PERPETRATOR GRAFFITI:
SHARING VIOLENT WORDS AND IMAGES IN TURKEY

by

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PERPETRATOR GRAFFITI: SHARING VIOLENT WORDS AND IMAGES IN TURKEY

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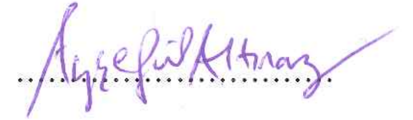
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ABSTRACT

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Beja Protner

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Thesis Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ayşe Parla

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The thesis focuses on the emotional experience of perpetrator graffiti of the Turkish-Kurdish urban war zones by young people in Istanbul who are emotionally and/or politically involved in Kurdish politics. By "perpetrator graffiti" I refer to the Turkish Special Forces' (ÖH) inscriptions of graffiti into ruined Kurdish spaces, sharing of their photographs on virtual "walls" of Twitter and Facebook, as well as their affective imprint on the dissident young people's gendered subjectivities. During the urban clashes between the local Kurdish militia (YDG-H) and the Turkish security forces in certain towns and neighborhoods of Kurdish provinces in Southeastern Turkey in 2015-2016, the ÖH sprayed graffiti with threatening content onto the ruined streets and intimate interiorities of private homes. In addition, the violent destruction and appropriation was photographed in a militarized masculinized spectacle with ÖH members posing for the photographs, which were then circulated on social media. The thesis critically engages with theoretical works on affect and emotions in critical theory and cultural anthropology. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in Istanbul, virtual ethnography, textual analysis of graffiti, and in-depth interviews with people who followed the events of the urban war zones via social media, I explore the historically contingent feelings of ruins and graffiti. I approach political feelings of sorrow, disgust, anger, helplessness, and precarious hope triggered by violent words and images in relation to meaning, subjectivity, and structural conditions of possibility, which proved to be essential preconditions for the emotional experience and the ability to respond to violence.

ÖZET

MÜTECAVİZ DUVAR YAZILARI: TÜRKİYE'DE ŞİDDET İÇEREN SÖZCÜK VE GÖRSELLERİ PAYLAŞMAK

Beja Protner
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Anahtar sözcükler: duygu, politik şiddet, duvar yazısı, yıkıntı, sosyal medya

Bu tez, duygusal ve/veya politik olarak Kürt siyasetiyle ilişkili olan ve İstanbul'da yaşayan genç insanların kent savaş alanlarındaki mütecaviz duvar yazılarına dair duygusal deneyimlerine odaklanmaktadır. "Mütecaviz duvar yazıları" ifadesiyle, Özel Harekat timlerinin (PÖH, JÖH) yıkıntı haline gelen Kürt alanlarına yazdıkları şiddet içeren duvar yazıları ve Twitter ve Facebook gibi sanal "duvarlarda" paylaştıkları fotoğraflarını ve muhalif genç insanların öznellikleri üzerindeki etkisi kastedilmektedir. 2015 ve 2016 yıllarında Türkiye'nin Güneydoğusundaki kimi kent ve mahallelerde yerel Kürt milisleri (YDH-G) ile Türk güvenlik güçleri arasındaki kent çatışmalarının ardından ÖH yıkıntı haline gelen sokaklara ve şahsi konutların mahrem iç mekanlarına tehdit içeren sprey boya duvar yazıları bırakmıştır. Üstelik bu şiddetli yıkım ve el koyma, ÖH mensuplarının poz verdiği ve sosyal medyada dolaşıma giren fotoğraflarda militarize ve maskulen gösterilerle fotoğraflanmıştır. Bu tezde, eleştirel kuram ve kültürel antropoloji alanlarındaki etki ve duygular üzerine kuramsal çalışmalar eleştirel bir perspektifle ele alınmaktadır. İstanbul'da yapılan etnografik saha çalışması, duvar yazılarının metinsel analizleri ve kent savaş alanlarındaki olayları sosyal medya üzerinden takip eden insanlarla yapılan derinlikli mülakatlar temelinde, yıkıntılar ve duvar yazılarının tarihsel olarak olası hisleri araştırılmaktadır. Şiddet içeren sözcük ve görsellerin tetiklediği üzüntü, iğrenme, öfke, çaresizlik ve kırılgan umut gibi politik hislere, duygusal deneyim ve şiddete yanıt üretme becerisi için asli olduğu kanıtlanmış olan anlam, öznellik ve yapısal olasılık koşuları bağlamında yaklaşılmaktadır.

PREFACE

Five years ago, when I started living and researching in Istanbul, I took on an intellectual and emotional voyage through a pretty unfamiliar world. I was attracted by its social intensity. Anyone studying the history and society, or more accurately, societies and worlds of Turkey bounded by invisible but knowable boundaries, would know what I mean by calling it "intense." As a curious young anthropologist, ready to take on virtually any theoretical and ethnographic challenge, I jokingly called Turkey a "golden mine for social scientists." Yet, it soon became clear that digging into it would take the sweat and tears one can hardly be prepared for.

In this thesis project the intensity of the field has finally become the focus of my research, which led me to explore the world of affects and emotions. Navigating the vast body of literature was challenging, but very rewarding. In the intellectual sense, this thesis is a turning point after which I will never think of social phenomena without considering emotions – of both, the observer and the observed. After all, anthropology (of emotions and perhaps more generally) is, I think, driven by our human curiosity about how others feel, how same things feel to other people, how to understand our own feelings and emotions, and how can we relate to each other. And the fact that we cannot completely comprehend how others feel is what drives our anthropological research deeper and further, and on the other hand makes us respect people's integrity and complexity, and forces us recognize our epistemological and ontological limitations and, finally, to challenge them.

However, the tunnel through which we travel is often dark and intimidating, the road is bumpy and unclear. I could not agree more with Ruth Behar, as she described it with painful honesty:

> Loss, mourning, the longing for memory, the desire to enter into the world around you and having no idea how to do it, the fear of observing too coldly or too distractedly or too raggedly, the rage of cowardice, the insight that is always arriving late, as defiant hindsight, a sense of the utter uselessness of writing anything and yet the burning desire to write something, are the stopping places along the way. At the end of the voyage, if you are lucky, you catch a glimpse of a lighthouse, and you are grateful. Life, after all, is bountiful. (1996: 3)

Ethnography may hurt us and change us forever. And thus, the voyage is never really finished, as we keep looking back.

Not only the relations we build in the field, but also the structures and relations of power we encounter and sometimes address academically may touch us in unexpected and less unexpected ways. As we are overwhelmed with the issues of doing ethnography and the ways we can (always imperfectly) put the experience of others and ourselves into academic writing, we might forget about the structures that constrain us and sometimes threat us. The need for silencing is the last painful touch of the voyage that brought about this thesis. It is not painful because of some self-centric need to express myself in my academic work, but because it compromises the theoretical discussions that are at the very core of anthropology.

However, the valuable reward (what I jokingly designated as “gold” at the beginning of my journey when I still had no idea about what it was) makes the sweat worthy. The wealth of the experience is also a gift, and gifts have to be returned and have to circulate, as most junior anthropology students learn from Bronisław Malinowski, often designated as the “father” of ethnographic fieldwork. I do not see this thesis as a sufficient way to return the gift, but rather as an incomplete step towards the search for the ways to honor those teachers, mentors, friends, and interlocutors who held the light and led me on my way through the tunnel, and for the possibilities to make what we do more meaningful.

For the second time, to Muzaffer.
This work, too, would not be possible without your love, support, and assistance.

Call it sentimental, call it Victorian and nineteenth century, but I say that anthropology that doesn't break your heart just isn't worth doing anymore.
—Ruth Behar

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In addition to the professors above, I am grateful to Leyla Neyzi whose wisdom and openness to share it also contributed greatly to my intellectual growth as an anthropologist during my years in Sabancı University's Cultural Studies Program. I am honored to have been your student and teaching assistant. Another professor who had a profound effect on my intellectual growth is Banu Karaca. Thank you for encouraging me to look at things differently and see their depths and complexity, for most inspiring classroom discussions, and for your attention, sensitivity, and warmth. Your mentorship has directed me the right way.

My schoolmates during these last three years also deserve the credit for my intellectual development. Each of them has contributed a bit of inspiration and stimulation during our discussions and conversations. I am most grateful to Deanna Cachoian-Schanz for intellectually inspiring conversations, and especially for her friendship, emotional support, and encouragement.

Special thanks are in order for the help with translation: to O. Oğul Köseoğlu and, of course, to my dear Muzaffer. With all my hearth I wish to be able to repay you one day for the patience with which you helped me to decode the graffiti and answer countless strange questions throughout these years.

Finally, I am most of all deeply thankful and indebted to my field-mates and interlocutors during this research. Thank you for letting me into your worlds, for trusting me and sharing your thoughts and emotions with me. It is you who made the foundations of this thesis. You are its inspiration and its true authors.

During my graduate study I was a beneficiary of financial support: Sabancı University's Full Scholarship, and 2215 Graduate Scholarship for International Students granted by The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK), which enabled me to live and study in Turkey.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi – Justice and Development Party
BDP	Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi – Peace and Democracy Party
CUP	Committee of Union and Progress (İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti)
EU	European Union
HDP	Halkların Demokratik Partisi – Peoples' Democratic Party
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (also Islamic State)
JÖH	Jandarma Özel Harekat Timi – Special Gendarmerie Forces
LGBTI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and other
MHP	Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi – Nationalist Movement Party
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
ÖH	Özel Harekat Timleri/ Özel Kuvvetleri (including JÖH and PÖH) – Special Forces
PKK	Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê – Kurdistan Workers' Party
PÖH	Polis Özel Harekat Timi – Special Police Forces
TSK	Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri – Turkish Armed Forces
U.S.	United States (of America)
YDG-H	Yurtsever Devrimci Gençlik Hareket – Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement
YPG	Yekîneyên Parastina Gel – People's Defence Units

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> *Public understanding of war through media images is not separate from or secondary to actual war experience but is primary war experience and therefore central to our social understanding.*
>
> —Dora Apel, *War Culture and the Contest of Images*

1.1. On Looking and Feeling

I look at a photograph that appeared on my Facebook “wall” on my computer screen and I recognize the unique minaret based on four columns, the “Four-legged Minaret” (Dört Ayaklı Minare), one of the landmarks of the ancient district of Sur in Diyarbakır. I must have a photograph with it from my first touristic visit of Diyarbakır. I remember it standing in a narrow street, paved with small stone cubes. In the photo, however, it stands there alone, on its legs damaged with bullet holes, in the middle of empty space surrounded with debris, on bare mud. The bullet holes on its legs remind me of an earlier photograph (of 28 November, 2015) widely circulated in the social media, with the murdered body of Tahir Elçi, a Kurdish lawyer and activist, lying in his blood at the tower’s foot. He was shot in the head in controversial circumstances, while he was making a public call to end the war and physical destruction of the ancient walled city district of Sur for the press. It feels as if the tower is filled with dense negative energy of layers of atrocities and excludes it back into the environment and onto me through the photograph; as if it is haunted by the memories of

violence it has witnessed (cf. Çaylı 2015)[1], including the annihilation of Sur's Armenian population, still denied by the officials. The weight of these "nods" of accumulated violence (Gordillo 2014) is heavy and it may be bodily felt as we look at the photographs of the destruction.[2] If it hurts me to see those images, how must it be for the people who call these places under destruction their home?

This thesis is about meaning, feeling, and emotions involved in the act of looking at the images and words of violence of the Turkish-Kurdish urban war zones, "shared" and circulated on social media (particularly Twitter and Facebook). The notion of "sharing" has a double reference. First, it refers to the act of reproduction, spreading, and circulation of contents on the social media by clicking "share." And second, it plays with the question whether something more than content might be shared, i.e. the spread of violence from the war zones to the virtual "walls," the affects transmitted from the images onto the people who view them, and the political feelings shared among these people within particular structural and subjective conditions of possibility. Can one really understand how images feel to someone else? The emotional worlds of others have always interested anthropologists (Martin 2013). As they proved to be always only partially reachable, they not only illuminated the limits of ethnography (Beatty 2010), but also expended them towards ever more thoughtful and emotional accounts of the worlds others inhabit, and altered the ways we may attempt to share these worlds with them and invite our readers to feel like doing the same. In a way, this research is an attempt of co-habitation of the emotional world of young oppositional people in Istanbul, who are negatively affected by the violent words and images from the war zones, which they continuously encounter on social media.

Not everyone feels the same while looking at the images of violence (Barthes 1981). The meanings and feelings shift according to cultural, political, gendered, and structural positionality of the one reading. In Sara Ahmed's (2004) terms, reading of texts (broadly

[1] Eray Çaylı wrote about Turkey's "witness sites" – "architectural spaces that witnessed atrocities whose sociopolitical legacy has continued to this day" (2015: 63).

[2] While I acknowledge the great significance of the great importance of the memories (as well as silences and erasures) of the disappearance of the Anatolian Armenians and the afterlife of their material remains in what are now the disputed Kurdish lands, again a space of destruction by the state, I will not include them into my analysis as I am focusing on the recent (and current) violence. However, their haunting presence is there, as some recent ethnographic researches have showed (see e.g. Biner 2010). As Gordillo (2014) brilliantly showed in his work on the affective materialities in Argentina, the "nods of rubble" are products of various layers of destruction stored into objects through the history and they are immersed into wider constellations.

speaking) and feelings that they trigger is always historically contingent – it involves previous readings. Barthes (1981) emphasized the subjectivity of reception of a photograph on both, semiotic (*stadium*) and affective (*punctum*) level. Along similar lines, Sontag (2003), inspired by Virginia Wolf's (1939) reflection on war, stressed that "we" should never be taken for granted when one is looking at violent images (cf. Silverstein 1976). Brutal images of war crimes (as no one speaks of war as a crime itself) create the "illusion of consensus" and invoke "hypothetical shared experience" (Sontag 2003). In fact, however, photographs of brutality of war, Sontag (2003) argued, often only confirm the opinions we already have and boosts our already existing political emotions. My research focuses on the emotional experiences of "oppositional people" – a heterogeneous group of various individuals who critically oppose *both*, the current political arrangements and their legitimization narratives, including (religious) nationalism and statism. In Turkey, many people are oppositional to (some aspects of) the government, but not many are critical about the idea of the "state," the idea of "*Türkiye*" as something everyone should always protect by all means no matter how bad the government, and the nationalism that constructs this reified image and breeds dangerous political feelings (see Ahmed 2004), that are crucial for the continuity of violence in Turkey (see Protner 2017). Thus, the people I worked with politically and/or emotionally belong to revolutionary left and the (pro-) Kurdish movement, which reject (Turkish) statist and nationalist ideologies. "The term 'Kurdish movement,'" as Zeynep Gambetti and Joost Jongerden wrote, "may include actors such as the outlawed PKK, the legal BDP [now HDP] and a panoply of civil organizations related to these – or, quite unceremoniously, people of Kurdish descent who spontaneously find themselves confronting state forces without belonging to any formal organizational structure" (2011: 379). By using "pro-" in the brackets, I transcend the ethnic boundaries and include non-Kurdish groups and individuals that join the struggle for rights and liberation of Kurds. With this move I also point to the liquidity between various left-wing Kurdish and non-Kurdish organizations, of which the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), a pro-human-rights party, representing ethnic, religious, gender, and sexual minorities in Turkey, consistent of various left-wing political organizations, is most visible evidence. The HDP and other organizations with who they collaborate are essential for the negative emotions to be shared and challenged into a

movement, as they give a sense of "we" and hope, that energizes political feeling of rage and in turn show that action is possible (cf. Ahmed 2004).

No one can feel the pain of others (Ahmed 2004; Sontag 2003). Yet, we can engage into sharing of emotions such as anger into which the pain is translated, and let ourselves be moved by collective political feelings (Ahmed 2004). However, the fact that negative emotions are shared does not automatically mean that people do not feel lonely, hopeless, and emotionally (and sometimes socially) isolated. The emotional experience of violent texts and images takes place in the particular context of structural violence and authoritarian oppression, which importantly delimit conditions of possibility (cf. Parla 2017) as well as the reading, dependent on previous readings (cf. Ahmed 2004). The ambiguous hope/hopelessness and continuous rage seems to constitute the states of living, especially among the oppositional people and groups, but perhaps in Turkey more general.

In the last decade, there has been a growing trend to in critical theory, anthropology, and other disciplines to frame everything ambiguous regarding people's experience in terms of "affect" (Hemmings 2005; Leys 2011; Martin 2013; Skoggard and Waterston 2015; Parla 2017). On the one hand, affects have been discussed as the forces and intensities exuded from materialities (Latour 2005; Thrift 2000; Henare et. al. 2007; Navaro-Yashin 2012; Gordillo 2014), and circulating between people and creating a shared atmosphere (Brennan 2004; cf. Cvetkovich 2012; Ngai 2005). On the other hand, affects have been described as pre-discursive, pre-subjective, pre-conscious bodily feelings that nevertheless determine our way of experiencing the world, our political decisions (Massumi 2002), our (political) subjectivities (Sedgwick 2003) and agency (Gould 2010), and the attachments that define the ways we inhabit the world (Ahmed 2010; Berlant 2011). Although the new direction towards things deeper than ideology and political consciousness opened the way to a more nuanced understanding of our collective lives, "affect" has been used in such diverse ways, that many started questioning its conceptual value and usefulness (Parla 2017). In addition, as works in critical feminist and queer theory, the structural conditions of possibility – the world before affect – is impossible to neglect (Ahmed 2010: Berlant 2011; Cvetkovich 2012). The same reason led many anthropologists to critically question the concept of affect and turn (back) to anthropology of emotions (see Lutz and White 1986) that offers sufficient theoretical and ethnographic basis to approach people's bodily experience in particular sociocultural and

political contexts (see Martin 2013; Parla 2017). As anthropologists long argued, emotions include both, bodily feelings and collective-subjective meanings (Leavitt 1996) – i.e. when I look at the photograph of the Four-legged Minaret, I simultaneously think of where it is, what is the history of that place, how it became ruined, etc., and bodily feel pain, sorrow, anger, and helplessness. Emotions can be approached ethnographically, which not only involves observation, but also (always partial) participation in the emotional worlds of others – i.e., feeling (Beatty 2005). Feeling is a part of any ethnography. However, as many noted, we have to carefully attend our own emotions in the field and critically acknowledge our positionality vis-à-vis our field-mates with who we feel that we share our emotions, as well as in the geopolitical and local structure, which both limit our emotional participation and the depth of our ethnography (Beatty 2005; Hage 2009).

In my research, I follow these emphasis and reminders. In conversation with the recent literature of the so-called ontological turn in anthropology and the so-called affective turn in critical theory, I use "affect" when I discuss the power of violent images to affect us and the way they imprint on people's subjectivities. Yet, as I will argue in Chapter 4, one's subjectivity also determines the experience. In addition, as I will argue in Chapter 5, meanings read from the images are central to the way we are affected as well. To discuss the people's experience, I use the notions of "feelings" and "emotions." Following authors such as Ann Cvetkovich (2012) and Sianne Ngai (2005) in critical theory, I use "feelings" when I want to stress the shared, atmospheric, moving, and political aspect of the collective emotional experience (see Cvetkovich 2012; Ngai 2005). This usage of "feeling" accords with the Public Feeling project among U.S.-based collectives of artists, activists, and academics in the field of cultural studies (including Lauren Berlant, Deborah Gould, Kathleen Stewart, and Ann Cvetkovich among others) that engaged in exploration of the relationship between public and political, and personal, emotional, and affective aspects of feelings from feminist and queer perspectives, and organized various symposiums, conferences, and other events of exchange and collaboration in some of the most prominent American universities in the 2000's. The public feelings the members of the project particularly engaged with are negative and ambiguous political feelings such as anxiety, depression, and hopelessness in relation to structural conditions of disadvantage and oppression, not unlike the feelings I discuss in this thesis. Thus, my reference to their

conceptualizations and discussions is an attempt to bridge feminist and queer studies with the study of other groups negatively marked by difference, in my case the Kurdish ethno-political minority in Turkey, as I believe that thinking about the parallels and connections between them is theoretically productive. "Feeling" is useful to discuss how things such as violent images and words, structural violence, capitalism, or social movement *feel* to people subjectively and what kind of social atmospheres they create among certain groups and societies or generations more generally (Cvetkovich 2012: 4-5) – in Raymond Williams' (1977) terms, what kind of *structures of feeling* they generate. On the other hand however, relying on the long tradition of anthropological engagement with emotions, I insist that people who feel are emotional, which include the intertwined social and cultural processes and personal positionalities, which in turn constitute their subjectivities and bodily predispositions to feel in a certain way (see Chapter 2).

1.2. Perpetrator Graffiti

After two and a half years of cease fire, the conflict between the Kurdish armed movement and the Turkish state escalated again in July 2015. In addition to the war between the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) in the mountains of Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia that has been going on for more than 30 years, this time the main battleground became certain districts and neighborhoods of Kurdish cities and towns such as Silvan, Sur, Varto, Şırnak, Cizre, Nusaybin, Silopi, and Yüksekova. After the abolishment of ceasefire, militarized youth formed local militias of the Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement (YDG-H), dug trenches to prevent the state forces to enter the areas, and declared autonomy. The state forces, particularly the Special Forces (*Özel Kuvvetleri* or *Özel Harekat Timleri* – ÖH) – the Special Police Forces (*Polis Özel Harekat Timi* – PÖH) and the Special Gendarmerie Forces (*Jandarma Özel Harekat Timi* – JÖH) attacked the neighborhoods with full power. The Kurdish provinces again came under the state of emergency, just like throughout the most part of the history of modern history of Turkey. In the areas of clashes, the government declared around-the-clock curfews that lasted for days and sometimes weeks. The population under curfews was cut from the access to

basic necessities, and exposed to terrorization and indiscriminate killing if spotted on the streets. The curfews were only temporary lifted in order for the civilian population to abandon their homes, which were then subjected to full-scale destruction that turned places like Şırnak or Nusaybin to unrecognizable and unlivable piles of rubble. During the curfews, hundreds of civilians were killed and hundreds of thousands were forcefully displaced (OHCHR 2017). The scale of violence was at first compared to the horrors of the 1990's, when the civil war in Kurdish provinces was at its peak and thousands of people were tortured, murdered, and forcefully disappeared with impunity, around 3 thousand villages were burned down, and millions were forcefully displaced (see Balta 2004; Göral et al. 2013; Özar et al. 2013). However, it soon became clear that the Turkish-Kurdish conflict has entered a new historical era in the domestic context of increasing authoritarianism, deterioration of human rights and civil liberties, changes in the political structure, and the international context of the war in Syria and Turkey's neo-Ottoman imaginary which drives its current international relations. "*We don't need the reference to the 90's anymore*," a Kurdish colleague said to me one day in fall 2015in the corridor of Sabancı University. In addition, as I will discuss in Chapter 3, the 21st century brought the war closer to us with the help of digital technologies and virtual spaces of the Internet and social media (Kuntsman 2010). We read the news of the war disseminated by the first-hand parties and politicized commentators in the instant when it is happening. Everything is photographed, filmed, and circulated online (Apel 2012). Daily lives of those who are concerned with the Turkish Kurdish issue, even if hundreds of kilometers away from the clashes, are wracked with the news of war and violent images of destruction. The fact that everything is happening right before everyone's eyes and the fact that the flood of digitalized "evidences" does not make a difference, does not prevent the violence, is what tortures and disintegrates.

As a part of the militarized performance of appropriation, the Special Forces (ÖH) covered the ruins with Turkish flags, and sprayed the walls of the ruined streets and interiorities of raided homes with nationalist, racist, jihadist, misogynist, threatening, and insulting graffiti (see Chapter 5). I call these violent words inscribed into the Kurdish spaces by the ÖH members "perpetrator graffiti." The term includes the notion of "perpetrator," referring to perpetration of political violence, which may require an explanation. While the categories of victims and perpetrators of political violence are most often used in binary,

simplistic way and have assigned moral value, the scholars studying perpetrators within memory and trauma studies have shown that they are in fact ambiguous and the borders between them are often blurred (Baines 2009; Scagliola 2007).[3] I write this thesis with the awareness of the complexity of people included in these simplified categories, but this complexity is not my focus. As Butler noted, we should look beyond the individual psychology of the perpetrators and discuss "how the norms of war in this instance neutralized morally significant relationships to violence and injurability" (2009: 82). Thus, rather than focusing on the subjects of the act, I look at the power of graffiti to affect people and investigate how political violence is perpetrated by things in the particular violent context. Accordingly, the term "perpetrator graffiti" refers to the graffiti as perpetrating violence, rather than people as political perpetrators.

Graffiti in general are a territorializing inscription of space and a practice of appropriation (Ley and Cybriwsky 1974; Nandrea 1999; Brighenti 2010; Bowen 2013) that can be felt in the space (Nandrea 1999; Chmielewska 2007). As such, they have been used as a form of political violence during wars (Rolston 1991; Peteet 1996; Baker 2002; Reed 2015; Kosova Press 2014) and their contested memorialization (Miklavcic 2008; Rolston 2012). As Julie Skurski and Fernando Coronil wrote, the concept of violence has a broad range of meanings and forms that point to "a multiplicity of social connections that link physical and psychological force, individual and structural harm, pain and pleasure, degradation and liberation, the violent and the non-violent" (Skurski and Coronil 2006: 5; see Scheper-Hughes 1992). As Gyanendra Pandey argued, violence "has been endemic to the advance of the modern, it has reappeared in constantly new forms, and it has occurred on all sides, /…/ not as isolated act, or a series of isolated acts, but rather as /…/ a *total social phenomenon*" (Pandey 2006: 7, original emphasis), as it involves the entire society with all its institutions and has religious, political, economic, and moral implications (Pandey 2006: 8). Hence, in order to understand violence, we have to go beyond the most extraordinary,

[3] In the last decade, the study of perpetrators flourished within the field of memory studies. It has been by now accepted in the memory and trauma studies that research of perpetrators' perspectives and their afterlives in "perpetrator societies" is as crucial to the understanding of violence and reparative endeavors, as listening to the narratives of victims (Üngör 2014). Understanding of the perpetrator's point of view, psychology, imagination, and construction of the Self allows us to better understand the social context that shaped the perpetrators (and made them such) and facilitated violence (Baines 2009). While I acknowledge that perpetrators of political violence are complex (see Baines 2009) (which does not make them less accountable), I decided to neglect this aspect of the perpetrator graffiti and the war in general for practical and epistemological reasons.

spectacular, extreme forms of physical destruction, and attend to "the exceptional in everyday practices of force" (Skurski and Coronil 2006: 3) – symbolic violence and "ordinary violence" of the differential citizenship (Pandey 2006; cf. Parla and Özgül 2016), that make up "states of violence" (Skurski and Coronil 2006) in which people live their everyday lives.

Turkey has a long history of violence, which includes physical and symbolic violence and dispossession, which have been a part of the continuous process of Turkification of the multicultural territory and have the continuity with contemporary political arrangements (Parla and Özgül 2016; Protner 2017). The targets of most brutal violence have been the country's ethnic and religious minorities that have been recognized as obstacles to Turkification and treated second-class citizens (Yeğen 2009). It is possible to argue that since the minorities have been rendered as a danger to the existence of the nation-state (Üngör 2008; Zeydanlıoğlu 2008), violence against minorities, especially the Kurds as far largest and most rebellious of them, has been the *raison d'être* of the Turkish security forces (see McDowall 1997: 196). The systematic institutionalized violence has always involved excess of physical and psychological force such as torture, harassment, and humiliation beyond the official orders, but nevertheless functioning within the system of oppression (Zeydanlıoğlu 2009). Perpetrator graffiti should be seen as a part of this institutionalized culture of violence. On the one hand, as graffiti-writing has become a systematic collective strategy, the perpetrator graffiti may be discussed in terms of continuity with other strategies of symbolic appropriation of space via material inscription of Turkishness (cf. Öktem 2004; see Chapter 3) and should thus be seen as a form of political violence and a part of institutionalized violence.[4] In addition, they should be seen in the broader context of the processes of militarization, crucially intertwined with the history of the conflict that goes back at least to the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 and the Kurdish rebellions in the following 15 years. The consequent emergency rule continued the militarization of Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia, and the economic neglect, and cultural and political oppression led to the politization of the Kurdish society in terms of opposition to the Turkish state, which prepared the fertile ground for an armed organization such as the PKK to militarize

[4] Although perpetrator graffiti and photography may seem "crazy" or exceptional and might be condemned by the government (as it were in Turkey), we have to acknowledge that they share the official perspective and confirm to the social norms of war and therefore legitimize it.

disappointed Kurdish youth. Thus, both parties in the conflict contributed to the militarization of the area and its people to the point where the absence of violence (in all its various physical, symbolic, and everyday forms) became no only unseen but also unthinkable. At the same time, militarism – "a set of ideas and structures that glorify practices and norms associated with militaries" (Altınay 2004: 2) – has been a central trace of the construction of Turkish official formations and institutions that rule everyday practices and discourses in the country, most notably its (nationalist) education (Altınay 2004). Thus, we have to see the phenomenon of the perpetrator graffiti as a part and a product of the ongoing century long subtle process of gendered militarization, where militarist believes and structures, closely related to particular normative idea(l)s of masculinity and femininity become taken for granted and unnoticeably prevail all aspects of Turkish and Kurdish lives (see Enloe 2000; Altınay 2004).

On the other hand, the perpetrator graffiti may be discussed in terms of their novelty. First, they are a phenomenon particular to the new urban warfare in Turkey, bounded with urbanity, and, as I will discuss later on, with a global culture of visualization, mobile capture, virtual dissemination, and viral circulation of moments of everyday life, from most mundane to most exciting ones (cf. Kuntsman and Stein 2015). Hence, we may see the perpetrator graffiti as a part of the particular zeitgeist, where everything may be turned into a spectacle and documented. And second, their content differs from the earlier discursive inscriptions of space. Previously known nationalist inscriptions on the mountain slopes that have long been a strategy of spatial appropriation are framed within defensive narratives of love for one's country, which is perceived as being under threat, rather than offensive expressions of threat and hate. In the militarized education and general militarization of the society, driven by the nationalist discourses of heroism, sacred territory, war on terror, and narratives of external enemies and internal traitors, the repressive state apparatuses are pictured as the *protectors* of the state and the Turkish nation rather than agents of violence (see Keyman and Kancı 2011; Altınay 2004; Kaplan 2006). As Sara Ahmed wrote, "This apparent reversal (we do and say this because we love, not because we hate) does an enormous amount of work, as a form of justification and persuasion" (2004: 42). In the case of the perpetrator graffiti, however, we are witnessing public expressions of hate in form of open threats (see Chapter 5). The authors openly claim violence in the performative act and get away with it with

impunity. This lack of the need for disguise may be signaling a new shift in the official attitude towards the Kurds and newly redefined borders of legitimate violence, as well as a change in regards to what kind of public feelings are tolerated and encouraged in the Turkish public. Mesut Yeğen (2009) and Aslı Çırakman (2011) respectively observed the change in official and public attitudes towards the Kurds in the 2000's in terms of intensification of exclusion and hate. While the official discourse became more inclusive during the peace negotiations (2013-2015), we may be witnessing a major setback where the terms of belonging and grievability (Butler 2009) have been redefined to the point where hate (rather than love), outright threats (rather than defense), and overt violence become more legitimate than ever, and thus publically performed rather than disguised.

As I will show in this thesis, the perpetrator graffiti link together various kinds of violence, from physical destruction, desecration, and appropriation of which they are a part, to symbolic oppression and terrorization which they conduct, and to the violent structural conditions in which they are written, read, and felt. As I will show in Chapter 5, the content of the graffiti reproduces gendered narratives of Turkishness and Turkish statehood, and the differential ethnicist and gendered citizenship regime. As such, the perpetrator graffiti are both, a form and a formative part of the structural violence in Turkey.

1.3. Violent Photography

In addition to the graffiti in the urban war zones, the Turkish ÖH members photographed their spatial appropriation in a militarized spectacle of masculinity and domination, posing for the photographs with ruins and graffiti, having their faces covered with snow masks, holding their weapons and flags, and showing nationalist symbols. The triumphalist photographic production may be classified as "perpetrator photography," taken as a trophy, aimed at glorification of the institutionalized culture of violence and framing of the legitimate violence on the one hand, and humiliation of the victims and the victimized communities on the other (see Hirsch 2002; Butler 2009; Apel 2012). Thus, the photographs are not only aimed at amusement of the perpetrators (Sontag 2005: 6), but a particular technique of systematic political violence that transcends the spatial and temporal limits of

the war zones. Susan Sontag (2005) argued that photography is in itself violent, voyeuristic, and predatory. Photograph continues the event, as it “reproduces a set of social relations that made the taking of the photograph possible” (Apel 2012: 6; see Azoulay 2008) and the “visual protocols of domination and submission and [instantiate] political hegemony” (ibid.: 80). As I will argue in this thesis, the perpetrator photographs are invested with political violence and spread it from the war zones onto the oppositional community throughout the country (and beyond).

Moreover, same as it is true for graffiti (see Brighenti 2010), photographs imply “looking” (Barthes 1981), witnessing (Berger 2013), audience (Apel 2012; Butler 2009: 83-85). When we look at the photograph of a perpetrator posing with the graffiti, we engage into double witnessing: first, to the perpetrator’s “I am here-ness” (Bowen 2013), in other words invasion (Nandrea 1999; Sontag 2005) or, as I will argue in Chapter 5, gendered penetration of the graffiti, and second, to the photographic event. What does the witnessing do, how to we experience it, and what kind of responses it might trigger? Some of most influential scholars of photography claimed that photographs cannot move us. In her early work *On Photography* Sontag (2005) argued that a photograph itself does not trigger a reaction. First, because the flood of violent images we are daily exposed to in the modern digitalized world makes the violence less real, and makes us get used to seeing violence and brutality, and not react to it. And second, because a photograph itself does not offer any contextual interpretation that would make us understand the violence. Moreover, John Berger (2013) famously argued that war photography depoliticizes war, as the shock of the violence gets dispersed, translated into the viewer’s shock over her own moral inadequacy, which generates the feeling of helplessness. Furthermore, Barthes (1981) thought of photography as flat, undialectical, de-realization of the world, and at the same time “overconstructed” with a sense of judgement, which delimits our agency in reaction to violence. On the other hand, Butler (2009), in her response to Sontag, took a wider perspective and argued that every photograph already includes interpretation in its frame, in which non-figurable and non-intentional forms of social and state power are “embedded.” In addition, while Berger (2013), Barthes (1981), and Sontag (2003; 2005) respectively refused to ascribe political potential to photography, Butler (2009) argued that the history of various successive framings and receptions of photography *conditions* the kind of public interpretations of violence we have,

and the experience and articulation of outrage, but does not determine it. Thus, she leaves space for the possibility of "disobedient act of seeing" (Butler 2009: 72). Furthermore, other authors on war photography such as for instance Susie Linfield (2010) and Dora Apel (2012), respectively argued that documentary photography has the potential to make people condemn war and engage in oppositional politics. Similarly, Ariella Azoulay (2008) saw even greater potential in the ambiguity of photography. She envisioned a "civil contract of photography" that constructs an inclusive and borderless "political community" of mutually responsible photographed subjects, photographers, and spectators through new political uses of photography.

My research indeed confirms this claim. As I will show in the Chapter 6, witnessing of violence may evoke empowering political rage, but only in the right conditions of possibility that should include collective hopefulness. On the other hand, it may also imped action. In her later writing *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Sontag (2003) reviewed her earlier claims about getting used to images of horror, disaster, and atrocity. Instead, she argued that we are nevertheless affected by the suffering of others. However, the bitterness and the "frustration of not being able to do anything about what the images show" (91) may make us reject the images and look away or leave us numb (Sontag 2003). Hence, Berger's (2013) argument about the paralyzing feeling of moral inadequacy might contain some truth after all (Apel 2012). In the case of the perpetrator photography from the Turkish-Kurdish urban war zones, it is not only about the pain of others, but the photographs are produced as a part of symbolic violence that hurts the (pro-) Kurdish community. Thus, it is that much harder to resist the violence and translate the pain and negative emotions into political action, especially given the general conditions of everyday violence. As I will show throughout the thesis and especially in Chapter 6, the question of agency in the face of violence is indeed central to the oppositional people's engagement with the photographs from the war zones. However, as I will show, the violence exuded from the images does not make oppositional people numb, but rather generates and feeds already existing political feelings of disintegration, sorrow, depression, and rage, that are impeded in the given conditions of possibility that make hope increasingly precarious and fragile, which may have same results of suspension of agency as numbness but thus not feel same, since feelings continue to burn.

1.4. Virtual "Walls" and Cyberspace

The perpetrator photographs of the militarized masculinized spectacle of ÖH members posing with ruins of destruction, covered with Turkish flags and inscribed with violent graffiti, and are published and spread by the Twitter accounts, apparently owned by the ÖH members and groups, and circulated by their ultranationalist supporters throughout Turkey. Hereby, the notion of "perpetrator graffiti" gains another layer of meaning. It does not only refer to the material inscriptions on the physical walls, but also the inscriptions on the virtual "walls" of the social media in an attempt to dominate the virtual space as well. Violent words and images of graffiti, ruins, and murdered bodies[5] from the Turkish-Kurdish urban war zones prevail and dominate the virtual spaces related to the conflict in a phenomenon that Adi Kuntsman and Rebecca Stein (2015) called *digital militarism* – "extension of militarized culture into social media domains" (6). It is a process where militarist politics interplay with social media and other digital communication tools; where ordinary networking and pleasure of digital acts in all their banality and everydayness intersect with wartime violence and brutalities of exceptionalism, and institutionalized violence gets new, digital forms and means of both, increased force and spectacular visibility, as well as normalization, banalization, and concealment (Kuntsman and Stein 2015: 2-12).[6]

Wars, conflicts, and their commemorations "are narrated, experienced and performed in contemporary digital media" (Kuntsman 2010: 1). The Internet has become a platform for "citizen journalism" and testimonies of atrocities, political extremism, and mobilization of political groups, and a weapon of war of cyberattacks for both, state and non-state political

[5] Images of murdered bodies of civilians who were killed during the curfews, and tortured and mutilated bodies of killed guerillas are the genre of the perpetrator photography, which I excluded from my visual analysis. First, because they are unbearable. And second, because the focus on ruination and inscription of space provides a different analytic insight into the state violence and its emotional experience. In turn, this may perhaps alleviate to some extent the pornographic use of the image when focused on the human body. However, I will discuss some of the images of murdered civilians, because they continuously came up during my interviews and proved to have strong effect on my interlocutors.

[6] Kuntsman and Stein (2015) analyzed the Israeli occupation and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on social media. The Israeli military and government, in addition to the supporters of the Israeli policies, explicitly took on a mission to incorporate online practices into their military project in order to counter pro-Palestinian anti-occupation online activism and dominate the cyberspace with their perspective (see Kuntsman and Stein 2015). A detailed comparison between the usage of digital technologies in the two cases, the Israeli-Palestinian and the Turkish-Kurdish as two distinct localizations of the global phenomenon of digital militarism may be illuminating for the analysis of the significance of digital technologies in the Turkish-Kurdish conflict in the present and their potentials yet to be realized in the near future. My brief comparison showed that the similarities between the two digital militarisms are striking, while the differences between them may lead us to a better comprehension of both cases in their local, international, and geopolitical contexts.

actors in wars and conflicts (Karatzogianni 2006). Digitalization of war enables the perpetrator graffiti to prevail everyday lives of people concerned with the Turkish-Kurdish conflict, as the images of ruins and graffiti, together with the posing ÖH members, are circulated on social media. The social media become, for those who are not in the war zones but are concerned with them, the primary site where distant wars and other violent events are experienced and instantly reacted to (Kuntsman 2010; Apel 2012; Bonilla and Rosa 2015; Gerbaudo 2012). In the last decade, social media have become an integral part of everyday life of (especially) young people in Turkey and elsewhere. People are checking their social media accounts virtually all the time. They rely on them for reaching news, selectively gathered from various Internet sites, for keeping in touch with friends and family, to communicate on daily basis. It is crucial for ethnographic approach to the cyberspace to not take it as a space separated from the everyday life in a society in general but "as continuous with and embedded in other social spaces" (Miller and Slater 2000: 5). As Daniel Miller and Don Slater (2000) showed with their holistic study of the Internet usage in Trinidad, the Internet is a naturalized everyday part of people's lives in a *particular place*. Thus, the social relations of that place importantly determine the online relations, including relations of power, domination and resistance (see Kuntsman 2004). In Turkey, the oppressive structural conditions in various ways influence the use of the Internet and social media. The authorities continue to ban more and more oppositional Internet pages, especially those of news agencies and newspapers, which are now inaccessible from Turkey (see Freedom House 2016). In response, political organizations and news agencies increasingly rely on social media to render their information reachable. Thus, social media become necessary for politicized individuals to keep in touch with the events and large groups of people of interest in the material world. To prevent the spread of news and communication through social media, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have been blocked on several occasions of important political events and mass violence (see Freedom House 2016), which proves their importance in relation to politics. Young politicized people in Turkey read same internet news pages, columns, and blogs, "follow" same Twitter accounts, and "like" same Facebook pages, depending on their political interests, which gives them material for discussions and collective actions in the material world. In addition, they are connected to each other in social media in a complex network, as they "follow" each other on Twitter and "befriend" each

other on Facebook. In the most recent Internet technologies such as social network sites, Danah Boyd argued, "'community' is an egocentric notion where individuals construct their social world through links and attention. /…/ Each participant's view is framed by her or his connections to others and the behaviors of those people" (2009: 27). Therefore, we get limited amount and selective kind of information from our social media "walls," which are closely connected with our life in the material world, as they mostly confirm and reproduce our knowledge, values, and political positionalities in general. As Boyd wrote, "People's worldviews – and their neuroses – leak from the offline to the online [and the other way around, I would add]. To fulfill their goals and desires, people envision structure within the wide-open spaces available online" (2009: 31; cf. Kuntsman 2004). Furthermore, politicized virtual sites and networks are related with the organizations and collectives these people are a part of or at least share their views and support their work. Thus, on-line and off-line (emotional) worlds of experience and action are even more integrated (see Kuntsman 2012). As Yarimar Bonilla and Jonathan Rosa (2015) argued, social media may become a space for radical politics, related to events in the material world. As such, they are also spaces of memorialization and commemorations of militarized traumatic and victorious events on which people build their belongings (Kuntsman 2010; 2011). In addition, they have also proved to be the means of communication, organization, and mobilization for public protests and mass uprisings (Gerbaudo 2012). We may observe all of these interrelated politicized usages of social media among oppositional people in Turkey.

In response to the politicized use of social media, the authorities increasingly engage in surveillance of Facebook and Twitter and restrict freedom of speech, which has in the last yeas led to thousands of prosecutions for "terrorist propaganda" and "insulting the president" (Freedom House 2016). Hence, as Miller and Slater (2000) emphasized, the changed conditions of social interaction and performance of Self do not automatically entail greater freedom of expression and thus neither greater honesty nor creation of "fake" identities (see Kuntsman 2004). In fact, some of my interlocutors told me that they are cautious about what they publish on social media and that they employ self-censorship in order to protect themselves from persecution and possible nationalist lynches. The usage of pseudonyms, although it may do the job a bit more difficult, does not significantly decrease the danger, as I was told. Yet, many people resist to self-censorship and insist on performing their freedom

of speech, as under authoritarianism even this may be a dissident act of resistance. Thus, the social media are a part of the general political oppression and the structure of unequal distribution of vulnerability in Turkey.

On the other hand, the political elites and its supporting groups and individuals themselves actively use the social media as a means of discursive domination, and symbolic violence (cf. Kuntsman and Stein 2015). The ÖH accounts on Twitter that spread violent images from the war zones are most aggressive example of this kind of usage. These accounts on the one hand serve to nationalist war propaganda, as the posts are "liked" and "shared" by hundreds of ultranationalists in Turkey, and on the other hand to intimidate the "other side," i.e. politicized (pro-) Kurdish people who also "follow" these accounts in order to get the first-hand information about the war from another point of view. As I will show in Chapter 3, these links between different people concerned with the war render social media as a mirror of general social polarization and politicized relations in the society. Parties and politicized populations oppositional to each other engage in violent encounters in cyberspace such as cyber-attacks and hacking, psychological warfare, propaganda, and consciousness-raising (see Karatzogianni 2006; Kuntsman and Stein 2015). Hence, digital media and information communication technologies not only represent contemporary wars and conflicts, including the Turkish-Kurdish conflict, but are turned into "technologies of information warfare" and become "battlefield in their own right" (Kuntsman 2010: 7; see Karatzogianni 2006; Kuntsman and Stein 2015). They bring warfare from geographically and/or historically distant places to our intimate everyday lives, as we engage with them through the screens of our computers and mobile phones, literally touching the images of pain and destruction on the touchscreens (Kuntsman 2010: 10). Social media become digital sites of the conflict, "another war zone" (Kuntsman 2010; Kuntsman and Stein 2015), where passionate *cyberwars* (Hudson 2010) and contests of images (Apel 2012) take place, as individuals opposed to each other engage in online symbolic violence and struggle for domination of the representation of the war in the virtual space, in hope to influence wider national and international public (see Chapter 3; cf. Kuntsman and Stein 2015; Hudson 2010).[7] This kind

[7] An important part of *cyberconflicts* which I have not included in my research are also cyber-attacks of state and non-state actors and hacktivism such as spamming, defacements of websites, and service attacks on computer systems, which may have important effects on sociopolitical and ethnoreligious conflicts in the material world (see Karatzogianni 2006; Kuntsman and Stein 2015).

of digital media usages involve a strong affective element and demonstrate, as Adi Kuntsman argued, "that online communication is saturated with passion, that virtual conflicts move us, and that our use of digital media is about affective investment, as much as it is about information, storage of data or form of communication" (2010: 9; see 2011).

Engagements with the (virtual) perpetrator graffiti in the cyberspace involve strong political emotions. As Kuntsman wrote, "past and current conflicts, wars and genocide touch us deeply, despite being distant temporally or geographically. What is more," she argued, "they touch us precisely when they emerge in the seemingly disembodied realm of cyberspace" (2010: 9). She put forward the concept of *cybertouch* of war, violence and death, which "refers to ways in which past and current events can touch us through the monitors of our computers and mobile phones, whether by creating an immediate emotional response (sadness, rage, pain, compassion, indifference, etc.) or by leading to long-lasting changes in the ways we remember and experience war and conflicts" (2010: 9-10; see 2011). It is this cybertouch of the perpetrator graffiti, the affective flow between online and offline experience, that I explore in this thesis.

Moreover, the symbolic struggles of violent words and engagement with violence of the war through photography in the cyberspace take place in particular violent contexts in which people use social media. As Kuntsman discussed, "digital structures of feelings" (applying Williams' famous formulation) are related to "broader political and affective regimes, such as those of grievability, exception, and killability" (2011: 1-2). For the people who are affected by the structural violence they live in, as well as the brutality of the war in the places that many of them call home, the online encounters with war violence are especially emotionally exhausting. Yet, they cannot look away from what is happening in their community and they cannot be numb, as their political consciousness does not allow them. Thus, in the third way of usage, "perpetrator graffiti" may be a metaphor for the imprint of the political violence embedded in the images and words, received in already violent contexts, on people's subjectivities, which importantly affects their ways of inhabiting the world.

1.5. A Note on Methodology

Five years ago in 2012, I came to Turkey to conduct my undergraduate thesis research on collective memories and perceptions of the Turkish Kurdish issue among young educated people in Istanbul with various social backgrounds and political orientations. For the two years of the fieldwork I lived with politicized Kurdish university students. I defended the thesis at the Department for Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Ljubljana in 2014. Since then, I continued to live in Istanbul and pursued a master degree. During my graduate studies I continued to write on the Turkish Kurdish issue. Thus, the ethnographic fieldwork I have done for this thesis between spring 2016 and spring 2017 has the continuity with my previous research. Again, the people I worked with were young people in Istanbul with a university degree that had come to the metropolitan city in search of education and jobs from various corners of the country, except that this time, I included only those politically and/or emotionally engaged with Kurdish politics (though not necessarily of Kurdish ethnicity). The profile of my interlocutors is somehow specific, as they are all in a way involved in the Kurdish movement in Istanbul, actively or ideologically (though some only implicitly), and exhibit high political literacy and engagement. It is important to acknowledge a relative privilege of these people within the Kurdish movement in general (on which many of them themselves critically reflected), given their level of education and liberal lifestyle in most central and secular parts of Istanbul as non-married young people. Yet on the other hand, some of them nevertheless encounter problems such as economic insecurity and nationalist discrimination (in addition to the general political unsafety). I chose this group because they are the ones who are most engaged with the Kurdish politics online and are thus most exposed to the cybertouch of violence (Kuntsman 2010), as they are closely engaging with the violent words and images of the Turkish-Kurdish urban war zones through social media, without being actually there. Moreover, an ethnographic research that would include people and spaces where armed clashes take place would be difficult to pursue in the given conditions of the state of emergency, curfews and no-entry zones, and political tensions that does not exclude foreigners. By focusing on people in Istanbul, I was able to observe and participate in their everyday public lives, spend time in their cafés and homes, listen to their politicized discussions and engage in them, spend the evenings in the cafés and bars of

Beyoğlu and Kadıköy where they go to have fun, and so on. This way, I was able to get a sense of the context in which they follow the events in Kurdish cities from a distance, and observe their almost continuous usage of social media on their smart phones and the way "feelings and affective states can *reverberate* in and out of cyberspace, intensified (or muffled) and transformed through digital circulation and repetition" (Kuntsman 2012, original emphasis).

In addition to accessibility particular to the topic, people of my own age, high level of formal and informal (political) education, and engaged in the left-wing politics are also those to who most reachable to a foreign researcher. While the assumed reachability is not always most beneficial for ethnography, as it may for example veil the important differences in our positionalities and feelings, I see its biggest value in the possibility of collaboration. Hence, I was able to engage with my field-mates in what Douglas Holmes and George Marcus (2008) called "epistemic partnership." However, while Holmes' and Marcus' (2008) methodological concept involves a rather technical view on collaboration with local experts, my research takes the concept to a new and different direction. In the last decade, the anthropological discipline has moved on to greater levels and deeper modes of bodily embedded ethnographic work (see Ingold 2011; Viveiros de Castro 2014; cf. Bassire and Bond 2014; Graeber 2015). I can claim that this thesis is as much a result of my field-mates' intellectual insight as it is mine.[8] I had the chance to discuss the perpetrator graffiti and photography in everyday conversations and during interviews in great analytical depths with my interlocutors, which significantly determined my analysis. They may have not read any anthropological texts on ruins, photography, emotions, political violence, etc. but we were able to discuss these issues in the particular context of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict as experts with strong intellectual exchange. In addition, these conversations were at the same time very emotional, given the affective power of images and the ways violence touches us, which we discussed. In Ruth Behar's terms, it was the kind of anthropology that breaks your heart, "a voyage through a long tunnel" (1996: 2) and a form of vulnerable witnessing.

