

Countermemory and the (Turkish-)German Theatrical Archive: Reading the Documentary Remains of Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *Karagöz in Alamania* (1986)

Lizzie Stewart

Theatre – Archive – Countermemory

In a discussion between theatre practitioners and researchers on theatre as a “social art” which took place in Hamburg's Thalia Theater in 2007, the question of the archive and its relationship to memory made a perhaps unexpected appearance:

[Ortrud] Gutjahr: Welchen Beitrag könnte die theaterwissenschaftliche Forschung für die konkrete Theaterarbeit eigentlich leisten?

[Christopher] Balme: Man könnte sagen, wir sind das Gedächtnis des Theaters in dem Sinne, dass wir für die Archivierung des Vergangenen zuständig sind (Gutjahr et al. 65).

By identifying the archival function of theatre studies as perhaps the most concrete link between theory and practice, Balme's remark also highlighted the dual nature of this function. On the one hand, the metaphorical or literal archive becomes a storehouse or place of memory. On the other, to archive, as to remember, is to perform a certain act: to shape that storehouse and, in turn, its contents (Cook and Schwarz 171). Thus while theatre history depends on physical, archival documents such as scripts, photographs, recordings, and reviews, it then itself helps to constitute or contest the “cultural archive” on which the “imagined community” of a particular area, institution, state, or tradition draws (Anderson). At the same time the image of theatre scholarship as collectively constituting the “Gedächtnis” of a theatrical tradition raises the question of how memory relates to (cultural) history and which fragments of that history may lie forgotten within this complex.

With these questions in mind I want to explore how a turn to physical archival remains might further illuminate a curiously neglected corner of the “archive” of German theatrical history: that of performances of plays by Turkish-German authors. Turkish-German literature, such as that represented by the short stories and novels of prize-winning author Emine Sevgi Özdamar, has frequently been invoked as a “cultural archive.” Such an archive preserves émigré writers' “counter-narratives” of their country of origin (Seyhan 13), or alternatively indexes a “transnational” conception of the Federal Republic of Germany (Adelson, *Turkish Turn* 15). Azade Seyhan understands this “archive” in relation to *cultural memory*: “an intentional remembering through actual records and experiences or symbolic interpretations thereof by any community that shares a common ‘culture’” (14). Leslie A. Adelson, on the other hand, actively draws on Derrida's concept of *consignation*, a process described in *Archive Fever* as the “act of gathering together signs [...] to form a single corpus” (*Turkish Turn*

15, 179 n.44; Derrida 5).¹ Despite these differences, both scholars emphasise literature's — and particularly Turkish-German literature's — potential for questioning and shaping collective memory and the communities that memory serves. The study and preservation of this literary “archive” thus takes on a political aspect: an aspect that is celebrated and simultaneously propagated by both Seyhan and Adelson. However several of the best known Turkish-German authors such as Özdamar and Yüksel Pazarkaya are authors not only of prose work, but also of dramatic texts. Despite this, until very recently little research has focused on how the performances of plays written, directed or performed by Turkish-German artists may contribute to such a cultural archive.²

Indeed it is only in the past few years that contemporary theatre productions written by, directed by, or starring Turkish-German artists have begun to attract significant academic attention. The 2011 collection of articles on *Theater und Migration* published by Wolfgang Schneider, for example, is the first to explicitly focus on this theme. While the Federal Republic of Germany officially accepted its role as a country of immigration in 2000, more than a decade later this shift in the nation's self-imagination appears to be gradually effecting change within the state-subsidised theatrical landscape. In 2008, for example, the Ballhaus Naunynstraße, Berlin opened as the country's first forum for “postmigrant theatre,” creating an important space for both established and emerging artists. Similarly in 2011 the German *Dramaturgische Gesellschaft* took the question “Wer ist WIR? Theater in der interkulturellen Gesellschaft” as the central theme for discussion at its annual conference in Freiburg (Sharifi 43).

That Turkish-German artists have often been at the forefront of discussions on “postmigrant” theatre is perhaps unsurprising. While large-scale immigration to Germany in the twentieth century has occurred from a variety of contexts including Turkey, Italy and the former USSR, discussions of citizenship, integration, assimilation and multiculturalism are frequently conducted around, and increasingly with, the Turkish population in Germany. The interest in contemporary “postmigrant” theatre is thus undoubtedly to be welcomed. As Hasibe Kalkan highlights in her examination of several contemporary plays, retelling German history through the lens of migration and postmigrant life in Germany can have an emancipatory effect for long marginalised groups (82). However the attention to contemporary theatre does stand in stark contrast to the lack of attention paid to earlier, apparently less successful Turkish-German forays into the German theatrical landscape. Although in 1982 Danja Antonović in *Die Zeit* highlighted the existence of “Theater, Literatur, Musik: Gastarbeiterkultur – Kultur, die keiner haben will” (636), academic work has focused on the literature and music, largely writing this theatre out of history.³

¹ Liesbeth Minnaard also refers to the images created within the narratives of *Der Hof im Spiegel* as “a condensed archive of memories” and so frames Özdamar's writing as an “Other's' Perspective on German National History” (79, 78).

² Scholars such as Helga Kraft, Katrin Sieg and Maha El Hissy do address Özdamar's second play *Keloglan in Alamania* (written 1991, premiered 2000), however all analyse the dramatic text of the play as held by the publishers, rather than the play in performance (Kraft 123–26; Sieg, *Ethnic Drag* 233–53; El Hissy 88–110). El Hissy also briefly alludes to Özdamar's prose work as an “Archiv historischer Ereignisse,” but does not relate this to Adelson and Seyhan or extend this concept to Özdamar's plays and their performances (90).

³ Apart from a more general and dated study of *Ausländertheater in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* undertaken by Manfred Brauneck in 1983 and summarised by Georg Stenzaly in the article “Ausländertheater” in 1984, Sven Sappelt's 1998 chapter on “Theater der Migrant/innen”, and the third chapter of Erol Boran's unpublished 2004 doctoral thesis, “Eine Geschichte des türkisch-deutschen

The first full-length play by a Turkish author to be written in German, registered with a publishing house and performed on a professional German stage is widely credited as Özdamar's *Karagöz in Alamania* (Boran 136).⁴ This play was directed by Özdamar herself at the influential Schauspielhaus Frankfurt in 1986 and has remained a point of reference mainly as a result of Özdamar's own reinscription of the piece and account of its performance in the short stories "Karagöz in Alamania, Schwarzauge in Deutschland" (1990) and "Schwarzauge in Deutschland (2001). These narratives are analysed by scholars such as Seyhan (101–12), who considers Özdamar's prose work to preserve "a form of counter-memory to official [Turkish] history" (149). While Seyhan focuses on the relation of these stories to Özdamar's country of origin, Liesbeth Minnard considers those narratives collected in *Der Hof im Spiegel* to be "instances of cultural counter-memory" (sic) which re-tell the "official" narratives of German unification (79).⁵ However productions of Özdamar's theatrical work and their potential contributions to the (in)official narratives being woven about Turkish migration to Germany have yet to be fully explored.

