

ANOTHER STORY OF THE DAILY CIRCULATION OF  
ÖZGÜR GÜNDEM: AFFECTIVE MATERIALITY

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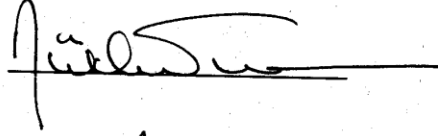
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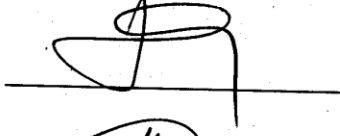
**Another Story of the Daily Circulation of Özgür Gündem: Affective Materiality**

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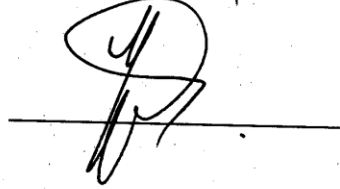
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## Thesis Abstract

Sidar Bayram, “Another Story of The Daily Circulation of  
Özgür Gündem: Affective Materiality”

This thesis aims to tell the story and history of the daily newspaper Özgür Gündem in the first half of the 1990s, by focusing on the everyday practices organized around the circulation of the newspaper, in order to track down in which ways Özgür Gündem as a material affected the capacities of other bodies and materials to act and relate. As the first alternative press writing on the Kurdish problem in Turkey, Özgür Gündem’s circulation carved out a space for the confrontation between the state targeting the circulation of Özgür Gündem and the newspaper community who exposed themselves to state violence for enabling its circulation. The affective density of Özgür Gündem, which exposed the bodies to state violence is analyzed in terms of the affective economies of sorrow (an affect which diminishes the power to live) activated by state violence and of joy (an affect which increases the power to endure) activated by sublimation.

The antagonistic character of the affective economies of sorrow and joy constituted alongside the circulation of *Özgür Gündem*, points towards the ways in which *Özgür Gündem* intensified practices of state violence while trying to organize a voice against them. From 1992 to 1995, its circulation left behind several bodies dead, disappeared, tortured, humiliated, imprisoned, shops burned down, buildings blown up and so on. This process coupled with increasing censorship, the introduction of MED TV and the radicalization of the newspaper’s attitude; the conjuncture of all these processes resulted in the drastic decrease in Özgür Gündem’s affective capacities. While Özgür Gündem’s successors continued to be published with different names, the generic name for all of them is still known as Özgür Gündem. The story and history of Özgür Gündem is that of a historical gesture for witnessing and communicating state violence and its socio-political implications.

## Tez Özeti

Sidar Bayram, “Özgür Gündem’in Gündelik Dolaşımının  
Başka Bir Hikayesi: Duygulanımsal Materyalite”

Bu tez, Özgür Gündem gazetesinin 1990’ların ilk yarısına denk düşen hikayesini ve tarihini anlatmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda gazetenin dolaşımı etrafında örgütlenen gündelik pratiklere odaklanarak, Özgür Gündem’in bir madde olarak diğer madde ve bedenlerin ilişkilene ve harekete geçme kapasitelerini hangi yollarla ve nasıl etkilediği tartışılmaktadır. Türkiye’de Kürt sorunuyla ilgili alternatif yayın yapan ilk gazete olarak çıkan Özgür Gündem, gazetenin dolaşımını engellemeyi hedefleyen devlet ile, gazetesinin dolaşımını sağlamak için kendilerini devlet şiddetine maruz bırakan gazete cemaatini karşı karşıya getiren bir uzam oluşturmuştur. Özgür Gündem gazetesinin bedenleri devlet şiddetine maruz bırakan duygulanımsal yoğunluğu, devlet şiddeti tarafından faaliyete geçirilen keder (yaşama gücünü azaltan bir duygulanım) duygusal ekonomisi ile ulvileştirme tarafından faaliyete geçirilen sevincin (dayanabilme gücünü artıran bir duygulanım) duygulanımsal ekonomisi açılarından ele alınıp analiz edilmektedir.

Özgür Gündem’in dolaşımı etrafında şekillenen keder ve sevincin duygusal ekonomilerinin antagonistik karakterleri, gazetesinin, devlet şiddeti pratiklerine karşı bir ses örgütlemeye çalışırken bizzat bu şiddeti nasıl pekiştirdiğine işaret etmektedir. 1992’den 1995’e kadar gerçekleşen gazetesinin dolaşımı, ardında sayısız kaçırılmış, işkence edilmiş, aşağılanmış, hapse atılmış, işkence edilmiş ve öldürülmüş beden, yakılmış gazete bayii ya da dükkan, bombalanmış binalar, vb. bırakmıştır. Üzerine sansürün eklendiği bu süreç, MED TV’nin açılması ve gazetesinin tavrının radikalleşmesi ile beraber Özgür Gündem’in duygulanımsal kapasitesinde keskin bir düşüş yaşanmıştır. Özgür Gündem başka isimlerle yayın hayatına devam etmiş olsa da hala Özgür Gündem olarak bilinmektedir. Özgür Gündem’in hikayesi ve tarihi, devlet şiddetine ve onun siyasi-toplumsal çıkarımlarına tanıklık etmek ve bunları yayımlamak amacıyla yapılmış bir jestin tarihi ve hikayesidir.

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*To my grandmother*

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In the first half of this year, the *Özgür Gündem* daily newspaper started to be published with the same name again nearly 20 years after its foundation. Beginning its publication in 1992, *Özgür Gündem* was forced to change its name and restart as a ‘new’ newspaper several times in a row in order to avoid the legal measures taken against it by the state institutions. By reclaiming and regaining the name *Özgür Gündem*, the history of the newspaper is opened up for discussion again. In the early 1990s, the paramilitary and extralegal practices of the state started to find their places on the pages of *Özgür Gündem*. As the first non-mainstream newspaper after the 1980 coup d’etat, the journalism of the newspaper presented another perspective from which everyday reality of the nation-state practices was framed in its inherent lawlessness and violence. Images and narratives about the paramilitary violence, village guards’ involvement in drug trade, disfigured bodies of the supposed terrorists and etc., were collected and distributed via the newspaper; practices of the dirty war of the 1990s, were revealed everyday on its pages. *Özgür Gündem*, challenged the nation-state based frames of public reality.

The challenge directed against such framing of reality, as well as that reality itself, led to the proliferation of violent practices against journalists, workers, distributors and readers of the newspaper. In the first nine months of *Özgür Gündem*, nine of its journalists got killed by the paramilitaries, its distributors were attacked and its readers were taken into custody. The circulation of the newspaper on the surface of the social led to violent confrontations between the paramilitaries and the bodies touching the newspaper, leaving behind bodies disappeared, humiliated,

disfigured. At the beginning *Özgür Gündem* was able to mobilize bodies against the repressive state practices it faced. Yet its successors, i.e. *Özgür Gündem* with a different name every time it was banned, have not had the same position and power. Their trajectories have never been the same.

This thesis is not about the history of the media-state relationship in Turkey, nor the making of the alternative media during the 1990s. Moreover, this study does not attempt to recapitulate the historical experience of the 1990s, as the years in which the armed conflict between PKK and the military intensified. The results of the escalation of the armed conflict in the Region<sup>1</sup> are intensified with the paramilitary activities targeting civilians, forcing Kurds to move out of their villages, to become civil guards, kidnapping, killing, humiliating or loosing them. On the other hand, the cities are transformed into battlegrounds in which Kurdish militants as well as other insurgent leftist groups performed violent protests, with molotov cocktails, stones and even with arms. The dust surrounding the 1990s was said to be produced by such violent performances of various political actors the state being the predominant one. *Özgür Gündem*'s story was embedded in this historical-social and political context.

This study however, does not tell a comprehensive story of the 1990s or that of the armed conflict in the Region and its socio-political effects. Rather, it seeks to analyze how the experience and sense of the 1990s is produced and lived by following the circulation of *Özgür Gündem*. This thesis aims to recapitulate the story and history of *Özgür Gündem* by paying special attention to the materiality of the newspaper and the ways through which it activates ways of seeing, being and acting in the world. By focusing on the everyday practices organized around the daily

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the study, I will use the term 'the Region' (*bölge*), as it is used by local Kurds in order to refer to the geography mostly populated by Kurds. It is a term which works to politically distinguish the boundaries of the Region from the administrative terms of Southeast and East Anatolia.

circulation of the newspaper, it asks how *Özgür Gündem*'s daily circulation as a material becomes an organizing principle of the everyday lives of the bodies touching it. Materiality, in this regard, is understood here as an active domain in which the cultural product produces its producers in turn, rather than a passive domain in which the mute and inert world things are animated and made meaningful by the world of subjects. Moving away from the Cartesian conceptualizations of the domain of materials as secondary, derivative to the world of humans, this study conceives materiality as affecting the everyday lives of subjects in manifold ways. Rather than expressing the supposed meanings attributed to them by the subjects, the objects are considered as beings capable of generating cultural meanings and informing embodied practices. I am therefore not interested in how and why subjects place themselves in particular relationships with the newspaper, but in what happens to them and how once they do.

Such a framework takes up and heavily benefits from Deleuze and Guattari's critique of meaning-based models that work to reveal the hidden meanings and structures behind the appearance of everyday life, in favor of "models that track actual events, conjunctures, and articulations of forces to see what they do."<sup>2</sup> Throughout their critique, "they outlined a theory of the affective as a site of potential, intensity and vitality."<sup>3</sup> In this sense I will track the everyday practices organized around the newspaper to see what the newspaper does to materials and bodies. In Stewart's terms this work focuses on the cultural poesis of *Özgür Gündem* as a newspaper, that is the way "the emergent assemblage made up of a wild

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<sup>2</sup> Kathleen Stewart, "Cultural Poesis: The Generativity of Emergent Things." *In Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* ed. Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna S. Lincoln (California: Sage Publications, 2005) pp.1015-1030, p.1016

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. For a discussion on the operations of affects see also Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* (New York: Zone Books, 1992) Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Anti-Oedipus* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983)

mixture of things – technologies, sensibilities, ...daydreams, institutions, ways of experiencing time and space, battles, dramas, bodily states, and innumerable practices of everyday life – has become actively generative, producing wide-ranging impacts, effects, and forms of knowledge.”<sup>4</sup> The question of how the circulation of the newspaper becomes a site of antagonism, how touching it turns the bodies into possible targets of paramilitaries while bodies expose themselves to state violence in order to circulate it, cannot be asked if the cultural poesis of the newspaper is not considered.

In this sense, I discuss the materiality of *Özgür Gündem* not as a process of inscription through which a style or a function is assigned to objects by subjects but as a mode of incorporation through which everyday practices that give rise to the newspaper are incorporated into its material composition. In order to understand the binding qualities of *Özgür Gündem*, analysis of the experiences and stories incorporated in it throughout its circulation is indispensable. Without taking into account the everyday practices and affective economies which endow the newspaper with qualities of making the bodies the target of state violence or demanding their exposure to such violence, the socio-political effects of *Özgür Gündem* cannot be properly analyzed. The relationship between the materiality and the bodies are understood in terms of the affective, in which the newspaper is conceived “as a literally moving mix of things that engages desires, ways of being, and concrete places and objects.”<sup>5</sup> And through affective economies, these affects align certain objects with subjects, by producing a sensual topography that designates the disposition of objects and subjects. In order to track down the work of affects, I also benefitted from the writings of new Lacanians on sublimation and fetish, which dealt

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<sup>4</sup> Kathleen Stewart, “Cultural Poesis”, p.1016

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p.1029

with material transformations in relation to carving out affective spaces around materials.<sup>6</sup> In this sense, the composition and circulation of objects are experienced and made meaningful in relation to the space of practices and the affective attachments produced around those objects. For instance, the sublime character of an object cannot be thought without the work of sublimation and the affective experience of the sublime. Thus the newspaper became a site around which affects coagulate to transform it into the sublime, in other words a particular node in the circulation of affect. Thus, I used this psychoanalytic framework, to relate the material transformations of *Özgür Gündem* to the ways the state and the newspaper community confront each other antagonistically. While the state strives to prevent the circulation of the newspaper by all means, others do their best to circulate it. The circulation of *Özgür Gündem*, in terms of the everyday practices organized around it becomes a vast domain of confrontation that extends to the whole geography of the country.

As necessitated by relations of antagonism, there are two different affective economies organized around the circulation of the newspaper. The legal and the extralegal state practices, on the one hand strive to decrease the material capacities of the newspaper, while, on the other hand, coding it as harmful to the bodily integrity of the subjects touching it through inflicting pain on the bodies. Then, both objectively and subjectively, by acting on both sides of the relation, the state practices decrease the bodily capacities of the newspaper to engage, relate, as those of the bodies touching it. This is what I call the economy of sorrow, whose work tears apart the objects and the subjects from what they can do. And it is the subject matter of Chapter 3. On the other hand, the circulation of the newspaper is preserved

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<sup>6</sup> Joan Copjec, *Imagine There is no Women: Ethics and Sublimation* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2002) and Alenka Zupancic, *Ethics of The Real: Kant, Lacan* (London: Verso, 2000)

in the face of shattering state violence. Everyday practices of the bodies are transposed according to the newspaper's circulation, which necessitates inhabiting the ambiguous space of exposure to death. These bodies are attached to the newspaper in ways that elevate it to the position of a sublime object and sees in it something indispensable for one's sense of what it means to be living. In Chapter 4, I will focus on the affective economy, the economy of joy as I call it, which works through sublimation and enables the circulation of the newspaper and works to increase the bodily and material capacities to endure in the face of devastating state violence.

This was the story of the years between 1992 and 1995. After 1995, even if these affective economies did not cease to exist, their intensity fell drastically. The newspaper was put into a position from which it could not even communicate the suffering it had gone through in the course of its circulation. The present condition of *Özgür Gündem*, from this perspective requires us to question the decrease in its capacity to inform ways of seeing and being in the world. While there are social, political and technological dynamics to this transformation, the life trajectory of *Özgür Gündem* raises more to questions. If we are still debating on the number of people disappeared, if the villages were really burnt down, if, in general such things really happen in this country, we have to ask ourselves how such a negationist attitude is still so powerful even when such events are photographed and narrated in detail day by day on the pages of *Özgür Gündem*? In this sense, how can we make sense of the life trajectory of *Özgür Gündem*, which is supposed to give voice to the sufferers of state violence, but ends up being among those sufferers with a near loss of voice? These will be the questions of the Chapter 5.

The arguments and discussions of this work are based upon the narratives of the journalists, distributors and lawyers of *Özgür Gündem* who used to work mainly in İstanbul and Diyarbakır in the first half of the 1990s. During my fieldwork, I interviewed the distributors of *Özgür Gündem* in Diyarbakır and as well as journalists from İstanbul. The publishing process of the newspaper in İstanbul was different from its distribution in Diyarbakır, which was under state of emergency rule<sup>7</sup> then. In this sense I had the chance of following the newspaper's circulation story, starting with the publishing and printing process in İstanbul, continuing with its transportation to Adana or Urfa, and ending with its distribution inside Diyarbakır and the rest of the Region. All of these stories are incorporated into the texture of the newspaper, and the sociopolitical landscape of these spaces and roads were affected by the circulation of the newspaper, albeit with different intensities.

While all of these people had stories to tell, not all of them were eager to talk about them. Some of them sharing their experiences and life-stories with utmost generosity, some keeping the conversation short, they all delivered their uneasiness with the idea of me writing their experiences. I did not insist, since I was inviting them to share with me the supposedly most troubled and vulnerable part of their lives. Yet all of these conversations quoted or unquoted in this work, provided me with manifold senses of the story and history I write. And on the other hand there was the question of time and memory, for I was trying to understand the sense of touching the newspaper, by listening to what had happened 20 years before. I was listening to them after the relief they possibly had gone through when it became

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<sup>7</sup> In order to combat 'terror', the Region is governed according to the state of emergency rules (Olağanüsüt Hal Kanunu) from 1987 to 2002. Under the state of emergency rules, as lawfully sanctioned lawlessness, special laws are executed and the everyday life is policed through the overwhelming control of the state.

evident that they survived those times, got married, had their babies or started their own jobs.

At this point I want to tell about another part of my fieldwork. Throughout my conversations on the newspaper, I was told that there was a documentary about *Özgür Gündem* called *Kurşun Kalem* shot in 1996, by Ahmet Soner. Unfortunately, although I tried my best, I could not find the documentary. However, fortunately I had the chance to meet Ahmet Soner. He offered me the raw video records of the interviews with people who worked for the newspaper in the first half of the 1990s that were shot during 1995. I have also quoted from those interviews and together with the interviews I made, they provided me a more vivid understanding of the text and context of the everyday experiences organized around the newspaper.

While throughout the years affects and emotions undergo the mediation of the cultural memory, a parallel reading of these interviews from two different timelines allow me to detect the common tropes between them and the persistence of some affects. The affects produced in the context of state violence, are more persistent than others, for through violence, the intensity of these affects are inscribed on the skins and bodies of people. Even when affects are not felt actually, their residues remains in the body, waiting for the slightest call, an ordinary question, tactile distraction in order to be actualized yet again.

On the other hand, I used the written testimonies of newspaper workers and distributors, the few books written on the non-mainstream press, as well as the copies of the newspaper itself. What I have intended to do however, is not a discursive analysis of these news or testimonies. In other words, I do not aim at deconstructing the main tropes and ideological codes of how they tell what they are doing. For, affects cannot be reduced to the functions of discourse even if they are transmitted



and organized through discourse. Affects are here understood as what gives discourse its stickiness, its ability to inform bodily practices and their persistence. However, this does not mean that affects are totally outside the discursive domain. When a newspaper distributor touches the newspaper in jail and wants to shout as he was doing before being imprisoned, this can be regarded as a direct engagement of the body with the newspaper. Yet, such affective responses take their immediacy from the historical and collective accumulation of experiences and discourses in the materiality of the newspaper. In this regard even when I analyze discursive formations around the newspaper, I aim to look at the ways in which such discursive formations inform bodily practices and align subjects together or with objects, through the work of affects and emotions.

As the data, methodology and structure suggests, this thesis is about writing the life trajectory of *Özgür Gündem*, from the perspective of the affective, which “rather than seeking an explanation for things we presume to capture...proposes a form of cultural and political critique that tracks lived impacts and rogue vitalities through bodily agitations, modes of fascination and moments of collective excitation and enervation.”<sup>8</sup> And it follows the circulation of *Özgür Gündem* newspaper as a quotidian material, and the everyday practices organized around it either to prevent or enable its circulation with reference to the affective economies pertaining to these practices. While such a work benefits heavily from the materiality literature and that of sociology of affects, the peculiar position of *Özgür Gündem* extends the discussion outside these domains. As the first alternative newspaper writing about and documenting an ongoing dirty war, the story of its circulation is also the story of the legal and extralegal state practices that works to recode it. These state practices

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<sup>8</sup> Kathleen Stewart, “Cultural Poesis”, p.1028

bring forth questions concerning the towards the state's control of the domain of representation and of the constitutive partition that it introduces into the domain of the sensible. In this manner, this work is also about the technologies of the modern nation-state through which it affects, makes and unmakes the sensual worlds of individuals and communities. The social death phase of *Özgür Gündem*, conceived as a fatal decrease in its ability to engage, relate and communicate, on the other hand, participates in the contemporary discussions about the representations and the representability of state violence. The story of *Özgür Gündem* provokes such discussions with a socio-historical insight that leads to theoretical questions.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE HISTORICITY OF THE NEWSPAPER



Fig.1 – Caricature taken from Qırık<sup>9</sup> by Doğan Güzel<sup>10</sup>

This is a cartoon taken from the series called Qırık, drawn by Doğan Güzel, published in *Özgür Gündem*. The series depicts the life of a family in Diyarbakır in the 1990s and their struggle to inhabit the everyday life the fabric of which is shattered in the midst of political violence. In the first frame we see the mother of Quto (the youngest boy of the family) who in the second frame is depicted as nailed to the ground when she sees Quto distributing *Özgür Gündem*. The last frame shows her shouting at Keko (the elder son of the house) as “Is this the job you found for your brother? Go away!..Leave my house.” How shall we understand the cultural

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<sup>9</sup> Qırık (kırık), is a term used especially in Diyarbakır for referring to the Kurdish rough males with their distinctive life styles. The term should be understood as designating a social type who has not a proper job, stays in the coffe shops all day, smokes pot, cuts himself with razor and is not politically engaged. Even though such a lifestyle includes strict codes of masculinity, the connotations of the term should not be reduced to the codes of machism.

<sup>10</sup> - Oh, God!

- Newspaper, Özgür Gündem!

- Is this the job you found for your brother! Get out! Leave my house!

- Stop it woman! He makes money, what else do you want?

codes and the physiognomy at work in the gesture of the mother seeing her boy distributing *Özgür Gündem*?

As the etymology of the word “horror” suggests, the gestures of standing as if nailed to the spot, “bristling (gooseflesh)” or “feeling frozen” as in the case of Quto’s mother for whom the scene is “unbearable to look at”, are the bodily reactions pertaining to the physics of horror.<sup>11</sup> Reformulating the conceptual tools used for making sense of contemporary violence, Cavarero emphasizes the centrality of horror for any understanding of the modern mechanisms and techniques of collective violence. Horror has nothing to do with the fear of death, as its bodily symptoms testify, but rather with “the disgust for a violence that does not content merely to kill because killing would be too little, aims to destroy the uniqueness of the body, tearing at its constitutive vulnerability.”<sup>12</sup> Horror is the product of violence aimed not at the human body as in the case of terror but to the human condition itself, as in the cases of massacres, tortures and carnages. What is at stake in such violence “directed at nullifying human beings even more than killing them”<sup>13</sup> is not the materiality of the body but its singularity. Such violence has disfiguring effects for the material composition of the body. In this sense like the scenes of horror, its threats are unbearable to look at since what is at stake is a disfiguring violence against the vulnerable.

The horror of the scene felt by Quto’s mother has something to do with historical meanings and social practices most often mediated by practices of political violence. There is a history and cosmology to this cartoon, without which the horror

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<sup>11</sup> Adriana Cavarero, *Horrorism: Naming Contemporary Violence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p.7

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p.8

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p.9

of Quto's mother becomes incomprehensible. There were mutilated bodies, ones disfigured by the "attacks with cleavers", others burned down, disappeared, still others shot from back with one bullet, yet still others kidnapped, tortured and left on the side of the road. Those were the bodies of the ones who were either writing and working for the newspaper or distributing or selling it. In other words, those were the bodies that were in touch with *Özgür Gündem* in one way or another. There is a text and a con-text to these images, which are not directly visible in the frame yet endow these images with political significance, historical situatedness and sensual density.<sup>14</sup> In the beginning of the 1990s, *Özgür Gündem* newspaper became the target of paramilitary violence to such an extent that getting into contact with it made one a possible object of the disfiguring paramilitary violence. In a similar fashion, a newspaper distributor told me that his mother poured water from behind her children every morning in order to prevent them from getting killed while fulfilling their duty to their people. Accompanying in a way the horror stemming from their jobs, their mother tried to bless them with a daily ritual surrounded with religious references as well as political morality.

As we were leaving home in the morning to distribute the newspaper, we could even hear gunshots in our neighborhood. Many got killed. In our house, it was me, my martyred brother and my other brother (working as distributors). My mother used to pour water from behind us. When we asked why she did so, she replied 'I entrusted you to beautiful people, you are here to serve this people, and I pray that you come back home safely in the evening.' After leaving home, we were wondering and/or asking each other who would get shot, who would get wounded or who would be taken into custody that day. For sure there was always someone who got shot, that someone being a newspaper distributor, yet surely also ordinary folks. It was different with ordinary folks. It was certainly very different with our correspondents. Many of our correspondents got killed. Hafiz Akdemir, who

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<sup>14</sup> Teresa DeLauretis, *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fictione* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987)

was martyred, and many others, people whom we loved. There is too much to be told. (Distributor)<sup>15</sup>

While their mother was very well aware of the possibility of exposure to state violence inherent to the practice of the distributing the newspaper, she also regarded such practice as indispensable, a kind of sublime work. *Özgür Gündem* became a newspaper that had to be delivered to the people-readers despite the very possible dangers it entailed. It produced horror and solidarity, fear and desire, testifying to the antagonistic production of senses. The question of how a newspaper, *Özgür Gündem* becomes an object that has to be simultaneously avoided and preserved, vanished and endured, entails a reading into the social and material life of *Özgür Gündem*. Without focusing on the regime of practices that gave rise to and were constituted around the objects, their powers to affect the other bodies and materials, to reconfigure the current temporal and spatial disposition of things and bodies cannot be properly analyzed. For to track down the powers of *Özgür Gündem* is to ask what *Özgür Gündem*'s circulation on the surface of the social did to bodies and other materials. How did its circulation produce a storm of material transformation, through posing, composing, decomposing, positing, positioning the bodies and materials? In which ways did *Özgür Gündem*'s circulation lead to the deterritorialization and reterritorialization of the bodily and social topography?

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<sup>15</sup> Sabah dağıtımına çıkarken, bizim hemen evden çıktığımız esnada, bizim mahallenin oradan silah sesleri dahi geliyordu. Çok insan öldürüldü. Evden bendim, şehit düşen kardeşimdi, öbür kardeşimdi. Annem arkamızdan su döküyordu. Biz ona neden su döküyorsun dediğimizde, 'ben sizi güzel insanlara emanet etmişim, siz bu halka hizmet için buradasınız ve dua ediyorum akşamları inşallah sağ gelirsiniz' diyordu. Biz de çıktığımızda hele bakalım bugün kim vurulacak, kim yaralanacak, kim gözaltına alınacak diye kendi kendimize kafamızda veya birbirimize sorardık yani... Mutlaka vurulan oluyordu, vurulan dağıtımçıları oluyordu, tabi dağıtımçılardan ziyade halk da. Halkın daha başkaydı. Muhabirlerimiz zaten bambaşkaydı. Çok muhabirimiz vuruldu. Şehit düşen Hafız Akdemir, çok muhabirimiz, sevdiğimiz insanlar. Yani bunu anlatmakla bitmez.

## History of Material – Material of History

The powerful tendency in the social sciences informed by the metaphysical dualism between body and mind is “to regard the world of things as mute and inert, which are set into motion and animated, indeed knowable only by people and their words.”<sup>16</sup>

Simplistic readings of the world of things and the world of humans, not only perpetuates the notion of materiality as “a passive domain” but also treats objects as either “purely functional” or “deeply symbolic”.<sup>17</sup> The taxonomies pertaining to the material world are organized either according to the role, use, function or utility that is assigned to an object or according to its significance in the expression of ethnic identity, consumption habits, class position and etc. In each case the material world is subsumed under the idea, reduced to the task of expressing the idea, regarded as a tool for the communication and transmission of deeper and more fundamental distinctions or ideas or dispositions. From this perspective materials are reduced to mediums and domains for the inscription of either a function or use or a style or an attitude.

As a material, the effects and affects produced by the circulation of *Özgür Gündem* on the surface of the social cannot be conceived if it is relegated to a tool of expression as another newspaper among others. To publish it, write in it, carry it, distribute it, sell it and buy it, became a source of horror, faith, vulnerability, strength, getting targeted by paramilitary violence which could result in wounds, damages, death and disappearance. Not only for the newspaper community but also for a great deal of state officials and paramilitaries, its publication and circulation

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<sup>16</sup> Arjun Appadurai, “Introduction : Commodities and The Politics of Value.” In *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* edited by Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986), p.5

<sup>17</sup> Lynn Meskel, “Introduction: Object Orientations.” In *Archeologies of Materiality* edited by Lynn Meskell ( Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), p.2

became one of the primary organizing domains of their everyday practices. A

distributor recapitulating his relationship with the newspaper tells:

From 1993 to 2005 I worked for the newspaper...newspapers were being banned and closed down, then they were restarting with new names...as the oppression increased and intensified, as the attacks increased, many got scared; they quailed, couldn't come to work, and felt obliged to quit the newspaper. Several people were jailed. Several headed towards the mountains. Several others fled to other cities, metropolises to save their lives. (Distributor)<sup>18</sup>

Precisely, *Özgür Gündem* was not an ordinary newspaper. Its circulation effected and affected the lives of many people in drastic ways. In this sense, the circulation of the newspaper on the surface of the socius exceeded the commodity form of newspapers, which inscribed the movement of these objects into relations of exchange and consumption.

