

**The Making of an Aesthetic Domain:  
An Archive of Lived Relations in Postwar Turkish-German Media Initiatives**

by

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To Mesut and Yekta

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## Abstract

After the phenomenon of post-WWII labor migration to West Germany (1955-1973), the 1970s and 1980s saw a prevailing portrayal of immigrant life, often depicted in popular culture and critical literature as being socially and politically excluded, repressed, exploited, and reduced to a mere workforce. This dissertation addresses the persistent public victimization of immigrant communities by introducing a previously rarely researched archive of lived relations within the domain of Turkish-German literature and media. This revelation unveils constitutive and creative activities that unfolded across communities on a daily basis. By focusing on the analysis of four early immigrant-led, self-organized postwar media initiatives, this dissertation argues that these initiatives played a pivotal role in the formation of a fundamentally transnational and multilingual aesthetic domain, urging us to reframe Germany's migration history through the lens of everyday relations.

The initiatives explored in this dissertation comprise two television films produced in collaboration between Friedrich W. Zimmermann and Aras Ören, the bilingual publishing houses Dağyeli and Ararat, the bilingual literary journal *Anadil*, and the cinema association SinemaTürk's film festival, "Tage des Türkischen Films." Individuals engaged in these initiatives, including co-founders, organizers, directors, translators, writers, readers, and viewers, actively participated in publishing, reading, discussing, organizing, exhibiting, and evaluating cultural productions in both Turkish and German. Through this dynamic engagement, they forged new relations, developed aesthetic kinships, and cultivated solidarities in a country of

immigration. Moreover, the archival research conducted on these relationship-building activities is a critical intervention that challenges the pervasive perception of migrant workers as isolated during that era. The impact of these initiatives reverberates even today, influencing discussions on critical topics such as immigration, citizenship, integration, and post-migrancy. In essence, the archival work presented in this dissertation accentuates the profound significance of unearthing the activities that shaped and continue to shape communities through the connections they established. These activities encompass their everyday lives and the aesthetic domain in which they navigated challenges, engaged with literature and media, and derived enjoyment from them.

## **Introduction, or a Grammar of Life: Turkish-German Media Initiatives**

*Shirins Hochzeit* (Shirin's Wedding, Sanders 1976) was one of the first feature films produced in the Federal Republic of Germany (hereafter referred to as West Germany) featuring Turkish-German characters. Told from the perspective of the Turkish woman migrant worker Shirin (Ayten Erten), it depicts the gradually deteriorating conditions of her life within the shrinking market for so-called "guest workers" (Gastarbeiter), and ends with Shirin being subjected to violence, forced prostitution, and ultimately death. The plot's harsh determinism, which lays bare West German society's devaluation of Shirin's life, highlights her status as absolute victim in an exclusionary, industrial country.

Mainstream media and critical literature of the 1970s and 80s portrayed migrant life with similar characteristics: as economically and politically constrained, as marginalized, isolated, and oppressed, and as generally existing in a survival mode. This trajectory emerged in the wake of bilateral agreements initiated by western European countries to ameliorate labor shortages in the post-WWII economy. Following the so-called "economic miracle" that West Germany experienced in the early 1950s, the country first signed a contract with Italy in 1955, followed by agreements with Spain (1960), Greece (1960), Turkey (1961), Morocco (1963), South Korea (1963), Portugal (1964), Tunisia (1965), and Yugoslavia (1968). Between the years of 1955 and 1973, West Germany issued short-term visas to some 14 million immigrant laborers (Castles 1986, 768), commonly referred to as "guest workers." While the migrant laborers were first perceived as valuable human assets for the economic reconstruction efforts, their presence in

recruiting countries became gradually “redundant” especially following the economic recession of 1973. While Germany put an end to bilateral labor recruitment in this same year, a critical mass of immigrant workers were able to remain in West Germany due to the unregulated nature of these programs. Workers from Turkey made up the largest percentage of this group. Myriad other reasons—including political unrest and extreme censorship during the 1970s, followed by the 1980 coup d’état in Turkey—also led a number of Turkish intellectuals and students to take up residence in West Germany during and after this period. Together, these events have led to a sizeable Turkish diaspora in Germany, with upwards of 4 million people of Turkish descent living in Germany today.

Viewed strictly within the confines of this history and within the framework of West German cinema, *Shirins Hochzeit* highlights another migrant worker’s victimization within the exploitative and gendered framework of capitalism. If we take its larger transnational reception into consideration, however, we are forced to grapple with more complicated questions of the so-called immigrant life after postwar labor migration, which inform the production, circulation, and reception of the film. Archival research on precisely these transnational aesthetic relations allows us to situate films like *Shirins Hochzeit* in a much broader media network than the framework of national cultural production otherwise allows. Aired on television for the first time by Westdeutscher Rundfunk (West German Broadcasting, or WDR), *Shirins Hochzeit* triggered major protests by right-wing extremists in Turkey as well as protests by Turkish nationals in Cologne (Kommunikation 2021). It also sparked a heated discussion in the Turkish parliament at the time (“*Shirins Hochzeit* - Archiv” 2022), and even led the singer Metin Türköz<sup>1</sup> to record two albums criticizing Shirin’s life and so-called “moral decadence.”

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<sup>1</sup> The albums are titled *Şirin’in Doğumu* (Shirin’s Birth, 1976) and *Şirin’in Düğünü* (Shirin’s Wedding, 1976), released by Türküola in the same year as the film.

In addition to political debates about the question of immigrant life, the production, circulation and reception of *Shirin's Hochzeit* in both Turkey and West Germany provoked major aesthetic discussions. Berlin-based author Aras Ören's collaborative work<sup>2</sup> with director Helma Sanders-Brahms had a direct influence on the character's agency as an immigrant worker: the portrayal of Shirin's life does not only include her adverse experiences at her work, but also her state of mind, her decision-making processes, her own desires, and the everyday relationships she strived to establish between immigrant workers from other countries, such as the Yugoslavia and Greece. This emphasis on Shirin's own ways of relating to the world was supported by other immigrant-led media initiatives, such as Türkische Redaktion (The Turkish Programming) on Sender Freies Berlin (Radio Free Berlin, or SFB). Through his position as editor at Türkische Redaktion together with Erkin Özgüç, Ören defended the film in public commentaries and press releases, and responded to reactions to the film following its initial screening.<sup>3</sup> Letters that audience members sent to Türkische Redaktion also reveal that despite considerable viewer support from both Turkey and West Germany, the film's social critique of both countries resulted in a massive viewer backlash replete with aggressive comments and threats (Aras-Ören-Archive). This backlash was so extreme, it neatly ended actress Ayten Erten's career (Kommunikation 2021).

Archival research on these multiple and disparate responses to *Shirin's Hochzeit* reveals an aesthetic domain that was already converging around questions of immigrant life in Turkish-German cultural productions of the 1970s. In this dissertation, I take up a number of similar case

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<sup>2</sup> Aras Ören also played the Shirin's migrant worker spouse Mahmut as one of the main characters in the film.

<sup>3</sup> The book *Shirins Hochzeit* includes a comprehensive collection of documents on the film, including Ören's comments, among those of others such as the director Helma Sanders-Brahms herself and Ayten Erten, documentations of the press about the film, along with an interview with Ayten Erten, further materials such as a flyer, other printed public reactions and select audience letters that are sent to the director. Claus Neugebauer (ed.), *Shirins Hochzeit*, Freiburg im Breisgau: Panta Rhei Filmverlag, 1980.

studies, which focus on a variety of self-organized, immigrant-led Turkish-German media initiatives of the 1970s and 1980s that tackle public perceptions of life in West German political discourse in the aftermath of the 1973's *Anwerbestopp*, which put an end to the recruitment of so-called "guest workers" to West Germany. Covering the period of approximately 1973 through the first years of German reunification in the early 1990s, the initiatives I examine include Sender Freies Berlin's in-house film productions *Frau Kutzer und andere Bewohner der Naunynstraße* (Mrs. Kutzer and Other Inhabitants of Naunyn Street, 1973), and *Kazım Akkaya und die Bewohner der Naunynstraße* (Kazım Akkaya and the Inhabitants of Naunyn Street, 1975); programming by the bilingual publishing houses Dağyeli and Ararat; the first Turkish-German bilingual literary journal *Anadil* (Mother Tongue); and the film festival *Türkische Filmtage München* (Turkish Film Days Munich). The various genres represented by these initiatives provide a range of focal points from which to explore the overarching premise of this dissertation: the idea that immigrant-led self-organized Turkish-German media initiatives gave way to the construction of a transnational and multilingual aesthetic domain, which was defined by and rooted in the daily interactions among communities.

Extending to the genres of theater, radio, cinema, television, journalism, music, and literature, this aesthetic domain is constituted through interactions between a variety of communities, including immigrant workers, and intellectuals and artists of the New Left from both West Germany and Turkey. As a result, it is decidedly multilingual, operating in and across Turkish and German. Due to their at times contingent nature, such interactions have generally been ignored or devalued in secondary scholarship, which treats immigrant life as "something to be handled" or as "a problem to be solved." By contextualizing such interactions through archival documents and found materials, my case studies reveal rather a complex aesthetic that

emerged around cultural productions, their markets and the internal dynamics of institutions struggling to establish themselves. Research on this mostly unofficial archive—located mostly in private archives of the individuals that are related to the initiatives—of aesthetic activities allows me to identify how the organizing participants in these initiatives necessitated constant and daily interaction with diverse audiences and forms of community access.

Through the specific archive I have assembled, my dissertation shows the transnational and multilingual nature of postwar Turkish-German media relations from their very inception. Multiple histories are present in this archive: not only that of West Germany, but also that of Turkey, including the history of Turkish linguistic modernization, migration from rural to urban centers during the 1970s, the 1980 military coup d'état and its long-lasting repercussions on Turkish intellectual life, and Turkish literary and cinematic traditions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, the aesthetic domain in question involves not only immigrant workers but also students, artists, and political exiles as members who often took on interchangeable roles as authors, translators, playwrights, organizers, directors, publishers, and broadcasters. The vast amount of material these key actors produced in these myriad intertwined aesthetic forms reached almost every aspect of the West German media landscape. The visible heterogeneity of these communities, both in terms of the organizing bodies of media initiatives and their select cultural productions, allows us to reconsider the entire history of migration from a transnational and multilingual perspective of everyday relations.

The initiatives I examine are not the earliest examples within the context of the Turkish-German bilingual and transnational aesthetic domain I address. From the first radio programming Radio Cologne (Köln Radyosu) to earlier efforts to establish Turkish-language theaters in Germany in the 1960s (Gezen 2018), numerous activities existed years before the case studies I

focus on in this dissertation. More importantly, they did not appear from within a vacuum; rather, a long and rich history of literary-cultural Turkish-German exchange preceded the case studies I discuss. In this sense, my scholarship builds on the work of Kristin Dickinson's *DisOrientations: German-Turkish Cultural Contact in Translation, 1811-1946* (2021), and Kader Konuk's *East West Mimesis: Auerbach in Turkey* (2010), which similarly trace moments of literary and cultural exchange between Germany and Turkey during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. These studies have been at the forefront of showing a history of exchange beyond national boundaries that dates to at least the early 1800s. Such scholarship has reframed the field of Turkish-German Studies, which has otherwise been predominantly concerned with the effects of the cultural production of a group of immigrants on German national identity (Ackermann 1983, Ackermann and Weinrich 1986, Adelson 2005). With their equal emphasis on German and Turkish literary and cultural traditions, Dickinson and Konuk provide rare studies in a field which has not otherwise tackled the question of how immigrant communities in Germany have produced alternative aesthetic constructs through their daily collaborations, negotiations, and experiments.

Ela Gezen's work *Brecht, Turkish Theater, and Turkish-German Literature: Reception, Adaptation, and Innovation After 1960* (2018) is a critical and comprehensive inclusion to such scholarship that concentrates on postwar Turkish-German interactions, taking on some of the initial activities within theater initiatives, and thus constituting an important part of the aesthetic domain that I propose in my dissertation. My particular focus on the 1970s and 1980s picks up where Gezen leaves off, gesturing toward a critical period in which Turkish-German cultural interactions exploded in number: in parallel with the fact that people from Turkey<sup>4</sup> became the largest immigrant population in West Germany, Turkish-German literary and cultural exchange

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<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that this population included not only people who identified as Turkish, but also people who identified themselves as other ethnic minorities in Turkey, such as Kurdish being the largest minority.



similarly took off in this time period, thus forcing communities to relate to one another in a much more intricate way than had previously been the case. Turning to largely-undocumented, earlier collaborations allows me to not only engage with scholarship on the problems of societal inclusion and exclusion, but also to identify how shared aesthetic kinships took place among audiences living in the same place.

Clearly departing from the stereotypical image of the exploited postwar migrant worker, the aesthetic domain I refer to in this dissertation reinforces *aesthetic* articulations and interpretations of the daily experiences of immigrants beyond work. Driven by the everyday experiences of immigration and its aftermath, this domain approached life first and foremost as a constitutive practice, which drove people to form new and varied relationships in their country of immigration. Both the content of art and literature produced in these initiatives, as well as their institutional formations reflect on such relationships: examples range from the editor's incorporation of reader letters into the issues of the literary journal *Anadil* to the Ararat publishing house's contact with multiple institutions in West Germany for find social and financial means for its bilingual publications in Turkish and German, from the decision-making processes of the co-founders of the festival Tage des Türkischen Films about screening a film in the program that was banned by the Turkish consulate, to those of the publisher of Dağyeli about what to translate, and for whom.

While all media initiatives strive to establish such relations, they are a *central* concern for the creation of aesthetic spaces in the immigrant-led organizations I consider in this dissertation. My use of "initiative" in this dissertation is primarily based on the "efforts" or activities of self-organization. Whether a collaborative cultural production such as Zimmermann's television films, or institutions such as bilingual publishing houses, I underline that all the case studies I

analyze establish their work almost entirely on their own. Often operating with minimal funding and without the means to advertise broadly, these organizations were accessed by relatively small audiences. Due to their diasporic nature, they needed to provide relatively greater accommodations for introducing, translating, and exchanging cultural productions in the market. Organizers of such initiatives thus tend to reflect on their own decision-making processes vis-à-vis the communities they address in a transparent way: for example, publishing houses such as Ararat explained to the readers the reasons for publishing bilingual works, or *Anadil*'s editor explains the logistic hardships behind the journal's distribution process in order to receive financial support from its reader community in form of abonnement. All these initiatives often share and explain such processes rather directly in their press releases, journals, open letters, posters, select works and events. Hence, they operate on close relations with communities including immigrants—relations that are much different from the relatively more popular public portrayals of the immigrant life in the West German context, which I aim to unpack in the following section.

### ***Historical context for the concept of life after the postwar labor migration***

Life as a term has historically been re-conceptualized, re-interpreted, and thus, also contested across disciplines such as philosophy, aesthetics, and the sciences due to its intellectually generative repertoire of definitions and approaches. Thinking about life has thus allowed for connections between fields and concepts otherwise long considered as separate, such as “nature and cognition, biology and politics, humans and animals” (Gailus 2020, 18). Despite this rich and varied connotations, the concept of life also invites, as Gailus states, “potentially catastrophic acts of reductionism,” in the German context, “as evidenced most clearly in

National Socialism’s systematic biologization of politics, art, and ethics” (18). Grappling with the concept of life thus comes with its own set of difficulties, due to the term’s biological and/or symbolic implications, and its wide-ranging theorizations of biopolitics, ecocriticism, and physiology.

My inquiry into the notion of life stems from the particular political-historical discourse in West Germany, which generated a concept of life understood almost exclusively through the lens of the value-producing capacity of labor (Tadiar 2022, xi). This entails a reconsideration of the political problems concerning industrialized labor in the framework of postwar labor migration. Such discourse got its momentum after the arrival of the so-called Turkish “guest workers,” making the phenomenon of labor migration even more visible in terms of numbers. Predictably, this specific reductionist concept of life was driven by hypothetical, and often discriminatory, assumptions about the experiences of immigration, which goes hand in hand with its potentially dangerous uses in media in forms of racism, and in forms of instrumentalization—or sometimes, objectification—for a social critique.

The economic recession in West Germany greatly exacerbated negative perceptions of immigrant populations, particularly after the oil crisis of October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1973. A few weeks later, on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, the guest worker recruitment program came to a halt (Bildung 2011). In addition to economic reasons, the so-called “political unreliability” of migrant laborers, who led wildcat strikes in factories during the late 1960s and early 1970s, was a significant factor for the termination of the program (Miller 2018, 159-160). These strikes increased in number during the summer of 1973 at plants such as Pierburg Autoparts in Neuss, Hellawerk in Lippstadt, Opal in Herner, and Ford in Cologne. Jennifer A. Miller interprets migrant workers’ active involvement in movements of political resistance in this period as an intervention for changing the “imposed

category of the ‘guest worker’” in West Germany by shifting their positions “from temporary participants to more permanent actors within German industry and society” (Miller 2013, 227). One of Europe’s largest news magazines, *Der Spiegel*, especially reinforced this popularized image of the migrant laborers in West Germany during the summer of 1973 (Stehle 2006, Chin 2007, 63). The similar mainstream perception of migrant communities was the most explicit in its 31st issue with the title “Ghettos in Germany: One Million Turks” (“Ghettos in Deutschland: Eine Million Türken” 1973). The emphasis on the population as an indicator for its imagined surplus also echoed then minister of labor Walter Arendt’s proposal to “curb[ing] the influx of guest workers” (“Markt der Menschenhändler” 1973, 60)<sup>5</sup> a few months earlier.

In turn, two crucial changes happened in the discourses of politics and media toward the end of the migrant worker recruitment program: First, immigrants became gradually more visible as the result of a strengthening belief in their permanency in West Germany; second, their life became visible in a restricted racist framework such as that propagated by *Der Spiegel*, which reiterated the community’s perceived redundancy in society. Such visibility became an excuse for the devaluation of the so-called immigrant life. The popular image of inhabitants in predominantly immigrant neighborhoods such as West Berlin’s Kreuzberg transformed from that of primary contributors to the economy to that of a potential danger to societal integrity.

On the other hand, the critical engagement with such devaluation of life in the context of the German New Left movement of the 1960s and 1970s also had its limitations. Due to political tensions resulting from the Cold War, artists and intellectuals of this period returned to texts by major figures of social critique such as Marx, Freud, Marcuse, Adorno, Brecht, and Benjamin, thereby reintroducing “the political function of literature to the center of public discussion”

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<sup>5</sup> All translations are mine unless otherwise stated.

(Gezen 2018, 53). By doing so, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Günter Wallraff, Max Frisch, and others could directly address the exploitative measures that industries and state authorities took with respect to immigrant workers. However, their portrayals as characters were often, in Rita Chin's terms, "brief and vague" (Chin 2007, 65). While they criticized the treatment of immigrant laborers as part of the exchange mechanism of the market economy or their subjection to racism and discrimination in society, they fell short of portraying their everyday lives as central to the fabric of West German society.

Public perceptions about immigrant life in West German political discourse were often limited to stereotypical assumptions about migrant workers. This led many writers and social critics to meditate on the concept of life itself in the context of a postwar capitalist framework. One of the most-cited statements about these meditations is Max Frisch's straightforward critique of the recruiting industrial countries' devaluating perspective on life through the figure of the migrant worker: "They called for workers; but people came instead" (Frisch, 1965, 100).<sup>6</sup> The irony in this sentence reveals the unrealistic public view of the laborer's life as a machine-like entity and commodity, whose value is defined in strictly economic terms. According to Frisch, the life of the migrant worker is reduced to labor in the context of the postwar economy, to the point that any human experience beyond work comes as a surprise.

Scholars such as Teraoka (1989) have laid out and critically investigated similar approaches to life and the figure of the migrant worker in West German mainstream discourse, the definitions of which have been driven primarily by the phenomenon of labor migration: while large media outlets affirmed and reproduced an image of the immigrant worker as dehumanized workforce without a voice, intellectuals of the New Left emphasized the exploitative and

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<sup>6</sup> "Wir riefen Arbeitskräfte, und es kamen Menschen."

discriminatory quality of this image, often by pointing out the neglected and denied rights and needs of so-called “guest workers.”<sup>7</sup> Whether taken at face value or critically, all these approaches reflect an underlying consensus about life being limited to the migrant worker’s relation to labor. Thus, in these traditionally recognized perspectives, the concept of life tends to be reduced to a political issue, and almost always explained on behalf of the subjects who experienced it firsthand. They have been highly circulated in the media, and therefore, are more accessible for historicization and analysis in scholarship.

These approaches alone, however, show us only part of the discourse. Early Turkish-German immigrant-led media initiatives reveal how communities engaged with ways of living together such as creating aesthetic spaces, the daily activities which fall outside of these public representations. I argue that immigrant and post-migrant organizers of, and participants in publishing houses, film festivals, literary journals, radio programs, television productions, theatres, exhibitions, museums, and archives, have been generating their own understandings of life since the beginning of postwar labor migration.<sup>8</sup> They do so by producing narratives about the connections they make in everyday life: these connections reveal how they felt, fought, imagined, argued, created art and literature, killed time, were bored or sick, had fun, desired to do something or desired someone, got drunk, had a conversation, had a family, helped others, built solidarities and established relations, communities, and institutions. I contrast to a societal tendency to reduce the concept of life to labor, I thus ask: how can we revisit and re-conceptualize approaches to life in these immigrant-led aesthetic spaces? What practices and

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<sup>7</sup> John Berger and Jean Mohr’s *A Seventh Man* (1975) is a case in point in representing the life of the migrant worker in the framework of a three-arc narrative. In photos and short fragments, the book encapsulates an experience of labor migration, which is essentially structured around capitalist exploitation, namely “Departure,” “Work,” and “Return.”

<sup>8</sup> Gezen’s thorough analysis of the multitude of literary activities in “Türkisch-deutsche literarische Begegnungen in Westberlin um 1980,” are some of the examples for self-organization of Turkish-German communities (Gezen 2023).

definitions of life emerged here outside of more standard approaches to the term? In other words, where is it possible to look for understandings of life informed directly by the everyday experiences of immigration?

The immigrant-led media initiatives I examine here in the context of West Germany clearly show how members brought multiple communities together to generate an artistic and literary landscape, which challenged more limited representations of life after postwar labor migration. This is not to say that participants in these initiatives aim to directly intervene in conversations about immigrant life as portrayed in mainstream media sources. Although at times they respond in their works, press releases and other channels of public communication against such portrayals, they were neither armed with such an agenda in producing works or establishing initiatives, nor had a major interest in doing so. Their aims and efforts were rather to build, grow, and discuss the world they lived in through their production of art and literature, which was embroiled in the daily concerns of establishing solidarities with other communities, and maintaining such solidarities through cultural productions in multiple languages. Through my own readings of such artistic and organizational practices, I retrospectively uncover these communities' own ways of approaching human experience. This is the kind of intervention that I aim to underline and investigate in this dissertation.

### *A theorization of life as everyday lived relations*

Rather than engaging with the colonialist cultural imposition on ways of living in a metropolis, Michel de Certeau takes on a disenfranchised subject's ways of relating to their environment in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984):

A North African living in Paris or Roubaix (France) insinuates *into* the system imposed on him by the construction of a low-income housing development or of the French language the ways of “dwelling” (in a house or in a language) peculiar to his native Kabylia. He superimposes them and, by that combination, creates for himself a space in which he can find *ways of using* the constraining order of the place or of the language. Without leaving the place where he has no choice but to live and which lays down its law for him, he establishes within it a degree of *plurality* and creativity. By an art of being in between, he draws unexpected results from his situation. (31)

De Certeau’s focus on the creative ways in which communities make use of an imposed order marks a definitive shift from a historicization of societal mechanisms<sup>9</sup>—ranging from colonialist practices to urbanization, state institutions, capitalist industries, and mass media—to a cultural analysis of these everyday practices by people who are exposed to them. This shift entails deliberately moving away from a perspective that is only concerned with the modes of oppression. That is to say, de Certeau does not dwell on the victimization of immigrant lives in media and scholarship, which presents immigrants only as the subjects of violence, discrimination, or exploitation. He emphasizes rather the agency of communities in question, whose members have the capacity to make use of the alleged imposed order simply by doing things in their own way.

Written during the period I analyze in this dissertation, de Certeau’s analysis also addresses the practices of immigrant communities, including workers, in the Global North. Contrary to the literary or scholarly analyses and social critiques of the life-equals-labor paradigm in the industrial countries of the time, de Certeau’s goal was to trace the patterns of miniscule daily activities, or what he referred to as *tactics*, in order to “bring to light the clandestine forms taken by the dispersed, tactical, and make-shift creativity of groups or individuals already caught in the nets of ‘discipline’” (xiv-xv). Tactics, therefore, belong to “the

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<sup>9</sup> Foucault’s works *The Birth of the Clinic* (1994 [1963]) and *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Foucault 2012 [1975]) are some well-known cases in point, which are historical analyses of how mental institutions and prison-systems came into place for appropriating the gold standard for normalized behaviors that could function in the liberal humanist framework.



space of the other” (37), which are personal responses to more top-down, calculated strategies of institutional power. They include regular and idiosyncratic “ways of operating” (30) which are actions as simple as walking, cooking, reading, dwelling, producing, and speaking.

According to de Certeau, the potential subversive impacts of these everyday practices on the larger society and institutional frameworks are paid less attention to in scholarship due to their visibility in comparison to the more systematically collectable data, for example, on media representations or consumer behaviors, as exemplified by the following passage: “[O]nce the images broadcast by television and the time spent in front of the TV set have been analyzed, it remains to be asked what the consumer *makes* of these images and during these hours ... what do they make of what they ‘absorb’, receive, and pay for? What do they do with it?” (31) His questions refer to more qualitative, experiential, harder-to-pinpoint, and therefore, often-disregarded practices of living. Thus, they are given less importance in scholarship, especially when it comes to discussions of disenfranchised communities.

De Certeau’s use of everyday practices, highlights the multiplicity of human experiences that are irreducible to a larger representative framework. In terms of research, their uses are neither generalizable to the behaviors of a group of people, nor do they add up to a concept or some “common” hypothetical idea of, for example, a single migrant worker. In other words, they do not work as proper evidence for a definitive, conclusive explanation about human experiences. However, they do reveal a pattern: a grammar for the ways in which they are *felt* or *lived*. Everyday practices such as reading, translating, selling, recommending, criticizing, celebrating, discussing about, liking and not liking a book, not being able to understand its language, getting angry or excited with its arguments, descriptions, and ways of telling a story are all individual examples of many ways of relating to the world, like the ways in which we

speak a language. Here, de Certeau's theoretical approach to everyday practices is clearly derived from Wittgenstein's reading of the ordinary use of language, which de Certeau also refers to as "everyday language" (10), from the first chapter of his book onwards: he states that Wittgenstein's philosophy engages with a radical critique of what de Certeau calls "the Expert," who gains authority by commanding the technical discourse to explain things inside the requirements of the discourse of specialty in the disciplines at hand, and by "eliminating the ordinary use of language ... ." In doing so, the Expert "makes it possible for science to produce and master an artificial language" (10). "A Philosopher," in contrast, tries to look for the patterns of language themselves, and to "determine the morphology of use" of the everyday expressions. By focusing on the *uses* of language, the Philosopher can "'recognize' different modes of everyday functioning, governed by 'pragmatic rules,' themselves dependent on 'forms of life.' (*Lebensformen*)" (12). Relatedly, as Andreas Gailus formulates, Wittgenstein's use of the phrase *forms of life* (2010 [1953]) is tightly connected to "the dynamics of aspect seeing" (Gailus 2020, 59), which shows us that "recognizing something in the World ... is not to subsume it under a concept but to acknowledge our internal relation to it" (60).<sup>10</sup>

An everyday practice is, thus, one example among many, like the innumerable *uses* of a language, which reveals to us "*facts* that are no longer *truths*" (de Certeau, 11) that are universal, generalizable, or conceptualizable. Each of them has its own art, and thus, requires its own specific questions. In my archival research about the daily activities in immigrant-led media initiatives, such questions might read as follows: How did West German publishers make use of the works from the literary canon in Turkey? How did they decide what to translate? How did

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<sup>10</sup> For further critique of the uses of concepts in literature and literary criticism, see Toril Moi's use of Wittgenstein's Ordinary Language Philosophy (OLP) in *Revolution of the Ordinary: Literary Studies after Wittgenstein, Austin, and Cavell* (2017).

audiences react to what they watched or read? How did some written discussions about literature and cinema become controversial? What were the disagreements about? What were the individual negotiations and hesitations behind the decision to show certain films in a festival? What were some of the editors' concerns and beliefs in their promotion and advertisement of literary journals?

My reading of archival sources and found documents reveals a terrain of lived relations comprised of everyday practices, which enables me to address these questions on a more tangible, material basis: here, my emphasis on the word *everyday* in this dissertation comes from a deliberate attentiveness to less-known and less-considered, albeit quite regular and frequent instances of building habits and making connections. Hence, I use the word to imply patterns of activity that have been historically disregarded and have thus remained outside the radar of scholarship.

On the other hand, my approach differs from de Certeau due to my deliberate use of the phrase *lived relations* to precisely emphasize the relationship-building capacities of everyday practices, which are already embedded and prominent in my readings of interpersonal communications through journals, letters, grey literature, and interviews. Whereas de Certeau mostly uses the expression "tactics" to underline the oppositional or reactionary character of everyday practices, which are moves against the so-called "strategies" for establishing hegemonic social structures by a "subject of will and power (a proprietor, a city, a scientific institution)" (xix), I do not situate Turkish-German media initiatives within a framework of tension. While tensions certainly arose among members within these initiatives, I am attentive rather to the necessary and vital human act of establishing a bond with the environment, including with people, places, and the past. In my focus on Turkish-German actors' constant

search for new ways to live and be in relation with others, I draw on Édouard Glissant's *Poetics of Relation* (1997 [1990]). According to Glissant, lived relations function "like a network" (195) that connects individuals through shared knowledge (8). He refers here specifically to destabilizing collective experiences in the aftermath of colonialism, especially with regard to the Caribbean reality. Within this context, lived relations describe how individuals relate to and "find themselves along with others" (195). However, beyond this historical particularity, Glissant also extends his discussion to his overall critique of the imperialist mentality of rootedness in the totalitarian sense: Unlike the desire to possess, to grasp, or to feel the need of being rooted permanently in a certain nation or territory, lived relations are built out of the "knowledge" of the unknown, out of the cultural contradictions, and the shared experiences in a "chaos-world" (143-144).<sup>11</sup> Glissant's formulation thus does not disregard the oppressive mechanisms of colonialist states or industrialized contexts, but rather keeps their violating existence constantly in the background. This approach demands that we do equal justice to the constitutive and creative actions that would start a conversation from elsewhere: from surviving to thriving.

The work of de Certeau and Glissant exemplifies close readings of everyday practices, which stress relationality. Neferti X. M. Tadiar's most recent work, *Remaindered Life* (2022), also makes a case for the theorization of life beyond the violent treatment and total devaluation of lives at the service of today's global capitalism. In the very moments of utter disposability of "life-times" as for example during wars on democracy or globalist economic forms of labor exploitation, Tadiar examines select everyday activities and moments of social reproduction that bring disenfranchised communities together. These activities include practices such as "cooking, cleaning, growing, repairing, tending, healing, feeding, mourning, soothing, seeing to the

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<sup>11</sup> "Chaos-monde"

flourishing of intimates and kin, always ‘helping’ rather than accomplishing” (332). Such practices are not geared towards creating a sense of “accomplishment,” as they do not serve a collective project or a specific end, but rather allow communities to form relations, help one another, and establish solidarity. They are experiences that make up a shared sense of living together.

Tadiar’s conceptualization of life is, first and foremost, based on mostly overlooked activities, whose reading also offers a much-less-studied form of political resistance than organized activism: enjoyment.<sup>12</sup> Along with her descriptions of outright violence, discrimination, and exploitation, she places an equal emphasis on having fun, creating art, engaging in plays, games and gambling, and other cultural habits of entertainment in her description of political struggle:

These other practices of life-making consist of tangential, fugitive, and recalcitrant creative social capacities that, despite being continuously diminished, impeded, and made illegible by dominant ways of being human, are invented and exercised by those slipping beyond the bounds of valued humanity in their very effort of living, in their making of forms of viable, enjoyable life. It is these practices of life-making that I think of and introduce here as *remaindered life*—modalities of living that exceed the necessary reproduction of becoming-human as a resource of disposable life for capital. (14)

Within the all-encompassing and paradigmatic axis of “life-worth-living” and “life-worth-expending” in the contemporary capitalist landscape, Tadiar investigates what is *remaindered* in this range of activities. These remainders are traceable through oral histories, and through art and scholarship that honor subjects’ self-identified valuation of being, living, and enjoying life as humans.

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<sup>12</sup> Tadiar opens one of the last sections of her work with Julio Garcia Espinosa’s following words in “For an Imperfect Cinema”: “[T]he organization of life is the organization of struggle. And in life, as in the struggle, there is everything, including enjoyment.” (272)

Closely in line with Tadiar's analysis of such "life-making" practices, the archival research I have conducted for this dissertation is not only a method but a theoretical framework. How can we find ways to learn about and show how Turkish-German immigrant communities in West Germany granted value to their own lives, or to ways of being human more generally? What kinds of enjoyment did they derive from reading and writing, for example? Or from watching and making films, renting video cassettes, organizing events, discussing books, participating in exhibitions, and engaging in readings of poetry? And how was this enjoyment related to their own conceptualization of life at the time? Such enjoyment is critical to the aesthetic domain I examine in this dissertation, the archive of which brings less-documented and enjoyable everyday realities to the forefront. The joys of everyday life, I argue, are as important as the adverse turns and experiences in history that most often dominate accounts of postwar labor migration to Germany. Taking such moments of joy into account thus encourages us to do justice to all realities in our research, and to pay particular attention to the miniscule daily activities, the multitude of which equally leaves a mark in history as much as more frequently recorded, larger events.

### ***The role of research and the archival method***

In "Venus in Two Acts," Saidiya Hartman tells about the story of lives, which were generated by official institutions and reports to be disposable, both "in the Atlantic slave trade and, as well, in the discipline of history" (2008, 11). The lives Hartman puts into question, especially in the examples of the *two dead girls* whose names appear "in a legal indictment against a slave ship captain tried for [their] murder" (1), stand for many who were murdered, are subjected to the extreme acts of bodily as well as symbolic violence, in history, and therefore, in its archivization,

respectively. She throws, thus, “into crisis ‘what happened when’ and by exploiting the ‘transparency of sources’ as fictions of history” (11) against such violence, and attempts to make these lost lives visible in stories.

Hartman’s approach as a storyteller with no stories or materials at hand is about the recognition of the total erasure of lives in histories such as the Atlantic slave trade. If Hartman had consulted only the archival information she had from the available data, she would arrive anywhere but the murders: “The promiscuity of the archive begets a wide array of reading, but none that are capable of resuscitating the girl” (13). In her rather unorthodox ways of engaging with the archive as an author who imagines and engages in failed attempts to tell about the lives of the murdered girls with no information about them but their murder at hand, Hartman’s practice of story-telling questions the entire practice of researching only with official and available sources, particularly when it comes to the histories of exterminated, massacred, or colonized communities. What is archival research for in cases where it only gestures at the failure to make the dead alive?

Although Hartman’s focus is on communities that scarcely left traces of their own lives in any document or form, her work raises important questions about the archives of disenfranchised migrant communities in West Germany as part of the Global North, which have been dispersed and dislocated elsewhere: the figure of the migrant worker, with its limiting and silencing representations through legal documents, works of literature, reports of health examinations, books and articles of social criticism, stands for an erasure of life in the official discourse in media and politics. There is much to notice this erasure in the archives, which refers to nothing else than the act of erasure. The figure of the migrant worker is conceptualized for the sake of more easily understanding a so-called immigrant life; the heterogeneity of migrant and post-

migrant communities is rendered invisible in this process. My methodology of research is therefore closely connected to the theoretical stakes of my dissertation. My arguments take shape through my own comparative readings of material evidence with respect to everyday practices of establishing relations in Turkish-German media initiatives. Unlike the case of Hartman, I am able to work with materials produced mostly by disenfranchised communities themselves, even if they were difficult to assemble. Given the dearth of scholarship on organizational activities in West German immigrant literature and media, my research uncovers a rarely investigated, non-localized “archive” of these initiatives. In my dissertation, therefore, I therefore refer to an archive that does not necessarily belong to institutions. As Deniz Utlü describes an imaginary archive of the history of migration to Germany in his essay “Das Archiv der Migration” (Utlü, 2011), this “archive” that I engage with has no place and has no name, and, following Utlü’s description, its many yet-to-be-accessed “documents” are dispersed in cities, in apartments, under houses, in cabinets and basements that have not been opened for a long time.

Except for in a few official institutions such as the Aras-Ören-Archive at the Academy of the Arts in Berlin (Aras-Ören-Archiv, Akademie der Künste), the Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museum and its archive (FHXM), the Radio Berlin Brandenburg Archive (Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg Archiv), and the libraries of the Free University in Berlin (Freie Universität zu Berlin),<sup>13</sup> these relational practices were not always easy to find and identify. I have traced them mostly in the grey literature of private archives, in interviews, journals that are no longer issued, and books that are no longer published. They are revealed in a variety of material forms, including multilingual poems and films, press releases of organized events, yearly promotional

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<sup>13</sup> Documentation Center and Museum of Migration to Germany (DOMiD) in Cologne is another, and the most comprehensive archive for documenting materials related to experiences after the postwar labor migration to West Germany, although the archive itself does not directly address the media initiatives I focus on in this dissertation.



catalogues of publishing houses, programming sheets, posters, reader response letters, correspondences between authors, translators and editors, manuscript drafts, and radio scripts. Most of these materials did not make their way into official archives related to literature and media in Germany, and therefore, this makes it harder for researchers to encounter activities that would gesture at the limitations of the historical perspectives concerning immigrant life as labor, which are often directly related to the impacts of work time.

I argue that bringing forth the practices of establishing relations through research, such as in the forms of creation of art and areas of entertainment alongside the experiences of survival and oppression, is itself a critical intervention to scholarship. It is another way of establishing relations with an aesthetic domain through analysis. Rare examples of scholarship in the context of postwar labor migration include Miller's anthropological study *Turkish Guest Workers in Germany: Hidden Lives and Contested Borders, 1960s to 1980s* (2018), which focuses on documents on microhistories of immigrant lives by telling about the daily tactics and strategies that Turkish migrant workers engaged with, including their negotiations with local doctors to pass medical exams, their fights with their dormitory managers, their sexual relations with others in nightclubs, as well as their solidarity efforts for better wages (17-18).

Conducted in the framework of Comparative Literature, my dissertation further emphasizes the multilingual and intermedial nature of the media initiatives in question. The materials I found in official and unofficial archives have allowed me to trace patterns of daily activities as they appear in multiple formats and genres, from cultural productions to institutional agreements, and from audience opinions to interviews. Furthermore, I approach all the archival documents I analyze as primary sources. Examining grey literature involving several initiatives allows me to more accurately depict the texture of the aesthetic domain I analyze here, while also

engaging with works of literature and art. I do not differentiate between cultural productions and their institutional contexts in my readings, because the participants in these initiatives were almost always transparent in sharing with their audiences their everyday acts of rendering them in their publication, advertisement, exhibition, or translation. In other words, the process was itself as equally significant as the products in these initiatives. Thus, through a comparative literary analysis, I consider both the works of art and their processes of exhibition, circulation, and reception as part and parcel of the same aesthetic practice, which is fundamentally informed by everyday lived relations, as they occurred between translators, publishers, directors, actors, readers, journalists, enthusiasts, and organizers.

My case studies furthermore exhibit connections between literary and other media canons and traditions that reach, in almost all cases, beyond the national boundaries. From Dağyeli's purchase of Nazım Hikmet's copyrights for translation from East Germany to the use of Turkish Yeşilçam cinema tradition in the festival Tage des Türkischen Films, the works that these media initiatives collect or reproduce mostly belong to a variety of historical or geographical contexts alongside theirs. The temporal and spatial stratification of the works I analyze, which are displayed in the specific context of the postwar labor migration's aftermath, also gave way to the ways in which I read the archival documents from a comparative perspective: in a multitude of histories, I prefer to emphasize the particular narrative that participants assembled in their own media initiatives. I do so by looking at how these histories were assembled, what mattered for them in terms of content, and what mattered to their audience, for example, through a reading of the literary journal *Anadil*'s selection of short stories and poems, and the printed reader letters in response to them.

Although the arrangement of initiatives I work with throughout the chapters are chronological, I do not intend to offer the reader a linear understanding of history. My studies rather remind us how recurring issues like xenophobia, racism, and questions about living in Germany remain crucial for immigrants to post-migrant generations today. The chronological structure thus reveals how most assumptions and stereotypes about immigrant life remain remarkably similar today, despite cultural changes in immigrant populations themselves, changes in the law and international policies, elections, and major historical changes such as the reunification of Germany or the coup d'état in Turkey. It enables us to look at an archive of lived relations, which forces us to see life after postwar immigration beyond a set of political, legal or social limitations. This archive shows us how people kept generating new modes of engaging with films and books, created spaces for experiencing them or discussing them collectively in festivals, and constructing new worlds (i.e., new meanings) despite the existing hardships that came from the conditions of work, legal status, education, or learning languages.

### ***Chapter overview***

Chapter one focuses on two television films released under SFB's initiative of screening immigrant-themed films around the same time as *Anwerbestopp: Frau Kutzer und andere Bewohner der Naunynstraße* (1973), and *Kazım Akkaya und die Bewohner der Naunynstraße* (1975). These films were collaborative projects between the journalist and film director Friedrich W. Zimmermann and the Berlin-based Turkish author Aras Ören. Based on two longform narrative poems by Ören, the films represent one of the first attempts to redefine immigrant life through cultural productions. Examining the tension between the films' content, and their production and reception processes in West German media outlets, I ask how cultural

productions themselves intervened in the mainstream media discourse of life after postwar labor migration. The film's setting in Kreuzberg in particular was central to urban development debates about the West Berlin immigrant neighborhood, which was scheduled to be partially demolished. I argue that the simultaneity of discussions about immigrant life after the recruitment ban with the film's release shows how significant and complex redefinitions of immigrant life were at the time, however little attention they have been historically paid.

The first Turkish-German bilingual publishing houses, namely Ararat, operating in Stuttgart since 1977, and in Berlin after 1980, and Dağyeli, which was established in Frankfurt am Main in 1983 and continues its operations today in Berlin, are the focus of the second chapter. I situate and analyze their self-organized initiatives in a broader network of literary activities in West Germany, asking: How can immigrant-led media institutions offer an alternative understanding of postwar immigrant life through their publishing practices, including their structural organization and approach toward their audiences? My analysis of these publishing houses necessitates a closer look at the attentiveness of their organizers to the everyday needs of readers. These needs include gaining access not only to books of literature in both Turkish and German, but also to contemporaneous discussions in German media about immigration, legal rights, and language learning. In doing so, I underscore the particular attunement and self-acknowledged limitations in the positions of publishers as well as the founders in other initiatives throughout the chapters, the majority of which being often left-leaning intellectuals from Turkey rather than being immigrant workers or members of the subsequent generations. Here, I rethink the aesthetics at the heart of everyday organizational endeavors, examining the closeness between the daily requirements for living and surviving, and those for cultivating a shared aesthetic space to gain a sense of living together.

The third chapter works as a counterpoint to the second in the sense that I unpack this sharedness. I ask what the transnational character and stakes are of sharing an aesthetic space by examining the publishing efforts in the monthly literary journal *Anadil*. Based in Stuttgart and published in Heilbronn from 1980-1982, this journal generated a domain of discussion for contemporary literature and art in both Turkish and German. In my readings of this journal's thirteen issues, I argue that even if an aesthetic space such as *Anadil* is shared by multiple communities, this sharedness is not only underscored by similarities: such aesthetic spaces, especially in the context of immigrant-led media initiatives, work rather as forums, necessitating an acknowledgment of the heterogeneity of communities in question. Following this premise, I investigate the tensions and opposing internal dynamics of the journal as revealed through some of the most prevalent topics of discussion contained within it. Through the journal's editorial emphasis on values associated with nationalist ideals of the early Turkish Republic was intended to build a unifying ground for readers and their aesthetic tastes, the actual writers and readers involved differed to a large extent in their literary and artistic opinions, preferences, and even languages. *Anadil's* issues are filled with vast disagreements, strong polemics, short-term disputes and irreconcilable accounts from multiple generations, of people with varying literary tastes, expectations, and experiences, making the journal a time-witness of the state of literature in Turkish and German in West Germany. Recognizing this brings out the limitations in the compartmentalizing views of immigrant life as equal to work force, or of literature after labor migration with terms such as "guest worker literature" or "foreigner literature" in the context of West Germany.

The fourth chapter on the Munich film festival "Tage des Türkischen Films," known today as "Türkische Filmtage" (Turkish Film Days) takes off from my reading of *Anadil* journal

as a time-witness: I focus on the ephemera of this media initiative as a potential and unofficial archive by investigating the possibilities and difficulties of conducting research on it. My focus on research stems from the difficulty of investigating these initiatives. With little to no research in the relevant scholarship, I had to reach beyond the official or available archives. In the case of Turkish Film Days, there is no particular archive that holds information about its establishment. This motivated me to delve even deeper into the issue of archive-lessness with respect to Turkish Film Days, and to approach this initiative from a more productive point of view. From where, I ask, can we begin constructing an archive for an initiative such as Turkish Film Days? What constitutes an archive in the first place, and how does this question can lead us to engage with materials that are perhaps less visible in the official archives, and show us more directly the fact that daily decisions can often create structural changes in ways of making art, in institutions and societies? Finally, what is the intervention of researchers themselves vis-a-vis traditionally recurring, and often delimiting stories, about life after postwar labor migration?

My conclusion is a result of my response to these theoretical questions about research in the final chapter: Looking at these everyday practices of generating aesthetic spaces, which includes creating cultural productions, enabling access to them, and establishing spaces of discussions about them, overwrites the often-historicized assumptions and narratives about a life that belongs to someone else. It is through research that recent scholarship and contemporary cultural productions have been able to unearth an archive of human experiences and relations, which exemplified instances from life after the postwar immigration from the onset of labor migration.

## Chapter 1 A Place of Relations: Aras Ören's Kreuzberg in Friedrich W. Zimmermann's Television Films

The exact movement of the camera is scripted down to the last detail in the screenplay of *Frau Kutzer und andere Bewohner der Naunynstraße* (Mrs. Kutzer and Other Inhabitants of Naunyn Street, 1973), a film made in West Berlin's working-class district of Kreuzberg during the mid-1970s.<sup>14</sup> The camera pans in the film exactly as in the script, to show numerous objects carefully added in handwritten comments: from the façades and windows of old tenements, to flower boxes filled with geraniums, and wall ornaments of thistles on brickwork. Footage of long tenement blocks with high walls facing Naunynstraße shows traces of dwellers' lived experiences everywhere, in the forms of buildings and used objects. Here, individual stories of inhabitants are inherently tied to the collective memory of an everyday life in the street. The past as well as the present are embedded in the materiality of the tenements, whether carved onto their walls or kept alive on windows in the form of flowers. As the camera moves from one object to another, the film evokes in the viewer a sense of history shared by all the communities in the neighborhood across generations. In the following sequences, fragments of inhabitants' stories are revealed in the film's overarching narrative through other objects and instances that indicate interpersonal relations: photographs of families, interviews with workers and protesters,

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<sup>14</sup> The handwritten additions in the script are marked in italics. "Fassade eines alten Mietshauses (halb) in der Naunynstraße (Schwenk von oben nach unten). (Blumenkästen) vor den Fenstern. *Geraniumtopf. Distel im Mauerwerk.* Fassaden-Schwenk endet auf einer Toreinfahrt - davor steht ein Leichenwagen *mit Sarg*, dessen Türen (hinten) gerade geschlossen werden, die Fahrer (Sargträger) gehen nach vorn." (Aras-Ören-Archive) "Façades of an old tenement house (half) in Naunynstraße (panning shot from top to bottom). (Flower boxes) in front of windows. *Geranium pots. Thistle in the brickwork.* The façade-panning ends at a gate entrance—in front of it is a hearse *with a coffin*, the doors (rear) of which are currently being closed, the drivers (pallbearers) go to the front."

artistic activities run by Kreuzberg communities such as the Kreuzberg street theater, as well as footage from the neighborhood, such as places of grassroots activism or children playing in courtyards, accompanied by the real-life activities and performances of non-actors from the district.