In shifting the focus from an analysis of Özdamar's literary work to the remains of the 1986 production, this article suggests that the study of earlier instances of "Turkish-German" theatre can contribute to the current reassessment of theatre's role in an increasingly diverse Germany. It draws on the rhetoric implicit in Seyhan's use of *counter-memory*, a term rooted in feminist and post-colonial scholarship which signals a turn to both other materials and other voices in the construction of a historical narrative. At the same time it acknowledges certain issues with this term. Although Seyhan does not explicitly define *counter-memory*, it appears mainly in opposition to "official history" and as a quality of transnational literary writing. Within the terms of Seyhan's discussion it thus becomes difficult at times to distinguish between *counter-memory* and the more frequently used "cultural memory" (149). For scholars such as Kerwin Lee Klein, a discourse which frequently opposes memory to history in turn invests memory in general with an oppositional or "counter"-hegemonic thrust. In Klein's eyes this renders the term *counter-memory* tautological (146 n.6). For others, such as Jennifer Nichole Asenas, however, the rhetorical nature of the term is of interest in itself (19).

Indeed, regarding the term as a rhetorical device reveals a further tension at work within Seyhan's use of *counter-memory*: its presence seems to signal both a desire to fundamentally undermine a form of "official" or hegemonic history and a desire to correct it.⁶ For Adelson this becomes problematic as "the rhetoric of recuperated losses linked to national origins [...] often relies on a rhetoric of 'healing' [and ...] resurrects the primacy of national archives and cultural roots," rather than allowing for new formations to emerge ("Writing" 160-61). Armed with an awareness of these

Theaters und Kabarets," are the only attempts at a comprehensive overview of the history of Turkish-German theatre. I retain the focus on specifically "Turkish-German" theatre as opposed to more generalised "migrant" or "post-migrant" theatre here, in order to historically contextualise, but in no way essentially define, both prose and theatrical work by authors of Turkish origin who write for the professional German stage in German, such as Emine Sevgi Özdamar.

⁴ This accreditation can be traced back to Lutz Tantow's article on *Karagöz in Alamania* as a dramatic text. The article appeared in 1985, prior to the play's premiere (210).

⁵ Where sources quoted use the hyphenated form I retain this, otherwise I will refer to counter-memory.

⁶ The "corrective" aspect of counter-memory can be further seen in the work of George Lipsitz, who suggests that "counter-memory is not a rejection of history, but a reconstitution of it" (227). Lipsitz rejects a Foucauldian approach, and argues as follows: "[w]e may never succeed in creating a truly total story inclusive of all the plurality of our planet, but the pursuit of such totality is essential" (213–14).

reservations, however, the rhetoric of countermemory can still be channelled productively. José Medina, much like Seyhan, casts a hyphenated countermemory as a kind of “remembering against the grain.” However he also reinvests this rhetoric with an explicitly Foucauldian plurality and open-endedness (12). He argues:

Critical genealogies contribute to the production of counter-histories, which are centered around those experiences and memories that have not been heard and integrated in official histories. [...] Counter-histories feed off such counter-memories and at the same time transform them, revitalizing practices of counter-memory and offering them new discursive resources to draw on [...] so that insurrectionary struggles among competing power/knowledge frameworks are always underway and contestation always alive. (12)

Rather than returning to the past to stabilise the present, rather than invoking memory to either fundamentally oppose or “fix” history, I employ *countermemory* here precisely to keep these categories in productive tension.

Within theatre and performance studies this tension is arguably reflected in Diana Taylor’s discussion of “the archive and the repertoire.” Taylor’s work is rooted in a consideration of performance in Latin America as a means “to reorient the ways social memory and cultural identity in the Americas have traditionally been studied, with the disciplinary emphasis on literary and historical documents, and look through the lens of performed, embodied behaviours” (Taylor xviii). Drawing on Taylor’s work, Katrin Sieg begins her 2011 article on “Postmigrant Documentary Theater in Berlin,” with an examination of “theater as an *archive* of Germanness” (166, emphasis in orig.). Although in this article Sieg alludes to the Greek roots of the word “archive,” which relate the term to a “public building” and “government,” her use of italics suggests that she, like Adelson and Seyhan, uses the term metaphorically here (166). The reference is thus not to a physical repository of documents, but an imagined collection of narratives, which might constitute a form of collective cultural memory. Sieg’s approach to this metaphorical archive differs from Adelson and Seyhan’s, however, in its focus on “German-German” rather than “Turkish-German” cultural products. As a result, for both Seyhan and Adelson the “cultural” archive of writing examined becomes a source of disruption to hegemonic or homogenising narratives of the nation-state. For Sieg the “archive” transmitted via German theatre “constitutes and continually reproduces exclusionary concepts of identity and community through scenarios of insurmountable difference” (“Postmigrant” 166). The “archive” is thus identified as a further source of domination, rather than being viewed as a space of “countermemory.”

Notably, the shift in focus occurs alongside the shift in medium. Moving from Turkish-German literature into “postmigrant” theatre, Sieg incorporates Taylor’s work into her theoretical approach and focuses on several productions at the newly opened Ballhaus Naunynstrasse, Berlin in order to “explore the potential of live performance to contest the sedimented *archive* of official and subaltern speech and imagery” that excludes migrants and postmigrants from a “European cosmopolitanism” (“Postmigrant” 166–67). The focus on performance in Sieg’s article indicates the importance of respecting theatre as a medium when shifting attention from Turkish-German literature to Turkish-German, migrant or “postmigrant” theatre. However, Taylor’s distinction between archive and repertoire relates to Latin America as a region with a history of conquest, in which “indigenous embodied practice as a form of knowing” and of transmitting knowledge was routinely repressed (19). In this particular

context this distinction allows a “remapping” of history that re-privileges the histories conveyed by non-written forms of remembrance (20). As a brief look at Erol Boran’s unpublished 2004 PhD thesis, “Eine Geschichte des türkisch-deutschen Theaters und Kabarett,” demonstrates, however, theatre produced by artists in the course of twentieth-century migration from Turkey to Germany presents a very different context.