In spring 2017, I conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with 14 persons in the age between 24 and 31 that took place either in my interlocutors' homes or in the cafés

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[8] I have discussed the relations and positionalities in the field in my work in progress (see Protner n.d.).

where they often spend time and feel comfortable and safe. Some interviews were conducted in Turkish, some in English, and some in combination of both, depending on the interlocutors' preferences, and they mostly took around 2 hours. I first asked them to talk about their life, where they grew up, if they remember the violence in the 1990's, and how they became politicized. Then I asked them about their social media usage – in which of the social media they hold accounts and how often use them, how actively, and for what purposes. After that we started to discuss the imagery of the urban war zones. Hereby, the temporality it is not insignificant. The interviews took place a year after the urban clashes ended, so it was about awaking the memories of their past experience (although visual cyberwars continue, as the war continues in the mountains and civilians under state of emergency continue to experience violence) (cf. Kuntsman 2011). This may have on the one hand blurred the emotional aspect of the images, but on the other hand alleviated the pain and distress involved in the act of witnessing, and allowed for greater analytical reflections. I did not show the images to them, but rather asked them what kind of images of ruins and graffiti they remember and how seeing them made them feel (including images of dead bodies, if they mentioned them). We talked about how different ruins may feel differently, and what are the differences and relations between ruined cities and killed people. We discussed particular examples that they brought up from their memory, especially the content of the graffiti and their symbolic meanings as they interpreted them. We also talked about the reasons for the ÖH members to write graffiti and take photographs with them. In addition, we discussed whether or not they have "shared" the violent images, with what purpose, and what kind of ambiguous effects it might have. The interviews were recorded with a voice recorder and the names were changed according to my interlocutors' preferences in order to protect their identity.

Moreover, throughout the year (most importantly while the urban clashes were still taking place), I was conducting observation with limited participation on the Internet – a virtual ethnography or *cyberethnography* (Kuntsman 2004) on Facebook and Twitter. The "key architectural properties of mediated sociality" that affect the nature of interactions online as well as our research among them are persistence, searchability, replicability, and invisible audiences (Boyd 2009: 30). This is especially useful in observation on Twitter, where the hashtags connect innumerous posts in a network and allow easy searching,

although this should not be the only technique of an online research (Bonilla and Rosa 2015). The main difference between the two social media is that Facebook builds social network through "friendships" on which two persons agree upon which they are able to see each other's posts, while Twitter allows for much wider and more impersonal communication with wide audience, and connections that do not have to be both-sided, which makes it a more appropriate ethnographic site (see Bonilla and Rosa 2015). I befriended and "followed" the oppositional people on Facebook, which I actively use (also in a politicized way) under a pseudonym (which was not created for this particular research, though). In addition, I created a Twitter account (also under a pseudonym, this time to stay anonymous), from which I "followed" my interlocutors (those who have an account), activist accounts known for their war reporting and commenting that are "followed" by thousands, and various pro-Kurdish news agencies that my interlocutors "follow," as well as the accounts apparently managed by groups or individuals belonging to the members of security forces. I did not actively involve in publishing, "sharing," or "liking" on Twitter. In fact, many people who are not organized in the movement use Twitter this way. Thus, it was really more of an observation than participation, albeit illuminating. I could get a sense of the way the war is framed by differently positioned people, the way they engage in cyberwars through posts and comments, and the way images are used for different purposes of war propaganda and oppositional consciousness rising.

Moreover, data on the Internet constitute digital archives that transgress the limits of immediacy, which on the one hand creates a strange "contradiction between affective intensity and deadly stillness" of violent words and images, but on the other allows researchers to access and analyze posts and discussions from the past, and retrace and review them again and again in a new light (Kuntsman 2011: 3). Thus, I was able to observe not only the cyberwars and digital militarism of the present moment, but also those of the previous months of the urban warfare that continue to haunt cyberspace (Kuntsman 2011). During my online ethnography, I collected the photographs of ruins, graffiti, and posing ÖH teams, mostly presumably taken by the later except for the aftermath of destruction, documented by journalists. I translated the graffiti for the purposes of the semiotic analysis. After that, I made the textual analysis of the images, where I payed special attention to the context in which they were produced and disseminated. As Andrew Beatty argued, attention

to particular circumstances and characters is crucial in order to understand people's emotions (2010: 433). Hereby, I employed an oppositional reading of the images, from the perspectives of my interlocutors. Thus, the ethnographic fieldwork proved to be the foundation of the methodology.

Last but not least, talking about emotions rises epistemological questions of translation, even more so when it includes inter-cultural and linguistic translation. We discussed feelings and emotions with my interlocutors in Turkish or English, none of which is the language in which I primarily feel. Thus, the specifications, descriptions, and translations between these two languages (and with a third language in my mind) were also a part of my interviews and numerous conversations in which I attempted to come closer to the understanding of what my interlocutors mean and feel. These conversations were helpful to choose the right English idioms for emic categories, which we often did together after moving words back and forward from one dictionary to another and another, to make sure that the idiom in English best describes what they feel. The metaphors involved in Turkish expressions that concern feelings proved to be additionally illuminating. In turn, the collaborative process of comparisons and translations contributed to my understanding and contextualized analysis. The issue of translation of feelings and emotions and the question of how well can we really know them and mediate them persuasively enough, however, reminds us of the limits of ethnography, as it does not allow – in contrast with fiction or memoire – the space for a full account of complex personal histories, relational dramas, and characters of individuals (Beatty 2010). Yet, as Beatty emphasized, we have to know our interlocutors and their interwoven histories that lie behind the emotions we observe and discuss (2010: 440). The length of my fieldwork and otherwise life in proximity with my interlocutors has been most valuable in this regard. In addition, my own emotions, shaped in the affective relation with these people, have always been a part of the translation and a guidance in the way of conveying the emotions of others (cf. Beatty 2010: 440). Moreover, by giving more space in the Chapter 6 to the narratives of my interlocutors and the ways they described how they feel, I tried to take use of the quality of narrative (see Beatty 2010) to render the emotional feel of my interlocutors' online encounters with violence and their individual everyday experience. Nevertheless, a large part of the way things really feel for someone else, even if the affects and atmospheres radiate between the narrators (the owners of the

stories and myself as the mediator), text, and readers – and I hope they do – is necessary lost in translation.

1.6. Some Thoughts on Responsibility

A research on violence requires some thoughts on various modes of implication and responsibility. Given the politicized online environment in which we engage with violent words and images, it is important to discuss and reflect on positionalities involved in looking, feeling, "sharing," and researching. What is one's role in the political violence? How do we participate in it? What kind of consequences do our actions related to it have in the broader conflict and the emotional worlds of others? As Michael Rothberg (2014) argued, it is necessary to consider modes of responsibility beyond the categories of victims and perpetrators in trauma theory. To explore these blurry waters, he suggested the concept of "implicated subjects" of political violence that serves as "a general category to describe modes of responsibility beyond the criminal guilt of the perpetrator" that will help us to make sense of- and resist violence. Implicated subjects consist of a "large and heterogeneous collection of subjects who enable and benefit from traumatic violence without taking part in it directly" and are thus "essential to the production of much of the traumatic violence that concerns us." The notion of "*implication* draws attention to how we are *entwined with and folded into* ('im-pli-cated in') histories and situations that surpass our agency as individual subjects" (Rothberg 2014, original emphasis). In the context of an ongoing political conflict that spreads from the war zones into geographically distanced people's lives via digitalization, it is important to think of different modes of implication.

In their engagement in cyberwars and online political activism, some individuals who oppose the brutalities that take place in the war zones choose to "share" and circulate the perpetrator photography of ruins and graffiti, as well as the murdered bodies of civilians and (exceptionally) guerillas.[9] This evokes questions of complicity in the use of violent images of war. While the images are "shared" in another, oppositional context, and framed as the

[9] While the bodies of guerillas killed in urban environment have been shared, hundreds of images of mutilated bodies of guerillas from the mountains that are circulated by the soldiers are normally not shared by the opposition.

evidence of violence in hope to trigger reactions and someday bring those responsible to justice, they are still perpetrator photographs, invested with violence that hurt others. Thus, while spreading the perpetrator photographs, we are complicit in spreading the political violence exuded by the images and included in their photographic and discursive frame (Butler 2009). In her discussion on Nazi photography and its use in art, Marianne Hirsch (2002; cf. Apel 2012) warned about the dangers of recontextualization of war photographs. First, perpetrator photographs reproduce what she calls the "Nazi gaze" (i.e. the triumphalist perpetrator gaze) – the position from which and the violent context in which they were taken (cf. Butler 2009). And second, generalized and nameless victims and perpetrators bring about the myth of depersonalized hyper-masculine evil exercising violence against the innocent infantilized and feminized victims. In turn, the gendered myths veil the historical and political context of a photograph (Hirsch 2002). However, Ariella Azoulay (2008) claimed that despite the fact that there is always the threat of photography's exploitation of vulnerabilities, they may also serve as a resource of struggle for those stripped of their citizenship and oppressed and thus have to be made visible. It is this way that oppositional people in Turkey use photographs of military and police violence. Apel (2012) emphasized that war photographs can be framed differently from the state-controlled hegemonic way, in order to "expose the racist, antidemocratic, and class interests of the state" (6) and "produce new forms of social knowledge that may be mobilized to fight for democratic rights and new freedoms" (5). Similarly, Lindfield (2010) challenged the claims about complicity argued that viewing of photographs of political violence can connect people, enhance understanding and solidarity, and mobilize people for change, which would not be possible in ignorance. Hence, the act of looking forces upon us a moral responsibility to position ourselves vis-à-vis the violence that we witness (Berger 2013). Yet, we have to consider the conditions of possibility of responses to photographs. In unequal structural conditions and oppression, some have more power than others to act upon the moral imperative. Thus, is important not to construct political act as a norm from a privileged position. As I will show in Chapters 4 and 6, the injury caused by the violent images viewed in states of violence may also affect people in a paralyzing way. "Neither simply perpetrators nor victims, though potentially either or both at other moments, implicated subjects are participants in and beneficiaries of a system that generates dispersed and uneven experiences of trauma and well-being

simultaneously" (Rothberg 2014). The unresolvable ambiguity of "sharing" of perpetrator photography which initially celebrates, performs, perpetrates and perpetuates violence on the one hand, and the position of those who "share" them with the purpose of mobilization on the other, illuminates the fluid positionality of implicated subjects between perpetrators and victims of violence, and push us to search for other ways of representing and resisting violence.

Furthermore, the implication of academic researchers of political violence should be considered (Rothberg 2014). Being a "vulnerable observer" and a witness to the suffering of others (Behar 1996) raises difficult questions of researcher's position and responsibility (which are always there, but are often ignored in research where personal involvement and position are silenced). What are we doing? What does it mean to listen and record recollections of hurt of others? What are the consequences of sharing their stories? Who may benefit from our research? The question of whether I am perpetuating the violence of words and images of the war zones by describing them and sharing them with the reader has been with me constantly while writing this thesis. Does the value of persuasive ethnographic mediation of the world of others outweigh its hurtfulness? Or does it come across as masochistic, sadistic (even pornographic) writing? Sharing narratives of violence and suffering with public is caught in the same dilemma as "sharing" of violent images. However, the ethnographer as an implicated mediator has a double responsibility – to the people whose experience of violence we record, and to our readers – which requires a great deal of sensitivity and indeed feeling in order to prevent harm, albeit the ambiguity always remains. Despite the fact that some of these questions remain unanswered, we should continue addressing (instead of suppressing) different vulnerabilities and responsibilities involved in our fieldwork and ethnographic writing, and resist the politics of closure (Behar 1996).

Vulnerable observing and writing concern one's own personal and professional life, as well as those of the audience and, of course, our interlocutors. It "is that not only is the observer vulnerable," Behar reminds us, "but so too, yet more profoundly, are those whom we observe" (Behar 1996: 24). This more broadly acknowledged responsibility should never be forgotten when we think about positionalities, vulnerabilities, and emotions. Attention to the gap between the researcher and her field-mates and interlocutors is always important to consider, but even more so when we study violence and emotions (see Hage 2009). My

privilege as someone with an EU citizenship which offers an easier exit from the violent conditions in which we look at the images of violence importantly determines my perception and responses to the violence. My concerns and strategies of survival, for instance, are profoundly different than those of my interlocutors. Lesser vulnerability to the structural violence affects the ways in which I am affected by the violence of images and the emotions it causes. On the other hand, I evoke traumatic memories and open wounds of people who I talk to about the violence and their emotional experience. Thus, I might perpetuate violence myself by making people re-experience the painful acts of witnessing during my interviews. In addition, while I benefit from people's willingness to open up and share their emotions, I have little to offer them in return from my position in this regard.[10] Furthermore, while I am not able to contribute to neither healing nor transformation, as a researcher, I benefit from the violence, as I take use of it for my intellectual exercises and acquiring academic degree. At the same time I risk to provide the valuable insight into the ways people are hurt to those who cause the pain, which might expose my field-mates to further violence. In addition, the danger of revealing their identities is greater than ever in the current political climate.

Last but not least, the thesis is not intended to invite pity for the oppositional people in Turkey, but exactly the opposite, to encourage the recognition of pain, as well as of the ways they actively try to overcome it and keep moving. Despite the pain caused by various kinds of violence, my field-mates have shown the strength to persist in the increasingly oppressive conditions, which deserves academic attention.

[10] For further discussion on emotions and positionality see Protner n.d.

CHAPTER 2

AFFECTIVE OBJECTS, EMOTIONAL PEOPLE

2.1. Introduction

Who is affected by the violence and how do they experience it? How can we discuss how others *feel* the violence of the images and words that hits them every time they scroll down their Twitter or Facebook walls? In other words, how can we conceptualize theoretically what is sensed and felt? What is the relation between bodily feeling and meaning, understanding, and conceptualization? Are we affected by the universal violent charge of the images or due to our particular socio-cultural understanding of their meaning in a known context or can it be a combination of both? These are the kind of questions that emerged during my research of the relation between the violent photographs and the oppositional people who encounter them in their daily life. They are the questions concerned as much with the phenomena under scrutiny as with our own epistemology and its limitations. Anthropologists, psychologists, and cultural theorists investigating human emotions have been addressing this types of questions in various contexts and from various points of view. In this chapter, I will briefly illustrate the anthropological approaches to emotions and present the recent ontological turn and adoption of affect theories. The purpose is not to review in detail the numerous anthropological works that deal with affects and emotions, but rather to trace the paradigmatic changes in approaches, point to relations between them, and to recognize both, their valuable contributions and limitations. I will evaluate the approaches to emotions and affect and define my theoretical position regarding affect and emotion. Following the contributions of anthropology of emotions, I will argue that emotions include both, bodily feeling and cultural meaning, which are always in complex relation – on both, individual and collective level, as collectives consist of culturally habituated individuals with shared symbolic systems (see Leavitt 1996). Individual and collective subjectivities shape and bodies materialize by and within accumulating experience of a particular social structure

(see Scheper-Hughes 1992; Butler 1993; Parla 2017). By acknowledging ontological anthropologists' reconceptualizations of people's relations with their environment and the implications for ethnographers' ontological limitations, and the contributions of both, anthropology of emotions and the affect theories, this chapter aims to build an anthropological perspective on people's emotions and affect of "things" that rethinks the subjective/objective relation and rejects the mind/body division and hierarchization, and is attentive to social, cultural, political, and economic conditions in which feelings are experienced, shared, and conceptualized (cf. Skoggard and Waterston 2015). With my particular ethnographic fieldwork focused on people's feelings caused by violent photographs of ruins and perpetrator graffiti in mind, I will argue that while materialities may influence people in uncontrollable and elusive ways and trigger collective feelings, people's emotional (including affective) experiences are preconditioned by their bodily habituated subjectivities that include one's history and present structural position. This kind of formulation may also lead us "back" to the more grounded place where we are able to critically scrutinize the value and limits of ethnography as well as our own emotional position in the field.

2.2. Anthropology of Emotions

Anthropologists have become largely interested in emotions roughly in the 1970's and 1980's. At the time, research of emotions was dominated by psychology, which followed materialist, positivist, and universalist approach based on the evolutionary paradigm, and focused on the internal and the individual aspects of emotions. While this perspective was influential in psychoanalytical and biologically oriented anthropology, some anthropologists drew attention to collective and socio-cultural aspects of emotions, based on the findings of their ethnographic fieldwork and cross-cultural comparisons (Lutz and White 1986; Leavitt 1996). The theoretical and epistemological tensions that marked anthropological debates on the relationship between emotion and culture at the time were structured along familiar dichotomies: materialism vs. idealism, positivism vs. interpretivism, universalism vs. relativism, individual vs. culture, and romanticism vs. rationalism (Lutz and White 1986).

Accordingly, most of the researchers assumed the body/mind dichotomy and defended one exclusive view of emotions: as either feeling or meaning; either a matter of body or of mind; of nature or nurture (Leavitt 1996; Lutz and White 1986). However, as Leavitt (1996) argued, transcending these dichotomies is necessary in order to understand all aspects of emotions, as they are neither pure sensations nor pure cultural cognitions.

In the materialist paradigm, emotions are seen as biologically constituted materiality that individuals and societies "cope with" (Lutz and White 1986: 407). Within this approach, emotions have been conceptualized as cross-culturally universal bodily feelings, primary to their meaning, without being critical to the constitution of emotions (Beatty 2005: 19). In this regard, the work of psychologist Paul Ekman has been especially influential (see Leys 2011). Based on his "naurocultural" research and cross-cultural comparison of facial expressions, Ekman argued that human brain contains "affect program" for six universal emotions – happiness, surprise, fear, anger, disgust, and sadness – a "biological system which stores the patterns for each distinct emotion, including the muscle, facial, vocal, behavioral, autonomic and central nervous system responses" (Lutz and White 1986: 410). According to this theory emotions are "automatically triggered by their elicitors, some of which are culturally acquired" (ibid.). Culture is seen as secondary to biology. The influence of culturally learned norms and habits is evident in the rules of display of emotions and the ways individuals cope with emotions. Hence, the inter-cultural variations of the expression of emotions (Lutz and White 1986: 410-411; Leys 2011).

The assumption of the "psychic unity" of human emotional experience has influenced the works of psychological anthropology that investigated the operation of certain emotions in particular cultures and drew links between affects, behaviors of individuals, and cultural institutions (Lutz and White 1986: 412-413). Hence, despite assuming the biological nature of emotions, anthropological study connected them with the realm of social. In this regard, studies of rituals have been especially important. On the one hand, rituals have been discussed as allowing for the expression of-, coping with-, or controlling and regulating universal feelings (Lutz and White 1986: 413). On the other hand, ethnographers have provided valuable thick descriptions of collective emotional experiences and affective atmospheres of rituals they observed and participated in. An early example is Emile Durkheim's (1965 [1915]: 217-218) famous description of the *corroboree* ritual of the

Warramunga, in which he talks about the power of the collective moment as an overflow of uncontrolled passionate emotions resonating among the participants. Due to his "intellectual bias of his time that eschewed anything associated with the emotional," Durkheim brushed aside the feelings generated and experienced in the ritual for the sake of science (Skoggard and Waterston 2015: 110). Almost half a century later, another canonical study of rituals that attended to moods, feelings, and emotions, and emphasized their intersubjective aspect was made by Victor Turner (1967) among Ndembu in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). Contrary to Durkheim's dismissal of emotions as a subject of interest, the emotions observed and experienced during their fieldwork became essential for the intellectual and theoretical development of Victor Turner and his wife Edith Turner (see Turner, E. 2015). However, as some have critically argued, "naïve" descriptions of emotions of others that can be found in Turner's ethnography are based on the biologist assumption of universality of feelings – a "commonsense naturalism" as Lutz and White put it (1986: 114-116) – which has important implication for anthropological epistemology (Leavitt 1996). It means that "the anthropologist /…/ must simply be in attentive and intensive proximity to the everyday lives of others in order to apprehend their emotions" (Lutz and White 1986: 115). If systems of meaning are seen as merely referring to bodily experiences, the latter may be taken as immediately accessible and understandable across cultures through either empathy or actual common life experience (Lutz and White 1986: 115; Leavitt 1996: 519). Most famous example of the latter is Renato Rosaldo's (1989) sensitive reflection on grief and the Ilongot headhunters' rage. The Ilongot men had explained to Rosaldo that the reason for them taking other people's lives and cutting their heads was the rage caused by bereavement. However, as he writes, his "own inability to conceive the [overwhelming] force of anger in grief led [him] to seek another level of analysis that could provide a deeper explanation for older men's desire to headhunt" (1989: 3). His argument (which remains valid) was that anthropologist as socially positioned subject with particular knowledge and background has a particular point of view that importantly limits his understanding. It was not until Rosaldo himself experienced the tragic loss of his wife Michelle Rosaldo in the field (who was herself a great anthropologist working on emotions) that he was able to comprehend and *feel* the rage of bereavement that the Ilongot had talked about. Thus, he pointed to the importance of the

force of feelings and passions behind the conventional conduct such as rituals that anthropologists of the time tended to ignore.

While these are valid points, it is naïve to think that a similar experience of bereavement can bring an anthropologist to a "position" that enables automatic understanding of others. In fact the point his wife had made with her discussion of "anger" among the Ilongot was precisely that cultural conceptualizations of "anger" determine the experience, so that "affects, whatever their similarities, are no more similar than the societies in which we live" (Rosaldo 1984: 145). Rosaldo himself was aware of the danger of attributing one's own categories and experience to another culture, as their cultural context and ways of expression of "anger" were clearly different between him and the Ilongot men (see 1989: 10). Yet, he may be doing just that, not when he relayed his feelings with the feelings of others and pointed to the limits of the interpretive method, but when he saw this passion as truly the essential driver of a rather conventional act of headhunting, which may take place long time after the bereavement and has additional motivations and functions related to "culturally specific ideas of prestige and manhood" (Beatty 2005: 20-21).[11]

Empathy in the field is a problematic issue that must always be a matter of doubt and a point of departure into critical reflection rather than a naïve ethnographic method of inquiry. First, empathy as a method of understand other people's emotions is weak because it confirms what it assumes, i.e. that feelings are universal (Lutz and White 1986: 115). Second (and more importantly), it smells of ethnocentrism and imperialism, as the unreflexively empathizing anthropologist imposes his own symbolic system of meanings onto the society he studies and appropriates emotion of the other (Leavitt 1996: 519-520; cf. Ahmed 2002). The biologist assumption about the universality of bodily feelings risks universalizing one's own experience and projecting it onto the people whose feelings we are describing. As Leavitt argued, many examples, including his own research of rituals among Kumaon in Central Himalaya, "suggest that the 'idiom of expression' – which differs from society to society (not to mention among classes, genders, regions, and linguistic and ethnic groups) –

[11] "Grief and the Headhunter's Rage" was a turning point and a beginning of Rosaldo's courageous vulnerable writing with which he turned back to ethnography after mourning of the painful loss of his wife. It was an important step into the emotionally engaged anthropology that acknowledges the key role of the observer in social analysis. However, it was not accepted as such by the academic community, where it was often dismissed as "feminine" sentimentalism by the colleagues who reproduced the patriarchal character of the academia (Behar 1996: 166-174).

is more than a mere overlay: it is involved in emotional experience" itself (1996: 520). As I will argue further on, one's subjectivity which includes the entire life experience in particular sociocultural conditions, as well as one's position in a social structure importantly determine our emotions.

The opposite approach in anthropology of emotions which has gained its popularity in the 1980's has seen emotions as the issue of mind and cognition, rather than body, and focused on their cultural meaning rather than bodily feeling. A key theoretical concept of these studies was that of the "culturally constituted self, positioned at the nexus of personal and social worlds" (Lutz and White 1986: 417; see Rosaldo 1984). Thus, in opposition to the conventional presumptions about emotions as individual, internal, and private, and rooted in biology, the proponents of the constructivist paradigm see them as essentially sociocultural and conceptualizes them as social constructions and evaluative judgements with the emphasis on their volitional and cognitive aspects (Lutz and White 1986: 406; Leavitt 1996: 522; see Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990). Following views of influential anthropologists such as Claude Lévi-Strauss and Clifford Geertz who defended primality of nurture to nature, this view places emotions in symbolic system and sees them as cultural artefacts, expressed and constituted by discourse, and thus possible to research and understand with the method of cultural analysis. Accordingly, ethnographers took on a challenge of interpretation of emotions as cultural categories based on investigation of emotion concepts (Leavitt 1996: 521; Beatty 2005: 19; see Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990; Rosaldo 1984). The title of the influential collection *Language and the Politics of Emotion* clearly indicates the turn to emotions as constituted and constitutive of social and public. The authors focused on the socially and culturally constructed performances of emotions and showed that they often function regardless of people's personal feelings or in complex relation to them (Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990). Although the emphasis on shared, public, and political aspect of emotions as they are expressed in language was a great contribution to the anthropological approaches to emotions, the contributors to the aforementioned collection neglected the fact that emotions are nevertheless bodily experienced by individuals. Yet, not all anthropologists studying emotions have "lost their feeling." Although focusing her research on concepts and meanings that according to her predetermined emotions in the Ilongot society, Michelle Rosaldo defined emotions as "thoughts somehow 'felt' in flushes, pulses, 'movements' of

our livers, minds, hearts, stomachs, skin" (1984: 143). Furthermore, in their investigations of language and contexts of emotions, the constructivists payed special attention to conceptualizations and categorizations of emotions different from those familiar to them and this way pushed forward a strong position of conceptual relativism (Beatty 2005: 19-20). "An analytical method that seeks to interpret people's own definitions of and assumptions about emotions has the virtue," as Leavitt put it, "– for anthropologists, the cardinal virtue – of preserving the distinctiveness of local understandings, often revealing a world of meanings that the participants take for granted and outsiders generally miss entirely" (1996: 521) Thus, focus on different conceptualizations of emotions may in turn help to counter naïve ethnocentrism in the field and in general and lead us to rethink our ("Western") analytical frames. In fact the idea among anthropologists to see emotions as social (collective, interpersonal) has its origins in the fields, where scholars encountered conceptualizations of emotions alternative to the one familiar to them – as private, personal, inner (see Rosaldo 1984; Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990). However, this relativist endeavor may end up as exoticization and Othering, as the Western model (at least implicitly) remains the point of departure and the reference of comparison (Beatty 2005: 19-20). As I will show later on, these issues are still very much alive in the current (sometimes heated) discussions on the ontological turn in anthropology which talks of ontological *alterity* of other worlds.

The perspective that focuses on embeddedness of emotions on social structure inevitably links emotions to power, and thus recognizes them as ideological, i.e. linked to class and domination (Lutz and White 1986: 406-407). An influential work that considers the position of emotions in social structure is Raymond Williams' (1977) conceptualization of structures of feeling. Williams (1977) argued that arts and literature reveal actual lived experience of a particular community (a generation, a class) in a particular sociohistorical context within formations, institutions, systematic beliefs, and relations of domination, but also beyond- and in nuanced interaction (including tension) with them. As Sianne Ngai importantly noted, Williams defined "structures of feeling" more broadly and at the same time more precisely than the way we think of emotions (2005: 359, fn. 28). In addition, by seeing them as structured formations "still in process" and "at the very edge of semantic availability" (Williams 1977: 132), he in a way acknowledged the difficulty of containing emotion entirely within language, which leaves space for ambiguity. As Ngai wrote, "A

'structure of feeling' is precisely that which 'escapes . . . from the fixed and the explicit and the known'; it is a social experience which is not fully semanticized, yet does not require this semanticization in order to exert palpable pressures and generate concrete effects" (2005: 360, fn. 28). Hereby, social institutions, formations, and positions are seen not as fixed products, but rather as forming and formative processes (Williams 1977). In a classic ethnography that explores negotiation of emotions in social structure of (gender) inequality, Lila Abu-Lughod (1986) illustrated how feeling and (in)expression of emotions among Awlad Ali Bedouins is ruled by the gendered social norms based on hegemonic concepts of honor, shame, and modesty. Yet, she also found out that poetry among Awlad Ali was a channel through which otherwise shameful and therefore repressed emotions could be expressed. In addition, the strength of Abu-Lughod's (1986) ethnography is not only in her analysis of emotional creativity within the cultural forms, but also in going beyond generalized facts about "a culture" and instead presenting personal stories and intimate emotiolnalities expressed through poetry that emotionally engage the reader (cf. Beatty 2010; Leavitt 1996). "For not only do emotions, in a quite obvious way," as Beatty wrote, "belong to stories; they also build on, allude to, and echo other emotions and events; they refer to interwoven lives" (2010: 430).

One's position is the social structure not only shapes the ways emotions are expressed, but also constructs the conditions of possibility of feeling. Another classic ethnographic (and indeed emotional) work that makes an incredibly strong argument about the structural conditions of emotions is that of Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1992). Her decades-long research in the shantytowns of Brazil showed how the structural violence, neglect, and indifference are reflected in everyday violence, neglect, and emotional detachment in the face of sickness and death among people living in extreme poverty. In the conditions of high child mortality, mothers may neglect weak infants and let them die in order for the survival options of stronger children to increase. This routinization of child death without grieving in Scheper-Hughes' (1992) account challenges the assumption of the universality of maternal love with the argument of its cultural and economic conditions of possibility. Moreover, Scheper-Hughes' work is important also because of its bridging of the mind/body and individual/social dichotomies which was a major contribution to both Medical Anthropology and Anthropology of Emotions. Following Mauss' and Bourdieu's theoretical postulations

about the bodily habituated subject, she suggested that "the structure of individual and collective sentiments down to the feel of one's body is a function of one's position and role in the technical and productive order" (1992: 185). She illustrated this claim with the example of the local notion of *nervos* – psychosomatic condition of malnourished, politically oppressed, and emotionally devastated people with symptoms such as "trembling, fainting, seizures, and paralysis of limbs, symptoms that disrespect and breech mind and body, the individual and social bodies. In the exchange of meanings between the body personal and the social body, the nervous-hungry, nervous-weak body /…/ itself both as metaphor and metonym for the sociopolitical system and for the weak position of the rural worker in the current [ill] economic order" or a woman who suffers from the bereavement due to the local death squads (i.e. political violence) as manifestation of the nervous political system (Scheper-Hughes 1992: 186). In addition to the theoretical contribution, detailed ethnographic descriptions that include the author's personal experience create an atmosphere of the affective life of a *favela* that can indeed be felt by the reader.

As Leavitt (1996) argued, if we are to adequately study emotions, we should neither neglect their sociality, i.e. their embeddedness into symbolic and social structures, nor the fact that they are nevertheless *felt*. First, languages about emotions often already indicate that emotions include both, cultural meanings and bodily feelings on both, individual and interpersonal level, and that all these aspects are often complexly intertwined. Second, this kind of nature of emotions can be found in "non-Western" conceptualizations and in affective collective practices such as rituals in which ethnographers shall retrace associations between bodily feelings and cultural memories, fantasies, ideologies, etc. (Leavit 1996: 526-529). More recently, there have been various studies that continue the tradition of "political economy of emotions" developed by the ethnographers mentioned above, and address the issues of culturally embedded, embodied, and gendered emotions in the context of postcoloniality, nationalisms, globalization, neoliberal capitalism, and political and social changes (see Boellstorff and Lindquist 2004; McElhinny 2010 for a review). These numerous works also prove that emotions are a part of daily social, political, and economic embodied lives and may be considered in anthropological approaches to virtually any aspect of people's lives.

Moreover, we may find an alternative to the body/mind split in the Western philosophical tradition itself. In the 17th century, Benedict de Spinoza rejected the claims about both, determinism of body by mind and the other way around, and wrote about the non-casual interdependency between body and mind as parts of one single substance of the universe. In his philosophy, he defined body as a whole, complex organism, composite of composites that include both, thinking and feeling, and interacts with other bodies. The emotion (*affectus*) which is the active outcome of encounters between bodies includes both, body and thought (Leavitt 1996: 526; Thrift 2004; Navaro-Yashin 2012: 168). In the last two decades, Spinoza's philosophy has gained great popularity in the studies of emotions and/as affects and has become the basis of the approach to emotions/affect that aims to subvert the entire Cartesian conception of the world (Thrift 2004; Massumi 2002), as I will show later on. However, as Beatty (2005) argued, conceptual reconciliation of meaning and feeling may not suffice to grasp the subtitles and inconsistencies of "emotional practice." "Emotion recollected in tranquility' – or, as we should now, less poetically, have to say, 'defined in word-sorting tasks and semi-structured interviews' – does not prepare us for the flux and re-flux of emotional practice. /…/ Only fully contextualized, naturally occurring instances will do, or else what we are getting is inconsequential talk about talk about emotion" (Beatty 2005: 19). The study of emotions always involves epistemological difficulty. If we assume that we can observe and understand meaning of emotions by participant observation in their contexts of occurrence, the line between interpretation and projection is still fragile (Beatty 2005).

These limitations and pitfalls have been a constant part of my fieldwork among the (pro-) Kurdish politicized young adults. How are we to know how *öfke* (rage), *iğrenme* (disgust), *umut* (hope), *umutsuzluk* (hopelessness), *üzüntü* (sadness), *nefret* (hate) and so on feel in a particular context of increasing political insecurity and exacerbation of a decades-long war, its omnipresence in everyday (virtual and actual) lives, and precarious passive/active struggle against it? Ever since the first weeks of my fieldwork among Kurdish university students in Istanbul in 2012, the sentence echoes in my mind as a reminder: *"You will never feel the way we feel."* When I feel (in Slovenian) exhausting *jeza* (anger), burning *sovraštvo* (hate), comforting *upanje* (hope), empty *brezup* (hopelessness) – often in a mixture (and I am indicating with the adjectives how well I know them even though they may be

ambiguous and mixed) – I have to keep in mind that even if these may be triggered by same things (such as violent photographs), they are still different from the emotions of my interlocutors due to our different structural position and differently habituated and inhabited bodies (cf. Hage 2009). In addition, as Beatty (2010) argued, our own emotions in the field, however an important part of the fieldwork, cannot illuminate the emotions of others which should be the main focus – not to become the infamous over-reflexive anthropologist from the anecdote who talks more about herself than the people involved in her study. Moreover, the diversity in the field (who are "we" in the statement of my interlocutor?) further complicates the picture. Naturally, anthropologists more easily relay emotionally to some people than others due to a combination of subjective and contextual factors. As I have often caught myself doing, we might generalize the emotions of those who we feel to understand better to a collective as a whole and neglect the diversity and internal contradictions within a group and even within individuals themselves. Nevertheless, instead of giving up on investigation of feelings due to the epistemological challenge they present, their critical exploration should be a constant part of our fieldwork (cf. Beatty 2005; Hage 2009). The grey area of familiar-but-different and different-but-similar which draws the ambivalent limits of our understanding of emotions of others is what I find worth exploring ethnographically – not only by investigating the meaning, but also (and inevitably) by feeling. However, in the end it is the emotions of others we write about, not our own emotions, as Beatty (2010) reminded us. As Leavitt argued, writing and reading of ethnography, understood as a narrative genre close to literary, can and should go beyond mere translation and "set off evocations and resonances to produce a total effect that goes beyond the semantic" (1996: 530) – a sense of possibility of feeling (cf. Beatty 2010).

2.3. The Ontological Turn in Anthropology

Ethnographic fieldwork may teach us that if nature/culture, body/mind, individual/social etc. are binary oppositional in "Western" ontology, the associations and divisions between conceptual categories may be along different axes somewhere else (Rosaldo 1984; Leavitt 1996: 521-522; Viveiros de Castro 1998); the category of emotion

itself may be constituted differently from what we expect (Beatty 2005). Moreover, there may be discrepancies or even contradictions between the way emotions are conceptualized in general, the way they are involved, expressed, and named in social intercourses, and the way they are reflected on in our interviews (Beatty 2005: 27). In addition, there are always bodily experiences that are not named, reflected on, or described to us (Leavitt 1996: 527). What shall anthropologists do about the elusive worlds of feelings of others?

In the last two decades, there have been attempts in anthropology and cultural theory to overcome (or rather bypass) the epistemological limits of grasping emotions with an entirely different and scientifically subversive approach – as its proponents seem to believe – which resulted in a diverse body of literature assembled under the label of the so-called ontological turn. In most general terms, the ontological turn has been described as a notable shift in anthropological and cultural theory "from questions of knowledge and epistemology toward those of ontology /…/ [which] opens the way for genuinely novel concepts to be produced out of the ethnographic encounter" (Henare et al. 2007: 8). What the scholars with very diverse focuses have in common, is their striving for a conception of the reality different from (and often explicitly oppositional to) what they see as the "Western" (Euro-American) common- and scientific sense that we have been imposing on the subjects of our studies when conducting ethnography. More specifically, they reject the Cartesian conceptual dualisms that are taken for granted in the modern Western thought: the "quintessential" Nature/Culture distinction and its versions such as subject/object, things/meanings, and human/non-human (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 4). Instead of these, the anthropologists of the ontological turn encourage us not to (only) *see* the world as lived within non-modern cosmologies (what used to be called "the natives' point of view"), but to recognize ourselves as a part of it and (more or less) *become* creatively embedded and embodied in it, "to *pass through* what we study," (Holbraad et al. 2014, original emphasis) "think through things" (Thrift 2000: 220; Henare et al. 2007) and consequently "to collapse /…/ the experience/analysis divide" (Henare et al. 2007: 4; see Inglod 2011) into what Nigel Thrift (2000) called "practical knowing". Rather than speaking of one indifferent nature (world, matter, things) and plurality of different cultures (world-views, minds) where the latter represent the former, the ontological turn instructs us to acknowledge *radical alterity* of many worlds and adopt the idea of

multinaturalism instead of multiculturalism (Viveiros de Castro 1998; Henare et al. 2007: 9-12).

As the models of alternative ontologies which "we" (Ethnographers? Philosophers? Everyone?) should embrace, the authors offer their own ethnographic cases. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (1998), one of the "founding fathers" of the ontological turn, build his theory and arguments on the example of *Amerindian perspectivism*, the cosmology of the Amazonian peoples. They do not categorically distinguish between "nature" and "culture" or "human" and "non-human," at least not in the case of "gods, spirits, the dead, inhabitants of other cosmic levels, meteorological phenomena, plants, occasionally even objects and artefacts" (1998: 470). They conceptualize difference between subjects inhabiting the world as having different bodily *perspectives* on the common spiritual world: humans see themselves as humans and see animals as animals (prey) and spirits as spirits; from their own perspective, "animals and spirits see themselves [literally, entirely] as humans: they perceive themselves as (or become) anthropomorphic beings when they are in their own houses or villages and they experience their own habits and characteristics in the form of culture" (ibid.) – food, bodily attributes, social organization, symbols, religion, rituals, etc.; they may see humans as pray (animals from their perspective). Thus, "human" (person, subject) is essentially a reflection of the self. Hence, Amerindians may perceive other peoples (Others) as not equally "human" (equal persons, subjects) (Viveiros de Castro 1998). To mention just another highly influential work, Tim Inglod (2011) suggested *animic ontology* as the one through which shall ethnographers immerse themselves into the world they study and produce new (and better) kind of anthropological knowledge. He based his arguments on the ethnographic example of the hunter-gatherer animists of the North Pole who consider themselves and everything in their environment as equal parts of active, dynamic, fluid "*meshwork"* of entangled lifelines in-*becoming*. As Henare and others wrote, "The question then becomes not just how human phenomena may be illuminated /…/ but rather how the phenomena in question may themselves offer illumination. How, in other words, the ways in which people go about their lives may unsettle familiar assumptions, not least those that underlie anthropologists' particular repertories of theory" (2007: 8).

Rejecting the "modernist" division of labor between Natural Sciences and Social Sciences, a branch of the ontological turn has focused on the liveliness of the non-human

world and agency of things. Numerous studies involve concerns of environmental history, political ecology, Science and Technology Studies, and multispecies research (Bessire and Bond 2014; see Benadusi et al. 2016). Most influential work on the relationship between human and non-human has been that of Bruno Latour (2005), who argued against the human domination of the non-human within the capitalist economy and strive for technological progress, and for a re-composition of the relation between human and non-human world. With his Actor-Network Theory (ANT) he proposed a horizontal object-centered approach to environment that grants subjective agency to "non-human actants." The notion of "network" is used similarly to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's (1987) conceptualization of *rhizomes*. With the metaphor of rhizomes, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) countered the metaphor of "root/tree," which symbolizes Western (modern, scientific) way of thinking. The latter is vertical, static, singular, historical, definite (and concerned with definitions), discursive (linguistic), binary, and (psycho)analytical, while "rhizome" is pre-discursive, prior to determination, and accommodates chaotic multiplicity of roots in endless horizontal plateau, their interconnectedness and heterogeneity, diversity, movement, fluid continuity (instead of ruptures), limitlessness, and potential. While these works mean a positive and indeed influential (one may say revolutionary) opening in the conceptualization of the world and the relations between humans and things, they have received critiques from fieldwork. While embracing the focus on the agency of objects as important contribution to social theory and ethnographic methodology, based on her ethnographic fieldwork in Northern Cyprus, Yael Navaro-Yashin (2012) argued that both, Latour, and Deleuze and Guattari might have gone too far with the categorical rejection of the "linguistic turn" associated with poststructuralism and deconstruction in human sciences, and the attack on psychoanalysis and linguistics, respectfully, which lead to complete neglect of human agency, creativity, negotiation, naming and conceptualization in relation to their environment. As geographer Nigel Thrift put it, "the result of their fear [of humanism] is that actor-network theory has tended to neglect specifically human capacities of expression, powers of invention, of [imagination and] fabulation, which cannot be simply gainsaid, in favour of a kind of flattened cohabitation of all things" (2000: 215). Moreover, Navaro-Yashin (2012: 163) noted that "Latour's work [was] limited in its *qualification* of objects and their politics" and argued that "the relation people forge with objects must be studied in the contexts of historical

contingency and political specificity" (cf. Bessire and Bond 2014). Instead of turning roots into rhizomes, she suggests the metaphor of *ruins* (which are also literally the animated environment whose affect on people she investigates), that accommodates uncontrollable and unforeseen growth (similar to rhizomes), as well as traces of a historical event (roots); the affective agency of ruins, phantomic objects of the Other, documents, and institutions, as well as people's memories and psychanalytical insight into their relation with objects. With her focus on the affective *relations* between people and things in Northern Cyprus, she proposed "an approach that merge the inside and outside, subjective and objective, making them indistinguishable" (Navaro-Yashin 2012: 24). Thrift (2000; 2004) similarly emphasized the activity between humans and things as relational, including impersonal affective resonances in the space and the power of imagination that causes expressive action (performance). In his investigation of spatial politics of affect, he argued that "urban spaces and times are being designed to invoke affective response according to practical and theoretical knowledges that have been derived from and coded by a host of sources," (2004: 68) but they are also spaces of positive engagement with the world in "attempts to form new political intensities and the attendant explorations of discipline, expressive potential and hope which are grouping around them (2004: 69). In another brilliant ontological anthropological study of vital materiality and its affective relation with people, Gastón Gordillo (2014) investigated the world of Gran Chaco (Argentina) where the haunting presence of "Indians" lingers in festivals, beliefs, bones, rubble, and bodies, cohabiting the multilayered "affective afterlife" of colonial and capitalist forms of destruction. In order to emphasize the violent concreteness of destructed space and counter the elitist (and indeed Western modernist and destructive) concept of cultural heritage, he proposes to operate with the term *rubble* rather than ruins. The most valuable quality of Gordillo's (2014) account on people's experience of- and interaction with the rubble is its ethnographic messiness. He did not insist on the autonomy of affect of the rubble, nor on its uniformity in relation to a particular group of people with "an ontology," but rather from the beginning emphasized that various bodily habituations determine the ways people are affected (or not) by the environment of destruction.

Another famous contribution to the discussions about the relation between human and non-human, and the "life of things" is the collection *Thinking Through Things* (Henare et al.

2007, ed.), where authors ethnographically explore the being of things (also differently from Latour) as conceptualized by people in ontologically different worlds, and consider "how 'things' themselves may dictate a *plurality* of ontologies" (Henare et al. 2007: 7). The idea is that concepts do not "refer" to things, but they rather can bring about things because concepts and things just are one and the same" so that "our experience of things /…/ can be conceptual" (Henare et al. 2007: 13; cf. Thrift 2000). As Thrift wrote, it is "a new stance towards the world – practical-moral knowledge – which argues that the world is constructed through activity, and especially the activity of talk [understood as *non-representational action*], which includes the expressive powers of embodiment" (2000: 223). Accordingly, the way for an ethnographer towards understanding different worlds is not by "explanation" or "interpretation," but rather by *conceiving* them through *enunciation* (Henare et al. 2007: 14) and thus "multiplying our world" (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 14). Along similar lines, Thrift (2000) talked about the "nonrepresentationalist" style of thinking that offers engaged, affectively embodied account of the dynamic world in making. What about the next step – writing ethnography? Following Inglod's (2011) attempt to revolutionize ethnography and bring anthropology "back to life," another ontological world may be made accessible to the readers through embedded narrative (story-telling) (cf. Leavitt 1996; Beatty 2010) that additionally includes images and drawings, sounds, smells and other possible sensations.

Although it may sound authoritative if not arrogant (and some critiques continue to warn about this problem – see Graeber 2015; Bajič 2016; Bassire and Bond 2014), Henare and others emphasized that the position of the ethnographer is not that of a superior observer – or now dweller – of several worlds, because she will always be "handicapped by a dualist ontology," by the inadequate concepts that "need to be transformed by appeal to those of our informants" (2007: 16). Therefore, ontological anthropological projects most importantly remind us about the ontological (rather than epistemological) limits "of what can be known (and then said) about that other" (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 12; cf. Graeber 2015). As David Graeber wrote in his critique of the ontological turn, "the real strength of OT lies in the fact that it encourages what might be called a stance of creative respect towards the object of ethnographic inquiry" (2015: 21); the recognition that we are really looking at "the *possibility, the threat or promise* of another world contained in the 'face/gaze of the other'" (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 13); "a possibility that can only be realized through the

ethnographer, even as the ethnographer, in trying to describe – let alone explain – this other world, inevitably betrays that promise" /…/. [Nevertheless,] "the task of the ethnographer is /…/ to try to keep that possibility alive /…/ [through] "creative, experimental, even poetic project – an attempt to give life to an alien reality that unsettles our basic assumptions about what could exist" (Graeber 2015: 21-22). "It is particularly here that the ontological turn is at its most radical reinvigorating a long tradition of an anthropology defined by a continual encounter with radical alterity: anthropology as a permanent state of first contact," as Ghassan Hage (2013) put it. Moreover, we should also see the impossibility of completely understanding the world (or a world) and each other as our *common* limitation with our interlocutors and thus something that we can talk about. Graeber's (2015) beautiful and realistic view on ethnography brings us back to the question of how to understand feelings of others. We cannot. Yet, with an attentive and creative participant observation that involves (as it always has) empathizing, sympathizing (see Leavitt 1996), listening, feeling, thinking, and writing (and why not also drawing, sculpturing, painting, singing etc.), immersion and reflection (cf. Hage 2009), we are moving closer to the eluding ideal of perfect comprehension and accumulating knowledge about the humanity of others and ourselves.

Ontological anthropology has been promoted (by its proponents) as *political* project of "ontological self-determination of the world's peoples" that promote the "permanent decolonization of thought," which in turn has broader liberating and oppositional potential against the (modernist) power (Holbraad et al. 2014). Similarly, Hage (2013) has recognized the radical political potential of the ontological anthropology in its rejection of the mono-naturalist assumptions inherent in monotheism, democracy (multi-epistemological perspectivism in politics), and mercantilist desire of a unified mode of measurement of value, which together "defined the essence of democratic capitalist politics." However, the anthropologists of the ontological turn have received harsh criticisms from some other colleagues. The most obvious is the uncannily familiar problem of talking about an isolated "people" with "an ontology"[12] as a homogeneous whole, where plurality of "ontologies" substitutes the old (and rightfully) rejected notion of "cultures" (Graeber 2015). The emphasis on the binary opposition between the "Western/Modern" Self and the "non-

[12] Graeber (2015) also exposed the problem of theoretical substitution of the philosophical meaning of "ontology" (as theory about the nature of being) with "ontology" as "being," "way of being," or "mode of existence," which causes confusion.

Modern" Other reminds on the well-known problems of exotization, generalization, and simplification of the Other (let us remember the effects of "ontological difference" in Orientalism (see Said 1978)). The reminders exposed by the critics are the neglect of the perspectives of "native" skeptics (Graeber 2015) and vital tensions of internal diversity and how they are negotiated by actual people, as well as overlooking of the aspects of mythologies that do include a version of nature/culture divide and denial of the appropriations of "Western" concepts (Bessire and Bond 2014). Thus, the radical alterity is sometimes imposed on the people in question for the sake of the theoretical argument. We can speak of "the return of the primitive," as Lucas Bessire and David Bond (2014: 442) put it, only that this time it comes as a reverse version of the colonial discourse: in the form of *normative* alterity – weather the "natives" accept it or not (cf. Graeber 2015). The evaluative judgement of non-modern ontologies – the fetishization of alterity, as Bessire and Bond (2014) put it – is both peculiar and dangerous. While authors speak of multiplicity of ontologies, they take the authority to decide that one of them is good, right, and emancipative, while other (the "Western" one) is wrong and oppressive (cf. Bajič 2016) – not really in the spirit of Amerindian perspectivism, one might note. As soon as the ontological alterity becomes a moral and political standard, the theorist becomes the authority who draws the borders and determines standards within them for both, the peoples in question and anthropology as a discipline (Graeber 2015). In addition, Bessire and Bond warned about the danger of creating inequalities between peoples according to who is different enough to be "eligible for the exceptional protections of alterity-as-collective-right" and who is not (2014: 444).

Hence, the overturned colonial overtones are paradoxically reproduced through reawakening of "the most modern binary of all: the radical incommensurability of modern and nonmodern worlds" (2014: 442). While the critique refers to works concerned with indigeneity, we may observe the tendency to impose the ontological difference and unity on the people in question also when they are not "pre-modern." Navaro-Yashin (2012) for instance insists that the interaction with ruins of violence makes "the Turkish Cypriots" melancholic, even if they themselves say that this is not so. In this regard, Ingold's (2011) perspective of the world as one fluid "meshwork" of life that accommodates all multiplicities (differences) as its intertwined lifelines is closer to reject all modernist binaries. However, the problem is that his ontology does not have space for structural relations of power as

conditions of living or for the recognition of the role of global capitalism. This denial implies not only the capitalist romance of the "return to nature" as the solution of the ecologic crisis, but also implicitly naturalizes structural inequality and thus supports the *status quo* (Bajič 2016; cf. Bessire and Bond 2014). As Graeber warned, "ontological anarchy" (promoted by Viveiros de Castro) may follow the logic that if "anything may happen," "anything goes" and in practice means "tacit acquiescence in the status quo, i.e. more or less, 'everything stays.'" This way "ontological anarchy ends up becoming the buttress for existing forms of authority" (2015: 25-26, fn. 33). Similarly, Bessire and Bond (2014) observe the lack of attention of the ontological anthropologists working among Amerindian peoples to structural inequalities and structural violence in national, regional, and global context, and people's actual struggles within postcolonial environments under neoliberal destruction and ecologic crisis. Yet, this is a generalization that may do injustice to ethnographers such as Gordillo (2014), who explicitly traced continuity between layers of rubble of colonial annihilation of communities, postindustrial capitalist destruction of towns after the abandonment of the railway with which they flourished, and the global neoliberal destruction of habitat for mass soya bean production. Hence, in comparison to some other scholars of the ontological turn (especially Inglold and Viveiros de Castro), authors such as Gordillo (2014) and Navaro-Yashin (2012) who investigate the haunted world of violent geography, do not recognize abstract "Western modernity" as the ultimate evil (Bessire and Bond 2014; Bajič 2016). They do not avoid identifying the concrete political and economic *longue durée* violent events and processes that animate the vital materialities inform of haunting.