In this chapter I read *Frau Kutzer und andere Bewohner der Naunynstraße* together with its sequel, *Kazım Akkaya und die Bewohner der Naunynstraße* (Kazım Akkaya and the Inhabitants of Naunyn Street, 1975), as the first presentation of everyday life in Kreuzberg on West German television. These films were aired as in-house productions of Sender Freies Berlin (SFB), with SFB's financial support for the Third Program,<sup>15</sup> which specialized in "culture and art programming" and screened several documentaries and reportages about immigrant populations in West Germany. The Third Program had limited viewership and no obligation to meet a full-time broadcast, meaning it was able to distribute its funding budget with less restrictions. The program thus often funded self-organized productions that experimented with form and introduced new content (Zimmermann 2020). *Frau Kutzer* and *Kazım Akkaya* occupy a unique space in the program as the poetic and visual renderings of life in Kreuzberg as narrated by its inhabitants. Moreover, these films were the only Turkish-German aesthetic collaborations that involved an immigrant-oriented perspective.

Receiving minimal editorial support from SFB, the Berlin-based Turkish author Aras Ören was the main collaborator behind these semi-independent productions with the director Friedrich W. Zimmermann. A close friend of Ören's at the time, Zimmermann was making reportages on immigrant workers as a freelance journalist at SFB's youth radio (Jugendfunk),

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<sup>15</sup> The premise of the Third Program in West Germany was modeled on the same agenda of the British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) Third Program in broadcasting programs about "art and culture" between 1946 and 1967. In West Germany, the Third Program started in 1964 under BR (Bayerischer Rundfunk). The additional content for immigrants in SFB started on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1973. (Roß 1981)



and asked Ören about collaborating on the integration of his poems into a documentary-drama television film even before they were published (Zimmermann 2020). Thus, the screenplays of these films draw almost entirely on Ören's two longform narrative poems on Kreuzberg: *Was will Niyazi in der Naunynstraße?* (What's Niyazi's Business in Naunyn Street?, 1973), and *Der kurze Traum aus Kağithane* (The Short Dream from Kağithane, 1974). Due to the films' editorial self-organization, integration of multiple cultural productions such as poems, songs, and a scene from a theatre performance, use of documentary footage in multiple languages, and its inclusion of perspectives in a variety of media coverage about Kreuzberg, I approach them in this chapter as self-standing media initiatives in and of themselves. By focusing on two films only, I show how individual cultural productions—outside the framework of larger institutions—hold the potential to critically intervene in the larger discourse on immigrant life in the West German aesthetic and political landscape. To show this, I read the particular presentation of Kreuzberg in the films that includes the historical architectural meaning of its tenements, the heterogeneity of its communities, and its day-to-day transformation as a renovation case. I underscore that the setting in the film itself forces us to think about the history of Kreuzberg as a transnational narrative about lived relations after postwar labor migration.

***Aras Ören's Naunynstraße as a place of relations: a literary context for Zimmermann's films***

Following changes in West German policy on aliens (Ausländerpolitik) in 1973 and the relative popularization of social criticism in literature and art circles, rising public curiosity about the lives of immigrants led to a particular interest in Ören's works in the German-speaking

readership. Ören had first written for the German-speaking public,<sup>16</sup> and he was able to define the life of immigrants through their own terms. Concurrent with the rise of politically engaged literature in West Germany, Ören had already started publishing about the narratives of the immigrants of Kreuzberg—where he also lived at that time—in his poems and prose. Moreover, the transnational historical framework in his works allowed him to speak of multiple intersections of immigrant experiences at once: in his Berlin poems, he does not only describe the impacts of the history of the working-class in West Germany on the lives of Kreuzberg inhabitants, he also details the impacts of agricultural policy, industrialization, and the resulting internal migration in Turkey.<sup>17</sup> In this way, unlike the existing public regard of Kreuzberg as a postwar neighborhood in ruins with no particular history in the politics and media discourse of the time, Ören signifies Naunynstraße as the site of a collective consciousness that cumulatively harbors all the histories its inhabitants have experienced.

The films' release dates correspond to the same period when the image of Kreuzberg in the mainstream press had become the epitome of the emerging postwar immigrant ghettos in Europe. The neighborhood's gradual visibility as a ghetto also changed the relation of readers and viewers of the mid-1970s to the cultural productions by and about immigrants in West Berlin. Ören's book *Niyazi* was published by Rotbuch in 1973, and reached "a far larger audience than any migrant literary text up to that point" (Chin 2007, 78). The second book of Ören's Naunynstraße narratives, *Kağithane*, came out only a year after. These two texts later

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<sup>16</sup> Ören published all the first editions of the books in his trilogy in their German translations, and in West Germany. It was only in 1980 that the first volume of *Niyazi* and *Kağithane*, along with *Die Fremde ist auch ein Haus (Gurbet Değil Artık, 1980)* was published in Turkish by Remzi Kitabevi in Turkey under the title *Berlin Üçlemesi* (Ören 1980a).

<sup>17</sup> For example, the title *Kağithane* itself a reference to the poem in the book "Bezirksamt Kağithane beschleunigt Straßenbau" (Kağithane Municipality Office Accelerates Road Construction), which alludes to a critique of economic recession in Turkey that led to emigration.

become the first two parts of Ören's poetry-cycle, also known as the Berlin Trilogy.<sup>18</sup> In each poem, as in the case of both films, an omniscient narrator introduces many characters with a variety of demographic backgrounds, such as Halime, Niyazi Gümüşkılıç, Elisabeth Kutzer, Atıf, Fazıl Usta, Klaus Feck, Nermin, Kuhn and Achim. Along with their introductions, these characters also speak about their daily lives as a continuation of their community's shared histories. In this way, the poems invite the reader to imagine the everyday life on Naunynstraße beyond the individual habits of the inhabitants. Their stories become instead far more embedded in the concurrent histories of postwar capitalism and the migrant worker recruitment programs in Europe, of both German and Ottoman imperialism, the Republic of Turkey, migration to urban areas in and beyond Europe, gender inequalities, racisms, and the partition of East and West Germany during the Cold War.

This sense of a cumulative continuity of history is important to Ören's understanding of individual as well as collective life that makes up the history of Naunynstraße. Gezen draws attention to the recurring 'motive and setting' of Kreuzberg architecture for Ören in his use of courtyards (Hinterhöfe) in his multiple works, such as his short story "Arka Avlu" (Backyard) in *Anlatılar 1970-1982* (Stories, 1991), in which he describes Kreuzberg courtyards in a bird's-eye view, with their "countless roofs and chimneys" and "accumulation of TV satellite antennas" (Gezen 2012, 379; Gezen 2018, 63). In his Berlin poems, Gezen adds, Ören adopts a closer look at the architectural elements that he describes in his other stories (63). Like Ören's narration of Naunynstraße in his trilogy which moves from story to story, floor to floor, and sometimes, building to building, Zimmermann often uses a corresponding panning technique with the

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<sup>18</sup> The director Friedrich W. Zimmermann states that he and Ören could not collaborate again to make a third film that would become an adaptation of the third book *Die Fremde ist auch ein Haus* (1980) due to Zimmermann's work at Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR) in Cologne (Zimmermann 2020).

camera to capture each architectural detail of the tenements both in vertical and horizontal direction. Several passages from Ören's longform poems are taken and made into a cinematic collage in Zimmermann's films in order to give context to their visual narrative structure. The panning effects of the camera in the opening scene, for example, are juxtaposed with a voice-over recitation from the poem *Kağithane*:

Imagine, you never want to be  
like these people here,  
who in their captivity  
think of freedom, and  
who think that everything  
begins and ends  
in-between these walls  
made of steel and concrete and bricks;  
like the ones who love flowers,  
entrapped from eternity to eternity  
in the order and discipline of the barracks,  
the ones who watch the greening green  
in the pots in front of the window;  
or who start the day with schnapps  
and end the day with schnapps;  
or who sit on a corner,  
drowsy like a dead one. (*Kazım Akkaya*)<sup>19</sup>

The speaker in the film addresses an implied audience outside the communities of Kreuzberg, inviting them to make assumptions about the life of its dwellers. The long take of the ornaments and decorations, which constitute an enjoyable and relatable sense of living together, contrasts with the speaker's interpretation of Kreuzberg inhabitants from the perspective of an audience who only sees a state of captivity and confinement: being forgotten and abandoned by the rest of

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<sup>19</sup> "Nimm an, du möchtest nie sein / wie diese Menschen hier, / die in ihrer Unfreiheit / an die Freiheit denken, und / denken, daß alles / beginnt und endet / zwischen diesen Mauern / aus Stahl und Beton und Ziegelsteinen; / die Blumen lieben, / gefangen seit endlosen Zeiten bis in endlose Zeiten / in der Ordnung und Disziplin der Kasernen; / die das grünende Grün betrachten / in den Töpfen vorm Fenster; / oder die mit Schnapps den Tag beginnen / und mit Schnapps den Tag beenden; / oder die in einer Ecke sitzen, / schläfrig wie ein Toter" (Ören 1974, 8-9). In the poem, the lines that are altered in the film are as follows: "die in ihrer Unfreiheit / an die Freiheit nur denken" "who in their captivity / only think of freedom" (8). Instead of the word "Toter," (a dead person) the word "Kranker" (a sick person) is used in the poem. (9)

the city, people kill time by observing the plants growing on their windows, spend their days by drinking schnapps, and aimlessly sitting on the corners “like the dead.” The speaker renders this second-hand information, in which Kreuzberg eventually becomes part of a certain myth. Such a myth lays bare the discrepancy between the two worlds: the internal dynamics and relations in Kreuzberg and its outside. By doing so, the voice in the poem reveals a critique against public perceptions of Kreuzberg as a so-called “ghetto,” where people are surrounded by the neighborhood’s borders in utter isolation from the rest of the society, and thus become deprived of their freedom in a state of hopelessness.

As Deniz Göktürk claims, the poems and the films (as well as other media) are complementary to each other, which allows us to consider the films as a larger “multimedia aesthetic project” (2021, 606), resulting from the collaboration between Zimmermann and Ören. This collaboration “combines [...] poetry and documentary to conceive of the city as a dynamic site of contact, cohabitation, and change” (606-7), in contrast to the idea of a city that is separated by its communities. Set in Naunynstraße in Kreuzberg—a street with one of the highest immigrant populations in West Berlin—the films received major critical acclaim in West German media for their experimental use of raw footage and photographs, poems, contemporary reportages, and real-life events from a publicly out-of-sight neighborhood. Physically isolated, Kreuzberg was located at the margins of the Federal Republic of Germany, being surrounded by the actual walls of the German Democratic Republic (aka. East Germany) on all three sides (Gezen 2012, 379). With remarks that often mention the neighborhood’s rare cinematic depiction, critics and film directors of the time often praised the film’s exceptional status for having been made “in the depths of Kreuzberg” (Sieben 1973).<sup>20</sup> The assumption here was that

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<sup>20</sup> “im tiefsten Kreuzberg”

this neighborhood would have little place in the minds of the majority of West Berlin's television audience. The reviews and promotions of these films indicated an ongoing critical interest in the films' originality in being made in Kreuzberg, and the use of Turkish immigrants' narratives.

The critical commentaries on Zimmermann's films highlight two crucial and contrasting aspects about the public framing of the term "ghetto" in the 1970s: the so-called invisibility and hypervisibility of the neighborhoods in question. On the one hand, in policies for urban development, newspapers, and cultural productions, working-class immigrant neighborhoods were considered as impermanent spaces of no political relevance due to their so-called "guest-worker" majority. On the other hand, social critics of the time gave particular attention to these neighborhoods as "ghettos" in their agendas and considered them as spaces of exploitation due to the same community of immigrant workers. Gezen interprets Ören's cycle of poems as a challenge to such instrumentalizing tendencies in "labor and capitalist critique," by portraying Kreuzberg "in the collective life of the neighborhood and its inhabitants, as the point of resistance and departure for collective solidarity and action" (2018, 64). Shortly after the publication of his first book of Berlin poems, *Niyazi*, Ören continued to tackle these conflicting views on ghettos in his collaboration with the journalist and director Friedrich Zimmermann. This time, however, they did so by visually presenting the neighborhood itself in mass media.

Zimmermann and Ören's television films *Frau Kutzer* and *Kazım Akkaya* work as the documentary extensions and complements to the stories in Ören's Berlin poems. However, their use of film as a visual medium itself works as an additional critical commentary on Kreuzberg's degree of visibility in public discourse: the audience is directly exposed to the everyday life of the neighborhood, including the appearance of many non-actors in the scripted scenes, as well as in the documentary footage. Here, the question is no longer about whether neighborhoods such

as Kreuzberg were significant or insignificant in the West German political context. The film demonstrates the everyday practices of people *as* political context. The ways they chat, work, play, have fun, pray, cook, visit friends, shop and protest serve as a new and indirect intervention into their own limited visibility in media, law, and *Ausländerpolitik* (policy on aliens). In this way, the films challenge recurring definitions and significations of life in these neighborhoods by politicians and leftist intellectuals, all of whom figured the value of life as inherently dependent on the political importance of the place in which one lives.

Following this contextual trajectory, I examine what these two films and their intervention in the larger political discourse looked like when Zimmermann, via Ören, attempted to narrate and document Kreuzberg as a neighborhood that became both *invisible* and *hypervisible* within the span of a few years. It was invisible in the sense that the district was perceived as a temporary place that was on hold along with the “guest” status of its immigrant worker majority. At the same time, it was also hypervisible in the sense that it was seen as a place of social decay, which eventually became part of West Berlin’s “Kahlschlagsanierung” (comprehensive demolition and reconstruction) process during the 1970s.

### **1.1 Kreuzberg: Frau Kutzer, Kazım Akkaya, and unlearning the “ghetto” on television**

Both Ören’s poem *Niyazi* and Zimmermann’s film *Frau Kutzer* appeared in 1973, when the particular use of the term “ghetto” in politics and media became an articulation of population excess. This condemnation of the place of living also had material consequences: Kreuzberg was designed as a housing rehabilitation area by Berlin’s municipal government politics in the mid-1970s (Hass-Klau 1986, 169) and was to be demolished and rebuilt to a great extent, regardless of the interests of its inhabitants. By the time the second book and film came out in 1974 and

1975, respectively, this urban renewal plan and demolition work had already started in Kreuzberg. The neighborhood's former invisibility in most media due to its perceived temporary state had already changed into the hypervisible image of a ghetto with every possible derogatory connotation of the word: as the "downfall of the cities," as a place of "increased criminality," and as the site of "social misery" ("Gettos in Deutschland: Eine Million Türken," 24).

SFB aired *Frau Kutzer* and *Kazım Akkaya* at a time when "family reunions reduced the quota for migrant workers" until the recruitment stopped in 1973, and as a result, "the term 'guest worker' was increasingly replaced by that of 'foreigner'" (Lanz 2007, 70).<sup>21</sup> In other words, as soon as the permanent settlement of migrant workers and their dependents was possible, immigrants were no longer perceived merely as a temporary work force, but as an ethnically different multitude (hence the term *Ausländer*) to be integrated into a so-called homogeneous West German society. Rita Chin's analysis clearly shows this relationship between the increasing numbers of dependents and the increased restrictions in alien policies that specifically discriminated against guest workers, who were among one of the largest outgroups in West Germany: "Lengthier residences meant that more and more guest workers began to send for their families, a development that strained German social infrastructure" (Chin 2009, 85).

It is not a coincidence that the use of the often-contested term "ghetto" in reference to working-class immigrant neighborhoods became widespread in politics as well as media with regards to integration debates. For example, CDU MP Josef Mick held immigrants responsible for forming ghettos in cities and for supposedly isolating themselves from the rest of society; it is through this idea that he found grounds for preventing ghettos for the sake of "integrating"

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<sup>21</sup> "Als der Familiennahzug die Quote der Arbeitskräfte unter den Migranten senkte, wurde der Begriff 'Gastarbeiter' immer öfter durch 'Ausländer' ersetzt."



immigrants.<sup>22</sup> This shows that Kreuzberg became increasingly visible as part of the urban fabric of West Berlin in public discourse as soon as politicians and media authorities started to depict it as a ghetto. Hence Kreuzberg only became visible by means of its perceived public “undesirability” in the 1970s.

According to the reviewers of Zimmermann and Ören’s film, including Zimmermann himself, if the visibility of Kreuzberg would attract any attention toward the film, it would be only in terms of its particular popularity in the public political debates and media representation as a ghetto by the time the films were made. In order to uncover such signification of the term in the popular sense in West Germany, it is necessary to examine its racial connotations through Ören’s own critique in his writing about Naunynstraße and his exploration of the neighborhood’s perception as a “ghetto,” before the term was closely associated with working-class neighborhoods that are predominantly populated by immigrants.

### *1.1.1 Dutschke, Ören, and the making of a ghetto*

On August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1968, Hans Magnus Enzensberger’s 1967 interview with the prominent figures and activists of the German student movement of the 60s, namely Rudi Dutschke, Bernd Rabehl and Christian Semler, was published with the title “Ein Gespräch über die Zukunft” (A Conversation about the Future, 1968). Only five years before the release of *Frau Kutzer*, which

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<sup>22</sup> In May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1975, Mick states the following in a Bundestag debate: “When I come to Berlin-Kreuzberg and have the impression that as if I was in Ankara, then that is not a condition. We do not wish this situation because we have something against guest workers, but because we want to integrate them, since we do not want to create new ghettos.” (Lanz 2007, 71)<sup>22</sup> Mick’s use of the word “ghetto” reflects, in the framework of “integration,” a common frustration among politicians for not being able to monitor and control life in the neighborhoods highly populated by immigrant people from different cultures.

documented Kreuzberg as a ghetto in a reclaimed, alternative sense, Rudi Dutschke emphasized the absence of ghettos and national minorities in West Germany:

In the US, the approaches of the future are already visible in the present moment—in the radical opposition, in the Black Movement. From this, I come to a conclusion that the Hippie-movement, in all its ambivalence, is structured and driven forward by the radical opposition of the national minorities. However, this is specifically American which is not analogous to us. We have neither ghettos nor national minorities. So, the problem arises here as completely different. (156)<sup>23</sup>

Dutschke clearly distinguishes between the political resistance movements in West Germany and those in the US by focusing on the phenomenon of ghettoization in these places as the driving factor of historical difference. He acknowledges the differences in both contexts and avoids drawing reductionist analogies between the US and West Germany. Nevertheless, he fails to recognize the presence of any neighborhood in West Germany that is publicly marked by its community's racial or ethnic difference. Carmine Chiellino interprets Ören's writing about Naunynstraße as a critical response to a particular public disregard of the ghettos and national minorities in West Germany like that of Dutschke's:

When, for example, Ören corrected Rudi Dutschke's thesis with the reference to the emergence of ghettos in Berlin: '(Was it September 69? At least one of the 11689 Turkish guest workers in Berlin),' he does this by reconstructing and presenting Naunynstraße in the form that Rudi Dutschke could not see in his conversation about the future in 1967: as a ghetto. (1995, 311)<sup>24</sup>

Chiellino's quote from Ören's third book of Berlin poems *Die Fremde ist auch ein Haus* (The Foreign is Also a House, 1980) includes a reference to the number of immigrant workers almost

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<sup>23</sup> "In Amerika sind die Ansätze der Zukunft schon in der Gegenwart sichtbar, in der radikalen Opposition, in der Negerbewegung. Daraus folgere ich, daß die Hippie-Bewegung in ihrer ganzen Ambivalenz durch die radikale Opposition der nationalen Minoritäten strukturiert und vorangetrieben wird. Das ist aber spezifisch amerikanisch, das findet keine Analogie bei uns. Wir haben weder Ghettos noch nationale Minoritäten. Also stellt sich das Problem hier völlig anders."

<sup>24</sup> "Wenn z. B. Ören Rudi Dutschkes These ... mit dem Hinweis auf die Entstehung von Ghettos in Berlin korrigiert: '(War es September 69? Jedenfalls einen von derzeit 11689 türkischen Gastarbeitern in Berlin),' tut er dies, indem er die Naunynstraße in der Gestalt rekonstruiert und vorführt, die Rudi Dutschke 1967 in seinem Gespräch über die Zukunft nicht sehen konnte: als ein Ghetto."

from the same period of time as Dutschke's statement, in the late 1960s. According to Chiellino, Ören's presentation of Kreuzberg as a ghetto is a deliberate attempt to make the district visible to his West German audience. Ören deliberately acts upon this neglect and denial of the immigrant population as part of the national minorities in the West German society, both by the mainstream media and the intellectuals of the German New Left. Thus, Ören's conceptual and aesthetic redefinition of Kreuzberg as a ghetto was quickly recognized and critically acclaimed by authors such as Ludwig Fels, whose title "Vom Slum ins Ghetto" (From the Slum into the Ghetto, 1973) is a case in point of such interest as it reviews of Ören's first book of Berlin poems, *Niyazi*.

Among the main reasons for this longtime neglect of Kreuzberg and its inhabitants was the expected short-term *guest* status of the immigrant workers in West Germany. Similarly, the state of the Kreuzberg district itself was publicly seen as temporary; it was among a select number of neighborhoods that migrant workers could afford, due to its low-rent housing possibilities. Kreuzberg was affordable precisely because it was officially classified and condemned as a "slum" area based on its semi-ruined state after WWII (Ladd 2008, 107). Most houses in the center of Kreuzberg could not be rented even after a maintenance renovation process due to their old and dysfunctional infrastructure, unlike the new housing estates on the outskirts of the city. As a result, the temporary residence of guest workers and their low-income families—alongside artists and students—was ideal for landlords to rent their properties for a few years until some parts of the neighborhood would be prospectively and partially demolished and rebuilt.

The invisibility of neighborhoods such as Kreuzberg in politics and the media also meant that the needs and problems of their communities would remain ignored by state authorities as well as the public. In other words, only through an identification of Kreuzberg as a semi-

segregated and racialized “ghetto,” would the former guest workers be recognized as permanent immigrants instead of temporary “guest workers” after the *Anwerbestopp*.<sup>25</sup> In one of his interviews, Zimmermann concludes that this transitional state of Naunynstraße in the 1970s had a major and immediate impact on the lives of the guest worker families, for whom the street had an utmost importance. He states that when they were making the film, the urban planners announced Naunynstraße as a “renovation case” (Sanierungsfall), which was tentatively scheduled for demolition (“Almanca” 2011).<sup>26</sup> In other words, Naunynstraße had become “a vacuum” that contained opportunities and possibilities for the community in contrast to its simultaneous financial and social devaluation as part of the postwar renovation program.

Maria Stehle’s analysis of the 1970s media discourse on the concept of ghetto includes significant evidence for how neighborhoods such as Kreuzberg gradually came to the center of public attention. In particular, Stehle surveys “the most popular West German newsmagazine *Der Spiegel*,” which “exemplifies some of the central tropes of the mainstream discourse” (49). The most explicit presentation of the ghetto, entitled “Ghettos in Germany: One Million Turks,”<sup>27</sup> also included an article in the feature with the title “The Turks are coming! Save yourselves if you can”<sup>28</sup> (“Ghettos in Deutschland: Eine Million Türken” 1973, 24). Stehle emphasizes the racist conceptualization of the term ghetto in this issue when arguing that the

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<sup>25</sup> With regards to the question of racialization of immigrants in West Germany, Rita Chin makes a crucial distinction between “the postwar redeployment of race” and “Nazi racial practice,” such that “culture (rather than biology) became the primary basis for explaining fundamental incompatibilities between Turkish guest workers and Germans.” (2009, 82)

<sup>26</sup> “Die Naunynstraße war eigentlich ein Sanierungsfall - von den Stadtplanern in West-Berlin als Sanierungsfall ausgewiesen, sollte abgerissen werden. Stattdessen wollte man was neues bauen. ... Und in diese Übergangsentmieteten Wohnungen strömten quasi wie in ein Vakuum für die türkischen Familien. Die Wohnungen waren billig, preiswert. Die Naunynstraße war so etwas wie ein Mikrokosmos der Berliner türkischen Gastarbeiter.”

“Naunynstraße was actually a renovation case—the city planners in West Berlin designated it as a renovation case and so, it was supposed to be demolished. They wanted to construct something new instead. ... And these transitionally vacated apartments streamed almost like in a vacuum for the Turkish families. The apartments were cheap, inexpensive. Naunynstraße was something like a microcosm of the Turkish guest workers in Berlin.

<sup>27</sup> “Ghettos in Deutschland: Eine Million Türken”

<sup>28</sup> “Die Türken kommen: rette sich, wer kann”

magazine “made an explicit connection between ‘foreigners,’ the German *Ausländer* or *Fremde*, and the deteriorating cityscape” (Stehle, 52).<sup>29</sup> The oil crisis and economic recession and the resulting halt on labor recruitment in 1973 were major factors in changing the public image of immigrants from temporary guest workers into permanent ghetto inhabitants. Kreuzberg’s hypervisibility as a ghetto is therefore closely connected to the hypervisibility of its inhabitants as “foreigners” or as racialized Others.

The racialized perception of immigrant ghettos in the 1970s gave way to a discourse that involved an unproblematized parallelization with the racist ghetto discourses in the US at the time. In the mainstream media, appropriated comparisons especially between Harlem and Kreuzberg, appeared frequently during this period, often in the absence of any discussion about racial, cultural, or historical differences that were at play in their emergence. Instead, “the imagined ghetto” in the context of West Germany “became a space for a projection for what West German cities were in danger of becoming” (52). Similar to Stehle, Chin also underlines another, earlier use of the term ghetto as a space of social and racial differentiation with respect to the Jewish community during the Nazi regime (Stehle 51; Chin 2009, 81), following which the term race became “thoroughly discredited” and perceived as “a taboo” in the postwar period. In parallel to this long-term denial of the existence of race, and hence, that of racism, the popular use of the term “ghetto” in the 1970s West German context is, supposedly, no longer associated with its racial connotations during WWII. In other words, seemingly divorced from its racist meanings in media discourse in such culture of denial, the word “ghetto” was assumed to be

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<sup>29</sup> Relatedly, Stehle’s reading of this issue underlines how such perceptual transformation was in sight of the mainstream media. Through other examples from the newsmagazine’s coming issues Stehle also demonstrated how the racialization of the ghetto inhabitants repeatedly existed during that year. Especially after the immigrant workers organized a series of wildcat strikes during the summer of 1973, the magazine called the Ford Strike’s speaker of the Turkish workers Baha Targün as the “ringleader” (*Rädelsführer*) (Stehle, 65; *Der Spiegel* 38, 1973, 19), while clearly distinguishing between German and Turkish workers by approaching immigrants as another social class—as a “sub-proletariat” (Stehle, 54).

unproblematic as a term. This is also why racist practices against guest workers and their families were long denied and rendered invisible despite their prevalence in the media and politics (81). Chin adds that this non-recognition of racism towards guest workers in West Germany was also present in the discussions of the German New Left, including the feminist movement, until the 1980s (Chin 2007, 71; Lennox 1995, 481-482). During that decade, the acknowledgment of racism and anti-racist movements was only present with respect to the context of anti-black racism, specifically regarding the ghettoization in the US and the Apartheid regime in South Africa.

### ***1.1.2 Cinematic configurations of the “ghetto dweller”***

Ören and Zimmermann use the above-mentioned racist assumptions about the neglected and oppressed “ghetto dweller” because they make up a considerable part of the popular discourse about Kreuzberg inhabitants during the 1970s. The montage of recent newspaper clippings shown in *Frau Kutzer* lay bare the exact turning point from the disregard of the immigrants to their hypervisible and criminal positioning as ghetto-inhabitants: “Knife wounds were fatal: 25-year-old died in hospital,” “With the knife quickly at hand: this year, foreigners were the perpetrators of 38 of 62 capital crimes,” “Arrest warrant against Turks: traces of blood on clothing”<sup>30</sup> (*Frau Kutzer*). These headlines were montaged right before the scene in which the character Ali, working at the montage in a factory, gets beaten by his colleague Klaus and his friends in the pub. The beating ends in Ali’s killing of Klaus in self-defense. In the beginning of the scene, Klaus listens to the news on the radio about the police’s uneasiness to do their job of

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<sup>30</sup> “Messerstiche waren tödlich: 25-jähriger starb im Krankenhaus,” “Mit dem Messer schnell bei der Hand: In diesem Jahr in 38 von 62 Fällen Kapitalverbrechen Ausländer die Täter,” “Haftbefehl gegen Türken: Blutspuren an der Kleidung”

protecting the basic democratic order, after which he gets drunk, angry, and agitated by the phrase “basic democratic order” (demokratische Grundordnung). He turns to Ali as he believes that Ali is the one who is responsible for disrupting the order in question, and hits him after saying: “Don’t cower before anyone, not even before yourself. If you want to strike, then strike!”<sup>31</sup> Klaus continues his insults by calling Ali an “Affenpinscher,”<sup>32</sup> while implying that he agrees with the authorities, and thus, makes a lot of money as an immigrant unlike him and the other German workers<sup>33</sup> (*Frau Kutzer*). As his insulting voice continues in the background, another series of headlines appear once more: “A blue eye is against Turkish honor,”<sup>34</sup> “Stabbed in rage, victim in risk of death—This morning: Turk stabbed a customer in the stomach with his knife,” “Allegation of murder denied: Turk claims to have shot rivals in a self-defense situation”<sup>35</sup> (*Frau Kutzer*). These headlines work as a frame for the mob beating at the pub, in which Ali is hospitalized as the result of a hate crime, before killing Klaus. The scene nevertheless contradicts media narratives about ghetto-inhabitants in Kreuzberg, where the source of aggression and violence is usually associated with immigrants. Göktürk’s reading of this same scene highlights the distanced presentation of news coverage in the film, such that it shows how stereotypical representations of immigrants cause the public to disregard incidents that go against racializing expectations. Göktürk writes: “The film presents this incident without

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<sup>31</sup> “Bloß nicht ducken, / vor niemand, auch nicht von dir selber. / Wenn du zuschlagen willst, / dann schlag zu.” In *Niyazi*, the expression “vor keinem” is used instead of “vor niemand.” (48)

<sup>32</sup> In German the name of the given insult is a dog’s breed that literally translates as “monkey-terrier.”

<sup>33</sup> “Manche haben es verdient, / sondern solche Affenpinscher wie du!” “Some made money, / unlike such Affenpinschers like you!” In *Niyazi*, the lines are as follows: “Manche haben es verdient, / zum Beispiel dieser Affenpinscher da!” “Some made money, / for example this Affenpinscher there!”

<sup>34</sup> “Ein blaues Auge ist gegen Türken-Ehre.” Above this headline, there is also the district administrator Koru Engin’s short statement in defense of the Turkish immigrants: “Nur wenige Türke greifen beim Streit zum Messer. Die meisten kennen deutsche Sitten.” “Only a few Turks pick up knives when fighting. Most of them know German customs.” However, even such a statement affirms the overall perception towards the Turkish community in West Germany which is assumed to be culturally violent unlike ethnic Germans.

<sup>35</sup> “Im Jähzorn gestochen Opfer in Lebensgefahr—Heute früh: Türke stieß einem Gast sein Messer in den Bauch,” “Vorwurf des Mordes bestritten: Türke will in Notwehrsituation auf Nebenbuhler geschossen haben.”

moralizing, ... highlighting that ... news reporting tends to frame Turks as potentially violent knifemen obsessed with their honor without paying much attention to individual cases and systemic frustrations that result in altercation” (2021, 616-617). In this way, Ali’s story becomes another recurrent but less visible and thus, lesser-known narrative about daily hate crimes against immigrants in West Germany.

While news reports about any violence against white Germans appear in every newspaper, the way the film renders Ali’s experience introduces the audience to how common and unrecognized such cases of violence against immigrants are. The story begins in Ali’s and his wife Nermin’s apartment, where Nermin is hosting two of their friends for the evening. The next sequence shows Nermin in a police station; later, she is told about Ali’s hospitalization. A photograph of Klaus’s dead body with his eyes closed interrupts this scene. The mob beating comes only later, when the audience can already anticipate what will happen next. As the camera switches from instant to instant, it does not differentiate between the significance of the events. The audience witnesses the indifference of the eye behind the camera that montages the repetitive and habitual instances from the daily life in Naunynstraße one after another. Zimmermann and Ören use this montage technique to present another historicization of reality by adopting the same tools and principles of journalism: they uncover instances one by one to reveal how events either remain unnoticed or are tailored to the racist discourse of the popular press.

Almost all critical reviews and reports on Zimmermann and Ören’s film *Frau Kutzer* recognize such publicized assumptions about ghettos. For example, the film director Lothar Lambert refers to generally accepted associations of Kreuzberg with ghetto characteristics: “Naunynstraße is increasingly becoming a synonym for the Kreuzberg ghetto-atmosphere and



guest worker problems, for a fatalistic resignation to misery and dedicated commitment to change. The film ... is especially noteworthy because one among the affected delivers the template”<sup>36</sup> (1973). By doing so, Lambert promotes the film’s unusual emphasis on the “neighborly coexistence”<sup>37</sup> in Naunynstraße as a contrast to a focus on the guest worker problems only. A few months before *Frau Kutzer*’s release, Ute Hermes similarly recommends that potential viewers not expect a narrative of misery from the film: “Though, whoever expects the usual ‘guest worker problems’ packed in a misery idyll, will be mistaken. Because this film does something that is perhaps the least expected” (1973).<sup>38</sup> Contrary to the overall public image of Kreuzberg as a place of exploitation, Hermes implies that the film will uncover a lesser-known truth about it as a place of “understanding, support and solidarity” between people with diverse backgrounds. Regardless of the differences in their interpretations of the film per se, all these critics see Kreuzberg as an essentially ignored place, carrying a potential for a film that is timely and interesting. The director Friedrich Zimmermann states that the setting of Kreuzberg alone might have attracted particular attention from the public at the time for a reason:

For the television audience, in the Third Program; what did they know about Kreuzberg? So, we wanted to introduce Kreuzberg, and the inhabitants of Kreuzberg. The old people, like Mrs. Kutzer, and the new inhabitants such as Niyazi. This was “exotic,” in quotation marks, for the audience. We did not exoticize it, however. Aras and I placed great value on this. (Zimmermann 2020)<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> “Immer mehr wird die Naunynstraße zum Synonym für Kreuzberger Getto-Atmosphäre und Gastarbeiterprobleme, für fatalistische Hinnahme der Misere und für engagierten Einsatz zur Veränderung. Der Film ... ist besonders bemerkenswert, weil einer der direkt Betroffenen die Vorlage lieferte.”

<sup>37</sup> “Naunynstraße als Kennwort für nachbarliche Koexistenz.”

<sup>38</sup> “Doch wer vielleicht die üblichen ‘Gastarbeiterprobleme,’ in Elendsidylle verpackt erwartet, sieht sich getäuscht. Denn dieser Film tut etwas, was vielleicht die wenigsten erwarten.”

<sup>39</sup> “Beide Filme waren exotisch im Sinne—Kreuzberg kannte doch keiner. Für das Fernsehpublikum, im dritten Programm; was wussten die über Kreuzberg? Also wir wollten Kreuzberg vorstellen, und die Bewohner in Kreuzberg: die alten Leute, wie Frau Kutzer, die neuen Bewohner wie Niyazi. Das war ‘exotisch’ in Anführungsstrichen für das Publikum. Wir haben aber es nicht exotisiert. Darauf haben wir beide Wert gelegt, Aras und ich.”

Zimmermann argues that most of the television audience in West Germany might have seen Kreuzberg as a place worthy of filming because most people living outside it had their own mythical, exoticizing ideas about the place. Therefore, for both Ören and Zimmermann, redefining and reclaiming the ghetto was one of the central motives in their making of the television films in and about Kreuzberg. This is firstly because the immigrant ghettos were not acknowledged as racialized places but were devaluated as transitional spaces due to their perceived temporary status until the early 1970s. Their invisibility and insignificance in the scope of West German media thus led their dwellers to be perceived as non-agents in the political arena. In turn, presenting the Kreuzberg ghetto in a reclaimed sense in their films becomes a political act of legitimizing its communities. Secondly, the idea of the ghetto in the films was central to the purpose of overwriting the racist implications of the popularized word in the mainstream media and politics. The hypervisuality of Kreuzberg as a ghetto in the public eye meant that immigrants were also gradually seen as the actors of an imagined social problem of integration. Thus, Zimmermann and Ören's documentation of everyday life in Naunynstraße, both from a perspective of journalism and literature is an attempt to invalidate both historicizing tendencies of the immigrant population in the public discourse.

## **1.2 “The present is the past”: Everyday life in Naunynstraße as a time document**

According to Zimmermann, Kreuzberg's devaluation as a “ghetto” is the reason that his everyday documentation of Naunynstraße was a rare case for West German television: “It was indeed the first drama film in Berlin about Turkish people and with Turkish people”

(Zimmermann 2011).<sup>40</sup> It was indeed the first time that the immigrant families in Naunynstraße were shown on television as people who do not constantly feel alienated from their lives due to their public perception as a temporarily available workforce. Instead, they were presented as part of a population central to the history of the district. Zimmermann and Ören further redefined the meaning of Kreuzberg as a ghetto that can no longer be associated with the idea of the suspension of life: In the films, Kreuzberg is not an abandoned *island* of ruins, frozen in time and in need of urgent demolition and renovation, but rather a place that has been actively changed by its own inhabitants. That the history of Naunynstraße is inherently connected to the life stories of its community makes both the district and its people permanent in the history of Berlin and West Germany.

### 1.2.1 ‘An invisible knife’: Frau Kutzer’s death

The following passage from Ören’s *Niyazi* appears in a slightly altered version in the film *Kazım Akkaya*:

the city’s houses still stand in the same place. / The antennas and the chimneys, the bare tree in the back yard,<sup>41</sup>

Piss spots around the corners—everything unchanged.

But then, an invisible knife cuts up  
everything that stands there with its poor geometry,  
and it gets unnoticed that something there is missing.<sup>42</sup>

Whether it is him or her, who cares?

Nobody will earn a penny more or less without you.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> “Es war ja der erste Spielfilm in Berlin über Türken und mit Türken”

<sup>41</sup> The version in *Niyazi* is as follows: “Die Antennen, die Schornsteine, der kahle Baum im Hinterhof” (58) “The antennas, the chimneys, the bare tree in the back yard”

<sup>42</sup> The version in *Niyazi* is as follows: “und im Raum sind ein paar Flecke / und überhaupt bleibt unbemerkt, daß da etwas fehlt.” (58) “and there are a few stains in space / and it gets not at all noticed, that something there is missing.”

<sup>43</sup> The version in *Niyazi* is as follows: “Dein Name wird sowieso nicht in die Zeitungen kommen, / in Radios, im Fernsehen / wird man dir kein Trauerlied singen. / Niemand wird ohne dich einen Phennig weniger kriegen.” (58) “Your name will not appear in the newspapers anyway / nor on the radio, nor on television / no dirge will be sung to you. / Nobody will earn a penny less without you.”

Maybe mourning creeps over shortly  
the baker's old wife / since it will soon be her turn.  
And Mrs. Kutzer's death,  
whom would it touch otherwise? (*Kazım Akkaya*)<sup>44</sup>

Here, the demolition district of postwar Kreuzberg appears as an insignificant place, where nothing can change the course of events in it. The uneventfulness of the neighborhood can be traced in every object that seems to have been untouched for decades: the speaker as well as the camera presents the walls of the houses, antennas, chimneys, empty back yards, and the corners of the buildings. All these objects were once made by people, but neither the reader nor the audience can perceive any human experience around them. Instead, there are human traces like bare trees once planted in a backyard or piss spots on the corners of the walls. The speaker's depiction of the neighborhood is similar to that of a dead body that was once alive. Like in an autopsy, the speaker imagines a knife that cuts through all the buildings and structures at once to find out what happened to the neighborhood. But the cause of death cannot be found.

This passage is also about the prospective death of Frau Kutzer, whose family lived in Naunynstraße even before the street carried this name in the 1840s. Despite her status as a long-term resident of Kreuzberg, the speaker informs the audience that nothing will change in the everyday life of the neighborhood with her death. Even if someone else learns of her death, Frau Kutzer will only be remembered in the terms of someone else's fear of dying. Just like Kreuzberg is treated by the majority of the public as an unimportant ghost town irrelevant to the rest of Berlin, Frau Kutzer is subject to the same kind of indifference, and her death will not be witnessed by anyone else. Nothing will change in the lives of the people Frau Kutzer will leave

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<sup>44</sup> "die Häuser der Stadt stehen noch am selben Platz. / Die Antennen und die Schornsteine, der kahle Baum im Hinterhof, Pißflecken um den Ecken—alles unverändert. / Dann aber zerschneidet ein unsichtbares Messer / alles, was da steht mit seiner armseligen Geometrie, / und unbemerkt bleibt, daß da etwas fehlt / Ob es der ist oder die, wen kümmert das? / Niemand wird ohne dich ein Pfennig mehr oder weniger kriegen. / Vielleicht daß die alte Bäckersfrau / kurz Trauer überkommt, / weil sie auch bald an der Reihe ist. / Und Frau Kutzers Tod / wen berührt es sonst?"

behind, just like the inhabitants of Kreuzberg have been abandoned and forgotten in the margins of the city. This shared sense of invisibility between Frau Kutzer and other inhabitants of Naunynstraße also arises in Ören's conversation with his actual neighbor Frau Kutzer.

Zimmermann reveals this real-life aspect of Frau Kutzer's narrative in an interview:

And it wasn't anything new, because Mrs. Kutzer told [Aras Ören] the same stories that were told by her husband, who was just as exploited and practically had to live in an equally 'shitty apartment' here on Naunynstraße in the back courtyard because they simply didn't have enough money—it just wasn't enough. (Zimmermann 2011)<sup>45</sup>

This shared sense of history between Frau Kutzer and her neighborhood was based on class relations, which again brings about Ören and Zimmermann's emphasis on the immediate impacts of living space on life. Contextually, both in the poem and film, this passage leads to an introduction to the life of İsmail, who becomes relieved and excited to finally find a place in Kreuzberg to live: "But then, my dear, / you should have seen İsmail's joy / when the agent said he could / move into Kutzer's / vacated apartment" (Ören 1973, 59).<sup>46</sup> The following sequence of this passage in *Kazım Akkaya* shows Kazım, who is standing next to his friend İsmail at a real estate agency. İsmail negotiates for an empty apartment with the agent by speaking in German on his friend Kazım's behalf. When Kazım asks, through İsmail, about the availability of an apartment, the agent, realizing the fact that Kazım is a Turkish migrant worker, turns down this request immediately, stating it is too late to find a place as everything has already been demolished. Only after İsmail insists in German does it become clear that the agent is not in fact willing to offer a low-income apartment to another immigrant in the first place. Finally, the agent

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<sup>45</sup> "Und es war dann nicht neues, weil Frau Kutzer hat [Aras Ören] die gleichen Geschichten von ihrem Mann erzählt, der genauso ausgebeutet wurde und der hier in der Naunynstraße im Hinterhof praktisch in einer genauso 'beschissenen Wohnung' leben musste, weil sie eben kein Geld hatten, es reichte nicht."

<sup>46</sup> "Dann aber, mein Lieber, / solltest du İsmails Freude gesehen / wenn der Makler ja sagt / zum Einzug in die freigewordene Wohnung / der Kutzer"

offers İsmail a two-room unit in Naunynstraße 69 by saying: “An old woman died. The apartment has become available” (*Kazım Akkaya*).<sup>47</sup>

The scene above establishes a historical connection between the lives of the old and new inhabitants of Naunynstraße, such that they make up a history of their place of living in the same way that their place of living makes up a story of their lives. The handover of Naunynstraße 69 from Frau Kutzer to İsmail is the first story about the inhabitants in the film *Kazım Akkaya*. This story marks at the same time the handover of the district’s history from the old immigrant working-class population to the immigrants who came to West Germany after labor migration. İsmail and Frau Kutzer embody the historical change in Kreuzberg’s condition as well as its perception as a ghetto. Kreuzberg does not conform to the myth of a socially disintegrated postwar space where there is no sense of community; this neighborhood is rather a ghetto only in the sense that it makes the racialization of a place visible.

Kreuzberg’s transformation from an invisible district of ruins to a hypervisible “ghetto” becomes even clearer when considering differences between the first and second films. *Frau Kutzer* takes on the last years of Frau Kutzer’s life as she witnesses the changes during the 1960s in Naunynstraße with labor migration, while *Kazım Akkaya* focuses entirely on the subjects of labor migration after Frau Kutzer’s death. This shift is related to Ören’s approach to Naunynstraße as a traditionally working-class neighborhood. His emphasis on the population change draws the audience’s attention to the collective history of a place rather than to the individual stories of the characters only.<sup>48</sup> İsmail’s life, his condition and identity as a guest

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<sup>47</sup> “eine alte Frau ist gestorben. Die Wohnung ist frei geworden.”