Boran’s study performs important work in highlighting the institutional challenges facing Turkish-German theatre between 1961 and 2004. In the third chapter of his thesis, Boran traces a history of Turkish-German theatre characterised by disagreements among the artists involved over the function of the theatre in question and a sense of “cultural isolation” resulting to a degree from issues with the German state’s attempts at engaging with Turkish-German ensembles or theatre practitioners (104, 196–200). Sven Sappelt points out that for a long time the German government had no cultural policy in place for a group it had never expected and was not keen to encourage to stay (qtd. in Boran 97). As a result, funding for Turkish-German theatre was frequently low, drawn from social funds rather than cultural budgets, and rarely continuous in nature, consisting rather of short-term, project-based subsidies (79, 158). This in particular hindered rather than promoted the development of existing theatre groups (Sappelt 283; Boran 199). Disagreements over the aim of the art form and a lack of institutional acknowledgement of its aesthetic value are also characteristic for the history of Turkish-German literature and affected both this literature’s dissemination and reception (Cheesman 82–97). However, it seems that these factors did not affect the production of literary works in quite the same way as they did theatre — an art form highly dependant on collaboration, access to professional training, and funding.⁷

In highlighting these challenges Boran effectively denaturalises the lack of Turkish-German theatre and theatre practitioners on German state stages. This is a move taken further by Mark Terkessidis, who argues that many state-funded institutions, including theatres, still function to serve the ethnically defined “Volk” rather than the diverse and actually existent “Bevölkerung” of the Federal Republic of Germany (108). The non-continuous history of Turkish-German theatre in Germany outlined by Boran in his thesis also suggests that the gaps between productions and projects are as much a part of this history as the productions themselves. Furthermore by the 1960s performance culture in Turkey was already strongly influenced by modern “European” theatre practitioners such as Carl Ebert and Bertolt Brecht, as well as by traditional performance forms (Boran 59–74). Given the differences between this Turkish-German and Taylor’s Latin American context, I intend to take a different approach to the questions of the repertoire and the archive here.

Notably while Sieg takes her cue from Taylor’s emphasis on embodied performance, her study of “live performance” at the Ballhaus is actually based on materials which can be considered archival: unpublished scripts and video-recordings of the Ballhaus performances (“Postmigrant” 181 n.1). Taking from Sieg the impetus to focus on migrant or postmigrant performance as a locus of disruption to exclusionary narratives of the Turkish presence in Germany, I suggest that this more practical archival approach

⁷ Das Theater an der Ruhr and the Arkadas Theater, Köln are the main exceptions to the rule here and are discussed in more detail by Sharifi (36-37), and Boran (158-70, 187-193). Kalkan highlights instead the Tiyatrom, Berlin as her example in a discussion of the discrepancy between the long existence of Turkish theatre in the FRG and the lack of public awareness of this (79). Sieg also notes the lack of access to professional training for Turkish-Germans (“Black Virgins” 185).

is one that can and should be taken further.⁸ Crucially this involves moving beyond those materials held in state collections to those held by individuals and placing an emphasis on multimedial sources. At the same time Adelson's more optimistic reading of Turkish-German literature as a cultural "archive" that firmly embeds the migrant or postmigrant experience within the history of the geopolitical entity the Federal Republic of Germany will also be drawn on here (*Turkish Turn* 15). I will demonstrate how the remains of one particular play shed light on past articulations of the Turkish presence in Germany and the dynamics surrounding the remembering or forgetting of these articulations in the cultural memory of the FRG. While the production in question itself presents the figure of the *Gastarbeiter* in ways which I will suggest counter the dominant mode of seeing this figure at the time, the employment of the rhetoric of *countermemory* is thus intended mainly to de-naturalise the absence of Turkish-German theatre both from studies of earlier Turkish cultural production in Germany and from German theatre history.

Reading the Remains: *Karagöz in Alamania*

The 1986 premiere of Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *Karagöz in Alamania* provides an excellent case study for an examination of how the intersecting archival concerns of Seyhan, Adelson and Sieg can productively combine with a fourth, more prosaic examination of physical archival remains of early instances of Turkish-German theatre. Özdamar's training and work as a theatre practitioner in both Turkey and Germany are key subjects in the semi-autobiographical novels and short stories for which she is best known, and this is reflected in a focus on performativity, mimicry and theatrical elements in the reception of her prose work. Özdamar's success as a writer and connections with the professional German theatre establishment thus make her something of an exceptional figure in Boran's study (186). The documentary remains of Özdamar's theatrical output as actress, director and playwright have, however, remained largely overlooked. The lack of scholarly engagement with her plays in production is thus typical of approaches to earlier migrant or "Turkish-German" theatre.⁹

Not only was *Karagöz in Alamania* the first of Özdamar's texts to be registered with a publisher, thus marking the beginning of her career as a writer, it also occupies a significant place in the history of Turkish-German cultural production. Although as Boran's study shows Turkish-language theatre was performed by various amateur groups throughout West Germany from the 1970s well into the 1980s, Özdamar's *Karagöz in Alamania* is unusual in that it premiered on a professional German stage. *Karagöz in Alamania* thus marks a watershed moment in the movement from "Turkish theatre in Germany" to what could be called Turkish-German theatre (Boran 136). Written in 1982, the play premiered on 4th May 1986 under Özdamar's own direction,

⁸ I am indebted to Laura Bradley's work here. Bradley points out that frequently only the most accessible artefacts, such as reviews, are used in performance histories or to pad out analyses of the dramatic text and calls for "more ambitious" use of artefacts (16).

⁹ Moray McGowan's examination of the drawings Özdamar produced of Manfred Karge and Matthias Langhoff's 1976 production of Goethe's *Bürgergeneral* constitutes the main exception here. Boran draws on some documentary remains by examining reviews of *Karagöz in Alamania* (135–57). Although Boran describes several plays briefly, the impressive breadth of his study means that a consideration of the aesthetics largely remains at the descriptive rather than analytical level however.

and has been performed in only one other professional production since.¹⁰ In examining the 1986 production I draw on the documents that constitute its material remains in addition to personal interviews with Özdamar and the dramaturge, Ingo Waszerka. These documents include newspaper reviews, published interviews, the programme, publicity photographs and a video-recording.¹¹ The use of material, multi-medial artefacts allows a move beyond the written records of the play to take place. At the same time the location of these artefacts in both public and private collections is significant for a discussion of memory production; a factor I will return to in the final section of the article.

The “Karagöz” in the title of Özdamar’s play is the name of both a traditional form of Turkish shadow theatre and its main character. However, in Özdamar’s work Karagöz becomes an alienated *Gastarbeiter*, played in the 1986 production by Turkish actor Tuncel Kurtiz. “Alamania” is of course a fictionalised West Germany, although in fact the action moves between rural Turkey, Istanbul, the Turkish border, the German border, West Germany and Yugoslavia, as well as between “reality” and dream. In a series of nineteen scenes the play charts the fate of Karagöz, a Turkish peasant turned *Gastarbeiter*, his loyal donkey Şemsettin and his wife Ümmü as they migrate back and forth between Turkey and Germany. Along the way they encounter a treasure hunter, a Doktor Mabuse figure, German and Turkish border officials, other *Gastarbeiter* and their wives, a semi-naked intellectual, a *Doppelgänger*, and an aggressive Opel car. While Karagöz grows increasingly wealthy in Turkey, his physical decline in Germany is evidenced by injuries to his head, and he becomes increasingly tormented by the potential betrayal of his wife with his uncle back in Turkey.