In my own research, I am engaging with the effects of violent photographs of ruins and graffiti on those who are politically and emotionally implicated into the ongoing political violence with decades (if not a century) long history. Not only historical, as Navaro-Yashin (2012) argued, but also subjective/collective contingency should be an aspect of any ontological anthropological research, especially those dealing with the remains of violence. When we acknowledge the importance of one's subjective and collective bodily habituation (cf. Gordillo 2014) within a politically, culturally, and economically, locally and globally historically shaped world (whether we call it "ontology" or not), we may problematize, in addition to other Cartesian binaries, the gap between Us and Them and the notion of radical alterity itself.

2.4. Turn to Affect and Back to Feelings

As I have shown above, the ontological turn includes the transcendence of the division human (subjective, internal)/non-human (objective, external) with the emphasis on people's bodily integration into their material and spiritual world. Various authors conceptualize people's bodily experience of their environment in terms of *affect*. There is a great variety of ways in which scholars have used the notion of affect that extends the scope of this chapter. Yet, what they all have in common is the focus the rejection of view of humans as merely cognitive and symbolic beings and the idea that there is something pre-linguistic, pre-subjective or trans-subjective, and visceral in our bodily engagement with things and even ideas (cf. Leys 2011). Critical reviewers (Hemmings 2005; Leys 2011; Martin 2013) have identified two major theoretical inspirations on which the scholars of the so-called affective turn build their theories: Spinozian philosophy adopted and reinterpreted by Deleuze, and the psychological and neuroscientific work of Tomkins and Ekman – the "Basic Emotions paradigm" (Leys 2011).

If the anthropological turn to emotions in the 1980's partially resulted from the dissatisfaction of biologist-psychologist view of humans as "mechanical 'information processors'" (Lutz and White 1986: 405), we seem to be witnessing a kind of opposite trend in recent social theory and cultural studies to "banish subjectivity from human experience" in what has been assembled under the name of "affect theories" (Martin 2013). In an attempt to bridge the modernist divide between natural sciences and social sciences and humanities, some affect theories have turned for inspiration to experimental neuropsychology, particularly that of Tomkins and his follower, Paul Ekman (see e.g. Sedgwick and Frank 1995). These psychologists conceptualized affects as *basic emotions* – fear, anger, disgust, joy, sadness, and surprise – which are a biological, evolutionary, and thus universal property of human animals, "expressed with the same distinctive configuration of facial muscle movements" (Lutz and White 1986: 410). "According to that paradigm," Leys wrote, "our basic emotions do not involve cognitions or beliefs about the objects in our world. Rather, they are rapid, phylogenetically old, automatic responses of the organism that have evolved

for survival purposes and lack the cognitive characteristics of the higher-order mental processes” (2011: 437). Hence, affect is essentially marked by unintentionality (Leys 2011; Martin 2013). Tomkins distinguished between drives and affects, both having a separate system in the human brain. While drives are instrumentally concerned with gaining particular objects to satisfy particular needs, affects may have various kinds of aims that may be constantly redefined. As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick wrote, “Affects can be, and are, attached to things, people, ideas, sensations, relations, activities, ambitions, institutions, and any other number of other things, including other affects. Thus one can be excited by anger, disgusted by shame, or surprised by joy” (in Thrift 2004: 61). In addition, Tomkins noted the discrepancy between the sensation and the cognitive process, which points to the flexibility of affect (Sedgwick and Frank 1995; cf. Massumi 2002). Hence, affect is marked by ambiguity and potentiality (Massumi 2002). Yet, however important this emphasis is, it does not succeed to prove the need for a category distinct from “feeling.”

Not surprisingly, the notion of ambiguous unfixed affective attachments has had a major influence on the development of critical feminist and queer theory. Sedgwick (2003), who is considered one of the “founders” of queer theory for instance, creatively adopted Tomkins’s theory to talk about the contingency, opacity, and error in emotional life. She argued that “it is the inefficiency of the fit between the affect system and the cognitive system – and between either of these and the drive system – that enables learning, development, continuity, differentiation. Freedom, play, affordance, meaning itself derive from the wealth of mutually nontransparent possibilities for being wrong about an object – and, implicatively, about oneself” (1995: 14). She particularly focused on the affect of shame, associated with “strange, rather than /…/ the prohibited or disapproved” (1995: 5). She explored unique subjective experience of shame as productive of difference, and its role in queer embodiment and belonging (Sedgwick 2003). Also inspired by Tomkins’ model of dissonance between affect and cognitive emotion,[13] Ngai explored “ambivalent situations of suspended agency” in literature, film, and theoretical writing (2005: 1). She investigated the minor and politically ambiguous negative emotions – “ugly feelings:” envy, anxiety, paranoia, irritation, a

[13] “Cognitive emotion” refers to the emotion as comprehended by the one who feels it, assuming that there is a temporal gap between physical sensation and our conscious realization of this sensation. However, it is a peculiar qualifier, which in order to sharpen the opposition to affect, moves it to something beyond emotion.

racialized affect of “animatedness,”and a “strange amalgamation of shock and boredom” she called “stuplimity” as mediators between the aesthetic and the political. It is important to note, however, that neither Sedgwick (2003) nor Ngai (2005) remained strictly within Tomkins’ paradigm in the sense of seeing affects outside of language. Furthermore, Sara Ahmed (2010) discussed our affective attachments to “happy objects” that embody the heteronormative ideas of good life and good citizenship, while unhappiness and suffering are projected onto particular bodies and identities (“affect aliens”), such as the feminist killjoy, the unhappy queer, and the melancholic migrant. Most importantly, with her analysis of moral economy of happiness, she placed affect back into relation with evaluative judgement, and gendered and racial structural inequality. Similarly, Lauren Berlant (2011) talked about attachments to objects of desire which in fact prevent our flourishing and defined them as “cruel optimism.” In addition, she explicitly related affective attachments to normative white-middle-class ideals with late capitalism as marked by precarious conditions of possibility which produces cruelty (cf. Ngai 2005; Cvetkovich 2012). Both works placed affect in the center of the political. Yet, while Ahmed (2010) offered the claim of queer unhappiness as a technique of political struggle, Berlant (2011) remains unclear about the way to “flourishing” (as well as about what this may mean, precisely), as any kind of political attachment involves a kind of cruelty. As Ahmed noted, “The model of emotional contagion, which is often influenced by Silvan S. Tomkins’ work, is useful in its emphasis on how emotions are not simply located in the individual, but move between bodies” (2004: 10). Yet, the works in feminist and queer theory on affect have moved far away from the evolutionary-psychologist conceptions towards the political, as they have long ago acknowledged that personal is both, bodily and political (cf. Hage 2009). Their consideration of political economy of affects (including affective investments) importantly pointed to the public (and shared) character of affects as well as their unequal distribution in terms of both, quantity and intensity (cf. Parla 2017). In addition, their take on affects has importantly contributed to “the depathologization of negative feelings such as shame, failure, melancholy, and depression, and the resulting rethinking of categories such as utopia, hope, and happiness as entwined with and even enhanced by forms of negative feeling” (Cvetkovich 2012), and pointed to their reparative aspect (see Sedgwick 2003).

On the other hand, there has been a body of affect theories that insist on the opposition between "affect" and "emotion" and conceptualize affect as impersonal (or rather transpersonal) asubjective bodily sensation or "intensity." As mentioned earlier, in opposition to the subject-centered philosophy of Descartes that "privileges the thinking and fully conscious human being" (Navaro-Yashin 2012: 168) and thus sees "body as animated by the will of an immaterial mind or soul" (Thrift 2004: 61), Spinoza talked about the interconnected unity of body and mind (Leavitt 1996). "So, in Spinoza's world, everything is part of a thinking and a doing simultaneously: they are aspects of the same thing expressed in two registers" (Thrift 2004: 61). The encounters between (human and non-human) bodies in the unified universe is defined by their *capacity to affect and be affected*. "Affect" (*affectus* – emotion, passion) is then a *relational force*, "the property of the active outcome of an encounter" (Thrift 2004: 62). Moreover, it is "a sensation that may move through the subject but is not known to it (i.e., it is unmediated by the cognitive, or the thinking and knowing and talking subject)" (Navaro-Yashin 2012: 168).[14] In this regard, the work of Teresa Brennan (2004) on the "transmission of affect" may be instructive. She evoked the notion of "atmosphere:" "The 'atmosphere' or the environment literally gets into the individual. Physically and biologically, something is present that was not there before. /…/ The transmission of affect, whether it is grief, anxiety, or anger, is social or psychological in origin /…/ [and causes] bodily changes" (2004: 1). Kathleen Stewart (2007) also talked about atmospheric and social nature of affect and underlined its elusiveness to definition. She conceptualized "ordinary affects" as "forces that come into view as habit or shock, resonance or impact. *Something* throws itself together in a moment as an event and a sensation; a something both animated and inhabitable" (2007: 1). Rather than with analysis, she presented us with descriptions of numerous disparate affective ordinary social scenes that create shifting atmospheres. The affective narrative might be the most honest way to go about affects, if we claim that they are intangible (cf. Beatty 2010). Yet, it may also end up being too random for the reader to conceive affect and too dim to feel it.

Most notably, Deleuze and Guattari (1987), especially Deleuze, adopted and reinterpreted Spinoza's notion of affect as impersonal, "nonsubjectified," even animalistic

[14] In contrast to Navaro-Yashin's (2012) take on Spinoza, one may also see his subject's relation with other bodies in terms of awareness rather than ignorance and absence of agency (Ayşe Parla, personal communication, 21 May, 2017).

bodily *power/ability/becoming* and developed their own philosophy around it. "For the affect is not a personal feeling, nor is it a characteristic;" they wrote, "it is the effectuation of a power of the pack that throws the self into upheaval and makes it reel" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 240). Hence, they strictly juxtaposed the notion of affect to feelings and emotions: "Affect is the active discharge of emotion, the counterattack, whereas feeling is an always displaced, retarded, resisting emotion. Affects are projectiles just like weapons; feelings are introceptive like tools (ibid.: 400). Most well-known adoption of Deleuzian affect theory, not without a reference to psychological experiments of pre-conscious reactions (see Leys 2011), is that of Brian Massumi (2002). He defined affects in opposition to emotion as strictly bodily, pre-cognitive, pre-discursive, non-subjective, pre-intentional, and *autonomous* intensity "disconnected to subjective, signifying, functional-meaning axis to which the more familiar categories of emotion belong" (Leys 2011: 441). He wrote: "Affect is autonomous to the degree to which it escapes confinement in the particular body whose vitality, or potential for interaction, it is" (2002: 35). Most notably, Massumi (2002) associated affect with potentiality. As affect is *virtual* in the sense that "happens too quickly to have happened" (2002: 30) and *unassimilable* in the sense that it remains open, unstructured, free from determination of language, meaning, and ideology. On the one hand, this means that it is exposed to political manipulation, production of ideological effects by nonideological, "mindless," affective means – by politization of seductive "power of mime" – as Massumi argued with the example of Ronald Reagan's political performance in the media (2002: 39-43). However, one may find it odd to completely reject history, meaning, and subjectivity while talking about the political. Ahmed (2004), for instance, wrote about *affective economies* in terms of circulation of emotions (understood as both social and affective) such as hate, which forms alliances, collective bodies, and borders between bodies. In the context of xenophobic nationalism, emotions such as hate, fear, and love serve as symbolic resources of political mobilization of violence. In addition, William Mazarella argued that "any social project that is not imposed through force alone must be affective in order to be effective – i.e., it has to speak both of Massumi's 'languages' concurrently: intensity as well as qualification, mimetic resonance as well as propositional plausibility" (2009: 299). By insisting on im-mediacy of affect, the theorists are unable to account for the potentialities of mediation and their relation with the affective work, which "prevents them from

understanding the workings of any actually existing social institutions" (Mazarella 2009: 302). There is always mediation of affects and, as Mazarella argued, its role in social life depends on its own masking (ibid.: 303).

On the other hand, the limitlessness of affect and its position outside social signification has been praised as encouraging creativity and transformation (Massumi 2002; Thrift 2004). Along the same lines with Massumi, Thrift argued in his "nonrepresentationalist" ontology of urbanity, that in addition to affective political manipulation by the powerful, the openness of affects also "allows us to work on them to brew new collectives in ways which at least have the potential to be progressive" (Thrift 2004: 58). We may find a similar kind of political optimism in Gordillo's (2014) analysis of the affective void of the rubble of layers of centuries of violence. Despite (or because of) the negativity of the afterlife of destruction, he argued, rubble is also a site of struggle and can "generate forms of solidarity and cooperation and /…/ the possibility of collective transformation and rebirth" (Gordillo 2014: 264). Similarly, Ann Cvetkovich (2012) discussed negative public feeling of depression "as a possible resource for political action rather than as its antithesis" (2). "Depression," she wrote, "/…/ can take antisocial forms such as withdrawal or inertia, but it can also create new forms of sociality, whether in public cultures that give it expression or because, as has been suggested about melancholy, it serves as the foundation for new kinds of attachment or affiliation" (2012: 6; cf. Sedgwick 2003; Ahmed 2010). Not without a reference to Sedgwick (2003), who had conceptualized the affect of shame and its transformative potential in a similar vein.

The hope of freedom from social constrains that some theorists found in affect, has been applied also to the "affective turn" as a theoretical revolution. Namely, along the same lines as the "ontological turn" of which affect theories can be seen as a part, another way in which the "potentiality" of affect has been discussed, is in terms of the liberation of critical theory. Both, Sedgwick (2003) and Massumi (2002) claimed to offer affect theory "as the way forward" in cultural theory (Hemmings 2005; Martin 2013). Similarly with the ontological anthropology, some affect theorists construct a simplistic opposition between "good" freedom from signification and restorative power of affect theory with its ontological embodied sensitivity, versus "bad" structural determinism and limitedness of poststructuralism which remains language-focused. As William Mazzarella argued, "the

major flaw besetting contemporary affect theory is its romantic (and complicit) attachment to a fantasy of immediacy – or as [he prefers] to put it, immediation" (2009: 294). As Clare Hemmings (2005) noted, the narratives of critical breaks favor generality instead of complexity and mitigate against careful critical reading, are dismissive, and celebrate "the new" as untouched by "the old." In turn, affect "often emerges as a rhetorical device whose ultimate goal is to persuade 'paranoid theorists' into a more productive frame of mind" (2005: 551). Yet, if we consider numerous works on feelings, emotions, and embodiment in anthropology (some of which I have discussed in the first section, especially the work of M. Rosaldo; see Skoggard and Waterston 2015), feminist theory (see Hemmings 2005), works on affects/emotions in the context of colonialism and nationalism, and discussions of neoliberalism and affective labor (McElhinny 2010), we may realize that "affect" as neither necessarily positive, nor "random," i.e. independent from language and social structure (Hemmings 2005; see e.g. Ahmed 2004; Berlant 2011), nor necessary as a concept (cf. Parla 2017). Moreover, the turn towards experimental psychology hardly sounds in lines with the categorical rejection of determinism (Leys 2011). As Leys (2011) showed, not only have been the findings of neuropsychology misread used interpretatively by Massumi and his followers, but some of that studies had been challenged and disproved by fellow psychologists themselves who argued against the idea anti-intentionalism, which is silenced for the sake of the argument (cf. Martin 2013). Furthermore, strict separation between bodily *affect* and discursive *emotion*, related to the "two layer" approach in psychology, reinforces the mind/body dichotomy and in turn counters Spinoza's ontology as well as the celebrated efforts to overcome Cartesian binaries. In addition, this approach is dismissive to the rich body of research in anthropology of emotions that proved the complex interconnectedness of bodily, subjective, intersubjective, cultural, political, and structural aspects of emotions (Skoggard and Waterston 2015: 112). Authors of some of the most illuminating works mentioned above have dismissed the distinction between affect and emotion and argued that emotions are experienced by individuals but they are also social and political, and they involve intersubjective and asubjective bodily sensations (affects), as well as sociocultural context into which they are imbedded as a product and productive force. Some such as Cvetkovich (2012) or Ngai (2005) consciously decided to use "feeling" to avoid limitations (actually) of "affect" and emphasize their ambiguous, impersonal, and political character.

As Emily Martin (2013) showed with the example of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Strait Islands in 1898, even some of the earliest proto-ethnographic fieldworks may counter the banishment of subjectivity from the methods used in experimental psychology on which some affect theories build. The scientists of the Expedition believed that they can perfectly immerse into the lives of the islanders and inquire a "native mind," so that they become embodied subjects and instruments of research. Yet, they acknowledged the difficulties of comparison and accepted inaccuracy, and recognized the limitations of this immersion – such as the problem of taste (almost a century before Bourdieu's influential work on taste and bodily habituation) and the fact "they could not embody the past experience of islanders" (Martin 2013). Nonetheless, as they believed that a shared context produced shared minds, they also believed that by bringing that context to the British readers, the latter can experience the lives of the islanders as well. For this purpose, their methodology involved collection and detailed description of islanders' sensory modalities (smell, hearing, vision, touch, and taste) and their qualitative perception of the world (natural phenomena, ritual beings, and ordinary objects) through drawing, not only language. They were especially attentive to data-collection in everyday, ordinary settings "natural" for the locals, not to be framed by European thought Martin 2013). So much about the novelty of interest in bodily sensations and the ontological "turn" (cf. Skoggard and Waterston 2015)!

As Hemmings noted, "both Massumi and Sedgwick are advocating a new academic attitude rather than a new method, an attitude or faith in something other than the social and cultural, a faith in the wonders that might emerge if we were not so attached to pragmatic negativity" (2005: 563). The affective (political) attachments of the theorists of the ontological and affective "turns" themselves are worth investigating. "It is clear," Martin wrote, "that the trait of potentiality is sometimes thrown up as an object of desire because it seems to imply creativity, openness, and infinite possibility unconstrained by social conventions" (2013: 8). But what is the historical contingency of the theoretical attachments to potentiality and distaste for the (post)modern deconstructionism? It is related to the feelings of political impotence in the face of glokalized wars (where everyone's complicity is harder and harder to deny), growing inequalities, global and local injustices, neoliberal violence of increasingly destructive capitalism, the rise of right-wing politics and

totalitarianisms, and the ecological crisis? What kind of shared affective atmosphere conditions the rise of ontological anthropology and the turn to affect? Bonnie McElhinny (2010) emphasized the need of a historicized approach to affect modeled on Foucault's genealogy that tries to answer the question of "why we are, at this particular moment, witnessing such interest in affect" (312). Some interesting clues may be found in his review. First, Nikolas Rose (1999) argued the late-capitalist "citizenship is primarily realized through acts of free but responsibilized choice," which leads to "a celebration of choice and self-realization through consumption, as well as to a focus on diseases of the will, or failures of self-control. As affect [theory?] becomes commodified, a focus also emerges on parsing authenticity and sincerity" (in McElhinny 2010: 312).

Second, "Adams and others (2009) suggest that the contemporary fascination with affect can be understood as an intensification of regimes of anticipation (perhaps in contrast with regimes of truth)" (ibid.). Hence, the future orientation of ontology and affect theorist may itself be driven by political vectors of hope and fear amidst the present precarious state of natural and social worlds which they often fail to account for (cf. Bajič 2016), as well as of the academia itself. Mazarella went even further to note that (some) cultural theorists the fantasy of pre-mediated existence with that of most reactionary (racist, nationalist) political interests which reveals their complicity "with entirely mainstream currents in contemporary public culture – all the way from the depoliticizing sensuous theodicy of consumerist gratification to the neoliberal will to allow the 'spontaneous' logic of the market to displace the 'artificial' mediations of human institutions" (2009: 303-304).

Last but not least, a post-colonial analysis may put in perspective the attention to affect as "inspired by colonial rules and violence, anxieties and desires about imperial decline and mimicry, and the aftermath and ongoing effects of empire evident in global migration flows and increasingly multicultural metropoles, settler colonial states, and postcolonial states" (McElhinny 2010: 312). However, some form of optimism (be it cruel or otherwise), hope, and joy (even if unhappy) may also be necessary for progressive politics, as well as for engaged social research (McElhinny 2010: 320-321).

2.5. Conclusion

Although not as novel as some like to present it, the contemporary focus in anthropology and cultural theory on bodily experience and embodiment has been an important step towards understanding of emotional and sociopolitical worlds we inhabit. As I have indicated with the title of this chapter, it enabled us to talk about affective objects and emotional people, as well as to rethink the relation between them. The major contribution of the ontological turn in anthropology has been its emphasis on the embeddedness of people in their ("ontological") worlds that may challenge our assumptions about the being of things in another world and undermine our representational authority. Yet, our ontological limitations shall not discourage us to engage with radical and less radical alterity, but rather encourage us to immerse ourselves deeper into the emotional worlds of others with both, feeling and thinking and – as it seems to be necessary to add at this point of social theory – talking (cf. Graeber 2015).

Since I will be discussing people's feelings caused by violent photographs of ruins and perpetrator graffiti, the ontological discussions on the affective relation between people and things is crucial for my analysis. Ethnographic studies and social theories that challenge the divisions of subjective/objective and human/non-human, and the human-centered approach to things have brought about the notion of affective animatednes of material and non-material objects and environment, and encourage us to see that things are not just things, but they can influence people in uncontrollable and elusive ways. Affects, I agree, linger in the atmosphere, are transmitted between objects and subjects, circulate between people who bodily experience them, and are continually produced via their subjective mediation. These affects are not random or neutral, but are historically forged and always already culturally mediated and politically embedded. Rather than talking about affect in general, we should talk about affect-in-context. Navaro-Yashin (2012) and Gordillo (2014) showed this in their respective discussions of historically contingent affects radiating between people and haunted materialities of the aftermath of political (and economic) violence. As Ahmed argued, "how the object impresses (upon us) may depend on histories that remain alive insofar as they have already left their impressions" (2004: 8). Moreover, they may very well include intention. In the particular case of my research, the affective quality of violent

photographs is not forged randomly and unintentionally by entangled layers of violence in the past that haunts the present, but they are, on the contrary, intentionally invested with violence that takes place in the actual present. Thus, the public feelings that emerge from the affective interaction are a part of most immediate politics of emotions, hope, and resistance. Hence, although they are bodily feelings, affects are embedded into socially produced contexts of use that are a basis for what actions and words *mean* to people (Martin 2013). It is important to acknowledge that our bodily experiences, political feelings, and in turn our decisions and acts are not merely or entirely conscious or a result of internal drives, cognitive processes and evaluations. Yet, we cannot exclude our historically contingent subjectivities, which are partially but by no means entirely shaped by affects (as bodily feelings and an aspect of intersubjective becoming). Our historically constituted culturally habituated subjectivities exist as *bodily predispositions* for our emotional experiences, even if the experience itself is not intentional (obviously), not conscious, nor put in language (as we all know how difficult this sometimes is). Even if we are not able to conceptualize what exactly we feel – and even less what others feel – we feel as moral agents with relevant affective-formative social experience that includes memories of the past and of the present social structure. This is exactly why different people feel differently about the same things. Affective attachments and public feelings are collective, but not universal. Emotional experiences are shared with some people to a certain degree due to their common positionality in relation to certain things which has been consciously constituted through their life experiences. To quote here M. Rosaldo, "thought is always culturally patterned and infused with feelings, which themselves reflect a culturally ordered past, [so] just as thought does not exist in isolation from affective life, so affect is culturally ordered and does not exist apart from thought" (1984: 137). Yet, I would not go so far to say that our different life experiences put us in irreconcilable, isolated, and clearly bordered ontological worlds, but rather in comparable structural and emotional positions which we shall by no means underestimate, no matter how close we feel to those we study (cf. Hage 2009).

As much as it may be fashionable to put it differently (especially given the terminological creativity of the ontological turn), I argue that while we can speak about affective relations between people/objects, people remain emotional – including both, feeling and meaning, always on the intersection of personal/public and depending on the structural

conditions of possibility, which, as critical theorists argued, bring about particular political feelings. Anthropologists have thought about emotions this way since long ago (see Martin 2013; Lutz and White 1986; Leavitt 1996). As many have been lead to conclude – and I will follow them as well – rather than in revolutionary theoretical turns, we should recognize the "potentiality" of the ethnographic method (Martin 2013; cf. Graeber 2013). Ethnography itself involves affective relations, public feelings, and emotions. During the ethnographic method of participant observation, observation and participation always melt into each other, but also coexist in tension. However, our political feelings and emotions related to our field are in conflict with our analytical position, which in turn generates another set of emotions that Hage (2009), borrowing from Spinoza, called "ethnographic vacillation." We are always partially emotionally (and bodily) embedded in several different sociocultural worlds and not really a "true" participant of any of them. Although this may be our limitation in professional and private life (which are in many ways inseparable) (see Behar 1996), it is also "the potential to examine the ontological position that comparison between two social worlds opens up" (Martin 2013: 8).

CHAPTER 3

THE TURKISH-KURDISH CONFLICT: From Spatial to Visual and Virtual

3.1. Introduction

Contrary to the contemporary dominant opinions which place the beginning of the Kurdish question in the time of the PKK's fight against the Turkish state, the Turkish Kurdish issue may be traced long back to the Ottoman Empire. The history of Eastern Anatolia is marked by historical continuity of violence. In this chapter, I will point to only some of these continuities and developments in the past that can illuminate the Turkish Kurdish issue and the war in the present. Moreover, in order to understand the political feelings of the oppositional people related to the Kurdish politics, in is significant the the narrative of continuity of state violence and Kurdish resistance has a central role in collective memories of politicized young Kurdish people, which determine their emotional attitudes towards "the Turkish state" – an abstract notion expressing the continuity regardless changes of governments, which is nevertheless also material, as it is felt on the skin in everyday encounters with the education, repressive apparatus, government officials, physical environment inscribed with Turkish nationalism, nationalist media, and discriminative attitudes and humiliation, which importantly determine people's subjectivities. Instead of accounting for the complex history of Kurdish politics in Turkey, I will focus on the spatial aspect of the Turkish Kurdish issue in order to put the perpetrator graffiti into a historical context of the incorporation of the space and time of the Other into the national space trough material-discursive inscriptions of the space, which are related to the broader project of demographic engineering (Öktem 2004).[15]

However, as the graffiti sprayed on the ruins are photographed by the ÖH members who pose with them in a spectacle of masculinized militarized sovereignty and then

[15] For a fuller account on the history of Kurdish politics since the late Ottoman Empire and a detailed analysis of the current political arrangements and atmosphere see Protner n.d.

circulated in the Internet, the nationalist inscription does not only mean Turkification of physical space, but also the hegemonic appropriation of the virtual space (cf. Kuntsman and Stain 2015; Kuntsman 2011). Hereby, the social media, especially Twitter, become "another war zone" (Kuntsman and Stein 2015), a space of struggle for domination of visual-discursive representation of the war (Apel 2012). Thus, in the second section, based on virtual ethnography, I will discuss the ways in which the cyberwar (Hudson 2010) has been taking place between the users of the accounts managed by the members of state forces involved in the war on the ground, and the pro-PKK and pro-Kurdish accounts of news agencies and politicized individuals. The historical connections between different strategies of Turkification and the counter-hegemonic struggle for Kurdification, and their dynamic interdependency are important to understand the significance of "sharing" of visual material on the social media and the "affective fabrics" that spread from cyberspaces into people's everyday experiences and political horizons of emotions (Kuntsman 2012).

3.3. Spatial Strategies of Turkification and Re-appropriation

Throughout the modern history of late Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey, Eastern provinces have been ruled with suspicion, divide-and-rule strategies which resulted in high level of local violence, and top-down social engineering. As Uğur Üngör (2008) showed, a focus on the policies of nationalist social engineering in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia reveals a spatial continuity of Turkification between the late Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey, rather than a break (cf. Öktem 2008). While Christian Armenians and Syriacs were the primary target of systematic violence in the Ottoman Empire, which finally ended up in their extermination during the World War I (in which the Kurds had various significant roles depending on their alliances), the Kurds were the next to be dealt with on the way to the construction of a homogeneous nation and the Turkification of this never fully appropriated territory (Üngör 2008). In this section, I will point to continuities in spatial strategies of Turkification such as displacements, appropriation through destruction and reconstruction, and nationalist inscriptions of the space, from the Young Turk era and the Kemalist Republican era, up until today. The historical overview aims to put the physical

destruction and perpetrator graffiti into the context of policies of Turkification alongside other continuous strategies. As Gordillo noted, “destruction” and “production” of space are not only parts of a never ending cycle, but also “moments that reveal that space is a malleable plastic” whose forms (roads, walls, towers, military-posts, etc.) have profound political implications (2014: 78-79).

Spatial strategies have been central to the demographic and social engineering in the process of Turkification of the Kurdish-majority region (Jongerden 2009; Öktem 2004; Gambetti and Jongerden 2011). As Üngör wrote, “‘Eastern Anatolia’ became a laboratory for nationalist visions” (2008: 18) with the logic of a homogeneous nation-state in the period of Young Turk rule under the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) in the last 15 years of the Ottoman Empire, which took the shape of institutionalized violence and reorganization of space that continued and intensified in the Kemalist period of the Republic. The territorial incorporation of the periphery and Turkification of material space took the shape of physical destruction of the space of the Other and appropriation of the space through various strategic ways of its reconstruction as Turkish space. In the case of contested territories, physical destruction and construction are two aspects of the same process of appropriation (Öktem 2004; 2009; Gordillo 2014). Kerem Öktem (2004) proposed that the appropriation of space takes the form of subsequent interrelated clusters of strategies: destruction and neglect, dispossession and transfer of capital, and appropriating nationalizing reconstruction. While this process is most apparent in the annihilation of the Christian Other and their cultural legacy, it continued in the social engineering of Anatolia with the focus on the erasure of Kurdishness. At the very beginning of the Republican era, physical inaccessibility of Kurdish rural settlements was recognized as a security problem (Jongerden 2009). Thus, physical destruction in military campaigns was a systematic strategy of gaining control over the space which was followed by strategies of reconstruction with the goal of Turkification (see Türkyılmaz 2016). Disproportionate physical destruction such as burning of entire villages has been a part of war policies in early Kurdish rebellions (Bruinessen 1994: 191; McDowall 1997: 426-428; see Orhan 2012). The strategic massive destruction of small rural settlements continued during the war against the PKK in the 1990’s when about a quarter of all rural settlements was destroyed and evacuated (Balta 2004; Yeğen 2009: 604; Öktem 2004: 566; Gambetti and Jongerden 2011: 383-384). Physical destruction gained another momentum in

2015-2016 when it has spread from rural to urban settlements and entire neighborhoods and towns were ruined by shelling and bombs (see OHCHR 2017).

Physical destruction is closely related to forced displacements of population and transfers of capital to the hands of loyal (Turkish or Turkifyable) groups and individuals. One of the earliest strategies of demographic Turkification process of the non-Turkish space were strategic settlements of population. In 1914, the bureaucratic apparatus Directorate for the Settlement of Tribes and Immigrants was established by CUP in order to force sedentarization of the nomadic Turkoman, Kurdish, and Arab tribes and provide accommodation for Muslim refugees from the Balkans and Caucasus, but quickly became militarized with its focus on deportations of rebellious elements from the region with the help of paramilitary Special Organization (Üngör 2008: 22). The Armenian annihilation, which was rendered as deportation of rebellious population, despite the fact that it included massacres, played a major role in the Turkification of the region, as the confiscated Armenian properties were relocated to the loyalist Muslims and settlers from the Balkans who were gratefully ready to assimilate, which was a major step towards the Turkification of economy (Üngör and Polatel 2011). In addition, already in 1916, mass deportations of Kurdish tribal chieftains from eastern provinces to the Turkish-majority areas of Central and Western Anatolia in which many died of hunger and cold took place with the explicit goal of disrupting their cultural belonging and force them into assimilation. The deportees were replaced with non-Kurdish Muslim settlers (Üngör 2008: 25-26).

Demographic engineering under the pretense of "modernization" (see Zeydanlıoğlu 2008) and security measures continued after the foundation of the Republic under the Kemalist one-party rule. Mass deportations of tens of thousands Kurds to western provinces and to Syria, and settlements of Turks in their villages followed the Kurdish rebellions (Üngör 2008: 28-31; see Orhan 2012). Their properties were confiscated and redistributed to the Turkish-speaking immigrants (Yeğen 2009: 601). Moreover, as Gambetti and Jongerden noted, "the displacement and resettlement of Kurds constituted a part of /…/ politics of assimilation, employed both as an instrument to punish rebellion and crush further discontent and resistance, and also as a way of weakening tribal structures, considered by the state as the stronghold of Kurdish identity" (2011: 377). The strategic settlements became even more systematic and explicitly designed for Turkification under the Settlement Law of 1934, "a

very elaborate legal text sanctioning the mass deportation of entire categories of peoples, everything from 'itinerant Gypsies' to 'anarchists' and 'those who are not devoted to Turkish culture,' sweeping notions that would most of all target and strike Kurds" (Üngör 2008: 31; see Yeğen 2009: 603-604). The increasingly aggressive treatment of the Kurdish provinces and the spatial strategies of destruction were accompanied by an orientalist discourse of civilizing mission, which aimed at the Turkification of population (Zeydanlıoğlu 2008; Türkyılmaz 2016; Üngör 2008: 33; Yeğen 2009). Turkification of the region was rendered as its modernization, as the latter came to be equated with a homogeneous nation-state as the only formation within which Turkey will be able to "catch the train of Western civilization" as the ruling elites saw it (Zeydanlıoğlu 2008; see Ahıska 2003). The deportations were strategically aimed at assimilation of the displaced, as they were sent to Turkish-majority areas and dispersed, encouraged to inter-marry with Turks, and children were sent to bordering schools where aggressive assimilation strategies took place (Yeğen 2009; Üngör 2008; 2012).

The war against the PKK in the 1990's was time of another mass displacement of 1-4 million people from villages with assumed questionable loyalty (Yeğen 2009: 604; Jongerden 2009: 6). As it was difficult for the landless peasants to find income in economically neglected areas, many left their region and migrated to other large cities in search for employment, where many were trapped in permanent poverty (Gambetti and Jongerden 2011: 384; see Saraçoğlu 2011). In addition, the expressions of Kurdishness were met with racism and discrimination in Turkish cities, which led to construction of physical and symbolic urban boundaries on the one hand, and forced assimilation to some extent on the other (Saraçoğlu 2011; Karakoç 2011; Gambetti and Jongerden 2011: 385). Moreover, some of the evacuated villages were reportedly redistributed to Muslim refugees from Central Asia who were then armed as Village Guards (*Köy Korucuları*) – the institution of local people (mostly Kurdish) who were voluntarily or involuntarily armed by the state and used to fight the PKK, which were frequently involved in murders for personal reasons and organized crime that mostly remained unpunished (Balta 2004; Özar et al. 2013).

The process of forced migration and dispossessions continues since the recent security operations in the rebellious towns and neighborhoods, which reportedly displaced around half a million of people (OHCHR 2017). As the demolitions continue under the

pretense of reconstructions, the residents continue to be evicted from their homes and prevented from returning. Thus, we can observe the continuity of material destruction and expulsion, and dispossession of the populations recognized as threatening the state's sovereignty and impeding Turkification.

On the other hand, various spatial (re)constructions in the Kurdish-majority region have always accompanied destruction and served as the second step in the nationalist appropriation process. First, the reconstruction of settlements that aimed at better control over the space and at the same time its nationalist incorporation started soon after the foundation of the Republic (Jongerden 2009). As Joost Jongerden wrote, "The uniform application of particular [administrative] elements in the design of new villages becoming prevalent at that time had to make these settlements into instances of the nation-state, each village a microcosm of the national cosmos" (2009: 4). The design took the shape of clustering of administrative services in the form of vertical integration of provincial to center-villages, agricultural towns, and small villages and hamlets (Jongerden 2009). In the 2000's, this kind of "development" projects went hand in hand with partial returning to the evacuated and burned villages, but it had mostly security-related aims and was socially destructive rather than enabling the return of old community life (Jongerden 2009: 6-7). In addition to the restructuring of settlements, the building of infrastructure whose primary aim was military access, and the construction of dams have also been a part of the "development" projects. Yet, the dams are equally destructive, as they cause displacements and disappearance of the cultural heritage under water. As Öktem wrote, "Through the inundation of villages, cemeteries and churches, the material culture and the memory of the 'other' are literally submerged; residents are evicted; through the building of tunnels and irrigation systems, the topography is rearranged. Once this process is completed, the geography gains a new appearance beyond recognition" (2004: 566). In addition, as Gambetti and Jongerden (2011) emphasized, the neoliberal aspect of the Kurdish question should not be neglected. The postwar continuous destruction and neoliberal reconstruction plans of the poor dissident neighborhood of Sur, which is at the same time an ancient walled city of Mesopotamia, are most revealing. The neoliberal reconstruction of Sur as an upper-class gentrified touristic/boutique-shopping area also includes mass displacement of the rebellious poor and the "classic" transfer of economic capital to loyal populations – in this case, the entrepreneur

Kurds who are not engaged in Kurdish politics and (ideally) support the AKP. The political allegiance to those in power is an investment into Turkishness, which brings social capital and the power it entails, as well as most immediate economic capital. Thus, it is worth noting that the continuous Turkification process in the Kurdish-majority region is most closely related to political alliances, particularly in relation to the ruling elites, which partially overlaps with class differences, rather than being all about ethnicity.

In addition to material strategies, nationalist project of appropriation of space involves also discursive strategies: creation and dissemination of a hegemonic historiography, toponymical strategies of renaming, and the inscription of ethno-nationalist symbols into the geography (Öktem 2004). First, after the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, the nationalist elite saw the necessity of a cultural, social, and ideological break with the Ottoman Empire as the *ancien régime*, as its ethnoreligious diversity was recognized as a weakness and an obstacle to construction of a modern nation-state (Ahıska 2003; Çolak 2006; Öktem 2004; Keyman and Kanacı 2011). The Turkish nation was being invented in nationalist narratives. On the one hand, its glorious history was traced back to the Turkic "civilization" of Central Asia with racial (and later cultural) references to the "motherland," and on the other, Anatolia came to be presented as Turkish "fatherland," rightfully fought for in the "War of Independence," which was made the turning point of the radical break (Keyman and Kanacı 2011). While the bridge was constructed between ancient Turkish past and modern present, starting with the "War of Independence" (1920-1923), the Ottoman time was constructed as the shameful time of darkness, ignorance, religious oppression, and backwardness that shall be forgotten (Çolak 2006; Öktem 2004: 568). As Esra Özyürek (2007) argued, the modernizing reforms such as purification of the language with the exclusion of non-Turkish (mostly Arabic and Persian) words; change of the Arabic script into Latin (which prevented new generations from reading Ottoman texts); replacement of the Islamic calendar with the Gregorian calendar (i.e. a new perception of time); introduction of European measures; prescribed Western clothing (i.e. abolishment of diverse regional and ethnic attires); and state-censored replacement of family and tribal names with Turkish last names, were not only aimed to homogenize and Turkify the diverse population of Anatolia, but also to erase their memories of the diversity in the Ottoman time. With the erasure of the complex sociocultural reality of the Empire, the histories of ethnic and religious minorities

have been systematically silenced (Öktem 2004; 2009; Altınay 2013). This kind of nationalist historiography has been institutionalized, disseminated, and reproduced in Turkish history institutes universities, schools, and textbooks and thus became the hegemonic version of national history (Öktem 2008; see Keyman and Kancı 2011). While the Ottoman past was later included into the national historiography and there has been a turn towards personal family histories that bring back to light the diversity of Anatolia (Özyürek 2007), new official narratives and personal histories are also selective and tend to project the nation-state logic of centralization and overarching civic national identity back into the pre-national time.

Second, the strategy of what Öktem (2008) called toponymical engineering has also been in the service of the erasure of the non-Turkish elements from the space and memory, and the Turkification of space and people (Öktem 2008; Jongerden 2009). The toponymical change has gone hand in hand with the strategic demographic engineering – i.e. "state-directed removal or destruction of certain communities from a given territory in order to consolidate power over that territory and prepare the conditions for the nation state to project its vision of space and time" (Öktem 2008: par. 15). The changes of Armenian names happened after their annihilation; Greek names were changed after the war and forced exchange of population; many Kurdish names were changed after military campaigns (Öktem 2008). For instance, after the destructive campaign in Dersim (see Türkyılmaz 2016), the province's name was changed into Tunceli in order to break the association of the place with the lack of control and incorporate it into the Republic as distinctly Turkish, as the new name "literally [means] the 'Land of Bronze,' in reference to the Turkic legend of the exodus of tribes from Central Asia and their settlement at metal-rich Ergenekon" (Türkyılmaz 2016: 165). Thus, as Jongerden (2009) noted, naming and renaming is never innocent but it is a strategy of cultural domination. "The process of (re)naming /…/ in itself enacts the transformation which it symbolizes" (2009: par. 31; cf. Öktem 2008).

The process of replacing non-Turkish toponymes such as Armenian, Greek, Kurdish, Arabic, Laz, etc. started under the CUP regime in the late Ottoman Empire and continued up until the 1980's (Öktem 2008). While the changes were mostly results of spontaneous initiatives by military commanders, local administrators, and Parliamentarians in the CUP era, the process became more systematic in the republican time (Öktem 2008; Jongerden 2009). "The reference to historical regions such as Armenia, Kurdistan or *Lazistan* – the

official name of the eastern Black Sea province of Rize until 1921 – was forbidden and a ban imposed on the importation of maps containing these terms" (Öktem 2008: par. 31). The nationalist elite went so far as to even change the internationally recognized names of autochthonous animals that included references to Kurdistan and Armenia. Hence, even the scientific community was willing to isolate itself from the rest of the world in order to erase the traces of ethnic diversity in Turkey. In the 1920's and 1930's, name-changing was a part of administrative reorganization of space into centralized provinces and cartography of the new Turkish territory (see Öktem 2008). In the 1950's, however, Turkification of toponymes became a top priority. A special Expert Commission for Name Change was established in 1956 and by the end of 1970's changed up to 91% toponymes – names of towns, villages, hamlets, mountains, rivers, etc. – in the provinces in the Southeast and East of the country (Öktem 2008: par. 44). The name-changing got another boost under the military junta and its bureaucratic apparatus and nationalist hysteria after the 1980 coup and during the Kurdish insurgence, and was particularly aggressive (Öktem 2008). New names were arbitrary, mostly chosen randomly or with references to Turkishness and Turkish state in relation to the nationalist historiography, rather than being translations or having cultural references (Jongerden 2009: 11). As Öktem wrote, "The consequence is a sterile, factually misleading and intellectually disappointing repetition of a limited number of beautified place names that do not correspond to the topographical, historical or linguistic structures they denominate" (2008: par. 65).

Third, the "probably most striking strategy" of the nation's inscription of the space as Öktem (2004: 569) put it, is the inscription of nationalist symbols and slogans. The Turkish flag is literally everywhere and is not only installed into spaces by the authorities, but also by the nationalist people who use it as a way to express their patriotic feelings and invest into Turkishness in return for symbolic and material empowerment. In addition to its presence on official buildings, the flags hang of residential windows, are displayed in public and personal vehicles, restaurants and cafes, as well as appear on profile photographs of the social media accounts, are warn as t-shirts, and printed on lighters, mugs, and other everyday objects. Atatürk's signature and his profile is also printed on t-shirts, mugs, cars, shaped in jewelry, and tattooed on people's skin. As Aslı Çırakman (2011) argued, this "flagging the nation" is a form of banal nationalism, which is nonetheless at the same time overt, intentional, and not

harmless. The overt symbolic violence against the Other is intertwined with other forms of hateful violence, as it reproduces and feeds nationalist exclusion, hate, and war (Çırakman 2011: 1899).

In the Kurdish-majority region, the coercive aspect of nationalist imprint becomes especially evident, as it is a discursive aspect of outright territorial claim and war. Not only are flags, nationalist symbols and slogans a part of administrative buildings and schools, and a part of nationalist iconography of the monuments in urban squares, but they have been also monumentally inscribed on mountain slopes. Large rocks form symbols such as the crescent and star (Turkish national symbol), and slogans such as "How happy is the one who says he is a Turk" (*Ne mutlu Türküm diyene*), "One Turk is equal to all World" (*Bir Türk dünyaya bedeldir*), "One language, one people, one flag" (*Tek dil, tek halk, tek bayrak*), or "Homeland first" (*Önce Vatan*). Since the war between the state and the PKK started, hundreds of this kind of inscriptions were made all over the region, especially in the areas presumably disloyal to the state (Öktem 2004: 569; Zeydanlıoğlu 2008: 7-8).

These striking practices of excessive inscription of Turkishness and Turkish statehood into the space are territorializing endeavors that rise questions of sovereignty. Would they be necessary if the destructive and reconstructive practices had successfully erased the Other from the space, and Turkified and appropriated it? Navaro-Yashin noted that the less legitimacy the state has on a territory, the more effort it puts into inscribing political symbolism onto the space (2012: 44-50). While she referred to the cartographic documentation, name-changing, and inscription of Turkish nationalist symbols into the space in the "illegal" (unrecognized) state of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, she also noted that this "make-believe" labor is present in any nation-state. Thus, the spatial inscriptions are performances of "make-believe" sovereignty – or as I would put it, "(un)make-believe" – including *material* (un)making (destruction, erasure, reconstruction, fabrication) and *phantasmatic* work (believing, political imagination, nationalist historiography) on materialities, which is continuously disturbed by the *phantomic* (as in the case of annihilated populations) or actual human (as in the Kurdish case) return of the Other (see Navaro-Yashin 2012).

Turkey's sovereignty in the Kurdish Southeast has been continuously challenged and compromised through counter-hegemonic spatial practices. In fact, it is impossible to

distinguish between the state policies imposed on the Kurds from the authorities' responses to the local and national strategies of resistance to Turkification. "The dialectics of power and resistance, appropriation and re-appropriation, symbolization and re-symbolization operate in manifold ways" (Gambetti and Jongerden 2011: 379). Spatial strategies of resistance have become especially visible after the growth of the Kurdish movement by the end of 1990's, as the rapid urbanization partially consequential of the rural destruction and displacements opened the way to the urban oppositional politics (Gambetti and Jongerden 2011). As Jongerden (2009) put it, we have been witnessing the "return of the Other" in the urban space since the 21st century through spatial policies of non-state actors that were a result of collaboration between Kurdish political actors (pro-Kurdish municipalities) and the civil society (see Güvenç 2011). As Gambetti (2005) argued, the rise of municipalities as central actors in the Kurdish movement after the lowering of the intensity of the conflict facilitated a process of depolarization of voices in urban Kurdish spaces and "commun-ication" (rendering common) between competing publics in a non-Habermasian public sphere that mobilizes "energies in such a way as to alter hegemonic modes of relationality" (52).

Discursive strategies of re-appropriation of space were a crucial part of this new dynamic. First, the renaming of streets, squares, and parks took place under the supervision of the municipalities led by the pro-Kurdish parties. The names refer to the important figures of the collective (nationalist) narratives of the Kurdish history and struggle, and anti-colonial struggles across the world, as well as ethnoreligious diversity and inclusiveness (Jongerden 2009: 11-12). As Jongerden wrote, "the [pro-Kurdish parties'] naming strategy is at heart a political struggle over the meaning attached to public space" (2009: 12). In addition, the Turkish nationalist iconography such as statues and slogans were being removed in the 2000's and replaced with statues erected to the icons of Kurdish nationalist-political and cultural struggle such as poets, activists, and politicians (ibid.; Güvenç 2011). Thus, the oppositional spatial strategies include de-nationalization of space as de-Turkification and its re-nationalization as Kurdification (Güvenç 2011). Through this discursive and visual struggle, the counter-hegemonic (traumatic) memories built around the central nationalist narrative of oppression-and-resistance as well as the hope for peace and rights in the future were inscribed into the space and as such became an important part of the construction of

Kurdish nationalism and identity politics (Jongerden 2009; Güvenç 2011). Re-appropriation was not only discursive, but also bodily. The events organized in these re-appropriated spaces such as squares and parks had a significant meaning of re-appropriation and were often Kurdish-political in content such as cultural festivals, political gatherings, commemorations, and protests (Güvenç 2011). The events dedicated to the victims of contemporary violence are accompanied with the subsequent inscriptions of the memories into the space by naming places after the victims and evicting monuments in their memory (Güvenç 2011: 34).

The Kurdish spatial inscriptions have been a controversial issue and have caused several contestations and legal struggles, which only reinforced the connection between practices of spatial appropriation and the general political struggle of the Kurdish movement (Jongerden 2009; Güvenç 2011). As Muna Güvenç suggested, these "everyday practices of urban space and the urban experience of collectivity within socio-spatial and political encounters engender a sense of national identity and nationalism" (2011: 38). Although the state actors have continuously tried to impede the spread of performances of re-appropriation, the popular manifestations of culture and identity "could no longer be checked by military measures" (Gambetti 2005: 57-58), legal procedures (see Güvenç 2011), or administrative obstacles since the 2000's. During my touristic visits of the Kurdish-majority region in the time of ceasefire (2013, 2015), I have observed various inscriptions of Kurdishness in everyday materiality – not only monumental, but also in shape of decorations and souvenirs, sport dressed in yellow, red, and green (Kurdish national colors), on which was written "Kurdistan," people's clothing, artworks, and urban graffiti. It was a Kurdish space, exuding confidence.

Yet, as the urbanization of the Kurdish movement facilitated armed mobilization in most resistant urban spaces of the region, the struggle over space reached a new stage during the renewal of the armed conflict with the PKK. In addition to the clashes in the mountains, the PKK organized Kurdish youth to fight in the cities for the first time. The newly established Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement (YDG-H) dug tranches in some of Kurdish neighborhoods of towns and city districts such as Silvan and Sur in Diyarbakır, Şırnak, Cizre, Idil, and Silopi in Şırnak, Nusaybin in Mardin, and Yüksekova in Hakkâri, and declared autonomy in these areas. The authorities answered with force and declared around-the-clock curfews in these areas, while the security forces (mostly Police Special Forces –

PÖH and Gendarme Special Forces – JÖH, rather than conscripted soldiers) conducted operations. The curfews were temporary lifted only in order to evacuate the people whose houses were then shelled and bombed by tanks. The region has once again become the place of death and fear in the face of grave human rights violations, as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Report reveals (see OHCHR 2017).

The escalation of war and state of emergency gave way to reinforced spatial strategies of renewed and redefined Turkification. First, the space was subjected to the unprecedented scale of physical destruction of urban space. After the breaking of the YDG-H armed struggle, the some urban settlements were left virtually uninhabitable. Second, the government-appointed trustees who took over the control over the municipalities again engaged in discursive and symbolic appropriation. They changed names of streets that memorialized prominent figures of the Kurdish struggle – often to names of Turkish nationalist figures and people who died in the state's anti-Kurdish war (for example names of Turkish "martyrs" and village guards). They removed multilingual and Kurdish signboards for toponymes and municipalities. They even changed the colors of bridges from yellow-red-green to red-while (Turkish national colors) and painted them with Turkish flags. Moreover, numerus Kurdish monuments were destroyed (Oran 2017).