<sup>48</sup> Chin similarly argues Naunynstraße to be the determining factor for people’s identities in *Niyazi*: “He builds this vision into the very foundation of *Was will Niyazi* by structuring it around a particular place—Naunynstraße—rather than specific characters. The street not only acts as a backdrop for the comings and goings of the poems’ many characters, but also marks who they are.” (2007, 66)

worker cannot be told without Kutzer and her family's lives as workers with a migration background from East Prussia. In this framework, life can only be defined through social interactions that are prescribed in class relations. Gezen points out that Ören's structural approach on life is in close relation with that of the Brechtian traditions of realism, in which the artist chooses to foreground social relations over biographies: "[R]ealism has a two-fold task, to recognize but at the same time to see through reality to make visible 'the laws that determine how the process of life develop'" (Gezen 2018, 49; Brecht 2018, 98). While Ören was completing his work *Niyazi* in January 1972, he articulated a similar understanding in Westdeutscher Rundfunk: "Humans as they grapple with their environment each day, their struggle in society, the visible class-character. Looking at humans from this perspective, there is no absolute life form: when societal structures have changed ... then characters change too."<sup>49</sup> Gezen's analysis of this statement follows an interpretation of Ören's approach to guest workers as the direct continuation of the "existing legacies of the working-class struggle and solidarity" in Germany's labor movement (2018, 48). In both the Berlin poems and the television films, Naunynstraße is the basis for class relations to occur. Eventually, this would make up a sensibility of life that can be constantly redefined on a daily basis. As people "grapple with their environment each day," narrations of everyday instances in Naunynstraße necessarily bring about the changing state of life due to the changes in social relations and interactions. Therefore, Frau Kutzer's death does not become an individual event; rather, it is an intervention in the lived relations across generations that indicates a definitive but subtle change in the everyday life of

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<sup>49</sup> Translated by Ela Gezen, in *Brecht*, pp. 47. The German version is as follows: "Der wichtigste Impuls sind für mich die Menschen, die Menschen, wie sie täglich mit der Umwelt auseinandersetzen müssen, ihr Kampf in der Gesellschaft, der sichtbare Klassencharakter. Für mich gibt es keine abstrakten Menschen, sondern nur Klassenmenschen. Und wenn man aus dieser Perspektive die Menschen sieht, gibt es keine absolute Lebensform. Wenn sich die gesellschaftlichen Strukturen geändert haben ..., dann ändern sich die Charaktere." (Wiegenstein 1972)

the Kreuzberg community. Nobody notices the fact that she died, but the ways in which people relate to the neighborhood fundamentally change with the vacated apartment she left behind. This is why in *Kazım Akkaya*, the liquidation scene of Frau Kutzer's apartment is among the significant events in the narrative, showing how life in Naunynstraße has always continued on the basis of these everyday changes. The camera pans and zooms in on social workers who hastily enter Frau Kutzer's former apartment and leave carrying her life-long belongings from small objects to big furniture down the stairs of the building. After the vacation of the apartment ends, one of the social workers removes her name plate from the door as an indicator of a job being finished. This time, the speaker recites an earlier version of the poem "Frau Kutzers Nachlaß" (Mrs. Kutzer's inheritance), an altered version of which was later published in Ören's *Deutschland: Ein türkisches Märchen* (Germany: A Turkish Tale 1978, 12-13):

The legacy of Mrs. Kutzer is swollen feet, crooked fingers, and exhausted eyes. And because she constantly had to sell her labor, she was left with a squeezed body, a squeezed soul, unfulfilled dreams and unfulfilled wishes. Her dreams as a young girl have long become dusty in nature in the attic. Like the dress that she wore when she married Gustav, her whole life is locked in these boxes. A few pictures, in the green velvet album, are on the bedside table ... Born, raised, and died in Naunynstraße 69. She has lived a life like in exile on her own street. ... The proletarian knows no inheritance.<sup>50</sup> (*Kazım Akkaya*)

Contrary to the use of the word "Erbe" (legacy) in the beginning of this passage, nobody actually inherits Frau Kutzer's belongings since all that is left behind are the historical traces of her social position as a worker, which she bore on her body. The scene shows that everything she owns is expropriated until no material trace of her is left. Even the name plate on the door that once

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<sup>50</sup> "Das Erbe der Frau Kutzer sind geschwollene Füße, krummknochige Finger, und tiefmüde Augen. Und weil sie ständig ihre Arbeitskraft verkaufen musste, blieb ihr ein ausgepresster Körper, eine ausgepresste Seele, unerfüllte Träume, und unerfüllte Wünsche. Ihre Jungmädchen Träume liegen längst verstaubt in der Natur auf dem Dachboden. Auch das Kleid dass sie trug als sie Gustav heiratete, ihr ganzes Leben liegt eingeschlossen in diesen Kasten. Ein paar Bilder, in dem grünen Samtalbum, liegen auf dem Nachttisch, ... Geboren, aufgewachsen, gestorben in der Naunynstraße 69. Sie lebte ein Leben, wie im Exil in der eigenen Straße ... Das Proletariat kennt keine Erbschaften."



attested to her existence is removed. As social workers carry Frau Kutzer's belongings out of her former unit, the camera's documentation of them one by one works similar to an inventory: her boxes, her wedding dress, the green velvet album on her bedside table all represent her ways of relating to her world in the form of impermanent and disposable daily objects.<sup>51</sup>

A few scenes later, Fazıl Usta, among the first guest workers to arrive in Germany, dies in a hospital of a stomach ulcer due to poor working conditions. Kazım Akkaya, who brings Fazıl Usta to the hospital will similarly count Fazıl Usta's belongings, which are handed to him after his death. In this case, however, the inventory will only consist of things he carried in his pockets until he died: "One silver ring, a subway ticket, a passport, a blue paperback, / a couple of sunflower seeds, half a packet / cigarettes, a lighter and clippings / of money transfers to Turkey. 122 Marks, 33 Pfennigs" (*Kazım Akkaya*).<sup>52</sup> These inventories are far from any material value, but are closely connected to the conditions of the lives and deaths of Frau Kutzer and Fazıl Usta. The objects themselves lay bare their overall goals, intentions, memories and relations to their communities. After counting Fazıl Usta's belongings one by one, Kazım Akkaya mourns how a process of exploitation, through which his life unfolds in West Germany, can minimize his individual hopes, copings, and responses to his environment: "What kind of a process is this, that we step on one corpse on top of the other in order to survive ..."<sup>53</sup> (*Kazım Akkaya*).

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<sup>51</sup> The alternative version of this poem in "Frau Kutzer's Nachlaß" provides the reader with a more detailed version of this inventory: "Ein Bett mit Strohmattatze, eine Flurgarderobe, / Einen Nachttischschrank, und noch, und noch, / Eine Nachttischlampe, einen Tisch, vier Hocker, / drei Sessel aus verschiedenen Garnituren, einen / dreibeinigen Ständer. In der Küche Geschirr, Teller / aus billigem schmutzig-weißem Porzellan, / in der Stube ein Bild von Max Liebermann, / schlecht reproduziert" (Ören 1978, 10-11). "One bed with a straw mattress, one hall wardrobe, / one bedside cabinet, and more, and more / one bedside lamp, one table, four stools, / three armchairs made of different trimmings, one / three-legged stand. In the kitchen dishes, plates / made of cheap dirty-white porcelain, / in the living room a photo of Max Liebermann, / poorly reproduced"

<sup>52</sup> "ein silberner Ring, / U-Bahnfahrkarte, Reisepaß, blaues Taschenbuch, / Ein paar Sonnenblumenkerne, ein halbes Päckchen / Zigaretten, ein Feuerzeug und Abschnitte / Von Überweisungen in die Türkei. 122 Mark, 33 Pfennig." In *Kâğıthane*, the corresponding part is as follows: "ein silberner Ring, 122 Mark / U-Bahnfahrkarte, Reisepaß, blaues Taschenbuch, / Ein paar Sonnenblumenkerne, ein halbes Päckchen / Zigaretten, ein Feuerzeug und Abschnitte / Von Überweisungen in die Türkei." (Ören 1978, 23)

<sup>53</sup> "Was für ein Vorgang ist es, dass wir eine auf das andere Leiche steigen, um zu bestehen ..."

### ***1.2.2 Inheriting the historical legacy of a place***

Kazım Akkaya's statement is also valid for Frau Kutzer, who isolated herself in order to survive, and thus, "has lived a life like in exile on her own street." In the exposé of *Kazım Akkaya*, Zimmermann emphasizes that the hearse heading to the graveyard in the film's second scene is in fact Frau Kutzer's funeral: "the second [film] begins with the funeral of Mrs. Kutzer, the 75-year-old pensioner from Naunynstraße and ends with the birth of a child, whose mother is a Turkish worker and lives in the same house."<sup>54</sup> Zimmermann also explains the significance of the transformation Kreuzberg's population: "The German neighbors have become marginal figures; their change becomes evident at the beginning of the film—they clear the space. A new generation fills the gap."<sup>55</sup> Hence, Frau Kutzer's life and death provide an overall framework for the neighborhood's new inhabitants as the inheritors of Kreuzberg's historical legacy as a working-class neighborhood, although the stories of other immigrants from Turkey such as Niyazi, Halime and Fazıl Usta have already been told and emphasized in the first book and film.

Rita Chin sees the emphasis on Frau Kutzer more in the film *Frau Kutzer* than in the book. She interprets this as a network decision to highlight a character with no history of migration in the hopes of reaching a broader viewership (Chin 2007, 71, 80). While such concern plays a major role in the promotion of Frau Kutzer as the protagonist in the first film,<sup>56</sup> I argue

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<sup>54</sup> "Der Film beginnt mit der Beerdigung der Frau Kutzer, der 75-jährigen Rentnerin aus der Naunynstraße, und endet mit der Geburt eines Kindes—die Mutter ist türkische Arbeiterin und wohnt im gleichen Hause." Exposé, 12.6.1974, Friedrich W. Zimmermann private archive (hereafter referred to as Zimmermann private archive). As of next year, the documents are planned to be accessible to public in the Aras Ören Archive at the Akademie der Künste (Academy of the Arts), under the section "Sammlung zum Archiv: Friedrich W. Zimmermann."

<sup>55</sup> "Die [d]eutschen Nachbarn sind zu Randfiguren geworden; ihre Veränderung wird am Anfang des Films deutlich—sie räumen den Platz. Eine neue Generation füllt die Lücke." Zimmermann private archive.

<sup>56</sup> Friedrich Zimmermann confirms such concern: "Der Titel war deswegen gewählt, weil die Protagonistin war Frau Kutzer, und ich musste -oder wir mussten- für das Publikum ein deutschen Aufhänger haben. Also Türken in der

that this decision was not likely made by the SFB network itself. Furthermore, the centrality of Frau Kutzer is furthermore not exclusive to the television film but is also prevalent in Ören's poetry-cycle. Although the film was promoted as an "Eigenproduktion" (in-house production) of the SFB, Friedrich Zimmermann notes that SFB's involvement in the production process itself was minimal for both films (Zimmermann 2020). Zimmermann maintains that while SFB was responsible for the films' funding—including the honorary calculations for its permanent staff, cameramen Horst Kandeler and Dieter Hoffmann, and editors Annette Dietrich and Lothar Kompatzki—he and Ören made final decisions about the production including casting, screenplay, and intermedial experiments in the filming process (Zimmermann 2020).

In addition, the title of the film *Frau Kutzer und andere Bewohner der Naunynstraße* is directly taken from Ören's working title of *Niyazi* in his draft dated from January 1972, which was *Bayan Kutzer'in Can Sıkıntısı, Naunyn Sokağı ve Naunyn Sokağından Sesler* (Ms. Kutzer's Boredom, Naunyn Street, and the Voices from Naunyn Street, Aras-Ören-Archive). The working title in Turkish reflects Ören's idea of forming the narrative structure of the first book primarily around the life of Frau Kutzer, regardless of an intended German-speaking audience, and even before *Niyazi*'s publication. This means that the story (as well as the perspective) of Frau Kutzer works as a fundamental reference to the historical trajectory of the working-class in West Germany prior to postwar labor migration. The end of *Niyazi* thus gives way to social change and resistance through Niyazi's and other characters' inclusion in the narrative. This historical trajectory is significant because Ören wrote *Niyazi* as events in Kreuzberg and its community

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Zeit gab es eigentlich nicht. Die lebten in Kreuzberg. Man sprach nicht über die Türken .... Also mussten wir einen Titel finden, der sowas einer das deutsche Publikum anspricht. Und das war 'Frau Kutzer und die Bewohner der Naunynstraße.'" (Zimmermann 2020) "The title was chosen because the protagonist was Ms. "Kutzer, and I had to - we had to- hook the German audience. There weren't really any Turkish people [on television] at the time. They were living in Kreuzberg. No one talked about Turkish people ... Therefore, we had to find a title that appeals to German audience. And that was 'Ms. Kutzer and other inhabitants of Naunynstraße.'" "

unfolded. Referring to his Berlin poetry-cycle in his 2019 collected edition, *Berliner Trilogie*, Ören stated: “The present is also the past.”<sup>57</sup> Throughout Ören’s writing process, the narrative’s time often intersects with the time and history from which he writes, which also mostly correspond to the time of the filming. In Zimmerman’s terms, this renders the television films “time documents” (Zeitdokument). Thus, the ethos of documenting Kreuzberg in its present moment—both in written and visual form—reflects an attempt to survey its history of social inequality and its struggle for social justice from the perspective of a “now.”

### **1.3 Documentation of everyday life: Kreuzberg in docudrama**

A documentary-drama film like *Niyazi* had never been aired on West German television before. This is not only due to its focus on everyday life in Kreuzberg and its narrative basis in Ören’s poems, but it is also due to decision-making processes around “film subsidy on the federal and regional level” including the television industry: “[t]he criteria for selection and funding ... have often been conditioned by a limited focus on the problems of integration” (Göktürk 2002, 250). As Göktürk argues, these “[s]ubsidy schemes fostered a ghetto culture which went to great lengths to propagate integration, but seldom achieved popularity” (250; Göktürk 2000).

With limited financial resources from SFB’s Third Program, *Frau Kutzer* and *Kazım Akkaya* remain rare experimental examples of documentary-dramas that also make the cultural ghettoization of cinema in the market visible. At the same time, their multiple screenings at SFB and later WDR (Aras-Ören-Archive), as well as requests for screenings and adaptations from

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<sup>57</sup> “Gegenwart ist auch Vergangenheit.”

various associations, events, radio programs and theatres within and beyond West Germany,<sup>58</sup> reflect another shared aesthetic understanding about the ways in which the meaning and value of life could be rewritten after the period of labor migration to West Germany and other western European countries. In short, Zimmermann and Ören manage to establish a network between people with similar interests, thus enabling them to take part in other projects. Zimmermann continued making documentary films at Westdeutscher Rundfunk, while Ören worked as an editor at SFB's Türkische Redaktion (Turkish Programming), and took a major role in the Swedish-Turkish production *Otobüs* (Bus, 1974) with the well-known Turkish actor Tuncel Kurtiz, who later played the role of Kazım in *Kazım Akkaya*. The relations that Zimmermann and Ören established with multiple communities through the productions of *Frau Kutzer* and *Kazım Akkaya* go hand in hand with the relations they have established through the films between the present and a shared past: they speak about Naunynstraße in a framework of its entire history of immigration, which dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century Prussia. To do so, the films reveal a tradition of labor migration and of the everyday life of immigrant working class by focusing on an important architectural phenomenon in Kreuzberg as well as neighborhoods across Germany: the tenement.

### ***1.3.1 A history of documented relations: The tenement***

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<sup>58</sup> Some examples for the interest can be traced in the requests by letters: I. A. K. Strehler writes in a letter from Zürich on November 25<sup>th</sup>, 1973: "Wir haben erfahren, dass in der Berliner Werkstatt des SFB ein Film über Ihr Poem gedreht wurde. ... wir möchten diesen Film gerne 2-3 Tage hier in Zürich haben, um unser eben erst gegründetes Türkei-Komitee zu propagieren." "We learned that a film about your poem was made in the SFB's Berlin workshop. ... We would like to have this film here in Zurich for 2-3 days to promote our recently founded Turkey Committee." On April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1975, Klaus Pierwoß from State Theater Württemberg-Hohenzollern Dramaturgy department invites Ören for a discussion following the screening of *Frau Kutzer* at Arsenal-Cinema Tübingen on June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1973. Also in a letter from SFB to Rotbuch Publishing on December 11<sup>th</sup>, 1986, it is indicated that *Kazım Akkaya* will be part of the program of 750-Jahr-Feier der Stadt Berlin (750-year celebration of the city of Berlin, Aras-Ören-Archive)

Zimmermann documents one of the most significant facts about Kreuzberg's hypervisibility as a ghetto in the beginning of both films: the neighborhood's condemnation as a slum area and the resulting demolition work. *Frau Kutzer* begins with a sudden shattering moment of an empty rental tenement's window facing Naunynstraße, which is evacuated for demolition (Sanierbauten). The noise of the broken glass is followed by many others in the next frame, featuring children in the courtyard who throw stones at the already worn wing of the abandoned building as part of their play. Only a couple of years later, the beginning of *Kazım Akkaya* features an oscillating wrecking ball in the midst of a tenement's demolition. This time, the same kind of tenement that children used as a playground was transformed into a major construction site. The tenements in the beginning of both films hint at a continuous process of destruction that gradually intensifies and proliferates everywhere in Kreuzberg. In a letter to *Kutzer's* editor Anette Dietrich, which Zimmermann attaches to his correspondence with Aras Ören on September 16th, 1974, Zimmermann demands that the impact of the second film's opening must be "furious" in order to draw the audience's attention right from the beginning (Aras-Ören-Archive).<sup>59</sup> He describes the same scene in the epilog as filmed from afar, when the building goes down slowly. Such scenes of destruction set up the change in tone in *Kazım Akkaya*, where the destruction of the place of living will have devastating impacts on life and everyday experience in Naunynstraße.

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<sup>59</sup> "Auch der zweite Teil des Films ... beginnt mit einem furiosen Opening ... Vielleicht wieder einer eingeschmissenen Scheibe—diesmal ist sie etwas größer, eine Schaufensterscheibe mit den Schriftzügen des türkischen Konsulats—oder, wenn's wegen der Signalwirkung zu politisch sein sollte, mit einem anderen Action-opening. Auf jeden Fall soll mit einem filmischen ... Auftrakt begonnen werden, um das Interesse der Zuschauer von vornherein an dem Film zu wecken. Spannung in den ersten Sekunden..." "The second part of the film ... also begins with a furious opening... Maybe again a broken window—this time it's a bit bigger, a shop window with the lettering of the Turkish consulate—or, if it should be too political because of the signal effect, with another action-opening. In any case, the film should start with a cinematic ... task to arouse the viewer's interest in the film from the outset. Tension in the first seconds..."

In his films, Zimmermann links the history of Naunynstraße directly with the history of the tenement, or *Mietskasernen*,<sup>60</sup> the construction of which dates to 1862.<sup>61</sup> Named after Franz Naunyn, who served as mayor of Berlin from 1848 to 1850, the naming of Naunynstraße dates back to this same time period (1864). Moreover, Franz Naunyn's mayorship corresponds to the time in which Frau Kutzer's family migrated from East Prussia as a result of industrialization and "competitive capitalism" (Konkurrenzkapitalismus, Ören 1973, 13). The largest share of tenements in Berlin belonged to the Kreuzberg district (Ladd 107), which became a solution for accommodating the rapidly rising numbers of laborers in expanding urban areas due to the industrial demands for a cheap labor force.

Through the evacuation of Frau Kutzer's house after her death and her immediate replacement with Ismail and his family, Zimmermann demonstrates that the struggle over housing also stands for a struggle for life, and hence, for a form of class struggle, almost 100 years after the construction of the tenements. After the recruitment halt in 1973, Kreuzberg became once again a redevelopment area and the target of the so-called "Kahlschlag-sanierung"

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<sup>60</sup> The term *Mietskaserne* that Hobrecht also used himself can be translated as 'rental barrack,' featuring the tenement's architectural kinship to Prussian residential military block (Ladd 100) with a capacity to house more than a hundred residents. *Mietskaserne* later became a pejorative word to underscore the landlords' exploitative measures on residents. This included units being rented for shorter periods of six months to several workers and their families at once, which led to overcrowding of shared facilities including night lodgers for beds appropriated to the workers' shifts, unsanitary conditions such as poor air circulation and lighting (FHXB Museum, Berlin; hereafter referred to as FHXB), and mandatory population decline due to the lack of space for newborns. (160). Moreover, short-term tenants of the newly constructed tenements were called 'dry residents' due to their so-called share in drying out the mortar with their breaths, which was an alternative to homelessness (FHXB).

<sup>61</sup> Proper to state regulations for the specific height of the apartments and the minimum size of their inner courtyards under the Prussian Building Code of 1853, the first rental tenement block was proposed in 1862 by James Hobrecht (FHXB; 400-402). It was a regulatory design for a five-storey building type with only one massive ornamented façade facing the street, having a "narrow courtyard, enclosed often on all four sides by additional wings of the building" with small passageways to the courtyards of other rental tenements (Ladd 101). Derivations of Hobrecht's model were later included in other urban development plans for cities with growing industrial demands such as Leipzig, Dresden, Cologne, and Vienna (Bernet 2004, 404).

Tenements in Berlin were mostly privately owned, and the owners often had total control over the rental rates in favor of maximizing profits (Scheffler 2012, 158). This resulted in rent speculation, where most working-class residents could afford units facing the courtyards at best to be shared with multiple individuals, while manufacturers resided in the street fronts.

process (Rudolph 2022)—a term often used to describe Kreuzberg’s radical, inconsiderate maintenance renovation period.<sup>62</sup> This was regardless of the fact that the postwar tenements still housed the majority of immigrant families for over a decade. Zimmermann claims that this was precisely the reason why he wanted to show such an increase in the processes of demolition in the midst of a living neighborhood, especially in his second film (2019). The question of the place of living, in turn, became directly a matter of life and death in his Kreuzberg films—politically, socially, as well as biologically.

Both Zimmermann and Ören’s depictions of Kreuzberg tenements are part of a much longer tradition with respect of the documentation of everyday life in Berlin: social critique of inhospitable living conditions and the architecture of rental barracks was historically significant for many artists, journalists and philosophers even decades after their construction.<sup>63</sup> The illustrator, lithographer and photographer Heinrich Zille’s famous statement about the deadliness of the apartments in Berlin’s working-class districts summarizes this consistently harmful relation between human life and the living space:

‘You can kill a person with an apartment just as well with an ax!’ horrid and dark courtyards, stinking garbage cans, silent morgues for the ‘aborted’ ones and newborns—

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<sup>62</sup> The process included the scandalous construction process of Neues Kreuzberger Zentrum (New Kreuzberg Center, NKZ) from 1969 to 1974 as a mass residential building with a total of 367 apartments (FHXB). The vision for Kahlschlagsanierung itself came from the idea of demolishing the “ineffective” postwar ruins in Kreuzberg to the ground, and replanning the neighborhood from scratch, including the construction of modern structures, best exemplified by an early and rare Axel-Springer-Hochhaus, which was built in 1961.

<sup>63</sup> Walter Benjamin dedicated an entire episode of his radio broadcasts about Berlin exclusively to the city’s rental tenements, entitled “Die Mietskasernen” on April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1930. Benjamin talks in this broadcast about the development plan of Berlin in 1858 as a “calamity” (Unglück), which led to the proposal of the architectural model of the tenement (120). He also praises the city planner and writer Werner Hegemann among people “who led the liberation struggle against the old fortress-like, dark barracks city,” with a mention to his historical critique of the tenements entitled *Das steinernde Berlin: die größte mietskasernenstadt der Welt* (The Stony Berlin: History of the Largest Tenement City in the World, 1930), published the same year as the broadcast (Benjamin 123-124). Moreover, a year after Benjamin invites the audience to Ackerstraße 132 to look at the building complex Der Meyerische Hof (Meyer Hof) as the epitome of Berlin’s working-class tenements with thousands of inhabitants, the painter and photographer László Moholy-Nagy captured it in his short documentary film *Berliner Stilleben* (Berlin Still Life, 1926) with a focus on the many uses of its interconnected courtyards: as a coop, playground, and dump site (Eisenschmidt 2010, 263).



this is how the life-film of thousands develops. A world of its own—that one fights—but does not cure! (Zille, in Ostwald 1929, 104-106).<sup>64</sup>

Zille defines tenements as deadly weapons due to their detrimental sanitary conditions even before any studies had been done on them (ZHXB). His historicization of working-class everyday life together with other writers and film makers generated a documentary impulse similar to the aesthetic tradition of New Objectivity (Neue Sachlichkeit) in the Weimar era.<sup>65</sup> Zimmermann's particular documentation of Kreuzberg's transformation in both architectural and social terms serves as a contemporary commentary to this shared aesthetic tradition from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Zimmermann's documentary-dramas on Kreuzberg resonate particularly strongly with Zille's illustrations of the social milieu of the working class.<sup>66</sup> Film critic Inge Bongers underlines this relationship in her review of *Kazım Akkaya*: "Zille's milieu has been colored anew; and very slowly, after almost ten years, with 30,000 guest workers in a single district, this penetrates into the consciousness of neighbors, the fellow human beings, and the authorities" (1975).<sup>67</sup> In giving the example of children as non-actors playing in one of the courtyards presented in the film, Göktürk states what has changed in Zimmermann's more contemporary take on Kreuzberg: "What is new in *Frau Kutzer* is that these children are speaking a mix of Turkish and German. They are digging up the asphalt ground, peeling off

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<sup>64</sup> "Man kann mit einer Wohnung einen Menschen genauso gut töten, wie mit einer Axt! Garstige finstere Höfe, stinkende Müllkästen, die verschwiegenen Leichenhallen für 'Abgetriebene' und Neugeborene. Unter Schlafleuten und Absteigemädchen—so entwickelt sich der Lebensfilm Abertausender. Eine Welt für sich—die man bekämpft—aber nicht heilt!"

<sup>65</sup> Zille's everyday patterns of the working-class life were later portrayed by the filmmaker Gerhard Lamprecht and the journalist Hans Ostwald in collaboration with him through their works of documentary narratives, such as the documentary film *Die Verrufenen* (The Slums of Berlin, 1925) and the book of social critique with biographical notes, entitled *Das Zillebuch* (The Zille Book, 1929), respectively.

<sup>66</sup> Zille's books of illustrations such as *Mein Milljöh: Neue Bilder aus dem Berliner Leben* (My Milieu: New Images from the Life of Berliners, 2000 [1913]) documented the everyday life in Berlin's working-class districts as early as the first decades of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Zille's depictions of life in the tenements were integral to the social milieu he referred to as *Milljöh*—the vernacular rendering of the French word "milieu," which, as Amanda Brian argues, "suggested the lived environment of the locality." (Brian 2013, 35)

<sup>67</sup> "Zilles Milieu hat eine neue Färbung; und ganz langsam, nach bald zehn Jahren 30.000 Gastarbeitern in einem einzigen Bezirk, dringt dies auch ins Bewußtsein der Nachbarn, der Mitmenschen, der Behörden."

layers of the old city fabric and uncovering the soil beneath the built environment” (Göktürk 2021, 612).

With Zimmermann’s depictions of the more “current” everyday life in Kreuzberg, what he and Zille share in common is politically significant: these experiences do not only consist of negative ones, such as the detrimental conditions of housing, overcrowding, and the exploitative measures of the state and the industry. “The everyday” encapsulates rather every single aspect of life in Kreuzberg communities: sickness, birth, death, work, despair, hope, free time, entertainment, education, solidarity, and struggle.<sup>68</sup> This is not to undermine the severity of the bad living conditions; rather, it is to render rather a more wholistic view of the realities of human life. As we read in Göktürk’s analysis of *Frau Kutzer*, in Zimmermann and Ören’s aesthetic collaboration, “[t]he focus is on shared experiences ... of natives and migrants, driven by curiosity, even in instances of resentment and violence” (2021, 608). Zimmermann and Ören’s outlook on everyday activities and emotions is in itself also a political act: they deliberately refrain from a reductionist view of defining life only from the perspective of production relations, in which the subjects are only seen as means for exploitation. In contrast, they provide a larger framework for life that is defined by many diverse individual experiences and social interactions that shape it: this includes the inhabitant’s life in the tenement, at the workplace, and in the pub; and in case of Ören’s narratives, also experiences in Turkey, including their time in

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<sup>68</sup> For example, the writer and editor of the *Zillebuch* Hans Ostwald especially underlines Zille’s humor as a significant aspect of his critique when he portrays the financial and social difficulties of living in Kreuzberg, maintaining that Zille shows “the people” and “the environment in their best and often amusing appearance (Ostwald 176, quoted in Brian 35).

the immigrant laborer recruitment center in İstanbul, in villages in Anatolia, in their childhood, and during the phenomenon of internal migration from rural to urban centers.<sup>69</sup>

The factual data used in the film is often mixed with renderings of literary narrations in the films, whose genre Zimmermann categorizes as a “documentary-drama” (Dokudrama, Zimmermann 2020), or a combination of documentary and drama play. In this respect, the films are not strictly “adaptations of literature” (Literaturverfilmung). Documentation of the lives of the Kreuzberg inhabitants often accompany the recitation of the narratives in the poems: “We wanted to take the template, the dramaturgical template from literature, in order to adapt it to today’s situation, to make it intelligible” (Zimmermann 2020).<sup>70</sup> The state television service the Third Program (Das dritte Programm) of SFB was a convenient platform for such experimentation because the program specialized in “art and culture” with no obligations to fulfill the 24-hours of broadcasting time (Zimmermann 2020). As a result of this, SFB could offer particular funding for film directors who worked with unconventional forms and new content for television that don’t necessarily comply with the expectations of viewers who also followed “The First” and “The Second” national public television services.<sup>71</sup> At the same time, the rising interest in some state broadcasters such as Bayerische Rundfunk (Bavarian Broadcasting, BR) and Westdeutscher Rundfunk Köln (West German Broadcasting Cologne,

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<sup>69</sup> Although I focus exclusively on Zimmermann’s television films in this chapter, Ören’s kinship to other aesthetic traditions such as the poem genre in Nazım Hikmet and the implications of Brechtian epic theatre in the context of Turkey, with figures such as Genco Erkal and Vasıf Öngören should also be mentioned. For an in-depth analysis of these transnational aesthetic relations, see Gezen, “Convergent Realisms: Aras Ören, Nazım Hikmet and Bertolt Brecht” (2012), and *Brecht, Turkish Theater, and Turkish-German Literature: Reception, Adaptation and Innovation after 1960* (2018).

<sup>70</sup> “Wir wollten die Vorlage, die dramaturgische Vorlage aus der Literatur nehmen um sie auf heutige Zeit also auf die Situation anzupassen, verständlich zu machen.”

<sup>71</sup> “The First” (Das Erste) national public television service in West Germany is still called today as ARD (Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, standing for “Working group of the public broadcasters of the Federal Republic of Germany”), and “The Second” is still called as ZDF (Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen).

WDR) in including exclusive programs for guest workers and immigrants in the framework of “Gastarbeiterprogramm” (guest worker programs) in Greek, Italian, Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian, and Turkish, reinforced a further demand for informative content about the lives of immigrants for a broader viewership.

### ***1.3.2 Naunynstraße: A visual experiment***

Zimmermann’s inclusion of documentary elements is similar to that of a newsreel. This enabled him to directly challenge current convictions about Kreuzberg, which was rarely presented in national television to begin with. For its time, his film was an exception in terms of content (Zimmermann 2020), and therefore, he and Ören had the responsibility to rewrite popularly held beliefs from scratch. The ability to use Kreuzberg as a setting also helped Zimmermann in his journalistic presentation of everyday events in the neighborhood *as they happened*. For example, he could place the fictional characters Atifet, Niyazi and Horst under the banner carried by the actual participants of the May 1<sup>st</sup> demonstration in 1973.<sup>72</sup> Meanwhile, he appeared in his actual job as a journalist, who could ask the spectators on the roadside their opinions about the participation of the immigrant workers in the demonstration: “What do you think of the foreign workers demonstrating here?”<sup>73</sup> and “Why don’t you march along?” (*Frau Kutzer*).<sup>74</sup>

It is noteworthy to mention here again that Zimmermann had already been reporting about guest workers in SFB’s youth radio as a freelance journalist. In both films he makes use of his role at SFB as part of his experiment in integrating his journalism into Ören’s literary

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<sup>72</sup> *Frau Kutzer*’s screenplay and the director’s notebook (1974), Zimmermann private archive.

<sup>73</sup> “Was halten Sie davon, daß Ausländische Arbeitsnehmer hier demonstrieren?” The question was formulated in the screenplay differently: “Was halten Sie davon, daß auch Türken hier mitdemonstrieren?” “What do you think about the fact that the Turks also demonstrate here?”

<sup>74</sup> “Warum marschieren Sie hier nicht mit?”

presentation of Kreuzberg. The title of the sequel *Kazım Akkaya* alone attests to how Zimmermann holds the character Kazım’s fictional interviews as significant and central for the production. Kazım’s scripted reflections on the changes in his own life as an immigrant worker in West Germany appeared in both films, and Zimmermann performed both interviews himself. He even made use of the red press bus with SFB’s emblem on it as the camera team entered the major construction site to film the interview. However, the films were not the only media for bringing the two modes of telling in contact. Ören was doing similar work in his poetry by bringing forth the life story of the Naunynstraße inhabitant Kazım Akkaya in form of a social reportage.

Friedrich W. Zimmermann—or Fritz Zimmermann—is also one of the characters in Ören’s poetry-cycle; he interviews Kazım Akkaya about his life in West Germany as a television reporter.<sup>75</sup> In Göktürk’s interpretation, this “intermedial referentiality” in Ören’s poem shows how the film “factored into [the literary text] from the outset in a collaborative production, acutely aware of the poetics and politics of voice, performance, and (re)presentation” (2021, 609). The first interview appeared in *Niyazi*, in which Kazım talks in detail about how he had to immigrate as a worker to West Germany due the economic recession in Turkey. His narrative is one of success and pride, in which he especially emphasizes how he became the “favorite”<sup>76</sup> of his foreman after working under a construction company for three months in West Berlin (Ören 1973, 32). As the hopeful tone of *Niyazi* diminishes in the following books, Kazım’s tone also

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<sup>75</sup> The introductory passage of Kazım Akkaya’s story in the first book of Ören’s Berlin trilogy is as follows: “In einer Reportage des Fernsehreporters Fritz Zimmermann hat Kázim Akkaya sich selbst so bekannt gemacht.” (*Niyazi*, 32) “In an interview by the television reporter Fritz Zimmermann, Kazım Akkaya has made himself well-known.” The follow-up interview takes place in the following book *Kâğıthane*, where it was introduced to the reader as such: “Hinterher in einer Reportage des Fernsehreporters Friedrich Zimmermann, erklärte, was geschehen war, Kazım Akkaya so” (*Kâğıthane*, 24) “After a report by the television reporter Friedrich Zimmermann, Kazım Akkaya explained what had happened”

<sup>76</sup> “Liebling des Meisters”

becomes more desperate about his living conditions in his follow-up interview in *Kâğıthane*. The character Fritz Zimmermann asks Kazım again about his life only one year after the previous interview,<sup>77</sup> to which Kazım responds: “And then, as Winter was around the corner / it meant that / my work was over. You are a fine worker, / but we don’t need you anymore, / they said. / They pressed the documents in my hand”<sup>78</sup> (Ören 1974, 29). As part of Ören’s fiction, the character Kazım is emblematic in reflecting the changing patterns of social relations and sensibilities and in Naunynstraße.

Gezen’s analysis of Ören’s engagement with Bertolt Brecht in using reportage as a narrative technique also helps us think through Zimmermann’s relation to Ören in his journalistic interpretation of the Berlin poems: “Ören’s allusions to and use of reportage, like those of Brecht, emphasize the factual over the empathic” (2018, 62). Reportage, or a total news coverage of an event with uses of interviews, comments, and statistics, is fundamentally instructional; it marks the distance between the reporter and their subjects. This way, the audience is never able to assimilate their experience in the informed experience, but instead, becomes detached from it in a position of an observer. The literary use of such technique brings about a sense of uneasiness on part of the implied audience, who cannot be fully and emotionally absorbed in the content that they are presented. This estranged relation of the audience to the factual material brings about an alienation effect (*Verfremdungseffekt*) that Brecht describes as such: “The artist’s object is to appear strange and even surprising to the audience. He achieves this by looking strangely at himself and his work. ... Everyday things are thereby raised above to the obvious and automatic”

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<sup>77</sup> “Als ich Sie im letzten Jahr interviewte, da waren Sie der Liebling des Meisters. Jetzt sind sie arbeitslos, wie kam das?” “When I interviewed you last year, you were your foreman’s favorite. Now you are unemployed, how did that come about?”

<sup>78</sup> “Und dann, als der Winter / vor der Tür stand, hieß es, / mir der Arbeit ists vorbei. / Bist ein guter Arbeiter, / aber wir brauchen dich nicht mehr, / sagten sie. / Sie drückten mir die Papiere in die Hand.”

(Brecht 1964 [1936], 92). In this framework, Ören uses the tools of journalism to defamiliarize the reader from Kreuzberg's popular perception in politics and media, and hereby reframes the everyday life in the neighborhood from the perspective of its inhabitants as new knowledge.

Some instances from Ören's personal life in Kreuzberg are also included in this reframing, such as when he mentions his actual friends and colleagues Johannes Schenk<sup>79</sup> and Natascha Ungeheuer as characters in the poem "Vorführung auf dem Heinrich-Platz" (Performance on Heinrich Square, Ören 1974, 11-14). The character Natascha exhibits her oil paintings about the lives of immigrant workers on the square, while the character Johannes puts a play on stage about "Mehmet aus Anatolien" (Mehmet from Anatolia, *Kazım Akkaya*) in his Kreuzberger Straßentheater (Kreuzberg Street Theatre) as a writer and performer. Ören depicts multiple reactions to these exhibitions on the street, including two Turkish workers who are surprised by the "strangely dressed and masked" actor as he "speak[s] of them in a foreign language,"<sup>80</sup> and the German drunkard who talks down to the artists by accusing them of being communists (Ören 1974, 12). The same reactions of the passersby are also included in the film *Kazım Akkaya* as the actual street performance of the play occurs. In the book, the speaker's role is to show these everyday instances rather than to comment on them; in the film, actors perform the entire sequence in mere dialogues, without being interrupted by the mediation of the speaker. This particular realist aesthetic from the underrepresented perspectives is also mentioned by Gezen, who defines Ören's particular realism as "a political aesthetic, rather than a single determinate literary style or genre; as such it seeks to unmask social conditions from the standpoint of the working class, considered the agent of societal change" (2012, 369). Ören's

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<sup>79</sup> Along with H. Achmed Schmiede, Johannes Schenk is also the translator of Ören's *Niyazi*.

<sup>80</sup> "Zwei türkische Arbeiter deuten im Vorübergehen / auf die Schauspieler, / seltsam gekleidet und maskiert, / die in einer fremden Sprache / von ihnen reden."

simple display of all the conflicting reactions in the public space of the square alone creates a dialectical tension: in their role as observers, the readers are able to follow the seemingly trivial formations of public opinions to their every single detail, as well as think about their possible transformations in the future. This kinship between Ören and Zimmermann's works on Kreuzberg in form of a reportage, and those of the artists who participated in the festival, indicates a shared realist aesthetics in the Kreuzberg artist circle of the 1970s. In this context, realism can only be achieved through inhabitants' descriptions of their own social problems, instead of a portrayal of social problems in an imagined ghetto according to the state authorities.

In order to address these issues from the perspective of workers and immigrants, Ören placed many newspaper clippings among the pages of his drafts of Berlin poems about these communities in West Berlin, Kreuzberg workers, and the consequences of the economic recession in Turkey; their subject matter ranges from the unemployment of poor copper tanners in the city of Isparta, to the foundation of Aid Association of Turkish Tenants in West Berlin (Aras Ören Archive, Academy of the Arts). Later, Ören's interests in narrating events in a journalistic framework later also enabled him to gain a position as editor at SFB. In 1974, Ören was recruited to Turkish Programming (Türkische Redaktion) at the radio broadcast with Engin Özgüç due to Zimmermann's recommendation, following their artistic and editorial collaboration in *Frau Kutzer* (Zimmermann 2020).<sup>81</sup> Turkish Programming consisted of news coverage from Turkey and West Germany, introductions to and readings of, literary works on and/or by Turkish immigrants, as well as information sessions about particular laws and regulations regarding immigrant workers and their families. There, Ören continued his literary endeavors in relation to

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<sup>81</sup> Following the so-called "Gastarbeiter" programs addressed to immigrants in BR and WDR, Turkish Programming at SFB started on May 6, 1974 along with Yugoslav Programming, both of which were the first broadcasts in a language other than German in Berlin (Aras-Ören-Archive).



his and Özgüç's presentation of news content. The program also included Ören's serial radio play *İçimizden İki Kişi: Gülseren'le Behçet / Zwei Unter Uns: Gülseren und Behçet* (Two Among Us: Gülseren and Behçet) which takes on the adult lives of Halime's children Gülseren and Behçet from the Berlin poems (Aras-Ören-Archive). Since Ören understands life as politically embedded in everyday social relations and societal change, he also sees the necessity in presenting it both as a documentation and a dramatization in his aesthetics.

Zimmermann, as a journalist and filmmaker, also valued the aesthetic amalgamation of these two modes of representation in his cinema.<sup>82</sup> In *Frau Kutzer* and *Kazım Akkaya*, he similarly foregrounds reportage not only to narrate, but also to document and inform the audience in his use of visual and auditory possibilities of cinematic montage technique. The scenes are often combined with the fragmentary display of archival documents such as KPD and SPD election posters from the Weimar Republic, photographs of factory workers, worker demonstrations, Rosa Luxemburg's speech at the International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart in 1907, Karl Liebknecht's 1911 speech at the demonstrations in Berlin, photographs and documentary film snippets showing districts from İstanbul and Berlin, and music excerpts such as Johann Strauss II's "An der schönen blauen Donau" (The Blue Danube), Turkish folk songs such as "Haydar Haydar," and recent popular Turkish songs from the 1970s such as "Ben bir Köylü Kızıyım" (I am a country girl) by Ajda Pekkan. Such collage of historical, and timely, visual, and auditory documents evokes a presentational—rather than representational—journalistic distance in Zimmermann's position as a filmmaker. In his position, however, he shows, rather than tells. Zimmermann's journalistic attitude in the film does not equal to

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<sup>82</sup> Zimmermann also made further television and radio productions in form of social reportage, including his collaboration with Wolfgang Landgraeber on Namibian diamond industry: "100 Millionen Karat: Die Diamantendynastie Oppenheimer." (Landgraeber and Zimmermann 2006) "100 Million Carats: The Oppenheimer Diamond Industry."

journalism because he transforms the tradition of social reportage by mixing the documents with narratives in a lyrical form—as written and told by Ören—rather than with reports about events or phenomena.

Zimmermann's montages, as well as his role as a television reporter combines with his documentary style based on his presentation of factual data. His interviews in the film include scripted ones such as Kazım Akkaya, taken from Ören's poem, and another one with the character İsmail and his wife,<sup>83</sup> dealing with their move-in to Frau Kutzer's apartment, which was exclusively written as an interview for the film, and does not exist in Ören's poems. Zimmermann also adds real-life interviews that would blend in the films' narrative adaptations, such as when the non-actors were watching the demonstration on the sideroad, as mentioned earlier, or when Zimmermann asks the opinions of non-immigrant workers about their Turkish colleagues at a construction site. These interviews are often montaged with factual press releases, official statistics reports, and news coverage taken from a variety of primary sources, including quotes from the Liberal-Democratic Party in Germany (LPD) senate committee and press releases of the federal government. For example, the speaker starts reporting the following recent statistical data and Berliner Senate's decisions in 1974, right before the character Fritz Zimmermann interviews İsmail in the backyard of Frau Kutzer's former apartment:

According to a study, the housing situation of foreigners has not changed significantly after 1968. 68% of the respondents had a toilet, 24% a bathroom and 10% central heating in their apartment. Further, it is also possible to pursue the redevelopment areas as close as possible to the wall, especially Kreuzberg and Wedding. Nevertheless, such development was interrupted by the moving restriction based on nationality decided by the Berlin Senate in October 1974. (*Kazım Akkaya*)<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> The reportage with İsmail's wife was later not included in the filming process due to the limitations on the film's length (Zimmermann 2020).

<sup>84</sup> "Wie aus einer Untersuchung hervorgeht, hat sich die Wohnungssituation der Ausländer seit 1968 nicht wesentlich verändert. 68% der Befragten hatten ein WC, 24% ein Bad, und 10% eine Zentralheizung in ihrer

What Zimmermann as director does here is bring forth Ören's challenge against the recently re-popularized genre of social reportage of the 1960s. The prominent figures of the German New Left in literature such as Max von der Grün and Günter Wallraff often resorted to social reportage for their critique of the living and working conditions of immigrant laborers (Wise 1995, 42). The genre's popularity in the 1970s as well as the following decade is apparent in Arlene Akiko Teraoka's comparative analysis of Max von der Grün's *Leben im gelobten Land* (Life in the Promised Land, 1975), Günter Wallraff's *Ganz Unten* (Lowest of the Low, 1985), and Paul Geiersbach's *Bruder, muss zusammen Zwiebel und Wasser essen!* (Brother, must eat onion and water together! 1982). Teraoka critically approaches each of their common "privileged access to the Turkish experience" and looks at the ways in which they differ in their "models of encounter with the Turkish Other" (126). The author's degree of being attentive to their own position eventually leads them to either take on a problematic sense of entitlement in their methods or choose to critically reckon with their privilege. In most cases, they prefer to do the former by writing with an "assumption that foreigners were incapable of speaking for themselves" (Wise, 44). On the other hand, works by authors like Aras Ören articulated experiences in communities they lived in, and thus simultaneously challenged the tailored, and often popular, narratives about them. In response to his privileged position among the co-workers at SFB with no migration background, Zimmermann chooses to take on the role of a listener rather than a commentator in his fictional reportage with Kazım Akkaya—exactly as Ören portrays the character Fritz Zimmermann in his Berlin poems. He refrains from providing

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Wohnung. Weiter lässt sich verfolgen möglichst die Sanierungsgebiete in die Nähe der Mauer, insbesondere Kreuzberg und Wedding zu ziehen. Diese Entwicklung wurde jedoch durch die im Oktober 1974 vom Berliner Senat beschlossene Zuzugssperre unterbrochen."

any additional commentary, but instead expects the audience to make sense of his presentation of facts through the montaged documents in relation to the scripted scenes.

When Niyazi and Horst are headed to the union in the epilogue scene of *Frau Kutzer*, this technique becomes particularly evident. As they have a conversation about Kazım Akkaya's unjust situation and the "thousands like him," they start walking through Naunynstraße towards Oranienplatz, and the perspective of the camera shows a gradually wider landscape by moving farther and farther away from the street. This last wide angle shot before they arrive at the union emphasizes again the immediacy of the place of living to life, an association which first and foremost necessitates solidarity in the neighborhood to be maintained. Specific to Naunynstraße inhabitants, the streets and houses that they live in are also historically made by them: when Niyazi und Horst disappear from the camera's view, the speaker recites the following lines in the voice-over: "What kind of people were they, who built such / streets, such houses, / where only new walls come from old ones" (*Kazım Akkaya*).<sup>85</sup> While the first film sets up the groundwork for Kazım's narrative in the coming film with these words, it also demonstrates the idea that to fight for a neighborhood is to fight a claim for a life of one's own.

### **Conclusion: Claiming life in claiming the place of living**

In the sequel film *Kazım Akkaya*, the last scene before the epilogue features a hospital nursery in which newborns are crying. The camera pans again, and this time, goes from crib to crib, or from baby to baby. The voice-over in the background states:

You know, people  
should live their lives  
with their own senses,

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<sup>85</sup> "Was für Leute waren das, die solche / Straßen bauen, solche Häuser, / Wo aus den Mauern immer nur neue Mauern kommen"

with their own wishes.  
Everything else is  
like walking with unfamiliar feet  
like kissing with unfamiliar lips.  
We are people with two lives,  
and the worst is, we don't know,  
which one we actually belong to.<sup>86</sup> (*Kazım Akkaya*)

In focusing on the bodies of the newborn, Zimmermann gestures toward lives that are yet to be lived. The babies lay side by side, with no parents beside them, no information about where they come from or in which place they will end up in the future. The only common denominator is that they all happen to be in the same place at the same time. The end of the film's narrative indicates the zero point of a person's history, where all members are even and equal right before suffering comes down upon them, depending on the context in which each will be raised. Hence, the newborns carry a potential in themselves to live their own lives 'with their own senses and wishes' by claiming responsibility for the place they dwell in, and claiming responsibility for the life they have through struggle and solidarity. Any feeling of strangeness, foreignness, or unfamiliarity that can be associated with the adjective *fremd* in the poem would be evoked in them only when they are denied such acceptance.

On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1998, decades after the films were made and almost a decade after the reunification of Germany, the term ghetto was still a popularly used term for denying the assumed ways in which immigrant communities live in Germany with respect to the popular integration debates in politics and media. Berlin's Senator for the Interior Jörg Schönbohm (CDU) stated in an interview that "Today there are neighborhoods where one has to say: this is not Germany anymore. Those who are against integration will leave those ghettos intact. Since I

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<sup>86</sup> "Weiß du, die Menschen / sollten ihr Leben / mit dem eigenen Verstand leben, / mit den eigenen Wünschen. / Alles andere ist, / wie mit fremden Füßen laufen, / wie mit einem fremden Mund küssen. / Wir sind Leute mit zwei Leben, / und, am schlimmsten, wir wissen nicht, / welches Leben uns wirklich gehört."

am for integration, I am also for a step-by-step removal.”<sup>87</sup> (Schönbohm 1998). With respect to Schönbohm’s essentialist and racist definition of ghetto vis-à-vis ghetto-inhabitants, Barbara Mennel’s analysis of Thomas Arslan’s and Fatih Akin’s films shows how minority artists were simultaneously reclaiming the contested term in the context of Germany: besides the realm of cinema, Mennel also gives examples from other media such as Feridun Zaimoğlu’s “aestheticized Kanak Sprak” in his books, which is “a language that does not claim authenticity but reworks the cadence of ghetto discourse,” and Z 2000, an exhibition featuring young ‘ghetto artists’ at Academy of the Arts that “aims to negate the space’s political and material discriminations” (Mennel 2002, 140-141).