The premiere of *Karagöz in Alamania* attracted a significant amount of media attention. The piece was reviewed in major theatre journals such as *Theater heute* (Auffermann), and *Die Deutsche Bühne* (Delekat), as well as in the cultural pages of the local and regional newspapers and *Der Spiegel* (“Türkische Reise”). Despite this level of interest, the reviews themselves spoke at best of “ein lohnendes Wagnis” (Franke), and at worst of “ein Stück ohne Sprache und ohne Konzept” (Friederiksen).¹² In his analysis, Boran suggests that reviewers found it easier to condemn the production outright than to engage with it because of the reviewers’ own discomfort when faced with an unusual piece of theatre by someone they perceived as a foreigner (148). In particular he highlights the artistic director’s decision to hand out a piece of paper which “explained” the play to the audience on the night of the premiere as an intervention that negatively altered the play’s reception in the press (146–48). Further research indicates that Boran may be right to treat the reviews with suspicion. The statistics for 1986 show that a total of 2248 tickets were sold, suggesting the play was popular for its short run

¹⁰ Boran has the premiere as 26 April 1986 (140). In fact the premiere was delayed slightly and the eventual date of premiere, 4th May 1986, can be seen on the programme for the 1986 *Karagöz in Alamania* (Waszerka, “Karagöz in Alamania”) and is reflected in the fact that reviews only began to appear in May (Franke; Friederiksen; Fühner). The second professional production was in 2000 at the Kellertheater Innsbruck (dir. Johannes C. Hoflehner).

¹¹ The majority of these materials were accessed in the archive of Verlag der Autoren; the theatrical archive of the Johannes Senckenburg University, Frankfurt; the Abisag Tüllmann Archive of the Deutsches Theatermuseum, Munich. Others, however, such as the video-recording, were kindly made available to me by Emine Sevgi Özdamar. I am very grateful to Özdamar and Ingo Waszerka for sharing their memories of the 1986 production and their time with me.

¹² These reviews were all accessed in the following archives: Archiv Verlag der Autoren, Frankfurt am Main: File “O”; Archiv zum Städtischen Bühnen Frankfurt, Johannes Senckenburg University, Frankfurt am Main: “Schauspiel Inszenierungsmappen,” Spielzeit 1985/86, Mappe Nr. 17.

of 8 performances (Deutscher Bühnenverein 17).¹³ Moreover, the play was viewed by subsequent audiences without the interference of the artistic director's leaflet, and so very possibly received differently on subsequent nights. It was also selected as one of three plays to represent the Frankfurter Schauspielhaus at the annual Hessische Theatertage festival in June 1986: a fact which dramaturge Ingo Waszerka suggests reflected its value to the Frankfurt Schauspielhaus (personal interview).

Access to further documentary remains of the 1986 production thus allows us to contextualise these reviews and even re-frame them. Although the cast comprised of a multinational group of professional actors including only one amateur, a particularly frequent complaint was the perceived lack of actors' stage presence. One reviewer mistakenly states that this was "[weil] die meisten ausländischen Mitspieler Laien sind, die überhaupt Schwierigkeiten mit der Schauspielerei, mit dem Ausdruck, der gestischen Umsetzung von Ideen haben" (Führer). Another laments: "Wo bleibt der Dramaturg, der darauf dringt, dass mit den ausländischen Schauspielern gearbeitet wird, bis man sie versteht, wo das nötig ist? Wo bleibt der Dramaturg, der durchsetzt, dass das szenische Geschehen klarer und durchsichtiger wird?" (F. Schneider). Although Boran also notes the tendency to mistake amateurs for professionals in other reviews of the play, he sees this as a result of the language the script demands the actors speak, rather than as a reflection on the actors themselves (149). However, this does not appear to have been an issue in the later Austrian production, and in performance the scripted language becomes only one of the levels of communication through which a production "speaks." In both of the reviews quoted above visual as well as aural issues are cited as problematic and an overall lack of stage presence becomes linked to the actors' nationality, subtly linking this to the actors' "inability" to represent.

Notably, the reviewers of *Karagöz in Alamania* seem to conflate a technical definition of stage presence with a literal or colloquial one. Although stage presence is manufactured by factors such as "lighting, acoustics, costume, make-up, blocking, and training" (Marcus 1003), the attribution of "stage presence" to an actor can be dependant on the stage body appearing or being perceived as "naturally" auratic (Power 149). Stephen Chinna re-links this common usage of "stage presence" with its philosophical roots, which he traces, via Derrida, all the way back to Plato. Chinna suggests that "the longing for an aesthetic (or even a metaphysics) of pure presence implies a desire for an essentialist subjectivity—or, the discourse of a universalist, teleologically orientated end to difference and dispersed subjectivity" (qtd. in Power 77). The longing for stage presence expressed by the reviewers of *Karagöz in Alamania* in 1986, then, may indicate a perception of the "other" bodies on stage as "natural" or untrained bodies. At the same time it also suggests a desire for them to appear as staged in a way that would obscure the "unnatural" elements involved in this process.

Certainly such a desire would seem to correspond to the representations of Turkish *Gastarbeiter* to which West German audiences were generally exposed in the early 1980s. In 1983 and 1985 hugely popular books such as *Als ich ein Türke war* and *Ganz unten* by journalists Gerhard Kromschöder and Günter Walraff engaged West Germany in what Sieg names "a spectacular, national pedagogy" (*Ethnic Drag* 179). Masquerading as Turkish *Gastarbeiter* using a mixture of tinted contact lenses, hair dye, and broken German, both journalists set out to "unmask" German society. Walraff describes his "Verwandlung" as follows:

¹³ It is difficult to determine whether these numbers equalled a full house or not as the figures are somewhat skewed by the performances at the Hessische Theatertage. There the play was presented in a hall of variable capacity, making it unclear what the maximum potential audience for the run would have been.

Die Verschärfung des Asylrechts, der Fremdenhaß, die zunehmenden Gettoisierung – ich wußte davon und hatte es doch nie erfahren. [...] Viel war nicht nötig, um mich ins Abseits zu begeben, um zu einer ausgestoßenen Minderheit zu gehören [...]. Von einem Spezialisten ließ ich mir zwei dünne, sehr dunkel gefärbte Kontaktlinsen anfertigen [...] Ein schwarzes Haarteil verknotete ich mit meinen eigenen. (11)

By inserting their own heavily mediated bodies into the picture, the journalists managed to present an impression of “immediacy”, their own “presence” lending truth to their account. However, Wallraff ultimately failed to engage with or address the people he wanted to understand: as Sieg points out the simple task of interviewing individuals who had come to Germany as *Gastarbeiter* is thus replaced with an elaborate masquerade (*Ethnic Drag* 184). This is reflected in the use of the first person pronoun, which gestures towards the authenticity of lived experience while also excluding other voices. As Wallraff admits almost inconsequentially: “Ich weiß inzwischen noch nicht, wie ein Ausländer die täglichen Demütigungen, die Feindseligkeiten und den Haß verarbeitet” (12; emphasis in orig.). The experience of actual lived migration as narrated by the *Gastarbeiter* him/herself is thus excluded from the “Wahrheit” of the society Wallraff sets out to unmask. The presence of the journalists as intermediaries, translating the experiences of “the *Gastarbeiter*” for the German public, positioned those people who had come as *Gastarbeiter* to West Germany as unknowable. At the same time by suggesting a condition of essential “foreignness,” Walraff helped fix an image of the *Gastarbeiter* as already known.