One might think of distributing the newspaper as an easy job. Everyone would easily recall the scenes from popular old Turkish movies: clean looking, well-mannered, Mr. nice kids, holding a bundle of newspapers under their arms, sell newspapers in the streets screaming 'Fresh news! Fresh news! Check it out!' Our job was nothing like that. Can you imagine us holding a bundle of *Özgür Gündem* or *Özgür Ülke* under our arms? They didn't allow these newspapers in the Region; police, soldiers and their civilian collaborators terrorized the streets to prevent their distribution and made sure that no one kiosk or shop carried them. Imagine in such an environment a kid holding these newspapers under his arms and shouting 'News, real news! News about the massacres, murders, unidentified killings in the Region! Here is the real newspaper!' It doesn't look easy, right? (Distributor)<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> 93'ten 2005'e kadar bir fiil gazetede çalıştım. Gazeteler kapanıyor, (başka bir adla) açılıyor... Baskı dönemi arttığına, şiddetlendiğine, saldırılar olduğunda bir çok insan gazeteyi bırakmak zorunda kaldı; gelmedi, korktu, yıld, çekindi, canını kurtarmaya çalıştı. Bir çok insan cezaevine girdi. Birçok insan dağa çıktı, birçok insan bir şekilde canını kurtarmak için başka başka şehirlere göç etti, metropollere gitti.

<sup>19</sup> Ne var ki gazete dağıtımıcılığında diye düşünceleriniz olabilir. Öyle ya, bazen TV kanallarından hiç eksik olmayan o eski Türk filmlerinde de vardır hani; eli ayağı temiz, düzgün, iyi aile çocuğu görünümündeki bazı çocuklar koltuklarının altında gazete tomarları, caddeler, sokaklar boyunca, 'yazyooooor, yazıyooooor' diye çığlık çığlığa bağırarak gazete satarlar. Bizimki böyle bir şey değil işte... Bu şekilde, koltuğunun altında *Özgür Gündem*'ler veya sonrasında *Özgür Ülke*'ler olacak, bu gazeteler özellikle Bölge illerine sokulmayacak, polisler, jandarmalar ve bunların sivil uzantıları bu amaçla sokaklarda terör estirecekler. Gazete bayilerinde bu gazetelerin bir teki bile mümkün değil bulunamayacak. Ama sen, koltuğunun altında bu gazetelerle 'Yazyooooor, Bölge'de gerçekleştirilen katliamları, faili meçhul cinayetlerin iç yüzünü yazıyooooor, gerçekleri yazıyooooor, mehmetçik basınının yazmadıklarını yazıyooooor, esas ve gerçek gazete geldiii!' diye bağıracaksın. Kolay mı? Quoted in İrfan Karaca, Ape Musa'nın Küçük Generalleri, *Ape Musa'nın Küçük Generalleri*(Little Generals of Ape Musa) (İstanbul: Berçem Yayıncılık, 2008) p.92



After its publication, *Özgür Gündem* became one of the primary domains through which bodies entered into an antagonistic relationship with the state. Imbued with such political and sensual density, it gained “a bodily temporal existence, a presence whose particular properties induced distinct ways of seeing and acting in the world”<sup>20</sup>. To carry *Özgür Gündem*, was not like carrying any other newspaper, like *Posta* or *Hürriyet*. One had to hide it; walk carefully by looking around. Carrying the newspaper changed not only the state of feeling but even the posture of the bodies. For to be seen with *Özgür Gündem*, dramatically changed the symbolic position of the body into a vulnerable state in the gaze of the state.

The density of the sociopolitical meanings attached to the newspaper and practices organized around it, decommodified it, i.e. neither the forms of transactions nor the “regimes of value”<sup>21</sup> surrounding the newspaper could be reduced to those of monetary transactions and exchange value. If from a socio-cultural perspective, “commodities must be not only produced materially as things, but also culturally marked as being a certain kind of things”<sup>22</sup> throughout their life trajectories things can be transferred from one phase to another. For instance while “slaves, once sold as chattel, can become gradually humanized, personified, and reenchanting by the investiture of humanity”<sup>23</sup> in the new global economy body organs can become “commodities of last resort for the socially disadvantaged populations.”<sup>24</sup> Thus, like

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<sup>20</sup> Marisa Lazzari, “Objects, People, and Landscape in Northwest Argentina.” In *Archeologies of Materiality*, p.127

<sup>21</sup> Arjun Appadurai, “Introduction : Commodities and The Politics of Value.”, p.4

<sup>22</sup> Igor Kopytoff “The Cultural Biography of Things : Commoditization as Process.” In *The Social Life of Things*, p.64

<sup>23</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *The Thing Itself*, *Public Culture*, 18, no. 1, Winter 2006, pp.15-22, p.15

<sup>24</sup> Nancy Scheper Hughes “Bodies for Sale: Whole or in Parts.” In *Commodifying Bodies* edited by Nancy Scheper Hughes-Luic Wacquant (London: Sage Publications, 2002), p.2

commodification one has to think decommodification as a process embedded in social practices and cultural codes. And when previously commodified things, forms and activities are decommodified “they take on new temporal and spatial coordinates for human perception.”<sup>25</sup>

Things like Özgür Gündem, are vehicles for the production of the social bonds between persons and for the organization and control of affective-sensual experience. Here I use affect in order to emphasize the “bodily capacities to affect and to be affected, augmentation or diminution of a body's capacity to act, to engage, to connect such that auto-affection is linked to the self feeling of being alive that is aliveness or vitality”.<sup>26</sup> By extending the emotional and sensual towards the collective, the material, the unconscious against the individualistic, ahistorical and psychological conceptualizations of sensual worlds, the concept of affect becomes an important tool and perspective for analyzing the subtle relations that most often goes unnoticed or taken as derivative. Recent scholars following Spinoza and Deleuze, emphasized the social and historical significance of affective experience in the formation of political identities, in the formation of memory, making sense of everyday reality, in the organization of labor practices, in the maintenance of the relations of antagonism and in the culture politics of paramilitary violence.<sup>27</sup>

Sara Ahmed, proposes an economic model of affect, in which affects

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<sup>25</sup> Allen Feldman, “On Cultural Anesthesia: From Desert Storm to Rodney King”, *American Ethnologist*, 21, no.2, May 1994, pp.404-418, p.407

<sup>26</sup> Patricia Clough, “Introduction.” In *Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social* edited by Patricia T. Clough (London, Duke University Press, 2007), p.2

<sup>27</sup> See Allen Feldman, *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), Begona Aretxaga, *States of Terror: Begona Aretxaga's Essays* edited by Joseba Zulaika (Nevada: Center for Basque Studies, 2005) and John Protevi, *Political Affect: Connecting the Social and the Somatic*, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2009)

circulates between rather than residing positively in the subjects and the objects.<sup>28</sup> Affects do not reside in a single subject nor in single object and rather than being passive psychological traits they are open to historical transformation and social intervention due their social circulation between different corporeal bodies. The circulation of affect between objects and signs is what creates its value, the more it circulates the more affective it becomes and appears to contain affect. Thus, like commodity fetishism, the affects appear in objects, as if they are ipso facto innate qualities of the objects in question, by the concealment of their trajectories of production, circulation and exchange. According to Ahmed, “the accumulation of affective value shapes the surfaces of bodies.”<sup>29</sup> In this sense I will use the concept of affect to refer to the ways through which the encounter with the newspaper transforms the sensual experience of other bodies in ways which either increases or decreases their capacity to act.

The overwhelming presence of violent practices enfolding the circulation of *Özgür Gündem* intensified the capacity of “the binding qualities that materiality allowed” as well as the attachments in the community. There was a whole bunch of activities organized around the newspaper, which in their own ways carried the possibility of becoming the target of paramilitary practices, at different levels. From taking pictures, conducting interviews, writing down stories, organizing news, printing the newspapers to taking them to other cities, distributing them, selling them, buying and reading them. These quotidian practices composed “the mundane sensual and material qualities of the object.”<sup>30</sup> These practices are central for tracing

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<sup>28</sup> Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2004)

<sup>29</sup> Sara Ahmed, *Affective Economies*, *Social Text* 79, 22, no.2, Summer 2004, p.121

<sup>30</sup> Daniel Miller, “Why Somethings Matter.” In *Material Cultures: Why Some Things Matter* edited by Daniel Miller (London, UCL Press, 1998), p.9

the more subtle connections between the affective qualities, bodies, materials, in the process of how things make their makers in turn.

Like other newspapers *Özgür Gündem* was also distributed by the United Press Distribution Company, yet it couldn't enter the Kurdish provinces... It couldn't reach these provinces via UPDC. In big cities, the kiosks and shops selling the newspaper were under constant threat. Undercover policemen, and sometimes even regular policemen, threatened the owners of these places not to sell *Yeni Politika* newspaper. Therefore the shop owners tried selling our newspaper secretly or they carried only a very few, like 1-2, issues of it. They didn't allow the newspaper to be sold. When we tried distributing it on our own, our young distributor friends were attacked with cleavers. (Journalist)<sup>31</sup>

If we are to understand materiality as “a process of embodiment in the sense of incorporation rather than inscription, in which artifacts... incorporate in their bodily form the rhythms of the practices that gave rise to them”<sup>32</sup>, it is only through the analysis of their life trajectories that we can interpret the human transactions and affective economies that enliven things.<sup>33</sup> This necessitates not only following the daily practices organized around the newspaper but also paying attention to the social imaginary that gave rise to these ordinary practices and endowed them with collective significance. Since the diversions are meaningful only in relation to the path from which they start we will have to analyze briefly, the history and socio-political condition of press in Turkey and the socio-political context and events that gave rise to the publication of *Özgür Gündem*.

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<sup>31</sup> *Özgür Gündem* gazetesi diğer gazeteler gibi birleşik basın aracılığıyla dağıtılıyordu, buna rağmen Kürt illerine sokulmuyordu... Birleşik Basın Dağıtımına bu bölgelere ulaşamıyordu. Büyük illerde de bayiler üzerinde bir baskı vardı. Sivil polisler, hatta zaman zaman resmi polisler bayilere gidip *Yeni Politika* gazetesini satmamalarını söylüyor, satarlarsa kendileri için iyi olmayacağı tehditlerinde bulunuyorlardı. Bunlar da gazetelerimizi tezgah altı yapıyorlardı ya da çok kısıtlı 1-2 tane alıyorlardı. Sattırmıyorlardı. Biz de kendimiz dağıtmayı denediğimizde de oradaki genç dağıtımcı arkadaşlarımıza satırlı saldırılar oluyordu.

<sup>32</sup> Marisa Lazzari, “Objects, People, and Landscape in Northwest Argentina.”, p.128

<sup>33</sup> Arjun Appadurai, “Introduction : Commodities and The Politics of Value.”

## The Turkish Media

The material form of the object in question is significant for understanding the capacities of things to affect the everyday life since the material composition of the objects limits and delimits their affective faculties. “Objects are indeed different from the model of the arbitrary linguistic sign, as their materiality and durability are conditions for their movement across social and semiotic domains.”<sup>34</sup> While everyday circulation of *Özgür Gündem* intensified its affective composition, the significance of press in imagining communities and nations endowed it with dense historical, social and political meanings.

Benedict Anderson emphasized the consequences of the coming of the press for imagining the nation, which knits together seemingly disparate events in the narration of the nation and plot them in a homogeneous empty temporality.<sup>35</sup> He conceives the glue that binds the nation in the work of language, as he examines the role of the press accordingly. Yet Anderson undermines the affective dimension of such glue, as he underestimates the contribution of the press to the ability of “modern nation states” to “serve as vehicles of political emotion.”<sup>36</sup>

By providing images and narratives for the nation to see and hear, to show and to tell, the newspapers contribute to the making of the scopic regime and unisonance of the modern nation state. “By a scopic regime I mean the agendas and the techniques of political visualisation: the regimens that prescribe modes of seeing and visual objects, and which proscribe or render untenable other modes and objects

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<sup>34</sup> Marisa Lazzari, “Objects, People, and Landscape in Northwest Argentina.”, p.129

<sup>35</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983)

<sup>36</sup> Quoted in Yannis Stavrakakis, *The Lacanian Left: Psychoanalysis, Theory, Politics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p.194

of perception.”<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, unisonance, like in the singing of national anthem, refers to the acoustic configuration of the nation-state which is based on the accordance of sounds.<sup>38</sup> Through such visual and acoustic regimes the newspapers act on the sensory organs, the senses and the sensible. In the modern history of Turkey the newspaper as a technique for the “cultural construction of nationness as a form of social, (sensual) and textual affiliation”<sup>39</sup>, has always been an object of control. State control writes the newspaper into the techniques of producing intimacy between the nation-state and the nation, as the culture of shared meanings and feelings. In Turkey the press has been a very valuable tool for the fabrication and manipulation of the senses and the sensibilities of the national body. In this manner, the journalists who attempt to alternate the predominant sense of reality are considered to challenge the national senses and to act against the sensibilities of the nation, thus punished severely.

The first journalist killed in the history of modern Turkey was Hasan Fehmi who was known to be a serious critique of *İttihat Terakki* and the head of the Serbesti newspaper. He was killed on Galata Bridge with a bullet in his head from the back. His fate would later be shared by other 60 journalists due to various reasons such as opposing the regime, writing about its dirty works, relations of interest, propagating and supporting subversive action.<sup>40</sup> Most of these incidents took place in the 1990s, against the journalists of Özgür Gündem. Yet, other than few examples (like Tan and Özgür Gündem) the press throughout the modern history of the Turkey, is said to be

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<sup>37</sup> Allen Feldman, “Violence and Vision: The Prosthetics and Aesthetics of Terror.” In *Violence and Subjectivity*, edited by Veena Das (London: University of California Press, 2000), p.49

<sup>38</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*

<sup>39</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* ( New York: Routledge, 1994), p.140

<sup>40</sup> Hıfzı Topuz, *Özgürlüğe Kurşun* (Bullet to Freedom) (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2007)

loyal to the official ideology and imaginary of the nation-state. The loyalty was so powerful that it exceeded the demands of their master. The press has been both a domain and a technique of state control and a means of producing the hegemony of the nation-state.

Except for the burning down of the printing house of the Tan newspaper in 1945, state violence against journalists can be said to proliferate in the 1990s. Historically, until the 1990s the press in Turkey remained in the hands of particular interest groups who had very close relationships with the governments and state bureaucrats. More importantly, the press has always supported the activities of the military office in the name of the persistence of the state, both in times of war and in times of coup d'états. For instance media cartels were not only eager to celebrate 1980 coup d'état, but also contributed to its realization. They did not only applaud the coming of the military intervention, but framed the events in the country in such a way that such intervention seemed indispensable.<sup>41</sup> In this sense, from the sources used for obtaining the news to the way they were presented, from the installation of images to the selection and narration of events, the press has been a medium that constituted the nation-state as a powerful agent in the establishment of the sense of everyday reality.

In the 1990s with the escalation of the armed conflict in the Region, the relationship between state officials and newspaper owners gained strength via MGK (National Security Council) meetings. These meetings were based on the agreement that in exchange for their collaboration with the state in its fight against terrorism, the media cartels would be offered financial aid. The collaboration, of course, means composing the newspapers according to the reason d'être of the state. For instance, in

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<sup>41</sup> For historical examples see Evin Katurman, "12 Eylül Darbesi ve Basın (12 September Coup and The Press)", *Bianet*, 10 May 2007, Available [online] : <http://bianet.org/biamag/bianet/93099-12-eylul-askeri-darbesi-ve-basin>

1992, İzzet Keser, the journalist of Sabah daily who was in Cizre for Newroz celebrations, was shot dead by the paramilitaries in front of other journalists.<sup>42</sup> And Sabah did not even mention it. Recently, Mehmed Ali Birand has confessed that most of the newspapers relied on the military reports given to them for the news about the events in the Region. Or they ignored or distorted the news delivered to them by the journalists working in the region.<sup>43</sup> In this manner, through financial aid the nation-state ensured that the news were selected or ignored and presented or misrepresented according to the sensibilities of the nation-state. Yet, there were still other special laws, i.e. the laws of OHAL (State of Emergency) government, for controlling the news about the Region specifically. For instance;

Statutory Decree: By consulting and taking the opinion of the Governor of the State of Emergency Region, banning temporarily or permanently the publication, multiplication and distribution of any written work –regardless of their places of printing, whether it be inside or outside the Region- and closing down the related printing houses if necessary, where such written works significantly harm the public order, agitate the public and prevent the armed forces from properly fulfilling their duty by misrepresenting what is done in the Region and disseminating false news and commentaries...<sup>44</sup>

Such legal measures were taken to ensure that the operations of the security forces take place without any opposition. No kind of news that could excite/agitate people, thereby obstruct the war against terror in the region, could be published. As this law concerning the prevention of excitement/agitation suggests, the state strived to

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<sup>42</sup> Yılmaz Odabaşı, *Güneydoğu'da Gazeteci Olmak* (Being A Journalist in Southeast) (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1998)

<sup>43</sup> Mehmet Ali Birand, *Rüya Görmeyelim PKK Böyle Tasfiye Edilmez* (Dont Dream, PKK can not be Eliminated In this Way), Milliyet, 13 October 2010, Available [online]: <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/ruya-gormeyelim-pkk-boyle-tasfiye-edilmez-/mehmet-ali-birand/siyaset/yazardetayarsiv/14.10.2010/1300835/default.htm>

<sup>44</sup> Kanun Hükmünde Kararname: Bölgedeki faaliyetleri yanlış aksettirmek veya gerçektışı haber ve yorum yapmak suretiyle bölgedeki kamu düzeninin ciddi şekilde bozulmasına ve halkın heyecanlanmasına neden olacak veya güvenlik kuvvetlerinin görevlerini gereği gibi yerine getirmesini engelleyecek şekilde yayınlanan her türlü basılmış eser hakkında Olağanüstü Hal Bölge Valisi'nin, teklifi veya görüşü alınarak bunların bölge içinde ve dışında basılmış olup olmadığına basılmaksızın, basılmasını, çoğaltılmasını, yayınlanmasını ve dağıtılmasını sureli ve süresiz yasaklamak, gerektiğinde bunları basan matbaaları kapatmak... Quoted in Müslüm Yücel, *Kürt Basın Tarihi: Tekzip*, İstanbul, Aram Yayıncılık, 1998, p.137



control not only the selection of news but also their affective composition. The news should not excite the people. From this perspective, the newspapers are not only organized according to the sensibilities of the nation but also become their medium of production. In the 1990s, the press by operating as a medium that organized the sensual world of the national body, contributed to the etatisation of the society.<sup>45</sup> Remember the flag campaign in 1996, when the national flag was brought down in the congress of HADEP. The newspapers and TVs called for a campaign for defending the national honor and released feelings of anger. On the same day İstanbul was red-white, with national flags coming out of everywhere. The etatisation of the society, refers to the ways in which the society becomes coextensive with state power, a process which “mobilize self generating, spontaneous sites within society, in order to reproduce and enhance state power.”<sup>46</sup> And the mainstream press played a central role in the production and reproduction of state power in such ways.

The press has a distinct function, in terms of the official ideology policies within the framework of one party rule. The judiciary takes on its responsibility, so does the legislature and the executive. As the so called fourth power, the press takes on its share as well. This is what the press does: they convict the acts of the Kurdish organizations functioning in the legal field, i.e. engaging with legal politics, press, peace initiatives, etc., in the public opinion. They represent these acts and practices as illegal, thereby preparing the suitable environment for attacks. The issue flares up and they in a sense convince the public especially the Turkish public through manipulation. Thereafter the task is handed over to others. In the second phase the police and the army comes into the picture. The third phase is the phase of the controlled judiciary. Sometimes it is the phase of the MPs in the parliament, as clearly visible in the case DEP MPs against whom the hands of the rest of the MPs were raised (for their conviction and imprisonment). (Journalist)<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Yael Navaro-Yaşın, *Faces of The State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002)

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. p.132

Setting up targets for the paramilitary violence and investing such violence with legitimacy has been one of the most chronic, banal functions of the press. The modern history of Turkey contains various atrocious events in which press was a constitutive agent. By using particular names and frames to refer to specific events, communities and personalities, the press declares certain bodies as disposable and invests state violence with legitimacy. Naming, as Nietzsche argued, is one of the most powerful tools of the masters: “The seigniorial privilege of giving names even allow us to conceive the origin of the language itself as a manifestation of the rulers: they say ‘this is so and so’, they set their seal on everything and every occurrence with a sound thereby take possession of it.”<sup>48</sup> With the power of naming, as the power of taking possession of, framing of events (referring to the aesthetic and discursive composition as well as to the optic, acoustic and graphic configuration) by the mass press perpetuates the etatist aesthetics resting on the stately partition of the sensible into what is visible and audible and what is not.<sup>49</sup>

Feldman argues that “like other institutions (industrial, penological, psychiatric and medical) the mass production of facts and of facticity itself is based on techniques and disciplines that, in the case of media materially mold a subject and culture of perception.”<sup>50</sup> The culture of perception the Turkish press molds, distributes the perceptual and sensual abilities, like other goods and services of the

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<sup>47</sup> Basının ayrı bir işlevi var, tek parti çalışması içerisinde resmi ideolojinin politikaları itibarıyla. Yargı bunun bir kısmını üstleniyor, yasama bir kısmını, yürütme bir kısmını. 4. kuvvet diye tabir ettikleri basın da bir kısmını. Basının yaptığı şu, Kürdistanlı oluşumlar için yasal siyasi çalışma olsun, basın çalışması olsun, barış inisiyatifleri olsun önce sayfalarına, yazılarına çıkarıp kamuoyu nezdinde mahkûm etmeye çalışıyor. Yasa dışı olarak lanse ediyor, saldırılarına zemini oluşturuyor. Hem durum iyice alevleniyor, hem de halk özellikle Türk halkı bu konuda manipülasyonla ikna ediliyor. Sonra görev diğerlerine bırakılıyor. İkinci aşaması polis ve ordu kuvvetleridir. Üçüncü aşaması güdümlü yargıdır. Bazen de DEP'liler örneğinde görüldüğü gibi milletvekillerinin kalkan elleridir.

<sup>48</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, “Genealogy of Morals.” In *The Nietzsche Reader* edited by Keith Ansell Pearson & Duncan Large (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), p.396

<sup>49</sup> Jacques Ranciere, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999)

<sup>50</sup> Allen Feldman, “On Cultural Anesthesia” , p.406

nation-state, unequally along the racial, geographical and political lines. And such unequal distribution of the “communicative and semantic legitimacy of sensory capacities and their ability to achieve collective representation in public culture”<sup>51</sup> constitutes cultural anesthesia.

Cultural anesthesia is a gloss of Adorno’s insight about late capitalist modernity, that underlines the increase in “the social capacity to inflict pain upon the Other... and to render other’s pain inadmissible to public discourse and culture.”<sup>52</sup> In Turkey the mainstream press works to maintain the sensory topography of the nation-state by pushing the pain inflicted upon certain communities and in certain spaces into the domains of invisible and inaudible. In the mainstream press the indignities and violent events that the Kurdish community experience are denied publicity, narrativity and imagery. The sensory world is frequently carved out in a way that makes the pain inflicted upon Kurdish community insensible.

The frames used by the press, endures cultural anesthesia by differentiating between which lives are liveable and which are not, whose death can be mourned and whose not.<sup>53</sup> If “those we kill are not quite human and not quite alive, this means we do not feel the same horror and outrage over the loss of their lives as we do over the loss of those lives that bear national and similarity to our own.”<sup>54</sup> Of course this differentiating takes place along the same lines with state’s partition of the sensible. Thus the dead, mutilated, lost, tortured bodies of Kurds do not lead to the same affects with the ones that bear national similarity since such “affective responses are

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<sup>51</sup> Allen Feldman, “On Cultural Anesthesia”, p.406

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. p.406

<sup>53</sup> Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (London: Verso, 2009)

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. p.42

invariably mediated, they call upon and enact certain interpretative frames.”<sup>55</sup> In this sense, the statist enframing of the events and the stratification of senses should also be understood as a form of violence. By inserting things and persons into a universe of meaning, enframing strip these object and bodies of their humanity, legality and legibility. Yet, the transformation of affective responses, on the other hand, “can also call into question the taken for granted character of those frames, and in that way provide the affective conditions for social critique.”<sup>56</sup>

“We consider them as state officials because that is what they were. In any case their newspapers are like the voice of a counter-guerilla radio. In this sense, rather than remaining inattentive they contributed to the attacks from their sides. (Journalist)”<sup>57</sup> According to the journalists of *Özgür Gündem* the Turkish media, as they call it to highlight the underlying racial premises, was one among the other state forces that engaged in paramilitary activity. Their attitude was not inattention, but a certain form of attention which simultaneously disembodied people with histories and embodied them as terrorists without faces. The state-based frames of the Turkish newspapers, and the culture of political violence, triggered the search for different visual and narrative repertoires and techniques for the framing and transmission of reality.

### The Need for a New Media

In his memoirs, Ragıp Zarakolu talks about the 1990s as *Annus Horribilis* – the years of horror.<sup>58</sup> According to the well known 1993 concept, the paramilitary activities in

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid. p.34

<sup>56</sup> Butler, *Frames of War*, p.34

<sup>57</sup> “Onları devletin görevlileri olarak görüyoruz çünkü durum da öyle. Zaten gazeteleri bir kontrgerilla radyosu bülteni sesi gibi. Bu anlamda tavırsızlıktan ziyade saldırılara onlar da kendi cephelerinden katkı yaptılar.”

the region extended to journalists, children, businessmen, deputies and so on. In the Region, the perpetuating culture of anesthesia, not only intensified the feelings of horror and helplessness but also distrust against the Turkish press among the Kurdish people. People in the Region were reading everyday in the mainstream press that who burned down the villages were not soldiers but terrorists, or who were killed in front of their houses were not the villagers but terrorists. The silence produced by such modes of attention, made the dirty war in the Region, even dirtier. Since the mainstream press played “a crucial part in the normalization of state terror”<sup>59</sup> the leftists, Kurdish political activists and writers gathered together politically for publishing a newspaper. In order to counter the culture of perception based on the exclusion of the everyday experiences intertwined with state terror, a weekly newspaper *Yeni Ülke*, which would later be published daily as *Özgür Gündem*, was published in October 1990.

The Bab-ı Ali (the Sublime Porte) media, or what is today called the İkitelli media, ignored or intentionally dismissed the social, cultural, historical structure of the Kurdish people. After all, historically speaking the Kurdish people has always been ignored. Operating from within the official perspective, these newspapers adopted the official policy attitudes. *Yeni Ülke* for the first time challenged this practice. It tried to give voice to the cultural, political, historical, societal realities of the Kurdish people, as they are. This is the main difference of *Yeni Ülke* from the Bab-ı Ali or the İkitelli press. (Journalist)<sup>60</sup>

In this newspaper, the narration, the emplotment and enframing of the events were thought to be in accordance with the everyday experience of the marginalized

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<sup>58</sup> Ragıp Zarakolu, *Bir Ülkeye Ağıt: Annus Horribilis* (Requiem for a Country: Annus Horribilis) (İstanbul, Belge Yayınları, 2003)

<sup>59</sup> Begona Aretxaga, “States of Terror: Displacements.” In *States of Terror*, p.129

<sup>60</sup> Babıali medyası veya şimdiki yapısıyla İkitelli medyası, bunlar Kürt halkının toplumsal, tarihsel, kültürel yapısını göz ardı ediyor veya bilinçli olarak yansıtmak istemiyordu. Zaten, Kürt halkı tarihsel olarak da görmezden geliniyordu. Resmi görüşe bağlı olarak, bu gazeteler resmi politikanın davranışları içerisine giriyordu. *Yeni Ülke* ilk defa bunu yıktı, Kürt halkının kültürel gerçekliğini, tarihsel gerçekliğini, toplumsal gerçekliğini, siyasal gerçekliğini olduğu gibi seslendirmeye çalıştı. Yani *Yeni Ülke*'nin en önemli farkı Babıali veya İkitelli basınından, budur.

Kurdish community. The circulation of the newspaper coupled the frames of the nation-state with the stories and histories narrated from the margins of the nation. The news about the practices of paramilitary violence, human rights violations and etc. started to circulate on the socius, albeit in a limited scope. The weekly newspaper worked to circulate the cultural realities and daily experiences of marginalized Kurdish community and others whose experiences were denied publicity. Yet it was also the construction of certain frames for expressing and making sense of those marginal realities, which were officially non-existent or existed in another way.