Not only were the areas where the YDG-H declared autonomy subjected to asymmetrical physical destruction, but the re-Turkification through discursive-material inscriptions, too, reached unprecedented intensity. The districts were covered with giant and smaller flags all over. In addition to this, for the first time, graffiti were sprayed in the urban space by the security forces on public and private buildings and even inside people's homes. The graffiti as a practice of nationalist inscription has a continuity with the militarized iconography and slogans of the rock-formations which were not only territorial incorporation of space and phantasmatic Turkification (Navaro-Yashin 2012), but also a war-time strategy of appropriation, intimidation, and humiliation – a psychological war based on visual symbolic violence. Yet, the practice has moved from remote mountains and common public spaces associated with government to ordinary streets, and private and most intimate places of people's daily lives. In addition, as I will show later on, the inscriptions became more violent and overtly hateful in content, and in a way more personal and concrete than general

statist-nationalist symbols and slogans, as they include individual notes and creativity of the authors. Despite the fact that the practice itself has become systematic, it is not administrated from the central government or controlled. As the reverse process of de-Turkification through name-changing, changing of monuments, meaningful reconstructions of space, as well as graffiti of the politicized youth rendered the space visibly Kurdish, the Special Forces (ÖH) saw the necessity to reinscribe Turkish sovereignty into the urban space and took the initiative. They appropriated the counter-hegemonic practice of graffiti-writing, more commonly used by resistance movements, which makes the appropriation even more meaningful and total. Conducted in the context of intense violence and mass displacement, the perpetrator graffiti most explicitly illustrate Öktem's (2008) emphasis on the causal relation between destructive demographic engineering and spatial strategies of nationalist inscription. Yet, they may also be seen as an attempt to hold on to a territory of contested sovereignty (cf. Navaro-Yashin 2012). The perpetrator graffiti point to the interdependency of the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic strategies of spatial appropriation and illuminate the impossibility of Turkification (cf. Gambetti and Jongerden 2011). Ever more excessive and violent nationalist inscription most obviously emerges as an appropriating practice that in fact illuminates that lack of territorial sovereignty and legitimacy of a nation-state, and is doomed to produce an ever stronger contra-effect (cf. Zeydanlıoğlu 2009).

3.4. From Visual to Virtual

The destruction, flagging and perpetrator graffiti are photographed as nationalist militarized spectacles with the ÖH members posing for the photo together with ultranationalist and statist symbols, and circulated on the social media. The need of this kind of performance of Turkish presence in Kurdish spaces for wide Turkish and (potentially) international audience additionally points to the phantasmatic aspect of the sovereignty. Namely, the performance serves to gloss over the shortage. Yet, it also spreads the visual strategy of nationalist inscription from the material space into the cyberspace and virtual "walls" of social media accounts, which adds another important layer to the Turkish-Kurdish conflict and the way it is experienced by the people who are not directly involved in it. It

opens up the virtual battlefield for digital militarism (Kuntsman and Stein 2015), cyberwar (Hudson 2010) and contests of images (Apel 2012).

As Dora Apel wrote, “in modern warfare and the accompanying culture of war that capitalism produces as a permanent feature of modern society, the contest of images is as critical as the war on the ground” (2012: 1). Photography has long been a part of wars on the ground. On the one hand, perpetrator photography has been a strategy of violence and humiliation, shaming, or/and blackmail of the victimized people by the perpetrators as a part of a machinery of destruction – most infamously during the Nazi extermination (see Hirsch 2003) and during the U.S. forces’ torture and abuse of prisoners in Abu Ghraib (see Butler 2009; Apel 2012). On the other hand, critical documentary photography and political art aim to show the “truths” of a war and produce counter-hegemonic narratives (Apel 1999; 2012; Linfield 2010). In either case, visual representations *frame* the war which is related to power and control over narrative aspect of war and its ramifications (Apel 2012: 1; Gürsel 2012), as well as more general limits of recognizable and intelligible socio-political reality, legitimate war, and humanity (Butler 2009).

The perpetrator photography of the visual inscriptions of the appropriated urban space in the Kurdish-majority regions, I argue, is at the same time triumphalist celebration of militarized masculinity, violence, and appropriation (cf. Butler 2009: 84; Hirsch 2002), as well as in itself a practice of Turkification of the visual and discursive frame of the war (cf. Butler 2009), and an attempt to seize the virtual spaces of representation of the war (cf. Gürsel 2012). By photographing the Turkification of spaces through physical destruction, flagging, and graffiti, together with the posing heavily armed, masked members of the ÖH forces in full combat attire, the violence is framed as a masculinist militarist triumph, domination, superiority, and subordination of the “enemy.” Thus, the victims of violence are dehumanized and abstract, while the militarized subjects surrounded by nationalist symbols emerge as heroes of the war for the “sacred” Turkish territory (cf. Protner 2015). This also puts the photographs into the larger frame of Turkish nationalist narrative whose central focus is the territory (Keyman and Kancı 2011), in which the non-Turkish voices are silenced and alternative perspectives marked as treason, since diversity presents a danger to the state, and therefore must be eliminated (cf. Öktem 2004; Altınay 2013). Therefore, the photographs that reproduce the hegemonic frame of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict and Turkish history in

general are a part of the process of Turkification of "time of the Other" (Öktem 2004). As the ÖH members are more or less the only ones able to take photographs during curfews, they have the exclusive power of representation of the war within the frames of militarized nationalist culture. As Apel observed, "Internet archive today becomes part of this machinery [of persistent militarism], which mobilizes and recruits the liberal public sphere of largely young male viewers for whom this imagery replaces the real with the representational and offers a romanticized narrative of sacrifice and heroism in service to the state" (2012: 3; see Kuntsman 2011; Kuntsman and Stein 2015). Hence, the social media have become a part of the state's propaganda machinery that fuels the violence, normalizes it, and legitimizes it with the help of mobilization of nationalist sentiments (cf. Ahmed 2004).

While the official Turkish media have served to spread war propaganda and the terrorism discourse for decades (Arcan 2013; Çırakman 2011; Karakoç 2011; Zeydanlıoğlu 2008) and continue to do so as the independent media hardly exists anymore, the cyberspace cannot be fully controlled by governments, no matter how hard they try (Apel 2012; Gürsel 2012). However, even if the graphic displays of violence may go beyond the government's strategies, the images are still framed by the hegemonic nationalist narratives that are shared by both, war strategists and ultranationalist fanatics, and reproduce the shared ideas of what constitutes humanity (see Butler 2009). As I have shown above, the ways in which the Turkish Kurdish issue has been framed and dealt with have almost a century of continuity of policies. Yet, it is exactly elusiveness of social media (in comparison to traditional media) that prevents accountability which enables for the verbal and symbolic violence, militarism, and nationalism to reach unprecedented extremes and move the borders of acceptable violence, instead of granting a limitless "liberatory site" (Kuntsman 2004). The circulated photographs from the urban war zones normalize the destruction and nationalist inscription of the physical space, as it is publically displayed with the members of official security forces posing and publically displaying them in a heroic militarized performance. As physical and symbolic violence against civilian spaces and people becomes positively displayed in nationalist spectacles rather than hidden, it comes to be framed as normal, inevitable, and legitimate part of the "war on terror" (cf. Butler 2009; Kuntsman and Stein 2015). Thus, the spread of war photography on the social media contributes to the normalization of the "permanent state of emergency" (Fassin and Pandolfi 2010).

However, as Apel (2012) noted, the original frame of war photographs is instable, as the photographs can be reused in endless new contexts that produce different meanings – not without complicity, of course (Hirsch 2002). The practice of circulation of war photographs taken by the perpetrators of political violence goes back to the World War I, when violent photographs celebrating militarism circulated among thousands within the patriotic communities of supporters, but also among antiwar activists and pacifists, which lead to a visual debate (Apel 1999). Today, in the digital era of the Internet, the amount of material from all edges of the world, the speed of circulation, the possibilities of digital design and visual recontextualization, and the number of people (actively or passively) involved in visual debates online are enormous (Kuntsman 2011; Gürsel 2012; Gerbaudo 2012; Bonilla and Rosa 2015). Indeed, when we say in the contemporary social media language that a photograph or a video "goes viral," it means that it quickly and uncontrollably spreads from each one place to multiple other places and so on, and engages and connects huge numbers of people in the virtual space. Moreover, the notion of "going viral" also allows for endless uncontrollable variations and "entextualizatons" (Silverstein and Urban 1996) which all add to the layers of framing (cf. Bonilla and Rosa 2015). The hashtags, for instance, "have the intertextual potential to link a broad range of tweets on a given topic or disparate topics as part of an intertextual chain, regardless of whether, from a given perspective, these tweets have anything to do with one another" (Bonilla and Rosa 2015: 5). The effects of images on different people who encounter and engage with them in different contexts and from different positions may be very diverse, and their subsequent usages largely depend on the particular emotional experience involved in the encounter (see Apel 1999; Hirsch 2002; Kuntsman 2011).

Cyberspace is marked by diversity, reframing, and communication. The social *media* particularly (besides other sharing channels such as YouTube or MySpace that include commenting) are all about communication (Gerbaudo 2012). Communication among strangers online is often marked by conflict and charged with strong emotions, political identifications, and moral judgements (see Gerbaudo 2012; Bonilla and Rosa 2015). As Paolo Gerbaudo (2012) showed in his work on the usage of the social media in relation to political activism and mass civil unrests in public spaces, cyberspace is not a separate "virtual world," as it is sometimes seen (see Boellstorff 2008), but a space interconnected and co-dependent

with the streets and squares where popular politics take place (cf. Kuntsman and Stein 2015; Kuntsman 2011). However, the social media are more than just a mean of group formation and a tool of organization of political action. They are also proper sites, although by no means isolated (as we know that isolation is mostly a myth and a problematic assumption), spaces where political belongings and feelings can be expressed and negotiated, and political ideas can be exchanged between individuals (Kuntsman 2004; Bonilla and Rosa 2015; Hudson 2010). For many people, the social media are sites of actual political activism (Bonilla and Rosa 2015; Kuntsman and Stein 2015; Karatzogianni 2006). Hence, as photographs of violence are circulated online, the political conflict and violence they relay to spills into the cyberspace, and the polarized political debates with it (Hudson 2010; Kuntsman 2004; 2011; Kuntsman and Stein 2015). A passionate conflict parallel to the war on the ground takes place in the visual and virtual space (Gürsel 2012; Kuntsman and Stein 2015). Zeynep Gürsel argued that the American so-called "war on terror" in Iraq (which may be said for wars in general) was also a war of images, where "battles over the infrastructures of representation are battles over visual worldmaking" (2012: 71). Gürsel (2012) focused her research on the work of image brokers – "the people who act as intermediaries for images through acts such as commissioning, evaluating, licensing, selling, editing, and negotiating /…/ [and] move images or restrict their movement, thereby enabling or policing their availability to new audiences" (2012: 72) – related to the competitive world of photojournalism and news agencies, where institutional and political hierarchies and negotiations of various kinds of domination within them determine the subject and the frame of visual representation in news worldwide. The social media, however, are that kind of space of multiplicity of voices with unfixed and unpredictable hierarchy and power depending on the amount of "followers," where anyone may take on the role of an image broker. Accordingly, the struggle for domination of the visual-representational frame is perhaps the most intense and all-inclusive on social media (cf. Kuntsman 2004). The "contests of the images" (Apel 2012), parallel to the conflicts in material world are especially affective during armed conflicts (see Kuntsman and Stein 2015), perhaps most importantly during civil wars where both parties try to spread their narrative of the conflict in order to legitimize their violent endeavors (see Protner 2015), and where the boundaries between participants and non-participants are blurred (see Balta 2004).

3.5. Cyberwarfare and Digital Militarism of the Turkish-Kurdish Conflict

During my virtual ethnography on Facebook and Twitter I was able to observe what has been termed as visual-discursive cyberwarfare (Hudson 2010). I have followed various Twitter accounts and Facebook sites and individual accounts that publish news and opinions about the Turkish-Kurdish conflict. Among the social media, Twitter is most appropriate to accommodate the cyberwars and to observe them, as there are almost no limits in communication among huge numbers of strangers. Due to the easy networking and the reach of large audience, the attempt to appropriate the discussions about the Turkish-Kurdish conflict and Turkify the virtual space seems to predominantly focus on Twitter. Groups and individuals associated with the security forces have a large number of accounts: “Özel Kuvvetler” (Special Forces), “Türk Özel Kuvvetleri” (Turkish Special Forces), “Terör Analizleri” (Terror Analysis), “Pkk Gerçekleri” (PKK Truths), “JÖH” (Gendarme Special Forces), BÖF (Operations [against] the Separatist Organization), “Derin Kuvvetler” (Deep Forces), “Terör Gerçekleri” (Terror Truths), and others, which are all pretty similar and often “share” and “like” each other’s posts. Some of these accounts have a few thousand followers, while others have tens of thousands, even up to 242 thousand (such as “Terör Gerçekleri”). It is worth noting, that not only ultranationalist supporters follow the accounts, but also many oppositional individuals concerned with the Turkish-Kurdish war, who are used to gather news from various politically embedded sources in order to understand the events and the way they are understood by different parties. As I have learned during my ethnographic fieldwork among politicized Kurdish students in 2012-2014, following news from different sources is in fact required for a member of politicized Kurdish circles that frequently analytically discuss contemporary events in relation to the Kurdish politics. Many of my interlocutors during the present research followed the ÖH accounts on Twitter. These accounts are publishing highly politically embedded first-hand news from the war zones, as well as comment on the other political events from their particular ultranationalist point of view and frame them into a militarized discourse. The images published by these accounts include digitally designed pictures of nationalist symbols and slogans, photographs of landscapes, portraits of TSK and ÖH members who lost their lives in the clashes, photographs and videos of military operations, funeral photographs, photographs of sieged weapons of

the PKK, mutilated bodies of the guerillas, images of politicians and public figures together with PKK members which are supposed to work as a proof that they are "terrorists," and, of course, photographs of militarized masculinist spectacles amid the ruins of the urban war zones with flags, graffiti, and posing ÖH members.

The meanings of the visual material have to be understood in the sociohistorical context in order to illustrate the significance of the Turkification of the virtual space. First, the artistic and romantic photographs of mountainous landscapes of the Kurdish-majority region marked with Turkish flags and sometimes posing members of security forces, looking towards the horizon, serve as documents of the spatial Turkification and photographic proves of sovereignty, and are therefore crucial to the phantasmatic labor of sovereignty (cf. Navaro-Yashin 2012). As they are staged with exclusion of non-Turkish elements, as snapshots of appropriation, frozen in time, they are more convincing than any kind of spatial strategy that is doomed to be partial and eventually contested. The landscapes are framed as Turkish homeland, protected by the armed forces. The landscape images are often posted with generic texts such as "Good morning," or "God help Turkish soldiers/police," or classic nationalist slogans such as "Homeland First." Moreover, perhaps most striking are the photographs of graffiti endorsed with additional nationalist symbols and the ÖH members posing in a militarized performance of appropriation. The social media had a crucial role in the constitution of the practice of perpetrator graffiti and photography. As first such photographs were widely circulated and received a lot of positive reactions on social media, others seem to have been encouraged to leave their own mark of special appropriation. Even months after the end of the urban clashes, the graffiti photographs are re-published by the ÖH accounts as "good memories." The visual spectacles are most overt celebrations of appropriation and, as I will show later on, semiotic narrations of the war itself. In addition, some photographs include those of the members of armed forces with smiling local Kurdish children in positive interaction (cf. Kuntsman and Stein 2015). The soldiers are presented as good civilizers, welcomed by the local population. These images additionally normalize militarism, justify the military presence in the region and the appropriation of space, as well as construct the opposition between the "good Kurds" loyal to the state and "bad terrorist."

Second, the digitally designed images such as for example a silhouette of a soldier carrying a body of his dead/injured fellow in front of a Turkish flag, are a practice of

nationalist inscription of symbols into the virtual space that most precisely mimics the spatial strategy. It is comparable to the excessive flagging of material spaces that aims at Turkification of multicultural spaces (Öktem 2004) and to fuel overt nationalism in spaces with Turkish majority considered already appropriated (Çırakman 2011). The particular photograph of two soldiers in front of the flag appears again and again when the losses of larger groups of soldiers ÖH members are reported. Thus, they serve to associate the losses with nationalist feelings and loyalty to the state, which automatically becomes excluded from the parties responsible for the loss. The deaths of soldiers and ÖH members are in fact most common news and include a lot of visual material. In addition to generic images, photographs of the funerals of the killed soldiers and ÖH members are common. They not only include nationalist symbols, but also (and especially) gendered representation of crying family members in distress, especially wives and young children (cf. Enloe 2000). These photographs have the continuity with the mainstream media, where the funerals of soldiers have been most efficient strategy of war propaganda by raising and nurturing political feelings (Protner 2015). The funerals shown on TV had a major effect on the development of ethnic hate among Turkish citizens (Zeydanlıoğlu 2008; Çırakman 2011). As Zeydanlıoğlu noted, "Funerals of soldiers killed in clashes with the PKK frequently turn into anti-Kurdish hysteria," which sometimes leads to lynching attempts against Kurds and left-wing activists. "These practices are encouraged and normalised by military officials, academics, politicians and journalists who define nationalist hysteria and violence as 'reactions by concerned citizens' and encourage them to respond" (2008: 12-13; cf. Çırakman 2011).

Most important notion of the discourse around the deaths of the state forces' members is the concept of martyrdom (*şehitlik*), which is also central to Turkish nationalism in general (Keyman and Kancı 2011). When soldiers and ÖH members die – in clashes or in accidents – they are proclaimed martyrs (*şehit*) on the social media and in general public discourse. The concept has religious meaning and has been incorporated into the secular statist militarized discourse and serves to militarize death and render it meaningful within the nationalist narratives of sacred territory/homeland and sacred war (Azak 2010; Keyman and Kancı 2011). The photographs accompanying the reports of "martyred" combatants are close-up portraits of the soldiers/ÖH members and sometimes their family photographs. The family photographs also reproduce the patriarchal gendered norms of a father as protector of

family and land, and his supportive militarized passive wife who has given birth to little future soldiers (see Enloe 2000; Altınay 2004).

The guerillas, on the other hand, are dehumanized in perpetrator photography. Their deaths are presented as deaths of faceless and nameless "terrorists" and their lives are rendered ungraiveble (cf. Butler 2009). Moreover, their deaths are celebrated as military success in opposition to the sad losses of the state forces. While they are mostly reported as numbers, graphic photographs of mutilated bodies, dubbed "carcasses" (*leş*) are not uncommon. These photographs are posted together with brutal mockery (cf. Kuntsman 2011). Similarly, videos of killings are also posted on Twitter. During the urban clashes, for instance, a video taken by a special vision camera was shared, in which YDG-H members are shot and exploded into pieces. It was a display of military-technological superiority, and a pornographic performance of extermination of the "enemy," displayed as a military trophy. Often, the publishers "tag" more active Kurdish activist accounts to make sure they will see the violent posts. Thus, these videos and photographs are explicitly communicative and are aimed to cause emotional effects.

On the other hand, some pro-Kurdish accounts actively engage in cyberwar with the Turkish nationalists. Most commonly, the deaths of TSK/ÖH members are reported as numbers, mostly by the accounts of the pro-PKK news agency, ANF (Firat News Agency), which often exaggerates with the numbers and presents them as success. Although I have not encountered any dead bodies of Turkish armed forces, there are videos of large explosions of military vehicles on the mountain roads, helicopters, and military posts, taken by the guerillas from a distance. Some of these are quite famous – for example, most of politicized young Kurds will know about the video of a helicopter explosion and the shooters chanting "it fell," surprised about his success. Since the end of ceasefire, I have noticed the increase of this kind of videos, produced and released by Guerilla TV and disseminated by the pro-PKK news agencies and individuals. In many of these videos one can hear the voices of guerillas filming and celebrating the success of the action in which tens of soldiers are killed and injured. It is hard to imagine that these videos raise positive emotions and sympathy for the guerillas, but they do – among militarized nationalist Kurds – although the distaste for them is also widespread within the Kurdish movement. Some of these videos are posted on the social media and used particularly to counter the above mentioned provocations on the

ÖH accounts. As Apel noted, “Since the introduction of popular Internet video-sharing sites and social networking sites such as YouTube and Facebook, tens of thousands of viewers have been able to watch videos of military operations” (2012: 3). As the communicative usage of these videos in the cyberwar between ultranationalist Turks and the supporters of the PKK shows, these videos and photographs are not uncensored documents of events open to any kind of narratives, but the interpretations are already imbedded in the images (Butler 2009), which in turn constitute and reinforce the militarized nationalist discourses (Apel 2012: 4). Especially with the use of videos, the contemporary wars have moved closer to the genre of videogames, which normalizes and banalizes war as such on the one hand, and make it more appealing on the other (Apel 2012). Both “sides” of the cyberwar engage in mirroring discourse that celebrates the death of the “enemy” with the feelings of glee and this way constructs binary opposition between Us and Them in terms of grievability. In addition, they are a part of war propaganda, which renders it as a game not only with visual material, but also as it is framed as battle between good and evil, while the audience cheers for one or the other in their comments and “likes” on the social media.

However, a part of the Kurdish visual propaganda production is also militarized nonviolence. Most common photographs and videos published by the PKK supporters are photographs of guerillas in their traditional uniforms, decorated by traditional colorful scarfs with flowers, sitting in the nature and looking into the camera with innocent smile. Some photos involve gentleness between young women with “natural beauty,” others show their care for wild animals – “living with the nature.” In addition, there are innumerous videos of young guerillas singing in Kurdish and dancing folk dances (*govend*). What are in fact combatants is framed as happy, innocent youth, strong but peaceful and carefree – “liberated” and nonviolent. Moreover, especially in the case of brutal deaths of guerillas exposed to the public or other famous cases, the Kurdish movement also uses the concept of martyrdom, which mirrors the Turkish nationalist discourse. Thus, the pro-PKK framings of the war also normalize militarized culture of the armed movement and significantly contributes to the militarization of Kurdish identity (cf. Kuntsman and Stein 2015).

In addition to the idealized image of the guerilla, the pro-Kurdish news and individual accounts on social media (and otherwise) mostly focus on reporting the state violence. Thus, the state forces are put in binary opposition to the guerillas and presented as monstrous, brutal

torturers, and illegitimate occupiers (see Protner 2015). Hereby, the recontextualization of the perpetrator imagery is crucial. Videos and photographs of the ÖH militarized spectacles that have originally been framed as heroic, are reused by the oppositional people as the evidence of brutality and excessive use of violence against civilians and the environment. This has been especially widespread practice due to the abundance of the visual material during the urban clashes, but it has long been a practice among (pro-) Kurdish activists. I still remember a video, which was shown to me in my early days of the previous fieldwork: a compilation of footages of brutal tortures and abuse of civilians, including children, with the dramatic music taken from the *Requiem for a Dream* film soundtrack. It was horrifying. This kind of violent compilations are still spread on social media in order to raise consciousness about human rights violations, and they have a great affective power. Especially photographs and videos that show torture, humiliation, and death of civilians are widespread with the aim of exposing the brutalities of the war. Thus, the same images of suffering are on one side used to show the state's power and domination over the dissident population which is constructed as terrorists, and by the other to expose and condemn violence, and demand justice.

In the ÖH accounts, not only the combatants are constructed as terrorists, but also politicians, activists, and other public figures that criticize the government in any given political controversy. To prove their involvement into "terrorism," they publish photographs of these persons together with the leading staff of the PKK. The expanding terrorism discourse also includes the Kurdish struggle in Syria to which the ÖH accounts often refer as the "PKK/YPG terrorist organization" when they publish news from the Syrian war. Politicized Kurds are equally concerned with Rojava, whose military success and political imaginary and structure attract political left from all around the world, but is especially valuable example for the Kurds in the region. The framing of the Kurdish struggle in Syria in the international virtual space is especially significant, as their success greatly depends on the international support. Thus, the struggle for visual and discursive domination of the virtual space includes the sensitive issue of Rojava as well. Very often the pro-Kurdish and pro-state forces accounts discuss same current political issues in a polarized way, which further illustrates the struggle for domination over the framing of the events broader than just the Turkish-Kurdish war (cf. Kuntsman and Stein 2015). Yet, they are both mostly focused

on the Turkish-Kurdish conflict regarding which they are in continuous communication, explicit in comments, and where they often re-publish each other's posts and reframe them with oppositional comments. It seems as if Twitter account users are in constant anticipation of the emotions of one another, as they engage in verbal and visual violence filled with hate.

3.5. Conclusion

The Turkish Kurdish issue has a long history of spatial policies of Turkification and counter-policies of re-appropriation. The Turkification policies have been a form of violence imposed on the Kurdish-majority region under the ethnonationalist imagination of modernity. They included forced migrations, material appropriation of space through destruction and reconstruction, and discursive (such as toponymes-changing), which aimed at the erasure of ethno-religious diversity from the space and history (Öktem 2004). However, the Other kept coming back within a growing political movement under which the counter-hegemonic spatial practices took place. This struggle for spatial domination included the material-discursive inscriptions of space which started with the flagging and nationalist slogans formed with rocks on the mountain slopes. Yet, during the urban warfare, the urban technique of nationalist inscription emerged in the form of perpetrator graffiti. Moreover, the graffiti have traveled from the material spaces into cyberspaces of social media; from material walls to the "walls" of Twitter and Facebook. Especially on Twitter, the so-called cyberwar for the domination of virtual spaces of discussion about the conflict has been taking place between the (pro-) ÖH account-users and the pro-PKK users, both disseminating ideological narratives and war propaganda, in continuous communication with each other, which may get extremely violent and morbid (cf. Kuntsman 2011). Furthermore, same violent images of spatial Turkification turned into a nationalist spectacle are circulated first by those who took the photographs and engage in the phantasmatic labor of construction of sovereignty, and then by people oppositional to the war that re-frame them as documentary photography, i.e. evidences of asymmetric deliberate destruction, symbolic and physical violence, human rights violations, and impunity. The cyberethnography implicates that the struggle on social media is most significant in terms of framing the war in the public sphere

(Kuntsman 2011). Moreover, the emotions are being generated and discharged on social media by the politicized users, which is important in order to understand the social dynamics and collective feelings in material world as well, as the affective atmospheres spill between cyberspace and everyday emotional lives in the material world, as I will show in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 4

IMAGES OF DESTRUCTED CITIES AND/AS RUINATED LIVES

4.1. Introduction

I am sitting in a café, browsing through my collection of the photographs of the debris of violence, working on a draft of this chapter. A friend sitting beside me looks at the screen of my laptop. In a short moment, she pulls her shoulders together, pulls a face into an expression of pain and turns away as if something would slap her from the screen. It is likely that she has seen the photograph before, maybe more than once, on her computer screen or smartphone, during one of her regular checks of Facebook "wall," while working or while sitting in a café, just like we do now. "Don't look at them too much," she says with genuine concern for my wellbeing, speaking from her own experience of studying photographic representations of suffering. She is warning me about the quantity of looking, as if the effects (or affects, as I will conceptualize them) of the images could accumulate inside me and could eventually damage my health, injure me. How can we define, study, and understand our bodily experience and this power of the images of violence and destruction? How and why do we engage with the images of destruction? How can we conceptualize the feelings we get from the ruins? Are the feelings coming from our subjective attitude towards what we see – the destruction of what was once our city, a living space for people and communities, and a home? Or is there an autonomous violent force of destruction that we bodily experience merely by the act of looking at a photograph? What is so affective or/and meaningful about ruins? In this chapter, I will discuss the photographs of ruins from the Turkish-Kurdish urban war zones that were widely circulated on the social media during and after the urban clashes and the experience of the images of the people who mostly encountered the destruction only through photographs (though some also in person). First, I will talk about what it means for a city to be destroyed through the concept of *urbicide* – the annihilation of urbanity as a place of coexistence of communities (Coward 2009). I will address the destruction of urbanity in

comparison to the destruction of human lives and argue that they are, in the eyes of people who engage with them, inseparably connected, rather than two comparable types of images. As the attitudes and narratives of my interlocutors reveal, the emic perspective focuses on the destruction on human lives, implicated in the ruins. Contrary to those scholars who prioritize ruins in discussions of emotional effects of images of destruction, my interlocutors were more strongly affected by the images of dead bodies in the moment of looking. In addition, the witnessing without images of the extermination and the feeling of helplessness were most disintegrating. However, the long-lasting effects of material destruction on their emotional lives as well as on the lives of communities in terms of belonging also continues to linger.

Second, I will discuss the affect of ruins in relation to several aspects of uncanniness of ruins: the affective void (experienced especially) by people who saw the aftermath of destruction live; simultaneous absence and presence of the city; ghostly presence of bodies lost in the rubble; haunting of human remains; disrupted belonging as the loss of "home;" and gendered desecration of homes. I will argue that people's historically contingent subjective attunement is crucial for the feelings to be transmitted between violent images and people who encounter them. As Navaro-Yashin wrote: "An environment of ruins discharges an affect of melancholy. At the same time, those who inhabit this space of ruins [or in my case, engage with it visually] feel melancholic: They put the ruins into discourse, symbolize them, interpret them, politicize them, understand them, project their subjective conflicts onto them, remember them, try to forget them, historicize them, and so on" (2012: 172). Partially following this focus on object-subject relationality, I will nevertheless argue that in the context of ongoing violent conflict, one's subjective positionality in relation to violence and to the destructed places plays a determinate role in the experience (cf. Jansen 2013). Hence, I argue that the affect of ruins passes through one's subjectivity that determines one's bodily disposition to be affected in a certain way, as well as one's knowledge of the context. Understanding the violence in a particular violent context exacerbates negative feelings, already present due to the overall violent states of living. This, as I will show in in the last section, is especially evident in the case of atrocities that were not visually documented. While ruins cause sadness, grief, the feeling of uncanniness, and a disruption in one's

belonging, the will to exterminate, exhibited in the violence, and ungrievability of death is what disintegrates people most of all.

4.2. Urbicide

The houses of the narrow stone-made streets of Sur, surrounded by one of the largest (almost) completely intact walls in the world, have been turned into unrecognizable concrete skeletons with black stains from fire and smaller piles of debris. I cannot believe that I walked these streets less than a year ago, when there was still a lively historical city center. Many of my interlocutors have visited the historical center of what is considered the Kurdish capital. With some of them, we together dwelled on the memories of the aesthetic experience of ancient history together with lively community life, small shops, and beautiful stone-built *han*-s – old caravanserais with internal yards where people meet to drink tea and smoke *nargile* (water pipe), or cool down under spraying water in hot summer evenings. Since the destruction, people speak about Sur with sadness. Not only because its ancient history had a sense of pride for the Kurds, but also because of the disruption and destruction of human lives. Sur was known to be populated by poor families, many of who settled there after they lost everything during the destruction of presumably "pro-PKK" villages and were forced to migrate and search for a source of income. These people have lost their homes and their sources of living for the second time. Yet, it would not be correct to see Sur as (only) a place of victimhood. As a politicized space, it has been one of the hearts of the political Kurdish movement. It was this political unity and confidence that gave birth to the armed struggle for territorial sovereignty, stated by the local youth and joined by hundreds of others who saw it as their city. Consequently, the defeat of the resistance fighters and the destruction and evacuation of their living space was both, practical and symbolic blow for the Kurdish movement in general and for those who had been inspired by the political energy of Sur, as well as other cities famous for the similar social character such as Cizre or Nusaybin. As I will argue, systematic destruction of certain districts and buildings way beyond the "collateral damage" in war is an attempt to crush what and who these places stand for and therefore a technique of political violence (cf. Coward 2009; Bevan 2006). Thus, the

photographs of the ruins have overwhelming emotional effects on the viewers whose (political) subjectivity makes them especially perceptive to the violence of destruction.

Numerous pictures of Nusaybin district of Mardin, Yüksekova (of Hakkâri), Silvan and Sur (Diyarbakır) and Şırnak and Cizre (Şırnak) are indistinguishable from each other. They were all reduced to rubble; turned into demolished "ghost towns" of collapsing buildings with gaping holes instead of windows and the remaining walls pierced with holes from bullets and explosions. We are faced with the horror of the void left of these towns. In a few days, photographic accounts of the destruction evolve and multiply, as do their effects, accordingly. The effect of some photographs of riddled ruins under a dark sky and with an empty tank road in the middle has been increased with the help of designing tools for brightness and color. We can see pictures, consistent of two photographs put together – Nusaybin "before/after;" Şırnak "before/after." Other collages assemble photographs of different cities and thus point to the large scale of the destruction, as well as to their interconnectedness as both, victims of "urbicide" (Campbell et al. 2007; Coward 2009; Shaw 2004; Ramadan 2009) and spaces of resistance. Some photographs are juxtaposed to those of the ruinated Syrian cities and neighborhoods, pointing out the severity of the war in Turkey and its silencing in the international media. Some photographs have been used in collage juxtapositions with the photographs of the aftermath of destruction from the World War II. In the upper left angle is the poster of the film The Pianist (dir. Roman Polanski, 2002) and a photograph of mass exile of refugees under it. On the right side of the collage is a photograph from Cizre ("the Cizre" is written on it, mirroring "the Pianist" from the poster) with the same composition of ruins with a road of rubble in the middle. Under it, a photo of refugees from Cizre, escaping the war zone with as much properties as they can carry on foot, from the time when the curfew was lifted for a short time.

Along the same lines, the photographs of Nusaybin and Warsaw are put together, both framed as results of deliberate complete destruction in an attempt of illegitimate occupation. The message is more politically explicit and commemorative: Above, "1 Hitler – Varşova 1939-1945" writes over the photograph; below, "2 Erdoğan – Nusaybin 2015-2016." The latter is one of the most widely circulated photographs of the destruction of Nusaybin from the early June 2016. The town, or what was left of it, was captured in the frame from a lifted position and a fair distance. In the empty ground of yellow soil in the foreground, possibly

the edge of the city, there is a team of state forces and four large armored vehicles, three of the same kaki camouflage color with olive green stains matching the dry grass in the foreground, and one white. A bit further there is a smaller black armored vehicle. Up from the "square" (which might have been built-up before the destruction) goes a muddy tank road paved through the debris. Alongside the road, there is smaller rubble of the buildings razed to the ground. To the right and left are collapsing leftovers of destructed buildings, looking like big piles of broken walls, as far as the eye can see. Some walls along the tank road are covered with gigantic Turkish flags, forming a red passage through the ruins, as if it was waiting for the new ruler to take his first walk through the concurred territory.[16]

Why the images of violence against built environment play such an important role in our experience of war and destruction? Sometimes images of buildings being destroyed – especially those that stood strongly through long history and "survived" several storms of social change – can affect one even more than images of people suffering. Ruins come to symbolize devastation of people's lives as *longue durée* and collective rather than one-time individual tragedies. Images of ruins evoke a more abstract notion of destruction (of human lives) that may touch us more painfully and overwhelm us, as we find ourselves in the midst of it. As Croatian author Slavenka Drakulić famously asked in her "obituary" for the Stari Most (Old Bridge) in Mostar after its destruction in 1993: "Why do I feel more pain looking at the image of the destroyed bridge than the image of the woman [with her throat cut after a massacre]" (Coward 2009: 11)? Trying to answer this question, Drakulić wrote: "The bridge /…/ was built to outlive us. /…/ Because it was the product of both individual creativity and collective experience, it transcended our individual destiny. *A dead woman is one of us – but the bridge is all of us*" (ibid., Coward's emphasis). As Coward argued, the statement should not be understood as a disregard for the value of "human life." What is meant is that the destruction of built environment "comprises the negation of the conditions of possibility of the communities within which individuals have their existence" (2009: 12; cf. Bevan 2006). This kind of perspective on destruction (in political violence) that puts materialities into the

[16] After this horrifying photographs was widely circulated, a Kurdish artist and journalist Zehra Doğan painted the same scene of ruinated Nusaybin and was because of this sentenced to more than 2 years of prison (see http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/In-Erdogans-Turkey-an-Artist-Gets-Jailed-for-Painting-Reality-20170324-0010.html).

center of discussion is a radical challenge to the modernist anthropocentric frame (Coward 2009; cf. Navaro-Yashin 2012; Henare et al. 2007).

In order to conceptualize material destruction, the concept of *urbicide* has (re)emerged and engaged scholars from various disciplines such as political theory, geography, international politics, planning, sociology, architecture, anthropology, history, and law into an interdisciplinary dialog (Campbell et al. 2007). The concept is used for variety of examples of destruction of built environment, ranging from the one of war (as a strategic objective of purposive violence) to the one of capitalist urban planning and restructuring (Campbell et al. 2007; cf. Gordillo 2014). As Gordillo (2014) showed in his analysis of layers of destruction in Argentina, there is a continuity between history of political violence and "contemporary afterlife of distinctly capitalist and modernist forms of expansion and ruination" (27). The connection could not be more obvious in the example of Sur, the oldest but also the poorest part of Diyarbakır, as most of my interlocutors noted as well. While the smoke was still in the air, the AKP government started to announce plans for full reconstruction of Sur as a commercialized heritage site, which inevitably means gentrification that would finalize the displacement of the population and completely change the character of the place.[17] The demolition of Sur continues even one year after the battles have finished and thousands are still getting internally displaced. The result, and often the explicit aim of urban transformations, as in the case of these resistant Kurdish neighborhoods, is the uprooting of a community; its extermination and obliteration. Several of my interlocutors saw the destruction of a city in term of bond between a place and a community, especially through the memories and history contained in the built environment. Most of my interlocutors critically saw both, war and capitalist destruction of a city as a damage inflicted on the bond between a place and a community, especially through the memories and history contained in the built environment. As my field-mate Fırat put it:

> *"A city carries a people's memory it carries a city's memory. It doesn't matter how bad place may it be, if it is your place where you experienced something, your family is there, you lived your childhood there, then this is much more meaningful. The walls have history. They are very meaningful for a parson, there is a real bond. You speak with that walls, with the walls of the city, and it tells you things, it gives you memory.*

[17] See an article in Guardian by David Lepeska: https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/feb/09/destruction-sur-turkey-historic-district-gentrification-kurdish

/…/ [With demolition] they are annihilating memories of all the community there." (Fırat, 30)

"Because we all have a house and we all lived in houses, I don't know, for myself, I relate to the house I have been living in as if I relate to like teddy bear that has been with me for all my life. It is a part of the family, it's a part of you, actually. So when you see it is destructed, a part of you and your family is also destroyed. The whole life of that place and community is gone. And it doesn't seem replaceable." (İdil, 30)

As Robert Bevan wrote, "To lose all that is familiar – the destruction of one's environment – can mean a disorientating exile from the memories they have invoked. It is the threat of a loss to one's collective identity and the secure continuity of those identities (even if, in reality, identity is always shifting over time)" (2006: 13). The "dispersal of those networks means that [that house or the city] is no longer a place where one belongs" (Bryant 2014: 691). Many of my interlocutors have personal attachments to the places that were ruined. With the ruination of the places, their memories feel ruined as well.

"Think, a destruction of the place you knew, you went there and drank tea, spent time with friends, really affects you bed emotionally. And actually there it is your country. You will not see it again." (Ewa, 30)

"You but you lived in that house, you drank water, your grandfather bought you something… Your childhood, I mean! And they are trying to annihilate these memories." (Sara, 29)

"I have seen to Sur before, I stayed there, I know the streets, I have seen all the streets where the clashes took place, I visited them with friends. And nothing is left from there, just stones, everywhere is ruined. When I will go there again, I will want to go to the same places with a nostalgia, to see how they have changed, but these places are now gone. When I go I will want to see it even if it is ruined, but one period of my life when I was walking around there, the house where I stayed, is now gone. Of course, this affects a person. It is painful, very painful. The places where we spent nice time are gone." (Fırat, 30)

The places where many of my interlocutors grew up, visited, spent time with family and friends, and felt at home, will never be that places again, as many of them noted.

It is true that the Kurdish forces caused material destruction as well, but as Graham (2004) argued for the case of Palestinian-Israeli struggle, we can talk about "asymmetric

urbicide" where the violence of the dominating force is disproportionally stronger. Needless to say, there are no trophy-photographs of Kurdish militants celebrating the destruction. In the photographs, we are witnessing "the *targeted* destruction of architecture beyond that caused by purely military considerations" (Bevan 2006: 11, original emphasis). Bevan, a journalist, architecture critic, and heritage consultant, argued in his book *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War* (2006) that the destruction of buildings – especially those with a great cultural significance for a community – is a strategy of war: "cultural cleansing, with architecture as its medium" (8); a deliberate act to eradicate the traces of the existence of a community aimed at the extermination of the community itself. Rather than "collateral damage," Bevan claimed, "this is the active and often systematic destruction of particular building types or architectural traditions that happens in conflicts where the erasure of the memories, history and identity attached to architecture and place – enforced forgetting – is the goal itself" (Bevan 2006: 8). Bevan (2006) illustrated his argument with various historical and recent examples of ethnic cleansing, partitions, and conquests: from the conquistadors' destruction of the ancient cities of the Americas; bombings of Dresden and Tokyo in World War II; and the attacks on (especially Ottoman Muslim) architecture during the Bosnian war (including the infamous destruction of Stari Most in Mostar); to destruction in the context of Partition and continuous ethnoreligious violence in the Indian subcontinent; attacks on places of worship in Palestine/Israel; and the meaningful choice of the World Trade Center towers in the "9/11" attack.

A comparable illuminating example from the recent urban destruction in Turkey is that of the Surp Giragos Armenian Orthodox Church in Diyarbakır's walled city of Sur. Since the annihilation of Armenians in 1915-1917, the largest church in the region was deliberately left to deteriorate and decay,[18] until 2009-2012 when it was finally restored in collaborative efforts of Turkey's Armenian community and the local Kurdish authorities. The restoration was also the time of public apologies of Kurdish politicians for the participation of Kurds in the Armenian catastrophe and thus an important step in reconciliation. In the last decade, significant part of the Kurdish movement adopted the discourse of historical continuity between the Armenian catastrophe and the ongoing violence against the Kurds, which entails

[18] See Bevan (2009: 53-60) for a comparative discussion of material aspect of the annihilation of Anatolian Armenians.

both, the recognition of historical complicity and guilt on the one hand, and the building of stronger ties of solidarity between various oppressed groups in Turkey (in accordance with the explicit discourse of the HDP). During the clashes in 2015-2016, it was made sure that the Surp Giragos Church as a place of worship and a *memorial* site of Anatolian Armenian community (a museum is also included in the complex), a reminder of the annihilation, the absence of Armenians, a symbol of Armenian-Kurdish solidarity, and the embodiment of the autonomous historical narrative they construct together against the official line of denialism, was ruined again. In addition, together with other churches in the region, Surp Giragos was expropriated in March 2016 under the Article 27 of the Expropriation Law. The seizure of the church prevented the Kurdish and Armenian communities to restore the church as a reminder of the continuity of violence and a symbol of solidarity that they built independently of the state authorities. The example most clearly illustrates the meaning of urbicide as Coward beautifully put it: "the destruction of buildings as a condition of possibility of being-with-others" (2009: 14). Another important building which has been reported to be damaged during the clashes is the afore mentioned Dört Ayaklı Minare which is not only an iconic monument of Sur, but also a place of memory of murder of Tahir Elçi who was shot during his call for the end of destruction of the ancient city. It is these meaningful connections, the entanglement of buildings into the memory of the assaulted communities that make the destruction so painful and devastating.

According to Coward (2009), deliberate assault on the material environment of a shared space is an attack on *urbanity* as the condition for co-existence of a community in its heterogeneity and plurality. Thus, urbicide is "fundamentally political form of violence," central to exclusionary political forces of homogenization (ibid.; cf. Shaw 2004; Bevan 2006). We can add to Coward's (2009) various examples of urbicide such as the destruction during the Yugoslav Wars (cf. Bevan 2006) and the Israeli destruction of the Occupied Territories of Palestine (cf. Graham 2004) our example of the destruction of Kurdish cities by the homogenizing force with its ethno-religious notion of Turkishness. These and many more cases of urbicide follow the same logic of nationalist appropriation. Similarly as in Israel (Graham 2004), Lebanon (Ramadan 2009), and former Yugoslavia (Shaw 2004), the urbicide of the Kurdish districts in Turkey has been a strategy of "ethnic cleansing" (i.e. homogenization), advocated with the ideological construction of the urban warfare against

the YPS in official and media discourses as "cleaning" the streets of "terrorism." **NE SÜPÜRDÜK BE.. PÖH** ("How Well We Swept, Man.. PÖH"), says one of the graffiti, with two MHP (Nationalist Movement Party) flags with three crescents sprayed left and right of the sentence. A man poses in front of the graffiti, in full-black militarist attire, with only three holes for eyes and mouth in his snow mask. Shaw (2004) claimed that displacement (and massacres) of people, and destruction of plural urban communities through urbicide are in fact two sides of genocide. For him, "destruction of buildings and targeting of urbanity" (i.e. plural communities as defined by Coward) are "*elements* of genocidal war" (Shaw 2004: 148, original emphasis). Furthermore, he discussed the parallels between the concepts of genocide and urbicide and argued that the border between the two concepts is blurred, since (1) in practice the attacks on plural, cosmopolitan urbanity and ethnic communities are not separate; (2) both are marked by indiscriminate violence; and (3) they often happen simultaneously and are experienced as one by the victims (Shaw 2004: 148-149). Shaw concluded that "Urbicide is a form of genocide, the fundamentally illegitimate form of modern war in which civilian population as such is targeted for destruction by armed force" (2004: 153).

Similarly, Bevan (2006) called for the recognition of the destruction of built environment of a community as cultural genocide, systematic cultural cleansing, whose experience is "fatally intertwined" with the experience of genocide and is often an evidence of intended crimes against humanity. Yet, some authors disagree with the conflation of concepts despite their important connections (Coward 2009) and note that there may be an urbicide without a genocide (Ramadan 2009). (Attempts of) annihilation of a people may include various interconnected strategies. The systematic endeavors ever since its foundation as a modern nation-state that derives its legitimization from the existence of a homogeneous nation to annihilate Kurdish identity have involved destruction (and reconstruction) of space (see Jongerden 2009; Ötkem 2004), eradicating violence (during the Dersim massacre 1937-1938), and various assimilation strategies (especially linguistic policies) that have been conceptualized as cultural genocide (Fernandes 2012; Üngör 2012). While these processes are practically related, the most important parallel between these concepts lies in their temporality. Genocide, cultural genocide – also discussed specifically as linguicide (annihilation of a language) or ethnicide (annihilation of an ethnic group – i.e., its identity) – and urbicide are not one-time events, but rather long-term processes of destruction. Hence,

they all have an afterlife in which they importantly affect everyday politics as well as people's subjectivities. In this vein, Sara (29) expressed her concern about the long-term consequences of the destruction in relation to the possibility of reconciliation:

> *"Many children are again experiencing the things from which we escaped as children. This is very heavy for me. /…/ What scares me very much is this. For example, the children whose houses are now demolished, who know that the police is Turkish, how are we going to explain to this child, that Turks are also your comrades? How are we going to speak about this? How are we going to explain this to these children? They couldn't go to school, his sister's killed body, for example, was kept at home… How are we going to explain her brother that we are going to make something together [with Turks]?* (Sara, 29)

As it is often the case with genocides and other forms of political violence, an urbicide, despite its uniqueness, may be perceived in relation to other urbicides known in history. Inspired by Benjamin's and (following) Adorno's conceptualizations, Gordillo described the relations between various debris of violence as "constellations" – an "image that evokes a non-casual connectivity defined by multiplicity, rupture, and fragmentation" (2014: 20). "Constellations," for Gordillo (ibid.) "point to processes that are stored in objects but that are also outside of them: an outside that is multicentered and has a plastic, elusive form, for constellations have no clear boundaries and superimpose on each other, forming palimpsests." Various "nodes of rubble" are immersed in wider constellations, and they are, as Gordillo (ibid.) argued, "far from being dead matter." Those who made the collages that juxtapose distinct cityscapes of destruction such as that of Nusaybin and Warsaw, and those hundreds who participated in their circulation online have addressed and expressed this connectivity. In addition, many of my interlocutors compared the faith of Kurdish cities with the simultaneous ongoing destruction of cities in neighboring Syria, and some evoked the memory of the Armenian catastrophe that took place in the same geographical area a century ago. These moves are not acts of "memory wars" and competitions in misery and trauma; rather, they are acts of what Rothberg (2011) called "multidirectional memory" of political violence – a transcultural remembrance with a greater political potential. Rothberg argued that distinct traumatic memories do not "crowd each other out of the public sphere" or relativize each other's uniqueness (2011: 523). Rather, non-competitive, non-hierarchical recognition of interrelations between distinct traumatic memories across communal,

geographical, and historical boundaries reinforces particular memories and opens new possibilities of their usage as common resources for articulation of each group's claims for recognition and justice (Rothberg 2011). It may be due to this connectivity that we experience the images of destroyed urban landscape as multiple and universal, as a part of us, as Drakulić (in Coward 2009: 11-12) asserted.

However, I would be cautious about Drakulić's juxtaposing the images of material destruction with the images of dead human bodies. When I asked my interlocutors to compare the effects of images of ruins with images of dead bodies, many of them argued that the latter affect them with a greater pain in the moment of witnessing. Hence, in contrast with Drakulić and Coward (2009), my interlocutors exhibited a human-centered perspective. Although my questions were about the photographs of ruins and graffiti, most of my interlocutors first recalled the images of murdered and desecrated bodies that were spread through social media. In August 2015, the social media got flooded by the image of a young female guerilla fighter Ekin Wan whose naked body lies on a street of Varto district of Muş, surrounded by bloodstains and legs of the members of Turkish security forces in military boots of who have striped her naked and took the photograph. The will to desecrate the "enemy's" body after she is already killed in a performance of masculinist domination fills the viewers with disgust. Another image of a tortured body that "went viral" in October 2015 was that of guerilla Hacı Birlik, attached with a rope to a panzer and dragged on the streets of Şırnak. As my previous research on the memories of political violence in the 1990's showed, these brutal spectacles are anything but new, but they have now reached another stage of publicity with the help of digital technologies and networks that makes it incomprehensible. Moreover, the publicized images of murdered bodies of civilians are also those that were most painful for my interlocutors and most strongly imprinted themselves into their memories. A middle-aged woman Taybet İnan, known as Taybet Ana, mother of 11, was shot in front of her house in Silopi in January 2016 during the curfews when everyone who was seen outside was targeted by the Turkish security forces. She lies on her side amid stains of dried blood with her legs pulled together and she is covering her face with one arm. Her motionless body was lying like this in the middle of the street for 7 days during the heavy clashes, while her family could only watch through the windows as it slowly decayed. The image triggers another horrifying story of a family in Cizre who has kept their 10-year old daughters murdered body in freezer

for 3 days, as they were not able to bury her due to the curfews.[19] Even if there is no photograph of the violence or if one has not seen it, the image is alive and clear in the memories as if one would have seen its photograph.