Returning to the reviews of *Karagöz in Alamania*, this context becomes significant, when one considers Cormac Power’s argument that “presence should not be seen as something fixed which theatre has or doesn’t have, but as the subject of a constantly shifting interplay between theatrical signification and the context within which a performance takes place” (14). Rather than accepting or negating the reviewers’ assignation of failed stage presence, here I want to focus on how the theatrical signification at work in the 1986 premiere might contrast with the context suggested by the popularity of representations such as those of Wallraff. This theatrical signification can be re-examined via attention to the visual rather than written remains of the production.

Although Boran concentrates only on the written content of the play’s reviews, the majority of these reviews were also accompanied by photographs such as that of Fig. 1. According to Robert Erenstein a common issue in theatre studies is that “[g]iven the primacy of the written word [*lógos*] in western culture [...] it is the norm to give the text priority over illustrations, which serve mainly as decorations, to support a conclusion or confirm a statement made in the text” (185; 2nd bracketed insertion in orig.). The focus on the written word in history-making thus obscures other sources of memory, such as those conveyed in visual media. While Erenstein is referring to illustration in the above quotation, I would suggest that his comments also apply to the treatment of the photographs included in the reviews here. Much as the treatment of the play-script as literature has largely obscured the resultant pieces of theatre in Özdamar scholarship, so too a focus on the written and not photographic content of the reviews obscures a key source of documentation and counter-memory.

Indeed the photographs record a very different impression of the actors’ bodies on stage than that presented in the reviews. The photograph in Fig. 1, for example, was used to accompany Thomas Delekat’s review of *Karagöz in Alamania* in *Die Deutsche*

Bühne. It captures a moment in the scene entitled “Wie Karagöz seinen Urin lassen muss und Şemsettin seinen ersten Meister trifft” and portrays the medical examination Karagöz must undergo before being accepted for work in Germany. The actors’ bodies are captured as carefully posed: the frozen, unclothed figures of the men being examined contrast sharply with the active, uniformed figures of the German medical staff. At the same time a comic edge is added via the doctor’s ridiculous headpiece. The dramatic text this scene is based on reads as follows:

Beim Vertrauensarzt.

Männer in Unterhosen. Vertrauensarzt führt Bewegungen vor.

Karagöz ist dabei.

Vertrauensarzt: Lassen Sie, bitte, Urin.

2 Bauern spritzen aus ihren Pistolen Urin ins Glas.

Vertrauensarzt betrachtet die Gläser.

*Vertrauensarzt: Kaputt – gut – kaputt ka – (unter das Uringlas wird Geld geschoben) – gut (Özdamar, *Karagöz in Alamania* 1982 12).¹⁴*

As a result of the copyright fees attached to the display of this image online, the photograph to be shown here could only accompany the article online for the duration of one year.

The photograph displayed here showed a frontal shot of the the inspection scene. Five male figures, including Tuncel Kurtiz in his role as Karagöz, could be seen. The male actors were spaced at regular intervals and each was naked apart from a variety of boxer shorts and, in two cases, shoes. The actor on the left, a young man who sported a shock of black hair and a small black moustache, had crossed his hands over his crotch defensively, head turned slightly towards the far side of the stage with a look of apprehension. Kurtiz stood with arms hung loosely at his side, his head turned to scowl angrily at the approaching doctor. To his right the third actor, again a young man, this time with short black hair and a sharp moustache, stood as if to attention, his chest puffed out, his arms held tensely at his side. To the right of the three men thus arrayed for inspection an actress playing a female doctor could be seen approaching. The doctor, who wore a white coat with head torch, was captured mid-stride, ready to distribute the glass for urine collection visible in her hand. Close behind her, a nurse, played by Irene von Nauckhoff in white headscarf and coat, followed bearing a tray of further glasses. Behind all of these figures something of the *mise-en-scène* could be seen. Two long clothes rails, one above the other, were hung with coats, dresses, furs, military uniforms of a variety of length and colour. On the second layer a large gap could be seen between the costumes hung there, indicating the permeability of this stage ‘wall’ of costumes. On the left a large step ladder could be seen rising up behind this second layer of costumes. Two lights strung at different heights from the railing illuminated the scene, and on the stage floor some spilt earth and an apple from an earlier scene could be seen.

Fig. 1. Photograph of *Karagöz in Alamania* (1986) by Abisag Tüllmann. Copyright Deutsches Theatermuseum München, Archiv Abisag Tüllmann. This image appears with permission of the Deutsches Theatermuseum München. Reproduction, distribution, or modification is prohibited without the consent of the Deutsches Theatermuseum, München.

¹⁴ This extract is reproduced by kind permission of Verlag der Autoren. The waterpistols mentioned here contained urine brought from Istanbul townspeople by hopeful *Gastarbeiter* fresh from the countryside and worried that their own urine would not be good enough to pass the medical examination required for workers to go to Germany.



Fig 2. “Medical Examination, Istanbul” (Berger 48-49). © A SEVENTH MAN by John Berger (text) and Jean Mohr (photographs) 1975. First published by Penguin Books, London UK. 1975. In print in English: Verso Books, London, 2010. In Turkish: Agora Books, Istanbul, 2011. This image is reproduced with kind permission of John Berger and Jean Mohr.