Zimmermann has presented such sensibility to mass media in his collaboration with Ören as early as the 1973: the films *Frau Kutzer* and *Kazım Akkaya* created an aesthetic domain that is exemplary for the ways in which artists tackled the recurring question of what “ghetto” means (and for whom) throughout the history of public discourse on immigration in Germany—both before and after reunification. More importantly, for Zimmermann and Ören, the conceptualization of the ghetto is never only a matter of political discussions: the concept itself always refers and comes back to the actual physical place of living that sets up the biological, economic, social, and legal conditions for living in the first place. This material understanding and reclaiming of the ghetto in Zimmermann’s visualization of Ören’s Kreuzberg established an aesthetic kinship with artistic productions, which will address the same issues in the coming decades, albeit with changing questions.

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<sup>87</sup> Translated by Barbara Mennel in “Bruce Lee in Kreuzberg and Scarface in Altona: Transnational Auteurism and Ghettoecentrism in Thomas Arslan’s ‘Brothers and Sisters’ and Fatih Akin’s ‘Short Sharp Shock.’” *New German Critique* 87, Autumn 2002, pp. 139.

## Chapter 2 Aesthetics of Lived Relations: Literary Value and Taste in the Context of Bilingual Publishing Houses

Misafir

Dün fena sıkıldım, akşama kadar;  
İki paket cıgara bana mısın demedi;  
Yazı yazacak oldum, sarmadı;  
Keman çaldım ömrümde ilk defa;  
Dolaştım,  
Tavla oynayanları seyrettim,  
Bir şarkıyı başka makamla söyledim;  
Sinek tuttum, bir kibrit kutusu;  
Allah kahretsin, en sonunda,  
Kalktım, buraya geldim.

Gast

Gestern hab ich mich von früh bis abends  
gelangweilt.  
Zwei Packungen Zigaretten haben nicht  
gereicht.  
Ich wollte etwas schreiben, doch ich verlor  
das Interesse daran.  
Ich versuchte zum ersten Mal in meinem  
Leben Geige zu spielen.  
Ich bin spazieren gegangen.  
Habe den Spielern im Kaffeehaus zugesehn,  
Ein Lied in einer andern Tonart gesungen,  
Fliegen gefangen, eine Streichholzschachtel  
voll.  
Verflucht, am Ende  
Bin ich dann hierher gekommen. ((Veli  
(Kanık) 2015 [1985], 116-117)<sup>88</sup>

Orhan Veli (Kanık)'s (1914-1950) poem "Misafir" (Guest) is about a day of boredom. All day, the speaker tries to kill time, to do things differently, or to make do with what they have at hand in order to make a change in the mundaneness of their day. But nothing is enough. Nothing

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<sup>88</sup> "Guest

Yesterday I was bored to death, from morning till night.  
Two packs of cigarettes changed nothing.  
I wanted to write, but lost my interest.  
For the first time in my life, I played the violin.  
I wandered around,  
watched people playing backgammon,  
sang a song in a different key,  
caught flies, a matchbox full.  
Damn it, in the end  
I ended up here."

attracts their interest. In the end, cursing, they end up as a guest in someone else's home, simply because they have nothing else to do. Written at the end of WWII in a world marked by upheaval and change, Veli's speaker remains stuck, persistently, in the ordinariness of the present moment.<sup>89</sup> The language of "Misafir" thus contrasts with the major catastrophes of that time that destroyed lives and perpetrated violence in the world. Veli ironically evokes the trivial everyday details of life by using colloquial expressions such as "bana mısın demedi" (a more colloquial use of "did not do any difference" in Turkish). In the face of history, Veli's speakers seek meaning in the vernacular of black humor—in the recklessness of everyday language.

Much later in West Germany of 1985, Orhan Veli's comprehensive collection of poems were edited and translated by Yüksel Pazarkaya, and bilingually published by the Turkish-German Dağyeli publishing house under the title *Garip/Fremdartig* (Strange, 1985). Pazarkaya translated Veli—one of the most famous and innovative modern Turkish poets of the 20<sup>th</sup> century—for the German-speaking public in an uncomplicated way. Reflecting the ordinariness and simplicity of daily actions, verbs like "spielen," "gegangen," "zugesehn," "gesungen" und "gekommen" in "Gast" emphasize repetitive actions with simple distinctions. Even though they attracted little popular interest, Pazarkaya's translations in *Garip/Fremdartig* received unexpected and significant critical acclaim in West Germany, as compared to other works published in Turkish or Turkish manuscripts published in German translation. In the context of postwar labor migration, Pazarkaya's choice of the word "Fremdartig" in the title had nothing to do with the connotations of the wide-spread word "Fremd," meaning "foreign" or "alien" in discussions about immigrants in media or politics; neither did the title of the poem

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<sup>89</sup> As in his other poems like "Cımbızlı Şiir" ("The Poem with Tweezers"), for example, the speakers say things such as: "Ne atom bombası, / Ne Londra konferansı; / Bir elinde cımbız, / Bir elinde ayna; Umrunda mı dünya!" (Veli (Kanık), 140) "Neither an atomic bomb, / Nor the London conference; / Tweezers in one hand, / Mirror in the other / Who cares about the world!"



“Misafir/Gast” (Guest) have anything to do with the likely popular associations with the so-called term *Gastarbeiter* or “guest worker” at the time.

Veli’s so-called sudden “re-discovery” as a Turkish poet in German translation was due to a confluence of factors: As a central figure of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Turkish literary canon, Veli never knew about immigrant communities and their experiences in West Germany. Yet he was recognized in 1985 as the result of a rising interest in Turkish literature that stemmed from a newfound political interest in the lives of immigrant communities in West Germany. Apart from the laudatory reviews written in journals and newspapers in Turkey and West Germany by literary critics, the main recognition of Veli was thanks to the editors and critics in Southwest Broadcasting’s best books list (*SWF-Bestenliste*, today known as *Südwestrundfunk-Bestenliste*, or *SWR-Bestenliste*), which awarded the publication with first place for its March 1986 selection. Submitting the publication to *SWF-Bestenliste* was the translator Pazarkaya’s own idea. The decision of publishing a bilingual edition of *Garip/Fremdartig* in the first place was the decision of Dağyeli publishing house, which introduced Veli not only to a German-speaking audience, but also to younger generations of immigrants, who were interested in reading select literary works from Turkey in the German language.

These relations between publishers, editors, translators, critics, and readers in the Turkish-German context led to their decisions about what to do with Veli’s work. I argue that such literary engagement across communities can give shape to entire canons, aesthetic criteria, and collective tastes, which stem from literary cultures in both Turkey and West Germany, and in both Turkish and German. In other words, I argue that being in relation can produce aesthetic categories. Questions such as what is worthy, what is accepted, and what is progressive, critical, or problematic, go hand in hand with the questions of who is reading the work, who is producing

it, and who is giving value to it. Addressing precisely these questions, this chapter analyzes some of the actions of two of the earliest Turkish-German bilingual publishing houses, Ararat and Dağyeli.

## 2.1 Literary activity as a practical basis for aesthetics

In an earlier literature scene in Germany during the Weimar Republic, Walter Benjamin theorized literary activity as the “strict alternation between action and writing” (Benjamin 1970 [1928], 45) in the beginning of *Einbahnstraße* (*One-Way Street*)—a book of close readings of a series of everyday objects and ordinary activities that he established personal relations with. In this context, he defines literariness not in the sense of ideals and norms that critics attempt to universalize and prescribe, but as that which is compatible with the practices, desires, and decisions of communities themselves:

The construction of life lies in facts rather than convictions and of such facts as have scarcely ever become the basis of convictions ... true literary activity cannot aspire to take place within a literary framework—this is, rather, the habitual expression of its sterility. Significant literary work ... must nurture the inconspicuous forms that better fit its influence in active communities than does the pretentious, universal gesture of the book—in leaflets, brochures, articles, and placards. Only this prompt language shows itself actively equal to the moment. Opinions are to the vast apparatus of social existence what oil is to machines: one does not go up to a turbine and pour machine oil over it; one applies a little to hidden spindles and joints that one must know (Benjamin 1970, 45).<sup>90</sup>

Benjamin draws here an immediate relation between living and writing by using the word

“construction.” Literary works collect and bring the facts of life together, which are manifested

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<sup>90</sup> “Die Konstruktion des Lebens liegt im Augenblick weit mehr in der Gewalt von Fakten als von Überzeugungen. ... wahre literarische Aktivität [kann] nicht beanspruchen, in literarischem Rahmen sich abzuspielen—vielmehr ist das der übliche Ausdruck ihrer Unfruchtbarkeit. Die bedeutende literarische Wirksamkeit ... muß die unscheinbaren Formen, die ihrem Einfluß in tätigen Gemeinschaften besser entsprechen als die anspruchsvolle universale Geste des Buches in Flugblättern, Broschüren, Zeitschriftartikeln und Plakaten ausbilden. Nur diese prompte Sprache zeigt sich dem Augenblick wirkend gewachsen. Meinungen sind für den Riesenapparat des gesellschaftlichen Lebens, was Öl für Maschinen; man stellt sich nicht vor eine Turbine und übergießt sie mit Maschinenöl. Man spritzt ein wenig davon in verborgene Niete und Fugen, die man kennen muß.” (Benjamin 1928, 7)

in the everyday use of objects such as brochures and articles, and expressions like opinions. The literary activity in this sense is grammatical, it lies in practice. Like the daily relations in a community, construction requires shared knowledge: one must know how to join the parts. This know-how informs the literary action in Benjamin's formulation as well as the overall structure of his book: Each section title of *Einbahnstraße* corresponds to a colloquial expression or an object he refers to in his everyday life, such as "Filling Station," "Gloves," "Mexican Embassy," "Construction Site," "Underground Works," "Germans, Drink German Beer!," "This Space for Rent," "Office Equipment," and "Augeas' Self-Service Restaurant."

Although Benjamin compares the aesthetic connection of a single work to the interpersonal social interactions in a community, this idea could be extended to other literary activities such as publication, translation, circulation, evaluation, and reception. In this framework, the aesthetics of any piece of art or literature can never be isolated from the processes of its making, from the question of who gains access to it in the first place, and for whom it was published. If we extend Benjamin's theorization of everyday practices in relation to literary activity to the context of bilingual publishing houses in the era after labor migration, we are compelled to ask: what kind of literary practices did the founders of these institutions establish with their public, and to what extent were their decisions driven by the demands of the public? What did the founders know and what did they learn? How did these founders construct an agenda through their own "leaflets, brochures, articles and placards" in relation to the broader landscape of the publishing sector? Finally, how did they reflect on their part in creating a grammar of aesthetics in West Germany that is both in Turkish and German?

In Benjamin's formulation, questions as such requires us to acknowledge the activity on part, and perspectives of readers: "Significant" literary work is born out of a reciprocal

relationship between its producers and consumers, and “must nurture the inconspicuous forms that better fit its influence in active communities.” Here, Benjamin emphasizes the central role that the everyday activities play in literature in order to underline the importance of locating literary practice at the core of the readers’ as well as the writers’, publishers’ and translators’ daily lives, as seen and lived within the framework of the communities they identify with, rather than the more “sterile literary frameworks,” constructed within the unspoken, predetermined rules of literary criticism. De Certeau’s take on the activity of reading is similarly a critique of such “aspiration” of literary works for fitting in an imposed framework of an aesthetics, which is often perceived as hierarchically more significant than the *mundane*, everyday activities that Benjamin mentions. De Certeau similarly theorizes the activity of reading as one of the everyday practices, which can be an effective intervention to societal frameworks rather than merely leading to a passive reception, and can be performed by everyone. In his formulation, reading should never be “reserved for the literary critic” (1984, 169), aka., the professionals, and is a capacity in re-constructing the meanings of a text over time. In this sense, by “wandering through an imposed system” of the text, the reader “takes neither the position of the author nor an author’s position. [They] invent[...] in texts something different from what they ‘intended’ ... [They] combine[...] their fragments and creates something un-known in the space organized by their capacity for allowing an indefinite plurality of meanings” (169).

Benjamin and de Certeau’s analyses of activities around literary works are crucial in the context of postwar Turkish-German media initiatives especially in understanding the bilingual publishing houses’ acknowledgments of the readerly potential in re-constructing a transnational aesthetic space, shaped according to the readers’ own demands for what kind of a literature in Turkish and German they want to see in West Germany. Thus, the critical position of Dağyeli

and Ararat can be considered at large with respect to relatively more popular and stereotypical understandings about immigrant life after postwar labor migration, which directly affect the everyday life of their readers. Their publication of bilingual literature with embedded translation exercises as paratext, for example, show the publishers' awareness of the urgent demand of younger generations for language acquisition as they lived and were educated in West Germany. In such sense, the aesthetic programming of immigrant-led self-organized initiatives such as Dağyeli and Ararat need to be approached in both ways: first, by asking the question of what these publishing houses presented to their readers as literature, and second, by asking how their readers reacted to and became active contributors to such literature.

Departing from the daily involvement of the reader communities in the bilingual publishing houses' literary programming, I argue that these initiatives were the forerunners in the creation of an aesthetic domain that clearly takes up questions of life quite literally, or in other words, in terms of everyday practice. While they do not engage in tension with the mainstream political discourse about life per se, these publishing houses acknowledge what life after immigration can consist of. In an aesthetic domain, this sometimes means daily practices such as getting access to literature in different languages, taking a political stance by publishing banned works in Turkey, or introducing a cannon of Turkish literature in West Germany for enhancing its readership across communities. The relationships that publishing houses have with their reader communities has impacted the way they make decisions about which works to publish and translate in Turkish and German. By deploying exclusionary vs. inclusionary principles, I argue that the actions of publishing institutions themselves therefore have transformative impacts on more popular and restricted assumptions about immigrant life.

Dağyeli and Ararat publishing houses understand their readers as coming from multiple communities with varying experiences, whose identities, scope, and needs can always be prone to change. Their founders neither treat the potential immigration experiences of their readers as the same, or even of the same kind, nor do they publish work that serves a solely political purpose according to a strict agenda in their programming. Instead, their approach underscores an understanding of a community of readers that have not actually met: some readers are students, some only speak German or Turkish, some speak both, some have immigrant status, some are children, some are teachers, some are workers, some are intellectuals who are also exiles and writers themselves from Turkey, and some are left-leaning thinkers and literati from West Germany. In the example of bilingual publishing houses, literary activities, and relations cross communities. Here, a reciprocal relationship between readers and institutions occurs, such as one that is similar to Benjamin's analysis of readers and aesthetic constructs: as publishing houses emerge from the literary practices of communities, the preferences, tastes and values across communities are similarly shaped through the publishing houses and their literary activity.

In bilingual publishing houses such as Ararat and Dağyeli, communities of readers are tied through an aesthetic kinship, which its members develop through their everyday practices of reading and reflection. A case in point would be the postcard-surveys that Dağyeli publishing house prepared for collecting feedback from its readers with questions such as: "Which book did you take this card from? Did you like the book? If yes, why? If not, why not? Did you know our publisher before you bought this book? Are you interested in further information about our books? Please check the areas that you are interested in."<sup>91</sup> As the readers navigate their aesthetic

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<sup>91</sup> "Aus welchem Buch haben Sie diese Karte entnommen? Hat Ihnen das Buch gefallen? Wenn ja, warum? Wenn nein, warum nicht? Kannten Sie unseren Verlag schon vor dem Kauf dieses Buches? Sind Sie an weiteren Informationen über unsere Bücher interessiert? Dann Kreuzen Sie bitte die Sie interessierenden Bereiche an." Postcard for readers, "Postkarte," Jeanine Dağyeli private archive (hereafter referred to as Dağyeli private archive).

preferences through these postcards, the publishing house accommodates them. Such reciprocal activity, in turn, allows for collaboration between publishing and reading communities to build an alternative canon of literature in Turkish and German in West Germany. I call the literature collections offered by these small-scale bilingual publishing houses a literary canon, because these publishing houses do most of the work in terms of making Turkish literature in Turkish and German visible, despite being small-scale institutions.

With their emphasis on the readers' relations with literature, and across communities in such practices, I argue that postwar bilingual publishing houses emphasize the importance and necessity of such relations in their publishing practices and acknowledge them in the demands of their readers. By doing so, they challenge reductionist definitions of immigrant life in the mainstream media sources as being closed-off to society and socially irrelevant. They also resist the instrumentalization of immigrant life as a topic of social justice through the critical and politicizing tendencies of the left-leaning, small-scale publishing houses emerged in the 1960s under the name of *Alternative Verlage* (alternative publishing houses). On the contrary, the founders of Dağyeli and Ararat publishing houses remain open to the fundamental heterogeneity and contradictions inherent to immigrant communities. They consider themselves the historical product of the last 25 years of emigration from Turkey, as well as the members of a longer tradition of publishing houses in Paris and London, whose founders published literature from the Maghreb, Africa, Armenia, India, and the Caribbean.<sup>92</sup> In doing so, their activities and approaches go against the understanding of life after postwar labor migration as a monolithically constructed experience. Instead, they approach life as a result of the shared knowledge of a

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<sup>92</sup> Press release on the publication series "Türkische Autoren in Europa" (Turkish authors in Europe n.d.), Dağyeli private archive.

broader historical and political framework of migration after imperialism and late capitalism, which, in its many forms, can never be defined or compared in terms of experience.

### ***2.1.1 Literary value revisited: The state of translation and publication of literature in Turkish after bilingual publishing houses***

What is a practical basis for the aesthetics? By reading a range of activities in bilingual publishing houses, including translation activities, issuance of journals, and printing postcards for readers, I aim to explain how concepts such as aesthetic value and taste become more dependent on audience and community access rather than merely on a systematic program or critical agenda in the examples of bilingual publishing houses.<sup>93</sup> In other words, I show the urgency these institutions felt to respond directly to their public's everyday demands through the promotion and circulation of cultural productions. By everyday demands, I mean the practical requirements for living and surviving, such as gaining access to language learning and/or legal information. But these demands also extend to the realm of pedagogy and the option for children to interact with literatures in two languages, and the ability to access books otherwise banned in Turkey in order to pursue one's freedom of expression, enjoy the possibility of publishing, and be able to take pleasure in literature written originally in Turkish. By reading the archival material and programming of Ararat and Dağyeli, I trace their acknowledgement of and responses to their readers' demands for learning, shared knowledge, communication, and orientation of their life, as well as their literary commitments in West Germany.

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<sup>93</sup> I should note that by bilingual publishing houses I precisely mean the institutions that publish books in two languages, and not in different languages in separate editions. There are other publishing houses that publish books in many languages, but it doesn't always mean that they juxtapose these languages in a single body of work.



Unlike the state of translation of Turkish literature from the postwar era up until the 1970s, Ararat and Dağyeli's bilingual publications as well as translations in German such as works by Güney Dal, Adalet Ağaoğlu, Nazım Hikmet, Fakir Baykurt, Aras Ören, Sait Faik, Ahmet Arif, Zafer Şenocak, Kemal Tahir, and Orhan Kemal, contributed to the emerging sense of an alternative canon. I use the phrase *alternative* to indicate, unlike the traditional canon of "Turkish literature" in Turkey, a canon that includes literature produced in West Germany as well as in Turkey, and that is accessible by both Turkish and/or German-speaking audiences. In creating such an alternative canon and aesthetic taste increasingly in a niche market and for multilingual readers in West Germany, Ararat and Dağyeli often not only sold existing translations of Turkish authors in German; they also translated older books anew, or actively translated new texts that did not yet exist in German. To do so, Ararat and Dağyeli had to also establish transnational or transcultural networks with both the German Democratic Republic or East Germany and Turkey in order to purchase the copyright for authors such as Nazım Hikmet and Sait Faik. In terms of translation activity, Ararat and Dağyeli translated these works simultaneously with other publishing houses, whose programs included publishing works of Turkish literature or literatures on immigration from Turkey, such as Harran, Hitit, Verlag am Galgenberg, Babel, Unionsverlag and Rotbuch, which had started to translate modernist and more contemporary literature from the 1920s through the 1980s.

Within this emerging wave of translation activities, bilingual publications were especially important for the visibility of Turkish literature that was otherwise inaccessible in Turkey. The availability of Turkish literature for the Turkish-speaking community in West Germany had been miniscule until the 1980s. By the time Ararat and Dağyeli were established during the 1970s and 1980s, the Turkish-speaking population had grown significantly due to family unifications and

an increasing number of political exiles due to political turmoil on the eve of the Turkish military coup d'état of September 1980. These shifting demographics also dramatically changed the scope and prioritization of what was translated and published. Ararat and Dağyeli publishing houses were established with the practical and idealist goal of providing accessibility to Turkish literature in bilingual German/ Turkish editions; they sought to meet the practical needs of people navigating their lives and aesthetic interests in the context of West Germany, and the idealist need to forge an aesthetic canon of Turkish literature in West Germany. The value that these publishing houses gave to timeliness in translation and bilingual publications goes hand in hand with these publishers' emphasis on *everyday use*.

This is why in most of their series or programs they include, in addition to literary works, further access to information for people with immigrant status. These include scholarship and works of non-fiction on law and politics related to the so-called "foreigner question," as well as books for childrens' linguistic education. With respect to the literary arena, on the other hand, the idea of creating access to works in Turkish literature was closely related to an overall frustration about the value of literature in Turkish within the German publishing market. This frustration resonates with other non-institutional efforts such as the anthology work by Deniz Göktürk and Zafer Şenocak entitled *Jedem Wort gehört ein Himmel: Türkei Literarisch* (1991), which resisted reductionist perceptions of Turkish literature as merely folkloric (8). The multiplication of translated works in anthologies and bilingual manuscript publications were therefore also meant to change and overwrite the limited perception of literatures in Turkish, which at the same time had to do with similar perceptions toward the community in West Germany.

The founders of both Ararat and Dağyeli publishing houses, Ahmet İ. Doğan, and Yıldırım Dağyeli, respectively, were also key figures in areas other than publishing, including

translation, education, and cinema. For example, Doğan coordinated with producer Wim Wenders for the film adaptation of Yaşar Kemal's novel *Yer Demir Gök Bakır* (Iron Earth, Copper Sky, Livaneli 1987). Yıldırım Dağyeli and Helga Dağyeli-Bohne were at the same time translators, journalists, and educators by the time they established Dağyeli publishing house in 1983. Yıldırım Dağyeli was also a key individual in publishing the first bilingual quarterly journal exclusively for issues and cultural productions of immigrants from Turkey with İbrahim Halil Özak. These activities outside the field of literary publishing demonstrate and contribute to their efforts to establish and sustain an aesthetic domain that was essentially multilingual for communities living in West Germany after postwar labor migration.

As the founder of Ararat publishing house Ahmet İ. Doğan expresses, the idea of publishing bilingually sought to address multiple concerns: “[c]onveying Turkish culture to the German public, conveying Turkish culture especially to the growing second and third generation in emigration in the so-called native and national language, to enable a common use of reading matter among Turks and Germans” (38).<sup>94</sup> As much as these concerns are bound to cultural, educational, and political agendas, they are simultaneously aesthetic ones. In this section I show how Dağyeli and Ararat determined the aesthetic value of published works—together with their reading public(s)—through the dynamics of their own daily preoccupations, rather than as a set of external criteria. But what exactly did literary value mean to publishing houses like Ararat and Dağyeli, as well as to their readers, and their authors? And to what extent and in what ways did Ararat and Dağyeli fit into the discourse created by the left-leaning, alternative publishing house trends in West Germany during the 1970s Rafik Schami addresses the question of the

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<sup>94</sup> “Vermittlung türkischer Kultur dem deutschen Publikum, Vermittlung türkischer Kultur besonders der heranwachsenden zweiten und dritten Generation in der Emigration, und das—wie gesagt—in der Mutter- und Landessprache, um eine gemeinsame Verwendung der Lektüre bei Türken und Deutschen zu ermöglichen.”

literary in relation to minority literatures in the West German tradition in his introduction to the collection of essays in *Eine nicht nur deutsche Literatur*:

In order to talk about the value of our literature, one must first define the point of view from which the value is measured ... In order to correctly assess the value of this literature, one must understand our political and legal situation. In the case of an absolute lack of representation of our interests, the literary expression of the wishes, fears and utopias of the minority becomes the most important podium for these interests ... However, these substantive statements are cast in a form that makes them literature and not just a document. This simple fact is often overlooked. (Schami 1986, 55-56)<sup>95</sup>

Schami points here to a disconnect between the stakes of minority writing and the traditional criteria for literary evaluation in West Germany. According to him, critics tend to avoid understanding the basic and urgent needs of minority publishers, writers, and readers; this prevents them from considering a given community's rationale for producing literature in the first place when assessing literary value. According to Schami, not only texts, but also production, circulation, and consumption activities around them need to be taken into consideration when determining literary value. This is especially the case with the minority writing that Schami defines, which explicitly incorporated political and legal situations into its content.

The limited manner in which these texts are evaluated by the majority, Schami continues, has to do with the critics' failure to recognize minority writing as worthy of the label "literature" due to its foregrounding of social and critical issues: "Often the assessment freezes at the importance of the content, and one argues about whether it is authentic or not. The variety of forms and their lively interaction falls by the wayside with such reductions. To recognize

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<sup>95</sup> "Um über den Stellenwert unserer Literatur zu sprechen, muß man zunächst die Werte definieren, von der aus de[m] Stellenwert gemessen wird ... Um den Stellenwert dieser Literatur richtig einzuschätzen, muß man unsere politisch-rechtliche Lage verstehen. Bei einem absoluten Fehlen der Repräsentation unserer Interessen wird der literarische Ausdruck der Wünsche, Ängste und Utopien der Minderheit zum wichtigsten Podium dieser Interessen ... Diese Inhaltlichen Aussagen sind aber in eine Form gegossen, die sie zu Literatur und nicht zum bloßen Dokument macht. Oft wird diese einfache Tatsache übersehen."

beautiful literature only as a document is a denial” (57). Schami shows here the irony in traditional patterns of literary evaluation. Disregarding form in their overemphasis on content, critics enact a process of reductionism in their reading of minority literature that also strips the complexity of evaluation itself to a more basic understanding of what makes a work “literary” in the first place.

Such concern with literariness evokes the traditional formalist ethos, which was later taken up by Marxist traditions such as the New German Left during the postwar period as Terry Eagleton formulates: “In a naively avant-garde gesture, the familiar is branded as the irretrievably banal. Everyday experience is necessarily bankrupt. Only by alienating the alienation, estranging the commonplace until it becomes well-nigh unrecognizable, can we restore it to its integrity” (Eagleton 2012, 93). With such an outlook on the normativeness of everyday situations, the critic cannot process the so-called straightforwardness of the political and legal situations in minority literature through traditional criteria of evaluation. Hence, most of the critics not only lacked the means to read these works within their own reference system, but they also failed to develop a comprehensive approach for reading these works on their own terms.

### ***2.1.2 Aesthetic programs of bilingual publications: Re-introducing the publisher’s role as mediator***

Ararat publishing house was established by Ahmet İ. Doğan in 1977 in Stuttgart.<sup>96</sup> Ararat was the first bilingual publishing house to publish in Turkish and German languages, with the aim of

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<sup>96</sup> After 1980, Ararat started to operate as a bookstore, and later a postcard store in Berlin-Kreuzberg.

“publishing Turkish literature in German in order to give the German public access to Turkish culture through the medium of literature” (Doğan 1981, 37-38).<sup>97</sup> Hartmut Heinze adds that among the goals of the publishing house was also for young readers to resist adaptation and takeover of a supranational mass culture in West Germany, by introducing a culture that until then had been reduced exclusively to the folkloric level (1986, 69). Hence, Ararat’s target audience was the German public, as well as immigrants from Turkey and their descendants. Their first program included re-edited volumes and first appearances in translations from more contemporary literature in Turkish<sup>98</sup>. Later, many different genres were published: from bilingual publications in German and Turkish for adults as well as children, to non-fiction manuscripts including research and conference proceedings about topics concerning immigrants, to schoolbooks for Turkish language learning, to art books, and a music book by the political exile Zülfü Livaneli. Doğan both translated works himself<sup>99</sup> and hired other translators for his series of bilingual publications and translated editions of Turkish literature in German.

A few years later in 1983, Dağyeli publishing house was established in Frankfurt am Main. Before founding this publishing house, Yıldırım Dağyeli had worked as a freelance journalist, bookseller and translator in Turkey and Germany since 1964. In an interview, he emphasizes the relative lack of German translations from literature in Turkish when he first came to West Germany (Dağyeli 1988, 10). The only books that were available to him were a book by

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<sup>97</sup> “Der Ararat Verlag ist mit dem Ziel gegründet worden, türkische Literatur in deutscher Sprache zu veröffentlichen, um über das Medium Literatur dem deutschen Publikum den Zugang zur türkischen Kultur zu ermöglichen.”

<sup>98</sup> These include works such as the political exile and playwright Vasif Öngören’s two volume children’s book *Des Märchens Kern* (Of the Core of the Tale, 1978), Orhan Kemal’s *Murtaza oder Das Pflichtbewusstsein des kleinen Mannes* (*Murtaza*, 1979 [1952]), and Adalet Ağaoğlu’s *Die Zarte Rose meiner Sehnsucht* (*Fikrimin İnce Gülü*, The Delicate Rose of my Mind, 1979 [1976]).

<sup>99</sup> His translation of the two volumes of *Des Märchens Kern* has been nominated and made onto the shortlist for the German Youth Book Prize in 1979 (www.akj.de n.d.).

Yaşar Kemal published in Frankfurt, and by Aziz Nesin in East Germany (10).<sup>100</sup> In the same interview he adds that he opened a Turkish section in a bookstore during the 1970s in Frankfurt, and later sold books written in Turkish and Turkish literature in German translation with his friends. His daughter Jeanine Dağyeli, who runs the publishing house in Berlin today with Mario Pscherra, explains her father's initial motivation in 1981 for publishing writers who could no longer publish in Turkey and had to flee after the military coup d'état in 1980 (Dağyeli 2020): in addition to making these books available for the politically interested intellectuals and exiles in Europe, he also wanted to provide literary books by and about the experiences of labor migrants in German translation for a German-speaking public. Yıldırım Dağyeli initially put together a series of booklets in Turkish by writers such as Tezer Özlü and Aysel Özakın, and a series of bilingual booklets of short stories by writers who came as labor migrants to Germany, such as Fethi Savaşçı's *Bei laufenden Maschinen / Makinalar Çalışırken* (1983). During the translation process of this initial bilingual publication, he collaborated with other translators, writers, and poets.<sup>101</sup> After the publishing house was officially established, Yıldırım Dağyeli played an active role as a translator, and continued working together with translators such as Helga Dağyeli-Bohne and Yüksel Pazarkaya.

In Dağyeli's complete directories, the publishing houses' program for the year and the specific categories for publication are presented according to genres or themes that are more or less similar for each year; some of these categories include literature from Turkey, Turkish writers from Europe, literature of Turkic languages, German-speaking writers, children's books, Turkey in the mirror of time, religion/Islam, immigrants, and literature in Turkish.<sup>102</sup> With Özak,

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<sup>100</sup> The referred books are Yaşar Kemal's *İnce Memed* (1962), translated by Horst Wilfrid Brands, and Aziz Nesin's *Die skandalösen Geschichten vom türkischen Erzgauner Zübük* (*Zübük*, 1965) translated by Herbert Melzig.

<sup>101</sup> These key figures included Helga Dağyeli-Bohne, Salih Sıtkı Gör, Aziz Sar and Özgür Savaşçı.

<sup>102</sup> Literary programming, Gesamtverzeichnis 88/89, Dağyeli private archive.

Yıldırım Dağyeli published the first bilingual quarterly journal exclusively for issues and cultural productions of immigrants from Turkey, called *FORUM: Zeitschrift für Ausländerfragen und -kultur / Yabancılar Sorunu ve Kültürü Dergisi* (Journal for Foreigner's Issues and Culture), which was also advertised in the last section of the directory.

In his interview with Helmut Hartwig, Ahmet İ. Doğan emphasizes the immediate relationship between everyday practices and aesthetic expression in the context of postwar labor migration in West Germany:

In the context of such migration, people first need to set up what they know from home in the foreign country in order to survive: grocery stores with their own specialties, local meeting places, restaurants, Döner Kebab stalls, etc. Then there are “amateurish” experiments in culture: amateur folkdance groups, music bands, amateur theaters by associations etc. All of this is as a matter of course self-help. (1981, 37)<sup>103</sup>

According to Doğan, socially established networks of everyday activity can be central to immigrant communities in creating, circulating, and receiving cultural productions. In this context, cultural productions themselves are essential to survival: they offer a mode of navigating life through a set of organizational and collectively-driven activities. Hence, the word *amateurish* in quotation marks emphasizes the necessity and value of amateur efforts rather than diminishing the worth of the activities at hand: amateur in this context is not used as the opposite of professional but to indicate the activity's proximity to lived experience.

In Doğan's formulation, bilingual publications serve a purpose similar to self-help: in his words, Ararat's bilingual program “convey[ed] Turkish culture to the German audience, convey[ed] Turkish culture, especially to the second and third generation who are growing up in emigration, and—as I said—in the mother tongue and the national language, in order to allow

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<sup>103</sup> “Im Zuge einer solchen Migration werden die Menschen das, was sie von der Heimat her kennen, erst einmal in der Fremde einrichten, um zu überleben. Lebensmittelläden mit eigenen Spezialitäten, Vereinslokale, Gaststätten, Döner Kebab-Buden etc. Dann gibt es ‘amateurhafte’ Versuche im kulturellen Bereich: Volkstanz-Laiengruppen, Musik-Kapellen, Laien-Theater von Vereinen etc. Das alles ist eine selbstverständliche Selbsthilfe.”



Turks and Germans to use the reading material together. I believe that the dissemination of bilingual books in schools and among German pupils is no less important of a goal, and that this can only make the much-used word integration “more meaningful” (38). I now turn to Doğan’s formulation of “self-help” with an overarching question about aesthetics: what would the literature and media landscape look like, if we were to prioritize the singular, everyday efforts of living (and living together) at the heart of creative expression?

Ararat publishing house included a statement on the last page of every book in the series “Texte in zwei Sprachen/İki Dilde Yayınlar” (Texts in Two Languages). Appearing in the 1980s, this series addressed the literary and social necessity of doing translations and bilingual publications in West Germany:

The Bilingual Publications series is formed, first of all, according to literary criteria. A second criterion is social in nature: The cultural context, thoughts and feelings of these people can be conveyed through literature to the German reader, who is constantly together with the Turks in his daily life. Turkish readers in foreign countries, who are mostly stuck between two universes, can be helped to find a way and socialize through literature, and their reading needs are met to some extent.

Bilingualism is primarily a requirement of literary translation, it reinforces the rationale of literary translation, and supplements it. However, bilingualism is also a necessity for our day: both for the Turkish people in Germany, and the German people who are in constant, increasingly personal contact with them.<sup>104</sup>

This statement also emphasizes the political reasoning behind the publishing house’s selection process. It foregrounds the importance of enabling collective aesthetic pleasure on the part of both Turkish and/or German-speaking communities. This gestures toward a sense of coexistence. According to this statement, the purpose of publishing works bilingually is not, as in the more

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<sup>104</sup> “Bu ‘İki Dilde Yayınlar’ dizisi, her şeyden önce yazınsal ölçütlere göre oluşur. Bir ikinci ölçüt ise, toplumsal niteliktedir: Günlük yaşamında sürekli olarak Türklerle bir arada olan Alman okura, bu insanların ekinsel bağlamları, düşünce ve duyguları yazın aracılığıyla iletilebilir. Çoğun iki evren arasında sıkışmış kalmış, yabancı ülkelerdeki Türk okura ise, yazın yoluyla bir yon bulma, toplumsallaşma yardımı sunulabilir, onun okuma gereksinimi bir ölçüde giderilir.

İki dillilik, öncelikle yazınsal çevirinin bir gereğidir, yazınsal çevirinin gerekçesini sağlamlaştırır ve yazınsal çevirinin kendisini bütünler. İki dillilik ama aynı zamanda günümüzün bir gereğidir: Hem Almanya’daki Türkler, hem de bu Türklerle sürekli, giderek kişisel ilişki içindeki Almanlar için.”

traditional sense, to bring the so-called original work and the alleged value of its originality to the fore. It is rather to create a common understanding of an aesthetic realm in West Germany where Turkish and German readers simultaneously exist. It is important to distinguish these publishing efforts from the emergent discourse of multiculturalism at the time. Whereas multiculturalism held up the possibility of living together, albeit without substantial interaction between communities (Chin 2017), the activities of bilingual publishing houses necessitated constant interactions between the German and Turkish languages and cultures.

It is furthermore noteworthy that Ararat refers to the first and second generation of immigrants in the context of the 1980s, when the discourse on immigration was still a nonissue. At the time, immigration was still discussed as a “guest worker” or “foreigner question.” Jeanine Dağyeli expands on this issue by maintaining that especially her mother, Helga Dağyeli-Bohne, who was one of the publishing house’s permanent translators, was preoccupied with the state of the Turkish language in West Germany as a full-time educator (Dağyeli 2020). Jeanine Dağyeli states that as she was teaching in schools with high rates of children with a migration background, she realized that none of those children had access to texts written in languages other than German. She thus often included works from different languages in her literature classes.

This pedagogical concern was also central to the bilingual programming of both Dağyeli’s and Ararat’s literary activities. Such concern, however, did not suggest that the purpose of bilingual editions was merely about language education: it was also a concern simultaneously for creating a bilingual literary taste for German and/or Turkish speaking communities in Germany. Turning back to Ararat’s bilingual publications series would be a useful case in understanding how aesthetics and pedagogy were both considered important elements in the cultivation of a

Turkish and German literary grammar in the context of West Germany. At the end of some books, especially targeted to children and young readers, Ararat prepares an additional section called “Sprachlicher Übungsteil/Dil Alıřtırmaları” (Linguistic Exercises):

That's why we offer the language exercises section: to take advantage of the possibilities offered by a bilingual directory, to improve language skills to some extent. ... They are also intended as an encouragement for the reader to derive similar or other exercises from the texts.<sup>105</sup>

As stated, these linguistic exercises often consisted of open-ended questions and blank spaces for sentences for further translation activity. Rather than imposing an aesthetic imperative on its readers about what they “ought to” read and like, these publications invite the reader to participate actively in their reading process, produce creative expressions on their own terms and test their own aesthetic skills in the language in question.

*FORUM* was another bilingual publication by Dağyeli in book format that focused more on everyday political/social affairs, economics, cultural and legal issues with regards to immigrants from Turkey. The journal includes reviews of books dealing with foreigner issues as well as a list of books submitted on these topics. Released in collaboration with both German and Turkish editors, it also published relevant documents as well as interviews by experts and artists on contemporary discussions.<sup>106</sup> *FORUM*'s review in the journal *Kommune* reflects the journal's and Dağyeli publishing house's overall aims in bringing everyday life and lived relations to the realm of publications, the practice of which itself becomes an attempt to intervene in the discourse of life after postwar labor migration:

Attempts at international understanding through their own, self-determined media, as a counterweight to the overwhelming power of the German media landscape - ... But things only get really exciting when "foreign" employees and authors become part of the

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<sup>105</sup> “Bu yüzden, dil alıřtırmaları bölümünü sunuyoruz: İki dildeki bir dizinin açtıđı olanaktan yararlanıp, dil becerilerini de bir ölçüde ilerletmek için. ... Bunlar, okurun metinlerden benzeri, ya da daha başka alıřtırmaları da türetmesi için, aynı zamanda bir özendirme olarak düşünölmüřtür.”

<sup>106</sup> Literary programming, Gesamtverzeichnis 88/89, Dağyeli private archive.

everyday picture in the German media, when they are not reported on in a judgmental and informative way, but when they themselves speak out—and not only in connection with ‘typical foreigner topics.’ (*Kommune* 1985, 78)<sup>107</sup>

As the review implies, *FORUM*’s bilingual release builds a media network itself by opening a channel to both Turkish and German-speaking communities; instead of imposing information on readers with a migration background, the editors of *FORUM* provide space for them to express their own concerns about their lives in West Germany, and to communicate with others in this bilingual sphere. In this way, the topics develop more organically and are prone to change given the urgent, everyday needs of their readers. In this context, bilingual publications are not only about language and accessibility, but about readers creating their own “self-determined” media, public, and community by coming—and living—together.

Dağyeli and Ararat’s engagement with bilingualism led us to rethink the role of the publisher as mediator, which was also central to the broader publishing landscape in West Germany. In the traditional sense, being a publisher in the role of mediator meant having the entitlement to disseminate a certain, often personal, aesthetic taste through the process of labelling specifically selected publications. What the founders of the collectively run, alternative publishing houses argued against was this imposing and restrictive attitude of the publishers toward their reading publics. In the context of bilingual publishing houses like Dağyeli and Ararat, the role of the publisher as mediator takes a different shape. In the hopes of establishing an aesthetic domain in and through lived relations, mediation is inevitable. However, it does not

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<sup>107</sup> “Völkerverständigungs-Versuche über eigene, selbstbestimmte Medien, als Gegengewicht zur Übermacht der deutschen Medienlandschaft—schön und gut und interessant, und angesichts der real existierenden Situation auf dem Medienmarkt sicher auch wichtig. Aber richtig spannend wird die Sache erst, wenn auch in den deutschen Medien ‘ausländische’ Mitarbeiter/innen und Autoren/innen zum Alltagsbild gehören, nicht wertend und informierend über sie berichtet wird, sondern sie selbst das Wort ergreifen—und das nicht nur in Zusammenhang mit ‘typischen Ausländerthemen.’”

have to be bound to a single person's decisions. Ahmet İ. Doğan expresses his role as a mediator by complicating and questioning it in its conventional sense:

In relation to the one and a half million Turks who sell their hand-power here, I am atypical. In other words, an emancipated and privileged foreigner who becomes a “mediator” because of this latitude. But this brings not only a privilege, but also responsibility and conflict (Doğan 1981, 39).<sup>108</sup>

Acknowledging his position allows him to also redefine it: refraining from being a decisive authority figure allows Doğan to seek to understand how aesthetic commitments are political and related to power dynamics between a publisher and its readers. This is especially the case when being a member of an immigrant community who has diverse experiences and positions within that community. The founders of bilingual publishing houses such as Ararat and Dağyeli are attentive to the fact that aesthetic taste and values come from collective histories rather than individual choices or the preferences of a select elite. The acknowledgement of this, in turn, indicates first and foremost to a community that they have the means of creating their own aesthetic commitments according to the relations they establish with one another.

## **2.2 The landscape of publishing: Tracing literariness from the *SWF-Bestenliste* to bilingual publishing houses**

After a closer analysis of the bilingual literary programming of Ararat and Dağyeli, a broader outlook on the publishing sector and the critical tendencies towards aesthetic criteria in West German literature becomes necessary to situate these self-organized, immigrant-led publishing houses within the broader network of literary initiatives. Understanding how media initiatives in

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<sup>108</sup> “Im Verhältnis zu den anderthalb Millionen Türken, die hier ihrer Hände Kraft verkaufen, bin ich atypisch. Also ein emanzipierter und bevorzugter Ausländer, der aufgrund dieses Spielraums zum “Vermittler” wird. Das bringt aber nicht nur ein Privilegien mit sich, sondern auch Verantwortung und Konflikte.”

the realm of literature operated during the establishment of a Turkish-German postwar aesthetic domain is necessary to conceptualize what was valued in literary works at the time, and what counted as literature in the first place. Following my analysis of the literary agenda of Dağyeli and Ararat publishing houses in redefining what literary value and taste meant for reader communities, and in turn, for themselves, I examine one of the most well-known literature lists from 1975, namely the *SWF-Bestenliste* and its role in shaping the broader literary field in the West German context. I argue that it was in response to these lists, and the subsequent monopolization of literature by giant publishing companies, that alternative publishing houses began to emerge within the literary scene. As part of the literary landscape including award systems, the *SWF-Bestenliste* is especially important to the historical context for Dağyeli publishing house, which was awarded first place for its bilingual edition of *Garip/Fremdartig*. *SWF-Bestenliste*'s selection of *Garip/Fremdartig* was expected to mark an alleged turning point in the history of this publishing house in bringing it wider recognition. Yet, this was not quite the case: except for a few critical reviews, Veli's bilingual volume neither sold well, nor had an impact on the overall knowledge of Turkish literature among German audiences. Focusing on the publication of *Garip/Fremdartig* as an *uneventful* literary event, I differentiate how literariness was understood in the broader publishing network by most critics of Orhan Veli, and how Turkish-German bilingual publishing houses in West Germany manifested their own claims about it.

What was the state of the allegedly *engaged* literature at that time, and how did critics introduce such literature to a more widely recognized media, such as television? Author, literary editor, and television journalist Jürgen Lodemann attempts to alienate the viewer from the television screen during his presentation of Southwest broadcasting's best books list of the

month with the following statement: “I am sitting here in a huge room, higher than a gym. I don’t see anyone ... I also don’t see any of the twenty or so people who work here now. I am talking to a black rectangle called ‘camera aperture’” (“Das Lob der Kritiker: SWR Bestenliste. Die ersten 40 Jahre” 2016). Lodemann’s approach to mass media in introducing literature resembles John Berger’s final address to television viewers in his critical introduction to traditional Western art culture during the first episode of *Ways of Seeing* in 1972 on BBC Two: “...The images are like words, but there is no dialogue yet. You cannot reply to me. For that to become possible in the modern media of communication, access to television must be extended beyond its present narrow limits.” Only three years apart, both Lodemann and Berger look and speak directly to an imaginary viewer behind the camera to make audience members both conscious of their own positions and critical of the medium they are using. Both Lodemann and Berger feel the need to appropriate their use of television as a mass medium within its ‘present narrow limits’ when presenting critical material about literature and art. What does this tendency to take a distance from the medium’s popularity gesture toward?

From its initial organization in 1975 onwards, Lodemann envisioned *SWF-Bestenliste* as a critical alternative, especially to the Spiegel-Bestseller list, which was determined only by the numbers of sales (“Das Lob der Kritiker,” 2016). In contrast to a bestseller list, the promise of the *SWF-Bestenliste* is to allow interested readers to navigate through new releases based on the choice of a jury of around 30 literary critics. The only condition across different genres such as novels, poems, narratives, and other fiction is the newness of the publications. The selections range from James Joyce translations to new editions of Kafka to recent manuscripts by writers such as Ludwig Fels and Friedrich Christian Delius. The list was created each month as the result of a voting system, through which permanent members awarded points to newly published books

in West Germany. Starting in 1978, the critics began to meet yearly in Baden-Baden to vote for one author from the monthly lists for a monetary prize. The jury's evaluation of literature over the years created the criteria for "forming a unique guide in the flood of new publications" ("Das Lob der Kritiker"). In contrast to a bestseller list that relies on the authority of the popular readership in the market, a best books list gains its reliability from the authority of a few select experts: a jury serves as the litmus test that distinguishes quality over quantity.

The question about the medium itself, however, adds a crucial nuance in this seeming dichotomy between bestseller books and "books that [the critics] want as many readers as possible [for]" ("Das Lob der Kritiker"): why television? As the name implies, *SWF-Bestenliste* is a list that is funded and generated by a broadcasting station. The list is announced monthly on television, as well as published in the station's literature magazine. In Berger's terms, by extending the television's 'present narrow limits,' Lodemann uses the medium's alleged democratizing potential to gain access to a broader audience in the hopes of creating a more diverse readership. Whether the selection itself calls for a more democratic or diverse readership is open for interpretation. *SWF-Bestenliste*'s close connection to television nevertheless indicates the urgent need they felt to achieve a direct and instant interaction with a wider readership. This is even more apparent in their decision to televise critics' discussions about books as part of SWF's programming.

In 1989, the entirety of the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting in Baden-Baden to vote for and determine the *SWF-Bestenliste*'s prize holder (Paul Wühr) was screened. During the meeting, the critics sat in a circle, discussing and providing rationales for their preferences. Later, immediately after the decision was made, a member from the jury left the circle to announce the winner, and call them right away on a phone placed in the studio ("Das Lob der Kritiker"). As the process of book



selection becomes more and more semi-participatory and transparent through television, it becomes necessary to investigate this growing need for transparency in the context of the West German publishing sector. Lodemann's attempt to distinguish authentic literary value—as it was determined by the *SWF-Bestenliste*—from a market value based on popularity, and his aim to make the list widely available as opposed to only accessible to an elite few, was closely related to the existing concerns and emerging needs of the publishing sector at large in West Germany at the time.