> *"When you read over and over the narratives, you can no longer be sure if you saw a photo or just read about it. I know I haven't seen this child in the freezer, I know I didn't see it, but I remember the image. Because it was told over and over and it is a powerful image. I was told so much about the image and I haven't seen it. I have it in my mind and it is horrible. And there was this photo of Taybet Ana. /…/ So it was told over and over again, the mother lying on the floor in front of the house. I have this images [in my mind]. And now actually I realize that these images I haven't actually seen are more powerful."* (İdil, 30)

The images of dead bodies most explicitly show the brutality of the war, and the disregard for human life. However, most of my interlocutors found the juxtaposition of ruins and human bodies odd and prioritization of one or the other somehow problematic, as the destruction of human lives is an integral part of material destruction, implicit in the images of ruins. For the viewers of the photographs, the ruins stand as reminders of violence and destruction of people's lives – both, those whose lives were lost amid the ruins and those hundreds of thousands that have lost their homes and belongings, and were forced to migrate to other towns and cities. *"The ruins imply that people have died, or left, that they are no longer there. Even the houses are dead. /…/ The life in general,"* (İdil, 30). *"When you see ruins is like a summary and you can expect there must be bodies inside,"* said Armi (24), who also noted that she is more shaken by witnessing bodies as a dancer, for who body has a great significance. Most of my interlocutors found "sharing" of images of dead bodies very unethical and problematic, as it not only causes great pain, but also disgraces the victims. They argued that alternative visual representations and memorializations of victims focused on their lives rather than their death are more meaningful and productive.

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[19] News report of the event: http://www.diken.com.tr/cizrede-10-yasinda-bir-cocuk-yasamini-yitirdi-cenazesi-buzdolabinda-bekletiliyor/

4.3. Affective Ruins/Rubble

Building upon the connection between urbicide and destruction of communities, I argue that we should move the analysis of ruins beyond the allegorical frame of the destruction of Stari Most or Sur, which has been considered one of the most important artefacts of Bosnian cultural heritage and a fetishized symbol of co-existence of communities in Bosnia, and as a ruin became a symbol of the destruction of the possibility of the co-existence or ethnoreligious communities. Gordillo (2014) argued that to call something a "ruin" usually means to see it as an abstraction of the past worth preserving – and fetishize it as does so the heritage industry. This attitude towards ruins is bourgeois common sense of the elite that "is not politically innocent, but founded on a disregard for the piles of rubble" (2014: 6). Therefore, he makes a political and theoretical move from "ruins" to "rubble," which is concrete, textured, and present. As theoretical concept, "rubble," he claimed, has the power to deglamorize ruins and reveal "material sedimentation of destruction" (2014: 10). While I agree with Gordillo's (2014) warning about fetishization and commodification of ruins, closely related to the policies of destruction, I chose not to give up on the concept of ruins because it better expresses the violence that produces ruins, the act of ruining, destroying, demolishing.[20] Moreover, the distinction between rubble and ruins is difficult to sustain when we consider people's political engagement with specific debris. Gordillo (2014) based his perspective on his ethnographic fieldwork where he observed people's disregard for the historical value of the ruins on the one hand, and their affective engagement with them within another ontological frame on the other. Yet, even he, after making a conceptual and theoretical move from "ruins" to "rubble" in the introduction, did not always keep a clear distinction throughout his ethnography, which diminishes the value of the theoretical distinction. In addition, my own observations indicate a more complicated relation between different attitudes towards the debris of the Turkish-Kurdish urban clashes. The photographs of the aftermath of the clashes do not represent ancient buildings of Eastern Anatolia's and Mesopotamia's cultural heritage (except for Sur, since it is an ancient city in itself), but

[20] In Turkish, the word "yıkıntı" (ruin, debris) comes from the verb "yıkmak" – to demolish, destroy, ruin, while the word "kalıntı" is used for "historical" remains (heritage). My preference to translate yıkıntı as "ruin" might originate from the fact that the expression fits better with my native symbolic system where the word "ruin" (ruševina) likewise primarily associates with destruction and refers to any kind of violently demolished building and does not by itself hierarchize debris.

ordinary neighborhoods and residential buildings – people's living environments now turned into rubble, and marked with flags and nationalist graffiti. Yet, many of my interlocutors also emphasized the ancient history of Mesopotamian towns and hamlets such as Sur, Silvan, or Nusaybin/Mardin, destroyed in the war. These remarks may include the bourgeois attitude of hierarchization of debris to the extent that there is something bourgeois (educated middle class, to which most of my interlocutors and me belong) about valuing historical artefacts as such, but there is also more to it. On the one hand, it is a move to claim one's own denied an expropriated history and geography as common human heritage which might in turn give them – the places and the people – recognition and international concern (if not protection, as we see that there is no international institution powerful enough to do that in regards to places already proclaimed "world heritage"). Therefore, ascribing historical value to the places under destruction is a political move, which by no doubt plays into the international heritage industry – and me being a European ethnographer is not insignificant here. It is a co-opted choice in the face of destructive force of the war and neoliberal policies that demolish homes and historical sites alike in the Kurdish-majority regions, except if they (both) can be subjected to Turkification and dominated enough to be restructured or relocated. What used to be Kurdish rubble is then turned into Turkish ruins, and fetishized as human heritage in Turkish property and commodified (cf. Öktem 2004; Çaylı 2016). On the other hand, as Çaylı (2016) argued, heritage sites, experienced and conceptualized in terms of dispossession and vulnerability rather than proprietorship can also enable political mobilization, as the examples of Occupy-style protests in Turkey reveal. The view of the ruins as a part of continuously dispossessed material space, expressed by my interlocutors, may be thus also seen as a move of historically sensitive mobilization of vulnerability and belonging beyond the heritage claims in opposition to the policies that include ongoing destruction. After all, their demand is not to sterilize the areas as historical sites which always involves exclusions – as this is most often the case in top-down reconstruction projects – but to protect the (poor and often oblivious to the heritage-quality) people's right to live in those historical areas and continue to construct their own ways of relaying to them beyond the notion of heritage. Hence, the relation between historical ruins and rubble is complicated when they are both a part of an ongoing war, political strategies of symbolic and physical appropriation, and political struggles that evoke both, heritage (re)possession and claim of urban materiality as

a living space. In addition, due to the ongoing violence, people's relations with the debris may also be more immediate and more aware. The war, as I will show in the next pages, is what makes all ruins in the region concrete, present, and charged with violence of the present-past and the present.

No rubble is just any rubble. Ruins are material sites of layers of individual and collective histories and are filled with the emotional charge of destructive events. They embody histories that persist into the present (Thrift 2000; Biner 2010; Navaro-Yashin 2012; Çaylı 2015; Bryant 2014; Gordillo 2014). As I have discussed in Chapter 2, the ontological and affective turns in anthropology have unsettled the human-centered approach to materialities and invited us to investigate the question of life and agency of objects in relation to human beings (see Henare et al. 2007). Within this paradigm, the power of material ruins themselves can be investigated beyond being merely a "trope of destruction and negativity" (Gordillo 2014: 6). The Acror-Network Theory most explicitly talks about the "agency (or, rather, actancy) of objects and the rhizomatic multiplicity of space-times formed and maintained by them" (Thrift 2000: 214). Yet, while ANT "is good at describing certain intermediated kinds of effectivity," Thrift argued, "the troubling impasses and breakthroughs, the trajectories and intensities of events /…/ are too often caught up and neutralised," (2000: 214) and the human imaginative, expressive, and narrative work with the intensities – the "phantasmatic" in Navaro-Yashin's terms – is neglected (Thrift 2000: 215). Therefore, as ethnographic works on people's sensual experiences and ontological conceptualizations of the postwar material environments they live in showed, one's subjective-collective position in relation to the violent history (and present) plays an important role in the ways one is involuntarily affected by the materialities (see e.g. Jansen 2013; Biner 2010; Navaro-Yashin 2012; Bryant 2014; Gordillo 2014).

In his investigation of the affective afterlife of destruction in Argentina, Gordillo (2014) argued that the interconnected nods of rubble in the violent geography have a gravitational pull, a "brightness" that indicates the affective quality of objects infused with history of violence. The brightest objects, Gordillo (2014) showed in his book, are haunted by the ghosts of the massacred and dispossessed "Indians" who once themselves destroyed colonial cities in violent insurgencies, which generates the affective energy that can be bodily felt. Haunting, he wrote, is "an affect created by an absence that exerts a hard-to-articulate,

nondiscursive, yet positive pressure on the body, thereby turning such absence into a physical presence that is felt and that thereby affects" (Gordillo 2014: 31). The specters present in ruins, bones, and the *mestizo* bodies of *criollos*, although uncanny, are an ordinary part of the ontology of Gran Chaco; they are social figures with which people engage especially during religious rituals, carnivals, and celebrations that awaken the "Indians" in explicit references or implicit (silenced, forgotten, unaware) connections to indigeneity and conquest. Attending his rich and very diverse ethnographic material on the environmental and objective affects, Gordillo argued that ruins, bones, and other objects related to the violent history bodily affect humans in various ways, depending on our bodily habitual dispositions (socially constituted sensibilities in Bourdieudian sense) to be affected in particular ways (2014: 22).

Navaro-Yashin (2012) approached the affects of ruins in a combination of human-centered and object-centered perspective that challenges the distinction between interiority (the realm of psychoanalysis) and exteriority (materiality); a "perspective that could be called the affect-subjectivity continuum, one that attends to the embroilment of inner and outer worlds, to their codependence and co-determination" (24). Similarly with Gordillo (2014), she argued that the postwar environments such as that of the Northern Cyprus harbor phantoms and discharge negative affects that can be defined as "irritability:" eeriness, disturbing feelings of familiarity, and melancholia. Here, too, the phantoms of the lost (displaced and killed) Greek-Cypriots are absent-present in the environment and dwell in homes and objects of everyday use that the Turkish-Cypriots looted during the war and appropriated after the forced exchange of the populations. In addition to the affective quality of the postwar environment itself, the particular complicated question of the sovereignty of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as an unrecognized state importantly determines people's relation with the materiality they live in and –with. As people's legal and consequently emotional ownership of the properties abandoned by the Greek-Cypriots is uncertain and the return of the true/previous owners is a realistic threat, people's relationships with these belongings are marked by ambiguity (Navaro-Yashin 2012; Bryant 2014).

As the historically situated researches showed, people's positionality in a particular political context is important in their relation to ruins. In his critical revision of the theories of spatial affects based on his ethnographic work in divided Sarajevo, Jansen (2013) argued that people's subjective experience and knowledge importantly determine their relation to

materiality in the aftermath of war. First, war-related affect of materialities was not equally prevalent for everyone as people's concrete war-time experience was decisive. Second, contemporary political arrangements sometimes overruled the affective quality of spaces, resulting in "affective dynamics in asymmetrical comings and goings" (Jansen 2013: 31-32). As I will show below, the conscious awareness of violence in all its brutality as well as of its historical and present political context is significant for the bodily and emotional experience of people who are in conscious political opposition to the ongoing war by which their lives are affected in various ways.

4.4. The Uncanniness of Ruins

In their respective investigations of people's relationships with the postwar materiality in Northern Cyprus, Navaro-Yashin (2012) and Rebecca Bryant (2014) engaged the Freudian notion of the *Unheimlich* (German for "uncanny") as ambivalent unfamiliar/familiar, something that should be (or used to be) familiar, but became strange, which is experienced as frightening sensation, eeriness. In English *Unheimlich* literally translates as "unhomely." Navaro-Yashin (2012: 181-201) used Freud's concept, originally limited to the inner psychological state, to discuss the objective-subjective relations. In addition, she turned Freud's notion of estrangement of the familiar around and argued that the unhomely is an ordinary aspect of homeliness in the misappropriated houses of Greek-Cypriots and that their inhabitants have struggled to make the houses homely through various engagements with the objects – in the process of building lives out of ruins, as Bryant (2014: 682) put it. However, Bryant (2014) also noted that the appropriated homes became increasingly unhomely after the border has opened and some Greek-Cypriots started claiming back their properties in hands of Turkish-Cypriots. Thus, in addition to the ghostly presence of the absent population, there is always the "legal uncanny," discharged by the legal documents and administrative institutions of the unrecognized state of TRNC – and in less obvious ways of any state built on a foundational violence (Navaro-Yashin 2012).

My ethnographic material on people's engagement with ruins of the recent and ongoing war through photographs leads me to rethink the question of affect of ruins in

relation to subjectivity and continuous presence of violence. If the ghosts linger in the materiality of ruins, how are they experienced when encountered through photographs? In what ways are the ruins felt as uncanny when they are the remains of the cities one has just recently known and maybe called home? How does one's personal position in relation to the ongoing war affect the emotional experience? On a more "affective" level, in terms of the bodily feelings that are difficult to pinpoint, there is a ghostly void of negativity (Gordillo 2014) in the environment which was once a space of urban life of a community – the feeling of absence of life is something that may be discharged from the ruins regardless their context. Yet, I would dare to assume that temporality does play a significant role: the more violence is unfinished and has a direct continuity with the present situation or itself continues in the present, and the more the conflict is unresolved, unfinished, the fresher are the wounds of violence and the affects that dwell in the void are more violent and unsettling. Those of my interlocutors who have visited some of the towns after the destruction (mostly Sur since it is a major city), described the bodily experience of horrifying destruction to be much stronger and overwhelming than while seeing it on photographs. As Gordillo wrote, the void is "felt 'in the guts'" (2014: 24). Several of my interlocutors told me that the experience of ruins made them burst into tears.[21]

> *"When I went again to Sur I cried. Because I could not accept, I still cannot accept the state in which Sur is."* (Sara, 29)

Armi described the sensual experience of Sur, when the clashes were still going on:

> *"I cannot forget that. It was completely dark, normally it should be light, and everywhere demolished, scattered, closed, you cannot go there anymore. But you can go till police barricades. All people are there. The crying, screaming, they came to get the dead bodies, police gives the bodies to the ambulance, the mother is crying in the ambulance… This kind of noises. I got very bad, I cried a bit. Because… I was seeing the photos on Twitter, yes, taking bodies while crying on the videos, and so on, but directly seeing it… This was very bad: Think, on the other side, they had closed, destroyed everything, and darkness, and constantly sounds are coming. Constantly sounds of gunfire, screams, slogans are coming and it continues. In a*

[21] I may mention here that the gender aspect of culturally habituated bodily disposition to be affected is significant. None of my male interlocutors mentioned that he cried as a reaction to violent photographs or physical presence of ruins. Thus, affects (and emotions is general) are not gender neutral. As I will discuss later on, gender played a central role in people's experience of images from the Turkish-Kurdish war zones.

> *small area [the clashes] continue and it is completely dark, it was night. There is no entrance to there anyway, there are the armed guys [police] and so on. Everything that I saw and watched [on social media] was there in that moment. And to hear that sound in that darkness, that self-propaganda sounds [by ÖH], it is like from that occupied place, still yells and screams were coming."* (Armi, 24)

İdil told me that she even cried every time when she encountered ruins through the photographs on the social media – because of the affective power of destruction transmitted by the photographs. *"I cried so much. The ruins. It was horrible,"* (İdil, 30). Thus, the affect of uncanny are transmitted by photographs, which also trigger bodily emotional reactions.

The urbanity, which is no longer there, becomes uncanny in the process of ruination: the city is no longer a city, but a pile of remains of the city; it is damaged, deteriorated, desecrated; it is no longer a familiar place. Some of my interlocutors also noted that it is difficult to comprehend that the city is no longer there: despite the photographic evidence, the feeling of the existence of the city simultaneously lingers.

Moreover, the affect of uncanny is generated by the ghostly absence-presence of people who lost their lives in the clashes. Some districts such as Nusaybin and Şırnak have been completely evacuated and destroyed with shelling, and remain (partially) no-access zones heavily guarded by the state forces. The part of Sur where the clashes were most intense and the environment most severely destructed is one of the high-security zones closed to everyone except members of the ÖH. However, it is not only the emptiness of void that feels ghostly. As most of my interlocutors noted, the ruins are not only remains of a city, but they include human remains mixed with the rubble which was reportedly removed with excavators, loaded on trucks, and dumped somewhere beside the Tigris river under high security (as I have heard, the excavator operators are strictly forbidden to leave the vehicle).[22] There are several stories of people who managed to sneak back into their homes in Sur in order to take their belongings and found corpses. No-one knows how many bodies of youths whose parents will never be able to bury the remains are left to decay in the rubble (but we should talk about hundreds). Many people are still missing without a trace and their relatives and friends can only hope that they are hiding or went to fight in Rojava or in the mountains with the PKK. Although hidden behind the concrete walls and not visible on the photographs,

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[22] Here is one of the early journalistic reports on the process of the rubble removal and the human remains, by Yusuf Nazım: http://t24.com.tr/yazarlar/yusuf-nazim/surun-gozyaslari--i,14146.

killed bodies are present-absent in the ruins and it seems that the ghosts will continue to haunt the environment at least until the traces of war are systematically erased. Thus, the ruins of the recent war are most immediately associated with death and remains, which adds to the feeling of uncanny (cf. Bryant 2014; Gordillo 2014). The death which fills the void of the afterlife of urban combats in the Kurdish cities is real for the people who are aware of what has happened amid those and other ruins in the region, and it is experienced as something much more than just uncanniness of any kind of ruins. As I understood from the narratives of my interlocutors, the images of ruins are instantly framed within the Turkish-Kurdish war which means decades of political violence that significantly (for some essentially) affected subjectivities of these people and thus their reading of the images.

4.5. *Unheimlich* as the Loss of "Home"

Bryant (2014) discussed the figure of ruination as *Unheimlich* in relation to loss of home and belonging. During my interviews, it became clear that the level of personal attachment to a place significantly determines one's experience of destruction. Namely, while for some ruins were indistinguishable from each other, some others watched the disappearance of their homes on the photographs.

> *"They destroyed my uncle's house in [a town of Diyarbakır province]. It was my grandfather's house. The house where I spent all my time when I was little. For example the furniture… In I saw it when my friend journalist shared the photograph. My uncle didn't tell me. I didn't know and I saw it in the news. I look at the house and I know the furniture. Then I looked at the house beside and recognized it. I still don't go there. I went a few times to Diyarbakir, but I didn't go to that house."* (Sara, 29)

Seeing a place one calls home destroyed is more disintegrating than seeing some other unknown ruins, despite the fact that ruins in general are saddening. *"Pain. You feel pain and like you are destructed, like you are annihilated, you are gone, too,"* Sara said. The pain and overwhelming emotions caused by the destruction was for some more than they could handle which resulted in estrangement and the abjection of the place. Baran went back to his

hometown during and after the urban combats, but he never wanted to pass the destructed areas and tried not to look at them. Sara never went back to visit her relatives' house in the destructed town, although she visited the central city of Diyarbakir.

It is not only the physical homes of people destroyed and lost, but the belonging itself is disrupted. "The ambiguity of the concept of 'belonging,' Bryant wrote, "is that it mediates between care, interdependence, and right" (2014: 691). Taking care of a house makes it belong to one, but "within the context of a territorial conflict, one remains uncertain of one's right of belonging and is helpless to resolve the issue" (ibid.). The failure to care of a house, to somehow save a city from destruction, either when one is forced to abandon it or as one spectates the ruination of a place she felt attachment to from a distance with the help of digital technologies, compromises one's belonging to that place. It is not only the material conditions of life of a community that are destroyed in an urbicide, as Coward (2009) conceptualized it, but also the symbolic belonging of that community to a particular space and history, as Bevan (2006) emphasized. "[T]he opposite of /…/ uncanniness is to be "at home" in history, or to belong there" in terms of temporality (Bryant 2014: 695). Since the mid 2000's, but especially since the beginning of the ceasefire in spring 2013, the pro-Kurdish spaces throughout Turkey have witnessed cultural, social, and political flourishing that had been unimaginable just a decade before. It was the time of peace, creativity, hope, and political optimism. After the cease-fire broke, with the return of clashes, curfews, violence, forced displacements, and unpunished murders, the region entered another temporality. At the beginning, some discussed the "new time" with the reference to the 1990's (the peak of the war and the violence against civilians), but it soon turned out that the war entered a new stage, as it entered new spaces – the urban spaces and cyberspace. The scale and omnipresence of violence and destruction that are now (as opposed to the 1990's) documented in images and spread among those concerned with it, created a collective feeling of loss of a home: what used to be considered as a homely place, became something else, uncanny.

Another meaning of *Heimlich* is also concealed, secret, withheld from sight and from others; secretive, private, and intimate. Thus, the notion is related to the privacy and intimacy of home which is to be protected from invasion of outsiders. Thus, it is the signs of invasion that make the photographs of ruins and graffiti uncanny. During the urban clashes, the

"home" was not only invaded in military terms with the heavy presence of militarism, curfews, evacuations, and shelling of some districts, but also desecrated with (in addition to the "usual" flagging) the violent graffiti as the performative practice of domination. In addition, the perpetrator graffiti and photographs narrate an invasion into the intimacy of home and/as rape of a female body. A photograph of graffiti from Silvan that "went viral" in the social media reads: **DEVLET HER YERDE # KIZLAR GELDİK İNİNİZE GİRDİK** ("State is Everywhere # Girls We Came We Entered Your Dens"), with a drawing of a crescent and a star.

Some of the most memorable perpetrator photographs proved to be those of interiors of people's homes. Bedrooms were raided, walls sprayed with graffiti, linen scattered around, and, in one of the infamous images, several condoms dropped around. Thus, rape as the ultimate invasion is symbolically present and felt by the oppositional people.

> *"The photos taken in bedrooms, photos of entering people's bedrooms. /…/ A social destruction. To go as far as into people's bedrooms. /…/ It is a summary of all the violence and oppression happening there. Turkey is conservative so it is very private, secret place. For example they would never enter even bedroom of their parents, but they go there. /…/ It is a rape of people's lives, a rape of private life."* (Murat, 24)

> *"Rape. Rape culture is something that has been present among Turks. To annihilate women, restrict their existence, and rape them. /…/ There is also the Armenian [issue]. They take Armenian girls, make them their wives, but they kill the men. And make them forget that they are Armenians. They make this also to Alevis, they also made it in Dersim. These things bring up these memories. I will annihilate you with rape. You will already kill yourself, I don't have to kill you. /…/ I also cannot forget what they did to Ekin Wan. It started with this. I think that this war started after they stripped and exposed Ekin Wan's body and left it like this on the street. /…/ They expose your body. We also remember old photographs [like this] but this reminded us again: 'Look we [the state forces] are like this'."* (Sara, 29)

> *"One of the most distinct features of fascism is to touch women, to be sexist. It is like the place they are occupying is a woman and it is like a culture that occupies women. In the graffiti that they write, for example, 'we came to take you' and so on, 'girls,' again this macho-masculine culture"* (Armi, 24)

Both, desecrated homes and raped bodies trigger their owner's alienation, a disruption of belonging and familiarity. Ultimately, not only the abandonment of homes and the resistant neighborhoods in terms of physical evacuation, but also emotional expulsion, and giving up

on the territory and the time of autonomous flourishing of the community is what my field-mates thought the state forces in practice (even if without a strategy defined this way) try to achieve. All of the people I spoke with about the perpetrator photographs from the urban (and rural) war zones saw them as a means of psychological warfare, aimed to intimidate, and break people's resistance and hope. As Rojda and Sara discussed, the photographs are so affective because they contain the concentration of destruction, violence, and death that strike from the photographs like a painful slap.

> *"I don't get used to [the images], but I get used to not looking. Maybe if I see them, I do like this [turns the head away, squeezes her eyes together]. Now I don't cry that much, but maybe I don't look."* (İdil, 30)

İdil showed the move of closing her eyes, pulling her body back, and turning her head on the side – the same move as my friend made when she saw my collection of the photographs of ruins on my computer screen in the café and suggested me to "not look at them too much." Due to the images of ruins and in combination with other events of destruction of human bodies in ISIS suicide bombing attacks in Diyarbakır, Ankara, and especially Suruç, where several of my interlocutors lost friends, İdil started showing delayed signs of psychological trauma relater to a tragic event she witnessed as a child. Baran, similarly as my friend from the café, was so affected by the concentration of violent images from the social media that he closed his Facebook account and stopped checking Twitter during the urban clashes. A German colleague from another university who I met recently was collecting and documenting the images from the urban war zones for the Truth Justice Memory Center (known as Hafıza Merkezi) where worked at the time. He told me that he is also reluctant to look at the images again, as they did affect his wellbeing.[23] He thought he needs time to be ready to look at them again. Baran similarly explained that while it was unbearable for him to look at the images in the time when the city wars went on, it is easier to see them now when that particular violence has finished (or decreased) and life is slowly returning to what is left of that places.

[23] While I am not competent to adequately discuss the psychological issues related to these violent images, I know that there is something about them that goes under the skin. In the time of writing this chapter I did have a dream about ruins myself as well.

4.6. Ungrievable Death

My ethnographic research showed that in the context of ongoing conflict (especially the time of the urban clashes but also later on), the feelings of sorrow and grief are unresolvable and continue to inhabit and ruinate people's subjectivities. First, the ghostly presence-absence of Kurdish lives in the ruins is sustained by the possibility of children and friends being dead or alive, until their bodies are retrieved and buried or they are found alive. Authors working on enforced disappearances have noted that the ambiguous loss complicated grief and prevents mourning, as there can be no funeral, which renders healing impossible (Schirmer 1989; Göral et al. 2013; cf. Nichanian 2003). Second, the ruinated bodies witnessed through photographs haunt the memories, as if the photograph would stop the time and prevent mourning until the crimes are recognized and the justice achieved. According to Freud (1957) mourning is painful but required reaction to loss of an object of libido attachment in order to engage the process of detachment and acceptance of the reality. Melancholia, on the other hand, is a pathological state of inability to mourn, because the object of loss (someone or something) cannot be consciously perceived, which prevents the possibility of detachment and healing, and leads to extraordinary diminution of one's self-regard and impoverishment of ego. Butler (1997) expanded Freud's theory into the realm of gendered subjectivity and power, and developed the notion of "gender melancholy," conceptualized as a result of inability to mourn the losses or lack of satisfaction of prohibited sexual attachments in a heteronormative culture. She further explored the relation between power and impossibility of collective ritual mourning in relation to her famous notion of ungreivable lives (2009). Since the bodies lying on the streets and lost in the rubble are considered those of "terrorists" and "traitors" in the official discourse, their lives are rendered *ungrievable* by the state apparatus, ass their lives had never been recognized as human lives (cf. Butler 2009). The humanity of the remains is denied as they are left to decay in the ruins, until they are subjected to further destruction together with the remaining ruins, turning it all together in undifferentiated rubble, and finally removed and displaced. Consequently, the ritual burial and mourning are prevented. The reports say that some people secretly go to

search for their children's body parts in the place where the rubble is being dumped, which proves how crucial the ritual is. Hence, the "interdiction of mourning" (Nichanian 2003) is perpetuated with the continuation of the conflict more generally, which includes the discourses of dehumanization (on both "sides"). Until there will be a recognition of the deaths as human deaths, the mourning which would lead to healing and reconciliation cannot take place. As Navaro-Yashin (2012) discussed in relation to the absent-present Greek-Cypriots in the materiality of Northern Cyprus, the impossibility of mourning is what makes both, the ruins (and abandoned personal objects), and the interiorities of the people in relation to them melancholic; the affect of melancholia is produced and transmitted relationally, back and forth between people's subjectivity and ruins (172).

However, there is another aspect of melancholia: hostile feelings towards oneself, blaming oneself (see Freud 1957), which may translate as the feeling of guilt. While Navaro-Yashin (2012) addressed the feeling of guilt of Turkish-Cypriots in relation to the elimination of the "enemy population" in foundational violence of the (unrecognized) state through the emic notion of *ganimet* (Tur. loot, plunder, booty, war trophy and spoils)[24] and the theory of abject. In the case of violent destruction of one's own community, the melancholic guilt is less ambiguous. As most of my interlocutors expressed in one way or another, the most devastating was the awareness that they were sitting and following the violence and destruction on their electronic devices, unable to prevent the ruination of cities and the extermination. Real-time following of the burning of 176 people in the "basements of horror" in Cizre which was a process that lasted for days and was made public via social media by the people trapped in basements waiting to be killed (see Peoples' Democratic Party 2016) was for many the most painful and depressing experience of the time of the urban combats, although there is no visual material about it – as the horror of the events is *unimaginable*. As Marc Nichanian wrote in his discussion of Zabel Essayan's meaningful account on her encounter with the victims of massacres of Armenians in 1895:

> Only one thing remains beyond all speech, beyond every power to integrate, beyond all human apprehension. This thing is not death, it is not murder or burned houses, it is not even extermination. It is the *will to extermination*. What disintegrates people (for the stricken is the one who, in the most immediate, concrete, and violent way,

[24] Although Navaro-Yashin (2012) discussed the notion of *ganimet* and the related moral economy in Northern Cyprus only through its negative connotations, one might consider the positive aspect of plunder as the deserved trophy and spoils of the victor as well, which might seriously challenge her interpretation of emotions in the Northern Cyprus.

> undergoes the experience of disintegration) is therefore not extermination as such, although one forgets this too quickly and too frequently (and one tries to prove that the extermination did indeed take place, that it resulted in this or that many deaths, as if the essential matter rested there); what disintegrates is not the deaths in tens of thousands or in millions. No, it is the will to annihilate, *because it cannot be integrated* into any psychological, rational, or psychical explanation whatever. /…/ What disintegrates forever, for generations, is having been at one time, whether oneself or one's father, the target of a will to annihilation, a will that never drops its mask before the eyes of a third party and is thus all the more arrogant and impertinent. /…/ What disintegrates is the interdiction of mourning. (2003: 115-116, first emphasis mine, second original)

The will to extermination and the confidence to do it publically that they witnessed had for many of my interlocutors a paralyzing effect. No words can describe that feeling of incomprehensible horror.

> *"Lots of people were killed in their basements – and we saw it. We could watch it from the TV. And it is kind of like a… It makes you feel like you are nothing. Because you cannot do anything. And it makes you depressed because there is no other channel actually to express your feelings."* (Baran, 27)

> *"In this helplessness, everyone was posting something on social media, but we couldn't go out on the streets. There was nothing on the streets. But on the internet, we all made statements on the internet, everyone wrote something. But we could not transform the event. And not being able to transform anything was what broke people's hopes the most, I think. It was destroyed. People's psychology was destroyed. No one had thought that the state will do such big massacre. No one expected this. We didn't believe that this can happen openly before everyone's eyes. But it happened."* (Murat, 24)

> *"At least if we would go out on the streets! We didn't do anything. Still when I think about this I sometimes cry. I didn't do anything. I am angry with myself. I do not forgive myself and I will not forgive myself or anyone else for this. /…/ After this, anything can happen. /…/ I mean they burned them alive!"* (Sara, 29)

As my research showed, the melancholic feeling of collective guilt and shame due to the inability to either prevent the violence while witnessing it or respond to it is another thing that "lingers like a hangover" (Navaro-Yashin 2012: 162) in people's encounters with the photographs from the Turkish-Kurdish urban war zones and renders one's own life somehow uncanny as well.

"You can learn it in that moment. For example, I am making up, in [a district of Istanbul] somewhere, in a bar, while drinking beer, while drinking tea, or in cinema, while siting with our friends or while at work, I was like… I am looking at Twitter, it is a very tiring daily agenda anyway, constantly the news are coming, constantly corpses, constantly death. In fact here we continue our sweet lives. And at the same time there, in a place one hour, one and a half hour away by plane, things like this happen. That's why it was very bad." (Armi, 24)

4.7. Conclusion

This chapter as a whole illustrates the centrality of one's historically constituted subjectivity in the way images of ruins are experienced. On the one hand, ruins have history, which gives debris of violence a special charge that may be – or not – felt. On the other hand, people have emotional history with particular places in a particular context – in my case, the ongoing Turkish-Kurdish conflict, which is decisive in whether the affects of ruins will be felt and in what way. Hence, in this chapter I discussed how images of destruction of urbanity (urbicide) and of human lives affect people who are emotionally attached to the places under destruction. People are affected by any kind of ruins as a symbol for destruction, and they engage in multidirectional memory that connects spatially and temporally different debris of violence into constellations. Especially meaningful are places with historical significance in a community's imagination of Self. However, as I have shown, the images of ruins of the places people once called "home" (the region, the cities where they have memories from, or literal hometowns and houses of their childhood) are much more affective, experienced with much stronger feelings and emotions. The reason for this is that a destruction of urbanity cuts the bonds of a community to a place and it thus aimed at annihilation of a community as whole.

As the narratives of my interlocutors reveal, ruins feel much more melancholic if one has had an attachment to what has been lost. Yet, ruins are also closely connected with destruction of human lives, as urbicide is with annihilation. In this chapter, I have challenged the move away from human-centered perspective that prioritizes materialities before people in the analysis, since my ethnography led me to the other way. My interlocutors rejected the prioritization of ruins, as they were more affected by the images of ruinated bodies of

civilians and guerillas that most explicitly represent the brutality and disregard for human life. In fact, most disintegrating experience off all was the massacre in the basements in Cizre, which did not include images, but people followed the events on social media in real time and witnessed the atrocity at distance. The experience resulted in melancholia for many of my interlocutors, which includes especially the feeling of guilt.

Moreover, they argued that death is implicated in the images of ruins. The destruction of human lives can be felt in the ruins, which makes them haunted, makes them feel uncanny. First, there is the uncanny void where there should be urbanity and life. Second, the ghostly presence of those who lost their lives in the ruins and their remains were mixed with the rubble and never found. Third, the literal meaning of Freud's concept of uncanny literally translated as unhomely, which brings us back to the loss of home and disruption in belonging, which makes the places we once knew feel unfamiliar, unhomely. In addition, as personal homes were raided and desecrated with graffiti, the secrecy and intimacy of home was ruined through violent gendered invasion, which leads to bodily alienation, i.e. loss of home. Thus, the encounters with photographs of ruins causes a violent disruption, at times even ruination, in people's lives, and importantly imprints itself on one's subjectivity, where violent encounters accumulate and continue to haunt.

The experience of ruins through photography is painful, not only doe to the loss of places and people, but also due to the genre of photography. Photographs of ruins represent emptiness, total destruction, and absence of life. However, as some of my interlocutors acknowledged, there is life around and beyond ruins.

> *"You see a photo only once, it affects you, but you are not inside. When you listen to stories of people in real is more difficult. But photographs are more devastating. It destroys you more, saddens you more. Because when you go to reality and speak with them and you see that they continue the struggle. Because there is hope. Here you are affected too much, you cannot do anything. People were destroyed, they died… But the people there continue to live and they were not as affected as they seem to you. /…/ The life continues. But you don't see this on a photo, it seems to you that it is all over."* (Sara, 29)

Ünal, who lived and worked in Diyarbakır at the time of urban warfare, saw the images as a part of state forces' propaganda that defaces reality and a strategy of intimidation that we should not give in to. The images understood this way make him more rather hopeful,

because they prove the actual failure of the state's sovereignty and its powerlessness on the ground.

For some of my interlocutors, visiting Sur was an ambiguous experience of horror and hope. While the destruction is unimaginable – Sur as we knew it is really gone – people were still living there or very near and refused to abandon their homes. In addition, they kept protesting the violence on the streets, even with the risk of life. This incredible persistence of people living in the war zones can be inspiring and hopeful. Hence, although the experience of images of ruins affects people with sorrow and grief, a look beyond the photographs may enable one to stop the emotional disintegration and find a precarious hope in the strength of people living and dying in the war zones, which in turn enables solidarity and political action.

CHAPTER 5

MEANING AND FEELING OF VIOLENT TEXTS IN VIOLENT CONTEXTS

> *What is this theater of men making men /…/ that is not only a representation of dazzling myths and first times but their actualization, and not so much their actualization but, first and foremost, a magnificent excuse for another theater, the theater of concealment and revelation playing with the fourth wall, the only wall that counts, the gender line fatefully implicating holiness and violence?*
>
> —Michael Taussig[25]

5.1. Introduction

On a white wall riddled with holes from an explosion, there is a large graffiti, sprayed in black that reads: **AŞK BODRUMDA YAŞANIYOR GÜZELIM** ***:) PÖH*** ☺ (“Love is Lived in (the) Basement, my Beauty :) PÖH ☺”). In front of the sprayed wall stands a heavily armed man in combatant clothes; his head and face are covered by a black snow mask with a slit for the eyes. His arms are lifted; he is holding a Turkish flag in his left and showing a symbol with the right hand – fingertips joined together, except the index finger and pinkie, which are stretched upwards, forming the shape of dog’s or wolf’s head, just like the ones we used to make as children when we played with shadows on a wall. How does this image make us feel? Do we know where is the photographs taken? Who is the armed man and what is he doing there? Where and with what purpose is the graffiti written on this wall? What are the meanings of the text? Do we feel the violence of the image only because of the signs of destruction on the wall and the armed man standing in front of it? As I discussed in the previous chapter, there may be something universally affective about the images of ruinated

[25] Michael Taussig (1995): ‘Schopenhauer’s Beard.’ In *Constructing Masculinity*. Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis, Simon Watson, eds. New York and London: Routledge.

environment. The destructive violence inflicted on the living space of a community makes it feel uncanny. Yet, I argued that the understanding of the nature and the context of destruction and the subjective position – which includes bodily political-emotional attunement – from which people perceive these images plays a crucial role in the emotional experience. In this chapter, I will support and extend this argument with the example of images of perpetrator graffiti, which not only include material inscription and a specific context, but are also semiotic texts that are being decoded within this particular context by the people who already have a particular knowledge, emotional predisposition, and structural position in relation to what they are encountering through the photographs.

How does one feel about the graffiti described above, if one know that it was written in Cizre during violent clashes between the Kurdish YDG-H and the Turkish security forces, when round-the-clock curfews inflicted on the local population lasted almost non-stop from December 2015 till March 2016? That the anonymous militarized man on the photograph and his colleagues signed under the graffiti as PÖH (Police Special Forces) were involved in asymmetrical urbicides of neighborhoods and towns, which directly or indirectly ruinated hundreds of thousands of lives? That millions of people have died throughout the Turkish history in the name of the flag he holds in his hand and that the sign he is showing with his other hand is a symbol of the militant neo-fascist organization *Ülkü Ocakları* (*Ülkücülar*) that have been involved in various acts of political violence and "unsolved" murders? And finally, how does the photograph of the graffiti with the posing ÖH member make one feel if one decodes the semiotic reference of the text? The phrase is taken from a Turkish pop song by Bülent Serttaş, "Bodrum Akşamları" (2013), but in this particular "entextualization" and "co(n)textualization" (Silverstein and Urban 1996) involves a word play. While "Bodrum" in the song (and I will withhold my comments on the quality, taste, and dangerous gender mythology of the song) refers to the summer resort district of Muğla Province on the Aegean coast in Southwestern Turkey, the word (written as *Bodrumda* instead of *Bodrum'da*) also means "basement." In this graffiti, ended by a smiling symbol of laugh, the reference "basement" refers to Cizre's "basements of horror" (Peoples' Democratic Party 2016), where 176 people who were taking shelter from the intense clashes were indiscriminately massacred.

"*Güzelim*" (Tur. "my beauty") is a word with which – conventionally – a man would address a woman in a romantic relationship. I am looking at the photograph, going back to words "love," and "basement." Nobody knows exactly what happened in those basements – what was done to these people before they were killed, how exactly they were killed and their bodies burned. I feel a lump in by throat and I become aware of my slow breathing. The gendered bodily experience of horror leads one to think about sexual violence. Then may come disgust, maybe anger and hate, helplessness (one is watching as these things take place and can do nothing; "I am nothing."), and perhaps some unexplainable state of melancholic numbness caused by the witnessing (cf. Sontag 2003). As I have argued earlier in this thesis, feeling (bodily affect) and thinking (perception of meanings) are inseparably intertwined in emotional experience. As I also emphasized, we cannot feel or fully comprehend the emotions of others – and my above description should not be mistaken be universal – due to distinct structural positionalities and embodied subjectivities of individuals. While I will not be able to adequately answer the question of how others feel and how perpetrator graffiti feel to others, I will engage in this chapter with it by picturing the *embedded relation* of the oppositional people affected by the images of the Turkish-Kurdish urban war zones to what they perceive – based on the conclusion of the previous chapter, that this relation determines the emotional experience of what they see. By bringing together the two bodies of literature – the one on graffiti and the other on feelings, I will investigate the ways in which (perpetrator) graffiti are violent through the specific examples of the perpetrator graffiti and the in which they are framed. I will first conceptualize graffiti as material inscriptions of texts-in-context, which may affect us with violence – precisely because of the combination of material, textual, and contextual qualities, as I will argue. In order to support this claim, I will employ a contextual semiotic analysis of the perpetrator graffiti by taking into account the standpoint of the oppositional people who look at the images. Context in this particular case involves the material surface (Chmielewska 2007), the photographic-interpretative frame (see Butler 2009), and the Turkish-Kurdish conflict with all its present-past and contemporary violence. With the thick descriptions of texts-in-contexts I hope to create several interconnected violent *scenes* that "throw [themselves] together in a moment as an event and a sensation; a something both animated and inhabitable" (Stewart 2007: 1), which may be felt by the reader as well. Pointing to the ways in which the perpetrator graffiti are

violent, I will rethink the relation between affects (as intensities generated by the scenes that are bodily-emotionally experienced) and semiotics.

5.2. Violent Inscriptions

Graffiti-writing can be shortly defined as a practice of producing writings or drawings on walls or other surfaces in public places, using acrylic spray cans, markers, paint, or sharp objects. However, as Andrea Brighenti noted that graffiti writing is an "interstitial" practice – "a practice about whose definition and boundaries different social actors hold inevitably different conceptions" (2010: 2). In most obvious way, graffiti (or "wall writings" – *duvar yazıları* – as they are most commonly named in Turkish) are "optical traces of the visual marking of *I was here*" (Bowen 2013: par. 1). Yet, they are also "a haptic endeavour, a spatializing practice that claims spaces, makes places, and illuminates margins and borderlands" (ibid.; see Nandrea 1999; Miklavcic 2008; Brighenti 2010). Lorri Nandrea compared the wall inscribed with graffiti with what Deleuze and Guattari called a rhizomatic space: "inscriptions can begin and end anywhere, can proceed unpredictably in any direction, can form surprising juxtapositions, layerings, and diagonal relations" (1999: 111). Graffiti shape spaces in various ways. Perhaps their most prevalent function and certainly the most studied, is a territorial claiming of space, which is at the same time boundary-making (Ley and Cybriwsky 1974; Nandrea 1999; Brighenti 2010). Territories are marked with various materials, and such materials also become territories in themselves (Brighenti 2010: 326). Yet, the central characteristic of territories is that they are social "in the sense of something that is coessential to the inner and outer relationships within a multiplicity of *socii*" (Brighenti 2010: 325). They "*exist at the point of convergence* – which is of course also a point of tension – between relationships and spaces," Brighenti wrote. "It is the convergence point of intensions and extensions or, better, the immaterial and the material" (ibid., original emphasis; cf. Chmielewska 2007). Thus, graffiti are a "technological act" of inscription that combines material (wall, street) and immaterial (language, symbolic meanings, relations) aspect and determines the supporting base of territory (ibid.). Thus, graffiti are a

territorializing performance which lies on the intersection of material and immaterial, visual and invisible, textual and contextual.

Graffiti are primarily visual (optical), because "[f]or inscription to take place, witnesses are needed" (Brighenti 2010: 325). Or, as Nandrea wrote, "Graffiti forces us to witness something. On the back of social structures, it creates facing: a moment of visual confrontation with what is on the outside" (1999: 114-115). As David Ley and Roman and Cybriwsky wrote in their early discussion of graffiti as territorial markers, "The conquest of territory, even in fantasy, is always an act performed for an audience" (1974: 494). Therefore, graffiti are communicative; they are always already a reaction and an initiation of a conversation; a point of contact between different people and different temporalities (Ley and Cybriwsky 1974; Bowen 2013; Brighenti 2010; see Miklavcic 2008) – hence, not "I was here" but "*I am here*" and "*I will be here*." As such, however, a graffiti extends itself into the nonvisual symbolic world of relations, struggles, memories, and expectations. Graffiti are then not only optical (sensory), but also semiotic (meaningful). As Brighenti noted, "Meaning is not a mental state but a style of inscription" (2010: 325) – "ascribing a proprietary meaning to space" (Ley and Cybriwsky 1974). In addition to this, graffiti may include other meanings as well, which help constructing a spatialized narrative. Formally speaking, graffiti can take shape of murals (paintings), graphic sings - symbols, indexes, and icons – or proper texts. Thus, the content of communication may be more than mere marking a territory; it may include messages of identity, narratives of history and expressions of present experience, grievances, and imaginations of future, as well as Barthesian mythologies (see Miklavcic 2008). As Stuart Hall (1980) argued, communication consists of the processes of encoding and decoding in a particular context. Hereby, the process of decoding actively engages the audience and can end up in various interpretations of the message, depending on their cultural, social, economic, and political background, which determine the code (Hall 1980). Therefore, it is often a specific audience that is anticipated by the graffiti-writes (see Miklavcic 2008; Lay and Cybriwsky 1974). As I will show with my examples of the graffiti of the Turkish-Kurdish urban war zones, culturally and politically embedded reading is

necessary in order for the full violent messages to come across.[26] Hence, the context is inseparable background of any graffiti.

The "urban surface" onto which a graffiti is inscribed is another way in which the graffiti transcend the border between material and immaterial – the texture of the wall and the affective (in terms of a particular sensual charge) socio-historical context which is embedded into the materiality (Chmielewska 2007). "The urban surface seems inseparable from the graphic and linguistic form of the sign," Ella Chmielewska wrote (2007: 147). That particular surface, she continued, "references the raw texture of urban wounds, exposed substrate of war-damaged buildings, walls denuded of their plaster skin – here, the brick wall designates the ruins, not traditional material for building exteriors. In Warsaw, the political roots of graffiti are set in the wartime trauma of the city and the history of occupation and resistance" (ibid). Thus, graffiti, as the term *in-scription* already implies, are a part of a material assembly and a semiotic structure. They are textual (linguistic), but also contextual – in both senses, referring to the material surface and the affective history already inscribed into the material surface (Chmielewska 2007). As Alessandra Miklavcic's (2008) discussion of the offensive politicized graffiti revoking traumatic memories of political violence on the Italian-Slovenian borderland reveals, both, the context to which the graffiti refer in content as well as the contemporary political context in which the graffiti are written are most central for the life of the graffiti and for the emotional experience of the encounter with them.

The interaction with the texture (both, material and immaterial) through graffiti is a *bodily encounter* (see Sedgwick 2003) of what Ley and Cybriwsky (1974) called *experiential topography*. Tracey Bowen (2013) argued that graffiti-writing, and graffiti-witnessing and – reading are both *embodied* specialized practices and experiences: "The graffiti images are texts to be read, and experienced haptically and bodily" (par. 6). Graffiti often bodily affect with fear or anxiety, because they are associated with crime and violence; they make space *feel* dangerous and make us feel uneasy (Nandrea 1999). In addition, these spaces of danger are not gender-neutral, they are masculinized spaces. The authors of an ethnographic study argued that graffiti reflect a particular version of masculinity and construct a masculine

[26] I should note that many people living in Turkey who are not interested in politics and more specifically the Turkish-Kurdish conflict do not poses all the right codes and might therefore not be able to full understand the references of the ÖH graffiti.

identity among the graffiti artists/writers that involves valuing rebelliousness and boldness, which is partially a consequence of the outlaw status of graffiti (Monto et al. 2012; cf. Brighenti 2010; Nandrea 1999). Lauren Rosewarne (2004) addressed the issue of what she called "visual terror" of graffiti through an engagement with feminist geography. She compared street graffiti in their masculinist visuality to highly sexualized outdoor advertising and argued that they are both experienced as street harassment, which leads to exclusion of women (or more generally non-hetero-cis-men, one could intervene) from male-dominated public space (Rosewarne 2004). Thus, graffiti-in-context may be bodily experienced as gendered violence – even if their direct content does not include such semiotic references.

This emphasis brings us back to the question of relation between public space and territory. As graffiti *materially* mark territories, they are also a reflection and production of *immaterial* social relations of power and domination. This takes place in a *public domain*. Public domain is the intersection of public space (in terms of its availability), public sphere (as a place of communication) and public realm (of interaction) (Brighenti 2010). Although public space is often taken for granted, graffiti should indeed raise the question of the meaning of "public," as Brighenti (2010) suggested, and invite to think about exclusions, as Rosewarne (2004) did. The absence of equal citizenship, equal right to the city, to the space – and to life – importantly complicates the experience of "public space," as it becomes a place of vulnerability and dispossession for some and a stage for collective claims and appropriations for others (see Çaylı 2016; Parla and Özgül 2016). Moreover, as the examples of perpetrator graffiti on internal walls of private Kurdish homes reveal, graffiti may appear also in most intimate private spaces, a family bedroom. "Locations have meaning; to claim access to an inaccessible location is to make a claim of primacy for oneself," Lay and Cybriwsky wrote (1974: 494). Yet, also more particular claims may be made with particular locations. The graffiti on internal walls left by Turkish Armed Forces in Kurdish homes are a gendered performative play with the notion of "public" in order to desecrate one's home (make it uncanny) and humiliate the owner whose house (and bedroom) are symbolically turned into a "public house" – in Turkish associated with brothel (*genelev*) rather than pub – which is an attack on feminine respectability of the women of the house. Thus, graffiti as territorial(izing) endeavor may be an invasion into private space that challenges the assumptions about the public. With the use of graffiti, public domain may be turned into an

intersection of material and immaterial violent techniques of public domination. As Lorri Nandrea wrote, "Graffiti is invasive; it is a physical invasion of proper or public space. Played out in real time amidst real bricks and bones, it keeps alive a certain politics of space, claiming territories by marking out physical borderlines that violate the law, marking by marring in spectacularly visible acts of desecration" (1999: 114).

This becomes especially evident in violent spaces and disputed territories of (armed) struggles for appropriation of space. One such example are neighborhoods controlled by competing gangs that claim exclusionary right to exercise violence and oppression in a particular place and use graffiti to express their territorial domination and send messages of threat to people living on "their territory" and to possible competition (Ley and Cybriwsky 1974; Nandrea 1999). "Gang graffiti violates the proper owner, challenging the authority of the systems that exclude these illicit claimants and forcibly invading spaces to which access through socially accepted channels is blocked" (Nandrea 1999: 113). It is a "violent game of colonization and territory," in fact based on the same "ethics and practices of property" as a modern neoliberal state (particularly the U.S.), as Nandrea (ibid.) noted. Those who mark the walls also claim to be the kings of the streets and the masters or their use, and so that walls become a "behavioral manifesto" (Ley and Cybriwsky 1974: 505).

Another example of graffiti in space of explicit violence are political graffiti that accompany ethnopolitical (armed) conflicts. In the context of self-determination movements such as those of Basques, Irish Republicans, and Palestinians (Linstroth 2002) – and the Kurds, of course – graffiti are a "form of cultural production," deployed as a means of resistance, challenging the existing hierarchy of power, and voicing demands within a specific space of repression that speak to multiple audiences that will have various readings (Peteet 1996). They serve as a medium of expression of political and national identity, self-promotion and mobilization, and claiming the space for the cause (Linstroth 2002), but they can also debate contested memories, issues of the present, and visions of the future (Peteet 1996). In the case of ethnic conflicts and (post-conflict) tensions, space is marked by "graffiti wars" between oppositional groups (Ley and Cybriwsky 1974; Rolston 1991; 2012; Miklavcic 2008). Hereby, graffiti become the means of symbolic violence, marginalization of the Other (within), border demarcation, national identity-building and performance, and engagement with contested and traumatic (post)memories (Miklavcic 2008).