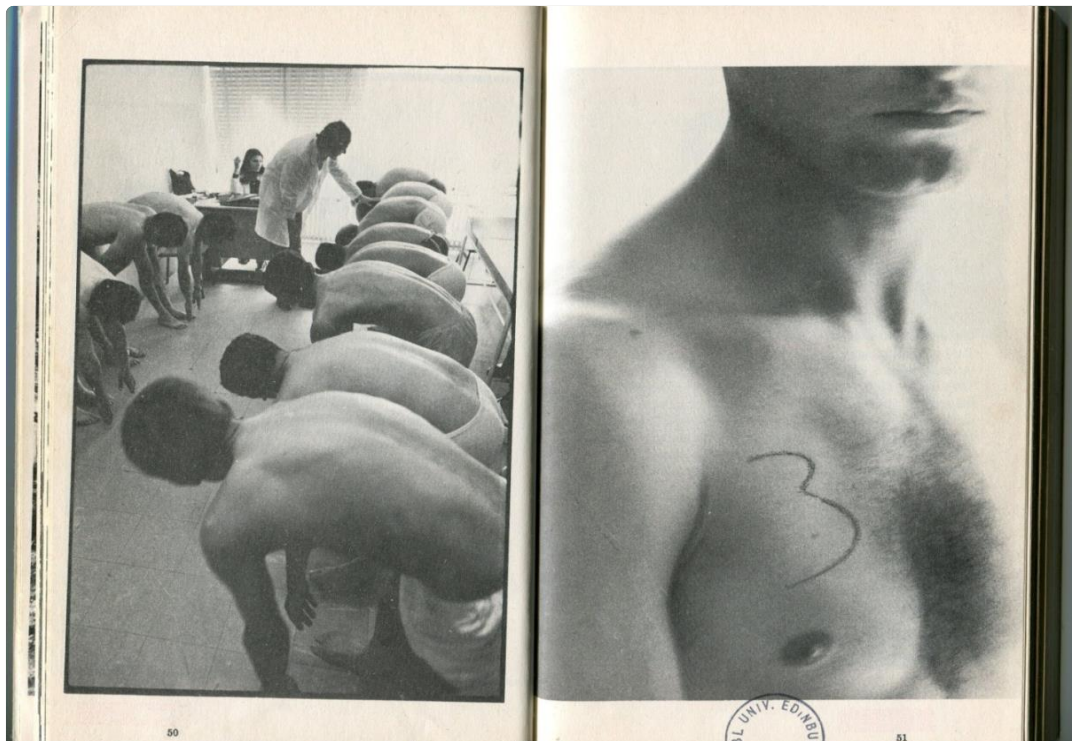


Fig 3. “Medical examination of Turks applying for work in Germany, Istanbul” (Berger 50); “Each man examined has his number marked in ink on chest and wrist” (Berger 51). © A SEVENTH MAN by John Berger (text) and Jean Mohr (photographs) 1975. First published by Penguin Books, London UK. 1975. In print in English: Verso Books, London, 2010. In Turkish: Agora Books, Istanbul, 2011. This image is reproduced with kind permission of John Berger and Jean Mohr.

While the description of this moment in the dramatic text is short and easily overlooked, in the 1986 performance the scene was extended to a length of approximately five minutes. The doctor's actions were played in a purposefully over-exaggerated manner and, in the audience response audible on the video-recording, drew some of the longest laughs from the audience (Özdamar, *Karagöz in Alamania* 1986).¹⁵ The laughter audible on the video-recording further serves as acknowledgement that far from being identified by the audience as amateurs, the actors were controlling the scene exactly.

In Fig. 1 the framing of the theatrical examination scene in close-up by photographer Abisag Tüllmann creates strong parallels with one particular documentary image in John Berger and Jean Mohr's *A Seventh Man* (Fig. 2). In this book, which explored the post-war phenomenon of labour migration in Europe in an unusual mixture of image and word, art and social documentary, the image of a medical examination of future *Gastarbeiter* in Fig. 2 is followed by two further photographs. The first shows men similarly half-naked but this time performing exercises led by the doctor (Fig. 3, left-hand page). The second consists of a close-up of a man's bare chest with the number three written on it in marker pen (Fig. 3, right-hand page). The video-recording of Özdamar's production of *Karagöz in Alamania* and further unpublished photographs of the play preserved in the Abisag Tüllmann Archive of the Deutsches Theatermuseum also show that this scene included the doctors inspecting the genitalia of the Turkish men being examined, getting them to perform exercises and writing numbers on their bodies (Tüllmann).

The referencing of such a central image of migration from Turkey to Germany is not unusual as the medical inspection formed one of what Özdamar calls the "Geschichtestationen dieses Weges" (personal interview). An overtly sexualised slapstick-style representation of the inspection procedure can also be seen in, for example, Nurkan Erpulat's musical history of Turkish migration to Germany, *Lo Bal Almanya* (Ballhaus Naunynstrasse, 2010).¹⁶ Notably, however, Tüllmann's camera picks out and frames the scene in ways that closely echo the photographic representations in Berger's *A Seventh Man*. The framing of the actors in Fig.1 obscures the height of the stage to focus more intensely on the men's individual attitudes much as Jean Mohr's camera does in Fig.2. At the same time the lines of men in each image emphasises the collectivising nature of the inspection process.

Viewing Figs 1 and 2 in the light of one another highlights a certain affinity between Özdamar and Bergers' "ways of seeing" labour migration. A 1975 *Spiegel* reportage reprinted in the 1986 programme for *Karagöz in Alamania* provides an illuminating further point of contrast here ("E5"). The *Spiegel* article drew attention to the dangerous conditions to be found on the motor-route often taken between Germany and Turkey by *Gastarbeiter* returning or visiting home. Its focus on the issue of infrastructure was in stark contrast to the lack of interest in the *Gastarbeiter* themselves, however, who "einem unwiderstehlichen und unkontrollierbaren Trieb folgend, machen sich [...] auf den Todestreck nach Skopje, Istanbul, Athen."¹⁷ Both Berger and Özdamar, on the

¹⁵ My thanks to Emine Sevgi Özdamar for kindly giving me access to this video-recording.

¹⁶ For a discussion of *Lo Bal Almanya* see Kalkan (80-81): the inclusion of a medical inspection scene is also briefly referred to here (80). Özdamar herself experienced such medical examinations first hand (telephone interview).

¹⁷ In this article some of the more absurd images from the play, such as Karagöz driving backwards to Germany in the final scene (Özdamar, *Karagöz in Alamania* 1982 52), are revealed to have their counterparts in reality: "Der Gastarbeiter rollte rückwärts in der Kolonne mit. Sein Getriebe war ausgefallen [...] 30 Kilometer war er schon verkehrtrümmer mitgefahren" ("E5"). Özdamar's frequently told anecdote in which the play is partly inspired by the typewritten letter of a *Gastarbeiter* friend of a

other hand, were interested not only in the experiences of the *Gastarbeiter* in Germany and Western Europe, but also in those of the journey from a worker's home in the Turkish countryside to Istanbul, and on to Germany. This affinity is significant not only in terms of the subject matter at hand, however, but also in understanding the artistic approach to that subject matter.

As Liesbeth Minnaard points out, Özdamar directly references Berger in her 2001 short story collection *Der Hof im Spiegel* (91, 258 n.53). Minnaard mentions this mainly as a conduit to her discussion of the “affinity” one of the 2001 narratives goes on to establish between the narrator and Vincent Van Gogh (95). This leads Minnaard to identify the “productive look” she sees at the heart of both Van Gogh and Özdamar's aesthetics as one which indicates “affection” and in Özdamar's case a desire for “Relation” or contact involving transformation (92).¹⁸ However, the affinity with Berger also seems worthy of further exploration, especially as it is mutually felt: Berger himself provides the preface to the English translation of Özdamar's second novel, *The Bridge of the Golden Horn* (ix–xi). Adelson notes in reference to the short story, “Der Hof im Spiegel,” that “[r]eferences to the reading of a particular book, [within that text...] dovetail tightly with implied strategies for reading” (*Turkish Turn* 66); a suggestion also present in Minnaard's discussion of Özdamar's aesthetic gaze (91-94). Similarly, visual parallels perceived here between a particular set of images may provide a useful starting point for investigating implied strategies for looking. The way in which Berger sees and responds to a photograph such as that in Fig. 2 thus also becomes useful for understanding the manner in which Özdamar sees and then represents both the quotidian and major events of her time.