Mark W. Rectanus maps such change in several stages: the prewar generation of publishers such as S. Fischer, Peter Suhrkamp and Kurt Wolff make up the so-called “traditional model,” in which the publisher appears as the authority figure who gets to determine the kind of books to be published in alignment with their individual aesthetic taste (1987, 97). Here, the publisher may limit the number of selected works to be published, while remaining in close contact with the authors themselves (97). Often with a strong personality and a pedagogical role as “cultural mediator,” the publisher teaches the public, in Kurt Wolff's words, what they “ought to read” rather than what they “want to read” (96). Wolff uses these contrasting labels about books in his reference to the rising bestseller trend with the publishing houses that “follow the popular taste of the public dutifully” (96), largely due to increased financial needs after the war. As publishing houses that were more aligned with the popular public taste began to dominate the market, publishing houses such as Piper attempted to bring the two trends together: even while fulfilling critical needs as “articulators of the literary canon,” they believed publishers could also introduce new authors and more contemporary political sensibilities to the public with an up-to-date programming (97).

Finally, with the impact of social justice movements and the student movement of 1968, a collective model became more prominent in burgeoning, left-leaning, collectively run, and small-scale publishing houses such as Rotbuch. At the same time as Friedrich W. Zimmermann's television films *Frau Kutzer* and *Kazım Akkaya*, a more critical approach to works by and about immigrants in West Germany was taking shape in the publishing sector thanks to these publishing houses: founders of these "alternative publishing houses" were taking political interest in publishing works of authors who wrote about immigration and migrant laborer experiences as part of their inclusive programming and political engagement. In this sense, Rotbuch was a forerunner among these publishing houses. In order to reestablish itself as a collectively run publishing house, Rotbuch split from Klaus Wagenbach officially on July 1st, 1973 (Aras-Ören-Archive) and published Aras Ören's epic poem about Berlin, *Was Will Niyazi in der Naunynstraße?* as its first title. It was the book that informed Zimmermann's first Kreuzberg television film the same year it was released.

As with Zimmermann's films, this first publication of Ören's book in German translation was geared towards an interested German-speaking public that did not necessarily know about immigration experiences or the Kreuzberg community. *Niyazi's* sales figures indicate its relative success in comparison to other works highlighting immigrant experiences (Chin 2007, 78). On the flip side, although Ören wrote the epic poem in Turkish, it would not be published in this language until seven years later, and never in West Germany.<sup>109</sup> While Ören's poem enjoyed a considerable readership and even viewership through the sponsorship of Berlin's regional German-language television programming and the alternative publishing house of Rotbuch, the Turkish-speaking community in West Germany was not part of the poems' audience, aside from

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<sup>109</sup> Aras Ören, *Berlin Üçlemesi*, İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1980.

those who spoke German. This short publishing history of Ören's book and its place in the alternative publishing sector raises important questions: How can we interpret the critical acclaim and success of *Niyazi*—which is about the Turkish immigrant community in West Germany—when it is a linguistically inaccessible work to most of that very community?

Rotbuch included themes of social movement and labor migration in its programming. In doing so, publishing houses as such “attempt[ed] to democratize, and in many cases collectivize the organizational structure of the publishing house while simultaneously offering authors greater financial and editorial participation in the publishing process” (Rectanus 104). While alternative publishing houses significantly paved the way for works that are more politically attuned to the present, while also increasingly including literature with transnational perspectives, their practices of inclusion tended to fall short due to the urgencies in their own political agendas and focus on more publicly discussed, current affairs of the day. The rare participation of writers with an immigrant background in their programs was thus often informed by such political prioritization. While a participatory and collective kind of publishing tends to avoid the publisher's role as a mediator, this seems impossible as the activity of inclusion and exclusion persists.

Resistance to mediation in the alternative publishing world of the 1970s was intended as a political act and an expression of skepticism toward market relations and publishing authorities. This correlates with Lodemann's efforts to demystify the jury's decision-making process by rendering it visible on television. However, no matter how politically informed they were, publishers and critics often failed to consider the failure in the practices of inclusion that the collective publishing houses or the *SWF-Bestenliste* engaged in via their own definitions of literary value.

As one of the immigrant writers selected for the *SWR-Bestenliste*, Feridun Zaimoğlu's response is ironically symptomatic of these practices: "I did not know that the *Bestenliste* was something different from a bestseller list" ("Das Lob der Kritiker"). It is helpful to acknowledge what criteria for aesthetic value mean in different literary publics, and how they function in a particular social syntax. Robert J. Meyer Lee formulates such an approach as "an attempt at a pragmatic description of how literary value is socially operative, regardless of what literary value may actually be or how it is actually determined" (2015, 340). From such a perspective, the mediator role of the publisher may not always suggest a limiting authority to literary culture. In fact, in many cases in multilingual publishing, mediation can be an indicator of the navigation and learning experience on part of the disenfranchised communities, of social necessity, or of a form of solidarity, in other words, a relationship-building process.

### **2.3 The "Orhan Veli Event": The shifting meanings of literariness**

On March 22, 1986, in Südwest 3's literature television program "Literaturmagazin," "a classic of modern Turkish poetry" was announced as the first-place winner in the *SWF-Bestenliste*. The alleged classic is the bilingual release of Orhan Veli's poetry collection *Garip/Fremdartig* (*Strange*, 1985) published by Dağyeli publishing house, and edited and translated by Yüksel Pazarkaya ("SWF-Bestenliste" 1986). The selection method was explained in the brochure of the list as such: "Each of the 25 literary critics listed below names four new book publications a month - with free choice - to which they wish 'as many readers as possible' and give them points (7, 5, 3, 1). The sum revealed the ... result for March" ("SWF-Bestenliste März 1986" 1986). *Garip/Fremdartig* received 33 points, a stark difference when compared to the 9 points Franz Fühmann's book *Die Schatten* received for 2<sup>nd</sup> place.

Together with Melih Cevdet (Anday) and Oktay Rifat (Horozcu), Orhan Veli is the founder of *Garip* or the *First New* movement in 1941. The meaning of the word “Garip” in the Turkish context has associations with being “strange,” “foreign,” or “peculiar,” as well as being “poor,” and “forlorn.” This is because Garip poets’ use of colloquial language and the themes of everyday life gestured toward a radical break from the easily recognizable symbols and poetic conventions—including strict rhyme and meter—that had dominated earlier forms of Ottoman poetry (Anday, Horozcu, and Kanık 1941). Coining the movement, the word “Garip” is both the title for the collections of all three members’ poems, published in 1941, as well as a more comprehensive collection of only Veli’s poems, published in 1945. Years later, the word, along with its translation as “Fremdartig,” became the title of the bilingual edition of Veli’s comprehensible poetry work, including 114 poems in German translation. Written in a time much earlier than the phenomena of labor migration from Turkey, this reclaimed meaning of “foreignness” or “strangeness” in the Garip movement was highly celebrated by critics in West Germany in their readings of Veli’s work. For example, Tatjana Rilsky praised Veli’s unconventionally mundane expressions as “life accidentally put on paper”<sup>110</sup> and stressed Veli’s practice of “noting the everyday in the everyday language” (1997).<sup>111</sup>

### ***2.3.1 Critical reception of a bilingual edition on SWF-Bestenliste: Orhan Veli’s***

#### **Garip/Fremdartig**

When the bilingual edition of Veli’s poems was published in 1985, critics praised it as being an aesthetically exceptional work that portrays the miniscule practices of everyday life in an implied

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<sup>110</sup> “... wie zufällig auf das Papier geratenes Leben wirken seine Verse.”

<sup>111</sup> “... die Alltäglichkeiten in alltäglicher Sprache notiert.”

universal (and in fact, Eurocentric) perspective. Petra Kappert, for example, predicted that German readers would find such “concise, matter-of-fact lyricism, rather ‘un-oriental’ in its simplicity and understatement, which may sound more familiar to [them], as it does to Europeans in general, than anything previously translated from Islamic Oriental literature” (1985).<sup>112</sup> According to Kappert, the strangeness of Veli’s modernism appears to conform to certain conventions in the German literary tradition—and in Europe more generally—especially with respect to its so-called ‘un-oriental’ sentiment, which cannot be associated with folklore. The character of strangeness or the foreignness in Veli’s portrayal of everyday simplicities, thus led readers to perceive Veli’s oeuvre as progressive for its time as well as at the time of its reception in West Germany in the 1980s. In almost all reviews of Veli’s poems in German, critics emphasize its mundaneness and familiarity with the everyday as an exceptional aesthetic uniqueness, rather than as a well-recognized feature of the modernist tradition.<sup>113</sup> This is especially apparent in Beat Brechtbühl’s comparative approach toward Veli within the framework of a so-called European poetics: “In all of Europe there is no one who has so mastered the refinement of (seemingly) simple poetry. His poems may appear modest on first reading. ... But one does not forget them again.”<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> “... eine knappe, sachliche, in Schlichtheit und *understatement* eher ‚unorientalisch‘ anmutende Lyrik, die ihm, wie dem Europäer überhaupt, vertrauter klingen dürfte als alles, was zuvor aus der islamisch-orientalischen Literatur übersetzt wurde.”

<sup>113</sup> Another good example would be Benedict Erenz’s description of Veli’s poetry: “Orhan Veli Kanık’s Gedichte liest man mit einer seltsamen Unruhe. Man unterbricht, springt auf, schaut aus dem Fenster, ob noch alles da ist, man schüttelt den Kopf, liest weiter, unterbricht, springt weiter auf, läuft in die Küche, schlägt sich ein Ei in die Pfanne, isst, liest weiter und merkt gar nicht, daß das Buch schon aufgehört hat—denn plötzlich ist alles, der Stuhl, der Tisch, das Ei in der Pfanne ein Gedicht von Veli” Erenz, “Späte (Wieder-)Entdeckung eines modernen Klassikers” (1986). “Orhan Veli Kanık’s poems are read with a strange restlessness. You interrupt, jump up, look out the window to see if everything is still there, you shake your head, continue reading, interrupt, jump up again, run to the kitchen, break an egg in the pan, eat, continue reading and don’t even notice that the book has already stopped—because suddenly everything, the chair, the table, the egg in the pan is a poem by Veli.”

<sup>114</sup> “In ganz Europa ist keiner, der das Raffinement der (scheinbar) einfachen Poesie derart beherrscht. Beim ersten Lesen geben sich seine Gedichte beschieden. Aber man vergißt sie nicht mehr.” Literary programming, Gesamtverzeichnis 88/89, Dağyeli private archive.

Among news coverage of the *SWF-Bestenliste*'s release, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* introduced this literary event as “überraschend,” (surprising, 1986) implying the rarity of Turkish literature published in German translation. Nevertheless, other critics distanced themselves from the adjective ‘surprising’ by approaching the word as exoticizing and reductionist. In an attempt to challenge the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*'s depiction of *Garip* as a rarity, they set out to prove its aesthetic exceptionality. In other words, they sought to prove its worthiness of being read and critiqued by themselves. Preoccupied with the popular media's interpretation of Veli's poetry as being on the *SWF-Bestenliste* for the allegedly wrong reasons—which is, other than its literariness—these critics gave rise to another exclusionary discourse on its justification as an exceptional literary work.

Situating Veli's readership in the West German literary landscape after postwar labor migration, Reinhardt Knodt similarly alludes to the aesthetic power of Veli's poetry. He differentiates it from other Turkish and German literary contexts that are more familiar to the German-speaking public, such as the categories of so-called “guest worker literature” and “literature of exile”:

The fact that a Turkish author appears on Südwestfunk's best list is probably new. But the fact that a young German-Turkish publishing house has conquered first place here with its first publications indicates something special. What is presented here, however, does not fit into the category of “guest worker literature” that more or less justifiably slips through the cracks of the major feuilletons, nor does it come from the thematically limited field of exile literature. “*Garip*” is an exceptional case ... (Knodt 1986)<sup>115</sup>

Knodt contextualizes Veli's aesthetic exceptionality for the reader: he renders Veli's work special by stating that it does not belong to *any* of the prescribed literary templates, especially

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<sup>115</sup> “Daß auf der Bestenliste des Südwestfunks ein türkischer Autor erscheint, dürfte neu sein. Daß aber ein junger deutsch-türkischer Verlag hier mit seinen Anfangspublikationen den ersten Platz erobert, deutet auf eine Besonderheit hin. Was hier vorliegt, paßt allerdings weder zu dem, was als ‚Gastarbeiterliteratur‘ mehr oder weniger berechtigt durchs Raster der großen Feuilletons rutscht, noch stammt es aus dem thematisch befgrenzten Bereich der Exilantenliteratur. „*Garip*“ ist ein Ausnahmefall ...”

with regards to the Turkish language in West Germany. He makes sense of this literary *event* as drastically different from the rare visibility of the alleged *Gastarbeiterliteratur* that “slips through the cracks” of the exclusionary feuilletons, and literature that is compartmentalized around the experiences of exile. In such a formulation, Veli’s work is presented as unrepresentable, and therefore aesthetically justified. While foregrounding Veli’s work as a case that is selected purely for aesthetic reasons, Knodt simultaneously casts doubt on the selection process, and hence, the literariness of the works that belong to the categories assigned above. Consequently, Dağyeli publishing house “has conquered the first place” with Veli, while the remaining literature about immigration or exile remains of questionable literary worth due its so-called “representativeness” in the broader literary context.

In other respects, the critic Benedict Erenz promotes Veli’s work as *unsurprising* by indicating its already-existing publishing history in West Germany. In his review entitled “Späte (Wieder-)Entdeckung eines modernen Klassikers” (Late (Re-)Discovery of a Modern Classic), he contextualizes the place of Veli’s work in West German literature as already part of a German-speaking readership. He refers to its earlier and first bilingual release by Suhrkamp publishing house in 1966 with only 49 poems, entitled *Poesie: Texte in zwei Sprachen* (Poetry: Text in Two Languages, Veli Kanık 1966), which was translated by Helmut Mader in collaboration with Yüksel Pazarkaya. Referring to this volume as “long out of print and missing,”<sup>116</sup> Erenz recalls the ongoing small-scale public interest in Veli’s work through its announcement in the brochure of Galgenberg publishing house and its release of the first reading samples the previous summer. He adds that “people have been longingly waiting for Veli”<sup>117</sup> and

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<sup>116</sup> “lange schon vergriffen und verschollen.”

<sup>117</sup> “wartete man sehnsüchtigst auf Veli.”



this “great expectation has now been fulfilled”<sup>118</sup> with its bilingual extended publication by Dağyeli, which took over its planned publication in German translation from Galgenberg.

Stating that Veli’s work was known by few, Erenz designates the appearance of *Garip/Fremdartig* in the *SWF-Bestenliste* as a “not surprisingly” late rediscovery. However, the extent of the interested public in West Germany remains unknown, especially since he starts his review by indicating the intended audience’s potential unlikeliness of knowing him, including himself: “Do you actually know the poems of Orhan Veli Kanık? A rhetorical question. I also did not know about them until recently ...”<sup>119</sup> How visible indeed were Orhan Veli’s poems in the German language, and how big of an expectation was Dağyeli’s publication in the German-speaking public? More than Veli’s state of recognition in the broader media network, what was at stake for the publishing house?

Apart from Suhrkamp’s volume, there are only a few places where Veli’s poems appeared in German translation before making the *SWF-Bestenliste*. They are mostly small collections in literary magazines. The two issues (84 and 107) of *Neue Deutsche Hefte* published a few of Veli’s poems, which were edited by Joachim Günther and published in 1961 and 1965, respectively. In July 1968 and July 1969, the poems “Das Gedicht mit dem Schwanz” (The poem with a Tail)<sup>120</sup> and “Gast” (Guest)<sup>121</sup> appeared in the literary folders of Luchterhand publishing house, entitled “Luchterhand Loseblatt Lyrik”(1983) These folders were edited by Elisabeth Borchers, Klaus Roehler and Günter Grass between September 1966 and November 1970. They included 7 poem-graphic-sheets, published every 2 months. Finally, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt

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<sup>118</sup> “diese große Erwartung hat sich ja nun auch erfüllt.”

<sup>119</sup> “Kennen Sie eigentlich die Gedichte von Orhan Veli Kanık? Eine rhetorische Frage. Auch ich kannte sie bis vor kurzem nicht.”

<sup>120</sup> “Kuyruklu Şiir”

<sup>121</sup> “Misafir”

publishing house published translations and texts in German with a focus on Turkey in its *Jahresring 84-85*, including “Galatabrücke” (Galata Bridge)<sup>122</sup> by Veli (11). Yüksel Pazarkaya would later write about Borchers’s personal comments on Veli’s poems in his newspaper article “Orhan Veli Olayı” (“The Orhan Veli Event”) as such:

I mean, there was no such thing as Turkish poetry in Federal Germany until those years. Since there was not even a single book to be dealt with concretely, the people of this country were not able to even think that Turkish literature could exist. Therefore, when Orhan Veli came out [as a bilingual publication by Dağyeli in 1985], he did not create “an event.” However, it pleased some readers who understand something about poetry . . . Elisabeth Borchers, one of the well-known German poets, wrote to me in a letter that “If there was a tradition to choose the poem of the year, I would choose a poem by Orhan Veli”. At that time we were content with such crumbs of joy.<sup>123</sup> (1986)

According to Pazarkaya, the *SWF-Bestenliste* gave way to Veli’s critical recognition in West Germany. This critical recognition showed itself, albeit rarely, in the years after the book’s selection for the *SWF-Bestenliste*. A striking example is the appearance of Veli’s poems on the wall of the newspaper building AVNET in Berlin am Ku’dammeck: the Dağyeli edition of the book was advertised on one side of the building, which appears alongside the verses on the other side. Taken from 20 poems, each verse appears in a sequence for 20-30 seconds.<sup>124</sup> Veli’s poems were also recited in reading events under various organizations.”<sup>125</sup>

Yet apart from the efforts of individuals such as Pazarkaya—who himself recommended *Garip/Fremdartig* to fellow journalist critics in the *SWF-Bestenliste* jury (Dağyeli 2020)—the book’s selection did not have a massive impact on wider audiences in West Germany, even if

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<sup>122</sup> “Galata Köprüsü”

<sup>123</sup> “Diyeceğim, Federal Almanya’da o yıllara değin Türk şiiri diye bir şey yoktu. Somut olarak ele alınacak bir tek kitap bile olmayınca da, bu ülkenin insanları Türkçe bir edebiyatın olabileceğini bile düşüncecek durumda değildiler. Orhan Veli çıkınca, bu yüzden, ‘bir olay’ yaratmadı. Ancak, şiirden biraz anlayan bazı okurları sevindirdi. . . . Tanınmış Alman ozanlarından Elisabeth Borchers, ‘Yılın şiirini seçme geleneği olsa, Orhan Veli’nin bir şiirini seçerdim,’ diye yazdı bana bir mektubunda. O zaman iste böylesine sevinç kırıntılılarıyla yetindik.”

<sup>124</sup> Letter from Imre Breuer to Cait Güleç, May 11, 1989, Dağyeli private archive.

<sup>125</sup> Brochure of the reading event, “İki Dünya Arasında / Zwischen Zwei Welten,” Central Library of Moers, and brochure of the reading event, Brochure of the reading event, “Ein Fisch in einer Flasche Schnapps,” organized by Gudrun Gerlach, Yulyus Golombeck and Axel Walter, Dağyeli private archive.

select critics “took possession of it with great enthusiasm and a little surprise.”<sup>126</sup> This is clear from the sales numbers. In his letter to İnci Asena two years after the *SWF-Bestenliste* announcement, Yıldırım Dağyeli notes that *Garip/Fremdartig* sold about 100 copies in the first three months after making the list; this number then plummeted drastically to 10 volumes a month, and eventually to less than 10 a month one year after the prize announcement.<sup>127</sup>

Granting Turkish literature public recognition in West Germany nevertheless remained a steadfast commitment for publishing houses like Dağyeli and Ararat. Whereas Turkish literature largely remained a “terra incognita,” Dağyeli “tr[ie]d to fill this gap, step by step.”<sup>128</sup> The same concept of “terra incognita” was used by Zafer Şenocak to delineate the state of Turkish literature in German translation from the 1940s until the 1970s; as Kristin Dickinson explains, these translations “belonged to a niche market,” and included only select authors such as Yaşar Kemal in West Germany, and Nazım Hikmet und Fazıl Hüsni Dağlarca in East Germany (2021, 15).<sup>129</sup> Yüksel Pazarkaya similarly traces the titles of Turkish literature in translation that were published during the 1950s and 1960s. As he demonstrates that *The magazine for cultural exchange of the Institute for Foreign Relations in Stuttgart’s* (1962) double issue on Turkey consisted of a compilation of only 13 titles, Pazarkaya himself could only collect an additional 11 titles for the entire decade of the 1960s (231).

This circulation history attests to the difficulty of publishing and publicizing any work of Turkish literature in the West German context. At the same time, it reveals the rarity and

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<sup>126</sup> “Alman eleştirmenler, ... Orhan Veli’ye büyük bir coşkunluk, biraz da şaşkınlıkla sahip çıktılar.”

<sup>127</sup> Letter from Yıldırım Dağyeli to İnci Asena, March 21, 1988, Dağyeli private archive.

<sup>128</sup> “... versuchen wir, das Versäumte Schritt für Schritt nachzuholen.” Press release on the publication series “Türkische Autoren in Europa” (Turkish authors in Europe, Dağyeli private archive.

<sup>129</sup> For the scope of this chapter, I only focus on the translations in German and bilingual publications after the postwar era. For a comprehensive study on the German Turkish translational relationship, see Dickinson, *DisOrientations: German-Turkish Cultural Contact in Translation, 1811-1946*. Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2021.

significance of bilingual publishing houses such as Dağyeli and Ararat. Through their work with translators, their efforts to attract new readerships across communities, and their acknowledgement of both Turkish and German speaking younger generations, who struggled to access literary works in the first place, they were pioneers in the bilingual publishing field. Despite financial limitations and a difficult literary market, their efforts were critical to establishing a dynamic, non-hierarchical literary canon of Turkish-German literature that exceeded the framework of labor migration.

### **Conclusion: Life read in two languages**

Bilingual publishing houses often publish volumes in two languages not only for practical reasons of accessibility. As in the collection of Veli's poems, they gesture at communities that exist in the presence of two languages: *Garip/Fremdartig* is thus a product of a fundamentally multilingual society that exists with the fact that there are, and will be, more than one language for communication, for self-expression, as well as for the enjoyment of literature. In 1981, The EXpress-Edition publishing house released a bilingual book in Turkish and German, which consisted of autobiographical stories and photographs from the everyday lives of West Berlin inhabitants with a migration background from Turkey, entitled *Weil wir Türken sind/Türk olduğumuz için* (Because We Are Turks, Kurt and Meyer 1981). Children pose in front of the photographer and author Kemal Kurt's camera in a rental tenement courtyard in a West Berlin neighborhood, with the bilingual caption "Ich weiß nicht, wo ich später leben werde/İleride nerede yaşayacağımı bilmiyorum" (I don't know where I am going to live, 44). The photographs by Kemal Kurt and Hans Günter Kleff are not directly connected to the stories or captions; they were juxtaposed rather in montage fashion with first-hand stories of people from all ages about

their times of work, leisure, education, play and protest in West Germany. The caption “I don’t know where I am going to live” is a quote from a resident and daughter of Turkish migrant worker Hanife Kurtal, whose autobiographical account is on the next page. Kurtal’s testimony stresses the difficulty of growing up in West Germany as a schoolgirl, who was placed well below her level of elementary education in Turkey, due to her lack of skills in German. “For most foreigners it is impossible to communicate and get along since it requires a command of the language” (45),<sup>130</sup> she states. The caption that accompanies this photograph in both German and Turkish thus responds to a question that carries with it an expectation of someone’s place of living as a definitive future reference point, despite and regardless of one’s current, actual living place, in front of which this photograph was taken in the first place.

In creating a narrative of everyday experiences after labor migration out of selected texts and images, *Because we are Turks* resembles another publication that was released six years earlier in 1975 by the writer John Berger and the photographer Jean Mohr, *A Seventh Man*. The work constitutes the outcome of Berger’s study of labor migration in Europe during the 1970s, and becomes a relatively more well-known inventory of the lives of migrant workers. *A Seventh Man* reflects some of the sensibilities with the rise of the New Left around questions of exploitative measures and issues of discrimination and inequality with regards to immigrant workers and their families across Europe. The photographs and the stories reflect these political concerns, where the three sections in the book are named after temporary work experiences: “Departure,” “Work,” and “Return.” The stories are narrated anonymously in third person singular and in English, ironically also imitating the recurring disinterestedness in the sources of

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<sup>130</sup> “Verstehen und Sichanpassen ist aber für Ausländer meistens nicht möglich, da dies über die Sprache läuft. / Anlaşmak ve uyuşmak çoğu yabancılar için olanak dışıdır çünkü bu dil bilmeyi gerektirir.”

media and politics in Europe about who the protagonists of immigration were and what these figures actually did in the everyday contexts they worked in.

*Because we are Turks* is a response as well as a critical supplement to *A Seventh Man* precisely because of its take on the limited understanding of the life of the so-called guest worker figure as a mere labor force in discourses on immigration and the question of foreigners in mainstream media and politics in West Germany. In the foreword, the editors Kemal Kurt and Erika Meyer explain their rationale for publishing a bilingual work in first person singular, *as is*, without any additional commentary, edits, or analysis: “We wanted members of the community to talk and others to listen. Therefore, we rendered their words firsthand, without intervention ... In the end, we published the conversations in two languages so that people are not, as usual, rendered as displaced once again” (4).<sup>131</sup> Here, the bilingual publication does not only provide accessibility to a wider audience. The existence of both languages side by side also affirms that the lives of West Berlin inhabitants with a migration background are not in suspense, even if public discourse constantly displaces languages and people from their actual places of being and dwelling.

A published photograph of a housing-ads page in a West-Berlin newspaper in the book is another example of the material consequences of such expectations about the symbolic suspense of life. Nearly every single description is accompanied by a small note stating either “Nicht an Ausländer” (not for foreigners), “Nur Deutsche” (only for Germans), or “Ideal für Gastarbeiter” (ideal for guest workers, 21). As seen from the expressions mostly implying the guest workers,

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<sup>131</sup> “Wir wollen diese Menschen zu Wort kommen und andere zuhören lassen. Darum haben wir uns aus dem, was sie uns mitteilen haben, zurückgezogen ... Wir bringen die Texte zweisprachig, damit die Betroffenen nicht wie meist üblich draußen bleiben. / Biz bu insanların konuşmasını ve diğerlerinin dinlemesini istiyoruz. Bunun için bize anlattıklarını dolaysız olarak, kendimiz araya girmeden aktardık ... Sonunda da yine alışlageldiği gibi açıkta kalmamaları için konuşmaları iki dilde yayınlıyoruz.”

such life is depicted by the press and other media as short-term and assumed to eventually exist elsewhere. This expectation of migrant laborers or immigrants in West Germany to dwell in households only temporarily until their supposed return to their countries of origin due to short-term work contracts confirms the relatively more popular assumption that Rita Chin underscores: “There was little sense that guest workers might eventually present a social problem because everyone involved in the recruitment program assumed that labor migrants would inevitably return home” (Chin 2009, 81). This idea of suspending life through work does not hold in the content and structure of such bilingual books such as *Because we are Turks*, both in the photographic spaces outside work time—meaning those of schools, weddings, streets, and houses—and in the textual space that narrates the immigrants’ accounts in two languages.

EXpress-Edition publishing house (as well as an exhibition space) was established in 1979, which was six years after the guest worker recruitment program came to a halt due to the economic recession in the aftermath of the oil crisis. It differs from Ararat and Dağyeli in its political programming and could therefore be considered as an “alternative publishing house.” Preferring to collaborate with immigrant writers, photographers, and scholars, EXpress-Edition also, albeit rarely, released bilingual publications. Through these bilingual efforts, EXpress-Edition, Ararat and Dağyeli publishing houses establish their own reading publics and become themselves media initiatives in the broader context of the publishing sector.<sup>132</sup> While their rationales differ—serving both educational, literary, and/or scholarly purposes—they all share the idea that in their contexts, bilingual publications have social and political stakes which

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<sup>132</sup> I should mention that in this chapter I only focused on the publishing houses that publish in Turkish and German, but there are also others such as Elfenbein publishing house that published bilingually in Portuguese and German. It should be also indicated that publishing houses such as Fischer Verlag also published bilingual books for language learning, as well as for republishing the literatures from the Western canon. However, I did not include them here for the purpose of focusing only on publishing houses that publish exclusively for the needs of minority communities.

cannot be separated from one another. This idea is reiterated time and again in their press releases, which note that creating an aesthetic domain and establishing readerships are always political practices. This is particularly relevant to bilingual publications in Turkish and German, which carry drastically different hegemonic statuses and levels of visibility in the West German context.

Changing an entire discourse about the presumed ways of encountering a community is always bound to material consequences for those who strive to take part in conversations that perpetually displace it. The founders of multilingual publishing houses in West Germany dare to ask what constitutes the definition of life after labor migration. Whereas this life is so often assumed to be suspended and to exist elsewhere, they ask what publishing, circulation, promotion, and consumption can actually do *to* and *for* communities, whose lived relations are an inseparable part of the same life in question.



### **Chapter 3 Conflicting Imaginations of Life Beyond Community: *Anadil* Journal as a Forum**

In a population whose members establish places of connection through alternative media initiatives, thereby raising a variety of concerns about everyday life and the making of art, what are the nuances in their discussions, and why do they matter? In previous chapters, I emphasized the ways in which immigrant-led media initiatives paved the way for a shared aesthetic kinship among communities whose members strove for connection in West Germany. Placing these initiatives within a broader framework of media networks in West Germany, I analyzed how they rethought definitions of life in mainstream media with respect to immigrant and post-migrant experiences; how they intervened in this discourse with their own definitions, production of works, and establishment of media initiatives; and how they communicated through their contribution to the aesthetic networks that they themselves created and supported.

This chapter, which focuses on the first Turkish-German bilingual literature and art journal *Anadil* as a smaller network, serves rather as a counterpoint to my earlier analyses. I argue that highlighting the inconsistencies, discordances, and disagreements between readers, publishers, translators, and authors presents us with a more accurate picture of how such communities are formed in the first place. These debates included specific discussions on certain works of translation, different takes on the question of integration, varying tastes, and preferences about the canonization of literature in a Turkish-German context, and other disputes, such as recommendations to younger generations about reading choices. I hereby argue that a sense of aesthetic kinship can only be conceived through acknowledgment of the fact that

experiences in creating and receiving art and literature *differ*, just as the singular experiences do. Focusing on *Anadil* shows what such an aesthetic community of readers, writers and artists looks like. It reveals existing and recurring misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and misguided assumptions among wide ranging members. As simple as this sounds, the following emphasis is critical: the members of the reading public in *Anadil*, as in all communities, possess diverging opinions, political tendencies, access to language(s), and assumptions about what life looked like after labor migration. Highlighting such an apparent fact is necessary in the context of immigrant-led media initiatives such as *Anadil*, precisely because these differences tended to be flattened out in order to address immigrant and post-migrant communities in stereotyping and homogenizing ways in political discussions. In this sense, my use of the words “communities” in plural form, or “community of readers” works rather as a reminder of the contested meanings of “community” in the first place, often highlighting assumed experiences of nationalities, certain experiences or other identities, as often used in, for example, “*Gastarbeiter* community,” “community of foreigners,” or “Turkish community.” What I focus on in my reading of *Anadil* as a forum is the fact that an aesthetic domain is dynamically created through literary preferences and discussions, as well as reading and writing practices *across* communities. However, this does not mean that the voices in *Anadil* were immune to discriminatory perspectives, nationalist sentiment, limiting assumptions about identities, or narrow understanding of aesthetic criteria in relation to literary practices. To the contrary, editorial commentaries in *Anadil* often set an expectation for readers to agree on Kemalist values and its upholding of monolingualism, which originate from the early years of the Turkish Republic. Some common uses of historically limited concepts such as “linguistic unity” and “cultural independence,” which implicitly assimilate ethnicity and linguistic diversity, demonstrate the dominance of left-leaning

intellectuals from Turkey in bilingual initiatives such as *Anadil*. In turn, the journal's overall pursuit of identity-restrictive politics reveals the limitations of the intellectual hegemony of Turkish political exiles that may become apparent in some cases in the language and selections of works when it comes to the postwar Turkish-German media initiatives I examine. Relatedly, I question *Anadil*'s editorial alignment with Kemalism as an ideal for a top-down process of historical modernization and secularization, which, in its more recent projections, also largely excluded and displaced most of the population that came to Germany as migrant laborers, especially those who did not identify themselves as Turkish. Thus, by reading *Anadil* as a forum of contradictions and conflicts, I point toward an unsettling and, therefore, not easily definable aesthetic space for literatures in Turkish and German. While the journal aimed to serve its public as the ground for a *shared* aesthetic taste, I uncover a multiplicity of readerly interactions that attest to vastly different perceptions about what it means to live, read, and write in West Germany.

### **3.1 Establishing a cooperative platform of art and literature: Editorial self-reflections in *Anadil***

*Anadil: Yurtdışındaki Türklerin Yazın ve Sanat Dergisi* (Mother Tongue: A Literature and Art Journal of Turkish People Abroad) is a literature and art journal based in Stuttgart and published in Heilbronn under the editorship of Yüksel Pazarkaya, which was published every two months in a total of 13 issues between the years 1980 and 1982. It is the earliest example of an immigrant-led journal of literature and art, which included non-fiction essays, short stories, poems, and autobiographical narrations, music sheets in Turkish, as well as print paintings from many established and young writers and artists across West Germany, along with a special

section called “Beispiele” (Examples), which involves manuscripts and translations in German.<sup>133</sup> This journal is the result of voluntary labor on the part of writers, translators, artists and publishers. The publishing and typesetting work, for instance, was done by Tülin and Ünal Uncu at Uncu Publishing, who are also the owners of Türk-Alman Kitabevi (Turkish-German Bookstore) in Heilbronn, known to be a meeting point of writers from Turkey and West Germany (Nesin 2019, 145-146). The authors in *Anadil*'s core collective also describe themselves as “yazarlar imecesi,” which could be translated as a “voluntary-author-collective,” which supports the journal by collecting works and letters from cities outside Stuttgart. An example of this is Güney Dal, who provided his address in West Berlin for correspondences (Dal 1980). The voluntary collective that was initiated by *Anadil* authors Yüksel Pazarkaya, Aras Ören, Güney Dal, and later, Aziz Yaşar Kılıç, also included other distributors inside and outside of West Germany, including the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Austria, Australia, (Pazarkaya 1981, 95) and Japan, reaching over 500 contributors (Pazarkaya 2017, 250). Also offering annual memberships and shipping to countries beyond Europe, the solidarity among the collective enabled the journal to be received in a transnational context by inviting readers from a variety of cultural backgrounds (Pazarkaya 1980, 1).

The collective effort, however, was limited when it came to technical work such as enveloping, addressing, and stamping the *Anadil*'s issues. Pazarkaya states in an interview that beyond his editorial role in the journal, he had to also take on these jobs all by himself (Pazarkaya 2017, 250), along with doing most of the translations in the content. Having moved from Turkey to West Germany as a student of Chemistry at Stuttgart University, Pazarkaya is prolific, and was a key figure in many immigrant-led media networks throughout his career;

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<sup>133</sup> The self-definition of *Anadil* in the journal is “Türkische Literaturzeitschrift mit ‘Deutschen Seiten.’” (Turkish literature journal with “German pages”)

beside his scriptwriting for the television series *Unsere Nachbarn, die Baltas* (Our Neighbors, the Balta Family, 1983), his engagement with the establishment of a Turkish-German theater, along with that of Stuttgarter Studiobühne, and his role as the broadcast editor for the Turkish Program in Westdeutscher Rundfunk Köln (West German Broadcasting Cologne), he was among the most prominent translators of Dağyeli publishing house, whose bilingual publication of Orhan Veli's *Garip/Fremdartig* was ranked in first place by the SWF-Bestenliste in March, 1986. Beyond such activities, Pazarkaya is also the author of many literary works in West Germany that mainly focus on the experiences of migration from Turkey, including *Oturma İzni* (Residence Permit, 1977), *Ben Aranıyor* (Searching for an "I", 2018, [1989]), and *Ich und die Rose* (Me and the Rose, 2002).

Pazarkaya's individual and multi-tasking efforts in publishing *Anadil*, as he states in the same interview, only lasted two years. His consolation was that after *Anadil*, other literary and art journals and magazines in Turkish and/or in German appeared (Pazarkaya 2017, 250). These journals include *Yabanel* and *Al-Gül* in West-Berlin, *Die Brücke* in Saarbrücken, *Direnış* and *Kafdağı* in Duisburg, *Yeni Zamanlar* in Hannover, and *Sirene* in Munich (Akkaya 2014), where translations and publications were often done by a similar principle of voluntary collective work by the members of literature and art associations, or smaller groups of students. These journals responded to a rising demand for a common ground from which to access and critique literature in Turkey as well as in West Germany. Pazarkaya expresses his initial motivation behind publishing a journal like *Anadil* out of this felt necessity and urgency, stating: "For those of us writing in Turkish and German living in various cities in Germany, there was no common environment, no meeting and communication ground before *Anadil*" (Pazarkaya 2017, 250).<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> "Almanya'nın çeşitli kentlerinde yaşayan Türkçe ve Almanca yazan bizler için bir ortak ortam, bir buluşma ve iletişim ortamı hiç yoktu *Anadil* öncesinde."

In order to meet the multiple potential needs of readers with regards to literature and art, *Anadil* was particularly designed to address them in different formats. While some sections in the journal appear regularly for a few issues successively, other sections disappear after being published only once. Such experiments with form and content in *Anadil* indicate that the changing agenda of the art and literature scene, as well as the political situation in West Germany, left an impact on the journal's overall structure. This can be traced especially under the section "Sanat Evreninden" (From the Universe of Art), where the editorial office of *Anadil* provides readers with news about various current events. These include contemporary art exhibitions, publications, literary readings, research, and newspapers on experiences of migration, academic accomplishments of Turkish professors, musical awards, as well as protests and boycotts by authors and artists across West Germany. The incorporation of recent news about a variety of media productions was also realized by analyses of works in cinema and television written by Ömer Olgunsoy, of theater by Yüksel Pazarkaya, and of art by Mehmet Güler.

### ***3.1.1 On the premise of collective effort***

A closer look at the remarks and commentaries on the journal *by the journal*—*Anadil's* editorial emphasis on the readers' and writers' cooperation—is necessary to understand the stakes of collective efforts in the journal. By reading some parts from editor's notes, editorial remarks and an essay by Pazarkaya himself about the problems about the financial hardships, technical delays and distribution of the journal, I show the transparent relationship that the board strives to establish with *Anadil's* readers, which in turn, becomes an invitation and expectation for the reader to feel a sense of belonging to *Anadil's* aesthetic space. Such dynamic approach of the

journal to its readers reveals the fact that *Anadil* is not only a platform for following the recent directions taken in the fields of literature and art in Turkish and German, but also helps us to develop a comprehensive understanding of the challenges involved in the publication process: Information about *Anadil*'s editorial decisions, its position within the recent political changes in West Germany, its philosophy for publication, its promotion and reception, and its material difficulties with contribution and distribution, were provided and discussed extensively throughout the issues. These self-reflections inside the journal also serve as an archival ground, which allows us to investigate the *Anadil* initiative's relation to its everyday conditions and surroundings. Throughout the 13 issues, which are dispersed over a span of about 2 years, the contributors of *Anadil* witnessed multiple changes in the course of politics and literature both in Turkey and in West Germany. With a start of its publication only a few months after the military coup d'état in Turkey in September, 1980, *Anadil* was active at a time in which policies with respect to immigrants and people with foreigner status took a downturn, as epitomized by West-Berlin CDU Senator of the interior Heinrich Lummer's immigration decree that sparked rampant protests during 1981. Helmut Kohl's election as Chancellor on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1982 then led to a number of anti-immigration policies, and his eventual declaration that Germany was *not* "a country of immigration" in his official government statement of 1989.

Amidst such structural denial of immigrants as key members of West German society, Pazarkaya presents his rationale for publishing *Anadil* as a form of "settlement" in his foreword<sup>135</sup> to the first issue, "Gurbetten Sürgüne?" (From Life in the Foreign Lands to Exile?):<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Although it is not the first essay of the issue, Pazarkaya describes it as the "introduction" in the text's main body.

<sup>136</sup> The word "gurbet" has multiple meanings as being distant and away from home, being in a foreign place, and foreignness.

The process of settlement of a society numbering in the millions means establishing all the institutions of social life. This can be done ... through a synthesis based on the concrete, historical and social conditions of both countries, through the creation of unique institutions that are appropriate to their own reality and dynamic structure. (Pazarkaya 1980, 1)<sup>137</sup>

In describing *Anadil*'s existence as the result of a "synthesis" that emerges from cultural productions of a variety of communities, Pazarkaya acknowledges the different reasons for migration from Turkey to West Germany. He includes here artists and intellectuals who likely came to Germany as political refugees alongside the majority of migrant laborers (1). While this foreword addresses the necessity of *Anadil* for Turkish-speaking communities, a different, German version of the text, titled "Vom Kulturschock zur Kultursynthese" (From Culture-shock to Cultural Synthesis, Pazarkaya 1980b), appears in the following pages, which explains the different reasons for *Anadil*'s publication in an address to a German-speaking public: "Out of isolation and introversion, new life is already sprouting from the migrants, which in the long run will prove to be a hopeful and creative synthesis"(7).<sup>138</sup> Through the efforts of *Anadil*'s contributors, according to Pazarkaya, this new "life" that would come about as a cultural synthesis would take place in the German pages of the journal, which consisted not only of translations, but also involved manuscripts written in German by Turkish and/or German-speaking authors across Europe (7).

Both versions of Pazarkaya's essays present the same practical facts about how *Anadil* would reflect such synthesis by reflecting on the journal's preparation process: from its typesetting to the formation of the voluntary network of its author-collective, the everyday

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<sup>137</sup> "Milyonlarla sayılan bir toplumun yerleşim süreci demek, toplumsal yaşamın bütün kurumlarını kurmak demektir. Bu ya gelinen ve yaşanan ülkelerdeki varolan kurumların üstlenilmesiyle olur, ya da her iki ülkenin somut, tarihsel, toplumsal koşullarına dayanan bir sentez yoluyla kendi nesneline uygun, dinamik yapısından doğan özge kurumları oluşturmak yoluyla."

<sup>138</sup> "Aus der Isoliertheit und Introvertiertheit heraus spriesst bereits neues Leben aus den Migranten, das sich auf längere Sicht als eine hoffnungsvolle und kreative Synthese herausstellen wird."



difficulties and efforts were exhibited to the readers in detail. This created a sense of transparency among the contributors of the journal and its readers, allowing *Anadil* to maintain closeness with the larger public as a democratic forum; in some cases, the editorial office of the journal particularly involved the readers in decisions by publishing their opinions. An example of this is the section “Yankılar” (Echoes) in the second issue, where reader letters were published in their original language of composition, alongside readers’ names and cities of residence. As a general response to these letters, an introductory note by *Anadil* summarizes the recurring demands of readers, including longer individual issues and a more frequent publishing policy (such as monthly) (*Anadil* 1981, 40). The select letters consist mostly of laudatory remarks, potentially adding to the promotion of the journal to increase its reach through publicity. At the same time, sharing readers’ comments renders the success of the journal something to be shared among its reading public: the note in the beginning of “Yankılar” also refers to other venues in which the journal was advertised, sharing the publication and promotional journey of *Anadil* with the reader directly.<sup>139</sup>

These gestures become one among many different forms of invitations to readers to personally partake in the journal’s process of publication and recognition across countries. The announcement in the 5th issue, titled “Anadil’in Türkiye’deki Sürdürümü için Okur Girişimi” (Readers’ Initiative for the Distribution/Sustainability of *Anadil* in Turkey), is a direct request

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<sup>139</sup> “ANADIL ilk kez 11 Aralık 1980 perşembe akşamı, Berlin, Buchhändlerkeller’de Güney Dal, Aras Ören ve Yüksel Pazarkaya’nın yaptıkları okumanın arkasından Türk ve Alman dinleyicilere, 12 Aralık günü ise, Türk Yazını haftasına katılanlara “Literarisches Kolloquium”un salonlarında tanıtıldı. Stuttgart Radyosu’nun Almanca yayınlarında dergi üzerine Yüksel Pazarkaya ile iki ayrı konuşma yapıldı, Köln ve Berlin Radyosu Türkçe yayınlarında ANADIL’e yer verdiler, Türk ve Alman basını ANADIL’i bir olay olarak duyurdu.” (*Anadil* 1981,40) “ANADIL was first introduced to Turkish and German audiences on the evening of Thursday, December 11, 1980, in Berlin, Buchhändlerkeller, after a reading by Güney Dal, Aras Ören and Yüksel Pazarkaya, and on December 12, in the halls of the “Literarisches Kolloquium” for those attending the Turkish Literature Week. Radio Stuttgart’s German-language broadcasts featured two separate interviews with Yüksel Pazarkaya on the journal, Radio Cologne and Radio Berlin featured ANADIL in their Turkish-language broadcasts, and the Turkish and German press covered ANADIL as an event.”

from the readers in West Germany to send *Anadil* to their friends' addresses in Turkey by purchasing the first seven issues for them (Pazarkaya 1981, 95). This is articulated in the announcement as a collective “responsibility and obligation” of the reader toward the journal as well as toward their friends, while sharing with them the financial difficulties and the amount of work given for the publication of each issue by an extensively detailed justification and reasoning:

If the large size and content of *Anadil* were converted into the size of a pocketbook, it would be a pocketbook of at least sixty pages. The cover, the paper and the printing are of superior quality to those found in pocketbooks. In addition, *Anadil* is bilingual. Given that even pocketbooks with a print run of tens of thousands are not cheaper than *Anadil*, our journal with a limited print run is cheap in German conditions. We can only achieve this by not including the huge amount of work that goes into *Anadil* in the production costs at all. We only subtract costs from what is paid out, such as typesetting, printing, paper, postage, etc. (95)<sup>140</sup>

Emphasizing *Anadil* as a product of voluntary and collective work by stating the absence of production costs—meaning there is no income gained from editing, writing and translation work, not to mention that authors were not paid to be published in the journal—Pazarkaya expects readers to join in this process of publishing, which is essentially based on a principle of solidarity. Due to the journal's claimed affordability and relatively low value in the market, Pazarkaya does not claim any responsibility for a financial compensation of labor, which is left unaddressed in the announcement.

Unable to finance itself in the long term, the editorial office of *Anadil* declared its thirteenth issue as its last in another announcement addressed to and shared with readers. With a hopeful gesture toward the rapid increase of other literary journals and magazines in Turkish

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<sup>140</sup>“ANADIL'in büyük boyutu ve içeriği, cep kitabı boyutuna dönüştürülecek olsa, en azından altmış sayfalık bir cep kitabı ortaya çıkar. Kapağı, kâğıdı ve baskısı cep kitaplarında rastlanan nitelikten üstündür. Ayrıca ANADIL iki dilde çıkmaktadır. On binlerce basan cep kitaplarının bile ANADIL'den ucuz olmadığı düşünülürse, sınırlı bir baskıya sahip dergimiz Almanya koşullarında ucuzdur. Bunu ancak, ANADIL'e geçen büyük emekleri üretim giderlerine hiç katmayarak sağlıyoruz. Giderleri yalnızca dizgi, baskı, kâğıt ve posta vs. giderler gibi dışarıya ödenenlerden çıkarıyoruz.”

across West Germany, material difficulties were put forward as the main reason for the journal's termination (*Anadil* 13 1982, 102). Nevertheless, the draft of a future project was also mentioned in the end, which was to continue publishing *Anadil* annually in the form of a bilingual yearbook instead of a journal. While this project was never realized, *Anadil* as a journal remains an archival document that offers timely aesthetic discussions in its content. Despite its limited number of issues, with its serial form that was published every two months, *Anadil* offers us a sense of continuity as a forum, which involved the opinions, analyses and discussions of readers and writers of the day.