The journalism of *Yeni Ülke* corresponds to a significant moment in the Kurdish struggle. In that period the struggle of the Kurdish people reached a significant point. There were large mass uprisings. Masses were responsive and they gained political awareness. Even in villages and small towns up to 5000 people were participating in protests. It was a beginning of a renaissance among the Kurdish people. With guerilla practices people reached a certain level of political awareness. People were demanding a publication venue where it could find and express itself and its struggle. The media in Turkey was not able to truly represent the struggle of the Kurdish people. Therefore *Yeni Ülke* was to be the voice of the Kurdish people, a venue through which it could express itself to the Turkish and world publics. The moves it made thereafter were partly related to this vision. (Journalist)<sup>61</sup>

The newspaper as a medium of the mass media is one technique among others, to express and constitute the political voice of marginalized communities. Fanon tells a very similar story about the attachment of Algerians to radios.<sup>62</sup> Radios in Algiers, were considered as an alien and alienating medium which only transmits the voice of

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<sup>61</sup> *Yeni Ülke*'nin gazeteciliği, Kürt halkının mücadelesinin önemli bir dönemine rastlıyor. O dönemde Kürt halkının mücadelesi önemli bir boyuta ulaşmıştı. Büyük serhıldanlar vardı. Kitleler duyarlı hale gelmişti. Küçük kasaba ve köylerde bile 5.000'i bulan büyük kitleler bir takım yürüyüşler yapıyordu. Kürt halkında bir uyanış başlamıştı. Gerilla eylemleri ile birlikte halkta da belirli bir duyarlılık oluşmuştu. Halk bu şekilde kendisini ifade edebileceği, bu mücadelesini bulabileceği bir yayın istiyordu. Türkiye'deki medya Kürt halkının mücadelesini gerçek yönleriyle boyutlarıyla veremiyordu. Bundan dolayı *Yeni Ülke* Kürt halkının sesi olmaya, onun kendisini dünyaya, Türkiye kamuoyuna anlatacağı bir kanal haline gelmeye başladı. Hamleleri biraz da buna dayanıyor.

<sup>62</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Dying Colonialism* (New York: Grove Press, 1965)

the masters. However, after the Free Voice of Algiers started its broadcasting, the number of radios owned by the Algerians grew rapidly. When the French government found out about the broadcasting of Free Voice of Algiers, it first prohibited selling radios, then selling batteries and finally distorted the signals of broadcasting. There was the predominance of anxiety on the part of French government, because in the radio news, Algerians found a powerful tool for contesting the truth of their rulers with another one. In this manner, Fanon argues that the techniques which were previously thought to be alien and alienating can be reclaimed and put into use according to other cultural and political codes. The previous national form of the newspaper, whose frames of reality were alienating, was transformed into a means for expressing the struggle of the Kurdish community. The medium of the newspaper which was the state's "arsenal for cultural repression"<sup>63</sup> became the voice of the community in struggle, the struggle of community for a voice, circulating on the surface of the social. Yet the scope of the weekly newspaper proved to be insufficient, considering the escalation of the dirty war and its disastrous effects.

The war expanded to such an extent and developed in such multifarious ways, its consequences reached such a point -which could be considered positively in terms of social history, yet negatively in terms of destruction of the humanity and the nature- that a weekly newspaper was not enough to gather news, deliver them to the public and organize a reaction. A weekly newspaper could only intervene in weekly agendas and publish outdated news; its commentaries did not match up with daily agendas. Daily is a very different periodization. From then on, in order to write about the war, and additionally about the labor movement in Turkey, the state employees' movement –albeit being in its infancy phase-, students' protests, campaigns and protests by various oppositional groups, a daily newspaper was indispensable. Perhaps it was already late. For intervening in the agenda on a daily basis, a daily newspaper was a must. (Journalist)<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Fanon, *Dying Colonialism* , p.84

In the Region, living in the state of terror increased the value of information, since every bit and piece of information about the armed conflict became the primary subject of stories daily told. To read the newspaper inserted and assisted one “in a world in which things happen, in which events existed, in which forces were active.”<sup>65</sup> The stories produced from the raw material provided by the news became the fields for the reproduction of political identities and intensification of attachments. The telling practices put one into a shared world of communal events. Through the newspaper the struggle came into the houses, the coffee shops, daily conversations, thus established a space of intimacy in the community. Such practices endowed *Özgür Gündem* with a communal character since “not any object or substance can acquire meaning and value by simply being inserted into the rules, times and spaces of (communality)...rather artifacts are in themselves histories of prior ... events and emotional sensory exchanges.”<sup>66</sup> And it is these stories and histories that qualify the object as communal.<sup>67</sup> Through the circulation of *Özgür Gündem*, the community tuned itself in on the new domains of perceptible and sensible, brought into being by the armed conflict in the Region.

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<sup>64</sup> Savaş o kadar birdenbire boyutlandı, yayıldı; sonuçları toplumsal tarih itibarıyla olumlu, insanlığın, doğanın tahribi konusunda olumsuz denebilecek bir raddeye vardı ki haftalık bir gazete ile bu haberleri almak, kamuoyuna, halka yansıtmak, tepki örgütlemek pek mümkün olmuyordu. Haftalık yayın, haftalık sürece müdahale edebiliyor, eskimiş haberleri verebiliyor, yorumlar güncel tam tekabül edemiyor. Günlük ise tabii çok farklı bir periyot. Artık o noktadan sonra savaşı, savaşın yanı sıra Türkiye’de işçi hareketini, bir kıvılcım kertesinde olsa bile yeni yeni başlayan memur hareketini, öğrenci eylemlerini, her türlü muhalif kesimin eylemlerini protestolarını ifade edebilecek, bir günlük gazete artık kaçınılmaz olmuştu. Belki geç de kalınmıştır. Gündeme günlük olarak daha kısa bir periyot içerisinde müdahale anlamında günlük gazete şart olmuştu.

<sup>65</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Dying Colonialism* , p.77

<sup>66</sup> Nadia C. Seremetakis, “Memory of the Senses, Part 1: Marks of the Transitory.” In *Senses Still : Perception and Memory as Material Culture in Modernity* edited by Nadia C. Seremetakis (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1994), p.11

<sup>67</sup> Nadia C. Seremetakis, “Memory of the Senses.”



## Challenge Directed to What Is

The first issue of *Özgür Gündem* was published on May 30, 1992 with the headline:

“Sovereignty belongs unconditionally to the DGM (State Security Court)”. In the

lead article Yaşar Kaya writes about the coming of *Özgür Gündem* as follows:

Because for 70 years, radios, newspapers or private TVs in Turkey have chosen to act as the spokesperson of the official ideology, the establishment, and the sovereign powers. *Gündem* will follow and communicate both the national and global agendas from its own perspective, as well as trying to create its own agenda. Unlike others it will not just express the official views, but will give voice to the demands and views of the oppressed and the ones whose voice is silenced.(Journalist)<sup>68</sup>



Fig.2 – The first page of *Özgür Gündem*.<sup>69</sup>

*Özgür Gündem* enacted another culture of perception and sensation which included the voices of the ones whose words were not heard, whose bodies were not visible, and whose lives were regarded as not dare to know. Such enactment would not rest solely on the gesture of inclusion but also on changing the coordinates of the sensible (i.e. change in the work of the eye and the position of the gaze, the work of the ear

<sup>68</sup> Çünkü 70 yıldır radyo, gazeteler ve resmi ya da özel televizyonlar Türkiye'de sadece yerleşik düzenin, resmi ideolojinin, egemen kesimlerin sözcülüğünü yapmayı uygun gördü. *Gündem* hem dünya hem Türkiye gündemini kendine göre izleyip aktaracak, hem de kendi özel gündemini yaratmaya çalışacak. Ötekiler gibi sadece resmi görüşleri değil, sesi kısılanların, bastırılanların da istemlerini, görüşlerini verecek. Quoted in Müslüm Yücel, *Kürt Basın Tarihi*, p.148

<sup>69</sup> *Özgür Gündem*, 30 May 1992

and the position of voice) for looking, writing and telling from the margins. As Agamben argues that the (hi)stories that are persistently marginalized cannot be told simply by adding their content into the predominant culture of perception, which produces the marginality in the first place.<sup>70</sup> The task fundamentally requires the transformation of the spatio-temporal and sensual coordinates of the reality. On its pages, the words like guerilla, Jitem, etc. that belong to a different socio-symbolic register were used. And in the newspaper, deaths of terrorists were mourned; military operations did not lead to relief but outrage and horror, that the same events were framed in an antagonistic way with different affective compositions.

The images, the journalism principals, the language, the montage, the political attitude of the newspaper refers to a jargon, an attitude, a frame “which contains the characteristics of the Region.” For, the region was ruled by state of emergency laws, which worked to terrorize the everyday life, and the reality of the nation-state had a different sense. Historically, rather than being a source of full attachment, nation-state had been a source of extreme vulnerability in the Region. Yet, especially in the 1990s, with the escalation of the armed conflict, the Region was transformed into a space in which the sovereignty of the nation-state was preserved and contested, installed and undone.

The Kurdish reality that had been denied for 70 years, the condition of the laborers, the war, and all other issues omitted by the system were no longer secrets. They were on the newspaper and openly uttered. Well, clearly it wasn't easy to accept and digest this fact within a short time period. Those who ran the state, the prime minister, the president, were in this very unusual situation where a daily newspaper in Turkey -in a way very much against the totalitarian, fascist structure- used the concept of Kurdistan, openly accused the state, took a stance against it, and became the voice of the people. So these rulers were surprised and couldn't digest this fact. This is the first point.

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<sup>70</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *Potentialities : Collected Essays in Philosophy* (California: Stanford University Press, 1999)

So even if it sold say only 500, even if it were distributed only among the newspaper workers, it would be hard for the state to digest it. Secondly, no matter how low its circulation was, say it was about 10 000, the real circulation was a few times of that. Moreover, because it was a referential source for democratic, progressive forces both in Turkey and the world, and because it was the only newspaper writing about Kurdistan, its word could reach everywhere, the UN, the US Senate. Human rights organizations were filing petitions on the basis of the news published in this newspaper. Thirdly, our newspapers were significant obstacles to freely conducting a dirty war. They became obstacles by writing about what was happening, what concrete policies, measures could lead to. We made about 15-20 shocking news, which normally would have shaken the country if the other press were not acting as state employees: we revealed the plan of the Minister of Internal Affairs, published confessions of soldiers and counter-guerillas, disclosed Mrs. Ciller's (the prime minister then) orders for bombing. All this was very disturbing for the state and the system. (Journalist)<sup>71</sup>

*Özgür Gündem* published news witnessing to the bestiality of state sovereignty which constitutes the denied truth of the being of the state.<sup>72</sup> Certain relations which were cast aside through the prevention of their representation were named and referred in ways that subverted the existing codes of signification. In certain aspects, the dirty war gained visibility through the circulation of *Özgür Gündem*, which challenged the imaginary of the state both inside and outside the nation.

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<sup>71</sup> 70 yıldır inkar edilen Kürt gerçekliği, emekçilerin durumu, savaş, ne bileyim düzenin savsakladığı bütün noktalar ortaya çıktı ve gazetede bunlar açıkça zikrediliyordu. Bunun kabul edilmesi, öyle kısa bir süre zarfı içerisinde hazmedilmesi kuşkusuz kolay değil. Devletin yöneticisi, başbakanı, cumhurbaşkanı Türkiye'de her gün çıkan bir gazetede hiç alışık olmadığı bir şekilde o totaliter, faşist yapılanmaya çok aykırı bir şekilde Kürdistan kavramının kullanıldığını görüyor, devletin açıkça suçlandığını görüyor, açıktan tavır alındığını, halkın sesi olunduğunu görüyor, şaşırıyor ve hazmedemiyor. Birincisi bu. Yani 500 satsa bile o gazete, sadece gazete içerisinde dağıtılmış olsa bile bunun hazmı kolay değildir devlet için. İkincisi, tirajı ne kadar düşük olursa olsun, biz diyelim 10000 gazete satıyoruz bunun reel satışı bir kaç mislidir. Onunla da yetinmemek gerekir, hem dünyada hem de Türkiye'de demokrat güçlerin referans noktası olduğu için, Kürdistan'ı yazan tek gazete olduğu için bu gazetenin yazdıkları her tarafa ulaşabiliyor. BM'ye Amerikan senatosuna, uluslararası insan hakları kuruluşlarına, meclise gazete referans alınarak soru önermeleri götürülüyor. Üçüncüsü, özel savaşın rahat bir şekilde yürütülmesini gazetelerimiz ciddi şekilde engeldi. Ne oluyor ne bitiyor onları yazarak, somut uygulamalardan yola çıkıp neler olabileceğini öngörerek engelledik. İçişleri bakanının planını ortaya çıkardık, kontrgerilla itiraflarını askerlerin itiraflarını, Çiller'in bomba emrini; diğer basın devletin görevlisi olmasa yeri yerinden oynatacak nitelikte 15-20 yayınıımız haberimiz oldu. Bunların hepsi devlet için sistem için çok rahatsızlık verici.

<sup>72</sup> Jacques Derrida, *The Beast and The Sovereign Vol. I* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2009)



Fig. 3 – The news titled “İnsanlık Sürükleniyor” (Humanity is Being Dragged)<sup>73</sup> One of the news, in this respect, is “İnsanlık Sürükleniyor” (Humanity is Being Dragged). The first frame depicts the body of Mesut Dündar, lying dead on the road after being taken from his home and shot. The special forces of the state came and tied his body to the back of a military tank. After the tank moved forward for a couple of meters soldiers left him on the road lying dead. The publication of these photos led Germany to stop selling tanks to Turkey and the event led to a parliamentary question. The bestiality of the sovereignty rests on a culture of secrecy, through which the regimes can hold their democratic ideals while resorting to every means possible to fight the subversives. The violence inherent to the law, as the bestiality inherent to the enactment of sovereignty, is framed by the mainstream media as a sign of archaism in the way of progress, not as generated by the same structures enabling progressive democratic institutionalization. However, *Özgür Gündem* visualized and narrated events in such a disturbing way for the imaginary of the state that “they ‘no longer knew what to do’, so that the acts, gestures, discourses

<sup>73</sup> *Özgür Gündem*, 16 October 1992

which up until then had seemed to go without saying became problematic, difficult , dangerous.”<sup>74</sup> With the publication of *Özgür Gündem*, the sensual and perceptual frames of the nation-state were contested by the techniques of optics, graphics and acoustics and acts of showing, writing and telling from the margins. These marginal spaces, like the Region, are spaces where the centers of legitimation and acts of violence do not overlap. And mimicking the everyday sense of reality in the Region, *Özgür Gündem* framed the nation-state sovereignty with its inherent violence. It was materially composed to communicate the reality together with the sense of reality.

### A Beautiful War

In the first day of Yeni Ülke, Yaşar Kaya told his friends that they should be ready for the war that would begin. After the newspaper begun its life, literally a new struggle was set off. It was a struggle on the constitution of the truth of the dirty war and on the frameworks that were used for prescribing the worth of lives. This was one of the most important aspects of the newspaper; it challenged the state control of the press through unbinding. This unbinding occurred in two parallel domains: like the state-based frames of reality were challenged and contested, the relations of subjection as the state’s base were also rejected. In other words, like the newspaper’s news could not be properly controlled, the practices of journalists could not be controlled either. In this manner, not only the circulation of the newspaper as a material object, but also the movements of the bodies that were in touch with it, became a vast domain of control engendered by political violence.

The most important aspect of the newspaper is its relationship with the state. The relationship of our newspaper with the rulers is incomparable to that of the other newspapers. There are very few comparable, similar examples across the world. Especially today states can’t do without newspapers and

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<sup>74</sup> Michel Foucault, “Questions of Method.” In *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, & Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 73-86, p.84

vice versa. The new politics actually represents a new paradigm. The relations with the state are completely different. There is a concrete difference: there is a state which tries to govern people; it is a lot more difficult to govern where there are problems, especially national problems. The more difficult it is to govern, the more the state holds on to governmental instruments. One of these instruments is the press, the media. The state has held on to the media to such an extent that it has come to the point of directly controlling it. Normally the newspapers and the journalists would feel troubled by this practice, yet Kurds were the ones who felt most troubled. I think there are about 300-400 such journalists. They are like fireballs, they are unruly. They are in groups and structures that broke ties with the state. This is a tradition and we made this tradition. The main difference started with the state holding more strongly on to the media, and with those who objected to this practice, leaving this media and starting their own institutions on the basis of their own capital, editorial staff, technology, etc. Of course the state didn't remain silent in the face of this situation. So it could be viewed as such a combat.(Journalist)<sup>75</sup>

*Özgür Gündem* due to the frames it used and sensual culture it molded, signalled a crisis in the homogeneous socius and *equivocality* (similar to the unisonance) of the nation. Such a crisis for Spivak, is the *sine qua non* for political action. If the socius is a continuous sign-chain, as Nietzsche argues, then “the possibility of action lies in the dynamics of the disruption of this object, the breaking and re-linking of the chain.”<sup>76</sup> Everyday circulation of *Özgür Gündem* which attempted to change the sign-system was itself a political action which opened up a field of possibility for further political actions. And people who were in contact with ‘the newspaper’ knew

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<sup>75</sup> Gazetenin en önemli yanı devletle olan ilişkileri. Bizim gazetenin yöneten kesimle ilişkileri, kurduğu ilişkiler, diğer gazetelerle karşılaştırılamayacak şekilde farklıdır. Dünyada bunun örnekleri çok azdır. Hele hele gelinen dönemde, gazeteler devletsiz, devletler gazetesiz yapamıyor. *Yeni Politika* bir ekol aslında. Devletle ilişkileri tamamen farklı. Şöyle bir ayrılık var: somut olarak, bir devlet var ve tabii ne yapıyor insanları yönetmeye çalışıyor; sorunların olduğu yerde, hele hele ulusal sorunların olduğu yerde yönetmek çok daha zor. Yönetim ne kadar zorsa devlet de yönetim araçlarına o kadar sarılıyor. Bunlardan biri de basın, medya. Medyaya o kadar çok sarıldı ki, birebir kontrol etmeye başladı. Normalde gazeteler ve gazeteciler bu durumdan rahatsız olurlar ama Kürtler bundan birinci derecede rahatsız oldular... Bence Türkiye'de 300 400 tane böyle gazeteci var. Ateş topu gibi bunlar, ele avuca sığmazlar. Bunlar hep böyle devletle ilişkisini koparmış, ipini koparmış grupların içerisinde, yapılar içerisinde. Bu bir gelenek. Bu geleneği biz yaptık. Temel farklılık devletin basına daha fazla sarılması, buna itiraz edenlerin artık bu basın içerisinde çıkıp kendi başlarına sermayesiyle, yazar kadrosuyla, tekniğiyle, teknolojiyle kendisinin olan kurumlar oluşturmasıyla başladı. Devlet de tabii buna sessiz kalmadı. Böyle bir vuruşma süreci denilebilir buna.

<sup>76</sup> Gayatri C. Spivak, “Subaltern Studies : Deconstructing Historiography.” In *Selected Subaltern Studies* edited by Ranajit Guha& Gayatri C. Spivak (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p.332

by experience that the change in sign-system was a violent transformation both literally and symbolically- that led to several assassinations, tortures, lost people, physical and symbolic humiliations. One of the journalists tells: “Despite all threats and risks we opted for a chronic war position. We are in a permanent war. And despite all, it is a beautiful war. (Journalist)”<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> “Bütün tehlikelere, tehditlere, sıkıntılara rağmen kronik bir savaşıma pozisyonu seçtik. Sürekli bir savaş içerisindeyiz. Ve herşeye rağmen güzel bir savaş.”

## CHAPTER 3

### STATE VIOLENCE AND ECONOMY OF SORROW

Recent ethnographies of the state challenged the Weberian conceptualization of the state as a rational-bureaucratic instrument of domination which is political insofar its existence is safeguarded in a given territorial area by the threat of physical force.

This instrument of domination is called the state insofar it holds the monopoly of the legitimate use of violence in order to enforce its order. Contemporary works on state practices emphasize that such an understanding underestimates the irrational, excessive, spectral and affective side of the “subjective being of the state” or “stately beings”, especially performed and more clearly visible in emergency zones, state of exceptions, in time of upheavals, in short, at the margins of the state.<sup>78</sup> While the tropes and legalities of the state understands such excessive, spectacular practices as lack – a lack of progress, enlightenment or proper democratization- these dimensions of the state practices cannot be taken as a sign of failure, perversion or lack of reason. The domain of the excessive, in this manner, is not a deviation from the norm but provides the constitutive truth of state’s being.<sup>79</sup> As the exception is necessary for the rule, state practices that are not bound with legality are necessary for the smooth functioning of things. In a similar way, margins refer not to geographical locations outside the state’s reach but to spaces where the legibility of the state is experienced and undone, where the law is contested and re-found through forms of extra-judicial violence. They are the spaces where exception becomes the rule, the sovereign meets the beast and the extraordinary is inscribed into the ordinary fabric of everyday life.

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<sup>78</sup> Micheal Taussig, *The Nervous System* (London: Routledge, 1992), See also Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Steppuat, “Introduction: States of Imagination” in *States of Imagination: Ethnographic Explorations of the Postcolonial State* edited by Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Steppuat (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001)

<sup>79</sup> Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001)



The quotidian signs and inscriptions of the state become a domain to explore the presence of the state as an everyday actor which is manifested most of the time through the spectacular, mimetic, excessive, festive as well as through bureaucratic rationality, paperwork and legal personalities.<sup>80</sup> Exploring how the state becomes a social subject in everyday life is “to ask about the bodily excitations and sensualities, powerful identifications, and unconscious desires of statehood; and about discourses, narratives and fantasies generated around the idea of the state.”<sup>81</sup> Formulated as an entity with the qualities of the fetish, state is understood as a powerful agent by becoming the everyday locus of desire and fear, attachment and resistance. In this sense it is not only imagined, fantasized or talked about, but its presence is also felt on the body. According to Appadurai, such affective surplus produces full attachment to modern nation state which involves “something more than the imputation of legitimacy to a sovereign state by its citizens.”<sup>82</sup> Like the etatisation of the society, full attachment refers to that “virtually transcendental commitment to rules, procedures, and impersonal structures of authority.”<sup>83</sup> He argues that, “modern nation-state requires various forms of violent mobilization in order to ‘produce the people’(in Balibar’s terms), and, in Foucault’s terms to deploy the techniques of governmentality. Put more simply: Violence... produces full attachment, rather than the reverse”<sup>84</sup> as the folk theory of common origins suggests.

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<sup>80</sup> Deborah Poole & Veena Das, “Introduction”, *Anthropology in the Margins of the State* edited by Deborah Poole & Veena Das (Santa Fe: SAR Press, 2004)

<sup>81</sup> Begona Aretxaga, *States of Terror: Begona Aretxaga’s Essays* edited by Joseba Zulaika (Nevada:Center for Basque Studies, 2005), p.257

<sup>82</sup> Arjun Appadurai, “Full Attachment”, *Public Culture*, 10, no.2, Winter 1998, pp.443-449, p.445

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. p.446

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. p.447

Bearing in mind the relationship of violence to attachment, we can argue that the state's monopoly of violence extends this monopoly over the forms of attachment. Kurdish movement therefore, by challenging the state's monopoly of violence, also challenges the forms of attachments and affects of violence. Bodily affects, in this manner, becomes one of the domains to submit or resist to the reality of state domination. The everyday production of affects becomes one of the main domains in the production, reproduction and transmission of the relations of antagonism. In this sense political configuration of the senses is central for the constitution of systems of domination as well as for challenging it. The place of everyday social practices of people and their experience of the state in the articulation of emotions with the systems of domination becomes a vast area to be explored by "sociology of emotions."<sup>85</sup>

Ranciere argues that every symbolic constitution of the social is a "partition of the sensible" into what is sayable and what is audible, what is visible and what is not.<sup>86</sup> This partition generates "the symbolic distribution of bodies that divides them into two categories: those that one sees and those that one does not see ... those who really speak and whose voice really speaks and whose voice merely mimics the articulate voice to express pleasure and pain."<sup>87</sup> Throughout the dirty war in the Region, this partition had not been limited to the legal transactions and codes, but introduced a break into the domain of life. It separated what was to live and what was to die, along the lines of political, racial and geographical affiliation, which Foucault calls "state racism". Its enactment intervened in the organization of everyday senses

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<sup>85</sup> Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*

<sup>86</sup> Jacques Ranciere, *Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of The Sensible* (London: Continuum, 2004)

<sup>87</sup> Jacques Ranciere, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p.22

and was inscribed onto the bodies through the performances of paramilitary violence. However, “state racism” rests more on the crafting of the senses than on the biological bifurcation.<sup>88</sup> The ones who were left to die or killed in the 1990s, were declared dead socially and symbolically, before their biological death. The sensory coordinates of the nation-state assigned them to domains of invisibility and inaudibility. Stately partition of the sensible, i.e. organization of affects that determined the boundaries of humanly beings, rendered the socio-symbolic condition of the newspaper community vulnerable to the disfiguring violence.

When those who have no part and no voice put into question the existing frameworks that assigns the worth of lives and the current topography of the sensible, the smooth functioning of the nation-state is disturbed by the introduction of other ways of seeing and being in the world. In this manner, *Özgür Gündem*’s publication and circulation was disturbing for the nation-state, for it showed the society in difference to itself, in its difference from itself. Not only the material composition of the newspaper (the frames used, the news published etc.), but also the everyday practices that enabled its circulation, challenged the progressive metaphor of nation-state as “the many as one.”<sup>89</sup> Its circulation signalled the forms of attachment that were not monopolized by the nation-state and undermined national sovereignty.

The circulation of *Özgür Gündem*, in this sense, produced uncanny effects understood as a “process of doubling, dividing, and interchanging of the self.”<sup>90</sup> Its circulation doubled the reality of the state with the reality of the Kurdish question

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<sup>88</sup> Michel Foucault, *Society Must be Defended: Lectures at the College de France 1975-76*, (London: Penguin, 2003)

<sup>89</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (New York: Routledge, 1994)

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. p.143

and divided the homogeneous one into two. The uncanny, for Freud, is both “something repressed which recurs” and “something which ought to have remained hidden but has come to light.”<sup>91</sup> The graphic and acoustic composition of *Özgür Gündem* as the voice of the ones who had no part became the site of anxiety for the nation, the political unity of which “consists in a continual displacement of the anxiety of its irredeemably plural modern space...”<sup>92</sup> *Özgür Gündem* was conceived as a material that should not be published and distributed, for it produced uncanny effects.

### The Terrorist Newspaper

The displacement of the anxiety of the nation-state and its reconfiguration of the senses went hand in hand with the proliferation of discourses and paramilitary violence targeting the newspaper community. In this way the nation-state struggled to recode and control the flow of *Özgür Gündem*, as it strived to control the flow of things and bodies, as well as senses, sensibilities and perceptions on its territory. The stories and images from the Region, where the daily life was exposed to state of emergency rules so that the others live in their normal state, coupled-doubled the everyday reality of the nation-state with its exceptional, extraordinary constitution. The everyday constitution of the state, through spectacles, images and performance of national unity, was coupled with spectacles of disfigured bodies, images of state atrocities and performances of paramilitaries. And in the face of this dislocation of the familiar structure of everyday reality the nation-state struggled to re-normalize the condition, as Deleuze argues “need, scarcity, famine, a society can code these, what it cannot code, is when this thing appears, when it says to itself: what is up with

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<sup>91</sup> Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny” in *Writings on Arts and Literature*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p.217

<sup>92</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p.149

these guys? So, in a first phase, the repressive apparatus puts itself into motion, if we can't code it, we will try to annihilate it. In a second phase, we try to find new axioms which allow it to be re-coded for better or worse.”<sup>93</sup>

Our newspaper cannot enter the State of Emergency Region. It can't be easily/safely distributed. People cannot easily/safely buy it. When they buy it, they have to hide it. A person who is carrying our newspaper is seen as a suspicious person and can be taken into custody. Our correspondents can't safely go out to make news. They can't act the same way as the correspondents working for the other newspapers. Above all, our newspaper is not considered a normal newspaper. (Journalist)<sup>94</sup>



Fig.4<sup>95</sup>

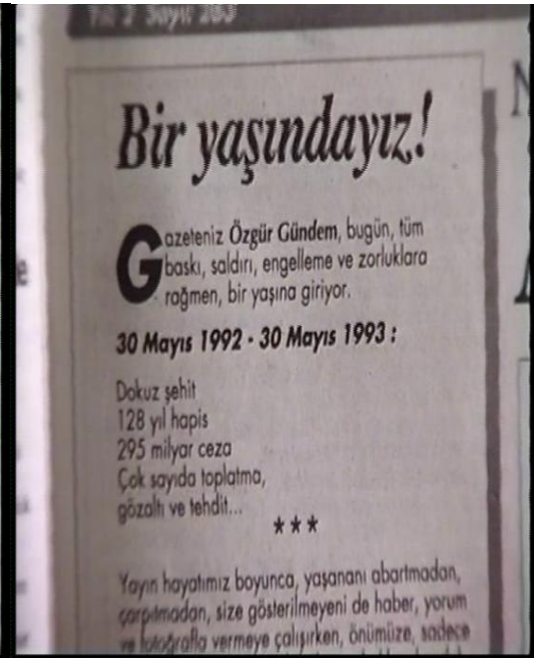


Fig.5<sup>96</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Courses on Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 1972, Available [online]: <http://deleuzelectures.blogspot.com/2007/02/capitalism-flows-decoding-of-flows.html>

<sup>94</sup> Gazetemiz OHAL bölgelerine giremiyor. Rahat dağıtımı yapılamıyor. İnsanlar rahat satın alamıyor gazeteyi. Aldıkları zaman gizlemek zorunda kalıyorlar. Gazetemizi üzerinde bulunduran bir şahıs, şüpheli bir şahıs diye gözaltına alınabiliyor. Muhabirlerimiz rahatlıkla habere gidemiyor. Diğer basın organlarındaki muhabirler gibi hareket edemiyorlar. Her şeyden önce gazetemiz normal bir gazete olarak görülüyor.