Graffiti are not only made in the context of urban resistance against sovereign powers (either in the context of gangs' control over territories, (militarized) politicized social movements, or/and youth cultures and street art/vandalism), but they may also be a performance of reinscription of the existing sovereignty by the agents of governance. This is a peculiar phenomenon. Governments are most commonly involved in the so-called "wars on graffiti" – militarized urban policies of control, framed in the security discourse and associated with the notion of "war on terror" (Iveson 2010). Yet, in the context of armed conflict they may also involve in "war (on terror) with graffiti." The phenomenon of state armed forces' graffiti that inscribe an actual military territorial appropriation and war seems to be neglected in academic research, despite the fact that it is not that rare practice in wars. An interesting historical example are soldiers' graffiti of the American Civil War that functioned as a social activity displaying loyalties, frustrations, and humor of army life, as informal commemoration of wartime experiences, and as invasive act, vandalizing Southern property (Reed 2015). Another example are the graffiti left by the Red Army left on Reichstag (German parliament building) in Berlin after the invasion in May 1945, that included provocative messages of victory and domination and glorifying the Stalinist regime. Being written in Russian, the massages were meant to be read by their fellows in joint celebration, rather than German soldiers and civilians (Baker 2002). One more recent example are the graffiti, left by the Nigerian army after military operation in the town of Odi in Bayelsa State in 1999 that ended up to be a brutal massacre of civilian population and ruination of the town (Ola 2002). As the reports suggest, graffiti in Odi written by the soldiers targeted local population. They involved hints to ethnic cleansing and pictured the operation as a "punitive expedition against people challenging government authority" (HRW 2000). Another example is the case of the Indonesian destruction of East Timor the same year, where "The graffiti was one of the more benign manifestations of the terror and destruction the Indonesian military (TNI) and its paramilitary (or militia) forces visited upon East Timor after learning the result" of the Timorese vote for independence (Nevins 2002: 623). It has also been reported that the Serbian soldiers, police, and paramilitaries left graffiti together with destruction, death, and violated women's bodies in ruined towns of Kosovo (Kosova Press 2014). It is not irrelevant that the more recent examples are from the contexts where various (gendered) war crimes took place. More common part of political violence are

paramilitary graffiti, rather than those written by official state forces. However, as I will argue later on, not only are the official and unofficial (so-called dirty war) violence often indistinguishable in practice, but the graffiti themselves embody the transcendence of the border between official ("legal," presumably according to the law of war) and paramilitary/gang activities. As such, graffiti themselves may be a sign of violence against civilians and possible war crimes. In Columbia, graffiti have been written by the paramilitaries fighting the guerrilla insurgency of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP) and the National Liberation Army (ELN). As we can understand from the scarce notes on the issue in the texts on other issues of the Columbian civil war (1964-present), the graffiti were threatening messages to the villagers and town dwellers accused of supporting the "terrorists," rather than to the guerrillas, and accompanied brutal violence (tortures, killings, dismembering, and disappearances) against these populations (Hunt 2006: 111).

The most studied example of paramilitary graffiti and (especially) murals are those from Northern Ireland. Graffiti and murals have been a constant symbolic spatial reflection (and performance) of the political conflict ("the Troubles") between the two ethnic communities in Northern Ireland, Catholic-Nationalist and Protestant-Unionist. Both communities have been using graffiti and murals as a form of political expression. The Unionist/Loyalist graffiti and murals have been there as the markers of British rule throughout the 20th century, while the Republican graffiti emerged as a practice of nationalist resistance and challenge to this domination during the Republican hunger strike in 1981. Paramilitary groups have been a prominent figures, not only of the conflict, but also in the "graffiti war" in Northern Ireland. Especially Loyalist paramilitaries, who saw themselves as an extension of state military forces, have been often (self-)depicted in murals together with other ideological symbols and historical figures and events (Rolston 1991; 2012; Abshire 2003). As Bill Rolston wrote, "Whichever paramilitary group was dominant in a unionist working-class area boasted its prowess on the walls through endless repetition of depictions of hooded men with guns" (2012: 4). Violent Loyalist paramilitary paintings continued to signal their presence even after the conflict resolution (Abshire 2003). Acknowledging the important role of violent words and images in the conflict, the British government tried to remove offensive and militarist iconography and initiated "re-imaging" of murals as a part

of reconciliation program (Rolston 2012). Hence, graffiti as a spatializing practice are also a technique of inscription of particular memories into space, which is most active and affective temporal transgression (see Miklavcic 2008).

Emphasizing the importance of scrutinizing the frame (as background) of the graffiti, shaped by "the urban context and the local nuance of the practice" of graffiti-writing, Chmielewska (2007) made a methodological intervention and argued, that graffiti should be studied *in situ*, i.e. with its original texture in the space of which is a part. However, based on my theoretical discussion on photography, I argue that graffiti may be experienced bodily through photographs as well, if we are familiar with their original context. The photographs include the original surface on which the graffiti are inscribed. The original context and its aura do not disappear, but are entextualized in another context of looking. In addition, the new context may as well exacerbate our negative feelings instead of alleviate them. The perpetrator graffiti from the Turkish-Kurdish urban war zones are very illuminating in this sense. They are first sprayed on the walls that have accumulated layers of political violence throughout the history and have been ruinated most recently in the urban clashes. Secondly, they are framed in photographs, together with the posing ÖH members themselves and this way tuned into war trophies. Lastly, they are published and circulated on the social media – the entire photographs become inscriptions on virtual walls. Now the perpetrator graffiti are most explicitly framed as a strategic part of a very particular political violence that simultaneously takes place in the actual as well as virtual space. Although we are not able to touch its original texture, the graffiti that appear repeatedly and concentrated on our digital screens do touch us (see Kuntsman 2010; 2012). And since the social media (and cyberspace in general) are such omnipresent aspect of our social and private lives and they pervade even most intimate aspects of our emotional lives, our encounters with the graffiti on social media may even more strongly affect us than the encounters in actual space/temporality – precisely because of the concentration of sensations on the one hand and the seeming disregard with which we look at the virtual walls on the other.[27]

[27] I will elaborate on feelings and emotions related to encounters of violence in the virtual space in the following chapter.

5.3. The Feeling of Texts

The authors focusing on the (im)material nature of graffiti have shown that graffiti as spatializing performances are affective – that they radiate a particular charge into the atmosphere (Chmielewska 2007) and onto people (Nandrea 1999) and make us bodily feel (Bowen 2013) the force of masculinized territorialization (Rosewarne 2004). As I have discussed in the previous chapter, affects linger in the material space (Navaro-Yashin 2012), and are transmitted between materialities and people (Brannan 2004). In this section I will discuss the feeling of graffiti as texts. I will first look into the non-semantic affectivity of texts and apply it to graffiti. Yet, the question I would like to particularly address, is that of the role of meanings – in addition to the texture – of graffiti for their power to affect people who are equipped to decode the graphic and linguistic messages. What is the significance of the semiotic aspect of graffiti in their power to trigger strong feelings and emotions?

As I have shown in Chapter 2, the orthodox affect theorists following Deleuze and the subsequent Massumi's (2002) adoption of Deleuzian philosophy in peculiar combination with neuropsychological experiments (see Leys 2011), strictly exclude subjective aspect from the affective experience. By placing affect in the moment of the "virtual," after physical sensation and before cognitive perception, signification, and sociolinguistic qualification of the sensation, Massumi (2002) and others conceptualize affect in opposition to emotions and thinking, as essentially non-discursive and pre-semiotic. In fact, Massumi (2002) especially emphasized that we are affected despite of (or contrary to) the semiotic and ideological aspects of what we see – on television, for instance. As the intensities we experience may not be congruent with the semiotic meanings of what we see, Massumi (2002) reasoned, it is precisely the pre-semiotic aspect of texts and images that is affective. Massumi supported and built these claims with the help of the psychological "Snowman experiment" which showed ambiguous intensities of a television story experienced by children (2002: 23-28), and with his discussion of the speeches of the American politician and president Ronald Reagan, for who Massumi claimed that was successful precisely because of his linguistic/rhetorical and performative dysfunction, which gave birth to the appealing power of mime, where the virtuality of affective performance offered space to the receivers to fill

them it with their preferred content (2002: 39-44).[28] However, not all authors use the notion of affect in most rigid way. Diverse and unclear use of "affect," often without an explicit definition, is in itself a problem that puts the concept itself under question (Parla 2017; cf. Grossberg 2010). As I have explained in Chapter 2, I use the notion of affect (interchangeably with feeling) when I want to describe the environmental and objective forces that may touch and influence people, rather than for people's experience. For the latter, the anthropological conception of emotions, which simultaneously includes (often ambiguous) bodily sensations and subjective thinking (Leavitt 1996), as well as the background that preconditions them – structural conditions of possibility (Scheper-Hughes 1992), subjective positionalities (Hage 2009), social norms (Abu-Lughod 1986), collective conceptualizations of the world, etc. Additionally, I use the notion of feeling for collective and political atmospheric tones and moods that are shared and circulated among people, but often difficult to grasp (cf. Ngai 2005; Brennan 2004). My ethnography showed that one's subjectivity and thus emotional predisposition is always present in the reception of violent images. Moreover, as I will show in this section, interpretation is not only always already embedded into the frame (Butler 2009), but thinking and understanding may also (re)enforce bodily feeling. Thus, the reception of images is an emotional process that includes feeling and thinking, which are intertwined and contextual (cf. Leavitt 1996).

In her review of gender-related anthropological research on language and affect, McElhinny (2010) made some very significant arguments about affect (what I would prefer to call feelings) – particularly about its political and economic contingency and usability, and about the need for its (Foucauldian) intellectual genealogy. Her review is a reminder that emotions are always invested into language, and that discourses about emotions are anything but politically neutral and are situated in (gendered!) structures of feeling, dependent on social, political, and economic formations (cf. Williams 1977; Ahmed 2010; Berlant 2011). It is this emphasis on context without which we cannot adequately understand the affects of texts (and other objects), on which I build my analysis of graffiti.

How can we approach ambiguous feelings ("affects" or otherwise) in relation to graffiti as texts? First, there is something non-textual, non-discursive in all texts – their form,

[28] For elaborated critique of Massumi's approach to affect see Leys 2011; Martin 2013; Mazarella 2009.

genre, and the collective historical context that gives it a particular aura or mood (Williams 1977; Ngai 2005; Berlant 2007). Ngai (2005), for instance, discussed how particular genres and forms in cinema art and literature produce various negative, ambiguous, confusing, non-cathartic, even paralyzing "ugly feelings," which rise additional unpleasurable feeling *about* the feelings ("meta-feelings") and complicate the objective/subjective divide. Particularly relevant is the organizing affect she called the "tone" of literary and art works which radiates from the work and is perceived by the reader (Ngai 2005). As I have shown above, graffiti as such are an invasive textual/performative form of inscription into space that claims spaces and re-makes them. Moreover, they are particularly masculinized genre that triggers gendered affective aesthetic experience (Rosewarne 2004). Furthermore, gang and war graffiti are specific genres of graffiti which include the *intention* of violence. Thus, there is something violent about the material form of graffiti and especially about war graffiti that can be felt by the viewer even if they are not texts proper. As Berlant wrote in her commentary on Stephanie Brooks' formative (textual) art, "Something happens in the viewer's bodily response, which then has to be shaped using whatever skills of ordering and eloquence – cognitive, emotive – the viewer has" (2007: 1). In addition to this, texts are contextual. The sociohistorical context, the texture charged with layers of history and emotions, that frames graffiti as texts, is inseparable from the inscriptions itself (Chmielewska 2007). It is this non-semantic aspect of texts that affects us on a non-conscious level.

Any reader of literature would agree that texts contain feelings that are difficult to define and create atmospheres that inhabit our bodies as we interact with them (cf. Ngai 2005; Berlant 2007). Williams (1977) already initiated this discussion when he talked about the structures of feeling in literature and art as something virtual that is ambiguous, not fully semantic, but nevertheless affects us. Perhaps most significant contributor to the affect theories in relation to popular culture (rock music, particularly), media (such as TV), and communication since the 1980's is Lawrence Grossberg. His work on affect was significantly influenced by Williams, but he approached it through various philosophical traditions (see Grossberg 2010). For him affect is a charge, defined by an ability to move: it is "the plane on which any individual (persons and practices are the two most obvious forms of individuation) is empowered to act in particular ways in particular places" (1997: 13). It is

always *contextual*, mechanic, contingent, and mediating part of material discursive production in everyday life as a whole that is not captured by signification or representation (cf. Ahmed 2010; Berlant 2011). “It goes through regimes that organize the body and the discourses of our lives, organize everyday life, and then produce specific kinds of effects,” Grossberg explained. “Organizations of affect might include will and attention, or moods, or orientation, what I have called ‘mattering maps:’ and the various culturally and phenomenological constituted emotional economies” (2010: 316). Thus, affect is a charge invested into cultural artefacts, which is not neutral, but mechanically operates within the social structure and a system of values related to emotions (cf. McElhinny 2010). Along similar lines, Ngai (2005), influenced by Adorno, discussed ugly feelings, which replaced more certain emotions in the late capitalist modernity and generate particular artistic forms and genres. She also showed that particular feelings have feminized, masculinized, or racial charge. Therefore, feelings (or affects) as such are historically contingent and relational. “Affect,” Grossberg argued, “is what constitutes the relationality. So, that's why Williams was right to see that you couldn't separate the structure of feeling from the conjuncture. Because what makes the conjuncture *exactly what it is* are the affective articulations among the various overdeterminations” (2010: 327, original emphasis). This emphasis is important for understanding the affective charge of graffiti, especially because of their essentially contextual and relational nature.

Second, there is something more conscious and intentional about the feelings invested into the Turkish ÖH graffiti, because they are encoded semiotic messages. The insistence on the semiotic/asignifying divide made by affect theorists seems to rather limit the analysis of the affective charge of the graffiti whose form is text proper (cf. Ngai 2005). After all, if one can speak about the feelings in literature and film (Ngai 2005), it is upon semantic reading of text that we are able to experience their non-semiotic affects. As Grossberg stated, “The meaning-structure has to somehow be affectively charged for it to constitute your experience. Now, it can be affectively charged involuntarily through forms of social machinery,” (2010: 328), or, as in the case of war graffiti, it may be very much intentional, although it at the same time includes the structural/cultural aspect which is not intentionally produced by the writer. As I will show below, the ÖH graffiti produce meanings and feelings with various rhetorical devises such as use of metaphors, irony, recognizable phrases, entextualization of

statements and poetry works, and symbols. Thus, they are highly intertextual.[29] As Graham Allen put it, "Meaning becomes something which exists between a text and all the other texts to which it refers and relates, moving out from the independent text into a network of textual relations" (2000: 1).

The intertextuality of ÖH graffiti is significant in several ways. First, the graffiti assume a complex cultural-linguistic code of the reader. As I will indicate with the (inter)textual analysis below, the adequate decoding of the semiotic messages is important in order to be affected by the graffiti. Words hurt because of the way we understand them. The perception of the violent texts moves through one's subjectivity via layers of intertextual connections and identifications of positionalities in these other communications, and layers of associations and emotionally charged memories they evoke. Without a culturally and politically embedded contextual and intertextual reading of the texts, their emotional effect would only be partial, shifting. Second, the complexity of meaning created by intertextuality allows for different readings. Not only partial, as in the case for someone who is not familiar with the references in the texts, but also different according to the reader's position. As Michael Silverstein (1976) argued, signs may "shift" their meaning depending on audience, contexts, etc. Thus, not all signs are shared in terms of meaning and reaction. Namely, while the perpetrator graffiti may trigger horror and anger for some, they may be amusing and empowering for others. People have different emotional reactions because they are different "YOU's" addressed by the graffiti-signs, therefore invoking different histories of previous contexts of understanding, and intertextual references and associations (see Silverstein 1976). This dualism is in fact a constant and conscious background implicated in the reading and anneals the emotions that are generated, as it is related to the conflict in general. Although there are countless possible readings, the politicized readers reduce them to the two poles in the conflict (which is a severely simplified imagination in itself). During my conversations about the ÖH graffiti, some of my interlocutors who were enraged and disgusted by the graffiti assumed the pleasure and fun the violent performance must be for the writers, their fellows, and the nationalist readers who cheer for their heroic "protectors of the nation." On

[29] The concept of intertextuality has been used in various, often conflictive ways among literary theorists, as Allen (2000) showed. "That poststructuralist critics employ the term intertexuality to disrupt notions of meaning, whilst structuralist critics employ the same term to locate and even fix literary meaning, is proof enough of its flexibility as a concept" (Allen 2000: 4).

the other hand, one may speculate that the sharing of the photographs by the ÖH members assumes the pain and irritation they may cause to the oppositional people.

Third, the notion of intertextuality raises the question of a work's authenticity and the author's individual authority (Allen 2000). The perpetrator graffiti in Turkey must be discussed not only as a collective practice, but also as a systematic endeavor and a systemic practice, rather than merely results of individual creativity, despite the fact that it might have started as such. They are a part of the militarized nationalist iconography production which has been essentially affective industry that has been narrating a single narrative of triumph, implicitly but systematically humiliating and oppressing the silenced populations, and polarizing the peoples of Turkey throughout the modern history. Finally, this brings us back to the structures of feeling and the anthropology of emotions. The emotional experience of the perpetrator graffiti and the photographs that frame them is collective and shared. The readers are joint by the virtue of shared history and political attunement which precondition the emotions generated in individual interactions with the texts and images.

5.4. Reading Perpetrator Graffiti in Context

In the theoretical discussion above, I have argued that the perpetrator graffiti of the Turkish-Kurdish urban war zones are affective because they are both, material and textual, textured and semiotic, as well as contextual (see Silverstein 1976). They are invasive territorializing material inscriptions into the space, but also build an affectively charged meaning intertextually and contextually. The context, here, is first of all material – the physical context and the photographs which construct violent scenarios that reinforce the message and exacerbate the feelings. In the non-material sense, the context is first the immediate urban warfare and the destructive violence inflicted on the materiality, people's bodies, and communities, and second the history of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict and the collective memories of political violence that transgress temporalities, connect places, divide some communities and build bridges among others. Readers of graffiti have a particular position within this shared history. In the following pages, I will offer a contextualized analysis of the perpetrator graffiti in order to demonstrate the significance of semantic

reading of the texts and images for the emotions involved in it, taking into account the position of the oppositional readers.

5.4.1. Turks for Turkey and Turkey for Turks

Most generally speaking, the underlying theme of the perpetrator graffiti is ultra-nationalism. The messages repeat known militarized nationalist slogans that narrate love of the "homeland" and the exclusive right of "the Turk" to inhabit and rule it. They are embedded into the narratives and mythologies of nationhood, associated with ethnic Turkishness and "the State" (*Devlet*). First, there are messages of the militarized heroism: **TÜRK SEVDAM İÇİN YAŞAR VATANIM İÇİN ÖLÜRÜM H.F… POLIS YENİLMEZ** ("Turk *[in Old Turkic script]*, I Live For My Love, I Die For My Homeland H.F… Police Will Not Be Defeated"). The perpetrator of violence is a hero, primarily defined through his ethnic Turkishness. The fact that "Türk" is written (here and in several other graffiti) in the Old Turkic script is very significant. The choice of the iconographic sign is a direct and stylized reference to the narrative of "ancientness" of Turkic/Turkish (equated) ethnicity and statehood. Thus, the script itself is a nationalist claim of history, territory, and the right to rule. Moreover, the ethnic Turkishness is linked with absolute loyalty to the homeland, expressed in the commitment of Turkish police to protect the territory from "enemies" (*duşmanlar*) – a concept based on the idea that all neighboring countries as well as world's leading powers (whoever this is in a given historical context) threaten Turkey. The narrative of the sacred territory and militarized masculinized heroism it is in fact most central narrative of Turkish nationalism that ambiguously intertwines ethnic Turkishness and statehood. As Fuat Keyman and Tuba Kancı (2011) showed, it is a constant thread of the militarized nationalist education (cf. Kaplan 2006; Altınay 2004). **VATANINA GÖZ DİKENİ EZ OĞUL** ("Boy, Crush The One Who Sets An Eye To Your Homeland") says another graffiti. Almost 80 years ago, Virginia Woolf (1938) asserted that the origins of men's positive interest in war shall be looked for in education. Ayşe Gül Altınay (2004) proved this claim in the case of Turkey, where the whole education system is militarized in various ways – most notably with the inclusion of actual military education into the curriculum and in terms of gendered segregation in which boys are raised into "little soldiers"

that look up to the "heroes" of the bloody wars of the Turkish and Ottoman history. Militarism is also present in less exceptional ways, as these wars play a central part of the nationalist self-imagination pictured in history books (see Kaplan 2006; Keyman and Kancı 2011). As Cynthia Enloe (2000) showed, state-building in general most commonly takes place through the connection between militarism, nationalism, and masculinity (see Altınay 2004 for the case of Turkey). Militarization is a subtle process in which beliefs and structures that are most closely connected to the military as an institution that exercises violence come to be taken for granted in everyday life of a society. It "creeps into ordinary daily routines; it threads its way amid memos, laundry, lovemaking, and the clinking of frosted beer glasses" (Enloe 2000: 3). The normalization of the militarized masculinized conception of belonging in Turkey, repeated in the graffiti is irritating for the critical populations. Yet, as it is so omnipresent in the public sphere, it is not a shocking experience to read this kind of graffiti. Rather, they are a part of the ordinary "states of violence" (Skurski and Coronil 2006) of the life of non-Turkish-nationalists; the "routine violence" (Pandey 2006) against the people who do not identify themselves with the narratives of militarized heroism.

During my research I observed that while the "homeland" (*vatan*) is related to nationalist emotional commitment, the "state" (*devlet*) most often appears in discourses related to loyalty. During the urban warfare, the identification of the armed forces with the idea of the state went so far, that the ÖH members came to embody the Turkish state. **DEVLET GELDİ** ("The State Came"), says one of the earliest widely circulated graffiti sprayed in white over a small tobacco shop. It is not only the ÖH members themselves that seem to believe to *be* the state, but they are perceived as such by the populations experiencing their violence as well. In the Kurdish movement, the reified and animated notion of the state (also called T.C. – abbreviation for the Republic of Turkey) is a common reference. "The State did this to us," is a common way to narrate the violence experienced by the Kurds. Thus, the idea of Turkish state is closely associated with continuity of institutionalized violence and raises resentment, if not hate.

Moreover, as those who refuse to take part in Turkish nationalist narratives of statehood know very well, the narratives are as much about exclusion as they are about inclusion. **T.C. YA SEV YA TERKET** ("T.C. [Republic of Turkey] Love It or Leave It") is a common phrase of the nationalist discourse that constructs one's emotional bond to "the

State" as a condition for the right for (equal) citizenship. Alternative attitudes may easily be associated with treason. Graffiti that says **DEVLETİN VAR İHANET ETME** ("You Have A State Do Not Betray"), is one such reminder. A "classic" anti-Kurdish xenophobic narrative (which I encountered often in the field) about disloyalty that is also entextualized in the graffiti is related to the use of electricity. The story has it that the Kurds use electricity illegally and do not pay for it, which causes a loss that is payed by the loyal citizens. (A Kurdish answer I received to the question about it was that it is the electricity acquired from *their* rivers, so why would they pay for something that was first stolen from them.) The messages picture the ÖH as the state-assigned force of justice that will make an end to this treacherous practice. **PÖHEDAŞ TAHSİLATA GELDİK!!** ("PÖHedaş Came To Collect The Payments!!") says one such graffiti, sprayed in red in an emptied room. Above the text, there is an icon for electricity – a lightning in a circle. "PÖHedaş" is an ironic word play, combining PÖH and Tedaş – the name of the national electricity distributor. Four ÖH members in black snow masks pose with the graffiti in a formation: two standing in the back in same position, two kneeling in front of them, holding their rifles on their lifted knee and showing the *Bozkurt* sign with their hand; the two on the left wear green camouflage uniforms, the two on the right black ones.

Narratives of treason play a very significant role in the nationalist discourse and in the attitudes towards minority populations (Çırakman 2011). They are the base for the nationalist imagination of enemies, which refers back to the time of the fall of the Ottoman Empire after the World War I, which was followed by significant territorial losses, first determined in the Treaty of Sèvres (1920) and then re-negotiated in the Treaty of Lausanne (1923). The narrative has it that the Allies of the World War I attempted to take Anatolia from its righteous owners (the Turks) and cut the rest of the Ottoman Empire into pieces with the help of disloyal Anatolian populations – Christian minorities. Some commentators talk about the so-called "Sèvres syndrome" of the ruling elites (whoever it is) and more generally the whole society ever since the foundation of the Republic until the present. The "Sèvres syndrome" refers to the nationalist fear for the territory, which is perceived as being under constant threat of "foreign forces" (any country with geopolitical power) and collaborating "internal traitors" (more precisely, minorities – although they are recently being joined by seculars and by followers of Islamist preacher Fethullah Gülen) (see Çırakman 2011; Yeğen

2011). This narrative has been the drive of numerous pogroms, lynches, and attacks on religious and ethnic minorities in the Turkish-majority cities throughout the history. Therefore, the discourse about the betrayal and the "enemies of the state" is closely related to the emotionally charged history of nationalist violence.

Another graffiti on an interior wall writes in red: **#07 Antalya# DEVLET KURMAK TÜRKÜN İŞİ İTE NASİP OLMAZ** ("#07 Antalya# Founding State Is Turk's Job, It Is Not Destined For A Dog"), with a drawing of the Turkish flag. The usage of hashtags is significant, as it may be understood as a reference to social media that renders the graffiti as something to be "sharable," something to be circulated. In addition to this, hashtags in Twitter link together in a network innumerous posts and constructs intertextual relations between them in the virtual space (Bonilla and Rosa 2015). With the widespread use of hashtags and names of Turkish cities in graffiti, the Kurdish space is symbolically linked to Turkish space and therefore a technique of nationalist incorporation of space (see Ötkem 2004). The photograph includes an armed ÖH member in green camouflage uniform and helmet standing by the door, showing the *Bozkurt* sign with his hand and holding a rifle in the other. The sentence includes the interrelated idea of statehood as a destiny-given exclusive right of ethnic Turks and the fear of "internal traitors" challenging this right. The "enemy of the state" is metaphorically replaced by "dog" in the rhetoric act of dehumanization and humiliation – as dog is considered a dirty animal in mainstream Muslim imagination and is used as a harsh insult. In addition, the sentence expressed a widespread "classic orientalist narrative" of Kurdish inferiority in the public discourse about the Kurdish issue that says that the Kurds are by the nature not able to rule themselves – it is not their destiny, as the graffiti says (see Zeydanlıoğlu 2008). Politicized Kurds and other supporters of the Kurdish movement have heard this kind of statements countless times. There is an (in)famous statement of Turkey's first minister of justice (1924-1930), Mahmut Esat Bozkurt, which continues to echo in contemporary ultra-nationalist discourse: "Turk is the sole master of this country, its sole owner. Those who are not of the pure Turkish race have one single right in this country: the right to be servants, the right to be slaves."[30] Some of the graffiti bring to mind this oppressive statement: **TÜRKSEN ÖVÜN DEĞİLSEN İTAAT**

[30] Türk, bu ülkenin yegane efendisi, yegane sahibidir. Saf Türk soyundan olmayanların bu memlekette tek hakları vardır; hizmetçi olma hakkı, köle olma hakkı.

ET ("If You Are a Turk Be Proud, If You Are Not Obey"), writes in black letters on a grey wall of a residential house, expressing racist exclusivism. **YA HEPSİN YA HİÇ YA TÜRKSÜN YA PİÇ** ("Everything Or Nothing, You Are Either A Turk or A Bastard"), says another graffiti sprayed in red under the crescent with a star – the symbol of the Turkish state. As Mesut Yeğen (2009) argued, the public image of the Kurds has changed in the 2000's from "prospective Turks" to "pseudo-citizens." They are now (especially those living in dissident neighborhoods and villages) perceived in terms of disobedience and threat to the Turkish state sovereignty and territorial unity of the "homeland," and recognized as unassimilable into the ethnicist citizenship, and therefore treated with more aggressive policies. The graffiti above express these attitudes behind the physical destruction, but they also go further in their treatment of the "pseudo-citizens" as entirely ungrievable populations.

As I have already discussed, the graffiti that picture the exclusive presence of the Turkish state and associate it with ethnic Turkishness in a way continue the phantasmatic strategy of territorializing inscription of the state sovereignty via military power with militarized nationalist slogans formed with rocks on the mountain slopes and official monumental iconography in the cities (cf. Navaro-Yashin 2012: 44-50; Öktem 2004). Similarly to these traditional inscriptions, the graffiti are performances of the appropriation and Turkification of space, which are not only material, but also discursive, linguistic, semiotic (cf. Öktem 2004). Yet, in the case of graffiti, the inscriptions are (1) more personal, as they are sprayed by individuals who additionally take photographs with them in a militarist nationalist performance; (2) experienced as more intimate, as they are inscribed on people's homes and even inside their homes, which makes them feel more invasive and threatening; and (3) experienced as more violent – not only as a consequence of the intimacy but also due to the context of intense physical violence on the one hand, and on the other the emotionally charged history of violence and oppression into which they are inscribed.

5.4.2. School graffiti

The place where graffiti are inscribed is significant for the understanding of the graffiti and for their affects on viewers. Some of most memorable photographs of graffiti among my interlocutors proved to be those from local schools, which have always been the

primary *locus* of Turkification (Kaplan 2006; see Türkyılmaz 2016). The school graffiti narrate the shift from assimilationism to physical force (although to be precise, physical and psychological violence have always been a part of education in Kurdish villages, as I was told). **EGİTİM** [sic] **SIRASI BİZDE**, **J.Ö.H.** ("It Is Our Turn to Educate You, J.Ö.H."), is written on a green schoolboard with a white chalk. On the right side of the photograph, the perpetrator stands with one leg lifted on what seems to be a knocked-down chair of the ravaged classroom. He holds his automatic rifle with both hands in standby, with a finger on the trigger, looking straight into the objective through the slit in his black snow mask. **KAPIMIZA DAYANIYORSA ZULÜM, BAŞKA YOL YOK, YA İSTİKLAL, YA ÖLÜM..!! Ş. ÇELİK J.Ö.H** ("If Cruelty Is Leaning On Our Door, There Is No Other Way, Independence or Death..!! Ş. Çelik, J.Ö.H.") – an entextualization of a part of an ultranationalist poem by Ali Kınık – is written on another green schoolboard. On one of its photographs, an ÖH member with a black snow mask stands beside it, holding a Turkish flag. The use of the notion of "independence" refers to the Turkish "War of Independence" (1920-1923) in which Mustafa Kemal (later Atatürk) organized nationalist armed resistance against the Aliened Powers of the World War I and those who were seen as the "internal traitors." The struggle was mainly territorial, as it emerged out of the rejection of the Treaty of Sèvres (1920). Among other territorial losses, a rejected Treaty which never came into validity, not only recognized the Kurds as a separate and equal nation, but also determined an autonomous Kurdistan region in the Southeast with the right to vote for independence. Hence, the affective value of the "Sèvres syndrome" in the imagination of the Kurdish issue is implicitly present in the references to the "War of Independence" in the graffiti, as the War remains the frame of reference for any official military activities.

The use of schoolboards for the perpetrator graffiti has several layers of symbolic significance, which emotionally affected several of my interlocutors. First, it is a place for children who are seen as the most innocent victims of the conflict. Destructed and invaded classrooms are a reminder of the violent disruption of everyday life. Second, as my previous research about the memories of young Kurds who grew up in the war zones showed, especially village schools have always been the spaces of Turkish domination over the local Kurdish populations and a primary *locus* of cultural eradication, which included symbolic and physical violence, as well ideological Turkification (see e.g. Üngör 2012; Türkyılmaz

2016). As I noticed during my fieldwork in Turkey, young Kurds mostly have vivid memories of their first encounter with the official education system, which was commonly experienced as violent, especially due to the prohibition of Kurdish language use. The children were not allowed to use their mother tongue in school, but most of them did not know any Turkish at all or were not able to express themselves in it. Thus, the school graffiti in destructed classrooms may not only signal the disruption of life, but also trigger traumatic or painful emotional memories of violence.

5.4.3. Reading the loyalties

The graffiti are full of political symbolism that expresses the writers' affiliations and loyalties. The most common affiliation of the ÖH members is with ultranationalist MHP and its neo-fascist militant affiliate *Ülkü Ocakları* (*Ülkücular*), also known as the *Bozkurt* (Grey Wolf) movement. Great majority of the graffiti in one way or another express this particular belonging. Their symbolism such the three crescents and the "wolf" sign formed with a hand – the two fingers in the middle joint with the thumb, the index finger and pinkie stretched upwards – are present in almost all photographs. Some ÖH members even hold a blue flag with a wolf's head in the photographs in addition or instead of the widely present Turkish flag. On one such photograph, three masked men in militarist attire stand before a burgundy-grey wall. The man on the left holds a gun with his both hands; the man on the right has his arm lifted in the air, showing the *Bozkurt* sign with his fingers; the men in the middle squats and spreads out a blue flag with a wolf's head in the middle, with only his masked head looking out from behind. On the wall behind the team a graffiti is sprayed in blue: **TANRIDAĞLI BOZKURTLAR** ("Grey Wolfs of Tanrıdağ"). While wolf is a symbolic animal for the *Ülkücü*-s, Tanrıdağ refers to a mythological place in the Pan-Turkist myths of ethnic origins of Turks. In addition to Pan-Turkism (with the reference to the mythological motherland in Central Asia), *Ülkücü* symbolism may include diverse elements that do not always completely overlap: neo-Ottomanism, Islamist nationalism, as well as secular ultra-nationalism, referring to the pre-Islamic Turkic unity (associated with the newspaper Sözcü). All these complicated belongings are expressed in the graffiti.

In addition, the symbolism is related to the history of political violence in Turkey. Throughout the history, far-right political organizations have always been involved in political violence against minorities and left-wing dissident groups. *Ülkücü*-s are known for their militant character, proximity to mafia, and paramilitary activities. They have been involved in countless physical attacks on minorities, and violent clashes with left-wing, Alevi, and Kurdish groups in multicultural Turkish cities. They are responsible for the majority of pogroms and lynches in the country's violent history. For the viewer who is aware for the nature and power of the *Ülkücü* movement, the photographs that uniformly include *Bozkurt* iconography are reminders of the institutionalized culture of violence and extermination. Additionally, they are a reminder of the paramilitarized character of the graffiti. Paramilitaries are unofficial militias consistent of gang-related members, often employed to do the "dirty business" in wars, in exchange for relative autonomy, impunity, and sometimes material goods (Üngör 2015). Paramilitary organizations have been involved in various instances of violence in Eastern Anatolia that caused thousands of civilian deaths and enforced disappearances (see Özar et.al. 2013; Göral et al. 2013). This time, the perpetrator graffiti took on the paramilitarist character. Within the conditions of suspension of law under the permanent state of emergency, the graffiti are a performance of dominance and impunity. The impunity in the case of graffiti-writing reminds the viewer of other aspects of impunity. It is this impunity that makes one think what else will they do, as some of my interlocutors mentioned, which keeps one in continuous fear of violence.

Another paramilitarist and perhaps even more horrifying expression of loyalty in the graffiti and photographs is related to the militarized Turkish Islam. The white interior wall of a family home with a carpet and pillows on the ground is riddled with bullet holes. **TEHVİD'İN ASKERLERİ NUSAYBİN'DE** ("The Soldiers Of [Allah's] Oneness [Are] In Nusaybin") is written on the wall with large green letters. Beside the graffiti, an ÖH member in camouflage uniform poses with his hand lifted high in the air, showing the Turkist *Bozkurt* symbol. **KANIMIZ AKSADA ZAFER İSLAMINDIR ESSEDULAH TİM** ("Even If Our Blood Drains, The Victory Is Of Islam. Esedullah Team"), says a large black graffiti covering a residential building. A mysterious group calling itself "Esedullah Team" (meaning team of Allah's lions in Arabic) signed several jihadist graffiti in Silvan and Sur in the first months of the urban clashes, but it disappeared soon after (it has been assumed that they all died in

clashes). Its affiliations are not clear and the state officials denied the state's relation with it after the question of "Who is the Esedullah Team?" appeared in national media together with the photographs of the graffiti.[31] However, the particular version of Turkish statist Islamism is widely present in the graffiti which points against exceptionalism. In a photograph which "went viral" on the social media in the early months of the urban clashes, the marriage between Turkish ethno-nationalism and Islamism is most apparent: **ALLAH HERŞEYE YETER! ESEDULLAH TİM** ("Allah Is Enough For Everything! Esedullah Team"), writes with large black letters on a green façade of someone's home in Sur (or maybe Silvan). Two small crescents are drawn beside the word "Allah" and beside them another two crescents with a star – the Turkish national symbol, at the same time internationally associated with Islam – one under another. Beside, another sentence is sprayed with same letters: **TÜRKÜN GÜCÜNÜ GÖRECEKSİNİZ** ("You Will See the Turk's Power"). In a photograph of an interior, "Türk" is written in large Old Turkic script, apparently with a black marker, under the three crescents of the MHP/Ülkü Ocakları. A sniper rifle leans against the white wall. In front of the wall, an ÖH member in a black snow mask stands with a large rifle in his right hand, pointing towards the sealing. His left arm is lifted high into the air, pointing the jihadist symbol with his index finger. An example of what might be described as an imagination of a "Turkist-jihadist synthesis"[32] says: **TÜRK-İSLAM KAZANACAK ŞEHİTLER ÖLMEZ** ("Turk-Islam Will Win. Martyrs Do Not Die"). "Martyrs do not die" is a widely used militarist slogan in Turkey, used in funerals and demonstrations. To be precise, Islam was never completely absent from Turkish militarist nationalism, as the concept of *şehitlik* (martyrdom in Islam) reveals (see Azak 2010). However, the religious-militarist rhetoric has reached new forms and levels in the context of the current (pro)Islamist political culture, which is in war with the secular feminist Kurdish groups in both Turkey and Syria, and in addition includes religious rhetoric in its attacks on secular political opposition and various

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[31] One of the discussions on the "Esedullah Team" by Orhan Kemal Cengiz (2015) has been translated into English and published in Al-Monitor: http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/11/turkey-pkk-clashes-who-are-terrorizing-kurds.html.

[32] The notion of "Turkist-jihadist synthesis" is my reformulation of the "Turkish-Islamic Synthesis," which stands for the integration of Sunni Islam into Turkish nationalist ideology as the basis for belonging which became *de facto* state ideology under the 1980 coup military junta. With the provocative reformulation, I on the one hand evoke a continuity in the Islamist character of imagination of rule and power, and on the other point to the ideological changes in this regard in the last few years, where the connection between Turkishness and Islam is not only ever more central in the official political rhetoric, but is also gaining increasingly over militarist, not unrelated to the context of international jihadism on the one hand, and the neo-Ottoman fantasies on the other.

international critiques, as well as neo-Ottomanist political fantasies. The latter are not unrelated with the deterioration of the government's relations with the European Union. The war with the PKK and failure to meet many other EU requirements have for long years prevented Turkey from progressing in its EU integration process. The AKP has made some major steps towards the satisfaction of the EU integration criteria in the 2000's which included the improvement of the position of Kurds in the country. However, in the last years, the rhetoric and policies have shifted towards neo-Ottomanism, which includes the rise of political Islam in combination with the discourse of Turkish superiority (under the assumption that Turks were the owners of the Empire). This provides a new imaginary for international relations that came to focus more on the former Ottoman territories (most notably Syria). On the other hand, Turkey's cooling relations with the EU and abandonment of the idea of integration gave way to unimpeded war on the Kurds and deterioration of human rights. It seems that all these various partially interconnected domestic and international political contexts created an environment in which the perpetrator graffiti may express an unprecedented level of Islamism.

One of most explicit expressions of Turkist jihadism is a graffiti, written on a white schoolboard with a red marker: **CANIM TÜRKİYEM YA ALLAH YA BİSMİLLAH JÖH CEHENNEME GÖNDERME VAKTİ** ("My Darling Turkey, Either Allah Or In The Name of Allah, JÖH, Time For Sending To Hell"). An ÖH member in dark clothes whose rifle rests on a desk poses beside the schoolboard, pointing to the word "HELL" with his finger dressed in black gloves. The photographs is a spectacle and a message of power over life and death. The graffiti talks about JÖH's "sending to hell" for the beloved country in the name of Allah. Hereby, the "war on terror" framed and legitimized in terms of Islam, as the sacred struggle – jihad. Nationalist duty becomes equated with the duty of a fundamentalist (as a way of reading of religious texts) Muslim. Perhaps its most disturbing manifestation is a perpetrator video from İdil town of Şırnak, which was widely circulated on the social media in November 2015 (the heyday of the urban clashes in the region) by both, members and supporters of the ÖH, as well as the indignant opponents, and found its way into the alternative and some mainstream media as well (although it was not discussed as problematic in the latter!). A few dozens of masked men in black uniforms gather in an empty space surrounded by armored vehicles. A nationalist song titled "*Ölürüm Türkiyem*" ("I will die

[for you] my Turkey") plays in the background. One of the PÖH members has a Turkish flag hanging over his back. He turns his back to the camera, lifts his automatic rifle in the air and we can hear screams and claps. Then he turns again and screams a signal. The men start all together firing their automatic rifles in the air, which lasts for 21 seconds. After the fire quiets down, the men start randomly one over another yelling "Allahu Akbar" ("Allah is the greatest" in Arabic; a phrase that is commonly used by international jihadist groups). We can see more policemen in plain clothes video-recording the spectacle with their mobile phones. Then one voice yells "Tekbir" and they all yell "Allahu Akbar! Ya Allah Bismillah Allahu Akbar! Ya Allah Bismillah Allahu Akbar!" ("In the Name of Allah, Allah is the Greatest"). After this, they give themselves a loud applause with screams and whistles. When everything goes quiet and they start walking around, the same Turkish nationalist song plays, the commander takes off the flag from his back and the video is cut.

Many of my interlocutors have compared the ÖH with the jihadist organization Islamic State (known as ISIS), which has in last few years become a symbol of religion-motivated violence, which has also been a matter of (justified) fears in Turkey. Thus, it is not surprising that the jihadist language of the graffiti triggers the association. Yet, the comparison of violent performances in Turkey with that of ISIS may also be analytically illuminating, since they do both use the technique of visual production and dissemination. As Gilbert Ramsay (2015) argued in his analysis of the horrifying execution videos and imagery recorded and spread on the Internet by ISIS, the spectacle of violence is not always a strategy to discredit an enemy, but can just as well function as war propaganda – as in the cases of ISIS self-dehumanization propaganda videos and (perhaps in less extreme version) the visual material produced during the war in Turkey. Moreover, my interlocutors' comparison is situated in a particular historical and political context. Namely, the time of Kurdish-led defense against ISIS and other jihadist groups in the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria (known as Rojava). During the famous battle for the Kurdish town of Kobanî which was under siege by ISIS for several months in 2014, Turkey refused to enable the Kurdish YPG to use a corridor through Turkey's territory in order transfer basic necessities and fighters from other cantons of Rojava, since the authorities see the YPG as a terrorist organization. This triggered one of the largest and most violent uprisings in the last years in Turkey, in which armed clashes between protestors and police as well as protestors and militarized

Islamists caused 31 lives. Thus, the members and supporters of the Kurdish movement in Turkey associate ISIS and Turkey in relation to war against the Kurds. The witnessing of the Islamist militarized performance in the graffiti deepens this connection and exacerbates the hate already felt for both institutions.

Closely related to the Islamization of (some forms of) Turkish nationalism is the change of the face of the sovereign. Several graffiti refer to the sovereign himself – the president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. This is a novelty in Turkish militarist performance and proves the recent shift in the loyalty of the armed forces. **SENİ SEVİYORUZ UZUN ADAM R.T.E.** ("We Love You Tall Man [a code name for Erdoğan] R.T.E."), says a widely circulated graffiti. Two ÖH members in dark uniforms and black helmets pose in front of it, holding a Turkish flag each from one side. Another expresses the loyalty in Kurdish: **#SUR BİJİ SEROK R.T.E. REİS SİVEREKLİ** ("#Sur Long Live President Leader R.T.E, Siverekli [someone from the town of Siverek]"). An ÖH member all in black poses with the graffiti with a rifle lifted in the air and showing the jihadist symbol with a lifted index finger. "*Reis*" was used in the Ottoman period for "president," "leader" and a name with which *Ülkücü*-s traditionally call their leaders. In the last few years it has become a common nickname for Tayyip Erdoğan, who has acquired absolute power in the country, not without the decisive endorsement of the MHP. As the graffiti reveal, the persona of "the leader" has come to represent "the state," which may be another historical turn in Turkish nationalist imagination.

On the other hand, numerous graffiti include references to provincial belongings of the authors – sometimes in the form of plate codes such as 01 (Adana) or 68 (Aksaray), as signatures such as "Kayserili" (a person from Kayseri) or "Elbistanlı" (from Elbistan), or as greetings such as **SURDAN** [sic] **DOĞANŞEHİRE** [sic] **44 SELAM OLSUN (**"Greetings from Sur to Doğanşehir 44") – written on an interior wall together with three crescents and photographed with a posing ÖH member in black, lifting his rifle in his right hand and showing the *Bozkurt* symbol with his left. Not surprisingly, graffiti expressing provincial belonging sometimes include also references to football clubs, such as Ankaragücü or Trabzonspor. Masculinist militarism is a common denominator of ultranationalist groups and football fandom and people's membership in these groups commonly overlaps (Üngör 2015).

Finally, there are also some references that situate the graffiti and the Turkish-Kurdish conflict into international regional politics and history. **YÜKSEKOVA AZERBAYCAN BAYRAĞNI KARABAĞDA ASACAĞIZ** ("Yüksekova, We Will Raise The Flag Of Azerbaijan In Karabakh"), says a graffiti in front of which an ÖH member poses with the *Bozkurt* sign and the rifle lifted high in the air. The statement draws parallels between the Turkish-Kurdish conflict and the Azeri-Armenian conflict. On the one hand, the interest of nationalist Turkish politicians and ordinary people into the Azeri-Armenian issue originates in the common ethnic origins of Turks and Azeris, emphasized in the Pan-Turkist nationalist imagination. Consequently, both wars are framed as two parallel struggles for righteous Turkic domination. On the other hand, the association of Kurdish militants with Armenians (i.e. non-Muslims) has a long history in Turkish anti-PKK discourse. **ERMENİ PİCLERİ** ("Armenian Bastards"), says a graffiti, signed "PÖH," "JÖH," and, again, "Azer" (Azeri). The identification of guerillas with the "Christian enemy" serves to distinguish the PKK from the "ordinary" Kurdish Muslim population based on the religious bond, as long as the latter is still considered assimilable, which is hardly the case in rebellious towns and neighborhoods. More importantly, the association enables the continuity of the narrative of minority treason for the nationalists. It is worth noting that the nationalist hate was so normalized that the word "Armenian" came to serve as an insult. On the other hand, however, the reference to Armenians awakes the memory of violence in the very same geography that took place a century ago. The correlation makes the graffiti feel uncanny, given the intensity of violence of the renewed armed conflict in the region. Yet, the association is also productive in terms of solidarity between oppositional groups in Turkey. In the last years, the Kurdish movement has engaged into construction of "multidirectional memory" (Rothberg 2011) on the basis of the continuity of state violence.

5.4.4. Messages of threat

Perpetrator graffiti not only accompany physical destruction and violence, but also refer to it in content and explicitly celebrate it. In a widely circulated photograph from Silvan that continues to appear on pro-ÖH Twitter accounts, an ÖH member faces his ¾ back to the camera; he holds a rifle in his left hand and a spray in his right. The words that he seems to

have just sprayed in red in the metal board covering a shut-down shop say: **KURDUN DİŞİNE KAN DEYDİ** [sic]**, KORKUN** (“Wolf’s Tooth Tasted Blood, Be Frightened”). Wolf again stands for the *Ülkücü* identity. The phrase is a metaphoric way to say that there has been bloody violence which will continue and cannot be stopped. Many of my interlocutors noted that graffiti like this prove that, rather than the violence against the built environment and the civilians being “collateral” or “necessary,” excessive violence seems to be the conscious aim of (some) of the ÖH members. The will to celebrate the killing through the additional inscriptions into the space is terrifying and repulsive for the viewers. **KAN KOKSUN BUROM BUROM** (“Let It Smell Of Blood, Rankly”), is written in red on a stone wall (possibly Sur) under the drawings of crescent and star and three crescents of the MHP/Ülkü Ocakları. “*Burom burom*” is an onomatopoetic rhetoric devise to picture huge quantities of blood spilled in violence.

As my interlocutors argued, the graffiti not only to terrify the local populations, but as the graffiti are photographed and spread on the Internet, they affect anyone who is critical of the institutionalized violence. Everyone who would dare to oppose the government is promised to become the target. As one of the interior graffiti says: **42 KONYA’YA SELAM OLSUN.. BİR BAK TARİHE TÜRK’E BAŞ KALDIRANLARIN SONU NE OLMUŞ NUSAYBİN…** (“Greetings to Konya 42.. Just Look Into The History How Those Ended Up Who Went Up Against The Turk, Nusaybin…”). ÖH member stands on the side of the large graffiti, holding a Turkish flag. A somehow related threat: **AKILLI OLUN YİNE GELIRIZ (**“Be Wise, We Will Come Again”) is sprayed with large blue letters on a burgundy color wall. In the middle between the words there is a large grey wound of explosion. An ÖH member in green is kneeling on the ruble that fell of the wall. He is wearing a black snow mask with a drawing of wolf’s head on its lower part and showing the *Bozkurt* symbol with both his hands.

These messages of the graffiti makes one think of the continuity of violence and destruction in the region and perhaps to feel its weigh on the body. These perpetrator graffiti are not random territorial signatures, but thoughtfully encoded messages for the dissident populations. The lack of veiling or denial of violence – and the lack of the need thereof – is horrifying in itself. As Butler (2009) would argue, these photographs reflect the ideas of what is considered (not) human and continuously frame some lives as ungrievable.