### **3.2 Critique of an aesthetic domain: Literary discussions in *Anadil***

Many public discussions were published serially throughout *Anadil*'s issues over the span of 2 years. The debates involve literary events, translations, manuscripts, and literary criticism, and were discussed by individuals and institutions with a variety of fields and backgrounds, ranging from experts and experienced intellectuals, such as literary critics, writers and translators, but also *Anadil*'s readers<sup>141</sup> and other representatives of publishing houses, and even state institutions. It was therefore possible for readers to follow their contradicting statements, disagreements, varying opinions—and in some cases, polemics—issue by issue. This immersed them in recent developments in the domain of literature and art during the early 1980s. In my readings of these reactions, I ask what role language plays in establishing relations between all

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<sup>141</sup> For an example of the inclusion of readers into the debates, see the discussion on Mehmet Yıldız's short story "Süpürgeli Bakan" (Minister with a Broom) by Ömer Polat, titled "Gorki, Çehov, Gogol ve Mehmet Yıldız" (Gorki, Chekov, Gogol, and Mehmet Yıldız 1981), and the responses, "Bir Eleştirinin Eleştirisi," (A Critique of a Critique) by Mehmet Yıldız (1981), "Sevgi İlkesi" (The Principle of Love) by Fakir Baykurt (1981), and "Bir tartışmanın ardından: Devlerin Üstüne doğru" (After a Debate: Walking Towards the Giants) by the reader Ece from Duisburg—the last name not given (n.d. 1981).

members of the writing and reading public. How does the creation of a bilingual journal affect the literary and artistic language of communication? And how do life experiences that also derive from political inclinations, class relations, language acquisition, education, gender, and age shape the ways in which literature is read and understood?

In order to respond these questions, I examine two lengthy literary debates in *Anadil*, namely the discussion about Literarisches Colloquium Berlin's (LCB) Berliner Symposium für Türkische Literatur, and about Nazım Hikmet translations, signed by the name "Ayşen Sergen-Birnbaum." Following the initial debate about the symposium, which is mostly about the criticism of institutions and their organizational efforts, the translation debate allows me to identify some tensions among the same writer communities from West Germany and Turkey about the aesthetics of cultural productions in translation. Finally, I look at the interventions by the younger generation of writers and readers in West Germany in *Anadil*, who are mostly, but not limited to, children of the Turkish migrant laborers. Through an analysis of written narratives about their own lives and own demands, in contrast to their passive positioning in *Anadil* through editorial and authorial lists of reading recommendations, as well as through an analysis of responses to reader submissions and articles criticizing their usually bilingual/multilingual upbringings in West Germany, I critically foreground *Anadil* as an essentially monolingual project. I argue that bringing about all these contradictions, discussions, and disagreements among reader and writer communities in *Anadil* would give us a sense of the internal dynamics that went into the making of an aesthetic domain that operates both in Turkish and German.

Bringing arguments of these multiple communities together on the printed page, *Anadil* occupies a unique space in media as an archive and an open forum of art and literature in West Germany. The journal did not distinguish between subjects with respect to their background:

comments by experts of literature and/or spokespersons of literary spaces were published alongside those from the general public, often without edits. As such, the journal maintained a non-hierarchical attitude and did not intervene in the debates it presented. The debates themselves, however, show just how different statements from similar reading publics can be. This premise may at first appear to be self-evident; all reading publics have internal disagreements. It is worth emphasizing in this context, however, as such disagreement has not been historically accounted for in the respective scholarship and media coverage about Turkish-German literary and artistic landscapes. Laying out the differing positions within these publics provides us with a more comprehensive picture of immigrant and post-migrant literary and artistic productions, which are often traditionally compartmentalized under umbrella concepts of identities and subject matters that are often externally assigned, such as “Gastarbeiterliteratur/kunst,” “Ausländerliteratur/kunst,” or “Migrantenliteratur/kunst,” in the mainstream media. Works that tend to be associated with these contested terms were often assumed to have similar aesthetics about the so-called life of the migrant worker. The discussions in *Anadil*, however, invalidate such a homogenizing understanding of literature as well as life after postwar labor migration. Through the simple act of granting space to criticisms, thoughts, comments, and productions among multiple communities with a variety of life experiences in West Germany, the journal indirectly redefines such logic and gestures instead toward the publicly dismissed complexity of a population.

### ***3.2.1 A discussion of literature, its events, and institutions***

One core literary debate in *Anadil* centers around the “Berliner Symposium für türkische Literatur” (Berlin Symposium for Turkish Literature), which took place in December, 1980.<sup>142</sup> Being one of the earliest discussions in *Anadil* from its second and third issue, it starts with an essay about the impressions of Güney Dal, one of the members of *Anadil*’s author-collective, titled “Bir Buluşma Kırgınının Yaklaşımları” (Meeting Insights from a Disappointed) (Dal 1981, 28). According to Dal, the symposium was organized through the poet and journal editor Michael Krüger’s recommendation of Eckhart Plincke, the director of the İstanbul Goethe Institute at the time, and Literarisches Colloquium Berlin (Literary Colloquium Berlin, LCB) (28). He states that the involvement of these established literary institutions in Turkey and West Germany gave him hopes for the success of such a comprehensive symposium about Turkish literature abroad (28). However, what he experienced was no more than a great disappointment. Most of the invited “German” writers did not attend the meetings for the four consecutive days;<sup>143</sup> there were no simultaneous translators except for the well-known author Tezer Kırıl (also known as Tezer Özlü), who took over all the translation work in the symposium; and neither the Turkish consulate, other culture attachés, or private Turkish businesses in West Germany showed any interest or support with respect to this major organization about Turkish literature (28).

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<sup>142</sup> For an extensive discussion of how the conflict unfolded in the symposium, including the discussions in *Anadil* see Gezen, “Türkisch-deutsche literarische Begegnungen in Westberlin um 1980,” in *Berlin International: Literaturszenen in der geteilten Stadt (1970-1989)*, Susanne Klengel, Jutta Müller-Tamm, Lukas Nils Regeler, Ulrike Schneider (eds.), De Gruyter, 2023, 229-242. For the scope of this chapter, my focus remains on how *Anadil* as a forum operated as a mediator for such discussions across various communities.

<sup>143</sup> With Richard Anders, Peter Hamm, and Joachim Uhlmann as exceptions, along with 2 Turkologists, whose names Dal does not mention. As an appreciation, *Anadil* published one of Hamm’s poems in Turkish, translated by Pazarkaya, with an additional note: “Batı Berlin’deki Türk Yazını haftasına Alman yazarlar ilgi göstermediler. Ama aynı zamanda Münih Radyosu redaktörlerinden tanınmış Alman ozanı Peter Hamm, toplantıları basından sonuna değin izledi. Peter Hamm’ın bugünlerde Hanser yayınevinden çıkacak son şiir kitabından bir şiirini Türkçe’ye çevirerek sunuyoruz.” “German writers showed no interest in the Turkish Literature Week in West Berlin. However, the well-known German poet Peter Hamm, who is also an editor for Radio Munich, followed the meetings from the press to the end. We present one of Peter Hamm’s poems from his latest book of poetry, which will be published by the Hanser publishing house in Turkish.”

Under *Anadil*'s German section "Beispiele" of the same issue, published on the next page, an excerpt from Sender Freies Berlin's (SFB) interview with the chair of the Literary Colloquium Berlin, Dr. Walter Höllerer, was published. This excerpt is described in the terms of "divergent opinions" (auseinander gehende Meinungen) by the *Anadil* editorial office in a short note at the beginning (Höllerer 1981, 29), where Höllerer praises the efforts of the Turkish organizers, translators and writers, along with the symposium's significance and success in raising awareness of Turkish literature's presence in West-Berlin, and of the differences in understandings between Turkish and German people in the city (29). Juxtaposed with these laudatory statements—with no mention of public resentment towards the symposium—the copies of two newspaper articles from *Die Zeit* (from December 19th, 1980) and *Abendszeitung* (from December 22nd, 1980) were published under the same section in *Anadil*, with their critically provocative titles "Ein Skandal" (A Scandal) and "Gäste auf Eis" (Guests on Ice), respectively (*Anadil 2* 1981, 29, 30, 33). Touching upon the same problems stated by Dal in a more outright critical tone, the news on *Abendszeitung* mention the well-known author Aziz Nesin's bitter remarks: "Don't translate us, I don't want it!"<sup>144</sup>

Nesin's protest towards the organization through his refusal to be translated shows the extent of Höllerer's denial of the presence and harshness of the conflicts within the events of the symposium, rendering the entire literary organization as a political issue. *Anadil*'s juxtaposed placement of all these voices in a journalistic manner as a mere collage of opinions lays bare to the readers the apparent disconnection between the organizing institutions of the symposium and its reception. Despite this unmediated approach, however, the editorial office did not leave the news without any commentary: they framed the entire section with a quote from one of the most

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<sup>144</sup> "Übersetzt uns nicht, ich möchte das nicht!"

canonical German authors, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Placed on the right top corner of the first page, it reads: “But of course, if we Germans do not look outside the narrow circle of our surroundings, we easily get into pedantic conceit. I therefore look around at foreign nations and advise everyone to do the same” (29).<sup>145</sup> *Anadil*’s implied, intertextual critique of organizational neglect, which was collectively felt during the meetings of the symposium, recalls a similar pattern of societal neglect with respect to the immigrant and post-migrant populations in West Germany. Highlighted by Goethe’s statement, the political problem of disinterestedness in the essays and news coverage was also made transhistorical, and thus, structural. This immediate connection between the treatment of lives and of the literary realm was similarly emphasized by Karin Kersten in her article in *Die Zeit*: “They [the guests] were exposed to unreasonableness—like all Turks in this country” (29),<sup>146</sup> thereby reinforcing *Anadil*’s critical intervention.

The final word on the Berlin Symposium for Turkish Literature was published on January 21, 1981 in *Anadil*’s third issue, without any intervention, commentary, or remarks on part of *Anadil* or the press. In a final “addendum,” the Senator of Cultural Affairs, Dr. Dieter Sauberzweig, responded to a set of four questions posed by Erika Schmid-Petry, a representative from the Freie Demokratische Partei (Free Democratic Party) (1981, 56). Sauberzweig’s answers further invalidated existing public perceptions about the ethos and purpose of the symposium; he claimed that the press had misconstrued the scope of the symposium, which had been intended to be a “translators’ symposium” with the title “Türkische Literatur der Gegenwart” (Contemporary Turkish Literature), and not a “deutsch-türkisch Autorentreffen” (German-Turkish Authors’ Meeting) (56). On the note of the non-involvement of state

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<sup>145</sup> “Aber freilich, wenn wir Deutschen nicht aus dem Engen Kreise unserer Umgebung hinauszublicken, so kommen wir gar nicht leicht in pedantischen Dünkel. Ich sehe mich daher gern bei fremden Nationen um und rate jedem, es auch seinerseits zu tun.” (Goethe 1827)

<sup>146</sup> “Sie waren Unzumutbarkeiten ausgesetzt—wie alle Türken in diesem Land.”



representatives in the symposium, the Senate refers later to a dinner in honor of the participants of the symposium on December 11. Neither providing much information about the dinner itself nor about the ongoing public resentment towards the symposium's organization, Sauberzweig moves on to mention a technical officer's participation in the dinner, who, out of the dinner's context, had a separate conversation with Nesin himself as “the spokesperson of the Turkish authors” (“Sprecher der türkischen Autoren”) about the betterment of the library work on behalf of the Turkish population in West-Berlin (56).

By publishing official documentations such as that of Sauberzweig's response, news reports, and interviews, *Anadil* informs its readers of nuances in up-to-date discussions about literature of the time, suggesting that the larger aesthetic domain of literature is also constituted by literary spaces, institutions, and organizations. By doing so, the journal also provides a historical record as an archive of the place of life and literature by the immigrant and post-migrant communities in West Germany. Through this layout, the transnational dimension of the Turkish-German literary realm becomes apparent: it involves many actors including literary institutions, translators, and authors in both Turkey and in West-Germany, at once.

### ***3.2.2 A debate's spillover: On Nazım Hikmet translations and polemics***

Another example of public discussions in *Anadil* is a critique of Nazım Hikmet translations by Gisela Kraft, which similarly involves transnational literary actors from Turkey and West Germany. In this case, however, parts of the debate reach beyond *Anadil*'s content by appearing in another West-Berlin journal in Turkish, titled “Halkçı”—a publication of “Türkiye Halkçı Devrimci Federasyonu” (Democrat Revolutionary Federation of Turkey) (HDF)—where Pazarkaya, the founder and editor of the journal, is at the heart of the debate.

The essay on *Halkçı*'s tenth issue, “Özeleştiriden Yoksunlukla Çağdaşlaşma Olanaksızdır” (Modernization is Impossible Without Self-criticism, Kırıl 1982), was written by the only simultaneous translator of the Berlin Symposium for Turkish Literature, and the well-known author from Turkey, Tezer Kırıl (Özlu).<sup>147</sup> In it, Kırıl refers to a critique of Gisela Kraft's translations in a piece published in *Anadil*'s eighth issue by another translator, namely Ayşen Sergen-Birnbaum. Written in German, Sergen-Birnbaum's essay “Schwierigkeiten aus dem Türkischen zu übersetzen” (Difficulties of Translating from Turkish, Sergen-Birnbaum 1982, 12) consists of an analysis of some of Kraft's translations of Nazım Hikmet's *Şeyh Bedrettin Destanı* (1977 [1936]). Starting with the suspicious absence of the translator's name in any publication or scholarship, Kırıl doubts that the translator is someone other than Pazarkaya himself. This is also due to Sergen-Birnbaum's direct—and only—comparison between Kraft's translations with the examples from Pazarkaya's new translation of Hikmet's same work (Kırıl, 17). Regardless of the identity of the translator, Kırıl expresses her astonishment about Pazarkaya's initiative of publishing an apparently attacking critique in his own journal, which, according to her statement, segregates the literary translation realm into two categories: Turkish and non-Turkish translators of Turkish literature (18). She considers Sergen-Birnbaum's text as a hostile reading against the already underrepresented aesthetic field in West Germany, that is, Turkish literature, especially when it comes to the individuals who are putting professional effort into its translation.

To prove her point, Kırıl orients the discussion towards the question of literariness by reading the comparison of one of Sergen-Birnbaum's examples in detail: Hikmet's verse “Seslerini hiç işitmedim” (I never heard their voice) was translated by Gisela Kraft as “Ich kenne ihre Stimme nicht,” (I do not recognize/know their voice), and in Pazarkaya's translation, it

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<sup>147</sup> This essay was also published in Özlu, Tezer. *Yeryüzüne Dayanabilmek İçin*. İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2018.

appears as “Ihre Stimme hörte ich nie” (Never did I hear their voice). Unlike Sergen-Birnbaum suggests, Kıral underlines that Kraft’s version is not a “wrong translation,” given the apparent shifts in the choices of individual words—such as not using the words “hiç” (never) or “işıtmek” (to hear). Beyond that, Kıral mentions her position as an experienced translator herself, arguing that Kraft’s German may be more literary than Pazarkaya’s (17).

Approximately one week before Kıral’s text was published in *Halkçı, Anadil*’s ninth issue was released with two follow-up commentaries on Sergen-Birnbaum’s essay: one is written in the form of a letter by the owner and founder of the Ararat publishing house, Ahmet İ. Doğan; the other is a note written by *Anadil* journal as a response to Doğan. Notably, Pazarkaya’s translation of *Bedreddin*, which was examined by Sergen-Birnbaum, was unpublished at this time. It appeared with Ararat publishing house later that same year (Hikmet 1982). This adds to Kıral’s initial suspicion that Pazarkaya could potentially be Sergen-Birnbaum, who, in Ararat’s letter, has private access to this unpublished translation, and prefers to show only Pazarkaya’s translations as “corrections,” rather than coming up with those of her own (Doğan 1982, 30).<sup>148</sup> Doğan describes this as a “misuse” of a publication from Ararat publishing house, explaining that their intention was never to “poison the atmosphere of the translators’ scene,”<sup>149</sup> and condemns *Anadil* by requesting the editors to discontinue Sergen-Birnbaum’s article, whose second part was scheduled to be published in the 9<sup>th</sup> issue (30). *Anadil*’s response was to continue Sergen-Birnbaum’s underlined parts of both Hikmet’s verses and their so-called “mis-

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<sup>148</sup> “Sie bedient sich bei dieser Korrektur leider nicht etwa ihrer Kenntnisse in Türkisch und Deutsch, sondern sie zitiert aus einer Übersetzung von Yüksel Pazarkaya, die Kürze bei Ararat erscheinen wird.” “Unfortunately, [Sergen-Birnbaum] does not use her knowledge of Turkish and German for this correction, but she quotes from a translation by Yüksel Pazarkaya, which will soon be published by Ararat.”

<sup>149</sup> “Auf keinen Fall war und ist es unser Anliegen ..., die Atmosphäre in der Übersetzerszene zu vergiften.”

translations” by Kraft until the fourteenth chapter of *Bedreddin*, by omitting Pazarkaya’s alternatives upon Ararat publishing house’s request (31).

As one can observe from the discussion on Sergen-Birnbaum’s criticism of Kraft, as well as that of the Berlin Symposium für Türkische Literatur, most of the debates on *Anadil* are polemics, aka., made of often strong opinions toward multiple literary communities in a creation of clear oppositions among them. Often resorting to a momentary emotional appeal from the reader or audience, literature polemics may not be long-lasting theoretical contributions to a broader history of aesthetics. However, beyond their perceived triviality and superficiality, they provide us with the nuances in the discourses of the day. Thus, polemics inform us about the collective needs, fears, values, demands, and desires that one may historically hold on to.

Despite being publicly open as a forum, *Anadil* reflects a collective unease among the members of its own public, attesting to the fact that identities, aesthetic goals, and reading publics can shift. And indeed, they shifted drastically during the early 1980s, which was marked with the definitive permanent settlement of immigrant and post-migrant generations in West Germany. I argue that such unease is due to rapid changes in the newly created aesthetic domains by immigrant and post-migrant communities in West Germany, including changes in shared aesthetic preferences, uses of language(s), and conceptions of “literariness,” as well as dissolving aesthetic “connections” and traditions. The transitivity among multiple communities in question within the scope of the journal defines the characteristics of these polemical public discussions. To put this more concretely, Kraft can become an established translator of Nazım Hikmet as a non-Turkish translator of Turkish literature as much as Pazarkaya. Nazım Hikmet translations in West Germany can become a means of competition, which might even be “misused,” as expressed by a publishing house known for its bilingual translations. A symposium with authors

from Turkey and West Germany can be organized in West Germany, by German literary institutions, as much as in Turkey. Moreover, the lack of this event's organization can receive a critical response in the renowned newspapers as a "scandal." A senator can invalidate the feedback by Turkish authors in West Germany on this symposium, which can be backed up by the German press.

Finally, a translator and author from Turkey can choose to not agree about how this literary event in West Germany unfolded: in her essay, Kırıl makes a further remark about Pazarkaya's (vis-à-vis Sergen-Birnbaum's) allegedly "discriminatory" behavior against Kraft as a non-Turkish translator of Turkish literature and establishes a parallelism between Pazarkaya and other Turkish authors in West Germany on the basis of such behavior. Kırıl accuses the authors in West Germany who took part in the Berliner Symposium of Turkish Literature of being similarly dismissive of the organizational efforts, especially given by Eckhart Plincke, the director of the İstanbul Turkish-German Culture Institute, who sought out funds for the symposium over the course of an entire year (18). She adds that even after all the authors—including Aziz Nesin, Çetin Altan, İlhan Berk, Tomris Uyar, Ferit Edgü, Aysel Özakın, and Demir Özlü—traveled from Turkey to West-Berlin for a week, the SFB's Turkish Program was not able to organize an open session with them (18). An unpublished response, in turn, was provided by Aras Ören, as one among the authors living in West Germany, who was also among the editors of the SFB's Turkish program as well as the permanent authors of *Anadil*: On a copy of Kırıl's essay, Ören took notes in the margins, falsifying her claims: "Not true ... Since our studio hours were limited, we didn't have the opportunity to gather the writers together and

record in the studio, and the writers who were going to stay for a few days weren't very interested in this" (Aras-Ören-Archive).<sup>150</sup>

Ören's simple list of the material challenges appear as irrelevant to Kırıl's expectations. The list indicates the potential misjudgments, miscommunications and misunderstandings within the communities informed by similar aesthetic traditions, some members of which would also contribute to the emergence of new aesthetic communities and their media networks in a country of immigration. Among these members are the population of writers who were never mentioned in these particular polemics, and who occupied the center of the collective unease with definitions, differentiations and transformations: the so-called "second generation."

### **3.3 Generational tensions: Toward a new literature**

Zeki Eski, a high school pupil in Marl, West Germany, tells about his struggles in receiving education in Turkish, along with 900 fellow Turkish pupils who attend the same school, in the third issue of *Anadil*. On behalf of them, Eski writes about his school's demands for more teachers, stating that there is only one teacher per 120-130 Turkish students (Eski 1981, 46). He states that having access to education in one's first language and about one's culture is a natural right, and those who do not provide them with such opportunity would only show an example of "a great irresponsibility" (46). The open letter was published in Turkish alongside a German translation by Pazarkaya (Eski 1981a, 47). An additional note by "*Anadil* editorial office" appears following the German translation of Eski's letter, including the sentences in the following:

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<sup>150</sup> "Stüdyo saatlerimiz kısıtlı olduğundan yazarları bir araya toplama, stüdyoda kayıt yapma olanağımız yoktu, birkaç gün kalacak yazarlar da buna pek sıcak bakmadı."

Integration must never mean self-sacrifice. Integration must never lead to the breeding of the Turkish children of today into the unskilled workers of the German economy of tomorrow. Otherwise, voices will be raised, as they are now in Berlin, calling for Turkish middle schools and gymnasiums. Nobody would then have the right to criticize such demands, which would have their justification as urgently necessary self-help. (47)<sup>151</sup>

*Anadil*'s publication, translation, and response to Eski's letter indicates that the journal's involvement in the discussions of integration, especially of the younger generations, is held as a crucial political responsibility that is immediate to the question of literary production in West Germany. This is also apparent in the non-fiction writing pieces, open letters, interviews, and news coverages on varying topics such as xenophobia, changing policies with regards to immigrants and their families, approaches of state institutions and associations in West Germany toward the organized literary events in Turkish, and discussions of public receptions of select cultural productions. Throughout the pages of *Anadil*, these pieces are placed in juxtaposition with short stories, excerpts from novels, and poems, at times appearing under a thematic scheme.

The third issue demonstrates the journal's wholistic attitude towards life and literature, which was dedicated to children and young people.<sup>152</sup> Including Eski's open letter, the issue is addressed almost exclusively to the population that is often defined as the "second generation," the majority of which were born and/or raised in West Germany, and were educated in German. The works are thus mostly published in both German and Turkish; they range from the autobiographical narrations of the children of migrant laborers to short stories, and to poems as well as other art forms, including the print of Hanefi Yeter's painting of Turkish children

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<sup>151</sup> "Integration darf niemals die Selbstaufgabe bedeuten. Integration darf niemals dazu führen, aus den türkischen Kindern von heute die Hilfsarbeiter der deutschen Wirtschaft von morgen heranzuzüchten. Sonst werden verstärkt Stimmen laut, wie jetzt in Berlin, die nach türkischen Mittelschulen und Gymnasien rufen. Niemand hätte dann das Recht, solche Forderungen zu kritisieren, die als dringend notwendige Selbsthilfe ihre Berechtigung hätten."

<sup>152</sup> This was also indicated openly in the 2nd issue as in the following: "3. Sayı ... çocuklar ve gençler için Türkçe-Almanca yazılarla çıkıyor." "Issue 3 ... will be published for children and young people with texts in Turkish and German," *Anadil* 2 (1981, 22). This is also relevant to April 23<sup>rd</sup> being the official Children's Holiday in Turkey.

learning German at school, and the music sheet for Zülfü Livaneli's song "Çocuk gibi/Wie ein Kind" (Like a Child, Livaneli 1981, 50) with Yüksel Pazarkaya's lyrics.

While German translations of a few texts alongside texts written in German are published under the title "Beispiele" (Examples) in the overall structure of the journal, these texts reach beyond a single section in this issue. They appear throughout its entire body, and mostly as translations in juxtaposition to the Turkish ones, which gives the issue a bilingual character. This makes the third issue that with the most texts in German, which led in turn to new discussions in later issues with respect to topics such as living conditions, writers' use of the German and Turkish languages in their works, and the relation of Turkish literature in Turkey to immigrant and/or post-migrant generations in West Germany.

### ***3.3.1 An emerging aesthetic engagement: Young writers of Anadil***

This linguistic shift in the third issue places the question of language at the intersection of social and literary discussions in *Anadil*, bringing the immediacy of living and aesthetic production to the fore. The short narrative "Bilemezsiniz, ne demektir, her yerde bir yabancı olmak/Ihr wißt nicht, wie es ist, überall ein Fremdling zu sein" (You do not know what it is like to be a stranger everywhere) is an example of such immediacy, which is written by Türkan (no last name given), a member of the "Jugend Schreibt" social support initiative, and translated by Pazarkaya into Turkish (1981, 54-55). The narrative is taken from the initiative's literary publication *Täglich eine Reise von der Türkei nach Deutschland: Texte der zweiten türkischen Generation in der Bundesrepublik* (A daily journey from Turkey to Germany: texts by the second Turkish



generation in the Federal Republic (Förderzentrum Jugend Schreibt e.V. 1980),<sup>153</sup> which consists of mostly autobiographical works by young people, expressed in varying literary genres and interviews. Türkan's text, which moves between a short story and an autobiographical essay, is an account of being denied love by one's social cycles of friends and relatives in Turkey and in West Germany (55).<sup>154</sup> The remaining love in their heart eventually turns to stone, gravitating the narrator to the ground with its heaviness.<sup>155</sup> In the end, they stop speaking to other people completely: their address to "Ihr" (you) in the title is not a reference to people in their social networks, but to members of their natural environment: in the end, not being able to share their love with others, the narrator aspires to be like birds in the trees, who manage to live in total safety and harmony with others. Immersed completely in nature, birds never feel like strangers or foreigners anywhere.

The established playwright Cornelius Bischoff, being also a well-known translator of literature in Turkish, writes a response to Türkan's narrative in the form of an open letter in the following fourth issue of *Anadil*, titled "Ich weiss, wie es ist, ein Fremder zu sein" (I know what it is like to be a foreigner, Bischoff 1981, 70). Referring to his own childhood with his German and Jewish-Turkish parents who fled from Germany and lived in Turkey for nine years from 1939 to 1948 (Kangler 2018, 6), Bischoff expresses that he felt accepted by both communities he was involved with in Turkey, as well as in Germany upon his return. According to Bischoff, this was due to his fluency in both languages, such that it was no longer possible to distinguish if he was from Turkey or Germany. His suggestion for Türkan eventually follows conclusions from

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<sup>153</sup> A review on this book was also published in *Anadil*'s second issue by Yüksel Pazarkaya under the section "Kitaplar" (Books) (*Anadil* 2 1981, 37).

<sup>154</sup> "In meinem Herzen hat sich viel Liebe angesammelt, die ich an meine Freunde verteilen möchte. Sie wollen sie nicht." "A lot of love has accumulated in my heart, which I want to distribute to my friends. They do not want it."

<sup>155</sup> "Die Liebe in meinem Herzen ist zu Stein geworden, von dieser Schwere bin ich ermüdet."

his own life: “Learn both languages so well that it becomes impossible to tell if you are Turkish or German” (Bischoff, 70).<sup>156</sup> Bischoff also adds the necessity of reading literature in both languages to understand people’s behavior and no longer be hurt by them (70).

Pairing up Türkan’s voice with that of the narrator by starting his letter with “Liebe Türkan” (Dear Türkan), Bischoff transforms Türkan’s literary narrative work into the beginning of a conversation about feeling like a foreigner in a country. Bischoff was indeed an exile who had to flee to Turkey at the beginning of WWII when he was 11, who faced systematic racism even there—at the Austrian institution in İstanbul where he got his education (Kangler, 7).<sup>157</sup> From a transnational and transhistorical perspective, Bischoff establishes parallels between Türkan and himself, and relates to the expressed suffering in Türkan’s narrative. Nevertheless, despite the systematic discrimination and racism that they both encountered, he also conflates the reality of being a member of a community with limited financial and educational opportunities in West Germany, with his own childhood replete with access to a privileged education at a European school in Turkey. Moreover, while Bischoff experienced social mobility through his education in Turkey, which led him to become an established writer and translator, Türkan’s future would not likely be equipped with such possibilities. Bischoff’s gesture of solidarity with Türkan from a perceived symmetrical dynamic with the answer “I know what it is like to be a foreigner,” hence disregards the particular position described in Türkan’s narrative. Bischoff’s solution of mastering both languages to the extent of “indistinguishability,” burdens the post-migrant communities in West Germany once again, with a personal responsibility of freeing themselves from their own suffering, which erases the structural mechanisms that perpetuate it

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<sup>156</sup> “Lerne beide Sprachen so gut, daß man nicht mehr feststellen kann, ob Du Türken oder Deutsche bist.”

<sup>157</sup> The institution’s name was even changed a year before his arrival from “St. Georgs Kolleg” to “Deutsches St. Georgs Kolleg” (German St. George’s High School)—a nationalist take on highlighting the “German” identification of the school.

through discriminatory policies, including the realm of education, in the first place. Moreover, learning two languages to the degree of excellence was far from being a reality for most of the population, who were deprived of basic educational rights, as expressed in Zeki Eski's text in *Anadil*'s same issue.

This textual conversation between Bischoff and the narrative voice in Türkan's work opens up many crucial questions about the inseparability of literary engagement and politics in the context of West Germany: histories of racism, exile, and migration; the role of class relations in accessing education and relatedly, literature; and the close relationship between language acquisition and structural opportunities including state and family. All of these elements determine the demands, tastes, and production of literary communities, as also surfaced in *Anadil*, particularly with regards to the communities that mostly formed after postwar migration. This allows the readers of the journal to encounter writers and artists engaged with a variety of experiences in and outside of West Germany, including established and inexperienced authors; those whose parents fled Germany and those whose parents migrated to it; migrant laborers and students; political refugees and intellectuals who fled Turkey during the 1970s and after the 1980 military coup d'état; and Turkologists, translators and publishers who decided to pursue their artistic and literary careers in West Germany.

Relatedly, the published reactions to a range of political events concerning these writers and artists indicate a complex understanding of community. A series of repressive measures taken by the Bonn government and other cities in 1981 against foreigners was extensively discussed and condemned by *Anadil* in the foreword of the seventh issue (*Anadil* 7 1981d, 122). In the following pages, Lummer's policy against squatters and people with foreigner status in 1981 were protested in an open letter to people in Berlin by Aras Ören, which was published in

both Turkish and German, and was signed by fellow writers, including Johannes Schenk, Jürgen Theobaldy, Rolf Haufs, Sarah Kirsch, and Hans Christoph Buch (128).

With the above-stated motivation of acknowledging multiple writer and reader communities in West Germany, the editors and leading writers in *Anadil* take initiative, especially in the fifth issue under the sections both in Turkish and German, with the titles “Ne Okumalı?” (What to Read?, *Anadil* 5 1981c, 88) and “Deutsche Literatur für Junge Türken” (German Literature for Young Turks, *Anadil* 5 1981b, 93), respectively, to introduce literary works to young readers of the journal in order to enhance their knowledge of literature available to them in West Germany, and potentially, in Turkey. This was done in close relation with Aras Ören's broadcast program with Erkin Özgüç in Sender Freies Berlin's (SFB) Türkische Redaktion, where Ören collected and announced book recommendations of ten works by ten authors from each of the leading writers and publishers in West Germany that he interviewed (88). *Anadil* published the entire list of these recommendations in the program, also by providing the reader with the names of the authors for each book, in two separate lists in different pages of the issue: one consists of works published in Turkish, and the other in German, printed in the Turkish and German pages of the journal, respectively.

The list of literature in Turkish in the program was published in *Anadil* with additional recommendations by the author Ömer Polat, and Ören himself, and it consists of contemporary works, as well as the “classics” of Turkish literature, Authors such as Yusuf Atılgan, Aziz Nesin, Adalet Ağaoğlu, Orhan Kemal, Sabahattin Ali, Yaşar Kemal, Kemal Tahir and Sait Faik, were repeatedly mentioned. Recommended by authors and publishers in West Germany specifically, the list also reflects a critical taste beyond the readership in Turkey, with the repeated additions of leading Turkish writers in West Germany, including Mahmut Makal, Fakir Baykurt, Aras

Ören, and Güney Dal. On the other hand, the separate list of literature written in German complements this suggested, alternative semi-canon of Turkish-German literature that the editors and writers in *Anadil* strive to pioneer. The list of recommendations in German is much shorter, and consists of only three authors: Heinrich Böll, Günther Grass, and Yüksel Pazarkaya. The works on this separate list are recognizable similarly as part of a historical and contemporary literary canon in German, including major leading authors from earlier periods, but also with a selection of authors from both East and West Germany, such as Gebrüder Grimm, Heinrich von Kleist, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Hermann Hesse, Thomas Mann, Bertolt Brecht, Theodor Sturm, Erich Kästner, Anna Seghers and Christa Wolf.

Statements in both Turkish and German explain the purpose and timing of *Anadil*'s lists in August: "The aim was to guide Turkish youth abroad, who have not yet established a relationship with Turkish [and German] literature, with suggestions. The off-season was suitable for reading books, and many people were going to Turkey for vacation" (88, 93). Expressing the practical possibility that young readers might find more time to access and read works of Turkish literature during their potential summer visits to Turkey, the *Anadil* editors and writers show the younger generation recognition and support for their initial explorations of literary canons in Turkish and German, along with a lesser-known literature in West Germany, published in Turkish. Moreover, in support of informing young readers who would be interested in reading works of Turkish literature in German translation, *Anadil*'s editorial office published lists of works of Turkish literature that were translated into German. These lists appeared in the ninth and thirteenth issues, for the years 1981 and 1982, respectively (*Anadil* 9 1982a, 40; *Anadil* 13 1982b, 102).

Such a gesture aligns with the journal's primary aim of creating a shared aesthetic taste that would maintain a "meeting and communication environment" between literary communities in West Germany. Moreover, the ethos in the selection of works would less likely be questioned due to their determination and approval by experienced authors and publishers. By relying on the singular aesthetic tastes of a small number of key individuals, *Anadil* establishes an overall standard for literariness in the realm of Turkish-German literature in West Germany, while also claiming to maintain its role as the mediator of a literary forum publishing titles that were officially announced elsewhere. However, the editorial involvement of the journal in the formation of these selections is undeniable, given that all three authors mentioned as *Anadil*'s voluntary-author-collective—namely Yüksel Pazarkaya, Aras Ören, and Güney Dal—are included as recommenders.

*Anadil*'s leadership as the first literary journal in creating a common literary ground among immigrant and post-migrant communities in West Germany, especially among the younger generation, also takes more pedagogical forms throughout the issues: a recurring section with alternating titles like "Genç Ozanlarla Söyleşi" (A Conversation with Young Poets) or "Genç Sanatçılarla Söyleşi" (A Conversation with Young Artists) was dedicated to young readers of *Anadil*, who submitted their works for publication but were rejected. One of the contributors to the journal—Aziz Yaşar Kılıç, who was later added to the journal's author-collective—makes a compilation of his short remarks on these works. Addressing these writers and artists in their full names, Kılıç's feedback reflects an attempt to create a sense of a one-on-one contact with them, which would simulate a "conversation," as the titles of these columns suggest. However, such a virtual meeting with the younger generation ends up being a top-down determination and evaluation of the literariness he seeks out for these works; he refrains from

providing concrete feedback on what has been written or produced, and instead, often evaluates the works according to some unclear aesthetic standards for a “good” work of art, or makes his own assumptions about the writers’ and artists’ reading, writing and drawing habits. His comments, often concluded in 2-3 sentences, involve generalizations without examples, such as: “You should work harder so that your poetry can take a more balanced trajectory” (Kılıç 1981, 39),<sup>158</sup> “It is a fact that you will write much better, provided that you remember to write a lot and read a lot” (39),<sup>159</sup> “You have to develop the technique of poetry and writing well within yourself” (39),<sup>160</sup> “You should tighten your verses and remove the unnecessary ones mercilessly” (Kılıç 1981b, 95),<sup>161</sup> “You must free your poem from the narrative element” (95),<sup>162</sup> and “Free yourself from the habit of making a line from a single word, and make the lines more frequent” (95).<sup>163</sup> Not giving any specific instructions about which parts of these works are in question, what difference these changes would make in the end, or why some stylistic choices need to be avoided, Kılıç maintains a hierarchical position as an aesthetic authority, a position that is both illegible to and unreachable for the young writers and artists he addresses.

Kılıç’s vague criticisms raise important questions about the larger dynamics among Turkish and/or German-speaking literary and artistic communities in West Germany: what is the purpose of creating shared aesthetic relations among communities by pioneering initiatives such as *Anadil*? To what extent did immigrant-led media networks primarily serve the various demands of the literary communities in West Germany themselves, and to what extent did they aspire to preserve a particular cultural framework, which may no longer have aligned with the

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<sup>158</sup> “Şiirinizin daha dengeli bir yörüngeye oturabilmesi için daha çok çalışmalısınız.”

<sup>159</sup> “Çok daha iyi yazacağımız bir gerçek. Ancak bol yazıp, bol okumak gerektiğini unutmamak şartıyla.”

<sup>160</sup> “Şiir ve yazım tekniğini içinizde iyice oluşturmalsınız.”

<sup>161</sup> “Dizelerinizi sıklaştırıp, gereksiz olanları acımadan şiirinizden çıkarmalsınız.”

<sup>162</sup> “Şiirinizi öykü unsurundan kurtarmalsınız.”

<sup>163</sup> “Bir tek sözcükten size yapma alışkanlığından kendinizi kurtararak, dizeleri sıklaştırın.”

life of these communities? Looking in the narratives of the underrepresented members of the second generation, such as those of Türkan and Zeki Eski, provides us with the necessary reference for the variety of literary experiences in West Germany.

The everyday experiences of immigrant and post-migrant societies in West Germany are immediately bound to the ways in which aesthetic networks are created in that the issues of education, housing and financial crisis, legal requirements, issues around physical and mental health, and residency status almost always inform, and more importantly, form the aesthetic domain: the intellectual interventions of reading publics, unpublished writers, students and enthusiasts, are as important as those of established writers, editors, translators, and publishers that make up the same communities. Recalling the founder of the Ararat publishing house Ahmet İ. Doğan, taking up the mediator role for a reading public necessitates acknowledging one's own privilege that not only comes with that role, but also with respect to the communities one takes part in. Otherwise, the idea of sharedness in an aesthetic community would overwrite the experiences of its members, who are pushed toward an assumed standard of literariness, which creates its own inclusionary and exclusionary measures.

### ***3.3.2 Literariness, revisited***

Pazarkaya's critique of literature about immigrant and post-migrant experiences in West Germany, published in the twelfth issue and titled "Almanya Olgusunu Yazmak," (Writing the Phenomenon of Germany), details nuances about the thought processes of most critics in West Germany, as previously criticized by Rafik Schami: critics often tend to read literature by minorities at face value by approaching it as a mere documentation of historical experiences (Schami 1986, 55). This happens due to a diagnosis of a perceived aesthetic dissonance in these



texts, which fail to fit into a traditionally structured criteria of literariness. In his essay, Pazarkaya's critique falls into a similar generalization of an idealized form of literary value, which he defends at the cost of undermining the efforts for creating pieces of art and literature within communities, and especially of people who might write or produce under limiting conditions, who might face difficulties with language and access to literary works in the first place, and who therefore might practice writing according to a small number of models in front of them:

Writing about Germany is becoming more and more like rambling. A few trite facts are repeated over and over again. For example, not even remotely approaching the recording value of "Bizim Köy" the duty of reflecting a reality for the first time, Germany is written in a conventional, worn-out way, lacking innovation (Pazarkaya 1982, 99).<sup>164</sup>

Pazarkaya also compares the way of writing he describes with the practices of producing literary works about the countryside in Turkey (99), which is traditionally termed as "taşra edebiyatı" (provincial literature). His comparison of "writing Germany" with "writing provincial literature" accurately reflects the ethos of his literary criticism, which gets its source from an expectation of a crystallized idea of literariness, rather than an analysis of the practical conditions in writing literary works. The critical issue here is not the fact that Pazarkaya observes the problem of "overuse," that is, writing about the same migration experiences in similar ways, but the fact that he does not touch upon the number of everyday struggles within immigrant communities in the first place.

As a counterpoint to his approach, some of these struggles could be traced as a response in Fethi Savaşçı's previously written essay "Almanya'da Yazmak" (Writing in Germany),

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<sup>164</sup> "Almanya'yı yazmak da, gevelemeye dönüşüyor gün geçtikçe. Üç beş beylik olay yinelene yinelene konulaştırılıyor. Örneğin, "Bizim Köy"ün tutanak değerine, bir gerçekliği ilk kez yansıtmaya ödevine uzaktan bile yaklaşmayarak, alışılmış, yenicilikten (Innovation) yoksun, yıpranmış, laçkalaşmış bir dizgeyle Almanya yazılıyor."

published in the seventh issue. Savaşçı is one of Pazarkaya's fellow leading authors in *Anadil*, who lives as a migrant laborer in West Germany. In his essay, Savaşçı names his own everyday, material struggles about reading and writing, and his difficulties in keeping up with the recent cultural productions and discussions due to his temporal limitations and fatigue as a worker:

We keep writing as a second job. No one can make a living with his pen. This causes our writing productivity to suffer. Eight hours at a workplace, one hour to get ready for work, one hour to go to work, that leaves us four hours before sleep. (Savaşçı 1981, 128)<sup>165</sup>

Simultaneously expressing his gratitude in becoming a writer among the reading workers, Savaşçı refrains from describing his experience as a complaint. He rather draws attention to material hardships to underline that everyday life underscores aesthetic production, including its challenges. Health issues due to work, not being able to know how to keep oneself busy in times of rest, not being able to meet people in pubs, establish romantic relationships, entertain oneself, not being able to communicate in German, and being deprived of the time it takes one to develop oneself intellectually, are all reflected in the way one writes, Savaşçı maintains (128).

I argue that Savaşçı's seemingly self-evident statement indicates a historically crucial fact that the role of limitations in one's everyday experiences in the writing practice has often been traditionally dismissed by established intellectuals of literature, including the critics, especially who analyze the literary contexts of minorities, as put forth by Schami. Hence, Savaşçı reminds the reader of the multiplicity of experiences in writing, especially those that belong to the more disenfranchised communities among immigrants, in describing the hardships encountered especially by migrant laborers. Savaşçı's emphasis and attitude was also the case in different writing contexts and schools of thought at the time: during the same period, in 1980, a similarly

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<sup>165</sup> "İkinci bir iş olarak yazarlığı sürdürüyoruz. Kalemle geçinebilenimiz yok. Bu durum yazma verimimizin düşmesine neden oluyor. Sekiz saat bir işyerinde çalış, bir saat işe hazırlan, bir saatte işe gidiş, uykunun dışında insana dört saatlik bir zaman dilimi kalıyor."

critical acknowledgment of the immediate influence of everyday living conditions on aesthetic choices and productions could be traced in a context of intersectional feminist literary critique in the United States by Audre Lorde in her essay “Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference” (Lorde 2016 [1980]). Laying bare the “unacknowledged class differences,” Lorde questions a women’s magazine collective’s decision to print only prose for one of its issues, while explicitly ranking prose as a higher form of art than poetry. She describes the difference in material conditions and demands necessary for writing in the two genres in detail and, like Savaşçı, implies the invisible and institutional power of neutralizing and hence, depoliticizing these decisions in the name of a so-called literariness. Albeit proposing a feminist critique, her intersectional approach to class, which necessitates attentiveness to other identities, is parallel to the particularity of problems about time, space, and energy arising from being a migrant laborer in West Germany, as expressed by Savaşçı. Across different contexts of criticism, perceiving material realities of life as intrinsic to aesthetic endeavors became a form of resistance during the time of *Anadil*’s publication, making the journal a platform of emerging contradictions among and within the communities themselves.

On this note, when it comes to the life contexts of the younger generation of writers, Pazarkaya’s solution to the literary problem of “writing about Germany” is far from tangible: in his address to youth at the end of his essay, Pazarkaya implicitly refers to a perceived impulsivity and impatience in their writing practice, stating: “In fact, when I say these things, I am thinking of young people, of those who are looking for a path. I want to look out for them. I want to say, don’t listen to what is written, read it, but choose one among a thousand, and then write like

yourself, not like others” (1982, 99).<sup>166</sup> Pazarkaya invites young writers to not rush, to take their time to read and write a lot, seek uniqueness and innovation as the driving forces in their processes of creating literary works. While following these steps might become beneficial for all writers and not only the so-called second generation in West Germany, in generalizing the experience itself, Pazarkaya burdens them with a responsibility that is almost exclusively personal, which dismisses the everyday social realities they might experience as delimiting, shown in the narratives of Türkan and Zeki Eski. On the flipside, they might also feel free to write against and despite the prescribed expectations of what counts as “good literature” within the critical—as well as canonical—literary realm in Turkish and German.

Pazarkaya’s perspective on works written in German by younger writers in West Germany, especially the community of descendants of Turkish immigrant families, becomes more explicit in his essay in the fourth issue of *Anadil*, titled “Oluşumun İçinden” (From inside the Formation, 1981a, 63). He provides the reader with a biography of a then twenty-one-year-old writer, who moved to West Germany with his parents when he was “nine or ten,” and received major critical acclaim and public visibility with his first self-published novel *Tränen sind immer das Ende* (1980) that eventually sold 3500 copies after being rejected by 75 publishers (63). Pazarkaya praises the “narrative unbridledness,” “style,” and “technical ability” of the German language used by this writer, Akif Pirinçci, whom he names only later in the essay (63). Pazarkaya introduces him along with Levent Aktoprak, whose poems in German were first published in *Anadil*’s same issue under the German section “Beispiele,” as “Turkish writers writing in German,” by asking: “is a non-Turkish Turkish literature emerging in the Federal

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<sup>166</sup> “Aslında bunları söylerken, gençleri, yol arayanları düşünüyorum. Onları gözetmek istiyorum. Yazılanlara kulak asmayın, okuyun, ama bin okuyup arasından bir seçin, sonra bir gibi de değil, kendiniz gibi yazın, demek istiyorum.”

Republic of Germany? The paradox lies within itself. How can there be a Turkish literature that is not written in Turkish?” (64)<sup>167</sup>

Pazarkaya’s so-called paradox becomes an indication of his particular conceptualization of Turkish literature later in the text, supposedly being written by “Turkish” writers: confounding self- and/or assigned identifications of writers with regards to ethnicity, as well as their publications in particular languages, Pazarkaya ignores his own inconsistencies of defining and institutionalizing a Turkish literature in West Germany, that may be exclusively written in German, by younger writers who may or may not identify themselves as Turkish. He verbalizes the felt frustrations that come from his own fallacy in telling about his conversation with the young poet Aktoprak, who exclusively writes in German, as in the following:

When we met in person, the first thing he said to me on the phone was: “Can I speak German?” What am I supposed to say? The child is going to tell me the point he makes, should I prevent it? I pressure on my own children enough to speak Turkish at home. And then I’ll say to Levent, no? Isn’t forbidding children who were born or raised in Germany to speak German, even in the middle of Germany, in the middle of a house, beyond a dilemma, beyond despair, an act that leads to schizophrenia, to a split in consciousness and personality? (63)<sup>168</sup>

The parental concern that Pazarkaya experiences with respect to his own children, who supposedly carry the risk of assimilating themselves by not speaking Turkish at home, has transformed Pazarkaya’s conversation with Aktoprak into a similar cultural expectation. Such expectation, however, is bound to fail from the onset, the reality of which he also describes as a historical and political problem due to the lack of responsibility on the part of the Turkish state, failing to implement cultural policies abroad (63-64). After this felt urgency to preserve Turkish

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<sup>167</sup> “Federal Almanya’da Türkçe olmayan bir Türk yazını mı oluşuyor? Sorunun çelişkisi kendi içinde yatıyor. Türkçe yazılmayan bir Türkçe yazın nasıl olabilir?”