<sup>95</sup> Our newspaper is under fire.” *Özgür Gündem*, 24 November 1992

<sup>96</sup> “We are one years old...Nine martyrs, 28 years of imprisonment, 295 billions TL capital punishment.” *Özgür Gündem*, 30 May 1993

*Özgür Gündem* which subverted the normal disposition of things and bodies became an abnormal object or an abject, as “matter out of place”. According to Douglas, dirt as “matter out of place” is that which must not be included if an order is to be constituted and maintained.<sup>97</sup> In modernist imagination, dirt is also aligned with those at the bottom “those who are in touch with sewers”, whose bodies are out of place.<sup>98</sup> In the gaze of the state, *Özgür Gündem* was considered to have a contagious quality like dirt. As “a matter that demanded definition so that the political and social boundaries it transgressed could be safely reestablished”<sup>99</sup> touching it transformed the bodies into bodies out of place. Its touch could contaminate the minds of people, thus the legal bonds of these bodies with the state became questionable. In this sense forms of state violence were mobilized for the re-constitution of the legal subject and the legal bond through making her submit to the mundane and random rituals of state.

The state considers us a direct part of the movement in Kurdistan. The reason why it represents us that way is because it wants to do so. They imagine that our correspondents, distributors and administrators have some sort secret information about the organization, that they know logistical, military tactics. Secondly the state adopted this strategy in order to delegitimize us. Therefore the place where we are interrogated and tried is the anti-terror police unit and the gendarmerie. (Journalist)<sup>100</sup>

The journalists working for *Özgür Gündem* were treated as terrorists. They were treated as terrorists because they were expressing ideas outside the

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<sup>97</sup> Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger : An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, (London: Routledge, 2003)

<sup>98</sup> Peter Stallybrass & Allon White *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* , (London: Cornell University Press,1986)

<sup>99</sup> Aretxaga, “Before the Law: The Narrative of the Political Unconscious in Basque Political Violence”, In *States of Terror*, p.185

<sup>100</sup> Devletin bizi Kürdistan'daki hareketin direkt bir parçası olarak görmesinin yanı sıra, öyle göstermesi, öyle göstermek istemesinden kaynaklanıyor. Sanılıyor ki bizim bütün muhabirlerimiz, dağıtıcılarımız, yöneticilerimiz müthiş örgütsel bilgilere sahipler, stratejik, lojistik, askeri bilgilere taktiklere sahipler. İkincisi, bizi meşru güzergahtan çıkarmak için bu tür bir yol tespit ettiler. Bu nedenle, yargılandığımız yer, soruşturulduğumuz yer terörle mücadele ve jandarma oluyor.

compass of the official ideology. They were reporting news other than the official news. People were expressing their opinions in the newspaper. In Turkey if you report any news outside the compass of the official ideology, if you publish the reality, then you would be treated as a terrorist. And they did so. Interrogating a journalist by JITEM (the officially 'secret' paramilitary force tied to the army in Turkey) is not something you can find in the rest of the world. (Journalist)<sup>101</sup>

The movement of *Özgür Gündem* became the subject of the MGK meetings on terror since it in turn terrorized the being of the state through its uncanny character. Talking about *Özgür Gündem* in the legal language of terrorism did not only code it, but also organized security practices that would be employed against it. The discursive strategies of the state determine certain domains of practices and techniques of control by reconstructing its object in ways compatible with such practices. These discourses of terrorism also introduced *Özgür Gündem* into the world filled with the fantasies of the state. In the symbolic space of the state, *Özgür Gündem* transfigured as a matter which contained in it something more than itself, which demanded special measures and attention. This more, this surplus refers to the terrorist being of the newspaper.

Whenever there is a briefing about the press, it is a warning targeting not only the dissident journals, but also others, to clean up their acts. In almost all meetings we were explicitly mentioned. In National Security Meetings or in the briefings to the media, the subject matter of the section on terrorism was *Özgür Gündem*. (Journalist)<sup>102</sup>

From the day on *Özgür Gündem* started its life there were assaults against it by both the printed and the audio-visual media actors. There were claims that our newspaper was a separatist terrorist press organization. It is quite clear

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<sup>101</sup> *Özgür Ülke* gazetesinin gazetecileri terörist muamelesi görüyorlardı. Terörist muamelesi görmelerinin nedeni, resmi ideoloji dışında düşüncelerin yazılmasıydı gazetede. Devletin resmi haberi dışında haber yapıyorlardı. İnsanlar düşüncelerini ifade ediyorlardı gazetede. Ama bu, resmi haberin, resmi ideolojinin dışında yapılıyordu. Türkiye'de resmi ideolojinin dışında haber yaparsanız, gerçekleri yazarsanız, size terörist muamelesi yaparlar. Yaptılar da. Gazetecinin JITEM'de sorgulanmasına dünyanın hiçbir yerinde rastlanmaz.

<sup>102</sup> Ne zaman basın konusunda brifing verilse bu sadece muhalif basına değil, diğer basına da kendine çeki düzen ver uyarısıdır. Biz açıkça zikrediliyorduk, neredeyse bütün toplantılarda. Milli Güvenlik Kurulu toplantılarında ya da basına verilen brifinglerde terör konusu *Özgür Gündem*'di.

that when you call someone a separatist terrorist it means s/he is to be killed or exterminated. In prime minister's own circular letters our newspaper was mentioned to be eliminated, exterminated. (Journalist)<sup>103</sup>

The separatist and subversive position of the newspaper in the gaze of the state opened up a space for counterinsurgency practices. Since *Özgür Gündem* was published according to the existing legal framework for the press, the alignment of it with terrorism extended state power to other domains which were previously unthinkable. It enabled the state to extend beyond its supposed rational-legal order, while stripping the object of its legal characteristics. In this sense, state opened spaces for manifold legal and extralegal practices to effectively prevent the circulation of the newspaper. The everyday circulation of the newspaper was transfigured into a domain of struggle between the paramilitaries and the newspaper community. In the face of such measures, to find the newspaper, to read it entailed extra energy and obstinate faith. Touching it required getting into a space where the likelihood of encountering the dark side of the state became a felt reality. Such affective density-surplus produced in and through its circulation beared witness to the irreducibility of *Özgür Gündem* to a commodity form. In the affective regime of the state, such irreducibility or surplus was translated as constitutive of the terrorist character of the newspaper. The historical meanings, experiences and affects produced around the newspaper, transformed it into a terrorist newspaper in the gaze of the state.

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<sup>103</sup> *Özgür Gündem* çıktığından bu yana, gerek yazılı gerek sözlü olarak bu gazeteye yönelik saldırılar hep vardı. Gazetenin bölücü, terörist yayın organı olduğu yolunda bir takım iddialar vardı. Çok açıktır; birine bölücü, terörist dediğin zaman, bu o öldürülecek, ortadan kaldırılacak anlamına gelir. Bizzat başbakanın genelgelerinde de bu imha edilmeli, ortadan kaldırılmalı gibi sözler geçti.



## From Newspaper Workers to Terrorists

The passage from newspaper to terrorist newspaper was paralleled with the respective change from newspaper worker to terrorist. In the first nine months of *Özgür Gündem*, nine of its journalists were killed by paramilitaries and none of their perpetrators were found. Besides, workers of the newspaper were constantly harassed, exposed to state surveillance, regularly interrogated, followed, sometimes got kidnapped, taken to a distant place, eyes blind, beaten up, put a gun on their heads, hanged down from a bridge, humiliated, told not to work in the newspaper anymore, and left there often unconscious and bleeding. Their bodies that were thought to be de-territorialized by the subversive and contagious character of *Özgür Gündem*, were re-coded again and again. The bodies became the surface for the violent inscription of attachments. Through the writing of the taxonomies of state onto the bodies, state purified those bodies from the dirt produced by *Özgür Gündem*, as the categorical transgression was sustained by violent transcription.

They collected our identity cards one by one and kept each one of us in her/his own department, thereby cut the communication between us. They did this when they raided the newspaper building. Thereafter they packed us into the bus one by one. We were not blindfolded until we got to the Gayrettepe police station. Yet they didn't treat us bad on the way, they didn't act like they were in a terror operation, as they call it. They were not showing off. They were not cursing or affronting us, as they would normally do. They were, in their own ways, acting polite, using phrases like 'would you come, would you sit down'. After arriving at Gayrette, they blindfolded us. After the identification process they took a group of friends elsewhere. They put the female friends in the detention room of the theft section of the second department, on the grounds that the political crimes department was full. They put us all in the same place. This is how they approached us: A Rambo type guy, trying to act like in an American movie, came in by kicking the door, and slapped a few male friends in the face. Then others acted as if they wanted prevent him from doing that by saying 'don't!' That first night after the identification process they released a group of friends, and put 6-7 of us in the cells. They distributed us to different cells. When I say I wasn't tortured I mean physical torture. Otherwise we had been subject to inhumane treatments

such as verbal threats, insults, remaining blindfolded, no toilet permission, etc. Yet I wasn't physically tortured. It was quite an interesting situation, since they didn't know what to ask. They made me write my CV. When they brought me the second time they asked about the PKK, as to whether it is a terrorist organization or not. They asked for written answers. When I said I don't consider the PKK a terrorist organization they turned jubilant as if they had succeeded in making me talk. So they went on 'what do you mean, etc.' I told them that I consider the PKK an armed organization struggling for the democratic rights of the Kurdish people. They responded 'is it not terrorist, etc.' As we were discussing about the demands and rights of the Kurdish people, their right to equal status with other nations, etc. they told me: 'Leave them aside, they are of the same blood with us, we know well how to treat them. Leave them alone, we will give them their rights. Let's come to the PKK problem. What is your relationship with the PKK? You are their newspaper; don't bring in the Kurdish people to this matter.' To tell the truth, they didn't know on what grounds they would carry on this interrogation. They accused us of being the PKK's newspaper, yet they didn't have any evidence. The only thing they asked about was a letter sent from Aydin prison. Şamil Batmaz, a prisoner in Aydin prison, sent this letter and it was addressed to my name. They asked me how I knew him, if there was an organizational tie between us, if he was the one in charge of the newspaper. Of course they knew that it was a reader's letter and that everyday we received several readers' letters. In general they put pressure on us to accept that we were the PKK's newspaper, claiming that Ocalan was writing in our paper with the pseudonym Ali Firat. Yet they couldn't support this charge of being the PKK's newspaper with concrete evidence.(Journalist)<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Tek tek kimliklerimizi alıp, herkesi kendi bölümünde toplayarak, iletişimimizi kestiler arkadaşlarla. Bunu gazetedeleyen yaptılar. Sonra bizi tek tek otobüslere doldurdular. Gözlerimiz açıldı Gayrettepe'ye gidene kadar. Fakat tavırlarında şey yoktu; herhangi bir siyasi ya da onların terör dediği örgütsel operasyon yaptıkları havası yoktu: küfür etmek, hakaret etmek. Biraz daha, kendilerince seviyeli davranıyorlardı: 'gelir misiniz, oturur musunuz.' Gayrettepe'ye götürüldüğümüzde herkesin gözlerini bağladılar. Kimlik tespitinden sonra, arkadaşların bir kısmını farklı bir yere götürdüler. Bayan arkadaşları siyasi şube de yer olmadığı gerekçesiyle ikinci şubenin hırsızlık bölümüne, nezarethanesine götürdüler. Hepimizi aynı yere koydular. Genel tavırlarında şey vardı; daha rambo vari, amerikan vari stili olan birisi gelip gidip, kapıyı tekmeleyip erkek arkadaşların bir kısmına tokat atmaya başladı. Diğerleri de sanki onu engellemek istiyormuş gibi davranıyordu; 'yapma' falan... O ilk gece, kimlik tespitinden sonra bazı arkadaşları bıraktılar ve bizi, sanırım 6-7 arkadaşı, hemen aynı gece hücrelere aldılar. Hepimizi ayrı hücrelere dağıttılar. İşkence görmedim derken, fiziki fiili işkenceyi kastediyorum. Öbür türlü, sözlü tehdit, baskılar, hakaretler, gözlerin bağlı kalması, tuvalete çıkarılmama... bu tür insanlık dışı uygulamalar oldu. Ama fiili işkence görmedim. Çok ilginçti, onlar da ne soracaklarını bilmiyordu. Bir özgeçmiş yazdırdılar. İkinci defa götürdüklerinde, PKK hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz, terörist bir örgüt mü, değil mi diye sordular. Üstelik bunu yazın dediler. Ben PKK'yi terörist bir örgüt olarak görmüyorum deyince, konuşturduk diye sevindiler. 'Ne demek istiyorsun' falan dediler. Ben dedim, PKK'yi Kürt halkının demokratik haklarının verilmesi için silahlı mücadeleye başvuran bir örgüt olarak görüyorum. 'Terörist değil mi' bilmem ne; böyle tartışmalara girdiler. Biz Kürt halkının taleplerini, haklarını onların da diğer ulusların sahip olduğu haklara sahip olması gerektiğini falan tartışırken (onlar) şey diyorlardı: 'onları bir tarafa bırakın, onlar bizim soydaşlarımız, biz onları severiz de döveriz de. Siz onlara ne karışyorsunuz, onların haklarını veririz

The terrorist being of the newspaper exposed its circulation to counterinsurgency techniques. Yet these techniques were excessive of the legality which was tried to be preserved and re-found. There was a transgression in the state's antiterrorism practices, since they were fueled by an "imaginary intimacy" with the terrorist in which paramilitaries mimicked the terrorist who got its power from the transgression of the law.<sup>105</sup> In imagining and desiring the terrorist, the state relieved its repertoire of practices from legal constraints. The journalists were lost or shot dead by people whose faces were not known, whose presence could not be documented, yet whose absent presence haunted the everyday life by generating horror and fear. As an organized mimesis the paramilitaries mimicked their fantasy of terrorism, since terror could only be presented in the imaginary relationship with the other. Yet, state practices, organized around imaginary terrorist bodies of the newspaper workers, reconfigured the socio-symbolic meanings of their bodies which produced real effects.

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siz PKK sorununa gelin, PKK ile ilişkiniz ne? Siz PKK'nin gazetesisiniz, Kürt Halkını da araya koymayın' falan gibi uç şeylerdi. Doğrusu, bu soruşturmayı neyin üzerine yürüteceklerin, onlar da bilmiyorlardı. Çünkü bizi PKK'nin gazetesi olmakla suçluyorlardı ama ellerinde bir delil yoktu. Bana sordukları tek şey Aydın cezaevinden gazetemize gönderilmiş bir mektup. Şamil Batmaz adında aydın cezaevinden bir tutsağın cezaevinden gönderdiği bir mektup var. Benim adıma gelmiş. 'Sen nereden tanışıyorsun? Örgütsel bir bağlantı mı? Gazeteyi o mu yönetiyor?' Onun okuyucu mektubu olduğunu, gazeteye hergün onun gibi onlarca mektup geldiğini kendileri de biliyorlardı. Ama genel olarak, Öcalan sizin gazetenizde Ali Fırat kod adıyla yazıyor, bu gazete PKK'nin yayın organıdır, bunu kabul edin gibi genel bir baskı vardı. Ama bunu somut bir şeye dayandırmıyorlardı.

<sup>105</sup> Aretxaga, "Intimacy of Violence." In *States of Terror*



Fig. 6<sup>106</sup>



Fig. 7<sup>107</sup>

When the ongoing attacks against *Özgür Gündem* journalists were asked to the Minister of State Yıldırım Aktuna, “he said ‘but you are doing something different. It appears as if your kidnapped friends are more likely to be terrorists than correspondents.’ (Journalist)”<sup>108</sup> The difference of their activities did not only stem from working in a newspaper like *Özgür Gündem*, but also from what happened materially to their bodies. The “as if” structure does not refer to a possibility, but an organizing principle in which the “as if” produces the reality of the terrorist bodies.<sup>109</sup> While telling an incident about one of the paramilitary attacks against himself, a distributor told me that he was able to survive the armed attack and went

<sup>106</sup> “Stop This Blood”, *Özgür Gündem*, 2 August 1992

<sup>107</sup> “Another bullet to Gündem, before Yahya’s blood is dried” *Özgür Gündem*, 9 August 1992

<sup>108</sup> ‘Siz de farklı bir şey yapıyorsunuz. Sanki o kaçırılan arkadaşlarınız muhabir değil de başka terörist olma ihtimali yüksekmiş gibi geliyor’ dedi.

<sup>109</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, (London: Verso, 1989)

to hospital, only to find that cops were already waiting for him there. In the hospital, one of the cops approached and told him “If you can survive such an attack, you should have had guerilla training.” As their death becomes the witness par excellence to the terrorist in them, surviving such attack also refers to the same bodily mixture. Paramilitary attacks not only applied power but produced it from the raw material of other bodies. In the violent staging of bodies or their sudden disappearance, the state showed its power to produce imaginary figures from real bodies and materials and vice-versa. In this way the bodies of the journalists were decomposed and re-composed both materially and symbolically.

In the aftermath of the killings of our correspondents, state representatives, in their statements, claimed that they were not really journalists but militants. Some of the columnists gave support to this claim. They wrote that in any case these people were not getting paid, didn't have any job contracts, and they were simply militants. Yet in that sense Gündem was not really different from other newspapers: journalists working there had job contracts and they were being paid in return for their labor. Therefore as a response to these claims we published the social security numbers of the killed friends and as well as the rest of the employees. We were together with these people through a job contract. Of course it wasn't a spiritless, dry relationship. There was a harmony of souls and minds between us and the employees. (Journalist)<sup>110</sup>

Not getting paid and not having a contractual relationship with the newspaper were one of the persistent arguments for aligning the activities of journalists with those of militants. The irreducibility of their relationship to the terms of capitalist relations of production, and the ties of affection produced among the newspaper workers, produced a surplus over the current topography of relatedness by modern capitalism and the nation-state. In order to work in such conditions of bodily vulnerability, one

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<sup>110</sup> Devlet yetkilileri, öldürülen muhabirlerimizden sonra, saldırıların ardından yaptıkları açıklamalarda, bunların esasen gazeteci olmadığı militan olduklarını iddia etmişlerdi. Kimi köşe yazarları bunu destekleyen yazılar yazmışlardı. Bunların zaten ücret almadıklarını, militan olduklarını, bir iş akitlerinin olmadıklarını yazıyorlardı. Oysa diğer gazeteler gibi, *Gündem* de çalışanlarıyla iş akti olan, belli bir sözleşmeyle gazetede emeklerini satan insanların bulunduğu bir işletmeydi, bir yayın organıydı. Bu yüzden, cevap olarak öldürülen arkadaşlarımızın ve diğer çalışanlarımızın sigorta sicil numaralarını yayınladık. Biz insanlarla iş akti temelinde bir iş birliği içerisindeydik. Tabii, ruhsuz ve kuru bir ilişki söz konusu değildi, çalışanlarımızla. Bir gönül birliği, bir anlayış birliği, bir düşünce akrabalığı içindeydik aynı zamanda.

should have a reason which when not articulated in the languages of capitalism and nation-state, becomes a problem. Thus, bearing the conditions that was made unbearable by the state itself was an important trope for the generation of the obstinate faith and affective surplus which transformed the newspaper worker into a militant, hence for the constitution of other ways of relatedness. The insistence of the journalists on the position they had even if it was made unbearable by all possible means, was a further source of anxiety.

### Of Bodies, Landscapes and Things

As *Özgür Gündem* circulated, not only the bodies but also the places it passed through were opened to re-inscription. The spaces of *Özgür Gündem*'s circulation and places of its stop, were seen as places to be annexed and reclaimed by the sovereign power through the optics and acoustics of surveillance. The social and material characteristics of the space were reconfigured in ways that opened it to the gaze and ears of the state. Through the gaze and the ear the state penetrated the sensory experience of the everyday. "You know, there was a park in front of our building. They built that park on purpose. It wasn't there before. They developed it after the newspaper. Then they brought the phone booths. They wanted it to be increasingly crowded so that undercover policemen can move around comfortably. (Journalist)"<sup>111</sup> The landscape around the building of *Özgür Gündem* was instrumentalized and marked as a tool for state control while supposedly disguising it. The newspaper's presence called for the presence of the state, which claimed and established itself through optical control of the space, and permanent surveillance and documentation of activities. Making its presence felt through everyday figures such as undercover police officers intensified the affective hold the state put on

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<sup>111</sup> Zaten önümüzde park vardı biliyorsunuz. O park da bilinçli olarak kuruldu. Daha önce yoktu. Gazete ile birlikte o parkı geliştirdiler. Sonra telefon kabineleri getirildi. Sürekli kalabalıklaşsın o kalabalığın içinde sivil polisler rahatlıkla hareket etsin diye.

reality. Recomposed as a technique of state control, the park constantly produced the sense of being watched. It became an artifact containing the gaze and the ear of the state. Yet together with the spaces of its circulation other materials and bodies through which *Özgür Gündem* circulated became the locus of state's reinscription.

The vehicle of the United Press (Distribution Company) was burnt down, not just once but several times. The vehicle destined for Diyarbakir was burnt down. The ones destined for Batman were burnt down. They wanted to make it clear that they would not allow the distribution of the newspaper; they would not let it enter the Region. When the United Press gave up, the newsagents also gave up distributing it. The main newsagents also gave up. They told that they couldn't go on with this job in a war environment. In the face of this situation, our solution was to transport the newspapers on our own, which was a very expensive method. We tried to organize the sale and the distribution via our branch offices in the Region, particularly the main one in Diyarbakir. We formed a network of distribution within the body of our main office. There were also journalist friends partaking in the distribution mission. After a while they were also attacked. Some got wounded, others were killed. Then the distribution business was over. Thereafter it was over. No single shop or kiosk accepted our newspaper. Then we shifted to the subscription method and also to one-to-one selling on the streets. In Diyarbakir it worked well. Then a new countermeasure emerged, they attacked even children with cleavers. Those youngsters distributing *Ozgur Gudem* were being chopped up with cleavers. (Journalist)<sup>112</sup>

Not just the newspaper workers and distributors, but also the readers were under threat. In Diyarbakir there were people brought down from buses and taken into custody just because they carried this newspaper. Even in Istanbul,

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<sup>112</sup> Birleşik basın arabası yolda yakıldı, bir defa değil, birden fazla yakıldı. Diyarbakır'ın dağıtımını yapan araba yakıldı. Batman'ın dağıtımını yapan arabalar yakıldı. Gazetenin dağıtılamayacağı, gazetenin bölgeye sokulamayacağı ve dağıtılamayacağı vurgulanıyordu. Birleşik Dağıtım bu işi bıraktıktan sonra, bayiler dağıtım işini terk ettiler. Baş bayiler de bıraktı bölgede. Savaş ortamında bu işi yapamayacaklarını söylediler ve terk ettiler. Bunun karşısında bizim önlemimiz, gazeteyi arabalarla, kendi imkanlarımızla göndermek, ki bu çok pahalı bir yöntemdi. Ve bölgedeki bürolarımız kanalıyla, özellikle Diyarbakır merkez büromuz aracılığıyla gazetenin satışını organize etmeye çalıştık. Merkez büromuz bünyesinde bir de dağıtım ağı kurduk. Dağıtım alanında görev alan, mesleği gazetecilik olan arkadaşlarımız da oldu. Bir müddet sonra bu arkadaşlarımız da saldırı altında kaldılar. Yaralananlar oldu, dağıtım yaparken öldürülenler oldu. Bayilere dağıtım süreci bitti. Bu aşamadan sonra bitti. Hiç bir bayi kabul etmedi. Bu kez abonelik sistemine geçildi ve ayrıca teke tek sokakta gazete satma süreci başladı. Diyarbakır'da bu iş iyi de işlemeye başlamıştı. Bu kez yeni bir akım çıktı, çocuklara karşı bile, özellikle, satırlı saldırılar dönemi başladı. *Özgür Gündem* gazetesi dağıtan gençler satırlarla doğrandı.

in certain districts we found out that newsagents were threatened not to carry and distribute our newspaper. (Journalist)<sup>113</sup>

The contact with *Özgür Gündem*, affected the bodily integration of other bodies, like the car that contained the newspaper, the shop that sold it, the distributor children and the readers who carried it. For instance, in Diyarbakır, Bulvar kiosk was burned down twice because of selling *Özgür Gündem*, leaving three deaths from the same family. The density of meanings and feelings attached to *Özgür Gündem*, repositioned the meaning of other related materials and their prescribed effects. Ferhat Tepe's father tells that when he was kidnapped, he had nothing with him except his pen and his camera. The pen used in the writing down the events and the camera to provide images, were tools for providing *Özgür Gündem* with its material substance. Their contact with *Özgür Gündem* transformed the technical and social qualities of these materials into its metonyms, whose technical and social significance had to be nullified. Such practices of inscription and encoding enabled the state to reorganize the circulation of *Özgür Gündem*, as well as the meanings and affects generated by its circulation. These practices, inscribed into the daily rhythm of *Özgür Gündem*, worked to code the newspaper as something that threatened the corporeality of bodies and things.

In 1993, the storm of violence reached its peak, due to what was known as “concept of 93” which prioritized the paramilitary violence over other means to cope with the Kurdish problem.<sup>114</sup> In the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December the building of *Özgür Gündem* was blown up. While Ersin Yıldız died in the explosion, the building together with

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<sup>113</sup> Sadece gazete çalışanları, dağıtıcıları değil, okurlar da tehdit altındaydı. Elinde bu gazete olduğu için Diyarbakır'da otobüsten indirilip göz altına alınan vardı. İstanbul'da bile biz dağıtımı kontrol ederken gördük ki, belirli bölgelerde gazete dağıtıcısı bayiler tehdit edilmiş ve gazeteyi getirmemeleri ve dağıtmamaları konusunda baskı altına alınmışlardır.

<sup>114</sup> Kurdish problem is a euphemism, a blanket term that covers the myriad forms of sorrow and joy produced in the course of a 30 years long struggle.



its technical equipments became useless. The ruin of the building stood as the primitive artifact of state violence. The histories and stories which could not take place in the official narrative could be read through these ruins. Or, like the building of *Özgür Ülke*, ruins stand for the lessons to be learned by being inserted in an exemplary space through violence.<sup>115</sup> It stands as the staging of state power and with its affective qualities; establishes the material culture for collective memory pointing towards the future.