5.4.5. Gendering violent texts and performances

As I have noted before, graffiti are a masculinized performance, related to ideas of boldness and spatial domination of male-dominated and often militarized exclusionist public space (Monto et al. 2012; Rosewarne 2004). **DELİKANLIK ZIRHLIDA DEYİL** [sic] **YÜREKTE OLUR..!** ("Crazy-bloodedness Isn't In The Armored [Vehicle] It Is In The Heart..!"), tells us a graffiti from Nusaybin. "*Delikanlık*" (literally crazy-, wild-, or hot-bloodedness) is an emic gendered concept which describes the uncontrollable masculinity of young men (who are described as *delikanlı*) in the period between puberty and marriage, the ultimate embodiment of manliness, the masculine ideal, which has a positive connotation. "A *delikanlı* is someone who is tough, true to his word, has his friends' back, and is honest, straightforward, and charismatic" (Nuhrat 2017: 26). In addition, "a certain amount of deviant behaviour [is] accepted as an inevitable concomitant of this stage" (Kandiyoti 1994: 208). The concept not only most commonly serves as rationalization and legitimation of violence – since *delikanlı* men cannot control their passions – but their aggressiveness is also praised as the correct behavior of "real men" and appreciated for its service of the protection of "home" (family homes, i.e. women, the society as a whole, and the country). Not surprisingly, the concept has especially high significance in the context of football fandom where most grotesque spectacles of masculinity commonly take place, as well as, as Yağmur Nuhrat (2017) argued, negotiations of gender.

If graffiti-writing proves to be a masculinist-militarist and emasculating performance in general, this aspect becomes even more apparent in the case of war graffiti. Virginia Woolf (1938) long ago argued in her book-long answer to the question of "How to prevent war?" posed by a military man, that war is a masculine(ist) endeavor. Men are designated to make states and protect nations – both by militarist means. As Enloe argued, the "militarization of any nationalist movement occurs through the gendered workings of power" (1995: 26). Women's lives are militarized in various ways, some of which are standardized and fetishized – namely, those that reproduce patriarchy, while others – those that include women's agency and challenge the roles determined to women in nationalist imaginary – are systematically silenced (Enloe 2000). The nationalist imagination has its consequences for the gendered

citizenship regime where only men who serve their "duty" in military have the status of first-class citizens, while women (and others who are not conscripted or refuse to conduct their military service), even if they do take active part in nationalist movements, are primarily seen as bodies that carry the nation's honor, children (future soldiers), and culture/traditions (i.e. the patriarchal system veiled in romantic narrative of uniqueness and unity), which have to be protected by male "citizens-soldiers" (Altınay 2004; Yuval-Davis 1993; Nagel 1998; Enloe 2000). Specifically in Turkey, Altınay noted, "lawmakers created a major source of gender difference that was *defined and administered by the state* (2004: 34; cf. Koğacıoğlu 2004). "By defining men's compulsory participation in the military as a *cultural/national/racial characteristic of Turkishness*, this myth naturalizes military service, while at the same time naturalizing a state-sponsored *political* differentiation between male and female citizens as *cultural* differentiation" (ibid., original emphasis). It is not that women cannot be violent – this assumption is in fact a crucial part of the patriarchal ontology – but rather that *active* engagement with violence, either in the form of protection or aggression, has been constructed as a central feature of masculinity. Thus, war is often constructed as "invitation into manliness" (Nagel 1998: 257). As my analysis of the perpetrator photography above shows, the militarist performances of war graffiti-writing and posing for the camera in full combat uniforms, masked, and with large weapons are spectacles of violence and/as masculinity. As I will show in this section, these violent performances are gendered in various ways. On the one hand, explicitly gendered graffiti express and reproduce the patriarchal nationalist imagination of gender-differentiated citizenship. On the other hand, they narrate sexual violence rhetorically by using metaphors, as well as visually by engaging gendered symbolism. In this way, they create an atmospheric feeling (affect, if you like) of sexual violence, which is bodily experiences by the viewers. Therefore, the graffiti are themselves a form of gendered violence which affects the locals as well as those who see them on the photographs that mediate the violence.

On a wall in one of the Turkish-Kurdish urban war zones, there is a mural of Mahsum Korkmaz, known as Agit, the first commander of the PKK's guerilla forces, painted in black. During the clashes, the wall was riddled with bullets and the figure of Agit has been dressed in women's bra, skirt, and high hills, sprayed over in red. Beside this, it is written: **FİSTANLI HEWAL** [sic] ("Heval [Kurd. "friend" – the word with which guerillas refer to

each other] In Woman's Dress"). A huge masked ÖH member in black uniform stands beside the graffiti, holding his large rifle with both hands. The graffiti refers to the event reported in Turkish news[33] about young Kurdish militant protestors camouflaging themselves in women's clothes during a protest in fall 2014, which followed in widespread nationalist mockery in the social media. The term "fistanlı teröristler" was first coined by the MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli and it quickly entered the popular anti-PKK discourse. [34] **GEBERIN FİSTANLI PİÇLER ELBİSTANLI** ("Die Bastards In Women's Dress, Elbistani") is sprayed on another wall, together with the crescent and star, beside which an armed ÖH member poses with his rifle. As women are considered militarily and otherwise inferior in the patriarchal nationalist imagination, the narrative played well into the militarist feminization of the enemy. The spectacle of binary femininity and excessive masculinity in the photograph could hardly be more explicit. Yet, the symbolic feminization of guerillas is something beyond supposedly comic and humiliating dressing into women's clothes as a symbol of inferiority. It has implications for the citizenship status of Kurdish militants and the Kurds who they represent. **FİSTANLA DEVLET KURULMAZ** ("A State Is Not Founded With Women's Dress") says another graffiti. On the one hand, the patriarchal logic where men's relation with women is conceptualized in either protection or aggression (while the later may be also pictured as the former), feminization becomes expression of militarized domination. On the other hand, it has implications for the citizenship status. The graffiti masculinizes the state-building and thus excludes and silences women's contributions to nationalist movements, which is a consequence of the constructed correlation between state, militarism, and masculinity (see Enloe 2000). Thus, femininity becomes a trope for exclusion – not only from the militarist cult of masculine warriors built around the Turkish armed forces, but also from the Turkish citizenship, which is constructed in close relation to militarized ways of "serving" to the nation and the state (see Altınay 2004). If we go a step further in the interpretation, considering the ambiguous distinction between combatants and civilians, we may note that not only the militants mentioned in the graffiti, but the Kurdish community as a whole is treated as second-class citizens, as it is being feminized in the

[33] http://www.ensonhaber.com/etekli-eylemciler-modasi-2014-10-11.html

[34] http://www.ensonhaber.com/devlet-bahceliden-pkklilara-fistanli-teroristler-2014-10-29.html

patriarchal spectacles of masculinist domination and appropriation of which the graffiti are a part.

While the symbolic feminization via graffiti may not do much to humiliate the Kurdish militants, the photographs narrate a story of actual humiliation of locals through invasion into their homes, destruction, and inscription of offensive and violent words onto their living space. It is this kind of humiliation that emotionally affects people who can only watch it from the screens. On a widely circulated photograph a graffiti sprayed in red on a grey wall of a residential home in one of the neighborhoods under curfew says: **BAHAR'DA TANGA GİYDİRECEM** [sic] **SİZE** ("I Will Make You Wear a G-string In the Spring"). Beside the graffiti, fully-armed ÖH member with a green helmet and orange sunglasses stands astride. Months later, this photograph reappeared on the social media, combined in pair with another photograph: A skinny young man lies on the ground on the side, supporting his body with one arm. He is barefoot and dressed in a short pink dress. Over him stand three men in military uniforms, one of them pointing his rifle into the man on the ground. They are smiling into the camera and their eyes are concealed with white marks on the photograph. After the photograph was published on "JÖH" Twitter account with the superscript saying "The Turkish army is true to its word" (*Türk ordusu sözünü tutar*), the post received almost 500 "likes" and was "shared" 113 times. Various forms of gendered violence has reportedly been a common part of the war. Some events, such as the one above, have been also photographed or filmed and circulated on the social media. The conversation about perpetrator graffiti evoked these images in the memories of some of my interlocutors during the interviews. These photographs are primarily aimed to shame the tortured coerced in a transgendered act, based on the presumption that feminization of a man represents "the destruction of one's being" (Butler 2009: 90) for both, the torturer and the tortured and thus at the same time reinscribe the norms of gender and sexuality (cf. Butler 2009: 89-90). Moreover, as Butler (2009) argued in her discussion of the photograph of torture from the military prison of Abu Ghraib, witnessing torture through photographs evokes questions of humanity – the tortured is positioned outside of norms by which human is constituted. "Their status as less than human is not only presupposed by the torture," she noted, "but reinstituted by it" (2009: 93). Thus, the photographs of torture, and murdered and mutilated bodies, as

well as the graffiti that refer to these acts, have a significant effect on the ways the Turkish-Kurdish conflict is framed in the public.

Another way in which the ÖH members seem to try to humiliate "the enemy" is by hetero-patriarchal workings on female sexuality. By referring to the Kurdish militants as "bastards" hints to inappropriate sexuality of their mothers. A more explicit expression is found in the graffiti, sprayed in green over an interior wall of a family home says: **OROSPUYA KÜRTAJ BEDAVA OLSUN ÇOCUKLARIYLA BİZ UĞRAŞIYOZ** [sic] **☺** ("Abortion Should Be Free For Whores, We Are Dealing With Their Children ☺"). An ÖH member who is posing with the graffiti meaningfully wears a white mask picturing part of a skull over the lower part of his face and shows the *Bozkurt* sign with his hand. The symbolic figure of mother has a central role in militarist (and) nationalist imagination and maneuvers of conscription, as mothering is seen in terms of raising (male) soldiers (Nagel 1998; Enloe 2000). Several graffiti express respect to the mothers of what they consider as martyrs, celebrating the Mother's Day. **BAŞTA KENDİ ANAM VE TÜM ŞEHİT ANALARININ ANNELER GÜNÜ KUTLU OLSUN. JÖH NUSAYBİN**… ("First To My Own Mother, and To All Mothers of Martyrs, Happy Mothers' Day. JÖH, Nusaybin…") is written with something like chalk on an internal wall in what appears to be a shed. On the photograph, a young ÖH member poses from the side, with one of his legs lifted on some sacks on the ground. He is dressed in green uniform and he wears a green bandana on his head, tied behind. His face is revealed. The photograph was released after he was killed in a helicopter accident.

While the figure of "mother of the nation" is seen as a primary concern of men's protection in war, "enemy women are /…/ uniformly characterized as sexually promiscuous and available: sluts, whores, or legitimate targets of rape" (Nagel 1998: 257). This distinction is grounded in the cultural and ideological notion honor related to women's sexuality (*namus* in Turkish). This kind of honor (*namus*) is believed (in the patriarchal imaginary) to be in fact men's honor, or more generally the nation's honor, in Turkey also the honor controlled by the state (see Parla 2001), carried by "their" women and dependent on their chastity and modesty. As Joane Nagel put it, "While traditionalist men may be defenders of the family and the nation, women are thought by traditionalists to embody family and national honour; women's shame is the family's shame, the nation's shame, the man's shame" (1998: 254).

Concerns with women's respectability are a crucial aspect of militarism and became especially important in the times of conflict – in terms of mobilization strategies as well as military practices. Prostitution is an integral part of military policies, based on the idea of "natural" masculine sexual drive of soldiers (Enloe 2000: 49-107). Thus, militarized prostitution is most closely connected with militarized rape. Military policy makers "discuss rape and prostitution as if their perpetrators and their victims were entirely different," but in practice, they think of them together: providing organized prostitution to soldiers is meant to prevent them from rape (Enloe 2000: 111). They are both seen in terms of "recreation" of soldiers – one legitimate and the other illegitimate. Yet, sexual violence based on sexualized patriarchal concepts of (masculine) honor and (feminine) shame has been widely used in wars as a weapon of ethnic cleansing, humiliation, and destruction of communities (Nagel 1998; Yuval-Davis 1993; Enloe 2000). Enloe (2000) has identified three conditions under which rape has been militarized. First, the "recreational rape," which is seen "as the alleged outcome of not supplying male soldiers with 'adequately accessible' militarized prostitution" (111). Second, institutionalized "'national security rape' as an instrument for bolstering a nervous [masculinized misogynous] state," (ibid.) used systematically against internal political opposition recognized as security threat. This type of militarized rape is as a form (and a part) of torture that commonly take place in prisons, aimed at destroying the victims' political strength and harming their male comrades under the assumption of their vulnerability related to female sexuality (Enloe 2000: 123-132). This type of institutionalized militarized rape of "enemies of the state" in prisons and detention centers against leftists, Kurds, prostitutes, and trans-individuals has been reported in Turkey as well (Parla 2001: 81).

Third form of militarized rape is "'systematic mas rape' as an instrument of open warfare" (Enloe 2000: 111), which is aimed at the annihilation of an entire ethnic or religious group – most infamously in Rwanda, Yugoslavia in disintegration, and Kosovo, but Turkey also got on the list in the 1990's (Enloe 2000: 132-151). Most recent example of a genocidal rape is mass rape and enslavement of Kurdish Yazidi women in Sinjar (Iraq/Kurdistan Region) by the ISIS in 2014. Gendered and sexual (state) violence have been essential (albeit not official) part of the violence of ongoing process of Turkification (ethnoreligious and political homogenization) of Anatolia, through which categories of belonging have been established. Rape, abduction, forced marriage, and (sexual) exploitation have been a central

aspect of experience of the *longue durée* annihilating project against Armenians (see Altınay 2013) and Syriacs (1915-1918) (see Mutlu-Numansen and Ossewaarde 2015) and against the Zazaki-speaking (Kurdish) Alevi Dersimlis (1937-1938) (see Türkyılmaz 2016). The sexual violence involved in the more recent Turkish-Kurdish conflict has mostly been silenced in the public sphere – which proves the damaging persistence of the patriarchal concepts of honor and shame – but is known that it does occur.

The gendered rhetoric of the graffiti illuminates the gendered nature of the war on the one hand, and threats with sexual violence on the other. The infamous graffiti saying **DEVLET HER YERDE # KIZLAR GELDİK İNİNİZE GİRDİK** ("State is Everywhere # Girls We Came We Entered Your Dens") is one such example. Violent penetration into intimate living spaces and their ruination, desecration, is not only documented in the photographs of the raided interiors, but also amplified with the graffiti. **GÜNEŞ GİRMEYEN EVE JÖH PÖH GİRER…** ("JÖH PÖH Enters The Home That Sun Does Not Enter…") writes on an internal yellow wall of a ruinated home. Two masked ÖH members in green are posing with the graffiti, holding their rifles firmly with both hands. The phallic connotation of the rifles could hardly be more obvious. "Home" is a feminized space, especially in the cultural context such as Turkey where spatial gender segregation is prevailing and the majority of women are housewives. The home, or more metaphorically, den, in these graffiti, is a trope for a Kurdish woman, penetrated, violated, ruinated, and dishonored by the "Turkish man" – "*delikanlı*," and his rifle. Disgust. Disgust is what women I talked with feel when seeing these photographs, aware of their context. Disgust is "the ugliest of all ugly feelings;" it is unambiguous and intolerable towards the object; it blocks the path of sympathy, and strengthens and polices boundaries (Ngai 2005: 335). In addition, it is a very bodily feeling, agonistic and contaminating, impossible to ignore (Ngai 2005). "In fixing its object as 'intolerable,' disgust undeniably has been and will continue to be instrumentalized in oppressive and violent ways," Ngai wrote (2005: 340). The women with whom I discussed the photographs pictured their bodily experience of disgust as sickening, felt inside, (for some) upsetting the stomach (the phrase *mide bozulmak* was used).

Yet, the performance gets even further. One of the rare perpetrator murals draws a meaningful pornographic scenario. A wound on the wall that exposed its red bricks is turned into a head and large round breasts are drawn under it. Beside the feminine figure, there is a

drawing of a nude man from ¾ backside. He holds the hole made into a head with his both hands and penetrates it with his penis. As Nagel argued, "the use of the masculine imagery of rape, penetration and sexual conquest to depict military weaponry and offensives" is a common aspect of sexualization of a militarized conflict (1998: 258). The Turkish perpetrator graffiti most vividly express the heterosexualized imaginary of militarized territorial domination as – basically – rape.

Moreover, the rhetoric of the graffiti makes the readers to see a symbolic link between sexual violence and other war crimes. **AŞK YÜKSEKOVA'DA YAŞANIYOR GÜZELİM BÖH PÖH…!** ("Love Is Lived In Yüksekova, My Beauty, BÖH PÖH…!") is a graffiti that replicates the graffiti that celebrates the basement campaign in Cizre with which I began this chapter. It is sprayed in huge red letters, covering the entire living room wall. Killing is being sexualized. Passionate love (Tur. *aşk*, which is different from *sevda* which a patriot feels for his country – or his mother) is used in a metaphoric reference to massacre. Yet another photograph someone's bedroom with the same reference has been the one that remained in the memories of almost all of my interlocutors. It is a close-up photo of a dressing table with mirror. A man, dressed in green militarist attire with black boots, green helmet, and black snow mask half-sits on the dressing table with one of his feet touching the ground. He is looking straight into the camera, holding his big rifle with both hands. On the mirror behind him, a heart is drawn in pink, possibly with lipstick, and inside it a crescent and star, and then the words: **AŞK YÜKSEKOVA'DA BAŞKA YAŞANIYOR** ("Love is Lived Differently in Yüksekova"). Outside the heart, "Gonyalı Beyşehir" is signed (person from Beyşehir in Konya). In the mirror, we can see the reflection of a double bed with white sheets. The placement of the violent scene in bedroom exacerbates the association with sexual violence. This bedroom photograph turned out to be the most memorable of all photographs of graffiti from the urban war zones among my interlocutors, since the witnessing of the ultimate penetration into most intimate homely space and the thought of all the (potential) sexual crimes that go unpunished triggers overwhelming emotions of anger, hate, and helplessness. However, it is also a very gendered bodily experience, which is much stronger for women, who are direct targets of the violent performance.

Many of my interlocutors narrated the conflict in terms of the opposition between brutal hypermasculinized perpetrators of sate violence on the one hand, and the gender-

balanced, liberated, and liberating Kurdish movement on the other. The political attacks on both, militant and political elements of the Kurdish movement is often pictured by pro-Kurdish critics as gendered war against the empowerment of women in order to protect the patriarchal order and its masculinist forms of domination (see Dirik 2016). It is a fact that women officially have an equal status to men in the Kurdish movement and enjoy an important role in the ideology of the PKK, which claims to be the movement of not only liberation of the Kurdish-majority region but also – and primarily – of women (Çağlayan 2012). As the narratives of young Kurds reveal, the PKK indeed has the credit for significant improvement of the social position of women in otherwise patriarchal Kurdish society in the last couple of decades. However, as Nerina Weiss (2010) showed in her ethnographic account of politicized Kurdish women's experience and subjectivities, there are social and political control mechanisms and norms inherent in the new political gender roles that continue to constrain women in everyday life in Kurdish society. As many of my women interlocutors argued, the use of patriarchal concepts of female sexuality that render (the threat of) sexual violence a weapon of war is a conscious strategy, which is not only the prof of the institutionalized gendered nationalism (see Parla 2001; Koğacıoğlu 2004), but also a bitter reminder that these concepts are very much alive in the Kurdish society as well. This patriarchal ontology, which is shared by both communities, is the foundational structure that allows for and encourages gendered and sexualized forms of symbolic and physical violence. Thus, the graffiti are most directly felt by women as the reminders of their vulnerability and structural inequality.

5.4.6. Perpetrator graffiti as memorialization

As the examples of conflict-related graffiti wars from Northern Ireland (see Rolston 2012) and Italian-Slovenian borderlands (Miklavcic 2008) reveal, graffiti have an important role in highly affective and politically sensitive memorial labor. They may inscribe particular emotionally and politically charged memories into the space, but also frame the present experience as a selective memory for the future, embedded into a general historical narrative which emphasizes some perspectives and silences others. There are numerous graffiti paying homage to the fellow ÖH members fallen in the clashes, proclaimed as "martyrs" (*şehit*).

Some streets have been proclaimed the streets of this or that “martyr” via graffiti in uniform style that includes the drawing of crescent and star. Other graffiti are more narrative: **#SUR# SELAM SANA EY YILLARI HEBA OLAN GENÇ!!! FIRAT ÇAKIROĞLU P.Ö.H.** (“#Sur# Salute To You Oh Youth Whose Years Went In Vain!!! Martyr Fırat Çakıroğlu P.Ö.H.”), writes in red amid the ruins in Sur. At least three different photographs of different ÖH members posing with this graffiti were spread on the social media. On one of them, the graffiti on the neighboring wall is visible as well: **P.Ö.H. ADALET NAMLUDA** (“P.Ö.H. Justice [Is] On The Gun Barrel”). These graffiti reveal that the fallen ÖH members are seen as the victims of terrorists and that the asymmetrical violence is seen as just punishments for the loss of these “heroic fighters.” **#ŞEHIT ABDULLAH DELİBAŞ YERDEKİ ORDUDAN GÖKTEKİ ORDUYA SELAM OLSUN YÜKSEKOVA** (“#Martyr Abdullah Delibaş Salute From The Army On The Ground To The Army In The Sky Yüksekova”), says another graffiti on the metal cover on the window of a closed-down shop. We can see a pile of rubble illuminated with the sun in the left corner of the photograph behind the posing ÖH member in black. With these memorial graffiti, the ruinated cities are turned into the memorial sites of the figures of the militarized culture of violence. Their lost lives are mourned publically in the appropriated space, which only exacerbates the ungrievability of Kurdish lives. **ŞEHIT PÖH COŞKUN NAZİLLİ İNTİKAMIN ALINDI** (“Martyr PÖH Coşkun Nazilli You Were Avenged”), is written on the white wall of a residential building. On the lower part made of red bricks, the sentence **GÖK GİRDİ KIZIL ÇIKTI… (**“Sky Entered, Red [Blood] Came Out”) points to brutality of violence, which is narrated as just vengeance rather than destructive attack.

Hence, the graffiti serve as narratives that frame and symbolize the urban wars and thus create their memory. **TÜRK ÇOCUĞU: SENİN VE YURDUN İÇİN CAN VEREN ULU ŞEHİTLERİNİ UNUTMA** (“Turkish Child, Do Not Forget Great Martyrs Who Gave Life For You and Your Country”) says text engraved in stone, maybe a base of a monument, whose photograph was circulated together with the graffiti and is continuously reappearing on the pro-ÖH Twitter accounts. This way, not only are the graffiti put alongside more conventional forms of the state’s inscriptions of sovereignty and nationalized memory into the space, but those who refer to the violence in the graffiti get a place alongside the “heroic” fighters of the (again) “War of Independence” to who schoolchildren are taught to feel

indebted for “saving” the sacred territory (see Keyman and Kancı 2011; Kaplan 2006). The power of collective memories is in their ability to attach to each other and form a consistent historical narrative in continuous reconstruction and simultaneous denial of the reconstructive labor, so that the narrative always supports belongings, ideological propositions, political arrangements in the present (Fentress and Wickham 1992). As the analyzed graffiti show, these are the narratives of not only heroic fight out of love for “their country” – its religion, the leader, and the territory that belongs to “the Turk” against the “bad terrorists,” but also expressions of cruelty that redefines and expends the notion of heroism. On a photograph which has been “photoshopped” so that it seems like a drawing, an ÖH member with his rifle in his hand wears a mask with a drawing of nose and jaw of the skull covering his face under the eyes. As a reminder of violent death, he is leaning on the grey wall on which it says: **SENİN İÇİN NUSAYBİNİ MEZAR ETMEK BOYNUMUZUN BORCU OLSUN KARDEŞİM COŞKUN NAZİLLİ** (“It Is Our Great Debt To Turn Nusaybin Into a Grave For You My Brother Coşkun Nazilli”). The kinship reference to a fallen ÖH member as “brother in arms” is another patriarchal militarist expression of masculinity (see Enloe 2000).

While graffiti can be painted over, the photographs of the destructed walls, sprayed with the words of redefined heroism and victorious narratives of appropriation are frozen in time and eternalized, together with those who pose for the photos, and thus allow for the temporal extension of their affective power to hurt (cf. Kuntsman 2011). These photographs acquire the function of war trophies and become virtual statues of militarist triumphalism (cf. Butler 2009), erected by the authors to themselves – a novel form of war iconography with the ambivalent status between “official” and “unofficial.” The photographs not only spread the territorial violence beyond the space where it takes place, but also beyond that particular temporality (Kuntsman 2011). As Butler wrote, “taking a photograph is neither always anterior to the event, nor always posterior to it. The photograph is a kind of promise that the event will continue, indeed it is that very continuation, producing an equivocation at the level of the temporality of the event” (2009: 84). The circulation of these photographs on social media is an act of appropriation of that temporality as the time of the victor; an act of the siege of the war’s memorialization.

5.5. Conclusion

With the above analysis of the examples of the perpetrator graffiti from the Turkish-Kurdish urban war zones, I tried to point to the importance of the context to the way we read and experience the graffiti. While graffiti-writing is in itself a territorializing practice of marking the space and a sign of its appropriation, war graffiti in disputed territories have a particularly violent context. They are not only a territorial marker of spatial mastery, but also a visual medium of communication of power and of the violence through which the domination is being exercised (cf. Butler 2009). Yet, the ÖH graffiti of the Turkish-Kurdish war zones are also carefully encoded semiotic messages, invested with symbolic violence. Thus, understanding of the graffiti as texts proper, their intertextual relations, and their entire historical context are crucial for the entire experience of violence. The contextually situated and politically embedded subjective semantic reading is what triggers gendered emotional experience of these photographs in my interlocutors. As I have most explicitly shown with the examples of gendered messages, the graffiti themselves are a form of violence in which the invasive material inscription gets reinforced with violent words in a violent context that are felt on the skin and in the stomach.

On the one hand, they are the spectacles that narrate the loyalties of the writers and serve as war trophies and symbols of heroism. On the other hand, perpetrator graffiti are violent performances that have the power to terrorize the local populations and other oppositional readers. Some of them explicitly or implicitly describe blood-thirsty brutality, while at the same time frame it as heroic acts of sacred war for the homeland and Islam, and just punishments for the disloyal populations. This way, the graffiti are the means of framing and memorialization of the war in a particular historical and political context from the perspective of the institutionalized culture of violence.

Yet for the oppositional readers, the graffiti are painful reminders of the physical violence that ruinated the environment and people’s lives (including their own), the gendered violence of the war, and the impunity of those who perpetrate violence. The graffiti are not only a part of the affective environment of the aftermath of destruction in which the violence lingers, but they also describe this violence, implicitly refer to, and point to as evidence in a semantic way. They are read as the expressions of the will and ability “to do anything,” as

my interlocutors said, to exercise any kind of violence and crimes with impunity. This thought rises fear. The *will* to harm (cf. Nichanian 2003) is put in words and publicly displayed with such transparency, that it also makes transparent the ungrievability of Kurdish (and other marginalized) lives. It is this facing of one's own ungrievability in the photographs of the graffiti and the militarized masculinized performances that constantly reappears on the virtual walls of the social media that terrifies the viewer.

However, there is another layer of reading that takes place after the first strike of feelings that virtually all of my interlocutors emphasized as well – the question of sovereignty. *Why* all this militarized and terrifying spectacle of material destruction, graffiti, flagging, and photographs? For my interlocutors, it is clearly a performance of make-believe sovereignty (see Navaro-Yashin 2012) and a sign of the actual lack of rule in these places. According to my interlocutors, the authors try to convince themselves and others through these militarized spatial performances of Turkishness and Turkification, as they have been doing ever since the foundation of the Republic (see Öktem 2004). Yet, the excessive violence points to the opposite of what is performed. As Hannah Arendt (1986) argued – and some of my interlocutors referred to her in their claims, violence is antithetical to power; it is a proof of the lack of power of a government and can only destroy power, not bring it. Arendt wrote: "Nowhere is the self-defeating factor in the victory of violence over power more evident than in the use of terror to maintain domination, about whose weird successes and eventual failures we know perhaps more than any generation before us" (1986: 70).

As Navaro-Yashin argued, this *phantasmatic* performance is employed to "gloss over the phantomic qualities" of the territory-in-appropriation (2012: 14). The void, Gordillo noted, is not pure nothingness and negativity, but also has a sense of uncontrollability, untamability, and presence of potential resistance (2014: 57-58). Empty streets, schools and homes, ruinated by weapons and invaded by painful words of violence and domination are still haunted by the authors of the previous graffiti, who have been either expelled from their homes or their bodies mixed with the rubble and removed with excavators. They are gone, absent, and yet present. Amidst the void, the words **YDG-H KONTROL TC GİRMEZ** ("YDG-H control; TC cannot enter") still remain visible, despite the fact that they are circulated online with the photograph on which a member of ÖH poses with his rifle, trying to prove them wrong. These performative efforts to literally and metaphorically gloss-over

the phantomic power with the phantasmatic (un)make-believe (the destruction and production of space) are driven by the persistent presence-in-absence of the “traitor-terrorist,” fetishized ghostly figure of the Turkish nationalist imagination, who wrote the previous graffiti. As Navaro-Yashin wrote, “specters underline the making of nationalist modernity” (2012: 16) – in Turkey and elsewhere. Although the graffiti are painful and rise strong negative emotions and often the feeling of helplessness and hopelessness, some viewers manage to see hope in the signs of weakness and fear, inherent into the violent (un)make-believe spectacles, and this way manage to overcome the disintegrating feeling of hate and find new strength for persistence.

CHAPTER 6

PRECARIOUS POLITICAL FEELINGS

To be a Negro in this country and to be relatively conscious is to be in a rage almost all the time.

—James Baldwin

6.1. Introduction

We design our social media accounts in the way that it determines what we see. A politicized (pro-) Kurdish young person in Istanbul is under constant effects of news from the war zones, the violent images and words of spatial appropriation and the cyberwars on the Internet. War, even if spatially remote, is a part of their everyday reality. That routine move of scrolling down the digital screens of our electronic devices. The news are appearing on our virtual walls of Facebook and Twitter continuously. We look at them routinely, but they nevertheless hurt us and trigger a set of emotions. In turn, the negative emotions triggered by the images of ruins, perpetrator graffiti, and the militarized nationalist spectacle around them, become a routine as well. If people want to know what is going on in the places they are attached to, they have to face the violence of the images on social media. It is almost unbearable, but we keep looking. For the (pro-) Kurdish youth in Istanbul, the only alternative to constant pain, sorrow, disgust, and anger triggered by the violent words and images is isolation from the news entirely, which means isolation from their own community and loneliness in the environment of systematic oppression, structural violence and discrimination, and ethnic tensions exacerbated by the embedded reporting from the war zones. There is no escape from the war. What kind of emotional world is this?

One may look at the same news and same violent words and images, and feel pain, anger, and helplessness, perhaps even hate. Yet, what one feels is not the pain of others. It can never be completely comprehended. In her essay on pain, Ahmed (2004) warned us about the appropriation of pain of others, which is an act of violence, and suggested that “an ethics

of responding to pain involves being open to being affected by that which one cannot know or feel" (30). Anthropology is this kind of endeavor – to acknowledge the pain of others and the fact that the researcher will never feel the same, to take our interlocutors seriously when they talk about emotions, and to keep trying to understand.

When I used to hear people around me in Istanbul continuously saying that they are depressed (*depresyondayım*), bored and lifeless (*canım sıkılıyor*), and confused or mixed up (*kafam karışık*), I used to think that they exaggerate or that these are figures of speech, but during my fieldwork on emotions I came to realize that it really means something. I came to realize that these ambiguous ugly feelings (Ngai 2005), political depression (Cvetkovich 2012), and precarious hope and hopelessness (Hage 2002; Parla 2017) are the atmospheric affects, shared in the society, and a ways in which people come to inhabit their world(s). This chapter is an attempt to at least partially grasp these complex emotional worlds of people who are emotionally and politically involved into the Kurdish movement and daily encounter violent words and images on their personalized "walls" of social media accounts.

The emotions and feelings that repeatedly came up in my interviews in the face of ruins and destruction were pain (*acı* – which also stands for hot and bitter tastes) and sorrow (*üzüntü*); the images are "*can yakıcı*" – literally "life-burning," i.e. causing overwhelming physical and mental uneasiness, pain, and distress, as I have shown in the Chapter 4. Moreover, the pain frequently turns into the feeling of rage and hate towards those who they recognize as the perpetrators of violence, whether the repressive apparatuses (all security forces), "the state" as an imagined entity seen and felt through the system of oppression and political violence, or even "the Turks" as those who refuse (or fail) to critique the state. Especially in relation to the perpetrator graffiti, my interlocutors most commonly described their feelings as *öfke* – rage, fury, strong anger (stronger than *sinir* – "anger"), intense irritation. Yet, this personal-political rage affects different people in various and importantly different ways, which has different effects on their daily life. As I have argued before, the emotional experience is preconditioned by one's subjectivity and the structural conditions of possibility.

In this chapter, I will focus on the question of possibility of feelings of rage/anger and hope. First, in relation to the general violent states of being in Turkey. And second, in relation to one's personal position in the Kurdish movement. One's level of involvement in the

organized Kurdish movement, I will argue, is particularly decisive in the way people experience and respond to pain and rage caused by the violent words and images, and the general feelings of hope and hopelessness that these violent encounters on social media help to generate. I will show that although rage, especially collective rage, is most commonly understood as active and politically potential emotion, it may also be destructive and paralyzing. While the feeling of rage in the face of violent words and images online can be empowering for collective political action against violence and injustice in material world, it may also become a part of a vicious circle of fear, helplessness, and despair. Hereby, the feeling of hope becomes increasingly precarious, which leads to (political) depression, inaction, and isolation. My interlocutors' narratives of emotional experiences hope to bring to light the emotional worlds in which they live and point to the ways in which their political feelings are delimited by the structural conditions of possibility. Moreover, this chapter aims to add another perspective on anger, hope, and related political feelings in conditions of continuous violence on the one hand, and the norms of a revolutionary movement on the other.

6.2. Emotions and Structural Conditions of Possibility

As anthropologists of emotions have shown in various contexts, emotions, which include both, bodily feeling and thinking, are collective in several ways. The way emotions are felt, experienced, understood, and expressed is subjective, but also culturally specific (Rosaldo 1984; Leavitt 1996) – integrated into *habitus* in Bourdieudian sense. Not only is it important to attend to the way emotions are put in language and positioned in the structures of meaning (Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990), but the whole bodily experience of emotions is culturally preconditioned, albeit not fixed or impermeable (Leavitt 1996; Beatty 2005). While some observed collective feelings in rituals, for instance (Turner 1967; Leavitt 1996; see Lutz and White 1986: 413; Skoggard and Waterston 2015), others put preexisting structural conditions of emotions in the center of their inquiry. Emotions are generated and expressed in particular social structure that importantly determines the conditions of possibility of feeling and expressing (Abu-Lughod's 1986; Scheper-Hughes 1992; Parla

2017). Williams' (1977) classic formulation of "structures of feeling" remains fruitful to think with, since it captures the "interpersonal, ambivalent, emergent quality of [emotions] as lived experience" and instructs us to also reveal "more fixed, governed qualities that are shaped in relation to existing" legal, economic, and political structures and arrangements that bring up the question of power (Parla 2017: 2). There is a rich body of anthropological literature that discusses emotions in terms of their historical contingency and political, social, and economic specificity. Scheper-Hughes (1992) and those who followed her pioneering work in medical anthropology among communities marked by poverty, social exclusion, and normalized everyday violence have shown how socioeconomic marginalization and everyday violence determine the physical and emotional lives of people – including that of the ethnographer, albeit in a different way (see Behar 1996). On the other hand, there are numerous anthropological works dealing with emotions in less extreme normalized conditions such as (post)coloniality and global neoliberal capitalism that more subtly but nevertheless crucially frame the experience and utilization of emotions (see McElhinny 2010).

Furthermore, recent authors in the field of cultural theory have written about intersubjective, atmospheric feelings or affects (Sedgwick 2003; Stewart 2004; Ngai 2005; Cvetkovich 2012), and collective attachments (Ahmed 2004; 2010; Berlant 2011) in the conditions of structural violence, oppression, and injustice. In continuity with Williams' conceptualization, have discussed the general structures of feeling as particular zeitgeist. Several of these authors have identified negative public feelings as particular to late modernity or late capitalism. Ngai (2005) argued that public emotions in what T. W. Adorno calls the fully "administered world" of late modernity are essentially characterized by ambivalence, passivity, and lack of catharsis. Berlant (2011) talked about the "cruel optimism" – "a relation of attachment to compromised conditions of possibility" (24) as a distinctive feature of the ordinary in late capitalism. Prospective optimistic attachments to the unreachable capitalist fantasy of "the good life" are cruel, she argued, because "something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing" (1). However, it is difficult to determine the cruelty of the attachments of an oppositional political movement, as they always have their "cruel" aspects (such as continuous dependence on existing unequal structures and individual accountability to unjust laws, as well as attachments to unreachable objects), but

are nevertheless a political alternative and aim to change particular cruel conditions and may well succeed to do so to a certain extend. However, due to the external and internal structural constrains and disappointments, political movements do involve negative feelings (see Gould 2010). Cvetkovich (2012) focused on depression as collective and ordinary political feeling of the current time of neoliberal governmentality, "wars on terror," political crisis and disappointments, economic and professional insecurities, and continuous historical racial and gender inequalities and oppression. "Depression, or alternative accounts of what gets called depression," she wrote, "is thus a way to describe neoliberalism and globalization, or the current state of political economy, in affective terms" (Cvetkovich 2012: 11). As I will argue, collective depression is recognized by many as a serious problem in Turkey, and the usage of antidepressants is rising. Despite the AKP mantra about the improvement of the economy and living conditions in the country, they are engaging in disregarding neoliberal projects, and people live in ever greater insecurity about the future (see Ozbay et al. 2016). Political tensions are another aspect of social life that exacerbates insecurity and fear, and consequently, depression.

However, within the general atmosphere of the late capitalism, optimism (and life in general) is not equally cruel for everyone, as Parla (2017: 7) emphasized. As Hage (2002) argued, the feature of late capitalism is not only that it produces ideologies of hope that withhold joy (see Ahmed 2010; Berlant 2011), but "capitalism does not even manage to distribute this kind of truncated hope evenly amongst the population" (152). Ahmed (2010), for instance, showed this with her discussion of unequal distribution of (possibility of) happiness. Furthermore, with her juxtaposition of two undocumented migrants in Turkey, an African man who was detained and murdered by a policeman during interrogation, and a Turkish Bulgarian woman who walked into a police station voluntarily and walked out with a warning of deportation and simultaneous encouragement to apply for citizenship based on the ethnic privilege, Parla (2017) evoked the notion of *precarious hope*, situated between ambivalent lived experience, and legal structures and regulations. Hope, she argued, is not equally distributed – neither in terms of amount, nor in terms of intensity, which is a result of structural differences. Emotions, as McElhinny (2010) emphasized in her selective review of anthropological works on emotions in neoliberal, national, and (post)colonial contexts, are never neutral regarding one's position in terms of race, class, and gender (see Ahmed 2004;

2010; Cvetkovich 2012). It is no coincidence that some of the fields where emotions have been especially addressed are feminist and queer theory, as women and LGBTI+ individuals belong among most disadvantaged groups (see Sedgwick 2003; Ahmed 2010).

Negative feelings such as shame (Sedgwick 2003), sadness (Cvetkovich 2012), unhappiness (Ahmed 2010), and anger (Ahmed 2004: 172-178) have been discussed with their particularity to the structural violence. Moreover, there are significant parallels between gendered and sexual, and racial/ethnic positionality in regards to conditions of possibility that generate particular subjective and collective feelings (see e.g. Ahmed 2010). Cvetkovich (2012) evoked Cornel West's "emotional color line" and the notion of "Black sadness," in order to make connections between racism and depression. "In West's comments," Cvetkovich wrote, "(black) sadness is a complicated feeling encompassing despair (but as a starting point, not an endpoint), hope, and the 'melancholia shot through with black rage' that is so frequently not heard by a 'morally tone-deaf society,' despite its articulation by African Americans" (2012: 117). The feelings of alienation and loss in the face of normalized racism which has a continuity with the history of colonialism, genocide, and slavery can never be accessible to white people who are implicated into the structural violence. In Turkey, the ambiguous rage is experienced along ethnic and religious lines, where the Kurds seem to be the angriest of all.

Continuous state of anger in which oppressed and discriminated populations live, is a result of systematic hurt (Ahmed 2004) and emotional inheritance (Cvetkovich 2012). As Ahmed (2004) argued, the way the events are being "impressed upon us" is historically contingent. Affects are always mediated by our skin, which is formed (materialized) and recognized as the border through history of painful (gendered and racialized) encounters, and thus includes a history of readings of feelings (2004: 25). "Pain," she wrote, "is hence bound up with how we inhabit the world, how we live in relationship to the surfaces, bodies and objects that make up our dwelling places" (2004: 27). Ahmed's emphasis on historical-subjective contingency of pain is most instructive in thinking about the pain caused by structural violence and discrimination. However, she also exposed the problem of turning the wound into identity, where it becomes a fetish, cut off "from a history of 'being hurt' or injured" and leads to forgetting (Ahmed 2004: 32). Not forgetting is crucial for the historical wounds to be healed and for the recovery to become possible, as the stories of pain must be

heard. Pain, Ahmed (2004) argued, may be solitary, but it is never private, as it requires another person's witnessing for the recognition – without appropriation. Ahmed (2004) illustrated these points with the example of the Stolen Generation in Australia – the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander children from their families as a genocidal assimilation policy, which includes interconnected (but not collapsed) individual and collective hurt. The damage is inflicted on the skin surface of a whole community and it is felt on the skin of individuals that make up that community. The children of the Stolen Generation were not only dispossessed of their childhood with their parents in their community, and more generally of the right to live freely on their ancestral lands, but were also dispossessed of their pain. First, when the perpetrator community appropriated their wound and turned it into national shame, which then became the object of collective healing through recognition that allowed the white "Australian nation" to become one body and continue to practice institutionalized racism. And second, as the bodies of the Stolen Generation became bodies of the perpetrator community, their attachment to those who inured them dispossessed them from the pain and impeded anger (Ahmed 2004: 34-38; cf. Povinelli 2002). The context is comparable to decades of Turkey's assimilation policies against the Kurds (see Yeğen 2009; Zeydanlıoğlu 2008), as well as their simultaneous and continuous discrimination in Turkish cities (see Saraçoğlu 2011; Karakoç 2011; Çırakman 2011).

Similarly as in the case of Black sadness, we are witnessing a complex and ambiguous mixture of feelings – a combination of sadness, and grief, but also strength, endurance, and hope – caused by historical hurt in other communities marginalized by systematic gender or racial/ethnic differentiation. However, there are various ways in which historical pain may be translated. The story of an Aboriginal daughter Fiona who has not healed but has moved on and survived, is a story of the impossibility of reconciliation, passivity, and the necessity of the perpetrator community to start differently inhabiting the world together with the indigenous community (Ahmed 2004: 38). On the other hand, the example of Saidiya Hartman's recovering of the silenced archives of slavery as an attempt to understand its affective afterlife in her personal and collective despair and weariness in the present (Cvetkovich 2012: 121-134). It involves political action, driven by rage (although Cvetkovich (2012) prioritized the feeling of depression). As Saidiya Hartman's story reveals,

anger as a form is “against-ness” is “about the impossibility of moving beyond the history of injuries to a pure or innocent position” (Ahmed 2004: 174).

6.3. Political Rage

Pain, as Ahmed (2004) argued in her chapter on feminist attachments, is crucial for collective mobilization “around the injustice of [the] violence and the political and ethical demand for reparation and redress” (172). However, it is not merely pain that moves subjects into feminism, but it is preconditioned by the “*reading* of the relation between affect and structure, or between emotion and politics in a way that undoes the separation of individual from others” (Ahmed 2004: 174, original emphasis). Furthermore, as Ahmed argued, “The response to pain, as a call for action, also requires anger; an interpretation that this pain is wrong, that it is an outrage, and that something must be done about it” (ibid.). Thus, anger a kind of reading of pain (which, as Ahmed (2004) argues, itself already involves reading) that creates a language of naming of the object that hurts and the interpretation of the causes of the hurt. Yet, it may also move beyond the object of “against-ness” and turn into a more general response to the world which allows a reading of interconnected injustices and structural violence from a distance. Moreover, anger is not only related to the past-present as a translation of pain into knowledge and a response to injustice which one is *against*, but it is also a vision of and *for* a certain different future (Ahmed 2004: 175-176). This move away from the object that causes pain, Ahmed (2004) argued, gives an attitude towards the world a capacity to become a movement.

Anger is what gives us the *energy* to react against structural violence and “deep social and psychic investments in racism, /…/ sexism” (Ahmed 2004: 175; Jasper 2011), and, in my case Turkish nationalism. Therefore, it is a central emotion in social movements and represents “emotional liberation” and the ability to challenge injustice for the suppressed groups that otherwise tend to suppress their anger or turn it against themselves (see Jasper 2011). Feminist (and LGBTI+) anger, and Black rage have been most commonly discussed in the context of moving political emotions in conditions of structural violence. As James Jasper wrote, “Women’s anger [and I would add anger of any other target of structural

violence] is /…/ a form of righteous indignation, a moral sensibility based on an analysis of injustice as well as a gut feeling of oppression" (2011: 297). Leonard Moore (2010), for instance, showed in his historical account of African American Activism in New Orleans, the ways Black rage has been the crucial driver of collective responses to police violence and structural inequality based on normalized racism since the World War II. For long time, however, emotions involved in political mobilization have been stigmatized in academic (sociological, political science) and popular discourses of "group psychology" and "angry crowds" defined through opposition with rationality and in parallel with affective rituals as the logic of the "savage mind" (Gould 2010; Mazzarella 2010: 296-297). The image of crazy, irrational, destructive mobs, taken away by collective affect have been used to pathologize and delegitimize activism. As a response to the stigmatization sociologists in the late 1990's engaged in corrective rationalization of social movements and neglected their emotional aspect. Emotions were recovered as central to political mobilization during the so-called emotional turn in the 21st century (Gould 2010). However, Deborah Gould (2010) argued that this turn has not gone far enough, as the emotions continued to be discussed in rationalist and cognitive terms, i.e. prioritized meaning and neglected feeling, or at least neglected the unpredictable, unstructured, ambiguous, ambivalent feelings (see works discussed in Jasper's 2011 review). Gould (2010), an affect theorist, emphasized the thought-emotion discontinuity and the nonrational (different from irrational as illogical and crazy), noncognitive – in her view, *affective* – aspect of political action and inaction. Yet, as I argued in Chapter 2, emotional experiences are subjectively and historically contingent; in Ahmed's (2004) terms, they involve reading which is conditioned by previous readings.

In order to reject this binary dichotomy between feelings and rationality, Ahmed (2004) suggested to see anger not as a motivation for movements, but as a performative "speech act which is addressed to somebody" (177). This, however, is where the conditions of possibility of just hearing come into play. In order for the feeling of anger to be productive and moving, we need to have *hope* in the possibility of the unjust structural conditions to be changed (ibid.). Hope as a sense of the possible (realistic or not) – past, present, or future oriented – is what keeps us going and raising voice even if we fail to be heard (cf. Miyazaki 2004). Yet, sometimes there is not enough hope for the anger to be translated into action, and then "you go quiet," as my friend Ewa said during our interview. "Indeed," Ahmed wrote,

"anger without hope can lead to despair or a sense of tiredness produced by the 'inevitability' of the repetition of that which one is against" (2004: 184). However, as I will show below, in the case of politicized young Kurdish and other oppositional people in Istanbul it is not the feeling of "inevitability" of violence that produces tiredness and hopelessness, but one's feeling of helplessness in the face of overwhelming brutal violence transmitted by the images and a disappointing realization that the efforts that improved the conditions in the past can always be canceled out and erased, that a political movement is not always a straight line of continuous progress towards justice. It is the experience of the precarity of one's struggle and physical life, its ungrievability (Butler 2009), that may prevent the anger to be translated into action, and may thus lead to political depression.[35] Cvetkovich defined political depression as "the sense that customary forms of political response, including direct action and critical analysis, are no longer working either to change the world or to make us feel better (2012: 1). In this situation, hope becomes increasingly fragile and anger may become melancholic rather than empowering.

6.4. Conditions of Possibility and Political Feelings in Contemporary Turkey

As it should be clear after the previous chapters, the context in which the emotional encounters related to the Turkish-Kurdish conflict take place on social media has been increasingly violent, which, I argue, determines the conditions of possibility for subjective experience and collective political feelings. As I have illustrated in Chapter 3, Turkey is currently in one of the peaks of institutionalized violence and political insecurity in its history. Under the increasingly authoritarian rule, any kind of criticism is targeted with the terrorism discourse, which constructs some lives as grievable and some as ungrievable (see Butler 2009), and even the absence of expression of loyalty is enough for suspicion and accusations. My interlocutors told me that it is virtually impossible to organize large demonstrations in Istanbul, since the organizing "cadre" is imprisoned, killed, fighting in

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[35] In Berlant's (2011) terms, the glimpse of cruelty of one's attachments makes the feelings even crueler. And yet, how can one replace attachment to the possibility of conditions where one's life will be grievable? Berlant (2011) herself does not offer a way out of cruelty. Are attachments that are not cruel possible for those who are disadvantaged in the conditions of structural violence?

Rojava, or in exile, while less militarized people are afraid of brutality and mass arrests with which the protests are suppressed. In addition, the ISIS attacks on secular left-wing and pro-Kurdish gatherings in the last two years where many of my interlocutors lost their friends and colleagues particularly traumatized many political activists and filled them with anxiety that prevents them from going out on the streets to demonstrate. Protests in the Kurdish-majority region, on the other hand, are reportedly targets of indiscriminate violence (only comparable to the horrible 1990's), which has resulted in dozens of civilian casualties and hundreds of injured. As my friend Ünal said, it is so easy to be killed in a peaceful protest that one "can chose something else;" if you are brave enough to go to protests, "you can chose getting killed another way," he said. Many of my interlocutors say that general fear in the society significantly decreased participation in collective demonstrations. Staying at home, on the other hand, as I will show later on, makes one who feels the political rage even more irritated, and the feeling of uselessness and helplessness can lead to depression.

Yet, the violent conditions do not only include physical violence involved in the war in Kurdish-majority provinces and the general authoritarianism and the state of emergency (OHAL) across the country, but also ordinary "states of violence" (Coronil and Skurski 2006) or "routine violence" (Pandey 2006) involved in the entire social structure with all its institutions that has everyday religious, political, economic, and moral implications. As Cvetkovich wrote, "Racism spans a spectrum that encompasses the ordinary as well as the catastrophic" (2012: 116). Similarly as Gyanendra Pandey (2006) discussed the violence of political categories of "natural" (majority) and "hyphenated (or marked)" (minority) citizens, constructed through strategies and practices of continuous nation-building process in post-Partition India, we may trace the structural violence of ethnicist differential citizenship and property regime in Turkey back to the foundational violence – the annihilation of Ottoman Christians from Anatolia (Parla and Özgül 2016) and the following *longue durée* violent events of ongoing Turkification. As I have shown in Chapters 3 and 5, the Kurds (in addition to other ethnic/religious/sexual minorities) have been marked as second-class citizens based on their ethnic and/or political identity, and recognized as a threat to Turkish sovereignty and thus subjected to continuous systematic symbolic and physical violence and dispossession in the war zones and in Turkish-majority cities. Therefore, we can speak of what Cvetkovich (2012) called intergenerational "emotional inheritance" of pain and anger through collective

memories of unresolved and ongoing systematic violence among groups such as Armenians, Kurds, and Alevis, but also LGBTI+, feminists, and radical (non-nationalist) political left. Turkish citizenship is not only based on religion (Sunni Hanefi Islam) and ethnicity (Turkishness), but is also gendered which has significant structural consequences, some of which I discussed in Chapter 5. This does not only mean that women and non-heterosexual men are also second-class citizens, but that violence against women and LGBTI+ individuals also becomes legitimized as a matter of national security related to ideas of national/family honor (see Parla 2001; Altınay 2004; cf. Nagel 1998). In turn, violence against minorities is gendered and sexualized in most overt, grotesque ways, as I showed in Chapter 5. The categories of oppression intersect with each other and one's position on an intersection leads to experience of more violence, which most crucially affect one's subjectivity that preconditions political feelings and readings of violent texts and images.