<sup>168</sup> “Yüzyüze gelince, telefonda bana ilk söylediği söz, Almanca konuşabilir miyim? Ne diyeyim yani? Çocuk derdini anlatacak, bunu mu engelleyeyim? Evin içinde kendi çocuklarıma Türkçe konuşmaları için yaptığım baskılar yeter. Bir de Levent’e, olmaz mı, diyeceğim. Almanya’nın orta yerinde, bir evin içinde de olsa, Almanya’da doğmuş, ya da büyümüş çocuklara Almanca konuşma yasağı koymak, bir açmazın, bir umarsızlığın da ötesinde, şizofreniye, bilinç ve kişilik bölünmesine uzanan bir davranış değil mi?”

culture and language at the constant risk of “becoming lost,” Pazarkaya makes a gesture at the end of his essay to embrace and defend Pirinçci’s and Aktoprak’s experiences and relations with language by granting them an identity as Turkish writers, adding that “To have the slightest doubt that they are Turkish writers is nothing but the blunt instrument of a tradition of wasting our people that has reached frightening proportions” (64).<sup>169</sup>

Reflecting his anxieties about his own identity and/or community-based, categorical inconsistencies, Pazarkaya attempts to justify his definitions about post-migrant experiences in West Germany on Pirinçci and Aktoprak's relation with Turkish language. On the other side of this similar logic of “(monolingual) literary competence” (Gramling 2010, 67), Pazarkaya’s position could be read as symptomatic of some crucial literary traditions and award systems in West Germany with respect to the German language, which limit their aesthetic scope to language clusters for the sake of encouraging and introducing authors from underrepresented communities to a larger readership, like the annual Adelbert-von-Chamisso Prize.<sup>170</sup> With an initial purpose of being granted to authors publishing in German who do not speak this language as a mother tongue, the address of the prize was at the focus of much discussion about its inclusionary promises.<sup>171</sup> The Robert Bosch Foundation, the initiator of the prize, has explained the shortcomings of its initial purpose that emphasizes German as a second language with the following statement: “Today’s social reality shows that a steadily growing group of authors with a history of migration speaks German as mother tongue. For the literature of these authors, the change of language and culture is thematically or stylistically formative, but it has become a

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<sup>169</sup> “Onların Türk yazarları oldukları konusunda en ufak bir kuşkuya düşmek, korkunç boyutlara erişmiş olan insanlarımızı harcama geleneğinin kör değneğinden başka bir şey değildir.”

<sup>170</sup> The Chamisso Prize was initiated by Robert-Bosch Foundation in 1986, and was continuously given until 2017.

<sup>171</sup> For further discussions about the political stakes of the Chamisso Prize in more detail, see: Heinz Friedrich, *Chamissos Enkel* (1986), Heidrun Suhr, “Ausländerliteratur: Minority Literature in the Federal Republic of Germany” (1989), and David Gramling, “The Caravanserai Turns Twenty: Or, Rethinking New German Literature—in Turkish?” (2010).

natural and indispensable part of contemporary German literature” (“Adelbert-von-Chamisso-Preis der Robert Bosch Stiftung” n.d. ).<sup>172</sup> To solve this problem of inconsistency in 2012, the scope of the prize was extended to a more inclusive definition, which is addressed to “authors writing in German, whose work is characterized by a change of culture” (“Adelbert-von-Chamisso-Preis der Robert Bosch Stiftung”),<sup>173</sup> which eventually led to its end in 2017, where the Robert Bosch Foundation declared that the prize has fulfilled its purpose.

Pazarkaya’s unease with his discussion about placing Pirinçci and Aktoprak in a definitive literary category thus mirrors similar historical concerns discussed in the literary critical realm in West Germany. Moreover, in his writing about the so-called second generation of writers, Pazarkaya establishes his societal expectations, along with the literary ones, on the basis of an ideal that he recurrently expresses in his multiple pieces of writing, which is mostly inspired by Kemalism, a secularist modernization philosophy based on the founding principles of the Republic of Turkey, which is foregrounds principles of linguistic and cultural unity. Pazarkaya often cites and defends Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s views and formulations on art and artists repeatedly throughout *Anadil*’s issues, with the sixth issue being a special one dedicated entirely to essays, poems, and prose on Atatürk due to the year 1981 being the “Atatürk Centennial.”<sup>174</sup> The crucial aspect in Pazarkaya’s way of highlighting Kemalism in the context of

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<sup>172</sup> “Die gesellschaftliche Realität zeigt heute, dass eine stetig wachsende Gruppe an Autor:innen mit Migrationsgeschichte Deutsch als selbstverständliche Muttersprache spricht. Für die Literatur dieser Autor:innen ist der Sprach- und Kulturwechsel zwar thematisch oder stilistisch prägend, sie ist jedoch zu einem selbstverständlichen und unverzichtbarem Bestandteil deutscher Gegenwartsliteratur geworden.”

<sup>173</sup> “... auf Deutsch schreibende Autor:innen, deren Werk von einem Kulturwechsel geprägt ist.”

<sup>174</sup> For a further connection between Yüksel Pazarkaya and Kemalism, see his bilingual children’s book in Turkish and German, titled *Oktay Atatürk’ü Öğreniyor/Oktay lernt Atatürk kennen* (Pazarkaya 1982a). In *Anadil*’s twelfth issue, Pazarkaya publishes the news that *Oktay* is recommended for schools in West Germany, covered by the *Milliyet* newspaper’s Frankfurt office. Above the news coverage, he also published a copy of the letter from the Ministry of National Education, dated on October 27<sup>th</sup>, 1982, as a response to a petition written by Ünal Uncu, the publisher of the *Türk-Alman Kitabevi*, in Heilbronn (*Anadil* 12 1982, 84). *Oktay* was also published later by Ministry of Culture in Turkey, in multiple editions.

literary production and life after the postwar labor migration in West Germany lies in his political stance against the assimilation of immigrant populations in West Germany. His particular use of Kemalist ideals attributed to the founding years of the Republic of Turkey serves his defense of the so-called independence of language and culture which he implicitly expects to be preserved within the communities in West Germany. However, the premises in these measures, which reflect an expectation of national unity even in the context of diasporas, do not reflect and meet the reality of the immigrant communities in West Germany, which live their everyday lives necessarily by existing in different languages and cultures.

The export of assumptions and principles that emerge through Pazarkaya's—and in some texts, through *Anadil*'s other authors'—preoccupations about the Republic of Turkey as a historical context has also dominated the journal's aesthetic trajectory in limiting ways, as its readership and contributors include people who write in languages beyond Turkish or German (such as Kurdish), or that tell about diverse historical and political contexts and communities within the Republic of Turkey, as well as West Germany, in their narrations. This will become more explicit with magazines that emerge after *Anadil*, such as the West Berlin-based *Yabanel*, whose creators and contributors attained a more bottom-up perspective on aesthetic productions that include writings highlighting the heterogeneous characteristics of the aesthetic communities.

### **Conclusion: Lives beyond the national paradigm**

A few years after *Anadil*'s final issue was published, *Sirene: Zeitschrift für Literatur* (Siren: Journal for Literature) became a publication of transnational literary domain in German, with its first release by the publishing house Kirchheim in 1988, and later, by the publisher Bülent Tulay of the Babel publishing house in Munich from 1990 until 1997. Literary texts by many



communities living in Germany, as well as international works of literature in German translation were juxtaposed in the journal's main body.

Whereas *Anadil* reflected some preoccupations and concerns for preserving and maintaining the idea and imperative of a so-called “Mother Tongue,” as its title implies, *Sirene* reflects an approach to the definition of an aesthetic community in a multilingual perspective: French, Greek, Turkish and German-speaking editors worked together in the journal for its publication. Moving away from a monolingual understanding of cultures and literatures and toward “multilingual constellations” (Yıldız 2012, 168) with experiments of German and Turkish in works such as *Mutterzunge* (Mother Tongue, 2010 [1994]) by Emine Sevgi Özdamar,<sup>175</sup> *Sirene* gestures at a sharedness in literature that is beyond an understanding of a single, homogeneous, and even, in the case of *Anadil*, a togetherness of disputing communities. As a timely witness of the reunification of Germany in its early years, the journal rather strives for what Yasemin Yıldız has termed a post-monolingual understanding and shared aesthetics, which reflects the idea of sharedness as an expression of common sufferings and of a striving for human connection. What would an archive of such a shared transnational and multilingual aesthetic space look like? In the following chapter, I turn to precisely such a transnational media network of the time, namely the film festival Tage des Türkischen Films (Turkish Film Days) as an unofficial “archive” which consolidates these ideas.

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<sup>175</sup> For an analysis of Özdamar's critical approach to the idea of mother tongue as a monolingual/historically institutional concept, and her postmonolingual approach to literary language, see: Yasemin Yıldız, “Surviving the Mother Tongue: Literal Translation and Trauma in Emine Sevgi Özdamar” (2012).

#### **Chapter 4 An Archive of Ephemera, SinemaTürk, and “Tage des Türkischen Films”**

A lesser-known history of immigrant-led media initiatives in West Germany calls for research beyond the official archives: remnants of day-to-day exchanges, conversations, and relationships in unofficially kept documents and personal statements are required for understanding it. Decision-making mechanisms of these initiatives are especially tied to the daily lives of their participants, who are closely affected by legal, financial, and generational changes in West Germany as disenfranchised subjects. Information thus does not always find its way systematically, if at all, into the archives in the form of proper documentation and records. In some cases, like the cinema association SinemaTürk’s festival “Tage des Türkischen Films” (today known as “Türkische Filmtage”),<sup>176</sup> archival documentation may be unable to provide any kind of information about the organization’s past. Turning to everyday evidence, including oral history records, may be the only way to reconstruct it.

Turkish and German-speaking film enthusiasts who were also residents of Munich established the association SinemaTürk Filmzentrum in 1989, with the aim of “presenting films from and about Turkey of high artistic and content quality to a broader public” (“Über uns – Türkische Filmtage München” n.d.).<sup>177</sup> Since then, the association organizes its annual film festival “Tage des Türkischen Films.” Each year,<sup>178</sup> the festival offers a selection of short,

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<sup>176</sup> In 2003, the new board members changed the festival’s name to “Türkische Filmtage” for a matter of simplicity and practicality. Margit Lindner, e-mail message, November 22, 2020.

<sup>177</sup> “Filmbegeisterte türkische und deutsche Münchnerinnen und Münchner gründeten 1989 den Verein SinemaTürk Filmzentrum e.V., um künstlerisch und inhaltlich hochwertige Filme aus der und über die Türkei einer breiten Öffentlichkeit vorzustellen.”

<sup>178</sup> In 1998/99 there was a change of management, and the festival did not take place in 1999. The new board was still inexperienced and decided to sit out a year. Margit Lindner, e-mail message, November 22, 2020.

documentary, and feature films made by a variety of directors and producers from Turkey, Germany, and countries with geographical and cultural vicinity to Turkey such as Greece, Iran, and Cyprus. Literary events such as public readings, video-workshops, and podium discussions with guest directors and authors about selected themes often accompany the screenings.

Despite decades of activity—which encapsulates exhibitions, various collaborations, and the directors’ constant search for new films to screen—“Tage des Türkischen Films” does not possess its own official archive. In a correspondence with co-organizers of Ayşe Gülcemal and Margit Lindner in 2020, they furthermore stated that neither the association, nor the festival’s venue “Gasteig”—including its cooperation partner Munich City Library—has kept any archival materials about the organization of the festival, its previous events, and meetings. As a result, the bulk of my research on this festival consists of interviews.

In this chapter, I argue that the methodological difficulty of finding archival materials and information about a festival that has been continuously present for over 30 years, makes research itself a theoretical issue. In other words, this final chapter takes up the conditions of research itself, by asking: What are the material limitations in unearthing lived relations? Where in an archive do documents and statements about daily interactions, agreements, decisions, and comments belong? Can and should we consider these short-lived, everyday forms of information and memory as part of history? When does ephemera become worthy of being kept and made accessible, and by whom? By asking these questions, I analyze the day-to-day challenges of an organization, which aims to reinforce the interaction of multiple communities and aesthetic kinships in a broader media network of a country of immigration. Rather than elaborate on the potential reasons for an absence of archival information, I look for alternative places where the festival's history is embedded within ephemeral documents about its realization process.

### *A festival without an archive?: Theoretical grounds for analysis*

Malte Hagener approaches film festivals and archives as nodes in broader media networks, stating that film archives “saw themselves from the very start not as a series of isolated entities, but as a transnational network of exchange and communication” (2014, 294). Whether they emerge out of amateur efforts, are products of the state and/or educators, or are enabled by individual donors keen on leaving a legacy (295), the selection, screening, protection, restoration, circulation, and study of films has been historically managed by institutions and individuals with financial and political capacity in a broader media network. If we approach SinemaTürk from this perspective as a collection of materials from a small, low-budget institutional formation, we might concede that documentation of this festival is unlikely to find its way into official archives, and thus also into the official media history of West Germany. Ger Zielinski nevertheless sees film festivals that do not keep archival records as phenomena that open a critical ground for knowledge production about the patterns of everyday practices. He notes that low-budget film festivals addressing identity groups or communities such as queer film festivals often do not have archival information held by institutions. This is precisely because they remain “highly sensitive to their public’s opinions”: rather than focusing solely on questions of material limitation, Zielinski acknowledges that immediate feedback from an audience can, in turn, explain historical transformations in a festival’s “organization, its structure, its programming, its self-presentation, and its future livelihood.” (2016, 145-146) In this context, ephemera thus often becomes “the sole remaining material evidence” for, and the appropriate reflection of such festivals’ day-to-day transformations in a broader historical framework (140).

The decision-making processes among the co-founders of SinemaTürk were short-lived from the onset, since the association as well as the festival were influenced by the structural changes in West Germany and in Turkey, as well as in the cinema sector: shortly after the first meeting of “Tage des Türkischen Films” from September 27<sup>th</sup> until October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1989, Germany entered the reunification process which led to the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9<sup>th</sup>. This process was followed by increased violence and outright racism against minorities during the 1990s, as evidence by repeated arson attacks on houses inhabited by foreign workers, refugees, and their families from Turkey in Hoyerswerda (1991), Rostock (1992), Mölln (1992), Solingen (1993) and other cities (Chin 2017, 259). These events led to an initial consensus that the state should take more concrete steps towards the official inclusion of immigrant and refugee communities as part of the German public. These steps included amending Germany’s descent-based citizenship law to allow provisions for migrants and their descendants to also qualify for German citizenship (259). These changes indicate a willingness on the official level to reconsider what it means to be German, at least in the legal sense.

In the context of the cinema sector, similar reconsiderations in the German Federal Film Board’s (FFA—Filmförderungsanstalt) definition of the “German film” occurred even earlier, in 1986, after a sharp decline in Germany’s share in the film market during the 1980s. FFA started to qualify films as “German” if “only the film script author or a leading actor is a German citizen and if the film premieres in German in the territory of the FFA or if it premieres in an A level film festival as a German entry” (Halle 2010, 31). Although these definitional changes were made purely out of financial reasons and were highly problematic due to their stress on the factor of “citizenship,” Randall Halle argues that they nevertheless opened the possibility for transnational collaborations, including the involvement of private sources (31). The regional film funding

organizations proliferated as a result of this new marketability in 1991 (31-32). The first annual event of “Tage des Türkischen Films” was thus held at a time characterized by public debates about the marginalization of immigrant populations after reunification, and state efforts expanding the cinema sector to be more competitive within a globalized market.

Standing at the crossroads of new discourses and practices of inclusion and exclusion, the co-founders of SinemaTürk navigated the material difficulties of self-organization within both the changing media networks of reunified Germany and the politically polarized, post-coup d'état Turkey during the late 1980s and early 1990s. The challenges they faced included: acquiring material and legal access to films from different countries; selecting and screening films in the face of censorship; grappling with a lack of funding; enabling translation with few resources; and preserving political integrity as a film festival that addresses multiple communities in and across Germany. Considering these short-term—even daily—challenges that the first Turkish-German film festival faced, it is no wonder that saving festival materials for a future archive may never have been at the forefront of SinemaTürk's agenda.

SinemaTürk is not the only initiative that led me to think about the significance of unarchived information for broader media networks. To a certain extent, all of my research for this dissertation had to reach beyond the information available in official sources: this required visiting private archives of individuals in their apartments or stores, conducting interviews, acquiring copies of published materials that are no longer on the market, and gaining access to digital copies of audiovisuals through private collections. As a result, a preliminary, non-official archive of immigrant-led media networks in West Germany began to emerge. This archive is unsystematic and *ephemeral* by nature due to its focus on daily endeavors. It shows how coincidental, everyday connections and encounters determine aesthetic communities, which

consist of institutions, audiences, publishers, editors, directors, and writers. It is thus as an uncharted territory with minor areas of knowns and major areas of unknowns.

The research itself shows how less-visible, miniscule activities and decision-making processes in the establishment and organization of immigrant-led media initiatives such as “Tage des Türkischen Films” gives way to a non-hierarchized way of approaching history. A history of the everyday—in which the so-called informational “gaps and excesses” become political—is also a form of knowledge production. In his theorization of historicizing migration to Germany, Utlu acknowledges the existence of the dispersed, everyday, and unknown materials outside of the official archives, which allows us to eventually transform the official history of the Republic of Germany as well as of the German Democratic Republic: love songs, letters, other uttered words about hometowns, legal documents, and exchanges among family and loved ones, advocates, officers and neighbors offer us a history from the perspective of communities living together in the same place, every day (Utlu 2011).

Kristin Dickinson places Utlu’s formulation in a more transnational context. She reads Emine Sevgi Özdamar’s autobiographical novel *Seltsame Sterne Starren zur Erde* (2003) as an attempt to create an unofficial archive in fictional form with the power to connect multiple histories and lived relations across geographies, including Turkey, the Federal Republic of Germany, and the German Democratic Republic. During her regular visits to East Berlin, the main character Emine translates documents from the *Volksbühne*’s archive, including newspaper headlines, theatrical texts, song lyrics, and lines of poetry (Dickinson 2022, 54), and sends them to her imprisoned friends in Turkey after the coup d’état in 1971. This “critical act of archival dissemination,” (57) Dickinson argues, brings about an understanding of a planetary aesthetic in the novel, or “a multi-centric and pluralizing worldly structure of relatedness” (55; cited from

Moraru and Elias 2015, xxiii). A planetary aesthetic necessitates a non-hierarchical look at history, in which larger events and transformations across the globe are understood together and simultaneously with the local, everyday endeavors, and individual contact on the micro level.

Drawing on both Utlu and Dickinson, who underline the author's and researcher's central and generative role in building unarchived historical connections in the first place, I would like to emphasize the two significant definitions and uses of the archive I work with: First, I am referring to the dislocated, and therefore, "invisible" archive of the festival "Tage des Türkischen Films" through turning to relevant materials about it as ephemera. My research particularly looks at the less researched, and often disregarded documents as the main archival material for a historical reconstruction of a festival. Here, I transform what is considered as "efficient" or "important" as an archival document. I do not distinguish between the more official agreements, funding letters, or correspondences between the institutions, and accounts of oral history through interviews, or found documents such as a television series' complementary journal, which is long out-of-market. Second, I approach the event of the festival itself as an archive: In other words, I use the festival (and the relevant ephemera) itself in order to reconstruct a history of relations, which, in turn, would hint at the essentially transnational and multilingual character of a history of Germany (and its media) as a country of immigration. These relations include efforts of aesthetic production and organization such as the festival's programming, or the activities related to cultural production, such as their reception, translation, and screening works—each of them informs us about the intricate nature of contact across the communities in Germany in a broader perspective, which always existed in a close relation to one another rather than in isolated places of living, or aesthetic spaces. From this perspective, the work of archivization—that is to say the practices through which archives are created out of individual relations to objects—is as



important as the final collection itself. Archives are not simply stable sources, but rather subjects *in relation to* the historicization of phenomena.<sup>179</sup>

#### **4.1 *Korkmazlar* as an unofficial archive of “Tage des Türkischen Films”**

Shortly before the initial meeting of the first Turkish-German film festival “Tage des Türkischen Films,” an eight-episode cassette series in Turkish and German, called *Korkmazlar* (1988), aired for the first time on television.<sup>180</sup> The series was both televised and released in VHS cassettes with German subtitles. The production was part of the association and language education program “Kassettenprogramme für ausländische Mitbürger e.V.,” whose aim was to produce audio-visual materials for providing support for Turkish-speaking families in West Germany to learn German as a foreign language. In about 30 minutes, each episode portrays a linguistic problem and its solution in the everyday life of the Korkmaz family, whose members live in West Germany as Turkish immigrants.

Synchronous to the episodes, the association Kassettenprogramme also issued additional audio cassettes along with a language education magazine with the same name, whose eight issues corresponded to the eight episodes in the series. The magazine *Korkmazlar* was published mostly in Turkish with parts in German and consisted of a variety of language exercises and sample texts. These include riddles with questions related to the events or people in the series, informational writings about the rights of the immigrant communities in West Germany that are

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<sup>179</sup> For further critical analysis on the theorization of archives as products of epistemological views and perceptions of subjects, see Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*. Princeton University Press, 2009.

<sup>180</sup> *Korkmazlar* was first shown from January to February, 1989, on German television with German subtitles on Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR, West German Broadcasting Cologne). Repetitions include screenings on public broadcasters Bayerischer Rundfunk (BR), Hessischer Rundfunk (hr), Südwestrundfunk (SWR), Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR), 3 sat and 1 Plus, from 1989 until 1996. (“Korkmazlar / BRD” 2012)

related to the week's theme, cooking recipes that appear on the episodes, interviews with, and autobiographical, non-fiction pieces by the directors, actors, and actresses. Moving across different genres, the magazine also had sections that highlight and introduce other artists living in Turkey and/or in West Germany, whose works were mentioned or songs that were played in the series. In their emphasis on the everyday life and relationships between Turkish and/or German-speaking communities in Munich, both the series and the magazine function as archives of Turkish-German lived relations after postwar labor migration to West Germany. While the episodes visually narrate the linguistic struggles and possibilities as intrinsic to the legal, political, and economic ones, the magazine unfolds details about the material struggles and possibilities of the individuals in the making of *Korkmazlar*: each issue provides the reader with comprehensive information about how some members of *Korkmazlar*'s crew met in the first place, what their thinking processes were, under what conditions they work and live in West Germany while they were making the series, and what their own everyday struggles looked like. By examining how the relationship between the everyday life of the *Korkmazlar* crew and that of the show's imagined audience informed the making of this series and its magazines, I argue that these materials are crucial for understanding the unresearched contributions of actors and directors from Turkey, who either took part in the *Korkmazlar* series or are mentioned in the magazine, for the organization of the festival. This self-referential approach is similar to the manner in which films were selected for "Tage des Türkischen Films" according to viewers' consumption habits and globalized film industry standards.

All these statements and self-reflections in the magazine about the production process of *Korkmazlar* thus contribute to our knowledge about the first Turkish-German film association in West Germany. A year after the series was made, some key individuals in the series' production

established SinemaTürk and its festival “Tage des Türkischen Films.” Among the four co-founders were *Korkmazlar*’s assistant director Thomas Balkenhol, its playwright Erman Okay, and Erdal Buldun, who was hired to assist the crew for an episode (Buldun 2019). The fourth founding member was Margit Lindner, who met Balkenhol and Okay in a transnational cultural association “Dükkan Kulturladen e.V.” (Lindner 2018) in Munich, which was established a few years earlier, in 1986, as a lending library for “literature, film, dance and music from Turkey” (Kevik, Dayı, and Ohrenschall 1996, 70). Balkenhol’s presence in associations such as “Dükkan Kulturladen” was also among his core involvements in other transnational initiatives, such as the Turkish-German cultural event organizing association called YOL Kulturforum, and Greek-German film initiatives in Munich, namely Griechische Filmforum, along with its film festival “Griechische Filmwoche” (Greek Film Week) during the same time.<sup>181</sup> With the support of state-led funding mechanisms in Munich during the late 1980s, all these burgeoning, local culture and art initiatives enabled artists, art enthusiasts, and experts such as Balkenhol to collaborate on more inclusive models for establishing transnational associations.

Productions such as *Korkmazlar* emerged as a result of these efforts. Both the series and its supplemental magazine reflect an attentive outlook on both local and transnational historical frameworks in covering everyday immigration experiences in West Germany after postwar labor migration. This outlook allowed the makers of *Korkmazlar* to move away from only representing the adverse experiences of migration and its aftermath, and to emphasize instead shared everyday practices of communities in West Germany across geographies and generations. They do so by also reflecting on their own lives and film-making experiences in the series’ magazine. In other words, they connect the world they exist in as artists living in a country of immigration to the

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<sup>181</sup> Margit Lindner, e-mail message, November 22, 2020.

fictional world of the Korkmaz family. I argue that this close relationship between the shared experiences of living and making art in West Germany makes *Korkmazlar* an unofficial archive for how the Turkish-German aesthetic networks functioned, especially how and why the members of SinemaTürk and “Tage des Türkischen Films” strived to bring together multiple histories and audiences in its body.

#### ***4.1.1 The emerging ethos of a film festival***

The first episode of *Korkmazlar*, called “Los, Pembe!” (Go, Pembe!), focuses on the parent Pembe's struggle in exchanging the new but broken cooking mixer she bought for her baby during her pregnancy. Although Pembe is able to utter the right words to communicate her issue in her first attempt, the cashier in the shop turns down her request in an indifferent manner. Frustrated about being treated unfairly and not able to get what is already her right, she turns back home with the thought of going back to the shop again the next day. During that evening, she dedicates herself to memorizing all the necessary sentences in order to defend herself. Dismissing her husband Dursun's discouraging statements about her linguistic and social ability to stand up for herself, Pembe eventually gets the support she needs from her German-speaking neighbor Andrea, Andrea's boyfriend Erol, and her daughter Halime, who also teach her and let her write down the sentences. The next day, Pembe is able to request to speak to the manager, articulate her problem once again, and exchange the broken mixer.

From the first episode onwards, the linguistic issues in *Korkmazlar* are rarely only about communication: despite Pembe's right choice of words to express her problem in German in her first attempt, she had to “upgrade” her grammatical skills further to be able to defy the injustice and racism she experienced in the shop. The parents Pembe and Dursun, and their children,

Halime, Cengiz, and Sanem, often face financial, legal, medical, and social consequences throughout the episodes. This is not because of their relative ability to use the German language, but due to the ways in which they respond to the exclusionary reactions in their surroundings. Their position as an immigrant family is closely connected to the administrative pause to the integration debates following CDU's victory and Helmut Kohl's second cabinet after the 1983 federal elections, where "the 'foreigner policy' returned to 'consolidation' efforts," whose aim was to "restrict and even reduce the numbers of foreigners in the Federal Republic" (Chin 2017, 165). Contrary to this marginalizing turn, the makers of *Korkmazlar* critically refrain from showing the family's struggle with language as an inadequacy or a fundamental lack, which would be considered as necessary for their so-called belonging to the West German society. Instead, they portray it as a form of resilience that enable the Korkmaz family to live on their own practical terms as members of a country of immigration that nevertheless denied such status even on the administrative level at the time. The family members' efforts of communication for finding lasting solutions to their everyday problems in the series are thus more emphasized than their use of correct grammar.

The makers of *Korkmazlar* shift the focus of the series away from the adversities and victimizing perspectives in the narratives of migration and post-migration experiences and recalibrate it to the characters' creative positions and how they strive for connection in the societal system. In other words, the series focuses on how its characters relate to their world every day. This deliberate gesture towards the agency of the characters in the series is closely related to those in the first televised cultural productions made by the immigrant-led, collaborative media initiatives: along with Ören and Zimmermann's films in the 1970s, which I analyze in chapter one, *Korkmazlar* is among the successors of early visualization attempts of the

Turkish-speaking immigrant communities in West Germany, such as the 12-episode series *Unsere Nachbarn, die Baltas* (1983), written by Yüksel Pazarkaya, who is the publisher of *Anadil* magazine, as well as the translator of Orhan Veli's bilingual publication that I mentioned in previous chapters. Similar to *Korkmazlar*, *die Baltas* takes on the everyday practices and struggles of the Balta family, and its content extends beyond the single dimension of labor exploitation and racism on a societal level. Parallel to Pembe's own resistance to societal expectations of her as a woman and mother as presented in her relation to her spouse Dursun, the characters in *die Baltas* also navigate inner family dynamics. These include learning to change the grammar of existing oppressions based on gender and age, both of which are epitomized in the life of the daughter İnci, who faces pressures from her father to quit school, marry and have children. Such criticisms of patriarchy, however, are not generalized and identified as intrinsic characteristics of the Turkish population in these series, as for example in other contemporary works such as Tevfik Başer's *40 Quadratmeter Deutschland* (1986).<sup>182</sup> Being attentive to each family members' varying relations to society as well as their own positions within the familial power structures, the creators of *Korkmazlar* and *die Baltas* avoid creating stereotypes out of the communities they take on, while still maintaining their critical approach towards the societal injustice within them.

These early collaborations of television productions cast a nuanced outlook on the life of immigrant communities in West Germany, which make rare counter-examples to the existing contents in both cinema and television during the 1980s: the rising interest in immigrant cultures

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<sup>182</sup> Although these productions set a contrast in terms of their political stakes, considering the key figures' interconnectivity to the immigrant media networks in West Germany, they are also much related to one another in their processes of making: for example, the actor Yaman Okay played the main role in both *Korkmazlar* series and the film *40 Quadratmeter Deutschland*. The ways of producing works of cultural production in these networks emerge from efforts of solidarity in between immigrant communities for more economic sustainability for actors, more viewership and recognition for films and for establishing a Turkish-German aesthetic domain in West Germany in the first place.

in the West German film sector, exemplified by the appropriation of federal and regional film funding support of the German Federal Film Board (Filmförderungsanstalt) from the late 1960s onwards had reinforced a “patronizing and marginalizing attitude” towards the so-called “‘Ausländerkultur,’ the culture of foreigners” (Göktürk 2000). Directors, who are granted such support found further possibilities to reach a wider audience in mass media, since television became “one of the most important funding sources and exhibition outlets for independent filmmakers” especially after the Television Framework Agreement, following the 1974 and 1979 amendments to the Film Subsidy Law (Hansen 2016, xxiii). In this way, increased financial possibilities enabled the independent directors to experiment with new content, such as programs by or about underrepresented communities in West Germany, while setting potential limits to their portrayal due to the restricting expectations of the funding boards in the television and film industry due to concerns of marketability. Despite these reductionist perspectives towards representations of immigrant experiences, the given opportunities for independent filmmakers dealing with immigration-related themes also enabled a small number of immigrant-led, collaborative productions such as *Korkmazlar* to appear on screens. In the midst of the political and aesthetic denial of immigrants' lives as intrinsic to West German society during the 1980s, the intervention of a single cultural production against such denial would later become the institutional ethos of SinemaTürk and its festival “Tage des Türkischen Films” within a larger film and television industry. A closer look into the series' magazine reveals how such an intervention took shape, which later informs the future decision-making processes in the programming of the first Turkish-German film festival in West Germany.

In the first issue of *Korkmazlar* magazine, Emire Erhan-Neubauer, the actress who played the role of Pembe, tells about her own struggles learning German after leaving her theater career in Turkey, and starting to work as an actress as well as a hospital janitor in Münster:

I am certainly one of the most convinced that the *Korkmazlar* series we are making will be very useful in teaching the language to the first generation. Those who are in my situation should be taught this language with entertaining examples that will stay in the memory. The first generation should not be discarded as an unnecessary item, saying that they are no good anymore. I can't imagine a more difficult situation than not being able to understand and speak the language of a country you live in. (Erhan-Neubauer 1988, 17)<sup>183</sup>

The series' publication *Korkmazlar* appears with the subtitle *Filmle İlgili Dil Magazini* (The Korkmaz Family: Language Magazine about the Film), which is clearly issued first and foremost as a language education magazine, and is addressed primarily to the Turkish-speaking communities in West Germany.<sup>184</sup> Erhan-Neubauer's statement above highlights the importance given to language learning as an everyday practice in the making of the series, where she establishes a connection between her own linguistic struggles in West Germany and those of the imagined audience. Shared lived experiences between the series' content, its making, and its targeted viewership as such later would also give way to the SinemaTürk's self-conscious and collaborative nature of its festival programming. Thus, I consider the magazine as an ephemeral archive of the establishment phase of "Tage des Türkischen Films": interviews, short biographies and autobiographies, memoirs, stories, and accounts of lived experiences such as Erhan-Neubauer's remark above fills the pages of the magazine's issues. These introductory sections about the main actors and actresses in the series also include well-known guest artists, singers

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<sup>183</sup> "Yaptığımız, *Korkmazlar* dizisinin birinci generasyona lisan konusunda çok yararlı olacağına en çok inananlardan biri benim mutlaka. Benim durumumda olanlara, hafızada kalabilecek eğlenceli örneklerle öğretilmeli bu lisan. İlk generasyondan artık hayır yok diyerek onlar lüzumsuz bir eşya gibi bir kenara atılmamalıdır. İçinde yaşanan bir memleketin lisanini anlayamamak, konuşamamak kadar zor bir durum düşünemiyorum."

<sup>184</sup> The masthead includes a small note, which states that the German translation of the magazine is available in the location of Kassettenprogramme für ausländische Mitbürger e. V. in Munich.



and caricaturists from Turkey and West Germany, such as Levent Kırca, Müjdat Gezen, Gönül Yazar, Altan Erbulak and Özay Fecht, who participated in or whose works appeared in the episodes. The sections are written for the purpose of both information and entertainment, where the stories often are filled with humor, personal experiences, everyday conversations, and meetings during the making of the series. For example, Erman Okay's piece in memoriam of the caricaturist and actor Altan Erbulak, who passed away a few months after his participation as a guest actor in *Korkmazlar*, includes many details from Okay's friendship with Erbulak back in Izmir during the summer of 1963, as well as in Oktoberfest during 1987. Okay commemorates Erbulak's obsession and meticulous care routine for his lighters, tells about how he pranked Erbulak by pouring cold water on him during his sleep, and how Erbulak, without moving in his bed, uses his fingers as windshields to remove the excess water from his glasses, which he is known for never taking off (Okay 1988, 10-11).

Stories from the everyday lives of the participants in *Korkmazlar* present them as accessible and as relatable as those of the characters portrayed in the series and in the magazine. This way, the process of making the series is not isolated from the daily endeavors of the Korkmaz family. Despite the differences in reasons for Turkish speaking communities living in West Germany, the acknowledgment of shared experiences, needs and wants of multiple communities in the magazine is an effort for generating a sense of connection among the members who are creating the cultural productions and those who are receiving them. Life events throughout the episodes such as birth, marriage and romantic relationships are intertwined with up-to-date legal information and practical recommendations about them in the magazine: for instance, corresponding to Pembe's story of exchanging the broken mixer in the first episode, the magazine's first issue "Pembe'nin Başarısı" (Pembe's Success) includes a section that

informs the readers about the necessary details with respect to the consumer's right to exchange the goods that are purchased in West Germany (*Korkmazlar* 1 1988, 3). Similarly, Halime's and Ümit's wedding in the eighth episode becomes a reference point for a short and cautionary piece in the magazine, titled "Genç Evlilere Mutluluklar" (Happiness to the Young Weds!, *Korkmazlar* 8 1988a, 17). Addressing the couples who are about to get married in West Germany, the writers of the magazine offer tips for preventing potential financial problems that may arise due to lack of information about the conditions under which marriage funds are granted.<sup>185</sup> This way, the editors of the magazine position the readers in close relation to the events happening in the series that would reflect the potential real-life situations in their everyday surroundings.

The crew's and editors' simultaneous presentations of both the content and the production process of *Korkmazlar* makes it not only a project about teaching German language to Turkish-speaking communities in West Germany, but also a larger cultural project about building connections among them. Making use of the production's individual, local and federal support, the future co-founders of SinemaTürk and "Tage des Türkischen Films" were able to later expand their goals for creating an interconnected and non-hierarchical cinema culture in Munich by including traditions, artists, as well as audiences from Turkey and West Germany. While many famous artists from both Turkey and West Germany had already been participating in the making of *Korkmazlar*, the masthead of the series' magazine shows a list of sponsors, such as the labor and social ministries of the federal and state governments as well as the Federal Labor Office, the City of Munich, the Bavarian State Foundation and Sprachverband-Deutsch für ausländische Arbeitnehmer e. V. (German Language Association for Foreign Workers), which

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<sup>185</sup> "Hiç kimse hiç kimseye bir şeyi boşuna vermez! Bu yüzden size, bir kredi çekmeden önce çeşitli kredi şekillerini incelemeyi ve banka ve tasarruf sandıklarının şartlarını karşılaştırmayı önereceğiz." (*Korkmazlar* 8, 17) "Nobody gives anything to anybody for nothing! Therefore, before taking out a loan, we advise you to examine the various types of loans and compare the terms and conditions of banks and savings funds."

financially contributed to the series' publication.<sup>186</sup> As a production of the association "Kassettenprogramme für ausländische Mitbürger e.V.," *Korkmazlar* also belongs to a transcultural initiative that particularly aims to expand Turkish-German literature readership in Munich with audio cassette recordings of works by writers including Aysel Özakın, Fakir Baykurt, Christian Ude, Dieter Hildebrandt and Yüksel Pazarkaya. Such an intermedial approach to bring literature and film into immediate relation to one another will later become a defining characteristic of the film festival's programming, with podium discussions and readings by guest authors on literature and film, as well as frequent screenings of literary adaptations.

Such transnational and intermedial aesthetic networks that emerged out of *Korkmazlar* provide us with an inventory of lived relations among key individuals and institutions, which renders itself as an unofficial archive of "Tage des Türkischen Films" —This connection between the cassette production and the film festival is most visible in the director Robert Hültner's and playwright Okay's close interest and relationship with Turkish cinema, which Okay wrote about extensively in the seventh issue of the magazine, titled "Üç Büyük Emekçi" (Three Great Cinema Workers). According to Okay, the *Korkmazlar* crew went to Üçağız village in Antalya in order to take the scenes in Turkey for the seventh episode. There, they met with the three major names in the mainstream Turkish film industry —Yeşilçam, namely the actress Aliye Rona, and the actors Erol Taş and Münir Özkul, who were invited to play the respective parts for the scenes from Turkey in the series. Rather than providing the reader with merely their biographical information as Yeşilçam stars, Okay describes the conversation they had in Antalya before the shooting, while also giving a detailed account about his own relation to them in his

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<sup>186</sup> "Dieses Magazin wurde von den Arbeits- und Sozialministerien des Bundes und der Länder sowie der Bundesanstalt für Arbeit, der Landeshauptstadt München, der Bayerischen Landesstiftung und dem Sprachverband-Deutsch für ausländische Arbeitnehmer e. V. gefördert." (*Korkmazlar* 1988)

youth as a moviegoer in the 1960s: he recalls watching Erol Taş and Aliye Rona in *Yılanların Öcü* (1962), a literary adaptation of Fakir Baykurt's novel with the same title, and a year later, watching Erol Taş in *Susuz Yaz* (1963), a literary adaptation of Necati Cumalı's story with the same title, both of which were directed by Metin Erksan (Okay 1988b, 11). Okay would later also propose *Susuz Yaz* as the first film to be shown in the festival "Tage des Türkischen Films" in 1989 (Okay 2018), which is known for being awarded with the Golden Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale) in 1964. As I will mention later in the chapter, SinemaTürk members' attempt at getting access to *Susuz Yaz*'s film roll would eventually fail,<sup>187</sup> but the close relation Okay establishes between a short-lived, educational language cassette series with the Turkish cinema sector allows us to trace crucial archival connections with a festival, whose co-founders would prioritize films circulating across film and literature traditions, as well as festival circuits in both West Germany and Turkey.

#### **4.2 *Iron Earth Copper Sky*: Literary networks as festival ephemera**

The Turkish film industry is only one part of the transnational archive that informs the annual programming of "Tage des Türkischen Films." Literature traditions in Turkey as well as those in the languages of other immigrant communities in West Germany inform many screenings and events in the festival over the past 30 years. Years before his involvement in writing *Korkmazlar*'s screenplay, Erman Okay was engaging in literary projects by developing his own methods for a bilingual theater. He established a theater group for children and youth in the Münchner Schauburg, called "Theater der Jugend" (Theater of the Youth, Sollfrank 1987, 219),

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<sup>187</sup> As I will expand on in the third section of this chapter, instead of *Susuz Yaz*, another film by Metin Erksan, titled *Kuyu* (1968), became the first film to be shown in "Tage des Türkischen Films."

which staged for the first time the adaptation of the well-known Turkish author Sevgi Soysal's radio play *Venüslü Kadınların Serüvenleri* (Soysal 1965) bilingually in 1983 (Saygılıgil 2017). Okay's continued interest in making Turkish cinema and literature accessible to a larger audience had an impact on his way of introducing Turkish cinema culture to moviegoers in West Germany through his co-organization of "Tage des Türkischen Films." As a result, the festival's literary archive shows how the organization was closely related to the everyday history of immigrant-led aesthetic practices in West Germany, which often started with literary initiatives.

Literature had a critical role in both creating a sense of cultural familiarity, and the recognition, critical value, and visibility of "Tage des Türkischen Films," which was epitomized by the festival's screening of the literary adaptation *Yer Demir Gök Bakır/Eisenerde Kupferhimmel (Iron Earth Copper Sky, 1987)*. The decision to screen this particular film underscores the festival co-founders' desire to reinforce the relationship between the film festival and the contemporary literature scene. Based on a novel written by Yaşar Kemal in 1963, the film is written and directed by the musician, author, and composer Zülfü Livaneli. In the same year of its production, the film was awarded with the "Un Certain Regard" prize at the Cannes film festival, and shown a few years later in the second annual event of "Tage des Türkischen Films" in 1990. Along with the fact that Yaşar Kemal was among the most well-known and translated authors from Turkey in Europe at the time, the global recognition of his literary adaptation carried the potential to bring together readers and viewers across communities in a relatively small, newly organized Turkish-German film festival with the aim of reaching a wider audience across cultures.

*Yer Demir* takes on a community's relation and coping with the social structures within and outside the village called Yalak in Adana, Turkey: figures that serve the continuation of

these structures, such as the state representatives and the landowner “ağa” (agha) only occasionally enter the Yalak community to contact them for the sake of their own exploitative interests. As the events keep turning against the life of the community one incident after another, the intended viewer witnesses the gradual transformation of the socially disengaged character Taşbaş into a “hermit” and a hero through the myths spread among the villagers. In turn, Taşbaş becomes a figure that represents the collective hope of the villagers against the Turkish state’s neglect, social and political exploitation, violence in family systems through marriages, and the resulting poverty, including the lack of infrastructure, hardships due to harsh weather conditions, and the sense of confinement due to the lack of knowledge and control of the so-called “outside” world, which continually takes advantage of them. Yaşar Kemal’s literary adaptation provides a comprehensive fictional account for the historical suffering in Anatolian villages after the societal and industrial changes in Turkey during the 1950s with the Menderes regime, which would later lead to the mass internal migration in Turkey from rural to urban areas, also including the postwar labor migration—again, mostly from villages in Anatolia—to West Germany after 1961.

The transnational themes of contemporary relevance at the time, such as political and economic exploitation of rural areas, state violence, and gender dynamics in the film as well as in the novel could thus attract immigrant communities in West Germany and beyond, who might or might not be familiar with the history of politics, rural life, and literature in Turkey. The film potentially also appealed to both Turkish and/or German-speaking communities, who had read or heard about Yaşar Kemal, his critical reception in Europe, or his oeuvre in Turkish as well as in translation. Moreover, major names from the West German cinema industry in *Yer Demir*’s production might have created a public interest: the film is a transnational collaboration between

Turkey and West Germany, including its cinematographer Jürgen Jürges, and its co-producer, the well-known film director Wim Wenders.<sup>188</sup> According to Livaneli's interview in the newspaper *taz*, Livaneli discovered that the Berlin Film Fund could provide a potential financial support for his film, however, he states that the institution only supported Berlin-based companies. Therefore, he contacted Wenders' editor and film cutter Peter Przygoda, and later Wenders himself, who agreed to collaborate with him after reading the film's screenplay (JÜS 1989, 27). Livaneli's film was produced the same year as Wenders' film *Der Himmel über Berlin* (*Wings of Desire* 1987), where Wenders used an excerpt from the song *Karlı Kayın Ormanı*, which was composed by Livaneli himself, and was based on the poem "Karlı Kayın Ormanında" by Nazım Hikmet (2008). Looking at the further literary connections of the film with the broader publishing landscape in West Germany, it should be also mentioned that Ahmet İ. Doğan, who himself took part in the film's production as the production assistant, and who is the founder of Ararat publishing house, released Livaneli's bilingual folk music sheet collection titled *Lieder zwischen Vorgestern und Übermorgen/Geçmişten Geleceğe Türküler* (Songs From the Day Before Yesterday and The Day After Tomorrow, Livaneli 1981a) a few years before the film was made, which also included the music sheet of *Karlı Kayın Ormanı*.

Publishing houses such as Dağyeli and Ararat were among the bilingual initiatives that had already been presenting works of literature from Turkey as well as works in West Germany written in Turkish to a larger, German-speaking public from the 1970s onwards. Publishing houses such as Dağyeli, Unionsverlag, and dtv had been circulating works by Yaşar Kemal in translation throughout Europe for decades, including the volumes of *Memed Mein Falke* (Memed, My Hawk, 1962), *Die Ararat Legende* (The Legend of Ararat, 1970), and *Das Lied der*

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<sup>188</sup> The other co-producers of the film are Renée Gundelach and Ülker Livaneli.

*Tausend Stiere* (The Legend of the Thousand Bulls, 1980). In this sense, the screening of *Yer Demir* in “Tage des Türkischen Films” reflects Kemal’s central place in the literary canon in Turkish, both in and outside of Turkey: a year after *Yer Demir*’s screening in “Tage des Türkischen Films,” Kemal’s novel was published with the title *Eisenerde Kupferhimmel* (1991) by Unionsverlag in Zurich, in German translation by the turkologist Cornelius Bischoff. Related to his translation work, Bischoff was also invited to speak on the life and work of Kemal under the title “Ein Schriftsteller im Elfenbeinturm ist für mich kein Schriftsteller” (A Writer in an Ivory Tower is Not a Writer for Me) years later in the 10th year jubilee of the establishment of SinemaTürk during the 1998 meeting of “Tage des Türkischen Films” (“Archiv – Türkische Filmtage München” n.d.). The literary event was accompanied by the screenings of Osman Okkan’s documentaries about the two well-known authors from Turkey, Nazım Hikmet and Yaşar Kemal himself. The film festival’s events and screenings related to Turkish literature indicates that the festival organizers not only benefited from, but also contributed to, and reinforced the state of the Turkish literary canon in West Germany—Yaşar Kemal’s body of work being one of the most apparent examples as a recurring critical discussion in the festival. The literary adaptations of many authors from the Turkish literary canon have repeatedly found their place in “Tage des Türkischen Films”: As part of the festival’s programming, film adaptations such as Erden Kıral’s *Das blaue Exil* (The Blue Exile, 1993), Tunç Okan’s *Sarı Mercedes* (1993), and Işıl Özgentürk’s *Seni Seviyorum Rosa* (I love you Rosa, 1992) were screened, which are based on Cevat Şakir Kabaağaçlı’s (also known as Halikarnas Balıkcısı) autobiographical novella *Mavi Sürgün* (The Blue Exile, 1961), Adalet Ağaoğlu’s novel *Fikrimin İnce Gülü* (The Delicate Rose of My Mind, 1976), and Sevgi Soysal’s novella *Tante Rosa* (1968). Reading events of Melih Cevdet Anday, Sevgi Soysal, and Orhan Pamuk, talks by



invited guest authors, including Pamuk himself, a memorial event for the author Aziz Nesin after his death, and podium discussions titled “From Novel to Film” and “Film and Literature” are among the literary events included in the film festival’s programming that are related to the screenings (“Archiv – Türkische Filmtage München” n.d.).