Fig.8- The ruins of the building of *Özgür Ülke*<sup>116</sup> Fig.9 – The nex day of the bombing.<sup>117</sup>

In Turkey I recall only the destruction of the Tan printing house (in 1945). Other than that, what happened to us was very barbaric.... Around the newspaper building there are houses, and there is a dormitory next to it. The entire building blew up. It was a very professional barbarity. This c4 explosive is used in professional counter-guerilla, special warfare operations. They used this type of an explosive to blow up Ozgur Ulke. A barbarity experience never before in Turkey. (Journalist)<sup>118</sup>

<sup>115</sup> Feldman, *Formations of Violence*

<sup>116</sup> *Özgür Ülke*, 5 December 1994

<sup>117</sup> “This Fire burns you too.” Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Türkiye de Tan matbaasının tahrip edilmesi olayı var benim bildiğim. Onun dışında, bize yapılan çok vahşi bir olaydı... Etrafında evler var, öğrenci yurdu var bitişiğinde. Olduğu gibi havaya uçtu. Çok

I was home at the time the newspaper building was bombed. I dressed up quickly, got into the car and went there. Seeing the building in that shape truly shocked me. (Journalist)<sup>119</sup>

I was told on the phone about what happened. I know about the bombing incidents in Istanbul, because I am a correspondent and I go to investigate these types of incidents a lot. When I saw the building burning up in flames, and the concrete blocks scattered around, I was appalled. Since I am used to bombing incidents I am usually quite cool-headed. My first reaction is to grab my camera and to document what happened for the future generations. For the first time in my life, my hand couldn't reach my camera. My eyes brimmed with tears, but I couldn't cry. My entire body shivered. I started grudging. (Journalist)<sup>120</sup>

The cruel inscription of the shocking reality on the building was read through the bodily affects produced by the incident. Such affects of being shocked, horror and etc., gave the effects of state violence a place in the body. The lesson of the state gained persistence in memory by penetrating the sensual. Through violent appropriation of things state power enacted the normative disposition of things and senses. The political violence produced a material culture of its own read through affects produced in the face of the ruined bodies and things, tortured, burned down and blown up. The affective economy established around *Özgür Gündem* turned it into a metonym for the fate of the people, as another journalist points out the bombing of the building in following terms: “Why was Ülke (country) bombed? The country of Ülke was already being bombarded. It was being bombarded. This process began in the villages then it reached the building of HEP (People's Labor Party), then

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profesyonelce yapılmış bir vahşet. Bu C4 profesyonel kontrgerilla, profesyonel harp tekniğinde kullanılan bir malzeme. Ve *Özgür Ülke* bu tür bir bombayla havaya uçuruldu. Türkiye'de yaşanmamış bir vahşetti.

<sup>119</sup> Ben binanın bombalanış saatinde evdeydim. Hemen üstümü giyinip, arabaya atlayıp geldim. Binayı o şekilde görmem beni şoka soktu.

<sup>120</sup> Telefonla olayı öğrenmiştim. Geldiğimde İstanbul'daki bombalama türlerini falan az çok biliyorum. Çünkü muhabirim, bu tür olaylara sık sık gidiyorum. Binanın alev alev yandığını, bütün beton bloklarının ön tarafa sıçradığını görünce dehşete kapıldım. Bu tür olaylara çok sık gittiğimden soğuk kanlıyım. İlk olarak elim fotoğraf makinesine gider ve o olayı, o durumu belgelemek ileriiki kuşaklara aktarmak için. Ve hayatımda ilk kez böyle bir olay karşısında elim makineye gidemedi, ağlayamadım ama gözlerim doldu. Her tarafım ürperdi. Kinlendim.

to the newspaper.(Journalist)”<sup>121</sup> The life trajectory of *Özgür Gündem* was not only related to other incidents against the struggle of the Kurdish community, but also the memory and affects of these historical experiences were incorporated in its composition and daily rhythm.

#### Censorship and De-substantiation

While the state institutions tried to prevent *Özgür Gündem*'s circulation by all means, censorship as a legal means was also put into practice. The law officers started to intervene randomly but in a politically motivated manner, to the presentation and representation of news in *Özgür Gündem*. State legally and practically defined what could be shown, written down and narrated by simply literally prohibiting the representation to take place. The news and images, which were found inappropriate to the necessities of the war against terror, were not let to be put on the newspaper and their places remained blank. In this way, most of the critical events in the Kurdish Region were categorically and systematically excluded from getting into the channels of public knowledge and thus were reduced to non-existence.

According to the 108th article of the Turkish Constitution media cannot be censored, it is free. By law censor is not possible. But the technical meaning of censorship is to prohibit the dissemination of news and ideas outside the compass of the official ideology. During Yeni Politika period this was achieved. It was confiscated by police while it was still in the printing house. Then it was hustled off to the prosecutor. The blank parts of the printed legal documents, prepared beforehand, were filled with pen therein. And the newspaper was confiscated while it was still in the printing house. In that sense there was a censorship. They prohibited non-official statements to appear in the newspaper. As for the word ‘Censored’ printed in the place where the censored news was supposed to appear, I think it was a way of taking a stand. Although they celebrate the abolition of the censorship, although censor is outlawed in the Constitutional Law, for us there is censorship. And in order to explain this to the reader we decided to take such

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<sup>121</sup> Ülke neden bombalandı? Ülke'nin ülkesi bombalandı zaten. Bombalanıyordu zaten. Bu süreç köylerde başladı, HEP'in binasına geldi, sonra gazeteye geldi.

a stand..... This is a confession by the state that it cannot bear with the realities. (Journalist)<sup>122</sup>

The most important consequence of the statutory decree about censorship and deportation was that since the owners of the printing house wanted to avoid closing down of their printing house by the prosecutor, they were self-censoring. Several news and articles were self-censored by the owner, thus the newspaper was coming out half empty. Several words, names and concepts such as militant, guerilla, Kurdish province, could not appear in the paper. The owners were intervening. Before the prosecutor, they were carrying out this censorship business in order to avoid the legal sanctions. Afterwards these blank pages, columns could also be considered as excuses for censoring and confiscating the newspaper. (Journalist)<sup>123</sup>

What was at stake could be called a “war of words”, in which politically subversive signification was not allowed to take place. The “unofficial” expressions such as Kurdistan, guerilla and so on could not be written down, for in the official imaginary of the nation-state, neither such a place, nor such figures existed. These words had cultural and historical significance and political density. They were the words referring to a different socio-political world, which was regarded as subversive by the state. The images and narratives of the dirty war were denied representationality as the dirty war itself was denied. In this way, public secrecy was constituted through the direct control of the perceptual culture. The state’s institution of public secrecy

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<sup>122</sup> Türk Anayasasının 108. maddesine göre basın sansüre giremez, hürdür. Hukuken sansür mümkün değil. Yalnız sansürün teknik anlamı devletin resmi ideolojisi dışındaki bilgilerin düşüncelerin okuyucuya ulaşmasının engellenmesi. *Yeni Politika* döneminde bu gerçekleşti. Daha gazete matbaadayken polis tarafından el konuldu. Apar topar savcıya götürüldü. Daha önceden hazırlanan matbu evrakların boş kısımları elle dolduruldu. Ve hemen matbaadayken toplatıldı gazete. O anlamıyla, bizce sansür gerçekleşti. Çünkü gayri-resmi ifadelerin gazetede yer alması engellendi. Sansürlüdür ibaresinin kullanılmasına gelince, bu bence bir tavidir. Her ne kadar sansürün kaldırılması bayramı yapılsa da anayasanın 108. maddesinde yer alsa da bizce sansür vardır. Ve bunu okuyucuya anlatmayı bir tavır olarak belirledik... Devletin gerçeklere tahammül edemediğinin itirafıdır.

<sup>123</sup> Sansür-sürgün kararnamesinin en önemli sonuçları gazete basıldığı zaman matbaaların, matbaalarına el konulacağı düşüncesiyle savcılıklardan önce gazetede haberleri kendilerinin sansürlemesiydi. Matbaanın bu yasa nedeniyle matbaasına el konulacağı düşüncesiyle pek çok haber, pek çok makale matbaada sansürleniyor, gazete yarı yarıya boş çıkıyordu. Bir takım kelimeler, bir takım isimler, kavramlar; militan, gerilla Kürt ili türünden kavramların hiçbirisi gazete de basılamıyordu. Matbaacı müdahale ediyordu. Savcı tarafından okunmadan önce, yasanın getirdiği yaptırımlardan kaçabilmek için matbaacı bu işi yapıyordu. Daha sonra okunmayan yarı yarıya boş çıkan bu sütunlar savcılar tarafından toplatmaya konu yapılabiliyordu.

reveals the fact that truth-regimes are not only sustained by the discursive weight and efficiency of the official language but also through the careful control of words and signs. Writings and images in the newspaper produced archives for the past in historically and ideologically codified forms. The meanings of these archives were not fixed and their legitimacy was indeterminate, but the state did not let an archive of its horror to be established. Or the state horror could be referred to only in the form of an archive. To enforce censorship, the legal framework provided by the state multiplied the actors by disseminating the responsibility through different actors. These measures made things harder for the prevention of censorship for it was practiced by everyday actors in the printing houses.

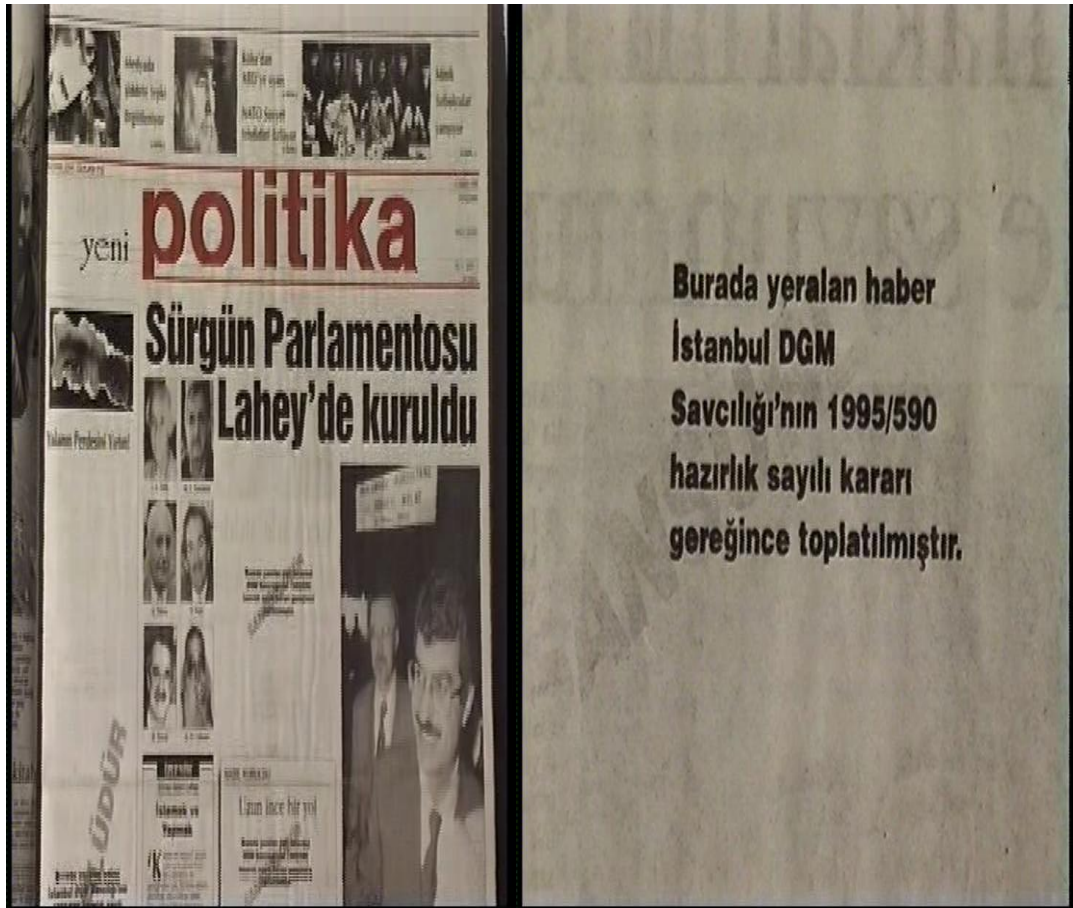


Fig.10-11 -Censored pages of *Yeni Politika*.<sup>124</sup>

<sup>124</sup> *Yeni Politika*, 13 April 1995

In fact this censorship is quite different from the censorship in the conventional sense. I think, in Turkey censorship is carried out in a number of different ways. First, they in a way announce that certain incidents are not to be investigated. Then the details of these incidents are laid out. Let's say they announce that no news regarding the Region would be published or even pronounced. But at some point let's say an entire town is burnt town, and then comes the second censorship. It is carried out by pronouncing specific names. They say nobody shall enter the town of Lice. It goes on step by step this way. The most efficient way is not letting the correspondent in there. The first degree censor we face is forbidding us from entering 'sensitive' places and state institutions. Then not letting us in the regions under operation. The others don't go in such areas anyway. If they still fail in preventing us, then they bring in various punishment methods against correspondents, including killing them. It is a quite different censorship. Because the state is in hurry, it can't delay solving these issues; it estimates that it would face bigger problems and damages in case this news is published. So it goes on step by step. In the final stage, it censors the news that it couldn't prevent beforehand through legal measures.(Journalist)<sup>125</sup>

There was a culture of censorship established around the newspaper which incorporated in itself different practices, beginning from not letting the newspaper workers into the sites where the state performs its ultimate horror, extending to impounding-confiscating the newspaper. Interestingly, practices of censorship and bodily violence were put into the same scale by the newspaper workers, blurring the line between the symbolic and material aspects of violence. Like the words and images witnessing to state violence were erased, the journalists as the actual witnesses were murdered. Certain stately practices accept no witness. This culture of censorship worked to deprive the newspaper of its substance, the graphic and visual qualities that made up the newspaper a medium in the first instance. At every level of

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<sup>125</sup> Sansür-sürgün kararnamesinin en önemli sonuçları gazete basıldığı zaman matbaaların, matbaalarına el konulacağı düşüncesiyle savcılıklardan önce gazetede ki haberleri kendilerinin sansürlemesi idi. Matbaanın bu yasa nedeniyle matbaasına el konulacağı düşüncesiyle pek çok haber, pek çok makale matbaada sansürleniyor, gazete yarı yarıya boş çıkıyordu. Bir takım kelimeler, bir takım isimler, kavramlar; militan, gerilla Kürt ili türünden kavramların hiçbirisi gazete de basılamıyordu. Matbaacı müdahale ediyordu. Savcı tarafından okunmadan önce, yasanın getirdiği yaptırımlardan kaçabilmek için matbaacı bu işi yapıyordu. Daha sonra okunmayan yarı yarıya boş çıkan bu sütunlar savcılar tarafından toplatmaya konu yapılabiliyordu.

making news, one was confronted either with state officials and paramilitaries or legal institutions and lawyers, who in their peculiar ways prevented the circulation of the news.

By transforming the material composition that gave form and meaning to the circulation of *Özgür Gündem*, the strategy of censorship aimed at transforming the social, political, symbolic and affective dynamics of the newspaper. As the capacity of the newspaper to signify diminished, so did its affective qualities and ability to produce social bonds. With the pages blanked, unable to signify and produce meaning, the circulation of *Özgür Gündem* did not mean anything. While on the one hand state prevented other bodies from engaging in a relation with *Özgür Gündem*, on the other hand it decreased the capacities of the newspaper to communicate, relate and engage. By intervening both to the objective characteristics of the newspaper and the subjective sense towards it, the state installed an affective economy of sorrow.

#### On Sorrow, Debt and Other Related Issues

The overall stately practices of disappearance, e.g. torture, murder, destruction of buildings and shops, burning down of the coffee houses, and the attacks against the distributors, organized around the newspaper constituted what can be called an economy of debt. In this economy, state violence is coded as a form of compensation for the injuries caused by the circulation of the newspaper. In his genealogy of punishment, Nietzsche locates “this idea of equivalence between injury and pain”<sup>126</sup> in the contractual relation between the creditor and the debtor, as the place in, which injury done is equal to pain to be suffered. “Precisely here, *promises are made*; precisely here, the person making the promise has to have a memory *made* for him: The debtor, in order to inspire confidence that the promise of repayment will be

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<sup>126</sup> Nietzsche, “Genealogy of Morals”, p.412

honoured, ...pawns something to the creditor by means of the contract in case he does not pay, something which he still ‘possesses’ and controls, for example, his body, or his wife, or his freedom, or his life. But in particular, the creditor could inflict all kinds of dishonour and torture on the body of the debtor, for example, cutting as much flesh off as seemed appropriate for the debt.’<sup>127</sup>

Today the mainstream Turkish newspapers such as Sabah, Hurriyet and others are dominated and controlled by the military. Compared to them, *Özgür Gündem* stands out with its perspective outside the official world. Therein lies its real value. It published news from across the country, yet particularly from OHAL (State of Emergency) Region. It wrote about struggles, clashes, state activities and guerilla activities. It tried to show and give voice to stories omitted and covered up by the mainstream media. Yet it paid heavily for doing that, very heavily. (Journalist)<sup>128</sup>

In exchange for the newspaper’s subversive activities, the bodies were extracted and territorialized by the state through the festive and careful infliction of pain.<sup>129</sup> There was a topology of sovereignty, like the cartography, setting the limits of all possible actions. With the invisible line, the *passengers* were marked. That is, their bodies and writings, souls and thoughts *were* in so far as they did not transgress the border. Failing in their obligations these bodies (as the body of debtor) were exposed to indignity, torture and pain, in order to pay the debt to the state (as the creditor). Beyond the line, at the very moment of transgression, the sirens were alerted. Through the infliction of pain, the state produced a memory for its subjects straining towards future. The mark and the wound became “obstacle to forgetting and the body

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<sup>127</sup> Nietzsche, “Genealogy of Morals”, p.412

<sup>128</sup> Bugün bir bütün olarak Türkiye gazeteciliğinin başlıca büyük gazeteleri, hürriyet Sabah vs. ana haber çizgisi olarak genelkurmayın denetimi altına girmiş durumda. Diğerleriyle kıyasladığımızda *Özgür Gündem*’in asıl değeri resmiyet dünyasının dışında kalan bir bakış açısına sahip olması. Türkiye’deki süreçleri, asıl olarak da OHAL’de cereyan eden mücadeleleri, çatışmaları, devletin ve Kürt gerillalarının faaliyetlerini duyurma amacını güttüğünü, büyük medyanın görmediği, duymadığı, duyurmadığı hikayeleri anlattığını, bunun da bedelini son derece ağır biçimde, son derece sert biçimde ödediğini söyleyebilirim.

<sup>129</sup> Veena Das, *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Ceontemporary India*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)



becomes memory.”<sup>130</sup> In this sense memory rather than operating as an inability to forget, operates as an active will not to forget the sovereign topology.

Yet, what turns these violent transactions into an economy of debt is the state itself. State violence before occurring as a violent transaction, is a mode of inscription.<sup>131</sup> It is a way of positioning and inscribing one’s place in the social and legal topography of the state. And “debt is the immediate effect or the direct means of the territorial and corporal inscription process. Debt is the direct result of inscription.”<sup>132</sup> In the face of the state, as the ultimate creditor, the subjects are the ultimate debtors. This is not because anyone is suspected from being a future bad debtor but “it is the bad debtor who must be understood as if the marks had not taken sufficiently ‘taken’ on him, as if he were or had been unmarked. He has merely widened beyond the limits allowed...to such a degree that it is necessary to reestablish the equilibrium through an increase in pain.”<sup>133</sup>

In other words, this relationship can be understood as one of debtor-creditor, only from the perspective and through the grammar of the state. The state presupposes and over-codes this relationship.<sup>134</sup> On the other hand, for instance, the trope of *bedel*, of which the journalist talks, refers to another frame in which these violent transactions are made meaningful. *Bedel* can be said to rest on the same equality (injury done is equal to pain to be suffered), yet the pain to be suffered is not the result of failing in obligations to the state but as a collective duty against the

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<sup>130</sup> Das, *Critical Events*, p.179

<sup>131</sup> Gilles Deleuze&Felix Guattari, *Capitalism and Schizophrenia : Anti-Oedipus* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983)

<sup>132</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p.190

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.* p.191

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

community in struggle. The difference between debt and *bedel* – which can be translated into English as compensation and cost, but also as reward- does not only refer to the creditor positions of the state and the community. It is not sufficient to point out that *bedel* is introduced to differentiate between the individual's debt to community and to the state. Even if both the state and the community colonize the worlds of individuals, they do it through different affects.

While the anthropological commentary on the debtor-creditor relation gives us valuable tools for understanding the underlying principles of state violence, it underestimates the affective dimension of the debt economy, which provides such economy with the power to reside in the bodies. In this sense we have to extend our discussion beyond the forms and logic of violent transactions between the newspaper community and the state, towards the affects and effects of these transactions on the bodily compositions of the newspaper community, the newspaper and the related materials. The debt economy operates through the production of sorrow and related affects of fear and horror. But for the time being let's go on with the discussion, little more.

“Through punishment of the debtor” writes Nietzsche, “the creditor takes part in the *rights of the masters*”<sup>135</sup> and “a sort of *pleasure* is given to the creditor as repayment and compensation, – the pleasure of having the right to exercise power over the powerless.”<sup>136</sup> According to the relation between transaction and inscription, compensation is a way of producing the powerless, coding them as powerless in the face of the state-creditor. In this, the construction of the legal subject is realized by ensuring the submissive position of bodies before the state. The rituals of inscription and transaction, including humiliation, getting damaged, production of wounds,

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<sup>135</sup> Nietzsche, “Genealogy of Morals”, p.413

<sup>136</sup> Ibid. p.413

getting beaten and etc., position the subjects in a powerless position both bodily and symbolically before the state.

Spinoza refers to a similar relation when he thinks of ruling in terms of the control of bodily powers to affect and to be affected.<sup>137</sup> He argues that the tyrants need sorrowful subjects in order to maintain their rule. Throughout his work, tyrant is one of the figures denounced by Spinoza, as the man “who needs (sad passions and sorrow) in order to establish his power.”<sup>138</sup> The slave is another, understood as the one with sad passions and sorrowful affects. “In despotic statecraft the supreme and essential mystery is to hoodwink the subjects, and to mask the fear, which keeps them down, ...so that men may fight as bravely for slavery, as for safety, and count it not shame but highest honor to risk their blood and lives for the vainglory of a tyrant.”<sup>139</sup> In the relationship between the tyrant and the slave, the sorrowful affects works as “complex(es) that joins desire’s boundlessness to the mind confusion, cupidity to superstition.”<sup>140</sup> Sorrow is the affect produced through encountering with other bodies which diminishes one’s bodily capacities to act, communicate, engage and organize. Sorrowfulness refers to being and feeling powerless both in thought and in body. In this sense the legal subject, is a powerless thus a sorrowful subject. The pain inflicted upon the body, leaves its marks not only onto the skin but into the body via the sorrowful affects- as those decreasing the bodily powers of one. The ultimate form of sorrow, in this sense, according to Spinoza is death, in which the body is fully encapsulated by sorrow. Death corresponds to the zero degree of bodily powers. The definition of death in terms of sorrowful affects, enable us to think state

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<sup>137</sup> Baruch-Benedict Spinoza, *Ethics* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 2001)

<sup>138</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* (San Francisco, City Light Books, 1988), p.25

<sup>139</sup> Deleuze, *Spinoza* , p.25

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.* p.25

violence in terms of bodily affects. State violence produces sorrowful affects at various intensities, by diminishing the capacities of bodies and faculties of mind. In this sense, through the production of sorrowful affects, state decomposed the bodily integrity of the newspaper community. It worked to diminish the powers of the bodies as well as the newspaper, by tearing them apart from what they could do. State's compensation practices, in this sense, enacted a normative topography of the social, in which the relations and positions of the bodies and materials were inscribed according to their affective compositions. Touching the newspaper made one a debtor whose body was to be exposed to various forms of cruelty. The debt could be understood as resulted from not submitting to the stately topography of things, bodies and affects.

In order to maintain its topography, state violence made a memory which strained towards future through such cruelty. Such a memory has a very similar structure to that of fear understood as "sorrow not constant, arising from the idea of something future or past."<sup>141</sup> Hobbes, in a similar fashion, emphasized the essentiality of fear for the maintenance of the covenant with the state. It is a powerful affect for controlling the subjects. Fear, as sorrow pertaining to future, enables the continuation of one's sorrowful, thus powerless, position. Through fear the normal disposition of things and bodies and the relations between them are maintained. Fear does not only stick together certain bodies in the face of imaginary enemies, but also it works to determine the domain of possible practices and engagements from the inside. In this sense it works also to tear apart certain bodies and things, ensure that they will remain distant by reminding the debt that will be created through getting into certain activities. In this sense, the memory can point to

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<sup>141</sup> Spinoza, *Ethics*, p.149

the future only through the affect of fear. Through the production of sorrow and fear, the state diminishes the capacity of things and bodies to relate to each and controls the domain of the possible relation they can enter into.

In this discussion, my intention was not to introduce a relationship of sequentiality and primacy between the production of affects and transactions of debt, but try to emphasize the work of affects in the economy of debt. I want to point towards another reading of the relationship between the state and its subjects, by emphasizing the significance of affectivity for understanding how the state strived to produce sorrowful affects around *Özgür Gündem* and coded it as a material that diminished the powers of the bodies. In this sense, the prevention of the circulation of the newspaper, as well as attacks against the journalist and distributors can be understood as the ways through which the state produced sorrow and fear. In all ways, state strived to inscribe the position of the newspaper community as powerless and sorrowful. Not only by inflicting pain as their debt to be paid for their impudence, but also by preventing the newspaper's circulation, the state established an economy of sorrow around *Özgür Gündem*.

## CHAPTER 4

### SUBLIMATION AND ECONOMY OF JOY

While the stately partition of the sensible enabled legal and extra-legal measures to be taken, to prevent the circulation of Özgür Gündem, the circulation of the newspaper established cartography of the socio-political landscape. The movements of the bodies were reorganized in this topology via the production of affects, in ways that enabled the circulation of the newspaper. The sovereign order of things and bodies were challenged as the dominant chain of signifiers, since several bodies were writing down, picturing, distributing and carrying with them the quotidian signs and stories of the criminality of the state. The circulation of Özgür Gündem simultaneously signalled and produced a crack on the surface of the social as the inherent limit of the nation-state to assume a totalizing positivity.<sup>142</sup> For, the newspaper not only signalled a reconfiguration of the sensible, by challenging the existing separation of whose voice can be heard and whose not, but also as a result of its affective density in everyday practices it effectively reorganized them.

In a parallel fashion, the everyday making out and distribution of the newspaper, despite the state's effort to place it into an economy of sorrow, underlined another affective economy and material topography that enlivened the newspaper. Of course, the state, through technologies of violence practiced at the level of the body was an important actor in the organization of affective relations and reproduction of legal bonds that are damaged. The economy of sorrow worked to control the flow of things and bodies as well as forms of relating to each other, by

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<sup>142</sup> For a discussion on the relationship between marginalized communities and the limits of nation-state's signification capacities see *Slavoj Žižek, The Ticklish Subject : The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London: Verso, 1999) and Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* ( New York: Routledge, 1994).

diminishing the affective capacities of the newspaper as well as the bodies touching it. Yet the bodies and other materials that engaged in the production and circulation of the newspaper affected and were affected by each other in ways that undermined the legal domains of practice and the state's hold over bodies. The supposed affects of legal and paramilitary practices were countered, challenged and subverted by and through the establishment of an economy of joy that provided the materials, bodies and sense of collectivity with the power to endure in the face of the sovereign power and to persevere in their struggle.

Distributors did not have any means of protection against any kind of attack. They were being told that the newspaper was forbidden. However, they were obstinately selling their newspapers. Under any circumstances! Though the cops, paramilitaries hit them, arrested them, insulted, shot, threatened and tortured them, every time, the distributors were doing their jobs with more obstinacy, enthusiasm and resentment.<sup>143</sup>

The violent transactions between the state and the newspaper community that composed of interrogations, being targeted, getting tortured, which were supposed to tear them apart from the newspaper by coding it as harmful, intensified the attachments of these targeted bodies to the newspaper. For, the bodies that were in touch with the newspaper were not only the address of sorrowful affects but also joyful ones. Rather than decreasing the affective capacities of the newspaper, joyful affects work by increasing its material capacities to relate and engage like the other materials and bodies touching it. The antagonistic character of the newspaper, in this sense refers to this quality of the newspaper as a material whose circulation on the surface of the social and whose touch produce on materials and other bodies the relations and relational practices of antagonism that it is supposed to simply

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<sup>143</sup>Dağıtımçıların, herhangi bir saldırı karşısında korunma araçları yoktu. Onlara, gazetenin 'yasak' olduğunu söylüyorlardı. Ama onlar inatla gazetelerini satıyorlardı. Hem de her şart altında! Polisler, Jitemciler, kontralar ne kadar vursalar da, göz altına alsalar da, küfür etseler de, silah sıksalar da, tehdit etseler de, işkence etseler de, dağıtımçıları her seferinde daha bir inatla, şevkle, kinle işlerine sarılıyorlardı. Quoted in Karaca, *Ape Musa'nın Küçük Generalleri*, p. 51

represent. In this sense everyday practices that gave rise to the publication and circulation of the newspaper, became the sites where the senses of perseverance, obstinacy, respect, hate, resentment were also produced in an antagonistic way, meaning these emotions worked to align the newspaper with bodies and other materials in a joyful way that increase their bodily capacities.