In comparison to the “spectacular pedagogy” propagated to the German public by Kromschöder and Walraff's masquerades, in *A Seventh Man* Berger argued that “[t]he world has to be dismantled and re-assembled in order to be able to grasp, however clumsily, the experience of another. To talk of entering the other's subjectivity is misleading” (93-94). While Walraff, for example, used the first person to stage his perspective as that of the *Gastarbeiter*, Berger remained emphatically with the third person “he” throughout. Unlike Walraff, it is not an unmediated or first-person truth that Berger purported to present, but rather the absence of such a possibility that he highlighted and so affirmed. Similarly, rather than the actors in the 1986 production of *Karagöz in Alamania* purporting to a naturalistic style in which they could “become” the parts they were playing, the use of a stock figure as main character and humorous movements inspired by the Marx brothers purposefully created a certain distance. In a personal interview Özdamar highlighted the overtly theatrical manner in which she saw workers: “nicht als arme Menschen, sondern als Chaplin.” The perceived “absence of stage presence” thus may well have been partly due to a misinterpretation of an overtly theatrical technique at odds with a naturalistic mode of seeing Turkish *Gastarbeiter* prevalent in German society at the time.

A focus on overt theatricality is further suggested in the 1986 production by aspects of the *mise-en-scène*. The video-recording of the 1986 production reveals that the performance took place on a Brechtian simultaneous stage, the centrepiece of which was a large, branching wardrobe structure, hung with costumes as can be seen in Fig. 1. This structure was built up over three levels and surrounded the central stage area on

friend also captures the move from private to public memory and the privileging of particular experience over hegemonic narrative characteristic of counter-memory.

¹⁸ Notably in the case of the short stories in *Der Hof im Spiegel* this also “makes the reader aware of connections and relations that fall out of the dominant *narrative* frame: the frame of national history” (Minnaard 92).

three sides. The meta-theatrical element created by the use of costumes as scenery referenced a concept of migration as a metaphorical no-man's land in which pre-prepared identities must be taken on and off, or alternatively left suspended. Furthermore it denaturalized the actions of the actors on the stage, highlighting the action on stage as skilled, rather than natural. The multi-national casting thus can be understood as countering the arguably Orientalist conception evident in work such as Walraff's, in which the Turkish figure is unable to represent himself. Instead an aesthetics of "Berührung" is preferred (Özdamar, telephone interview), that is of coming into contact with and being in some way moved by the scenes presented.

The significance of such an approach can be seen not only when one places the 1986 production alongside popular representations of life in migration to Germany, such as Wallraff's, but also when one considers social and cultural policy of the time. In the 1980s West German policy was still officially geared to encouraging *Gastarbeiter* and other migrants to eventually return to their countries of origin. While official documents such as the *Kommission für Ausländerpolitik aus Vertretern von Bund, Ländern und Gemeinden unter Federführung des Bundesminister des Innern* from 2nd March 1983 encouraged the "Förderung heimat- und herkunftsbezogener Kultur- und Freizeitaktivitäten der Ausländer auf kommunaler Ebene" (qtd. in Brauneck 43–44 n.13), as the document then summarises this was with an eye to "die Erhaltung der Rückkehrfähigkeit im Rahmen der Freiwilligkeit" (qtd. in Brauneck 12). The express intention was to encourage migrants to retain links to their "own" culture, rather than creating links with the host country, West Germany. As Azadeh Sharifi highlights, this had a negative effect on the professionalization of Turkish theatre in Germany (36). While the 1986 production of *Karagöz* was frequently received as a (failed) attempt to bring Turkish theatre to a German audience then, a re-reading of the multi-medial material remains of the production reveals it as a rejection of a "museal" discourse of preservation of "original cultures" preferred in cultural policy at the time. Instead it presents an assertion of the potential for the integration of the professional theatrical talents and imaginations of the migrant community.

Countermemory and Preserving the Empty Space: Berger – Tüllmann – Özdamar

The identification of a particular affinity between the artistic projects of Özdamar and Berger outlined in the previous section not only allows a re-examination of the 1986 production of *Karagöz in Alamania* to begin to take place, but is also productive in thinking through the broader relationship between countermemory and the (Turkish-)German theatrical archive. In *A Seventh Man* Berger draws a line between what a photograph means to a person in migration and what it means within the book in which it is being re-produced. Below the photograph of a "[y]oung boy in the rain" gazing at the camera, he writes that "[s]een in the dark-room when making the print, or seen in this book when reading it the image conjures up the vivid presence of the unknown boy. To his father it would define the boy's absence" (17). Just as the image in Fig. 1 might seem, in Berger's words, to "conjure up" the presence of Özdamar's 1986 performance, in fact this document marks the absence, or passing of the thing itself.

However, Berger explains what he sees as the importance of this absence for the photograph belonging to the migrant worker. According to Berger the photograph "holds open, preserves the empty space which the sitter's presence will, hopefully, one day fill again" (16). In contrast to the boy in Berger's photograph, the 1986 performance

of *Karagöz in Alamania* is obviously not a subject that can ever become present again, re-filling the space it has left behind. Moreover, the textual remains in the form of the reviews and subsequent scholarship on Özdamar may well be said to close over this empty space: framing the 1986 production of *Karagöz* as an only partially successful, and thus eminently forgettable, event. An absence of discussion of it as a piece of theatre in performance is thus figured as natural, rather than as a lack. The audiovisual and photographic remains reveal the richness of the 1986 performance as a source for further explorations of Özdamar's *oeuvre*, however, and of the historical context of Turkish-German theatre. In preserving the empty space once occupied by the performance, these remains, and Özdamar's own re-narration of the production in the form of short stories, direct our attention towards, rather than away from, an otherwise forgotten moment in the cultural history of Turkish migration to Germany.

It is attention to the public and private contexts in which the photograph of the young boy becomes situated, which allows Berger to draw the distinctions he makes above.¹⁹ With this in mind I turn here to the authorship and means of preservation of Figure 1 in order to further elaborate on my own understanding of the relationship between counter-memory and a process of examining the archival remains of Özdamar's 1986 production. Notably all of the photographs published in reviews of the plays were taken by Abisag Tüllmann, an acquaintance of Özdamar's from her time at the Bochumer Ensemble, and a significant photographer in her own right. As Jan Gerchow summarises, Tüllmann as a photographer had three main subjects: her home city of Frankfurt am Main, the changing political and social world of Germany, and the theatre (6–7).²⁰ Arguably all three of these subjects come together in her photography of the premiere of *Karagöz in Alamania*. Indeed, the holdings of the Abisag Tüllmann Archive at the Deutsches Theatermuseum, Munich contain 62 sheets of negatives which document the production, revealing that Tüllmann photographed it prolifically. The photographs were taken between March and April 1986 and each sheet of negatives contains on average 30 images (Tüllmann).