On the one hand, these authors’ relative reputation in Turkey and Europe might have attracted a larger audience to the festival, and thus reinforced the festival’s overall recognition in a wider literature and cinema landscape in West Germany. On the other hand, the festival’s predominant involvement with the canonical authors created blind spots, especially with respect to the context of Turkish-German literature, where some of its most read authors such as Emine Sevgi Özdamar, Zafer Şenocak, and Aras Ören—who was himself involved in filmmaking—were missing from the festival’s programming. On that note, looking at the patterns of literature selections of the festival over the years gives us a more accurate picture of how these decisions on the literary “archive” of the festival has in fact reflected the prioritization concerns of most publishing houses’ in their translation efforts of the Turkish literary canon in Europe.<sup>189</sup> In later years of the festival, for example, the organizers became more attentive in including literature by Turkish authors living in West Germany such as the literary adaptation of Habib Bektaş’s novel *Gölge Kokusu* (*Duft der Schatten*, *Smell of the Shade*, 1997). Directed by Atif Yılmaz, the film was titled *Septembersturm* (*Eylül Fırtınası*, *September Storm*, 1999), whose screening in 2001 was also followed by a podium discussion with Bektaş himself.

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<sup>189</sup> The project “Türkische Bibliothek” by Unionsverlag is a case in point with respect to this issue, which published exclusively canonical works in Turkish from Turkey rather than from West Germany, albeit the funding priority was defined as “German-Turkish Relations” in the sponsoring Robert Bosch Foundation’s statement (“Unionsverlag Die TÜRKISCHE BIBLIOTHEK” n.d.).

#### ***4.2.1 Film festival as an archive for aesthetic communities***

The exhibition of select literature in the festival is also connected to literary practices specific to Munich, which makes “Tage des Türkischen Films” also an archive of place-bound aesthetic practices and lived relations: according to Lindner, the activities in SinemaTürk, including the organization of its festival, is a direct result of the activities in other initiatives involving the presentation of Turkish literature, such as the “Kassettenprogramm für ausländische Mitbürger” that produced *Korkmazlar*, Dükkan Kulturladen and Kulturforum YOL (2020). While Dükkan was initially established as a lending library (Kevik, Dayı, and Ohrenschall 1996, 71) and later became a center for organized events for conveying Turkish literature to German and Turkish-speaking audiences in West Germany, YOL organized historical and cultural exhibitions as a Turkish cultural association with a framework broader than literature.<sup>190</sup> The members of SinemaTürk have often also been members of at least one of these initiatives, who were immersed in their processes of knowledge production, which later aesthetically informed the programming of “Tage des Türkischen Films.” Hence, the activities organized within the film festival itself can be considered an archive of shared aesthetic relations by multiple communities in Munich, who were immersed as well as interested in the intersection between arts and cultures after postwar labor migration. The forewords in the publication in honor of Dükkan’s tenth year by the well-known authors from Turkey Can Yücel and Adalet Ağaoğlu show how these initiatives in Munich changed not only how the Turkish-speaking immigrant media networks functioned, but also how communities interacted with them: While Yücel underlines the direct relation between literature and lived relations in stating “What you sell in the place you call

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<sup>190</sup> For the documentation of one of YOL’s exhibitions, see *Exil Türkei: deutschsprachige Emigranten in der Türkei 1933-1945*, Jan Cremer, Horst Przytulla, trans. M. Ali Aslan, München: Lipp, 1991.

‘store’ (Dükkan) is not a commodity. You are selling the contradictions of life between Turkey and Germany. This is a heavy business” (6),<sup>191</sup> Ağaoğlu echoes this statement by emphasizing the partly autonomous position of Dükkan from the Turkish literary traditions and history writing efforts, underlining the fact that the members of Dükkan “have to leave all the rules behind” for “more creative ... and better equipped activities” (7).<sup>192</sup> In this sense, “Tage des Türkischen Films” allowed for a space for cinema that is more attuned to communities with multiple languages and cultural backgrounds.

The festival organizers’ close relation and accessibility to Turkish literature as well as readers in Munich was also marked by its long-term cooperation with Münchner Stadtbibliothek (Munich City Library). This literary institution was a reliable venue for the film festival throughout decades and was also among the festival’s co-organizing partners, which covered its costs for space and technology (Lindner 2018). The turkologist Margit Lindner, who is one of the co-founders of SinemaTürk and who, at the same time, was responsible for the Turkish publications at the Münchner Stadtbibliothek, stated that precisely because the Münchner Stadtbibliothek was a reliable co-organizer of the festival from the start, literary events were repeatedly integrated into the festival, where literature and film have always influenced each other (Lindner 2020). She observed that the library’s ability to host events had started with the move of its main section to the newly built Gasteig cultural center in 1984, which provided the institution with lecture halls (today known as “Carl-Amery-Saal”) with a capacity of 130

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<sup>191</sup> “Das, was Ihr an dem Ort verkauft, den Ihr ‘Laden’ (Dükkan) nennt, ist keine Ware. Ihr verkauft die Widersprüche des Lebens zwischen der Türkei und Deutschland. Das ist ein schweres Geschäft.”; “Dükkan” means “store” in English.

<sup>192</sup> “Ihr, die ihr bei den Bemühungen um ‘Präsentation’ der türkischen Literatur und ihrer historischen Einordnung zum Teil eine autonome Stellung innehabt, laßt alle Regeln, die ihr bisher befolgt habt, hinter euch, laßt uns über Lesungen und dergleichen hinaus alle Wege auf tun für kreativere, ... und besser ausgestattete Aktivitäten.”

spectators in ascending rows of seats, along with a film projection space that was suitable for screenings (Lindner 2020).

The library as an event space enabled further literary aesthetic kinships in Munich across arts and cultures through many transnational associations' and initiatives' access to literature and public readership at hand. SinemaTürk's presence at the Munich City Library was only a part of the library's cooperative efforts in co-organizing events and reaching new target audiences within its body: the program focus of the library's event work was labeled under the title "Cinema International," where it housed many transnational film series including the association Griechische Filmforum München's (Greek Film Forum Munich) film festival "Griechische Filmwoche," (Greek Film Week) organized from 1987 onwards (Lindner 2020). Similarly addressing an immigrant population in West Germany that has increased significantly after postwar labor migration, Griechische Filmforum München and its festival "Griechische Filmwoche" was closely related to SinemaTürk and "Tage des Türkischen Films." They were, in fact, co-founded by the same person: Thomas Balkenhol. As a Munich Film School graduate, Balkenhol expresses his familiarity with multiple film cultures including Turkish directors such as Metin Erksan, Ömer Lütfi Akad, Yılmaz Güney (Balkenhol 2018). He also worked as a film cutter and was involved in the production of *Gölge: Zukunft der Liebe* (1980) which was considered among the earliest examples of Turkish-German cinema about immigration. The film was a graduation project of both the Turkish director Sema Poyraz and the Greek director Sofoklis Adamidis, both of whom live in Germany.

Balkenhol's core engagement with both Greek and Turkish cinema cultures also facilitated transnational literary collaborations within and beyond their programming, such as the Turkish-Cyprus-Greek event that was organized with the painter Fikret Oytam, the author Dido

Sotiriou and the director Panikos Chrysanthou, and Neşe Yaşın’s poetry reading at the “Griechische Filmwoche” (Balkenhol 2018). It should be also noted that another collaboration between the SinemaTürk co-founders Thomas Balkenhol and Erman Okay is their directing of *Der Duft der Dinge* (1991),<sup>193</sup> a documentary film on the life of the author Dido Sotiriou herself, who had to leave Anatolia and move to Greece after the Turkish-Greek population exchange in 1923. It is thus possible to state that a transnational aesthetic domain after the postwar labor migration, which had already been emerging in the publishing sector in West Germany, was reinforced by associations for introducing cinema cultures to a wider public during the 1980s.<sup>194</sup>

Such close networking between Greek and Turkish-speaking aesthetic communities and cultural collaborations in West Germany also reflected a political standpoint: it stood against polarizations following the Greek-Turkish conflict with regards to the Cypriot coup d’état and Turkey’s military intervention in Cyprus in 1974. Zülfü Livaneli co-founded the “Greece-Turkey Friendship Initiative” (1988-1996) himself with the director, author, and composer Mikis Theodorakis, and they organized the Greek-Turkish Film Days in association with the “Kulturforum Türkei Deutschland” (Alkın 2017, 426). “Tage des Türkischen Films” was not an exception in its efforts toward solidarity against the nationalist sentiments in the late 1980s: the association SinemaTürk was careful to never define itself as a national one, and its festival programming presented the West German public with a contemporary archive of culturally related cinema and literary traditions in geographical vicinity, including Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Iran and Cyprus, by showing films of directors such as Sergei Parajanov, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, and Panikos Chrysanthou (Balkenhol 2018). Another reason for the festival’s anti-

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<sup>193</sup> On the same year of its production, the film was also included in the programming of “Tage des Türkischen Films.”

<sup>194</sup> In Munich, where “Turkische Filmtage” also took place, the state initiative Filmstadt München played an active role in supporting small film festivals by Greek, Italian and South American communities. (Balkenhol 2018).

nationalist approach to Turkish culture is the intrasocietal polarizations within Turkey after the coup d'états in 1971 and 1980 (Buldun 2019),<sup>195</sup> also featured in films about Kurdish resistance in Turkey, such as *Hukukçuluğumdan Utanıyorum/Ich schäme mich, ein Jurist zu sein* (I am Ashamed to be a Lawyer, 1994), which was shown in the festival with much political challenge as I will expand on later in the chapter. The director Ayşe Polat's short films such as *Fremdennacht* (Stranger's Night, 1992) and *Ein Fest für Beyhan* (A Celebration for Beyhan, 1994) similarly present political stakes of migration from Turkey with regards to the Kurdish population, as well as the subjects such as military dictatorship and political asylum.

These politically relevant, transcultural aesthetic collaborations in the annual programming of "Tage des Türkischen Films" were connected to the festival's openness to having organizing members, who were experts, specialists, or enthusiasts in a variety of fields other than cinema, including law and literature (Lindner 2018). Lindner maintains that the SinemaTürk association was established with the technical help of some 20-25 members, as well as curators who had contacts with Turkish-speaking filmmakers outside Turkey (2018). According to Balkenhol's experience with multiple cinema associations under the umbrella state initiative Filmstadt München—founded in 1984—, SinemaTürk was structurally the most democratic association due to the way it was administered with a chairperson changing every year (Balkenhol 2018). The association even appointed a student at the film school, now the director Seyhan Derin, as the organizer of the festival for four consecutive years, from 1995 until 1999, when she moved to Berlin. This was also when the festival started to have particular

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<sup>195</sup> The earlier individual enterprise of Balkenhol as an editor of the bilingual book *Karikatürkei/Karikatürkiye* (1981) in Turkish and German hints at such political standpoint against the intrasocietal polarizations through state censorship and impediment of freedom of expression after the military coup d'états in Turkey: published only a year after the 1980 coup d'état in Turkey, *Karikatürkei/Karikatürkiye* unfolds the political history of Turkey through the well-known caricatures from Turkey between the years 1946 and 1981. According to the remark in the beginning of the volume, Balkenhol dedicates the book to the first yearbook of the Cartoonist Association (Karikatürcüler Derneği) after the association's closure by the Military dictatorship from 1971 to 1973 (Balkenhol 1981, 5).

themes, such as “New Turkish Cinema,” “Women's Films,” and “İstanbul Films.” (Lindner 2018). After Derin’s move, the new board members of the festival decided to wait for a year because they needed to have more experience (Lindner 2020). These year-to-year experiments in the associations and festival's administration allowed SinemaTürk members to approach “Tage des Türkischen Films” as a dynamic organization prone to contemporary changes in its audience's preferences as well as the aesthetic climate of Turkish film culture in West Germany.

Such flexibility is also due to the relative financial autonomy that the festival enjoyed through its funding sources as a small initiative: While Munich City Library was covering the festival's hall and technical costs as I indicated earlier, other institutions such as Goethe-Institut, and later, Turkish Consulate in Munich, took over the transport of the film copies from Turkey in order to avoid the high transportation costs of the 35 mm copies and the time-consuming customs formalities (Lindner 2020). The city of Munich’s Department of Culture covered the costs for the organization, film rental and the advertising material based on a deficit funding<sup>196</sup> after the ticket sales in support of the non-commercial film culture in Munich. The frequent involvement of sponsors from the medium-sized Turkish companies in Munich have financed the stay of the invited filmmakers, as well as the additional expenses of the festival (Lindner 2020). Although such monetary support from multiple local and state-led institutions have facilitated the annual organization of “Tage des Türkischen Films” on a regular basis, especially in its later years, it did not prevent the festival organizers from facing material and political challenges in their efforts for screening the films that they selected over the years. Taking a closer look at these

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<sup>196</sup> Lindner explains the deficit funding of SinemaTürk as in the following: “[A]uf Grundlage einer vorab eingereichten Kostenkalkulation und unter Abzug der erzielten Einnahmen aus dem Ticketverkauf, erstattet das Kulturreferat die Kosten des Festivals.” “[O]n the basis of a cost calculation submitted in advance and after deducting the income generated from ticket sales, the Department of Culture reimburses the costs of the festival.” (Lindner 2020)

difficulties would help us to develop an understanding of a festival itself as an archive for day-to-day hardships faced by immigrant-led media networks.

### **4.3 Archiving material challenges in “Tage des Türkischen Films”**

In search of the first films to be included in the programming of “Tage des Türkischen Films,” the members of SinemaTürk got into contact with one of the few private entrepreneurial families, who brought film rolls from Turkey to Munich through private efforts in the early years of postwar labor migration, and showed them in cinemas (Okay 2018). They found out that around 300 movies of 35 mm, once kept in that family’s warehouse, were given away to a silver extractor about a few days before their contact, since the films were taking too much space and started to decay while sitting in damp circumstances (Okay 2018, Balkenhol 2018). Erman Okay’s efforts to screen Metin Erksan’s *Susuz Yaz* (1963) as the first film of the festival, which was awarded with the Golden Bear award at the Berlinale in 1964, failed as well—not being able to locate any copy in Turkey, the SinemaTürk members tracked down a single one at a film lab in Frankfurt, which was, however, being held due to a conflict with the owners of the film roll (Okay 2018). Later, Okay decided to show another film by Metin Erksan, namely *Kuyu* (1968), which was owned by both a technician in İstanbul with its 16 mm copy as well as the same family, who contacted SinemaTürk members a second time after the member's first attempt of visit (2018). As the technician asked a significance price for the film, the members came to an agreement with the family in exchange for a small amount per screening, under the condition that the film should be shown in the festival no more than three times (2018).

Okay’s detailed account about the difficulties in tracking down the films, negotiating and closing agreements with their owners, and transporting and collecting the films across countries



especially in the first years of the festival, shows SinemaTürk members' efforts similar to archival research in their organization of "Tage des Türkischen Films." Such research, however, was never archived in the association itself. The urgency and time-boundedness of creating a festival event annually defined the members' primary aim, which is to inform audiences about the contemporary changes in the cultural taste and cinema industry of the day. Apart from a few exceptions, such as *Kuyu* and the director Yılmaz Güney's retrospective in 1994, the organizers of "Tage des Türkischen Films" often bring together films of timely vicinity. The production years of the films are often very close to one another, where the films are part of a contemporary outlook on the state of the Turkish film market in Turkey, as well as the Turkish-German film market in Europe. The particular selections and combinations of films thus have not only led to a new aesthetic taste in the audiences in Germany, which has developed and changed year by year, but also has later formed a long-term alternative archive of contemporary cinema traditions of cultural proximity, stretched over more than three decades.

Margit Lindner underlines the fact that half of the audience of the festival "Tage des Türkischen Films" consisted of Turkish migrants and post-migrants in Germany, and that a large part of the association and the organizers of the festival have also migrated to Germany from Turkey (2020). This had a two-way impact on the programming of the festival, which could not be isolated from the contemporary preferences and critiques of the Turkish and/or German-speaking immigrant populations in Germany. Thus, in my analysis of the festival, I consider the broader aesthetic framework that the co-founders of SinemaTürk created through their organization of events, collaborations, and podium discussions, which addressed both cinematic and literary traditions in Turkish, Mediterranean, European and/or Turkish-German contexts. The variety of communities and (lived) relations forged through these various events indicates

that “Tage des Türkischen Films” cannot be defined as a diaspora film festival with a thematic focus on postwar labor migration from Turkey to Germany alone. This becomes especially clear in instances where the organizers had trouble in accessing specific films due to censorship in other countries. Rather than simply viewing these material limitations as a roadblock, I argue that they enable us to pay closer attention to the festival as a transnational aesthetic network, whose very organization brings about changing political dynamics and technologies across geographies and communities on a daily basis.

Moreover, by considering these daily aesthetic practices in their selections of films, the organizing members let the screening schedule open both for films that are labelled in the cinema sector as festival or art films, and those that are considered as commercial films in the mainstream media. Through their non-hierarchizing and non-distinguishing approach among the industrial labels of “art” and “commercial,” I argue that they acknowledged and problematized the stratifying aesthetic prejudices on part of the sector as well as audiences and problematize them by placing both types of films one after another in their programming. In this way, the festival became an unofficial archive that highlights contemporary releases from both Turkey and Germany, as well as film-watching habits in Germany of the time.

#### ***4.3.1 A festival in the time of Video Home System and globalized expansion of the national cinema markets***

The daily consumption habits of viewers directly impacted the material challenges that the organizing members faced as far as the state of cinema is concerned during the late 1980s: Okay states that this period is defined by the boom of VHS (Video Home System) cassettes, which enabled everybody to start watching movies at home (2018). The VHS cassettes allowed

people to watch more films in a shorter period of time, also with more choices to select from according to their own taste. Their proliferation from ca. 1977 onwards also gave way to the multiplication of video stores (Videotheken) in German cities, through which individuals could rent films to watch at home in the form of cassettes (Haupts 2014, 42). Movie theaters thus could not compete with such rapid circulation, private accessibility, and affordability of the films, which has created a large economic shift in the cinema sector.

Since Turkish and Turkish-German productions target even smaller numbers of viewers in Germany, the film market for immigrant populations in Germany had gone through even a greater change. According to Okay, by the time the co-founders had established SinemaTürk and started organizing its festival, Turkish films were no longer being shown anywhere (2018). Erdal Buldun states that even before that time it was difficult to find cinemas that show Turkish productions—despite the population from Turkey constituted the largest portion among the number of immigrants in West Germany:

Before SinemaTürk, watching Turkish movies in Munich meant watching movies that were promoted in settlements where Turks lived densely, just like in other parts of Germany ... . A movie was announced, and posters were distributed from a car driving around the streets. ... At this very point, SinemaTürk became a bucket of water in the desert. (2019)<sup>197</sup>

Before the era of video, Turkish productions were circulated almost exclusively through private efforts in West Germany, where a market for Turkish films was almost non-existent. Can Sungu emphasizes the importance of cinema enthusiasts and entrepreneurs renting the “train station cinemas” (Bahnhofkinos) for a short period of time in order to show Turkish films, they collected film rolls from travelers on the train from İstanbul to Munich in exchange for pocket

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<sup>197</sup> “SinemaTürk’ten önce Münih’te Türk filmi izlemek demek, tıpkı Almanya’nın başka bölgelerinde olduğu gibi, Türklerin yoğun yaşadığı yerleşim yerlerinde tanıtımı yapılan ... filmleri izlemek demektir. Buralarda sokak sokak gezen bir arabadan film anons edilir, etrafa afişler dağıtırdı ... İşte tam da bu noktada SinemaTürk, çölde karşınıza çıkan bir kova su oldu.”

money (bi'bak 2020, 7). Sungu also underlines that the Munich train station has especially been one of the most important meeting points for immigrant workers from Turkey, which was the first stop for all in their travels to Munich as well as to other West German cities. The train station cinemas were the first indicators of a Turkish-German cinema culture, which later propagated from the South of Germany to West Berlin, before being taken over by the video and audio cassette industry. He also touched upon the community-building aspect of video-watching practices by the Turkish-speaking population in West Germany, stating that Turkish-German households rented and watched films often collectively (11). It is thus not a coincidence that prior to the establishment of SinemaTürk, the majority of the association's co-founders engaged in the production of the series *Korkmazlar* in 1988, which was a project first released in the form of video as well as audio cassettes—formats for watching films collectively in households, which gained rapid popularity among the Turkish-speaking populations in West Germany at the time.

This collective aspect becomes also prominent in the selection and buying of film cassettes, especially in places such as “Türkischer Basar” (Turkish Bazaar)—a hotspot for rental video and audio cassette stores in Berlin, where a large number of stalls next to one another were operated in place of the disused underground station in Bülowstraße between the years 1980 and 1993 (Bernstoff 2021). In order to show the reader the rapid circulation of Yeşilçam films in the stores of “Türkische Basar,” Bernstoff also provides a brief citation from the television magazine “Aspekte” from 1986 about the video and audio cassette consumption of Turkish-speaking immigrant communities in West Germany: “35 percent of all Turkish households had a video set, three times more than Germans; one household borrowed up to ten cassettes per weekend ...” (2021).<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> “35 Prozent aller türkischen Haushalte hatten en ein Videogerät, dreimal mehr als die deutschen; ein Haushalt lieh sich bis zu zehn Kassetten am Wochenende aus ...”

Although these percentages might provide the reader with some information about a significant predominance in Turkish-speaking households' preference in buying and watching VHS cassettes, it should be noted that the numbers alone should not give a clear cut definition for communities themselves: Randall Halle argues that statistical analyses of media consumption in Germany often tend to fall into mutually exclusive group denominations such as "Turks" and "Germans," which do not represent the heterogeneity of communities that identify with both, especially after the generational changes in self-perception, experience and family structures (2012, 128).

While acknowledging that the Turkish-German cinema spaces in Germany do often have a large Turkish-speaking audience, Halle underlines that they are not simply so-called "Turkish spaces" *or* explicitly German spaces. Especially after their immediate location in German multiplexes from the 2000s onwards, Halle refers to such cinemas as "interzones," which "derive from transformations in Germany and Turkey that are not simply simultaneous or mutual but rather convergent and interdependent" (124). Halle's analysis takes on rather the later and more institutionalized examples of such spaces at a time of the late-capitalist, globalized expansion of the national cinema markets. To this matter, Halle gives the examples of Karli Kino in Berlin Neukölln after 2003, which first began regularly screening Turkish-language films, or media funds that support as well as distribute Turkish mainstream productions in Europe, such as Maxximum Distribution. As a result of such efforts, these interzone spaces often emerged out of the promotions, funding, and distributions of Turkish productions through larger institutions such as EUROMED and Axel Springer (126), which have the financial capacity to have an impact on the transnational cinema industry and market.

With its annual programming over 30 years, the organizers of “Tage des Türkischen Films” have witnessed as well as reflected on the long-term impacts of these drastic shifts in the transnational cinema market in Europe, as well as the increased visibility of the mainstream and festival productions in Turkey—as a result both the impact of the VHS cassettes on cinema, and later, that of the global institutional investments in national film industries. Surveying the programming of the festival year-by-year thus reveals a historical shift, with the predominance of widely promoted mainstream films entering into the festival's agenda in the late-1990s and early 2000s, such as *Eşkiya* (1996), *Kahpe Bizans* (1999) *Propaganda* (Çetin 1999), *Vizontele* (2001), *Abdülhamid Düşerken* (2002), and *Gönül Yarası* (2005). The festival remained open to commercial feature films made in Turkey that had a larger audience, films of Turkish-German productions by new directors, along with short films and documentaries—which was representative of the state of many cinema cultures as well as audience preferences at once. In the later years of the festival, the organizers attended the meetings between FilmFernsehFonds Bayern (FFF Bayern) and Antalya Film Festival during the years of 2008, 2009 and 2010, where festival organizers and producers from Turkey and Germany met and established networks for future collaborations (Lindner 2020). According to Lindner, although “Tage des Türkischen Films” did not directly impact the cinema industry in Germany, the festival’s close connection—and influence on the succeeding Turkish-German film festivals—with the cinema industry in Turkey has also increased the likeliness of distribution companies in Germany to include Turkish film productions in their regular theatrical distribution (2020).

#### ***4.3.2 A festival as an archive of lived relations***

Most organizing attempts by the members of “Tage des Türkischen Films” come from the historically specific, material hardships in the collection and exhibition of films, which depended on the state of film industries and political climates in both Turkey and Europe. These attempts do not only reflect the up-to-date states of the multiple film cultures at the time, but also about the extent to which lived relations mattered in the formation of the festival’s programming: they let us ask why it was especially difficult to find some films, to transport them, to screen them, and to bring them together in order to make them part of a transnational aesthetic domain, which otherwise would not exist—neither in the context of Turkey, nor in Germany. It is thus possible to consider “Tage des Türkischen Films” as a product of an archival work itself, albeit not having an archive of its own—for the very same reasons of material difficulty.

How the films were shown is, thus, as important as what was shown in the festival in terms of tracking the historical changes in the immigrant-led media networks in Germany: in their interviews, all the co-founders especially remember the interpersonal relationships they depended on daily in their efforts of putting together the festival every year: their collective work with the film owners, directors, producers, students, and film enthusiasts in different cultural initiatives in Munich, along with those with the members inside the association of SinemaTürk, including lawyers and translators, had immediate impact on their structural organization and film selection. Such impacts are visible in Seyhan Derin’s role as the chair of the festival, and the pursuit of families and people who owned Metin Erksan’s films *Susuz Yaz* and *Kuyu*, as I mentioned before.

Beside the individuals themselves, who took part and played a defining role in the festival’s network, the medium of communication also mattered in terms of the very establishment of these lived relations. Particularly during the first years of the festival, most

contacts, including the international ones, were held through letters, phone calls and faxes, which caused misunderstandings and delays between the parties that agreed to work with the festival members: for example, SinemaTürk's co-founders Margit Lindner and Thomas Balkenhol recall their contact with the graphic designer they considered working with in Turkey for the first brochure and poster of the festival (Balkenhol 2018; Lindner 2020). After some time, the association received the designs in print, and revolted against them, which had the symbols of the Turkish flag with crescents and stars on it, being similar to the symbol of the police force in Turkey (Balkenhol 2018; Lindner 2020). For the transportation of the 35 mm film rolls, the organizers often had to rely on the Turkish Consulate General for solving the issues with the customs that held some copies in the past (Balkenhol 2018).

While such interest of a state institution in supporting the alleged “ambassadors” for Turkish culture in Germany helped the festival organizers to overcome some material limitations (Lindner 2020), this involvement resulted in the state's attempts to have a direct political influence, including censorship and control over the films to be screened: for example, the organizers of 1995 were unable to receive the film roll for Karaman Yavuz's documentary *Hukukçuluğumdan Utanyorum/Ich schäme mich, ein Jurist zu sein* (I am Ashamed to be a Lawyer, 1994) from the consulate, which was planned to be part of that year's programming (Balkenhol 2018). The documentary takes on the persecutions and imprisonments in the Kurdish community in Turkey, witnessed by the lawyers Şerafettin Kaya and Ruşen Arslan during their work in Diyarbakır after the military memorandum in 1971 against Süleyman Demirel's right wing Justice Party government. German Journalists Association protested the consulate for disabling the screening of the documentary at “Tage des Türkischen Films” (Balkenhol 2018), likely due to the films' documentation of state violence against the Kurdish population.



Balkenhol maintains that despite the impossibility of possessing the actual film roll, the organizing members were able to find one of the film's VHS copies in order to screen it—albeit in a relatively poor image quality (2018).

Dubbing and subtitling were also realized through individual efforts in the festival for the purpose of reaching both Turkish and/or German-speaking publics. Lindner describes the process of how the organizers worked with people in order to deal with the technical challenges in translating the dialogues in films as the following:

The movies were without subtitles. We used to watch the video, extract the dialogues and translate them. Some would come with a dialogue file. The dialogues we translated were performed live during the screening. The audience listened with headphones, one of us read the dialogues in a hut. Generally, Reyhan [Eroğlu] did both the translation and the voice-ins. She was doing the same for the Munich International Film Festival (2018).<sup>199</sup>

Similar to the work of Turkish-German bilingual publishing houses in West Germany, most translation work in the festival organization was done from scratch. This meant that “Tage des Türkischen Films” as a media network established aesthetic connections among multiple communities for the first time: not only between producers, directors, and actors during the decision-making processes for the programming, but also between audiences—Turkish and/or German-speaking movie-goers, some of which had an interest in Turkish festival films, in commercial films produced in Turkey, in Yeşilçam classics or canonical directors from Turkish cinema, and in films labelled as “New-Wave” from countries of geographical vicinity to Turkey. Such an inclusive and collective structure not only brings people together, but also establishes tastes and shared experiences among communities anew in its body. In other words, the

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<sup>199</sup> “Die Filme waren nicht untertitelt. Wir haben die Filme auf Video gesichtet, die Dialoge rausgeschrieben und übersetzt. Manchmal wurden auch Dialoglisten geschickt. Die übersetzten Dialoge wurden während der Vorstellung live eingesprochen. Die Zuschauer haben die Dialoge, die eine von uns in einer kleinen Kabine gelesen hat, über Kopfhörer gehört. Vor allem Reyhan hat sowohl die Übersetzungen als auch das Einsprechen übernommen. Sie hat dies auch beim Filmfest München gemacht.”

phenomena of the film festival both becomes a cumulative archive of cinema traditions across countries with its year-to-year programming, as well as one that restructures aesthetic relationships out of these traditions, and puts them in a new light historically, similar to an archiving subject.

### **Conclusion: The festival event as a temporal archive**

The 1980s were marked by “the massive proliferation of the festival model, for which several related terms such as ‘eventization,’ ‘festivalomania,’ ‘festivalization,’ and ‘festival epidemic’” (Loist 2016, 58) have appeared repeatedly in the recently emerging scholarship on film festivals. With its first organization in 1989, “Tage des Türkischen Films” was historically not an exception to such exponential growth in the number of film festivals especially across Europe, which happened due to a need for critical differentiation (De Valck 2016, 107) from the existing national (as well as Cold War) public spaces after the rise of the late-capitalist globalization: even in one of the most well-known example that goes beyond a national perspective from the 1951 onwards, that is, the Berlin International Film Festival—soon nicknamed Berlinale—the emphasis was placed on the exhibition of the “democratic credentials” of West Berlin “to the East across the city,” which “pointedly excluded any participation from the Eastern Bloc” (Wong 2016, 88). With the critical expansion and diversification of cinema during the 1960s and 1970s, as epitomized by the Oberhausen Manifesto (Oberhausener Manifesto) in 1962 (Elsaesser 1989, 24-25),<sup>200</sup> additions of the “independently curated,” “parallel sections” in film festivals, such as the integration of the International Forum of New Cinema (Internationale Forum des jungen

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<sup>200</sup> The manifesto was signed and declared by 26 film directors and critics at the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen (Internationalen Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen), who resist the commercial domination and restrictions of the film industry over the filmmakers in defense of a more independent future cinema in Germany.

Films) to the Berlinale in 1971, and the inclusion of national cinemas in the international context of “World Cinema” or the New Waves, the increasing number of festivals enabled and reinforced such differentiation in the cinema sector through their creation of specialized public spaces. De Valck states, after Bourdieu: “[F]estivals produce the consumers capable of consuming ... cultural goods, by cultivating the tastes of festival visitors and providing them with frameworks for understanding unfamiliar works” (112). “Tage des Türkischen Films,” along with other burgeoning smaller cinema associations and festivals in Munich during the 1980s, acknowledges communities on the basis of what they do, what they share, and how they connect with others as well as with works of art, rather than who they supposedly are from a labelling or compartmentalizing perspective of the mainstream media, based on generalizations of particular demographical data or immigration status.

These alternative spaces, also coined as “counterpublic spheres” (*Gegenöffentlichkeit*) in Negt’s and Kluge’s Marxist critique (2016 [1972]), are experiential in the sense that they are not “driven by the interests of capital” like the bourgeoisie-informed public sphere, and thus, “split [the proletarian context of living] into two halves” (18), in which the two spheres always exist in constant opposition to one another. In their formulation, the “context of living” (*Lebenzusammenhang*) is referred to here as proletarian in character, which also allow Negt and Kluge to explain their use of “counterpublic sphere” in class terms. As Hansen also critiques in her foreword, their analysis, in turn, leads to an exclusively labor-oriented definition of class, neglecting the dynamics outside those of class within communities. Nevertheless, one can still extend Negt’s and Kluge’s definition to other “contexts of living”: Film festivals such as “Tage des Türkischen Films” function as a similar aesthetic space that has a *counterpublic* nature, which works against the popular discourse of immigrant life, where the experiences including

daily habits and interpersonal relations of the members in disenfranchised communities remain “increasingly disjointed, fragmented, and irrelevant” (Hansen, xiv) in the face of broader media and politics. Negt’s and Kluge’s analysis of such dialectical relationship between public and counterpublic spheres also indicates their interdependency to one another: in the context of film festivals, Loist argues that the spaces they open are *highly relational* and never free from “hierarchical stratification” in the regional, national and global cinema market, including their promotions by critics, their positions and contributions in the larger competition, cultural prize and award systems, and the way they were commercialized (50).<sup>201</sup>

Treating “Tage des Türkischen Films” as a festival without an archive also reinforces this idea of interdependency over independency from the other institutional actors in the cinema industry: the short term, annually changing, and thus highly temporal struggles in the festival in facing the larger media networks in Germany keeps festival’s programming decisions constantly attuned, contingent, and urgent in the face of the existing media structures and technologies. Moreover, more recent takes on the counterpublics in the context of smaller film festivals, such as in the formulation of Zielinski, emphasize the heterogeneity of the communities that participate in such spheres: “The tension or play between contemporary publics and historical or marginalized counterpublics in the LGBT scenes is particularly noticeable at the related film festivals with respect to taste cultures, programming, self-definition, or identity, and is well represented in the ephemera circulating throughout the festival itself” (147). Paying attention to the heterogeneous composition of audiences as well as organizers in “Tage des Türkischen Films” allows us to trace the up-to-date changes in the preferences and decisions of its

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<sup>201</sup> On that note, Elsaesser gives the example in the following: “[D]elegating the selection for certain sections to critics or to other bodies inevitably creates new forms of inclusion and exclusion, and above all new kinds of hierarchies, hidden perhaps to the spectators, but keenly felt by producers and makers” (96).

community through the festival's programming and ephemera over the years. This makes the event of the festival itself a temporal archive, which shows us an inventory of the ever-changing *life-contexts* of communities after postwar labor migration.

### Conclusion: Living Archives

Cem Kaya's film *Aşk, Mark ve Ölüm/Liebe, D-Mark und Tod* (Love, Deutschmarks and Death, 2022)<sup>202</sup> takes on the emergence and transformation of Turkish songs and folk songs (*türkü*) about Germany starting with the first arrival of migrant workers from Turkey in 1961. Premiering at the Berlinale 2022, the film reveals a multitude of archival and found footage, as well as interviews about the everyday lives of musicians, collectors, traders, producers, entrepreneurs, and audiences, who pursued their lives and careers in West Germany over a span of six decades. Taking on accounts of everyday life and individual world-makings, Kaya invites the audience to pay attention to how people related themselves to a country of immigration through music: how they described life after postwar labor migration in West Germany through their songs, and after some time, how they started to sing these songs in German, as well as to express their experiences in them through their own ideas of Germany (Kaya 2023).

*Aşk, Mark ve Ölüm* is one of the most recent examples of artists seeking to portray immigrants' approach towards life in the post-migration context. Although filled with archival materials, Kaya's film looks more like an essay: being neither a journalistic report, nor a documentary, it reflects personal stories through photographs, cassette collections, music performances, and oral narratives. In them, the viewer finds impressions, memories, and even myths, for example, about *Türkischer Basar* (Turkish Bazaar) from 1980 until 1993, which was located at the closed subway station *Bülowstraße* in Berlin after the wall, and housed several

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<sup>202</sup> The title of the film is taken from Aras Ören's poem with the same title, which was also adapted to a song by the group *İdeal* in 1982.

bridal fashion stores, jewelers, hairdressers, cafes, and video stores (bi'bak 2020, 13). As the director and editor, Kaya prioritizes telling the stories about places such as Türkischer Basar, and other events, traditions, and practices *as people remember them*. By doing so, he makes no claims of authenticity, and takes no responsibility for representing any history or community. Instead, he focuses on creating possibilities for the audience to relate with people's individual stories. Thus, the use of archival material in the film does not seek to complete a "missing" piece of historical information. It rather amplifies the emotional impact of a collective recollection. Kaya maintains: "I don't use the archive as a document. I use it to evoke a feeling [in the audience]" (Kaya 2023), and the feelings in question are not only negative:

When we say: "those chicken carts at the weddings," or "those casinos," "those cinemas," "theaters," "video arcades," we also remember something positive. It's not that it's only racism. ... I think when we look at the past, it's a bit like listening to bad news all the time. We listen to bad news one after another, and then we get depressed, but maybe when we mix it, it becomes something more complementary. (Kaya 2023)

Drawing on the memories themselves, Kaya does not choose to tell the stories of the immigrant and post-migrant Turkish-German communities in a historical, political, or ethical light. In the film, people are not objectified as victims for a "better" politics or celebrated as subjects contributing to Germany's social and cultural diversity. People, instead, simply generate meaning through their relations with each other, and with their past. They tell about how they struggled to make a name in the industry, enjoyed music, entertained themselves, seized opportunities, engaged in humor, built connections in the market, established commercial networks, and lived within Germany's societal and aesthetic landscape.

In this framework, archival materials do not serve the purposes of historical representation or completeness. They are objects of the past, which are used, interpreted, and analyzed through one's encounter with the present. Our contact with them reveals the ways in

which we come to know and relate with the world today. Arsenal's (Institute for Film and Video Art) project "Archive außer sich" (Archives beside themselves, 2017-2021), for example, is based on the idea of the "Living Archives," in which "research, digitization and/or restoration of archive contents are part of a participatory artistic and curatorial contemporary practice" ("Archive außer sich").<sup>203</sup> Archives do not only change with time, but are also considered as "place[s] of production,"<sup>204</sup> whose dynamic structure allows the researchers and scholars to reflect critically on "colonial and migration history or [...] the history of political and aesthetic movements" ("Archive außer sich").<sup>205</sup> For this reason, living archives do not only depend on official spaces that are established under certain institutions. They may include "cinemas, festivals, art spaces, universities, public television stations, databases," and even "a former crematorium" ("Archive außer sich"),<sup>206</sup> and ephemeral materials that do not make their ways into any collection.

The variety of the archival materials and locations I found beyond official settings, and the changing heterogeneity of the communities in the aesthetic domain that I examined in this dissertation lets us similarly pay attention to the changing nature in the concept of the archive itself: here, an archive cannot be considered as fixed entity or self-standing place, containing a fixed set of information through its materials. The archive allows us to rethink the changing nature of *our own relations* with the past. A retrospective look is thus a productive one. We produce knowledge through our own relations that we establish with archival materials.

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<sup>203</sup> "Zugrunde liegt die Idee des Living Archive: Erforschung, Digitalisierung und/oder Restaurierung von Archivinhalten sind Teil einer partizipativ verstandenen künstlerischen und kuratorischen Gegenwartspraxis."

<sup>204</sup> "Das Archiv ist ein Ort der Produktion."

<sup>205</sup> "Kolonial- und Migrationsgeschichte oder [...] Geschichte politischer und ästhetischer Bewegungen."

<sup>206</sup> "Kinos, Festivals, Kunsträume, Universitäten, öffentlich-rechtliche Fernsehsender, Datenbanken, ein ehemaliges Krematorium."



In the last few years, institutions in Germany that fund productive archival projects as such took steps towards presenting and visualizing transnational cultural productions and aesthetic activities in Germany, which are informed by immigrant and post-migrant experiences. In January 2019, for example, state institutions such as the German Federal Film Board (FFA) and the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media (BKM), financed “Förderprogramm Filmerbe” (Film Heritage Funding Program, or FFE), which “awards up to ten million euros annually for an initial period of ten years for the digitization of cinema films, for conservation, curatorial or economic reasons” (Sungu n.d.).<sup>207</sup> However, the executive committees of such large, state-led projects still carry with them today some historically discriminatory concerns about what a “German film archive” consists of. In this context, Can Sungu’s essay, “Fiktionen ohne Bescheinigung, Narrative ohne Fiktion: Ein Plädoyer für eine transnationale Archivarbeit” (“Fictions without attestation, narratives without fiction: A plea for transnational archival work,” Sungu n.d.) asks what it means to conceptualize “Germanness” vis-à-vis recent projects with a so-called transnational perspective on archivization. While projects such as “Förderprogramm Filmerbe” are significant for the visibility they have brought to filmmakers of color, Sungu notes that productions involving languages other than German or participants other than German citizens are not often selected for restoration or digitization due to “formal criteria,” (Sungu n.d.), even though they have made critical contributions to cinema cultures in Germany. This is, according to Sungu, one of the significant reasons that

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<sup>207</sup> The essay is both published in German and English. I use the English version for the citations, and provided the German in full sentences in the footnotes; “Das Förderprogramm vergibt zunächst für zehn Jahre jährlich bis zu zehn Millionen Euro für die Digitalisierung von Kinofilmen, auskonservatorischen, kuratorischen oder wirtschaftlichen Gründen.”

some artistic and literary productions “cannot influence public discourse and remain in danger of being lost forever as artistic and cultural-historical testimonies” (Sungu n.d.).<sup>208</sup>

The self-organized immigrant-led media initiatives that I examined in this dissertation carried similar risks of being forgotten, despite the crucial transnational and multilingual settings they established for many communities in Germany. By looking at their archives today, we see how they introduced new insights and understandings about what participating in the production of media looked like across generations after postwar labor migration. Thanks to such *living* archives, which have changed with this research and will be changed in the future in terms of both its collection of documents and interpretations, what and how we know about the aesthetic domain that I investigate will also change.

Thus, in my examination of Turkish German media initiatives in this dissertation, I engage rather in a dynamic reading of select relations between their participants—including founders, contributors, and audiences—across the course of their establishment. My analysis is dynamic in the sense that the initiatives I examine, the details in the documents I read, and the archive I assemble, depends on my own relationship(s) to the material. I recognize that considering the idea of living archives reinforces the importance of the researcher’s own critical reflection and agency in productively engaging with their archival work. Therefore, I claim that every decision and endeavor—including academic ones— are driven, first and foremost, by personal questions and concerns.

Cristina Nord, head of the Berlinale’s independent section *Forum* since 2019, underlines in her essay “Ohne Bewegung nicht zu denken” (Unthinkable Without Movement, Nord n.d.) the necessity of change in the ways we look at aesthetic cultures. Noting recent interventions to

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<sup>208</sup> “Sie können nicht auf den öffentlichen Diskurs einwirken und bleiben in Gefahr, als künstlerische und kulturgeschichtliche Zeugnisse für immer verloren zu gehen.”

cinema in Germany from transnational perspectives, she views such interventions as themselves constituting a critical *living* archive. Nord's examples include film festival panels against discrimination such as "Storytelling beyond Stereotypes," websites such as [www.nichtmeintatort.de](http://www.nichtmeintatort.de), which feature "blog entries that scrutinize the character drawing and casting policies of the crime series"; initiatives such as "Vielfalt in Film" (Diversity in Film), which "collected data on discrimination during an online survey"; and "the film and discourse programs of the SİNEMA TRANSTOPIA (...) [that] provide[s] insight into the aesthetics of a transnational, post-migrant cinema" (Nord n.d.).<sup>209</sup> Other current creative projects such as "Weiter Schreiben" (Writing On, 2017)—for which the media initiatives discussed in this dissertation serve as forerunners—have been contributing and changing the body of archival work and language around life, migration and asylum in recent history. This project in particular taps contemporary refugee authors from war and crisis zones into the German publishing industry, where recurring emphasis on lived relations in these projects' statements underscores aesthetic commitments as part of collective agreements: "Writing is not only an art, it is also a way of life, a way of perceiving the world, of making it comprehensible to oneself and thereby relating to it." Such an acknowledgement defines an aesthetic community of *relations*, rather than of fixed identities, which has the means to establish its own politics, tastes, and values despite differences in contexts.

In terms of transnational attempts at creating an official and institutional archivization of immigrant and post-migrant experiences, Dokumentationszentrum und Museum über die

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<sup>209</sup> "Dass Filmfestivals Panels wie "Storytelling beyond Stereotypes" anbieten, ist recht neu. Auf der Website [www.nichtmeintatort.de](http://www.nichtmeintatort.de) finden sich Blogbeiträge, die die Figurenzeichnung und der Besetzungspolitik der Krimi-Reihe unter die Lupe nehmen. Eine andere Initiative, Vielfalt im Film, hat bei einer Online-Befragung Daten zum Thema Diskriminierung gesammelt. In Berlin geben die Film- und Diskursprogramme des SİNEMA TRANSTOPIA Einblick in die Ästhetiken eines transnationalen, postmigrantischen Kinos."

Migration aus der Türkei (Documentation Center and Museum of Migration from Turkey, aka. DOMIT) was established in 1990 through the initial efforts of five immigrants from Turkey, namely Sevtap Sezer, Aytaç Eryılmaz, Muhittin Demiray, Ahmet Sezer and Gönül Göhler (“Vereinsgeschichte” n.d.). Their purpose was to collect everyday documents and objects for an archive to give an account of the lives of immigrants from Turkey in the context of a museum. With a change toward a more transnational perspective through relations with other communities as well as the resulting widening of the scope of the archive, the name of the institution changed in 2007 to involve the phenomena of migration to Germany from everywhere, and not only from Turkey. The new name of the museum and archive is called “Documentation Center and Museum of Migration to Germany” (Dokumentationszentrum und Museum über die Migration in Deutschland, DOMiD). This organization currently launches projects that generate new exhibitions from people’s current interactions with the archive, such as DOMIDLabs, or the upcoming building “Haus der Einwanderungsgesellschaft” (House of Immigration Society) to be opened in 2025, which is planned to be a place for permanent and temporary exhibitions about immigrant and post-migrant experiences. (“Projekte” n.d.)

The ways in which founding members of DOMIT tried to find materials through their own efforts—at times rather unsystematically—and to establish an institution that could provide materials to schools and other exhibitions in Germany, inspired my own interest in self-organized Turkish-German media initiatives, as well as in archival research as a critical intervention in the limited representations of immigrant life in the aesthetic spheres and politics in Germany in the first place. Much of the current efforts today, such as “Weiter Schreiben” in terms of literary production, and “Haus der Einwanderungsgesellschaft” in terms of exhibiting archival materials, are focused on the present moment: they allow us to think about the ways in

which people can contribute to an archive-in-the-making in new forms of cultural productions and exhibitions. While they exemplify the crucial political stakes of the work that I undertake in my research, my dissertation shows the groundwork for these kinds of projects that lies in the innovative and collaborative activities of Turkish-German media initiatives in the 1970s and 1980s. My focus on the transnational and multilingual relations in them also shows the ongoing shortcomings of the current funding and awarding criteria of institutions that still adopt and operate in national frameworks. Moreover, given that immigrant laborers and their descendants in Germany were not granted any rights to citizenship until 2000, a comparative history of early aesthetic formations in the West German media landscape speaks to central issues in ongoing immigration debates and discourses of life in Germany today. The archive I uncover in this dissertation is thus a critical attempt to analyze some of the relations as they occurred in an aesthetic domain from the 1970s onwards, which is also of critical value to research and archival work in contemporary scholarship on postmigrancy, citizenship, and belonging in contemporary Germany.

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