These affects, however, were not contingent, individual and ahistorical but related to the collective employment of relational practices of antagonism, which in this context could be defined as “to publish and distribute the newspaper every day, even as the state strives to prevent it by all means.” In and through such a plot, different practices and experiences, manifold temporalities and spaces, various images and stories were related together and incorporated in the affective qualities of the newspaper. From photographing a burned down village to coming to the office safely, from taking the newspaper to Kurdish cities under the state of emergency rule to distributing them inside the city, became a series of deadly encounters staged within the space of the sovereign. These manifold quotidian practices and affective experiences were accumulated by Özgür Gündem in the course of its circulation. And such accumulation increased the powers of the newspaper to amplify everyday practices. The circulation of the newspaper, therefore, carved out a space full of tactics which undermined the legal and paramilitary measures and the affective economy of the state to silence it, in which the space of state was “escaped without leaving it.”<sup>144</sup>

Coming from the Pirinçlik military-station, there is a village, two three kilometers away (from my destination). We were carrying the newspapers in packages, which were taped. I left them on the side of the road, and then I asked a taxi driver coming from the police-station if there was any ID control on the road. He replied ‘there is, why’. I said ‘I do not have an ID with me.’ Anyway the car left, but a military car came right away. ‘Get in the car’ he

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<sup>144</sup> Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p.xiii



told me. ‘Why should I, I had been late for work.’ ‘Get in the car’, he said. Two soldiers took me in the arms. ‘So, you asked if there was an ID control or not.’ ‘Commander I didn’t ask anything like that’ I said. ‘I have an ID, why would I ask something like that?’ He said, ‘empty your pockets.’ I did. He couldn’t find anything. ‘Where are you going?’ he asked, ‘to my aunt’ I replied. ‘Which village?’, ‘Bilikan.’ However, there was no Bilikan village in that direction, they do not know that. They took my statement for a second time, couldn’t find anything and let me go. I got directly back to the newspapers. I decided to stop a dolmus (mini-bus) and take the newspapers with me and go. I stopped a dolmus. Then we stopped at the military-station, a soldier checked the IDs, another soldier saw the packages but did not opened them. He asked the driver, ‘what is in these packages?’, the driver said; ‘Ask to that friend’, I said, ‘slippers.’ ‘Go on’, he said. Then we arrived at Diyarbakır. As I was getting off, the driver asked me ‘what is in the packages?’, I answered ‘newspaper.’ He didn’t believe me. We opened the packages and looked inside; he was shocked when he saw *Özgür Ülke*.(Distributor)<sup>145</sup>

During that period, this how we were bringing the newspaper into the city: 250 newspapers were being carried by the flight from Istanbul. This was intentional. For there were cops at the airport with us who were also waiting for the newspaper. After signing the delivery notice and taking the newspapers, they were confiscating the newspapers no matter there was a confiscation order or not. Of course what we did was a tactic. In some sense we were casting them a bait. Later on, a distributor friend who took newspapers from Urfa was to bring them to the Diyarbakır border and we were to meet him there with a sidecar motorcycle.(Distributor)<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Ben Pirinçlik karakolundan gelirken, iki üç kilometre kala bir köy var. Gazeteleri koliyle getiriyoduk, koliyle bandajlamıştık. Yolun kenarına bıraktım. Ondan sonra, Pirinçlik karakolundan gelen bir taksiye sordum yolda kimlik kontrolü var mı diye. ‘Var, niye?’ dedi. Dedim ‘kimliğim yok.’ Neyse araba gitti, arabanın gitmesiyle askeri bir araba geldi mi. Bana dedi ‘bin lan arabaya.’ ‘Ne bineyim ben işe geç kalmışım.’ Dedi ‘bin arabaya.’ İki asker koluma girdi. ‘E sen demişin yolda kimlik kontrolü var mı yok mu.’ Dedim ‘komutanım ben söylememişim öyle bir şey.’ ‘Benim kimliğim var niye diyeyim öyle bir şey.’ Dedi ‘cebinde ne varsa boşalt.’ Boşalttım. Cebimden bir şey çıkaramadım. Dedi ‘nereye gidiyorsun’, ben dedim ‘teyzeme.’ ‘Hangi köye?’, ‘Bilikan.’ Halbuki o tarafta Bilikan köyü yoktu, asker bilmiyor. İkinci defa ifademi aldılar, bir şey bulamayıp bıraktılar. Ben gerisin geri gazetelerin başına döndüm. Düşündüm. Kısa yoldan dolmuşa atayım gazeteleri, gideyim dedim. Bir dolmuş durdurdum. Sonra karakolun oraya geldik, asker kimliklere baktı, kolileri görmüş bir asker, açmamış. ‘Kolilerin içinde ne var?’ dedi şoföre, şoför dedi ‘arkadaşa sor’, ‘ben terlik var’ dedim. ‘Devam et’ dedi. Sonra Diyarbakır’a vardık, inerken bir durum oldu şoför dedi ‘ne var kolilerin içinde?’, dedim ‘gazete.’ Adam inanmadı. Sonra açıp baktık, adam *Özgür Ülke*’yi görünce şok oldu.

<sup>146</sup> O dönem gazeteyi şehre şöyle sokuyorduk: İstanbul’dan 250 gazete uçağa veriliyordu. Bu bilerek yapılıyordu. Çünkü bizimle birlikte, hava alanında polis de gazeteyi bekliyordu. Bizim teslim alma belgesini imzaladığımızı gördükten ve biz gazeteyi teslim aldıktan sonra gazetenin toplatma kararı olup olmadığını bakmadan el koyuyorlardı. Tabii bu bizim uyguladığımız bir taktikti. Bir nevi polise yem atıyorduk. Daha sonra Urfa’dan gazeteyi alan bir dağıtımçı arkadaşımız otobüsle gelip Diyarbakır girişinde gazeteleri indirecek ve biz de onu sepetli bir motosikletle karşılayacaktık. Quoted in Karaca, *Ape Musa'nın Küçük Generalleri* , p.186

Everyday five newspapers arrived through cargo and we left them on the table in the distribution company. When the press department police came we told them: 'you are late, newspapers arrived and we distributed them'. And again we brought the newspaper to Diyarbakır through different ways and distributed them there. We even took back two of the five newspapers on the table as protocol by saying; 'we do not have today's issues.' (Distributor)<sup>147</sup>

According to De Certeau, the concept of tactics enable us to understand how the weak and/or subjected ones carry out operations of their own rather than passively conforming to the rules and norms of the powerful, or in other words how they divert, subvert or simply render inoperative "the laws, practices, and representations that were imposed on them by force.." <sup>148</sup> A tactic is a way of manipulating the existing conditions in favor of one's own and making use of every opportunity in order to accomplish the assumed clandestine activities. While strategies "postulate a place that can be delimited as its own and serve as the base from which relations with an exteriority composed of targets and threats (in our case the newspaper journalists, distributors, readers)...can be managed"<sup>149</sup>, "the space of a tactic is the space of the other...it(tactic) is a maneuver within the enemy's field of vision"...it operates in isolated actions...takes advantages of opportunities...creates surprises...In short, a tactic is an art of the weak."<sup>150</sup> The strategies that divide space to "make a panoptic practice possible...(in which) to be able to see is also to be able to predict, to run ahead of time by reading a space" while tactics rely on "a clever utilization of time, of the opportunities it presents and of the play that it introduces into the

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<sup>147</sup> Günde beş adet gazete kargo ile gelirdi ve dağıtım şirketimizdeki masanın üzerine bırakırdık. 'Basın Masası' polisleri geldiğinde, 'Siz geç kaldınız, gazete geldi ve dağıttık' derdik. Ve farklı yollardan gazeteyi yine Diyarbakır'a sokup dağıtımını yapardık. Hatta o masaya koyduğumuz beş adet gazete içerisinden de 'Elimizde bugüne dair gazete yok' diyerek iki tane gazeteyi de protokol olarak geri alırdık. Quoted in Karaca, *Ape Musa'nın Küçük Generalleri* , p.186

<sup>148</sup> De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p.32

<sup>149</sup> Ibid. p.36

<sup>150</sup> Ibid. p.37

foundations of power.”<sup>151</sup> The tactics made the dominant order of time and space “function in another register.”<sup>152</sup>

The repertoire of tactics organized around the circulation of the newspaper that were based on the intimate knowledge of the socio-political topography, accumulated through time and acquired through daily stories, modes of witnessing, and quotidian experiences. These practices called tactics, however, were not only the signs of agency of the weak, that they do not necessarily comply with the formal and legal disposition of things and bodies but also invented tools for making use of the available gaps in the system. More importantly, these quotidian tactics were played out in the same space which conceived of the newspaper as something that should be protected from the capture of the state. In this manner, they witnessed to the existence of another register at play in the organization of the spatio-temporal and affective sense of everyday experiences. Like the visual and graphic configuration of the newspaper, these practices, too, demonstrated “a gap in the sensible itself” which “makes visible that which had no reason to be seen; [and]...places one world in another.”<sup>153</sup> Such constitution and demonstration of another world, “challenges the hegemony of the state as the only giver of values.”<sup>154</sup> From the perspective of the newspaper community, the newspaper as a material was embedded in a dissimilar moral and value economy as the affective relationship with the newspaper experienced in different terms. It is a world in which the newspaper changed the position and composition of the bodies and things, also the world in which they were posed and posited. In this world the affects of sorrow and horror, are countered by

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<sup>151</sup> De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p.39

<sup>152</sup> Ibid. p.32

<sup>153</sup> Jacques Ranciere, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics* (London: Continuum, 2010), p.38

<sup>154</sup> Das, *Critical Events*, p.114

the affects of joy, enthusiasm, hate and love, which not only worked to increase the bodily capacities of one's, but also allowed a sense of community to be constituted and persevered.

#### Newspaper as Sublime

As a response to the state and paramilitary practices targeting its workers and readers, in an open letter to state officials, the workers of *Özgür Gündem* wrote “You can kill us but you can't silence *Özgür Gündem*.”<sup>155</sup> *Özgür Gündem*, was regarded as the voice of the people, which demands the mobilization of bodies and the expenditure of their energies for its circulation. The state's partition of the sensible, on the other hand, also depended on a “certain division of voice” as mere voice (phone) which is capable of only expressing pleasure and pain on the one hand and speech (logos) which “does not just give vent to feelings but introduces a standard of judgment” like “I have been wronged.”<sup>156</sup> In this way the newspaper introduced a split on the surface of the social as well as in itself, in which it was regarded as a voice to be eliminated and as a voice that had to be assumed as one's collective voice. In the way of its circulation, the newspaper incorporated in itself not only the blood and wounds of mutilated/disfigured bodies but also their joy, obstinacy, and perseverance. The everyday material consistency and circulation of the newspaper mimics the obstinate faith of the people in their struggle. In this reconfiguration of the socio-political topography, *Özgür Gündem* gained an existence which had “another reality and value that exceeds our individual intensions. (Journalist)”<sup>157</sup>

First day I suffered a theft attack. We left home and were on our way to the newspaper. Nihat told me ‘there are Hizbullah guys; they either call you to the back streets or into the buildings. Never and ever do that.’ As I said I was

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<sup>155</sup> “Bizi öldürtebilirsiniz, ama Gündemi susturamazsınız.”

<sup>156</sup> Mladen Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2006) pp.105-106

<sup>157</sup> “Tek tek bizim niyetlerimizi aşan bir başka gerçek ve bir başka değerdi.”

9 years old. I had the money I made after selling newspapers in my pocket. I had fabric trousers on me and my pocket was puffed up because of the money in it. While I was walking, someone called me ‘come here, how much is the newspaper?’ ‘8.000 liras’, ‘I will buy two for 15.000 liras, ok?’ I said no, I don’t accept. He stopped for a moment. ‘Ok’ he said, ‘come, I will give you. My sister's house is in the first floor. Let’s go there and I will give you your money.’ I approached the door, someone shouted 'don't go in'. I said ‘I am not coming.’ He said ‘come son, I am not from Hizbullah. I am not going to beat you.’ I went in, he knocked the door, and a little girl appeared and said ‘they are not home.’ ‘There is a key on the electric transformer, let me lift you up, i can't reach there.’ He lifted me up. I had left the newspapers on the floor. As soon as he lifted me up, he took my money and escaped. I shouted. I came out of the door of the building. ‘He stole my money, he stole my money.’ People gathered around, asked me ‘what happened.’ I said ‘he stole my money.’ They looked at the newspapers, it is *Yeni Ülke*. They took me inside a butcher's shop. ‘How much was your money?’ Then 354.000 liras. ‘Ok’ they said, ‘don't cry, you are a distributor of *Yeni Ülke*.’ And they left me there in the butcher's shop. The young guys there, about 19-20 years old, (said) ‘Go and tell in the tea house, the money of the *Yeni Ülke* distributor had been stolen, ask them whatever they can give.’ Then they brought and counted the money: 360.00 liras. They gave it to me. They also told me ‘If this were another newspaper, we would not have collected this money, you are the distributor of our newspaper.’ (Distributor)<sup>158</sup>

The attribution of a collective criminal agency to the newspaper community by the imaginary of the terrorist newspaper “was inverted into collective action directed against the legalities and technical rationalities that sought to isolate and segregate”

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<sup>158</sup> İlk gün ben bir hırsızlık saldırısına uğradım. Ben gazeteye giderken ilk gün, evden çıkmışız. Nihat bana diyor, ‘hizbullahçılar var, bunlar seni ya sokak aralarına çağırır, ya da bina içlerine, sakın olmaya ki sokak aralarına bina içlerine gitmeyesin.’ Dedim ya 9 yaşındayım. Gazetelerin paralarını topladım, cebime bırakmışım, kumaş pantolon. Cep şişmiş orada. Yolda geliyorum, biri dedi ‘gel buraya gazete ne kadar?’ ‘8 bin lira’ dedi, ‘iki tane alıyorum 15 bin lira olur mu?’ Ben de dedim ‘ben öyle vermem’, dedim ‘yok.’ Durdu, durdu. ‘Tamam’ dedi, ‘gel vereyim. Ablamın evi birinci katta. Gel oraya varalım, senin parayı vereyim.’ Ben binanın kapısına girdim. Biri bağırdı ‘girme.’ Ben dedim ‘ben gelmiyorum.’ Dedi ‘gel oğlum ben hizbullahçı falan değilim. Seni dövmeyeceğim.’ Gittim kapıyı çaldı, küçük bir kız geldi dedi ‘evde yoklar.’ ‘Elektrik trafosunun üstünde anahtar var, gazeteci gel seni kaldırayım benim elim yetişmiyor.’, beni kaldırdı. Ben gazeteyi yere bırakmışım. Beni kaldırmasıyla paramı alıp, beni bıraktı. Ben bağırdım. Binanın kapısına gelmişim. ‘Paramı çaldı, paramı çaldı.’ Ordakiler hep toplandı, dedi ‘ne oldu?’ Dedim ‘paramı çaldı.’ Adamlar baktı *Yeni Ülke*. Beni kasabın içine aldılar: ‘paran ne kadar?’ O zaman 354.000 lira. ‘Tamam’ dediler, ‘sen ağlama, sen *Yeni Ülke*’nin dağıtımçısısin.’ Hemen orada beni kasaba bıraktılar. Oradaki gençler 19-20 yaşlarında. ‘Gidin işte kahvede söyleyin *Yeni Ülke*’nin dağıtımçısının parası çalınmış kimin gönlünden ne koptuysa.’ Sonra getirdiler parayı, topladılar 360.000 lira, bana parayı verdiler. İşte verirken de, ‘başka bir gazete olsaydı bu parayı toplamazdık, sen bizim gazetemizin dağıtımçısısin’ dediler.

the newspaper from its community base.<sup>159</sup> The contagious character of the newspaper in the legal topography of the state was challenged by practices of organized touch that elevated the newspaper to the position of a sublime object. “Sublimation ought to be thought not as the substitution of a culturally valorized object for one that is immediately gratifying...but as a changing of the object itself.”<sup>160</sup> This shift in the object was accomplished by separating the newspaper, from the space of subject who is supposed to know, as the Other, the State.<sup>161</sup> The circulation of the newspaper gave its law to itself, touching the newspaper is endured without seeking any validation from the state’s authority. Through sublimation is not understood “as the elevation of an ordinary object to the dignity of the Thing”<sup>162</sup> but as the constitution of a socio-symbolic space of practices, the newspaper was transformed into something that was indispensable for the endurance of the self and sense of collectivity. The affects stemming from sublimation was not passive; they arouse themselves “through the gift of love”<sup>163</sup>, making the newspaper something more than itself, something from which the practices of the newspaper community derived their unstoppable force.

The experience of the sublime rests on a feeling of pleasure, which comes after the sense of displeasure. In this sense it is the pleasure stemming from the sense of power in the midst of an experience of powerlessness. Targeted, shot dead, tortured and kidnapped by paramilitaries, disappeared suddenly, the bodies

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<sup>159</sup> Allen Feldman, *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), p.89

<sup>160</sup> Joan Copjec, *Imagine There is no Women: Ethics and Sublimation* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2002), p.39

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid. p.38

<sup>163</sup> Ibid. p.40

encountered something joyful in the newspaper, through its gift of love. The bodily capacities to endure physically and affectively their exposure to state violence were increased. The omnipresence of paramilitary violence surrounding the space of the newspaper's circulation, was then countered by the collective expenditure of bodily powers alongside the circulation of the newspaper. "The object is apprehended as sublime with a pleasure that is possible only by means of a displeasure."<sup>164</sup> Since it was not an ordinary material, the wrongs done to the ones who were in contact with the newspaper, mobilized the collective body of the community in manifold ways. The bodies and things which became targets through their contact with the newspaper were reincorporated into the collective networks of community, through practices of solidarity. The individual damages were compensated collectively. The distributor of their newspaper was not like the others, he was not there for the money, even if he was there because of money. His was not an easy presence. He was carrying the voice of the people on his body, which made him vulnerable. He was carrying that voice still, and this made him valuable.

We cry out loudly 'Özgür Gündem, Özgür Gündem. Newspaper.' It is not like (selling) cotton candy. There is self-confidence. Being with those children, you get courage, power, morale and the way people look at you changes. The respect you don't get outside, you get it there. The respect you get there is very different from the one you get when you sell cotton candy, paint shoes, or sell dessert. I mean while you don't get any respect, while people do not see you, while you are nothing, when you start newspaper distribution, you become a hero in people's eyes. And they see you like that. Many of the people already address you like that. They show you this with their attitudes, mimics and expressions. You realize this. That look of people at you gives you power, morale. And with that morale, with that power you embrace it more.(Distributor)<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Alenka Zupancic, *Ethics of The Real: Kant, Lacan* (London: Verso, 2000), p.150

<sup>165</sup> Bas bas bağıyoruz Özgür Gündem, Özgür Gündem diye. Gazete diye. Pamuk şeker (satmak) gibi değil. Özgüven var. O çocuklar arasında cesaret alıyorsun, güç alıyorsun, moral alıyorsun ve insanların sana bakışı değişiyor. Dışarıda görmediğin o saygınlığı orada görüyorsun. Hani bir pamuk şeker sattığında, boya yaptığında, tatlı yaptığındaki saygınlıkla, oradaki saygınlık çok farklı. Yani

From the perspective of the nation-state the circulation of the newspaper produced anxiety. From the perspective of the newspaper community, the proximity of the newspaper produced respect, understood as “a feeling which indicates the presence of the moral law, the subject’s close encounter with the moral law.”<sup>166</sup> In the gaze of the community, working in the newspaper changed the symbolic status of their bodies and the corresponding feelings derived from such activity. Respect derives from the “exemplary case of ethical action.”<sup>167</sup> And such exemplary spaces are the places in which the axioms of practices are transmitted so that it gains a collective meaning and iterability. “In any context where it exerts its force, the example is characterized by the fact that it holds for all cases of the same type, and at the same time, it is included among these. It is one singularity among others, which, however, stands for each of them and serves for all...Neither particular nor universal, the example is a singular object that presents itself as such, that shows its singularity.”<sup>168</sup> And through such iterability, these affects, like the discourses, gain a materializing quality that makes the surface of the bodies.<sup>169</sup>

Working in and reading the newspaper, were imbued with ethical meanings which referred to the underlying collective codes of the newspaper community that coordinated their affective experiences. As an “objective feeling” that does not designate anything in the subject but in the object, respect “indicates that we have

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orada saygınlık yokken, insanlar görmezken, seni görmüyorken, sen bir hiçken, gazete dağıtımına başladığında insanların gözünde sen bir kahraman oluyorsun. Ve onlar seni böyle görüyorlar. Halktan zaten bir çok kişi sana öyle hitap ediyor. Sana bunu tavırlarıyla, mimikleriyle, söylemleriyle yansıtıyor. Bunu fark ediyorsun. İnsanların sana o bakışı, güç veriyor, moral veriyor. Bu moralle, bu güçle sen daha bir sahipleniyorsun.

<sup>166</sup> Alenka Zupancic, *Ethics of The Real*, p.140

<sup>167</sup> Ibid. p.144

<sup>168</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), p.9

<sup>169</sup> Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993)



come near to the object (designating the extimate place of our jouissance.)”<sup>170</sup>

Respect, that “irreducible quantum of affect”<sup>171</sup>, increased the bodily capacities of the ones that worked in the newspaper, it gave them morale and power required for engaging in such activities. Since they were carrying the newspaper, as the voice of the people, which told the experiences of the ones who had been denied voice, which thus produced a sense of collective solidarity, these people were elevated to the level of heroes, of those mythic figures responsible for the perseverance of the sense of community. The recurring discourse of heroism, however, was not only a way of appreciating the courage of the newspaper workers but was also a powerful tool for the appropriation of bodies by the community. Such a discourse of heroism worked to produce bodies in the image of militants and led to the reorganization of bodily senses and capacities in that respect. Like the newspaper, the composition of bodies was transfigured also by the collective affective investments of the community to increase their capacities to endure in the face of devastating paramilitary violence.

#### Newspaper Workers as Militants

Since object and subject are indispensably mediated, as Hegel argued, the shift in the position of the object is also accompanied by a respective shift in the subject’s position.<sup>172</sup> What is at stake is not the same object seen from two different perspectives. Since there is no common ground between these two perspectives, which can be mediated or sublated by a third term, the shift in the ontological character of the object is paralleled by a shift in the subject’s position.<sup>173</sup> Like the split in the object of sublimation, the subject is also passed through dramatic

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<sup>170</sup> Zupancic, *Ethics of The Real*, p.145

<sup>171</sup> Ibid. p.143

<sup>172</sup> Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit* (London: Cornell University Press, 1980)

<sup>173</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2006)

transformation, when it metamorphoses herself at the moment of its encounter with the real of paramilitary practices.<sup>174</sup> As the carriers of the sublime object *Özgür Gündem*, the workers of the newspaper were treated as the workers of the community. Rather than being regarded as the contaminated bodies of terrorists which had to be kept separate, carrying the newspaper enabled the formation of social intimacy between the readers and the workers. The relationship between the workers and the readers could not be reduced to monetary transactions but includes giving presents, chatting about life, providing protection and help when required. The circulation of the newspaper, therefore, produced a world of socio-cultural intimacy between the bodies “as a set of known and shared practices and life-forms that define a sense of belonging and likewise for which the group is stereotyped and condemned from position outside.”<sup>175</sup>

I mean, among those people, we too, as children, would take that newspaper, *Özgür Gündem*, and deliver it to people, to enlighten them, to raise their awareness. When someone got *Özgür Gündem* he would be so happy; he would say ‘Thank god, I have this newspaper today’. He would read the newspaper immediately. We had some readers, when we delivered the newspaper, we had many readers. Let me tell you one. As I was delivering his newspaper, he would roll my cigarette; leave it on the table for me. He was an old man from Lice. I mean, I gave him his newspaper, I would say ‘Here it is, hadji I brought you the voice of people.’ He looked at me like this, like he was getting eased, he used to say ‘Have a seat, smoke your cigarette and I will order a tea too.’ He used to go and bring the tea himself, ‘No you will both drink my tea and smoke my cigarette. You are coming from (the brink of) death, you are doing that duty, you deliver (the newspaper) to me, is it much that I give you cigarette or tea?’ So, there were also other people to whom we were bringing the newspaper. A Tailor. I delivered his newspaper everyday. One day, I saw he had a shirt made, he said ‘I had a shirt made for you.’ But many of our readers in that period were shot by Hizbul-kontras and Hizbullah guys because they were reading this newspaper. Of course, it was not only them. We were their targets as well. They shot us many times. But we were nomads, so we were running fast.(Distributor)<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Copjec, *Imagine There is no Women*, p. 44

<sup>175</sup> Aretxaga, “Intimacy of Violence.” In *States of Terror*, p.166

<sup>176</sup> Yani, biz de o insanların içinde, çocuk halimizle insanları aydınlatmak, bilinçlendirmek için o gazeteyi alırdık, *Özgür Gündem* gazetesini alır, insanlara götürürdük. Bir insan *Özgür Gündem*

Through the subsumption of the movements of the bodies to the movement of the newspaper, these bodies started to occupy the same terrain with the newspaper. The sublime character of the newspaper informed bodily practices, moods as well as embodied meanings and affects. It necessitated exposing oneself to death, not giving up easily, being cunning and aware, physically ready to escape and so on. The extraordinary character of otherwise ordinary practices such as publishing and reading a newspaper, contributed to the production of the affective surplus, through the appropriation of which, the sense of self, collectivity and community was organized everyday. The everyday circulation of the newspaper in this sense established strong intimate ties among the bodies and put them to the service of the collective. Hence, a journalist defines the readers as a community which “regards buying this newspaper as another duty (Journalist).”<sup>177</sup>

I mean, our readers were taking risks at least as much as we did, maybe more than we did. Completely unique to *Özgür Ülke*, (they were) not like the readers of any other newspaper. For a reader of an ordinary newspaper, far from making sacrifices, expects benefits. Especially, while the newspapers in Turkey were not being issued without promotions, while the readers were getting some other products with the newspaper, our newspaper’s readers were getting repression with the newspaper. That was the promotion. (Journalist)<sup>178</sup>

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gazetesini alırken, eline geçtiğinde, öyle seviniyordu ki, diyordu ‘çok şükür yarabbim, bugün bu gazete elime geçti.’ Hemen, gazeteyi aldığı gibi okuyordu. Bazı okuyucularımız vardı, gazeteyi götürdüğümüz esnada, epey okuyucularımız vardı. Ben bir okuyucumu anlatayım. Gazetesini götürürken, bir kaçak cigaramı sarıyordu, masanın üzerine bırakıyordu, bana hazırlıyordu. Liceli yaşlı bir adamdı. Yani gazetesini götürürdüm. ‘İşte’ derdim, ‘hacı dayı halkın sesini sana ulaştırdım.’ Bana bakıyordu böyle sanki rahatlıyordu, bana diyordu ‘hele sen otur, sigaramı iç, ben sana bir çay da istiyem.’ Kendisi gidip bir çay getirirdi, ‘yok illahim benim çayımı da içeceksin benim cigaramı da içeceksin. Sen ölümden geliyorsun, bana o hizmeti yapıyorsun, bana aktarıyorsun, ben de sana bir sigara vermişim bir çay içirecem, çok mudur acaba?’ Yani artı gazete götürdüğümüz insanlar vardı. Terzi. Gazetesini her gün götürürdüm. Bir gün giderken, baktım bana gömlek yaptırmış, diyor ‘sana bir gömlek yaptırmışım.’ Ama o dönemdeki çok okuyucularımız da bu gazeteyi okuduklarından dolayı hizbul-kontralar hizbullahçılar tarafından vuruldu. Tabi onlar yalnız değil. Bizler de onların hedefleriydik. Bizi çok defa vurdular. Ama biz gezgin olduğumuz için koşuyorduk hızlıydık.

<sup>177</sup> “Bu gazeteyi almayı başka bir iş olarak gören bir kitleydi.”

<sup>178</sup> Yani okuyucularımız da en az bizim kadar, belki bizden de fazla, risklere katlanıyorlardı. Tamamen *Özgür Ülke*’ye özgü, herhangi bir gazetenin okuyucusu gibi değil. Çünkü herhangi bir

Historically speaking newspapers in Turkey became vehicles for promotion techniques in the 1990s. From houses, to cars, from televisions even to airplanes, numerous materials were offered as promotions with the newspapers. In the 1990s the process was at its peak, and in order to sell their newspapers the owner of media cartels gave with it everything they could give. The promotions given with the newspapers took the place of the newspapers, as the ultimate motive for buying newspapers. This is exactly the logic of the supplement; it does not put an additional value on the object but masks the lack in the object. The supplement which is regarded as an additional feature of something original, which is posed in this way as lacking nothing, is also a way of getting away with the internal emptiness of the object. Unlike the other newspapers, *Özgür Gündem* on the other hand was being read despite the possible practices of interrogation, humiliation, torture, imprisonment and paramilitary attack. The logic of supplement as repression, in this sense, strove to hide the lack of legal authorization and reposition the newspaper as “matter out of place” and also re-place the respective position of other bodies. Yet this additional burden of the newspaper, informed bodily practices that would endow not only the newspaper with an affective surplus but also recomposed the bodily intensities of the newspaper community.