The images featured in the reviews of *Karagöz in Alamania* together with those stored in the Tüllmann Archive, thus locate the 1986 performance very differently from the written words of the reviewers: namely, alongside what Tüllmann seems to have seen as some of the key artistic and political developments of the day. In reference to Tüllmann's theatre photography, dramaturge Hermann Beil claims that:

[m]it ihren Theaterbildern dichtete sie eigentlich Aufführungen zu Ende.[...] Ihre Bilder zeigen ja stets immer noch etwas anderes, etwas, was der schnelle Blick

¹⁹ Berger further discusses the relationship of the photograph to memory in his "Uses of Photography." He suggests here that "[t]here is never a single approach to something remembered. The remembered is not like a terminus at the end of a line. Numerous approaches or stimuli converge upon it and lead to it. Words, comparisons, signs need to create a context for a printed photograph in a comparable way, they must mark and leave open diverse approaches" (66–67). Although the photograph reprinted in Fig. 1 is used within a particular argument here then, I hope through it to open up rather than fix discussion of this particular production.

²⁰ In 2010 Tüllmann's work was exhibited at the Historisches Museum Frankfurt, the Museum für Fotografie, Berlin, and was documented in an accompanying book (Caspers). While the subjects of her theatrical photography include productions by German and internationally renowned directors such as Peter Stein, the 2011 exhibition also displayed an interest in social change. Images depicting migration to Germany, including several featuring *Gastarbeiter* in their barracks and flats, were placed alongside images of figures from the student movements of 1968 such as Joschka Fischer and Rudi Dutschke lending each historical weight (Caspers 60–61, 64–65).

nie sieht, nie sehen kann. Ihre Bilder sind Entdeckungen und verhelfen zu Entdeckungen. (qtd. in Lauterbach 155)

In embedding Özdamar's play in what could be considered to be her own intertextual project, Tüllmann anchors it in a chronicle of a changing Germany, rather than excluding it from a neater history of theatrical successes. As Beil suggests, her images helps us to do the same.

An examination of the photographs also reveals that the documentary remains of Özdamar's play survive due to a number of interests. Some of these are related to an active concern with preserving a record of Özdamar as an author. The *Verlag der Autoren*, with whom Özdamar's theatre texts are registered, for example, has preserved reviews, press clippings and programmes as a record of their client's work and possibly for future marketing purposes. For others Özdamar herself is more incidental. The Abisag Tüllmann Archive contains photographs of *Karagöz in Alamania* as a part of Tüllmann's legacy, for example. Similarly the Archiv zu den Städtischen Bühnen Frankfurt at the Johannes Senckenberg University, which also contains reviews and publicity materials such as the programme for the 1986 performance, records the history of Frankfurt's state-funded stages. Given the limited recognition of the significance of the play following the premiere, there is then no single archive on which research into this relatively early instance of Turkish-German theatre can draw. Although the documents in the Deutsches Theatermuseum and the Johannes Senckenberg University may not have been intended to preserve a record of *Karagöz in Alamania*, however, their presence there, like Tüllmann's photographs, still functions to locate Özdamar's play within the history of theatrical developments in Germany.

While the turn to counteremory or the repertoire can involve a dismissal of the traditional archive,²¹ as a reading of the documentary remains of the 1986 premiere of *Karagöz in Alamania* has shown, public archives in Germany store the experiences not only of those who control hegemonic discursive space but also those who disrupt it, however briefly. These other traces, lodged in the same space as the materials of history, also document the past and as such can be used to reassess current narratives of cultural history. At the same time it is important to acknowledge the importance of individual's collections and memories of the event in contextualising these traces. The video-recording of the 1986 performance lay in Özdamar's private holdings for example, revealing the limitations of the public archive, and the need to extend an archival approach as broadly as possible. Furthermore it is the affective quality of Özdamar's artistic rendering of the production in her short stories which have kept a reference to this important production in circulation. Although in the case of the remains of *Karagöz in Alamania* physical *consignation* does not take place then, re-examining these dispersed remains in the context of one another allows a form of "remembering against the grain" to begin.

In Seyhan's reading of Özdamar's later short story, "Karagöz in Alamania, Schwarzauge in Deutschland," although the main character crosses borders due to economic circumstances, Özdamar "crosses borders of language and history, ancient and modern, to reinterpret and reclaim legends and lore lost or forgotten due to cultural

²¹ In their 2002 introduction to *Signs*, for example, Marianne Hirsch and Valerie Smith state that "public media and official archives memorialize the experiences of the powerful, those who control hegemonic discursive spaces. To find the testimonials of the disenfranchised, we have turned to alternate archives such as visual images, music, ritual and performance, material and popular culture, oral history, and silence" (12).

rupture, ignorance, and misappropriation” (106). While Seyhan focuses on rupture within and ignorance of Özdamar’s “mother” culture in order to approach her prose work, the “ruptures” identified by Erol Boran in his history of Turkish-German theatre become key to my own analysis of the 1986 premiere. Such ruptures mean that the ways in which this theatre has commented on, and been framed by, the very specific circumstances of 20th century migration to Germany are largely elided from broader histories of either theatre or Turkish-German cultural production.²² Much as Özdamar’s novels are often considered to preserve what Seyhan calls “a form of counter-memory to official history” (149), the multi-medial remains of her 1986 production – and Tüllmann’s photographs in particular – hold the potential to fire synapses in both private and public, metaphorical and literal “Gedächtnisse.” Current discussions within the German theatrical scene on who theatre as a public institution should serve and how it should change to reflect the increasingly diverse face of modern Germany make this a particularly opportune moment for exploring such forgotten or neglected moments of cultural history. For Özdamar as a writer, “Identitätssuche ist ein [sic] private archäologische Graberei” (qtd. in Konuk 60). Should Germany as a country of immigration decide to indulge in a little public digging, the private and public traces of productions such as Özdamar’s may provide an overlooked set of remains well worth investigating.

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N.B. The image from the Abisag Tüllmann Archiv originally included in this article has been removed from this version due to financial constraints surrounding the copyright of this image. The display of this image online incurs a yearly fee which the article author is unable to meet indefinitely. For more details feel free to contact the author.

²² Volumes claiming to provide an overview tend to focus mainly on literature or film (e.g. Blumentrath et al.). This has only gradually begun to change in the past year, as evidenced by the inclusion of a chapter on theatre in El Hissy’s *Getürkte Türken*, for example.

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