As Ahmed noted, emotions are crucial in one's coming into being as a political subject (2004: 171). I have asked all of my interlocutors about their process of politization, and all of my Kurdish interlocutors described their emotional experience of conditions of structural violence – not as much the war itself, as they were born into it, but especially normalized everyday violence and discrimination in Turkish-majority cities – as the trigger of politization and mobilization in the movement.[36] My entire ethnographic fieldwork among Kurdish university students in Istanbul (since 2012) showed that there is a quite consistent pattern in the politization among them. After the migration from Kurdish provinces to the very West of the country, young Kurds most commonly feel alienated from the Turkish society, which may develop into hate, depending on one's subjective amount of pain (inherited in the family as well as experienced in violent encounters). Many of them who were not born into a politicized family clearly recount the turning points of their recognition or increased concern for the Kurdish issue, most commonly an "ordinary" (normalized) but traumatic event of violence or discrimination and injustice. The alienation from the Turkish community leads young Kurds to search for others like them, which are often found in politicized student groups as well as the urban Kurdish movement (legal or underground). Within the organized movement they receive instructions for "correct" (i.e. hegemonic

[36] The personal narratives of politization of both, Kurdish and non-Kurdish interlocutors are presented in Protner n.d.

within the Kurdish movement) reading of feelings in the context of collective memories of continuity of oppression and resistance, and learn from older colleagues how to translate rage, which may be considered a second step in the common path of politization. It is in this time that most Kurdish students get familiarized with Kurdish history and literature, and other world literature related to colonial struggles and oppression, which solidifies their views on the Kurdish issue and shape their subjective position in the movement. During critical discussions with my interlocutors on various topics in Kurdish history and present politics, I had the chance to observe how they frame their personal experiences into the politicized historical narratives (see Protner 2015), towards which most of them were nevertheless quite critical. They reflected one of the central emphasis of the Kurdish intellectual culture – always critically question everything, but mostly yourself.

On the other hand, my non-Kurdish interlocutors have been emotionally and/or politically involved into the Kurdish movement as a result of witnessing of physical and structural violence in a particular subjective context and consequent recognition of the Kurdish struggle as legitimate and necessary. Each of them has a distinct personal history of getting familiar with the Kurdish and other sociopolitical issues and building their position vis-à-vis these issues. This process resulted in unique complex assemblies of experiences that have shaped them into who they are today and gave foundations to their political-emotional worlds (cf. Beatty 2010). Moreover, the contemporary Kurdish movement in Turkish-majority cities like Istanbul is led by the HDP, which offers a platform for the left-wing struggles for rights and empowerment of various marginalized groups such as ethnic and religious minorities, women and LGBTI+, workers, disabled, poor, victims of gentrification, victims of politically motivated exclusions, and for a greater social justice and equality in general as well as the environment. Thus, the organized "Kurdish movement" has with time become something much greater that goes well beyond the ethnic divisions and includes equally devoted non-Kurds as well (currently imprisoned co-chair of the HDP Figen Yüksekdağ is one such example).

Furthermore, political emotions are also ideological, in the sense that legitimate emotional responses are delimited by the political movement. The way the political feelings of pain, grief, and rage are translated to become moving is guided by the (culture of) the organized Kurdish movement, which includes the narratives and directions of its imprisoned

ideological leader Abdullah Öcalan and the executive PKK leadership, as well as the general affective atmosphere traveling within and between different activist groups (from the HDP and other left-wing and feminist groups that collaborate with it, to what is left from the militant cadre in the cities). The strength, calmness, and joy with which the leading figures of the movement (the HDP and the PKK) continue the struggle and keep motivating thousands of people despite military and political setbacks, criminalization, imprisonment, and general political and cultural oppression, is energized by future-oriented Blochian kind of revolutionary hope, loaded with agency (see Bloch 1986; Ahmed 2004). Moreover, just like Ernst Bloch (1986), the movement is hopeful about the potential of hope. Thus, as I will show below, hope came to be a *normative* feeling in the Kurdish movement and a "method of knowing and self-knowing" (Miyazaki 2004), which has ambiguous consequences.

On the other hand, it is a fact that the position of the Kurds and the Kurdish movement is experiencing a major setback. Tens of thousands have been imprisoned, tortured, injured, and killed because of being a part of the Kurdish movement, even if not organized. The individual and collective wounds have only started to heal during the last cease-fire and peace negotiations that gave way to hopefulness and optimism, and made people whisper about the reconciliation – until all that was crushed and the wounds were opened again and many new injuries were caused. Especially for those young people who did not grow up amidst public tortures and murders but mostly only heard stories of the horrors of the 1980's and 1990's, it is increasingly difficult to keep hope in the face of today's situation.

6.5. Social Depression in Turkey's Oppositional Circles

The social media as the spaces where people view horrific news, share words, images, and emotions, and experience (always already present) pain and anger importantly determine the conditions of possibility, albeit in ambiguous way (see Kuntsman 2011). On the one hand, social media are the only space for circulation of critical news and information, given the break down on the independent media. In addition, "sharing" of information brings like-minded people together and has the potential to play a crucial role in mobilization for political actions online and out on the streets (Gerbaudo 2012). Yet on the other hand, our virtual

walls are full of violent words and images of horrors of the war, which may also have an overwhelming effect (Sontag 2003) and imped politicized reaction people strive for (Berger 2013). As politicized young (pro-) Kurdish people mostly use Twitter and Facebook to reach political news about the conflict, violence and injustice is what they mostly see on their virtual walls. This may in turn construct an image of the world where there is nothing but horror and death. Continuous exposure to brutal violence and injustice may lead to fear, anxiety, depression, withdrawal and isolation – what sociologist of mass media George Gerbner (2002) famously described as the "mean world syndrome," the anxious perception of the world as a result of excessive television watching – which in turn prevents people from going out, socialize, and protest the violence and injustice, and makes them spend even more time on social media, which creates a vicious circle of negative emotions such as fear, helplessness and despair. Moreover, as people fear more and more to express their opposition to violence in public space, the social media activism becomes a legitimate way of protest. However, as my interlocutors claimed, this is a privileged position comparing to the people living and dying in the war zones, and many emphasized that "sharing" news on social media alone cannot lead to transformation, despite its important role (see Kuntsman 2004). Yet for many, "sharing" news and feelings on social media is the only reaction they are able to give amid the dissapearance of liberal public space, which does not satisfy them. In fact, even expression on the internet is becoming increasingly risky of prosecution, as many kinds of criticism may be framed as "terror propaganda" or "insult of the president," both prosecutable by law. The increasing insecurity of public and virtual spaces makes many people feel helpless, vulnerable, and afraid.

In this time of political crisis, unsafety, and additional economic inflation and insecurity, many from the opposition talk about a widespread social depression in Turkey. As Cvetkovich argued, we should think of depression "as a cultural and social phenomenon rather than a medical disease" (2012: 1; cf. Brennan 2004). However, as Brennan stressed, that transmission of affect which she investigated in psychiatric clinics, is "a process that is social in origin but biological and physical in effect" (2004: 3). My interlocutors talked about depression as a state of suffering of an individual as well as a general social atmosphere caused by the political and economic conditions in Turkey and in its regional neighborhood. The use of antidepressants in Tukey is very high and rising, as Rojda (31) who works in a

pharmaceutical company assured me. My interlocutors agreed that depression has become the ordinary feeling among politicized Kurdish and left-wing youth; "everyone is depressed," they say.

Many are depressed (especially) because they feel overwhelmed by violence, helpless, and unable to translate their pain. Some of my interlocutors had severe problems with depression during the time of the urban warfare. İdil (31), a psychologist and someone who started taking antidepressants during that period, explained:

> *"I think people are not sad, they are depressed. Because in these social circumstances you can't be sad, it is not enough. /…/ Depression means that you can't work, I mean not just as a job but any kind of work, you can't love, and you can't play. And many people can't, actually. Even if it is the norm, it is still depression."*

On the other hand, political depression is also a shared feeling that may (although not for everyone) have a capacity to move people closer and eventually beyond suffering (Cvetkovich 2012). As my field-mate Sara (29) explained:

> *"But we live. Because these are common problems. It is not just your problem. It is not only your depression. It is everyone's depression. And that's why you hold on to each other. You understand each other. You look at your neighbor, she is still on her feet, and you also stay on your feet. A process like this."*

Depression, Cvetkovich wrote, "can take antisocial forms such as withdrawal or inertia, but it can also create new forms of sociality, whether in public cultures that give it expression or because, as has been suggested about melancholy, it serves as the foundation for new kinds of attachment or affiliation" (2012: 6). However, the possibilities of moving with and beyond depression depends on one's subjective position in the structural conditions of possibility and the choices one is able and willing to make in relation to her pain and anger. During my fieldwork, political rage was a constant emotion in the narratives of my interlocutors. However, as I will show below, rage and depression can be translated in various ways. Within preexisting activist networks, it can be positive and productive (see Moore 2010). It can move and cause political mobilization that in turn provides a platform for translation of other emotions, breeding of revolutionary hope, and collective healing and support. For people who are not politically organized, on the other hand, political rage may

turn into despair, exacerbation of depression, and isolation. This in turn means more usage of social media to the expense of socializing in the material world, which brings one into a vicious circle of negative emotions and isolation.

6.6. Productive Rage and the Kurdish Movement

As I have shown above, anger or politicized rage is a kind of subjective-collective emotion that can move and mobilize for political action. Various struggles such as the feminist struggle and the Black struggle have been energized by rage, triggered by a politicized reading of pain and grief caused by injustice and structural violence. The (pro-) Kurdish movement is fueled by this kind of political anger in the face of loss of friends, family, and colleagues, loss of places of belonging, loss of rights, and the inability to prevent these losses. It is the kind of uncontrollable rage of bereavement, comparable to that which made Rosaldo (1989) rethink the headhunting among the Ilongot.

> *"It is very heavy, it gives you a lot of pain. For example when you see them [the photographs] you get angry and you say, you say 'I can go, too.' You also want to go there. Because I can't stand it. They are killing your mother, they are killing your father, your sibling, your friends. And they are being killed without mercy. There is no feeling of mercy in this system. So you also say, what can I do?"* (Cemal, 26)

> *"Anger. You want to get up and fight. For example, I would never fight, I cannot take a weapon into my hands. When I see this [photos] [I think], what am I doing here? I shall go too, I shall help them. But this is only for 5 minutes. Or this, for example. We say we are not nationalists. In that 5 minutes, you get this [feeling], you say, what are the Turks doing [to us]? You become a nationalist for 5 minutes. You also want to go and fight, just for 5 minutes. Later you are angry together with your friends, you are talking about these things together, you are trying to solve these feelings together and put them in the background."* (Sara, 29)

The way rage is channeled, is a matter of collective convention – which is the reason for the Ilongot to kill and for Rosaldo (1989) to refuse to kill. The organized Kurdish movement, I argue, provides the frames in which anger is translated into actions in various

ways, as I will show below. According to my interlocutors, the feeling of the need to "share" of the violent images is often the first reaction to the pain and anger caused by the encounter.

> *"When you share, you relief your conscience a bit, you relax. I saw this, I know it, and I protest it by sharing it. If you cannot protest on the street, you think that you protest on social media. I think this is the first feeling of sharing. And second, of course, another person shall see it, he shall be enraged, too, everyone shall be enraged, so there should be something [a collective reaction]. There are two aims. Both, the relief of conscience, and that you spread the rage to other people. You want to make them angry, too. You want them to give a reaction."* (Murat, 24)

As many agreed, social media provide a space for the expression of overwhelming emotions caused by violent images, as well as the space of circulation of independent news (see Kuntsman 2011). This way, social media turn to an affective space where feelings are released and shared, and where they circulate and clash with each other, and echo back into the subjective emotional experiences of active and passive users (Kuntsman 2012).

Moreover, many feel the duty to spread the images as war photography as the evidence of truth that counters the official indoctrination and propaganda machinery for national and international publics (cf. Kuntsman and Stein 2015) in hope that it will contribute to prevent the violence and someday bring the responsible to justice (cf. Apel 2012). As Kuntsman (2011) argued, the digital archives of feelings haunt the future of the cyberspace and make the violence linger and continue to hurt, but they also present a resource for future advocates of those whose lives are rendered ungrievable in violent texts and images. Thus, the "sharing" of violent words and images of violence is a hopeful act of angry speech, based on the precarious belief that the change is possible in the future. This precarious hope (see Parla 2017) and imagination of future or geographically distant digital archeologists (Kuntsman 2011) are the reasons why some of my interlocutors decided to "share" the photographs of ruins and perpetrator graffiti, very few even the photographs of ruinated human bodies (although most of them strictly opposed "sharing" of the latter).

> *"I share the photos to show the truth. I share because I get enraged and also people around me, people who think like me should hear it and strike with an attitude against this. /…/ To make something against this [violence]. For the struggle. Or everyone should see it. If you make an international channel, they should see it too, maybe they*

> *will give a reaction. The pressure of the European Union [on the government] can increase, I mean."* (Cemal, 26)

Those of my interlocutors who circulated violent perpetrator photographs of ruins and graffiti on social media argued that although the images are invested with violence and in fact made as war propaganda and as symbolic violence against the opposition, they at the same time reveal the truth that has to be seen (see Linfield 2010). The precarity of hope was most clearly revealed in our discussions about the possibility of convincing the "ordinary Turks," who are considered apolitical but perform naturalized statist nationalism received by the ideological apparatuses (i.e. not those who actively cheer for their terrorist-slaying heroes), about the wrong-doings of the state forces. Facebook is a network that connects large numbers of people who do not meet in everyday life and may have very different political positionalities – distant family members, childhood friends and schoolmates, etc. Thus, many of my interlocutors "share" the news about the violence particularly to reach those liberal Turks who enjoy the ethnic privilege and deny the institutionalized violence but might be affected by it if they saw the evidence. Although the hopeful "sharing" most commonly results in disappointment with the unresponsiveness and lack of sympathy of the "ordinary Turks," many pro-Kurdish activists continue to raise their voices on social media and in public space, because they know that a change is possible and they refuse to give up. On the more bitter side, there are those who say that if not convinced to oppose the violence, the liberals should at least feel ashamed or at least feel some discomfort while witnessing the violence.

The main reason for spreading violent images, however, is the collective mobilization of rage, driven by revolutionary hope, as the Cemal's and Murat's statements above reveal. During my ethnographic fieldwork, I came to realize that revolutionary hope is a *normative* feeling in the organized Kurdish movement (cf. Bloch 1986). It is this normative feeling of revolutionary hope that makes people feel that they have to translate their anger into action. Rage has long been not only subjective and collective feeling among the Kurds, but also a central feeling of the mobilization for the Kurdish movement. Spreading news about the acts of state violence and injustices, and commemorations of the victims have always been the strategies of the organized Kurdish movement aimed at fueling and mobilizing anger among the people. The enraged Kurdish public has been efficiently organized for mass protests

numerous times in the last three decades (see Güneş 2013; Çağlayan 2012). Those of my interlocutors who are active participants in the organized Kurdish movement "shared" the violent words and images of the urban war zones with the explicit aim to mobilize anger and trigger a mass reaction, as it has been numerous times before (most recently during the mass uprisings in response to Turkey's refusal to open a corridor that would aid the liberation of Kobanî in 2014).

Yet, most of my interlocutors discussed the role of social media in political mobilization as ambiguous. They saw the trend of "sharing" news on social media as a political act as problematic, as it may partially satisfy and cool down the rage, which they see as necessary for the mass protests in the given conditions of fear. The social media activism alone is not enough to make a change, my interlocutors argued, and as much as they are important for the mobilization in terms of circulation of political feelings and practical organization, they may at the same time work counterproductively if they are used solely for releasing of political feelings rather than their mobilization.

> *"In a way, you want to say what you think, you want the people to hear it. Social media can be useful for this. Is it bad or good? As I said, maybe it is negative maybe positive. There is also this side, when you have expressed it here, when you have said things there, you pour out what you have inside of you and that rage decreases. From this perspective it is negative. Because especially in the last period, despite the events are so big that the streets should burn, it turns to Twitter. And people feel like this: 'OK, I made something'. Alright, it is also valuable that you express yourself, your ideas, your political views. But it is not enough and it is also drawing you back. Because with that anger, you should be on the streets, you should be burning the streets. There was war going on and from 7 June to November, it was a big war, like 1000 of people died, and you know, Sur is completely demolished. And still the streets are empty. People are burned alive. And you know we just sat there and watched. And we were like looking at Twitter, ah, everything is so bad, you are sharing it, liking it, posting it, but the streets are empty. So the state had the feeling that 'I can do anything, they are on internet anyway.' And it was right. We just watched people burn."* (Rojda, 31)

The failure in mobilizing mass protests in Istanbul against the violence during the curfews in Kurdish towns and neighborhoods, especially in response to the Cizre massacres to which Rojda referred above, was a very painful experience for many of my interlocutors.

"I became aware that it is not going to be like this [that "sharing" news of violence will not bring people out to the streets]. Especially after the events in Cizre, I mean after 250 persons were burned alive. Because we could not do anything in that time. After this I started to feel that writing something [on social media] is meaningless. Writing something about that seems very meaningless. Because [before] it did give the relief. For example, when you went out to the street and encountered police, to write about what the police does, relaxes people. But after Cizre your conscious does not allow." (Sara, 29)

However strong the political rage, it also proved to be precarious and fragile. Sara stopped sharing news and images from the war zones on social media after the experience of disintegrating pain and helplessness in face of perhaps the largest single atrocity since the conflict between the PKK and the Turkish state. People could not speak about anger in the moment of the Cizre basement events. They only spoke of sorrow, grief, and guilt. The question of how could we follow the event in real time on the social media, saw what is happening in those basements, and not do anything to prevent it, continues to haunt many of my interlocutors. As I was able to observe, they are continuously osculating between hope and hopelessness, energizing anger and depression, etc. Hence, in precarious conditions of possibility, feelings are ambiguous (Ngai 2005; Parla 2012).

Nevertheless, as Ahmed (2004) argued, a movement (in her case feminist movement) allows for the distance from the object that causes pain and to transform anger into a politicized way of reading the world and addressing structural injustices. The organized Kurdish movement offers the space and the conceptual tools for individuals to move out of the uncontrollable rage triggered by particular events. The events and processes of decades of institutionalized violence and loss, and the acts of resistance suppressed with even greater brutality make an *emotional archive* (Cvetkovich 2012) for the Kurdish movement. The collective memory of political violence and resistance forms a narrative of continuity that provides a resource for claims of justice and reparation, which are mobilized around collective feelings of *indebtness* and revolutionary hope. The movement breeds the feeling of duty and indebtness with the discourse of martyrdom (see Güneş 2013), which is a part of a long tradition of symbolic rewarding the revolutionary spirit in the movement. This can influence people's attachments and choices – for instance the desire to be understood as "the right kind" of activist or freedom fighter. As my entire fieldwork among the (pro-) Kurdish young adults in Istanbul showed, it is not the feelings of nationalist love and hate (see Ahmed

2004) that move them, but rather the feeling of indebtness to those who have sacrificed their lives for the lives they are living (as the political status of Kurds in Turkey improved greatly in the last three decades) and for the movement to keep going towards the liberation of peoples, women, and environment. The feeling of "we have to do something" is indeed most common and conventional response to violence and injustice in the Kurdish movement. Accordingly, the feelings of helplessness and hopelessness are considered something be overcome, as giving up is framed as denial and betrayal of those who have sacrificed their lives (cf. Güneş 2013: 262). Thus, even in the times of setbacks such as the last two years, the accumulating collective anger remains the creative force (see Ahmed 2004: 175-177) of the movement and a source of active future-oriented revolutionary hope (see Bloch 1986; Ahmed 2004) for those who are active in the organized Kurdish movement, which provides the translation and contextualization of feelings, as well as the platform for oppositional acts.

> *"The breaking point for me was when we lost close friends. I said what kind of hope?! I mean, rage. Leave it, I am not hopeful, I am pessimist, I don't want to get out of the house, and so on. After we got better, this sorrow, this rage… These are feelings that can make people do something, or prevent from doing anything. /…/ They are feelings that are difficult to control, but if you look from a political perspective, they may be valuable. Yes, we are sad, we are enraged, but let's channel this somewhere. We have to do something, because we have a debt to those people. For example, a close friend of mine was martyred in Rojava, and ok, first month it is very bad and so, you are very sad. But, there is nothing to do, this is also the truth. /…/ S/he died for something, was martyred for something, to comprehend this made me feel better. There is a scum like ISIS and s/he was martyred while fighting against this. This is something very heroic, something very beautiful, something we have to respect, that's why we are indebted to her/him to continue the struggle here. Or, on the other hand, the sexist stuff of the graffiti /…/ it can be fought against from here. With the sadness and rage from there, when I am explaining something to the women here, I can say that it counts as the same struggle. Of course it is not right immediately related to what is happening there, but in general to build up a struggle against sexism with the women here can heal that sorrow and that rage. /…/ By doing nothing, sitting and feeling sorry, you are getting worse and worse. Because there is no ending to this. While doing some [small] things, you get more motivated, you suppress your sadness, you can spit out your rage better."* (Armi, 24)

> *"I feel that anger gives you also the strength to struggle, to do something. It feeds your passion to… to do something. When you are watching, it makes you depressed. And I say to many of my friends, if you feel like you are unable to do anything, you are unable to change the world and you are depressed, you need to go out. And it makes you stronger. And during all these times, when I was observing my friends*

around me, I can say that the ones who were on the streets, they were much healthier than others. They were feeling stronger and stronger. Against everything, they were able to have a smile on their faces and still they had hope. Because that's what the government is trying to do, they want to kill the hope and make you feel trapped, so that you can't do anything against them. And that's why we need to feed hope and we need to spread it." (Rojda, 31)

The feeling of duty "to do something" is involved also in the realization of the relative privilege of the highly educated young people living in Istanbul in comparison to the people living in the places that are under policies of martial law where the war on the ground and accompanying displacement, fear, and political violence continue. As I have briefly mentioned in Chapter 4, many people get inspired by the persistent struggle of the population under the intense violence, which gives them power to continue struggling in Istanbul in order to support those people who are in significantly more disadvantaged position.

"When I went there [to Diyarbakır] and I have seen women and they are very strong and some of them have lost their children during the war, some were daughters, some were sons, and all those mothers, all those women were very strong and they were saying, 'although this happened we will keep fighting.' We will never be a part of this government, these are our children, and in this self-defense we are right. When I have got in touch with them, when I went there to see them, I felt more powerful. I got angry with myself, I said they are here, they are in the war and they still have the strength to continue, and we are in the West [of Turkey] and feeling pity for ourselves! Why, why should we? We shall be stronger. And although they were the ones in the war, they gave us hope. And with that hope we never stopped again. Every day we made the protests and we tried to spread the word because this is what they also wanted. They said 'we are here, we are trapped and we want our voice to be heard'. Make all the world to see and hear what is going on here. What violence the state is using against us.' And with that promise we came back to the West and we did everything we could. /…/ It makes you stronger to be together. It gives you strength. Because when you are alone, you just feel pity for yourself and you can't do anything and you just keep looking on the social media. But if you feel strong, you can both, use the social media for your benefit, for your struggle's benefit, and also with that power you can go out and do something." (Rojda, 31)

Those of my interlocutors who are actively involved into the organized Kurdish movement showed a great strength and calmness, despite of their political anger. Many had a clear view on the Kurdish struggle in the contexts of its history and the multidirectional memory (Rothberg 2011) of political violence. As I have argued in Chapter 4, they were able to see the violent strategies of appropriation as a sign of the lack of state power and

sovereignty rather than its power. It is this analytical view from the outside, provided by the movement, that allows them to keep moving and keep nurturing the revolutionary hope that channels the rage back into the movement.

> *"Of course I am hopeful, because when I read about the world politics, about world history, always these things, for example German Nazi camps, it was very bad, they were throwing people directly into furnace and burning them. But even they got finished. Franco's fascism, Mussolini, Libya… You don't have to go far in the past, it even happens recently. In fact, they [the government] are so furious because they lost. Because they regressed so much, they are now attacking with all powers. A powerful state doesn't do something like this. A strong system doesn't do this. They do this because they see [the Kurdish resistance] as a threat, because they got scared. They are treating us like this because they are scared. Due to this they are that harsh. This is in fact a good thing. But we have to deliver, we have to do something. If you don't have hope, then your life is meaningless. We have to be hopeful."* (Cemal, 26)

> *"It doesn't make me afraid. On the contrary, it makes my faith and my hope bigger, actually. Because the only thing that they can do is to destroy. /…/ It shows heir lack of power, it doesn't show that they are powerful. /…/ It makes me think more about the things this movement taught us. It is so precious, I understand it more than before. Because if we didn't have this movement maybe we would be more like them. And it feels so good actually. I would never be that racist, that sexist, or I don't feel any hate against Turks, but they have all these things, [they think] that everybody except Turks is their enemy… It is so paranoid. Their situation is actually so hopeless, not ours."* (Ünal, 27)

> *"You have to be hopeful, you need people and you have to try to gather more people because you can only succeed together. We have seen in the case of the HDP, we saw great success, so it is working."* (Fırat, 30)

Only this normative revolutionary hope allows the people who are being killed, arbitrarily imprisoned, presented as terrorists in the media, and discriminated in everyday life, to step outside of the moments of overwhelming affective experience of rage and mobilize it into creative acts of struggle that keep alerting local and international public about the state violence and the violent states of everyday life (Skurski and Coronil 2006) in Turkey in hope to contribute to a better future. However, precarious anger and hope are not the kind of revolutionary feelings that expect instant transformation and are doomed to end up in disappointment and despair, but rather the feelings of slow and patient persistence of a mole (see Bensaïd 2001). The organized Kurdish movement is characterized by a long-term

perspective which allows for the normalization of hope, necessary for the persistence of the struggle in these difficult times (cf. Ahmed 2004: 187-188; Miyazaki 2004). As the above statements reveal, the shared political feelings of the organized Kurdish movement involve a hopeful attachment to the hope itself (see Parla 2017; Bloch 1986). Hope is the collective feeling that not only makes the Kurdish movement possible, but also what constitutes the bond of belonging. Hope, for the (pro-) Kurdish politicians and activists, is not only about the future, but also about the persistence and aliveness in the past and the present (cf. Ahmed 2004: 187).

Following Bloch (1986), Hirokazu Miyazaki (2004) discussed hope based on his ethnographic research among the dispossessed Fijian people Suvavou, as a method of constantly acting in the present in the name of a future change. However, the Suvavou hope in the struggle for their ancestral lands is not necessarily revolutionary, but primarily a performative method of being (an ontological condition), knowing, and self-knowing of a community; a method of preserving hope and keeping the present open to the future (Miyazaki 2004). The hopeful opening up to the possible but uncertain futures, Ahmed argued, is "an interval in time, and that interval is the time for action: it is now, when we must do the work of teaching, protesting, naming, feeling, and connecting with others. /…/ It is here that the feminist [and the anti-war, pro-justice] 'we' becomes affective" (2004: 188). The hopeful attachment to gender and ethnic or political liberation may be seen as cruel optimism insofar as it seems unreachable in a lifetime of an individual (Berlant 2011), but it is at the same time a method of persistence in the present, a way of reading the world and inhabiting it with others, and a way of self-knowledge (Miyazaki 2004; Ahmed 2004: 188). My interlocutors committed to the Kurdish struggle would not argue that their optimism is cruel, although the revolutionary attachments to "freedom" necessary involve cruelty in certain aspects. In fact, in contrast with the Suvavou (see Miyazaki 2004), the Kurdish movement is not only sustained by the hopeful narrative of the struggle, but also by the narrative of success. As many like to emphasize, while 20 years ago Kurds were denied their existence and were burning cassettes with Kurdish music in fear of getting tortured or killed, they now demand their rights out loud in millions, read books in their language, play their music on the streets of Istanbul, and enjoy unprecedented international attention and recognition. Transformation is slow, but visible if one looks from a distance. The political

movement, mobilized by hopeful anger offers the space and the ideological tools for one to make a step back and translate the pain in the way that it becomes empowering.

6.7. Helplessness and Impeded Rage

If the political rage, triggered by the violent perpetrator graffiti and images is translated through hope, it can become empowering and politically moving (see Ahmed 2004). While the organized Kurdish movement serves as a resource of normative revolutionary hope, the latter may remains less available and more precarious for many who are emotionally involved in the Kurdish politics, but not organized and actively involved as political actors. The experience of violent words and images on social media is dependent on the complex combination of subjective bodily predisposition to be affected and the preexisting structural conditions of possibility, which include differential citizenship based on gender, ethnicity, and political positionality, as well as the general emotional atmosphere in Turkey and within the Kurdish movement. Yet, my research showed that more than differences in people's subjectivities or the amount of structural violence they have been exposed to, their level of involvement in the organized Kurdish movement was decisive in their ability to feel hope in the given precarious conditions.

First, as I have already shown, the most affective aspect of the emotional experience in relation to social media is the fact that people watch and follow in real time the destruction and horrors that are happening in the places of their belonging, places of their childhood, places where they spent good time with friends and communities. Watching on the digital screens, day by day, how a world they once knew is disappearing, may be emotionally overwhelming. As Sontag (2003) argued in her discussion of the pain of others, the violence that we continuously encounter may impede a reaction not due to the fact that we stop feeling, but because it numbs and paralyses us, as it becomes too much to handle.

> *"You feel very powerless. Against the state, against an army, or against a hegemonic system, you feel powerless. You cannot do anything alone, you have no power. /.../ You cannot prevent all these things that are happening. This makes people passive. Because to lose, to always lose people, friends, to lose people of the place where you*

lived, gives the people the feeling of collapse. It annihilates your energy. It ruins the joy of life." (Murat, 24)

"A big reason for depression is that first, you can't do anything, you couldn't and you can't stop the amount of violence that is going on, there is nothing that you can do actually. At times you think, you go to some manifestations and so, but you can't stop the violence." (İdil, 30)

"I remember this. I could not get over it. In Diyarbakir, when the police was sent there and the curfew was proclaimed in that places, Mardin, Diyarbakir… There was a curfew and in that period, this happened. A small girl stepped out of the door and was shot by a special force member. And the mother cannot bury her child because there is curfew and they don't give the permission, they don't even respect this. I don't remember how long, a few days, it must have been something like one week, she has to keep her child in the freezer. I went through a trauma because of this event. Because you are sitting inside, life somehow goes on, you eat food, and your child is in the freezer. This, I think this is something the worst you can do to a human. /…/ Human values, your empathy, everything is gone at this point. I cannot think the pain of that mother, I cannot think the pain of that father, I cannot think the pain of that brother. There is a death inside, but you have to leave there and cannot go out of the house. This is one of the events that I cannot forget. In the middle of the street they shot someone's mother and for three days they did not give the permission to do anything. You mother is lying on the street, she is dying from hunger in front of your eyes and because she was shot, and you cannot help. We talk about these [events]… But I think we don't even have the right to talk about these things. Because we were not able to do anything, we don't even have the right to talk about it. I can suffer as much as I can, I can be as sad as I want, but I will never understand it. I was affected a lot by this." (Evin, 28)

"There is so much bad things, evil, that it turns into ordinary. And another evil comes, and that also turns to ordinary. Because it is getting normal. I think we are experiencing this, we are living in ordinary evil. /…/ [refers to Hannah Arendt's work] *You don't get surprised anymore. Yes, rage, but the rage is getting normalized. And you cannot give a reaction anymore, you remain unresponsive. And after that you get scared. It turns into fear. Because there is nothing to do. /…/ Yes, that rage, you are filled with rage, you can't do anything. Things are happening but you can't do anything from here. You are nothing. There [in Kurdish-majority regions] you are nothing too, but there you are active, you are that there. But here you are nothing, you can do nothing. You just talk, just talk. And how meaningless is this talking! To speak here strikes you as completely meaningless, so than you don't speak anymore. You go quiet. You are not doing anything. You don't read news, you don't follow anything anymore. You just try to live your ordinary life. Because if you turn to that side, again the exploding rage, regret that you didn't do anything…* [pauses] *Despair. Hopelessness."* (Ewa, 30)

The normalization of evil, pain, and sorrow, is something that many of my interlocutors discussed as the most frightening aspect of the experience. One's reflection on the inability to translate and response to one's own feelings leads to the feeling of paralysis and despair.

Second, as I have argued above, the urge to "do something" due to the feeling of indebtness and revolutionary hope is a normative political feeling in the Kurdish movement that drives political mobilization of anger. The feelings of fear and helplessness are stigmatized in the Kurdish movement. They are marked as shameful, although at the same time never pronounced this way, as everyone says that being afraid is "normal" and "human," given the range of violence and insecurity. Nevertheless, people speak about fear as something negative, often with a feeling of regret and shame. They talk about their own fear as they are confessing, while a friend's fear often becomes an entertaining story from a protest shared within a group of friends to laugh together. You just cannot be a respected member of the movement, a revolutionary hero, a role model, or a "martyr" if you show fear and despair, as the hegemonic forms of self-knowing continue to derive from the PKK as an armed movement (Güneş 2013). Of course it is not surprising that an armed struggle against a strong state with the second largest NATO army requires a great deal of revolutionary hope and courage. However, the normative ideal of courage and sacrifice, fueled by the martyrdom discourse, has at some point gone so far that it included and encouraged acts of self-immolation. The self-immolations of young Kurdish prisoners and student activists (especially women) in Turkey and in diaspora in Europe were particularly widespread in the 1980's and 1990's. The acts of self-immolation had a strong affective and symbolic charge, as they were placed within the nationalist myth of resistance (starting with the story of Kawa the blacksmith and the day of Newroz, the myth of ethnogenesis whose symbol is fire), and were celebrated as "sacred acts of resistance" and "sacrifice for the sake of the nation's freedom" in the PKK-affiliated media in the 1990's and continuously commemorated by the organized movement (Güneş 2013: 260-261; Çağlayan 2012: 11-12). The acts and narratives of self-sacrifice and martyrdom aimed to contribute to the involvement of wider Kurdish society into the struggle by mobilizing their grief and rage (Güneş 2013: 262). Although the this kind of strategic use of sacrifice is not anymore present in the Kurdish public discourse,

the revolutionary discourse of courage and/as honor at times explicitly and at times implicitly lingers among the civil youth, emotionally and/or politically involved in the Kurdish politics.

Thus, the feeling of helplessness and despair most significantly involve also the feeling of guilt and worthlessness, which additionally contributes to depression, as these feelings are stigmatized within the Kurdish movement. The impossibility of mourning the loss, I argue, is not only caused by the ungrievability of lives, but is additionally impeded by the exclusiveness of normative revolutionary hope. When people lose their hope in the revolutionary hope, they are left with nothing but the feeling of despair. I do not argue that the non-revolutionary means of healing and protest do not exist, as the case of various collective initiatives for peace and justice in Turkey such as the Saturday People[37] or the Peace Mothers Initiative[38] prove the opposite. However, in the state of pain and rage, young people who are cruelly attached (Berlant 2011) to the revolutionary values but are not organized in any of these collectives and movements may fall into a melancholic state, where they turn their rage against themselves, try to retreat from the Kurdish politics, and sometimes isolate themselves from social life in general.

Some of my interlocutors were not able to cope with the amount of pain and negative emotions triggered by the perpetrator graffiti and images, and they closed their social media accounts or stopped checking them regularly. Yet, as following political news is a central part of the politicized Kurdish community, this may cause distance from their groups of friends and loneliness.

> *"It was very depressive time for me actually in Istanbul. I was very unhappy in that period. Because I have been, as most of Kurds, most of the people who are concerned about that area, I was kind of like paralyzed, I was in [a district of Istanbul] in that period and I was very alone, I just kind of isolated myself from everything."* (Baran, 27)

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[37] The Saturday People (also known as the Saturday Mothers, *Cumartesi Anneleri*) is a collective, led by the relatives of the forcefully disappeared people in Turkey that have been organizing sit-in protests/commemorations, holding up the photographs of the disappeared and demanding truth and justice every Saturday since 1995 in Istanbul, Diyarbakır, and Şırnak.

[38] Peace Mothers Initiative (*Barış Anneleri İnsiyatifi*) is a group of Kurdish mothers organized around the demand for the end of war.

The isolation from the political community prevents people from sharing their emotions with others and engaging in collective healing. As Ahmed argued, the space of collective "we" where subjective feelings of pain encounter each other and engage in dialogs, and where anger gets to be translated, is essential for the aliveness and movement (2004: 188). Thus, with the loss of feeling of belonging and the collective support, fear may turn into anxiety and political rage into continuous feeling of paralyzing irritation that becomes an ordinary part of daily lives.

> *"The rage continues. Every time you see [the photos] it becomes more violent, you are becoming intolerant, becoming angry. This echoes into your ordinary life, it echoes into your social life. Maybe someone has nothing to do with this topic, says some nonsense, and you start reacting even to these nonsense things. Even if you know that there is nothing against you, you are getting angry. /…/ You see something [the photographs], this was done, and this echoes into your work life, echoes in your family life, echoes to your relationship… Because you are enraged and this rage is coming out from somewhere."* (Evin, 28)

> *"In that period… because it is everywhere. I really remember that I was about to cry when they cut down the trees close to my house. Because I think they were like a barrier between me and the society. It was all about the avoidance. I just tried to forget everything. But now, they cut down the trees, and I can see the neighbors. And I hate them!"* (Baran, 27)

Anxiety and irritation belong to the category of negative emotions that Ngai (2005) called *ugly feelings*, which are marked by suspended agency. Irritation is an impeded form of rage. As Ngai wrote, it is a "superficial affect," "a conspicuously weak or inadequate form of anger, as well an affect that bears an unusually close relationship to the body's surfaces or skin" (2005: 35). Similarly as disgust, irritation is a particularly bodily emotional experience that inscribes itself on our skin and, as Evin's and Baran's statement above illustrate, becomes the filter through which we experience the world we inhabit. For Ahmed, skin is the bodily surface, a border that "keeps us apart from others and /…/ 'mediates' the relationship between internal or external, or inside and outside" (2004: 24). The skin is a border that feels the encounters and is established and recognized, as the sensations impressed on the surface become read and recognized as pain or pleasure or irritation. "The recognition of a sensation as being painful (from 'it hurts' to 'it is bad' to 'move away') also involves the reconstruction of bodily space, as the reorientation of the bodily relation to that

which gets attributed as the cause of pain," Ahmed (ibid.) argued. People's attempts to escape from the social media and their isolation from the political community in the times of urban warfare and curfews was this kind of bodily moving away from pain. Yet, as the narratives reveal, the irritation caused by the rage, impeded by the feeling of helplessness, and the anxiety in the face of intensifying violence continue to inhabit the injured bodies in everyday life.

> *"The most important thing is this – not knowing what will be. You go, you live, but you cannot guess what is in front of you. What is going to be? Is it going to disappear, the region where you live? /…/ There are very terrifying scenarios of fear. They can come and take you from here, based on your ethnic identity, I men gather people. There can be something like this. This can happen. You can think anything from now on. /…/ You see that all people with university education here are jobless. You have a job and a life here, but what are you going to do… You always breed such fear inside of you. And I think this brings people down to the bottom, psychologically, really. Because you don't have a safe environment, [there is] insecurity. Anxiety about the future. Incredible anxiety about the future! The anxiety about the future is not anymore about I should earn money, I should have a house, I should have a car, I should have a family life. It is anxiety about I have to stay alive. /…/ To exist, to stay alive."* (Ewa, 30)

Ewa's statement not only testifies about the ongoing anxiety in the face of physical and structural violence, but simultaneously relays the feeling of anxiety to the insecurity of the precarious conditions of the neoliberal capitalism. The late capitalism that breeds increasingly cruel optimism (Berlant 2011), ugly feelings (Ngai 2005), and political depression (Cvetkovich 2012), is another background condition in which young people in Turkey try to keep going and "stay alive."

> *"There is something like this in Turkey. For example, I will tell about my life. I have a skin disease* [a meaningful coincidence?]*, during the day I think so much, I have to go to hospital, I have to work and make my living, and in Turkey this is very difficult. Because you are taking salary and all your salary goes for rent. Your friend has a problem, you ae fighting with your boss, you have a health problem, and nobody helps you with this. If you don't work, you are nothing. You struggle so much to just save your life! They work, they go from there to there, and there is no more time left to do anything else."* (Evin, 28)

During my fieldwork, I got only a partial sense of my interlocutors' lives. Many of them struggle to find a job with a secure income, work precarious jobs, or try to focus on their studies, which is already difficult in the uncertain economic conditions in the country, but is becoming increasingly difficult during the political crisis that preoccupies the minds of the young politicized people. Significant class differences between my interlocutors also significantly affected their perspectives on the question of agency.

> *What is happening in Turkey and in the world, to follow these political events and movements and just watch these things happening around us. At this point, the fact that we don't do anything, that we are not active in protest, sometimes puts me down. But I also have, this is so personal, I have a background, I also have a way of life and difficulties and so many problems and discrimination. Because of these reasons it is impossible to forget about my position, about my class. So I will always support, I will take a position of the discriminated people in Turkey, like Kurdish people in Turkey, like Armenian people in Turkey, or LGBT people. I will always take my position behind these people. This is not something that we have to discuss, obviously. /…/ So in an ideological way, this is going to be my position all my life. But at the same time /…/ it is also annoying to not really do something [because you have to work for living].* (Yambo, 28)

In addition to those who offered a critique of the precarious political and economic conditions in relation to their emotional worlds, Baran also criticized the irresponsiveness of the neoliberal academia to the violence and its failure to address the pain and anger of the affected students.

> *"It [the encounters of violence] makes you feel closer to the [Kurdish] community and to become alienated from your own job, from academia. There was a big silence in Sabancı University, I was talking with our professor and I said I think we can do something nevertheless. And these professors are working on the Kurdish issue, but I remember the professors just closed the topic and… It was a party, like a small pizza party, very disappointing form me. I couldn't dedicate myself a lot to Sabancı University, too, to the academia. I didn't, because I didn't believe in it."* (Baran, 27)

Is revolutionary hope possible in the compromised conditions of possibility in the world of structural inequalities and violence of capitalism and institutionalized sexism and ethnonationalism of authoritarian neoliberal states? Are there ways to share precarious ambiguous feelings, heal, and form new attachments that are less cruel? In the conditions of uncertain future and precarious hope, the attachment that I recognized to be hopeful, was the

opposition to hate. Hate and love are reductionist political feelings that involve othering and often lead to violence (Ahmed 2004; Hage 2009). As I engaged with my interlocutors in emotionally changed discussions of the possible explanations of the perpetrator graffiti, the question of hate came up in relation to rage (impeded or empowering) of the life in states of violence and disgust triggered by the violent words and images. My interlocutors recognized the nationalist hate as the emotion that drives the perpetrator machinery as well as everyday attitudes of ordinary people. Yet, they also talked about the moments of feeling hate for the armed forces and the nationalist Turks that they encounter in their daily life. However, they were always critical towards these simple feelings and tried to critically understand the structural conditions in which the anti-Kurdish sentiments grow, as well as reflect on the implications of their own hate. *"In the war, you start to resemble each other,"* Baran said after our interview and added that it is most important to fight against the feeling of hate.

> *"I think, if they gave me one of those soldiers, what would I do? Let's say they put him in one room with me and put a gun into my hands and I could do to this man anything I wanted, without any punishment, for example. I think, can I shoot this man? I am thinking, could I kill him?* [Me: And?] *I have the feeling that I couldn't, you know? /.../ I said I can be a nationalist for 5 minutes, but the 6th minute I look around, I cannot be a nationalist. Because this is something disintegrating for me."* (Sara, 29)

Instead of a fixed (and cruel) attachment to the (struggle for) "liberation," the rejection of hate in the moment when it may seem most legitimate emerged as a way of knowing and self-knowing through the practice of self-questioning and self-critique. The refusal to hate may be a sign of a precarious hope, different from revolutionary hope, but equally persistent (cf. Parla 2017). It is the kind of hope that transgresses the opposition between passivity and activity (cf. Miyazaki 2004). It does not include a clear vision of the future, but continues to embody the struggle against the one thing that most clearly prevents transformation – hate. Thus, hope is not as much about anticipating the future, as it is about the *openness* to different futures; futures where reconciliation may not be possible, but where we may nevertheless inhabit a world in a different way, in the absence of hate, and in acknowledgement of our mutual vulnerabilities and the ways in which we might be the cause of each other's anger (cf. Ahmed 2004; Butler 2009).

6.8. Conclusion

For groups experiencing and opposing injustice, the personal is most obviously and unavoidably political and the political is personal (Ahmed 2004; Hage 2009). The conditions of possibility of feelings and responses are the intersection of various distinct events and processes that already involve emotions. The precarious feelings involved in the looking at the perpetrator photography only add accumulatively to the already existing historically contingent gendered political emotions through which the reading and emotional experience of photographs take place (cf. Ahmed 2004). These modes of reading and feeling are subjectively constituted through emotional inheritance (Cvetkovich 2012) and collective experience of "states of violence and the violence of state" (Skurski and Coronil 2006) and resistance in the present-past and the present, depending on one's position in these complex conditions. Political anger continues to empower and mobilize the organized Kurdish movement, driven by revolutionary hope, which is also a method of (self-) knowing of the movement. Social media play an ambiguous role in this process, as they on the one hand enable the "sharing" of the news of violent events that trigger politically productive rage and facilitate mass mobilization, but on the other hand may trap people in the vicious circle of fear and become the only space of political action. As my research showed, social media do not suffice as neither space of sharing of emotions with others, nor the space where social transformation can take place.

Moreover, not everyone is a part of the same moving experience of anger. The overwhelming violence and the fear for one's own life, in combination with stigmatization of fear in the organized political movement, the feeling of indebtness and the norm of the revolutionary hope importantly contribute to political depression and isolation of those who from various reasons feel that it is impossible for them to "do something." By rejecting the academic attachment to hope of those who we study with, I addressed the vulnerability of people who feel paralyzed by the negative emotions of helplessness, irritation, anxiety, and despair. I showed that collective political feelings may nevertheless feel isolating and that these feelings are not only related to the experience of violent words and images, but also the structural conditions of neoliberalism where lives of young people become increasingly precarious. Yet, the ambiguity of precarious hope leaves space to think of the ways of self-

knowing and inhabiting the world that transgress the opposition between action and passivity, such as through the rejection of hate, which resists the normative notion of agency and refuses to give up on life.

EPILOGUE

Even if emotions are not the primarily focus or our research, the affective relations an attachments people construct with various objects in their environment and with each other is always a part of people's everyday lives. The question of knowing the emotions of those we study and work with has been one of the oldest in anthropology (Martin 2013), and also one of the most difficult issues, that not only brings us to the limits of ethnography (Beatty 2005; 2010), but the engagement with it also exposes the vulnerabilities of people and those of our own (Behar 1996; Hage 2009). Intensive ethnographic fieldwork is the only way social researchers can come closer to understanding of how other people feel (Beatty 2010). Exploration of other people's emotional worlds of pain, trauma, and ugly feelings (Ngai 2005) is an exhausting endeavor, but it may teach us a great deal of the ways mundane oppressive formations and everyday encounters imprint on our subjectivities and make us who we are. When we research violence, perpetrated and experienced by others, we do not stay immune to its affective touch, but it changes us on the way and determines our future research (Behar 1996).

In the digital age, the Internet became an unavoidable space of encounter and of our research that redefined the way people go about their daily lives and the ways power is conceptualized, exercised, experienced, negotiated, and challenged, as well as the ways we can do ethnography (Miller and Slater 2005; Kuntsman 2004; Bonilla and Rosa 2015). The online and offline emotional and political worlds are complexly integrated in various different ways, as feelings reverberate between the two and make connections between people and places, as well as draw old and new boundaries (Kuntsman 2011; 2012). As political violence enters the cyberspace, it spreads through its networks and becomes more ordinary and everyday than ever. Violent images and words crawl into people's lives and inscribe on the surfaces of their skins and invade their intimacies like violent graffiti on the walls of the war zones that mark territories and make spaces, and claim them, and perpetrate violence. The cyberspace is uncanny, haunted by the symbolic violence that fills the digital archives (Kuntsman 2011), just like the (images of) the aftermath of destruction are haunted by the absence-presence of life (Navaro-Yashin 2012; Gordillo 2014). The affect of uncanny,

exuded from the ruins of violence and the cyberspace where people encounter them every day, continues to ruinate lives and rise the questions of home and belonging. Is the act of "sharing" images of violence and destruction on social media an attempt to share feelings and share the ambiguously homely spaces of the Internet for those whose homes were demolished and burned and whose homelands are perceived to be taken away? How close can one really feel to get to those who "like" one's online performances of the Self on Tweeter and Facebook and what kind of new boundaries and walls this ambiguous connections construct? What kind of silences get normalized and reproduced in the online interactions?

Ironically, the cyberspace is also marked by the limits of sharing. As this research showed, people who are affected by the violence of images and words they encounter online and disintegrated by the will to hurt and exterminate that they narrate, experience the inability of sharing their emotions. The oppressive structural conditions and the routine violence (Pandey 2006) of the neoliberal and repressive everyday, as well as the normative structures of feeling, not only limit the conditions of possibility to feel, but also to express the feelings and share them with others. In the moments of political rage, the social media emerge as antisocial spaces. Collective political feelings such as precarious hope and hopelessness, despair, unbearable irritation, and depression may nevertheless feel isolating. Hence, another aspect of loss and exclusion succeeds the experience of loss of friends, homes, and political energy – the loss of belonging to the political community that demands revolutionary hope, courage, and motivation.

Yet, the narratives of pain and loss are also the narratives of survival. The background of the ace of vulnerable looking and the emotions generated by witnessing is the precarity of the everyday life, which I might not have been able to account for in all its complexity and its subtle effects they have on the position from which one is looking. There is life beyond the images of violence of the war and the political and personal (always integrated) efforts to resist it. The complex and affective ways in which politicized (pro-) Kurdish young people in Istanbul struggle to survive in conditions of not only political constrains, but also economic insecurity, the ways they navigate between political communities and material survival, and the ways they persist, has only been implicitly touched upon in this thesis and call for further ethnographic attention. When we research violence, it is necessary to also talk about survival.

As I have shown, new kinds of precarious hope that transcend the question of action and passivity are generated in the conditions of precarious lives. The exploration of these feelings and the ways they guide people's choices also pushes us to find new ways to talk about survival, and indeed, as we may learn from Behar (1996), to find new ways to survive in the hierarchical, neoliberal world of academia that often makes us face our own professional and personal vulnerability, as it puts us in relation of dependence with the forces that prevent sharing and demand silencing.

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