The sympathy, the love, the sensitivity people had towards us... Being “a distributor of *Özgür Gündem*”, in 1993, meant being a guerilla, an urban guerilla in the eyes of the people. A plak-argk guerilla has a Kalashnikov, he can defend himself. But an *Özgür Gündem* distributor has nothing to defend himself. Nothing. Never of course but, at first when we came to work here, it was because we had economic difficulties. But when we saw the love, the sensitivity of people, we said ‘we came to such a beautiful place, we don’t leave.’ And when we faced dangers and attacks, there were distributors

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gazetenin okuyucusunun bırakın bir takım fedakarlıklara katlanmasını, gazetenin ona artı faydaları olur. Özellikle Türkiye'deki gazeteler promosyonsuz çıkmazken, gazetenin yanında başka bir ürün de alırken, bizim gazetenin okuyucusu gazetenin yanında baskı alıyordu, öyle bir promosyonu vardı.

among us who joined the guerillas. We were not workers we were militants. We came here to fulfill our sacrificial duty. I would choose to be a martyr with honor, pride, rather than to die from an illness. So, this is why the distributors could keep the distribution tradition going.”(Distributor)<sup>179</sup>

“So the cops caught me again. 3 cops. They took away my newspapers. I don’t know how many times this was happening, I was being taken into custody. I mean, we were getting caught all the time. They were hitting, they were having my eyes swollen. They pulled our teeth, look, and they pulled this one and the lower teeth with pincers. They were also dropping when they slammed our heads to the walls. So, every time we got arrested, two or three of our teeth would have dropped for sure. For example, in the last period, when we got arrested we had no tooth in our mouths, so they could not break our teeth. (Distributor)<sup>180</sup>

While the newspaper owners tried to counter the charges that these journalists were terrorists, at another level the figure of the militant became an organizing trope in the everyday practices of the community with different intensities. Different levels of sacrificial practices were distributed through the position of everyone in the circulation of the newspaper and everyday practices that their position entailed. For instance while the distributors in Diyarbakır conceived themselves as militants in practice, some journalists conceived militancy as a legal category, or while the reader’s duty was to buy them, the journalist in Batman had to take a photo of paramilitaries without getting noticed and killed. Even at differential levels, though, the trope of militancy was an organizing principle for the ways the bodies and

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<sup>179</sup> Halkın bize karşı sempatisi, sevgisi, duyarlılığı. *Özgür Gündem* dağıtıcısı denildiği zaman 93’te, insanlar onları bir gerilla olarak, bir şehir gerillası olarak görüyordu. Yani bir argk gerillasının bir keleşini var, kendini savunabiliyor. Ama bir *Özgür Gündem* dağıtıcısının kendini savunabilecek hiçbir şeyi yok. Hiçbir şeyi. Sadece, ilk başlarda, hep geldiğimiz zaman çalışmak için, ekonomik sorunlarımız olduğundan dolayı geldik. Ama geldiğimizde o insanların sevgisini, o duyarlılığı görmüşken, biz dedik ‘öyle güzel bir yere gelmişiz, gitmeyiz.’ Ve o tehlikelerle, o saldırılarla karşı karşıya gelirken, biz o zaman ki dağıtıcılardan, gerillaya katılan dağıtıcılar da vardı. Biz bir işçi değil, bir militan. Fedakarlık görevimizi yerine getirmek için biz buraya gelmişiz. Hastalıktan ölmektense, onurlu gururlu bir şekilde şehit düşmeyi tercih ederim. Yani, dağıtıcıların dağıtım geleneğini bugüne kadar sürdürmesi bundan.

<sup>180</sup> Şimdi yine polisler beni yakaladı. 3 tane polis. Gazetelerimi almışlardı. Artık bu yani 100 kaçınıcı gözaltı bilmiyorum. Yani o kadar, hep yakalanıyorduk. Vuruyorlardı, gözümü şişiriyorlardı. Dişimizi bak, bu bir de alttaki dişlerim, penseyle çektiler. Kafamızı alıp duvarlara vurdukları zaman da düşüyordu. Yani mutlaka, her gözaltına alınışımızda iki üç tane dişimiz gidiyordu. Mesela artık son dönemde yakalandığımız zaman ağızımızda diş kalmamıştı, dişimizi kırıyorlardı.

materials affected and are affected by each other in everyday life. What was common to both the newspaper workers and the militants is not only their fate in their encounters with the state and the symbolic space they inhabited in the gaze of the state. The figure of the militant, like that of the terrorist, refers to a certain assemblage of bodily and affective qualities, and organizes material cultures and practices accordingly.



Fig.12. The protest about Ersin Yıldız’s death. “Şehid Namirin!” (Martyrs do not die!)<sup>181</sup>

The social performances of the funerals of the newspaper workers, exhibited the same symbolism and dramaturgy with those of the guerillas. The political language and the social practices surrounding their deaths or their exposure to violence were established from the same collective repertory. For, as both figures exist in death, their killing could not be sanctioned legally; they were already outlawed. In this sense they were sacred. They divided their selves from their body; they lent their

<sup>181</sup> *Özgür Ülke*, 6 December 1994

body to the outside along with the object in order to enable its circulation and preserve their selves against the infliction of pain. This division of the self from the body, as the metaphor of death, refers to the fact that the change in the symbolic system can only be enabled by an act, a rite of passage, which necessitates going through a symbolic death. In other words, to touch the newspaper evokes the sense of inhabiting the same space of death with the militants. In general, militancy became the trope by which the practices of the bodies that got into relationship with the newspaper were made meaningful. The something more of the newspaper, its excess, rather than being framed in state's fantasy of the terrorist refers in different degrees to the same level of existence with that of the figure of militant. The militant discourse pertaining to the circulation of the newspaper produced the bodies in their exposure to violence, and strove to cope with the fear through a collective gesture, or a gesture that called for a collectivity. In such a subversive mimesis of sovereignty, the newspaper community claimed its right on the bodies and challenged state sovereignty at the same space where it constitutes its overarching power.<sup>182</sup>

#### The Essence That Enlivens Things and Bodies

The circulation of the newspaper carried with it the storm of material transformation. While state practices appropriated bodies, other objects and spaces on the one hand, the material world around the newspaper was reorganized in ways that enable its circulation. The accumulation of affects through its circulation enabled the newspaper to be treated, understood and experienced as an organic part of the body. As it brought the voice of the people to each other, it also made their voice circulate on the surface of the social, have a place in it. In this sense its existence and circulation were understood as vital for the well being of the community. And the

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<sup>182</sup> Allen Feldman, *Formations of Violence*

wrongs done to it, accordingly, were experienced at the level of bodies. Rather than contaminating the purity of things and bodies, it was regarded as something that without which neither life, nor material has any meaning. Without the newspaper, the everyday life lost its living force, as the bodies were resound more and more with sorrowful affects.

Somehow I was very joyful that day. There was not much work that day. The page was almost ready. I was feeling guilty because of being late. I took the train from Bakırköy. I came to the newspaper. I bought bread and cheese before I came. When I stand like this the newspaper is on my right side. I was turning like this (to the right), I would see the newspaper, the building. It was a white building. We see it. It is impossible not to see it. I turned like this, there was no newspaper, there was a silhouette. I felt that my (right) side collapsed. My right side was not there. It was supposed to be on this side. (Journalist)<sup>183</sup>

Very interesting. *Özgür Gündem* happened to be maybe the first daily newspaper of the Kurds. It was met with much enthusiasm. We went through great excitements. When for the first time this people had a publication like this, the sudden closing down of the newspaper triggered an enormous reaction. Some people, young girls, called saying ‘if you have financial difficulties, we can sell our golds, bracelets.’ Some of them even suggested to come and work. There were some saying ‘this is our trachea, everyday we breath with this.’ There were people calling to say what they could do materially and/or spiritually. (Journalist)<sup>184</sup>

The metaphor of trachea is very telling since the newspaper affected the bodies in very vital ways; it gave them the strength to endure their lives or in other words it made life meaningful by presenting a form of life. Concerning this vitality, the

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<sup>183</sup> O gün nedense çok neşeliydim. O gün çok iş olmayacaktı. Sayfa tamamdı neredeyse. Geç kaldığım için de suçluluk duyuyordum. Trene bindim Bakırköy'den. Gazeteye geldim. Gelmeden önce ekmek peynir aldım. Şöyle durduğumda sağ tarafımda gazete. Böyle (sağa)dönüyordum, gazeteyi, binayı göreceğim. Beyaz bir binaydı. Onu görüyorduk. Görmemek imkansız. Böyle dönüyorum, gazete yok, bir karaltı var. Bu (sağ) tarafımın çöktüğünü hissettim. Bu tarafım yok. Bu yanda olacaktı.

<sup>184</sup> Çok ilginç. *Özgür Gündem* gazetesi Kürtlerin belki de ilk günlük gazetesi oldu. Çok coşkuyla karşılandı. Büyük heyecanlar yaşandı. İlk defa bu halk böyle bir yayına böyle bir gazeteye sahip olmuşken, birdenbire bu gazetenin kapanması okuyucularda müthiş bir tepkiye neden oldu. Arayan bazı insanlar, genç kızlar, maddi sıkıntınız varsa altınlarımızı satalım, bileziklerimizi satalım dediler. Hatta biz gelip çalışalım diyenler de oldu. Bu bizim nefes borumuzdur, biz her gün bununla nefes alıyorduk diyenler oldu. Maddi manevi ne yapabiliriz diye arayanlar vardı.



bodies organized their quotidian relations and practices according to the daily circulation of the newspaper. For instance, the readers were ready to work for the newspaper that they wanted to read, or to sell their assets to continue buying it. This paradoxical situation refers to another definition of the experience of the sublime; “when something entrances us so much that we are ready to forget (and to renounce) everything, our own well being and all that is associated with it; moments when we are convinced that our existence is worth something only in so far as we are capable of sacrificing it.”<sup>185</sup> In this sense the newspaper became something that provided not only the materials and bodies with a substance, but also produces the affective glue through which lines of social intimacy come into existence. To breathe through the newspaper, rather than through the trachea, points to a particular understanding of life which was politically organized along the lines of the ongoing struggle. The collectively organized air leaking into the bodies touching the newspaper is a good metaphor of how the daily rhythm of the newspaper made the life-worlds of other bodies by penetrating inside them. To read, write or carry the newspaper means, in this manner, to breathe together with those who were exposed to and struggling against state violence.

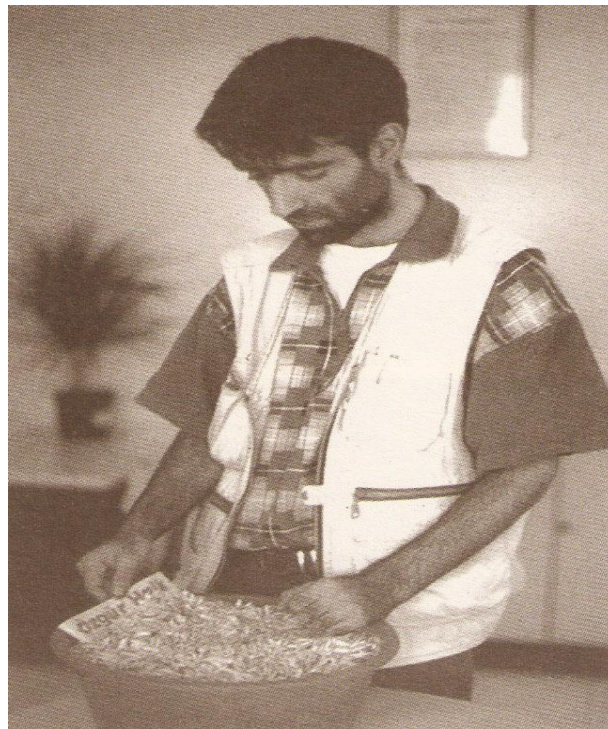
So many years passed, apart from those that will pass, the excitement, the enthusiasm, the joy of our days of distribution, still, in its freshness of the first day, lives in my heart. And when I took the newspaper when it was not closed down or confiscated, I could barely hold myself not to stir up a mess by crying ‘The real newspaper has come, do not be unaware of the facts..’ (Distributor)<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Zupancic, *Ethics of The Real*, p.151

<sup>186</sup> Ama şu kadar yıl geçti, daha da geçecek olandan gayrı, hala dağıtım günlerimizin heyecanı, coşkusu, hazzı, ilk günkü tazeliğinde yüreğimde yaşamaya devam ediyor. Ve ben kapatılmadığı veya toplatılmadığı günlerde elime her gazeteyi aldığımda içimden, ‘Esas gazete geldi, gerçek gazete geldi, gerçeklerden habersiz kalmayın’ diye bağırarak ortalığı ayağa kaldırmamak için kendimi zor tutuyorum. Nihat Hikmet Şenol, *Ape Musa'nın Küçük Generalleri* (İstanbul: Aram Yayınları, 2008) p.36

Touching the newspaper reactivates the previous bodily affections of joy and enthusiasm (a future oriented joy), and shrouds the body with the same socio-political practices that leads to such affections. The accumulation of affects in materials is what enables the newspaper to organize bodily practices, gestures and moods by intervening in the composition of these bodily capacities. Holding the newspaper for instance, prompts the distributor to shout as in the good old days by inserting back memory in to the level of sensory experience.<sup>187</sup> On the other hand, another point to underline is that these affects continue to determine the world of the individuals from within by virtually residing in-between the body. Through every encounter, past affects are reactivated and transmitted.



Look, this was in 1994, we used to distribute it like this. Under the watermelon seeds. Now, we had been like..., with the cops, we could not distribute them under our arms, you know. I mean, we used to distribute them using some other tricks. We were putting them here, in the middle. We were piling watermelon seeds to this corner, to there, to this part, to the middle.

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<sup>187</sup> Seremetakis, "Memory of the Senses."

Since it was to be seen as watermelon seeds, we were putting watermelon seeds on it. Covering here. Inside, it was full of magazines. Of course, I was taking 10 here, 10 on my back, I was zipping this vest. I mean, in summer it was a torment for me, in winter it was easy, I was distributing more. I was wearing a coat in winter, as if I wanted to wear a thick coat. Of course it was for the purpose of carrying more newspapers and magazines. So, after delivering my newspapers, I used to put the rest of the newspapers underneath the watermelon seeds. But while I was on the way for delivery I used to put 15-20 of them here, tie another 15-20 of them to my back. One day I was caught again, in Tekkapı (a) cop reached out for watermelon seeds, I held his hand like this, (and told him) ‘not so fast man, this is not a freeloader shop.’ Like a qırık. I was scared, I said (to myself) well when he puts his hand, what if it touches (the newspapers/magazines). I didn’t let it go. His hand touched only one watermelon seed. The police captain there turned and said ‘what happened?’ I said, ‘He is eating my sunflower seeds for free.’ He looked at him and said, ‘son why have you stopped this man. He is earning his bread.’ He looked at my arm, touched my shoulder and said, ‘earn your bread.’ A friend was waiting on the opposite side. He said ‘I thought maybe they would catch you.’ We were distributing like that. When I went to Eğitim-Sen, I took out (the newspapers) for the teachers in Eğitim-Sen. They were not for free, whoever bought one newspaper had to buy four glasses of sunflower seeds. So I was selling watermelon seeds, then I was going and distributing watermelon seeds again. I was saying to the teachers that ‘these are organized seeds, whoever eats them does not catch any illness.(Distributor)<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Bak bu 94teydi ,böyle dağıtırdık. Çekirdeğin altına. Şimdi artık polislerle şey olmuştu ya, elimize kolumuza alıp dağıtıyorduk. Yani bir şeyler yaparak dağıtım yapıyorduk. Buraya bırakıyorduk, ortaya. Çekirdekleri bu köşeye atıyorduk buraya atıyorduk, bu kısma ortaya. Çünkü buraları çekirdek olarak görülsün, üstüne de biraz çekirdek atıyorduk. Bura kapansın. İçi dergi dolu. Tabi 10 tane burama 10 tane arka sırtıma atıyordum, bu yeleğimi kapatıyordum. Yani yaz olduğu zaman benim için bir işkenceydi, kışın rahat, daha çok dağıtıyordum. Kışın mont giyiyordum, hani ben diyordum maksat kalın mont giymişim. Halbuki daha çok gazete ve dergiler için. Yani gazetemi dağıtıktan sonra, gazeteleri de çekirdeğin içine bırakıyordum. Ama gazeteleri 15-20 tane buraya, 15-20 tane sırtıma ipe bağlayıp dağıtım yapıyorum. Bir gün yine yakalandım, Tekkapı’da polis elini çekirdeğe attı, polisin elinden böyle tuttum, ‘hop babam burası beleşçi dükkanı değil.’ Qırıkca dedim. Korktum yani, biraz da dedim hani elini attığı zaman eli değer. Bırakmadım elini. Sadece eli bir tane çekirdeğe değdi. Ordaki o komser döndü dedi ‘ne olmuş?’, dedim ‘bedavadan çekirdeğimi yiyor.’ Ona baktı, dedi ‘oğlum sen niye bu adamı durdurmuşsun. O ekmeğine bakıyor.’ Benim koluma baktı, elini omzuma vurdu, dedi ‘sen ekmeğine bak.’ Karşıda bir arkadaşım bekliyor. Dedi ‘ben dedim belki seni yakalayacaklar.’ Öyle dağıtıyorduk. Eğitim-Sen’e gittiğim zaman, şimdi çıkarırdın, Eğitim-Sen’deki öğretmenlere bedava değil, bir (gazete) alan dört bardak çekirdek almak zorundadır. Yani karpuz çekirdeği satıyorum, sonra gidiyorum yine karpuz çekirdeği dağıtıyordum. Hocalara diyordum ‘bunlar örgütlü çekirdek, bunları yiyen hiçbir hastalığa yakalanmaz.’

In the face of the newspaper other things, like the watermelon seeds, the coat and bodies of the distributors, become a facade that disguises the real essence, the newspaper, against the penetrating gaze of the state. The technical and social functions of cultural artifacts and materials are re-channelled through their contact with the newspaper, while also increasing their capacities to affect and to be affected. Not only in the social imaginary but in its everyday circulation, the newspaper endows other materials with substance, it gives them depth by producing their interior. The newspaper also organizes these materials, bodies, and their relations with each other politically and affectively. Like the newspaper, these watermelon seeds are understood as things that increase the bodily capacities of persons, producing joyful affects in the bodies that eat them. In this sense the newspaper organizes a material culture and a respective cosmology that invest related materials and bodies with political significance and affective qualities.

#### Of Radars and Demons

The contact with the newspaper changed the way these bodies understood and related to everyday practices of the state not only by documenting the criminality inherent in the law of the state, but also by crafting their senses. The newspaper community experienced what is represented on the newspaper itself in their everyday experiences. In this sense, to touch the newspaper repositioned the bodies in question in such a way that such criminality was felt affectively rather than comprehended cognitively. The insight that these bodies gained not only challenged the penetrating gaze of the state, but also pushed them to enter inside the state. Posited in a space of exposure to death, to learn to predict the state became a vital lesson. What was mapped out was not only the material signs of state practices but also the cognitive-sensual component of the state as well. In other words, these bodies were not only

able to interpret the changes in the material environment, but were also able to read into the possible reactions, gestures and attitudes of the state. Such a repertoire of collective experience was utilized in order to decode every gesture, reaction and movement of state officials and paramilitaries and to counter it beforehand.

The lawyers used to meet with police. For our journalists were getting under arrest often a few times a week, our lawyers could figure out everything from the attitude of the directorate, I mean if they had her or not, if they were stalling us, if they were not accepting us just for fun. Our relations with the State was like; we could feel what they want to do, what they want to say. I asked Mrs.Arzu ‘how was their attitude, do they deny it although they have him?’ She said, ‘they don’t have him, they don’t want to give information now, they will stall us for 2-3 days, they don’t want to tell..’<sup>189</sup>

For the newspaper workers, I think the most important thing that the process, from *Yeni Ülke* till today has taught us, is to become very sensitive towards the state. Knowing and learning the state by living it, I think we know it very well. We have turned into somekind of a radar. What is it thinking, what can it do and when, how can this statement be interpreted, what can be the next step? I can say that we have reached somekind of a speciality regarding the offensive face of the state. The same goes with the phones. We were able to gather clues about the relation between the phone calls and the attacks, about what kind of favors the state was planning for us. For example, the headquarters of HEP was bombed upon the headlines used that day. It was the time of elections. We used “the murderer voted” as the headline that time, we knew that this was going to upset many circles. In the end, bombing there was a sign that new favors were going to be thought of for us too, at least we translated it like that. There were many reactions to that headline, like ‘your end will be like that too’, and ‘we are going to bring you down’. Or, you publish a news about the practice of military troops against the villagers in the Kurdish Region, with the names of officials written down. Then the cops or soldiers have their own way of getting the answers they want on the phone, like starting the conversation by addressing you as ‘heval’.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Avukatlar emniyet ile görüşüyorlardı sık sık. Haftada bir kaç kez muhabirlerimiz gözaltına alındığı için avukatlarımız artık emniyetin tavrından şeyi anlayabiliyorlardı, yani işte ellerinde mi değil mi, bizi oyuyorlar mı, iş olsun diye mi bizi kabul etmiyorlar. Devletle ilişkilerimiz artık şeydi; Hissedebiliyorduk ne yapmak istiyor, ne demek istiyor. Arzu Hanım’a diyorum ‘tavırları nasıldı, ellerinde de inkar mı ediyorlar?’ Arzu Hanım ‘ellerinde değil şimdi bilgi vermek istemiyorlar, 2-3 gün bizi oyuyorlar söylemek istemiyorlar’ dedi.

<sup>190</sup> Gazete çalışanları açısından, *Yeni Ülke*’den bugüne kadar gelen zaman sürecinin bize öğrettiği en önemli şey bence devlete karşı çok duyarlı hale gelmek. Devleti bizzat yaşayarak tanımak ve öğrenmek, çok iyi tanıdığımız düşüncesindeyim. Bir tür radara dönüştük. Ne düşünüyor, ne zaman, ne yapabilir, bu açıklama nasıl yorumlanabilir, ikinci adımı ne olabilir? Devletin saldırgan yüzü itibariyle

Let's say an undercover cop, back then cops were becoming undercover in growing numbers, in order not to be recognized. But how did we recognize them? When it was swollen (puffy) from their back here, we knew that it was a gun. So, we were paying attention to people walking on the street, when someone walks like this (he shows the look), we know that he is not a cop, but a cop walks like this; he looks into the eyes of people's. He stalks people. (You) understand that there is a cop. Second, when it comes to the car, when an undercover car goes, it never goes calmly. How do the official police cars go today? Slowly. These undercover cars; there were red and white ones. And there was a red Şahin, 969 or something like that. Usually their doors were left open anyway, they leave it like that so as to grab someone suddenly... (Distributor)<sup>191</sup>

Contact with the newspaper made the bodies sensible to the reality of the state, by turning their bodies into radars. The sensory qualities of the bodies were reorganized socio-politically, in order to escape from and counter the strategies of paramilitaries and state officials. Such sensory qualifications are necessary if one is to survive, to be ready and to react in time. The looks in the eyes of the people, their postures, the driving speed of the cars, their colors; all these mundane details of the everyday life were constantly decoded in terms of power relations between the paramilitaries and the newspaper community. This decoding “means turning representation into diagrams, making visible the vectors of force as they oppose and crisscross each

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bir uzmanlaşma aşamasına ulaştık diyebilirim. Telefonlar da öyle. Telefonlarla saldırılar arasında, devletin bizim için o zaman için ne gibi iyilikler düşündüğü hakkında ipucu elde edebiliyorduk. Örneğin, o gün çıkan bir manşetten yola çıkarak, HEP'in merkez binası bombalanmıştı o zaman. Seçim zamanıydı. Biz 'katil oyunu kullandı' manşeti atmıştık o zaman, biz bunun bir çok çevreyi huylandıracağını biliyorduk. Nihayetinde oranın bombalanması bizim için de yeni iyilikler düşünüleceğinin işaretiydi, en azından biz öyle tercüme etmiştik. O manşete çok tepkiler geldi; sizin de sonunuz öyle olacak, sizi de yerle bir edeceğiz. Ya da Kürt bölgesinde isim de vererek bir ordu birliğinin köylülere karşı bir uygulamasını veriyorsunuz. Telefona istediği yanıtı alabilmek için heval hitabıyla başlamak gibi askerin polislin şeyleri oluyordu.

<sup>191</sup> Sivil polis diyelim şimdi, o zaman polisler sivilleşmişti, kimse tanınmasın diye. Ama biz onları nasıl tanıyorduk? Bu arkalarında kabarık olduğu zaman, biliyoruz ki silah. Yani, yolda yürüyen insanlara dikkat ediyorduk, yürüyen bir insan böyle gittiği zaman (bakışını gösteriyor) biliyoruz polis değil, ama bir polis böyle gider insanların gözlerinin içine bakar. İnsanları takip eder. Orada polis olduğunu anlar. İkinci, arabaya gelince, bir sivil, bir araba gittiği zaman hayatta sakin gitmez. Nasıl bugün resmi polis arabaları gidiyor ya, yavaş yavaş. Bu sivil otolar, kırmızı beyaz otolar vardı. Hele hele bir kırmızı şahin vardı, 969 mu neydi. Genellikle zaten kapıları açık, açık bırakıyor ki aniden birini yakalamak için.

other, rewriting reality as a graph of power centers, movements, and velocities.”<sup>192</sup>

For one of the determining principles of everyday life, was not to get caught by the paramilitaries while taking a photo, distributing the newspaper or carrying it. These bodies, as one of the distributors said, had to be like a “demon”, endowed with mystical mental and bodily capacities. Faced with the mystical powers of the sovereign state that could disfigure, disappear bodies or destroy buildings and burn down cars without being noticed, one had to be cunning like a demon. One should go beyond oneself, and become both like a radar that can decode the flow of things and bodies in terms of power relations, and like a demon which can manipulate the existing conditions in favor of oneself.

Additionally, to work and to write for the newspaper enabled people, who otherwise had very respectful ideas on many other issues, to see many truths that they could not see on their own. Following the everyday world from this newspaper made me comprehend why it is so hard for the writers and thinkers in the West to look at the world from where the Kurds are. To tell the truth, I think that I got fairly acquainted with the reality of Kurds in Turkey through *Özgür Gündem*. (Journalist)<sup>193</sup>

In other ways it opened a space from which the Kurdish reality can be comprehended better. What is at stake is the fact that sharing the same affective world with the newspaper community produces an additional dimension to one’s knowledge that cannot be gained through thought or compassion. What cannot be conveyed through discourses and imaginary empathy, can be transmitted through the embodied experience of affects. In other words, the self which is supposed to imagine herself in

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<sup>192</sup> Fredric Jameson, “Symptoms of Theory or Symptoms for Theory”: *Critical Inquiry*, 30, no 2, 2004, pp. 403-408, Available [online]:

<http://criticalinquiry.uchicago.edu/issues/v30/30n2.Jameson.html>

<sup>193</sup> Ayrıca gazetenin kendisinde çalışmak ve yazmak, başka bir çok alanda çok değerli düşüncelere sahip insanların kendi kendilerine göremeyecekleri pek çok gerçeği görmesini sağladı. Gündelik evreni bu gazeteden izlemek, aslında Kürtlerin olduğu yerden dünyaya bakmanın niçin batıdaki pek çok yazar ve düşünür için bu kadar zor olduğunu anlamamı sağladı. Ben, doğrusu, Kürtlerin Türkiye'deki gerçeğiyle *Özgür Gündem* vasıtasıyla tam olarak tanıştığımı düşünüyorum.

the position of the Other from the outset, is recomposed anew on the same terrain with the Other through such affective experience and embodied knowledge.

Touching the newspaper, in this manner, does not only enable one to look at the world from a shared position but also to experience the sense of such a perspective or how that world makes you feel when seen and lived from such a position. It can be argued that the newspaper provides a more bodily engagement with the world on the same level of existence that opens up a space for a shared universe of feeling.

By tuning bodies, making them sensitive to the state, the social space with its voices, cars and things is transformed into the diagrams of power relations. In their everyday practices, these bodies not only learn how to read the parochial signs of the state but also learn in what sense they have to understand them. The body becomes the radar that translates everything and every action into the language of power relations. On the one hand the newspaper endows the bodies that get into contact with it, with the knowledge and experience of the criminality of the law and the state; a knowledge which inscribes itself on to the bodies and imaginaries of the people through violence. The inherent violence of the sovereign law, becomes not only visible in the visual topography of the newspaper, but also becomes a felt reality of the everyday experience of the ones touching it. On the other hand it also increases the bodily capacities of these bodies to restore the sense of self and community, in order to inhabit everyday life again. Remember the first headline of Özgür Gündem : “ Egemenlik Kayıtsız Şartsız DGM'nindir. (Sovereignty Uncontionally Belongs to State Security Courts)”<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Özgür Gündem, 30 May 1992



## On Joy, Love and Other Related Issues

First of all, I want to dwell upon the question of resentment as an important element of this affective economy, since it is considered as a powerful emotion on the part of the subjected/weak ones. Resentment is generally understood as the felt powerlessness in the face of humiliating, painful state practices. It is considered as the predominance of reactive forces over the active forces of the body in which “no longer being able to act... active forces are deprived of the material conditions of their functioning... they are separated from what they can do.”<sup>195</sup> As a reactive force, resentment is the triumph of the weak as weak, the constitution of a hostile world which in turn decreases the bodily capacities of one. In this particular sense, resentment is refused and understood as something that leads one to eat oneself up from inside by the newspaper community.

If you are resentful against, say even the state, you become unamiable. Your unamiability because of your resentment affects both your face and your body. There is no reason to eat yourself from inside, so I do not have any personal resentment. On the point of reaction, I claim that it should be a social reaction.(Distributor)<sup>196</sup>

However, inscribed in an economy of joy, resentment takes on other operations than previously prescribed to it. While resentment makes one feel that everything hurts and the whole world is hostile to her and separates one from what she can do, the affects of love and hate give a twist to that affect. The everyday practices and collective investments can change the way affects are transmitted and lived through, as well as changing their presumed meanings. How does, then, resentment work

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<sup>195</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (London: Athlone Press, 1983), p.114

<sup>196</sup> Kin tutarsan, devlete de olabilir, sevimsizleşirsin. Kin tuttuğundan dolayı sevimsizleşmen senin suratına da vurur, vücuduna da vurur. Kendi kendini yiyip bitirmenin mantığı yok. onun için benim şahsen bir kinim yok. Tepki verilmesi noktasında toplumsal olarak vermenin gerektiğini ifade ediyorum.

which is refused as a reactive affect? In which ways does it increase the capacities of the bodies caught in an economy of joy?

What if the police distributes flowers. I mean, breaking a heart is so simple. Mending a heart is impossible. Although you distribute flowers, or balls, after a few kicks the ball explodes, sorry but .uck your ball (they) say. The rose fades, .uck your rose, it lived only for two days then it faded away and it's gone, but the pain you have given to me is the pain that I feel for all my life when I see a mother, when I see a father, it is the pain of being fatherless, when someone says "big brother" to a big brother, the pain I will suffer is lifelong. (Distributor)<sup>197</sup>

This refusal to normalize things, attests to the fact that resentment works here as the refusal of compensation/reconciliation and an "unremitting denunciation of injustice."<sup>198</sup> "Here resentment has nothing to do with slave morality. It stands rather for a refusal to normalize the crime, to make it a part of the ordinary/explicable/accountable flow of things, to integrate it into a consistent and meaningful life narrative."<sup>199</sup> It becomes a way of refusing to forget what one was exposed to and transforms such experiences into source of commitment. Rather than reactivating their bodily powers, exposure to violence increases their feelings of commitment. This inversion leads us to analyze how the affective economy of joy, and primarily love makes other related emotions to resonate together in ways that increases the powers of the bodies.

Form the perspective of the community, in manifold ways the newspaper transmitted the affect of joy, in the sense of increasing the bodily capacities to affect and to be affected. The collective affective investment imbued the newspaper with

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<sup>197</sup> Polis kendince çiçek dağıtsa. Yani, kalp kırmak çok basittir. Kalbi onarmak imkansızdır. Sen onlara gül de dağıtsan, top da dağıtsan, topa iki tane vurduktan sonra top patlar, affedersin ..kim senin verdiği topu der. Gül kurur. ... koyim senin verdiği gül, iki günlük güldü soldu gitti, ama bana verdiği acı, yani, benim hayatım boyunca bir anneyi gördüğümde yaşadığım acıdır, bir babayı gördüğümde babasızlığın verdiği acıdır, bir kardeşin abiye 'abi' dediği zaman benim çekeceğim acı ömür boyudur.

<sup>198</sup> Slavoj Zizek, *On Violence: Six Sideways Reflections* (London: Profile Books, 2008), p.161

<sup>199</sup> Ibid. p.161

affective qualities which in turn recomposed the bodily relations, the socio-political functions of other related materials. To touch the newspaper, to carry it on one's body changed drastically not only the socio-symbolic space and their position in it but also changed the embodied practices and structures of feeling of those bodies in question. The feelings of enthusiasm, obstinacy, respect and the bodily postures and practices that these entail were inscribed in an economy of joy. While the state's economy of sorrow worked to decrease the capacities of the newspaper to affect and be affected through paramilitary and legal measures, the production of joyful affects enabled its endurance. And it was the production of joy and related feeling of love, hate, resentment which enabled the community and the self to persevere in claiming their voices in the face of state violence.

I can tell you this: fortunately, I lived through that period, that part of my life. I am speaking for myself. Those days I entered that politics that way . Maybe it was an unconscious entrance as the reason for our entrance was not exclusively political. But what has brought us to today is the foundations laid down in those days. I mean what has clarified, matured our perspective on the world, and in some way everything that reflects our reason, perspective was actually the foundations of those days. Fortunately, I lived through those days, though they were hard, full of repression and torture, and beatings, though they were bad and carried the risk of death. If I were born again I would do the same. (Distributor)<sup>200</sup>

And we try to look at life with zeal, excitement, love that those days gave us. This has reflected on everything we have. Our flesh, our bones, our lives, our world views, our perspectives... (Distributor)<sup>201</sup>

Well, of course, sometimes people would ask me, i mean once BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) also asked me, 'did you ever have a lover, ever got

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<sup>200</sup> Ben şunu diyebilirim. İyi ki o dönemi yaşamışım. Kendi adıma söylüyorum. O günlerde, o şekilde, o siyasetin içerisine girdim, belki bilinçsizdi, hani ilk girişimiz, tamamen bir siyasal düşünceyle girmemiştik. Fakat, bizleri bugüne getiren o günün temelleridir. Yani, bizim bugünkü dünyaya bakışımızı netleştiren, olgunlaştıran, işte bir şekilde kendi mantığımızı, bakışımızı yansıtan bütün her şey aslında o günlerin temeliydi. İyi ki o günler, zor da olsa baskı da olsa işkence de olsa, dayaklı da olsa, kötü de olsa ölüm pahasına da olsa, iyi ki yaşamışım. Bir daha doğsam herhalde aynı şeyi yaparım.

<sup>201</sup> Ve o günün bize verdiği şevkle, heyecanla, aşkla bazı şeylere bakmaya çalışıyoruz. Bu bizim her şeyimize yansıdı. Etimize, kemiğimize, yaşamımıza, dünya bakışımıza, görüşümüze.

married?’ I mean our love, lover... We dedicated ourselves to the movement. We said our real love is Kurdistan. When we take the newspaper and distribute it, shouting and screaming, then a free/independent kurdistan follows us. It was affecting the people in the same way. People used to say the same thing. However, in those days there were many losses too. We were getting caught many times. (Distributor)<sup>202</sup>

The social-political work of love can be analyzed at different levels. Love gives us the paradox of accepting as necessary what is contingent.<sup>203</sup> It is a way of relating to what one goes through so that the contingency of such experience is seen as indispensable for one’s own being. In this sense, subjects assume the responsibility of what they have gone through even if they have no choice at all. “The paradox of love, is that it is a free choice, but a choice which never happens in the present, i.e., which is already done – at a certain moment, I can state only retroactively that I have chosen.”<sup>204</sup> According to Sara Ahmed, love is a very strong form of identification with an ideal, which produces powerful ties among the members of a collective.<sup>205</sup> Yet on the other hand, love affects the world of individuals in such ways that the body becomes capable of doing things previously unthinkable and has the strength to dramatically change her own world. As the old saying goes; one does everything for one's love since it makes one’s eyes go blind. In socio-political terms however, love cannot be experienced as a pure feeling in itself, but most of the time goes hand in

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<sup>202</sup> Yani, elbette bazen insanlar bana söylerdi, yani bir gün BBC’ de bana söylemişti, ‘senin hiç sevgilin oldu mu evlendin mi?’ Yani bizim sevdiğimiz, aşkımız... Kendimizi harekete adanmışız. Demişiz, bizim gerçek aşkımız Kürdistan’dır. Gazeteyi elimize alıp dağıttığımız zaman, işte o bağırmanın, çığlıklarımızın, bağımsız bir Kürdistan arkamızdan geliyor. O da o halka böyle yansiyordu. Halk da böyle söylüyordu. Ama çok da kayıp veriliyordu o esnada yani. O esnalarda, çok yakalandığımız oluyordu.

<sup>203</sup> For this Lacanian reading of love see *Gaze and Voice as Love Objects* ed. Renata Salecl and Slavoj Zizek (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996)

<sup>204</sup> Slavoj Zizek, *The Lacanian Real : Television*, 10 April 1987, Available [online]: <http://www.lacan.com/symptom/?p=38>

<sup>205</sup> Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*

hand with the production of hate toward imaginary and real others who are seen as obstacles to one's love.

We started when we were kids. We wanted to earn money. First we started to distribute the newspaper to earn money, then slowly we got more and more involved in this issue. Then, when the police slapped us in the face, we asked ourselves why he was doing so. Then we thought about it again. When they tortured us, when a gun was put to our heads we realized that we were in a dangerous job. We thought they did not like it. This meant we were on the right track. Because what is good for us is bad for them. Because they don't want us to be good. Naturally they (those working for the newspaper) tried to politicize us and raise our awareness. Yet we educated ourselves and got politicized in and through the process. Nobody gave us a special (political) education. We lived through it, we got beaten, we got tortured, then we hated it more and more, we grew up with that deep anger and resentment. Yet we were actually just kids and we were being tortured. I don't think today's children face the same torture the same way. Back then kids were treated as adults. We didn't have the status of children. We were children but what was done to us was something that could not be done to children. But now? Things have changed and we have come to these days. Today in 2009, they say the children are being sued bla bla. We were not being sued back then. I mean, yes we could be sued. They wouldn't ask our ages. Lots of friends were imprisoned when they were under 18 years old and sentenced to life imprisonment. Lots of our friends were imprisoned in this way; they were tortured, they were put in big troubles. What will those people, children do when they are out? Of course, what they lived through have effects and impacts on them. (Distributor)

Sara Ahmed, argues that the love groups can be considered as the inverse of hate groups, in which the same mechanisms are put into motion but with a difference; what triggers these mechanisms are not the hate toward the other but love towards one's own collectivity.<sup>206</sup> Yet the relationship between love and hate is more complicated. For the newspaper community, what prevented the circulation of the newspaper and the practices towards that end were a huge source of hate since they prevented the production of bonds with the idealized collectivity. If one is harmful to the one I love, I hate it. In this sense, hate works to embody the state as that which

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<sup>206</sup> Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*

harms the loved one, thus becoming a way of positioning oneself towards the state in a way that can restore the bonds with the loved object. In this way, the state's attempt to produce sorrowful affects is transformed into hate which puts state into a secondary-meditative position, via-a-vis the primacy of love.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY

The story I have told so far took place between the years 1992 and 1995 and it is composed of the successive publication and circulation of the newspaper with the names *Özgür Gündem*, *Özgür Ülke* and *Yeni Politika* respectively. Those were the years in which the practices of state violence and repression against the newspaper community were at its peak, as were the armed conflict and the paramilitary violence in the region. Throughout these years, the newspaper struggled to shape the public discussions in the country, to produce a public against the dirty war in the Region in particular, and the anti-democratic practices of the state in general. Its daily circulation was around 50.000 and if we think, as it is suggested, that a newspaper was read at least by 3 people, it makes up a serious number. Being the only daily newspaper outside the mainstream media, it gained public attention from different sectors of the society. And it produced a counter public in Warner's sense, in which the individual struggle against suffering was transposed into a struggle between modes of publicness.<sup>207</sup>

In the midst of the armed conflict, *Özgür Gündem* as a material gained an affective density since the beginning of its life trajectory, through the incorporation of everyday practices of its circulation into its material composition. In this sense, the organization of the public exceeded its cognitive limits by being provided with the affective glue which produced shared ways of feeling and being in the world that informed everyday practices.<sup>208</sup> The newspaper affected not only the world views of its public but also their everyday bodily practices and senses that produced an excess

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<sup>207</sup> Michael Warner, Publics and Counter-Publics, *Public Culture*, 14, no 1, 2002, pp.49-90

<sup>208</sup> Aretxaga, "Intimacy of Violence." In *States of Terror: Begona Aretxaga's Essays* edited by Joseba Zulaika (Nevada:Center for Basque Studies, 2005)

over any cognitive definition of its public. The bodies that were in touch with the newspaper were inserted into the relations and practices of antagonism, as their bodies became the locus of the figures of the terrorist to be exterminated and the militant to be respected. In this sense, the newspaper changed the bodily composition of the ones who encountered it in manifold ways. One was exposed to either sorrowful affects by being exposed to state violence, or to joyful ones stemming from the endurance of the self. Such encounters eventually posited two different ways of being in the world organized according to two antagonistic logics.

In each case, however, the constitution and expression of these worlds were enabled by the violent transactions between the newspaper community and the paramilitaries. Yet these transactions were uni-dimensional, as the structure of inflicting pain suggests.<sup>209</sup> Of course there was no direct-material reciprocity between the two. For these transactions took place between the paramilitaries and the unarmed newspaper community, the struggle took place at the level of the affective side of the violence, not at the level of physical violence itself. The question becomes how the affects of such violence would be inscribed into the material and sensual worlds and socio-political relations of bodies; whether it will produce sorrow or joy. Even if the ongoing armed conflict in the region over-determined such transactions (the overwhelming figures of the terrorist and the militant that haunt the circulation of the newspaper, for instance, both refer to “those on the mountains”<sup>210</sup>) the subjects and spaces of encounter were specific to the languages and practices that the newspaper rather than armed encounter put into circulation. The period between 1992 and 1995 - the historicity of which rests on a particular form of

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<sup>209</sup> Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain : The Making and Unmaking of The World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985)

<sup>210</sup> “Those on the mountains” (dağdakiler) is a euphemism that is used to refer to terrorists/guerillas.



eventualization<sup>211</sup> - was marked by the manifold exchanges of signs, affects, making and unmaking bodies, doing and undoing worlds and destruction and perseverance of the self in the face of shattering state violence.

What happened then in 1995? After the publication of *Yeni Politika* in 1995 the newspaper can be said to pass into a new phase in its material life. Posing this question is easier than formulating its answer, as it is easier to point out to this rupture than give an account of the socio-political, material and symbolic dynamics at play in such transformation. For these transformations, even when they are considered as effects of complex dynamics, cannot be reduced to them.<sup>212</sup> The dynamics to which I will refer and the questions that stems from such examination, are indispensably bound up with the conceptual edifice with which I frame and tell the story of the newspaper so far. What I wanted to point out is the fact that, beginning with 1995, the powers of the newspaper to affect and to be affected were diminished to such an extent that it signalled a qualitative transformation. In reference to Appadurai's term "the social life of things", this phase can be called, the social death of the newspaper.<sup>213</sup> Like the meaning attributed to social death or symbolic death, it is the condition of not being able to relate to the social world while preserving one's physical existence.<sup>214</sup> In other words, it is the diminution of one's capacities to relate, engage and communicate to such an extent that while biologically and materially we can refer to it, the social ways of relating to it are thwarted. After 1995, the newspaper became more and more in-affective, both in terms of a decrease in its power to channel public attention and inform political

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<sup>211</sup> For a discussion on the gesture of eventualization see Foucault, "Question of Methods."

<sup>212</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations: 1972 – 1990* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997)

<sup>213</sup> Appadurai, "Introduction : Commodities and The Politics of Value."

<sup>214</sup> Jao Biehl, *Vita: Life in a Zone of Social Abandonment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005)

debates with its news and in terms of a decrease in its capacity to be an organizing principle for the everyday lives of the newspaper community. For the last 16 years the newspaper continued to be published under different names, yet not only its everyday circulation diminished to 10.000 but its social and affective capacities to organize the life-worlds of the people have all but gone.

In 1995, three parallel changes occurred. With the publication of *Yeni Politika*, the practices of censorship increased to such a degree that the newspaper started to be published as blank pages. Rather than targeting the newspaper community at the level of bodies, the newspaper's circulation began to be prevented through legal measures. This process reached its peak with the closing down of the newspaper, on the grounds of the charges that it was a follow up of *Özgür Gündem* and *Özgür Ülke*. The second shift occurred in the political composition and the attitude of the newspaper, and the third one occurred at the technological level. In 1995 MED TV started to broadcast from London in Kurdish, Turkish and Arabic. The introduction of MED TV and its successors MEDYA TV and ROJ TV, substituted the primacy of the newspaper through its audio-visual capacities to represent the news on time without being exposed to any censorship. These material, socio-political and technological transformations contributed to the diminution of the affective capacities of the newspaper in their own ways. Consequently the newspaper was separated from what it could do and re-placed into the chain of signifiers from which it was taken out through affective investment.

Such a transformation in the trajectory of the newspaper brings forth significant questions and insights about the mobilization of the public against state violence via the representations of such violence. Such discussion requires focusing on the relationship between the production of facts and violence, between the

constitution of a witnessing voice and its ambiguous condition. The story of the *Özgür Gündem*, lead us to question the general belief in the representations of violence for the constitution of compassion of empathy that lead to the collective mobilization against the perpetrators of such violence. If the newspaper's life trajectory can be summarized as the struggle for the constitution of a witnessing voice which could give a world and a language to the victims of state violence, then we have to ask how the constitution of this witnessing voice and re-inhabiting the language became the primary target of state violence.

### Radicalization

The economy of sorrow installed through paramilitary violence which made every effort to separate the newspaper from its communal basis and support, and was challenged and endured through the collective economy of joy, reconstructed a world around the newspaper in which the subjective positions and collective senses were distributed according to their positions towards state violence. One could fear and escape from it or be courageous and endure it. Either way what was constitutive of these life-worlds were their positions with respect to state violence. The economy of violence, as Feldman suggests, assumes autonomy through the time in which the social actors are caught in an endless exchange of bodily vulnerability, exposure to violence, courage and fear.<sup>215</sup> Such an economy, can also produce tropes of commodification, in which perseverance changes into fixation, means to ends. The violent practices around the newspaper had been accumulated to such a degree that although the newspaper continued to circulate, its powers were not the same. For instance, each day's publication cost was approximately "imprisonment for two years

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<sup>215</sup> Feldman, *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991)

and capital punishment of 500 million TL. (Lawyer)”<sup>216</sup> And in this bill the shattering of the world of individuals and sense of community through the infliction of pain is not accounted for.

As, even this incomplete bill suggests, it is very hard to persevere in such a position, without the mobilization of a vast collective energy in ways that can sustain the circulation of the newspaper. And the devastating state violence succeeded to a certain extent in diminishing the affective capacities of the newspaper and coding it as a generator of sorrowful affects, by increasing more and more the cost of newspaper’s everyday circulation. The newspaper to which is attributed the ability to organize a collective voice against the ongoing criminality of the state, started to operate as a source of vulnerability both bodily and legally. And such constant exposure to violence became one of the main sources of doubt against the validity of the facts expressed in the newspaper and limited its ability to inform and mobilize the public about the dirty war and related practices. The intensity of state violence and legal repression in this sense did not only diminish the everyday circulation of the newspaper to 10-15.000, but also inhibited its ability to organize a public.

First of all, this newspaper could be one of the best-selling newspapers. It would not be a newspaper from which both the journalists and the readers escape. It would preserve its character as a center of attraction. And I am sure it would not sell less than 100.000 a day. It would prevent disinformation by the mainstream press and deception of the people. It would prevent the manipulation of the public opinion in a wrong way. Turkey is almost a laboratory, an open and massive mental asylum. One of the fundamental reasons of this is the propaganda of the press. Most of these could be prevented. And it could contribute much to the solution of the Kurdish problem. (Journalist)<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> “İki yıl hapis cezası ve 500 milyon TL para cezası.”

<sup>217</sup> Öncelikle bu gazete çok satan bir gazete olurdu. İnsanların kaçtığı, hem çalışan gazeteci olarak, hem okur olarak kaçtığı bir gazete olmazdı. Çekim merkezi olma özelliğini korurdu. Ve eminim ki 100.000’in altında satmazdı. Egemen basının, medyanın dezenformasyonunu önlerdi, halkın kandırılmasına engel olurdu. Kamuoyunun yanlış şekilde yönlendirilmesine engel olurdu. Neredeyse bir laboratuvar Türkiye, açık, büyük bir akıl ve ruh hastalıkları hastanesi. Bunu yapan temel güçlerden

The alternative attitude of the newspaper, and its emergence as a new voice irritated particular interest groups. This uneasiness brought with it repression. Repression resulted in the development of an attitude which responded emotionally and pushed the newspaper to margins. Then in time the radicals (in the newspaper) increasingly predominated (the newspaper). However, unfortunately this turned out to be against the interests of the newspaper.(Journalist)<sup>218</sup>

The newspaper suffered from most of its casualties in the first *Özgür Gündem* period. With its attitude which was regarded by some friends as liberal and yielding and as not giving enough weight to the central elements of the Kurdish movement, it faced state violence. This is because it was read more and more in the West, by non-Kurdish people. This was the most serious impact of the newspaper. Otherwise, a newspaper with a circulation of 10.000 and being read only by militant supporters is not harmful for the state as does a popular newspaper. Of course it is harmful. For even writing down the truths on the paper is faced with enormous violence. Secondly, writing down on the paper constitutes documents for future. Thus, the state does not want either of them. However, it responded in a more violent manner to a popular newspaper which determined the public opinion. When they constricted *Özgür Gündem*, they succeeded partly in their tasks. I think the repressive practices did not only close down a channel like this but also diminished the potentials of *Özgür Gündem*, constricted *Özgür Gündem* in itself. In this sense, there was a double damage. (Journalist)<sup>219</sup>

There is a double damage here. In the beginning the newspaper was appropriated by different sectors of the society, from Turkish democrats to radical leftist, from Turks to Kurds and Alevites. Its circulation brought together these various political subjects

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biri de basın propagandası. Bunların bir çoğuna engel olabilirdi. Ve Kürt sorununun çözümü noktasında ciddi katkıları olabilirdi.

<sup>218</sup> Gazetenin yeni bir yaklaşım içine girmiş olması, yeni bir ses olarak ortaya çıkmış olması bazı çevreleri çok rahatsız etti. Bu rahatsızlık beraberinde baskılar getirdi, ve bu baskılarla birlikte çok duygusal tepkiler ve gazeteyi hep uca sürükleyen bir tavır gelişti... Zaman içerisinde radikal kanadın, daha baskın çıktığını da gördük. Ama bu gazetenin aleyhine oldu maalesef.

<sup>219</sup> Birinci *Özgür Gündem* döneminde, gazete toplam kayıplarının büyük çoğunluğunu o dönem verdi. Gazete o dönem kimi arkadaşların liberal ve gevşek, Kürt hareketinin merkezinde görünen unsurlara önem vermeyen çizgisiyle devletten şiddet gördü. Çünkü bu gazete batıda da giderek daha çok, Kürt olmayanlar tarafından da giderek daha çok okunan bir gazeteydi. Bu gazetenin en ciddi etkisi buradaydı. Yoksa 10.000 satışı ve sadece militan taraftarların okuduğu bir gazetenin, devlete, yaygın bir gazete kadar zararı yoktur. Zararı var. Çünkü, hakikatleri kağıdın üzerine yazmanın kendisi dahi son derece büyük bir şiddetle karşı karşıya kalıyor. İkincisi, bunun kağıdın üzerine geçmesi gelecek için bir belge teşkil ediyor. O yüzden devlet hiç birisini istemiyor. Ama yaygın, çok okunan, kamuoyunun belirleyicisi bir gazeteye çok daha şiddetli bir tepkisi vardı. *Özgür Gündem*'i daralttıkları an amaçlarının bir bölümüne ulaşmış oldular. Ben baskıların sadece böyle bir kanalı kapatmış olmakla kalmayıp *Özgür Gündem*'in olası potansiyellerini de daralttığını, kendi içinde de *Özgür Gündem*'i daralttığını düşünüyorum. O yüzden çift yönlü bir zararı oldu doğrusu.

in countering the repression of the state and the dirty war equally. Even though the Kurdish population and movement was the predominant component of the newspaper, it could not be reduced to it. Getting increasing validation from different sectors of the society and being read by Turks more and more, it was becoming a channel in which the reality of the state could be communicated. More than its existence as an archive, such breaking out of the racial segregation of reality, producing a gap in the sensual barriers rising along racial lines was dangerous for the order of the state. Throughout its trajectory, however, the newspaper lost its other components from mostly non-Kurdish origins and it became easier to fix and relate it to an origin, to a place.

The period when the newspaper faced the greatest violence from the state was not the period when the newspaper adopted its most radical voice; rather the newspaper was the target of immense state violence when it spoke with the voice of anyone who was wronged by the state. The most violent period, was not the most radical period of the newspaper's, but the time when it was dislocated from a fixed position of positive identity and assumed a more collective presence by giving voice to a wrong. Yet while exceeding its racially determined world, in the region its distribution and circulation was enabled along the lines of social intimacy which was also organized and mobilized by the Kurdish movement. As I have argued such diversity in the everyday practices produced differential degrees of affective relations with the newspaper. And faced with state practices of violence some people stayed away from the newspaper, while some journalists went to mountains.<sup>220</sup> Thus, the persistence of state violence and its increasing intensity led the newspaper community to assume more and more its Kurdish reference because of which it was

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<sup>220</sup> "Going to mountains" (*dağa gitmek*) is a euphemism for joining the armed forces of PKK. On the other hand this statement resulted from the fact that one can participate in the armed struggle only by way of literally going to the mountains.

stigmatized and differentially violated. The violence of the state, in this sense not only undid the newspaper community, but recomposed and coded it in a way that fixes its locus. Thus the violence of the state ethnicized the newspaper; it gave it back to its origins. Such a fixation and marking the newspaper as the newspaper of the Kurdish movement was the work of the state violence.

As for the newspaper and its public, state's violence was to detect and cleanse the heterogeneous being of the newspaper body. At the limit and at the end, as the final intervention, the sovereign stops the circulation of the newspaper and places it as the "radical". The locus of the newspaper became a radical place that could only stand in the mountains. Since the mountains and the heights were its own places, the sovereign carved and erased the locus of the newspaper and devoured it.

#### Of Legality and Blank Pages

*Yeni Politika*, the name of the newspaper at that time, was considered to be the newspaper of censorship. Most of the issues could not be printed and when it was not confiscated, the newspaper was published with mostly blank pages or without any significant news. And when eventually printed, the newspaper pages were full of news concerning the hardships that the newspaper encounters in the face of the state oppression. For the newspaper was embedded in an endless economy of violence and exposure to it. Unlike other means and technologies, the use of censorship became the primary tool for diminishing the material capacities of the newspaper: depriving it of its substance. Rather than aiming at the circulation of the newspaper, the state aimed at the substance of the newspaper by directly intervening into its material composition. Consequently, under these circumstances, when the newspaper was delivered to the shops and bought after innumerable hardships, one could not read anything but what happened to the newspaper was how it was censored, how its

journalists were imprisoned or killed, how their distributors or readers got attacked and so on.

The blank pages lead some readers to phone us to ask “Can we get an uncensored copy?” since they knew that the news in those pages were censored by the state. It was mostly from democratic societal organizations. In limited numbers we delivered uncensored copies to these readers by hand. The readers of *Yeni Politika*, continued buying the newspaper as a reaction to the censorship practiced by state. In one of our issues, we left one of the pages blank, and that issue reached a higher circulation. In the face of the censorship practiced by the state, people seemed to want the newspaper published, albeit with blank pages. Yet, within the process, blank pages became problem. People wanted to read news. (Journalist)<sup>221</sup>

A newspaper which is composed of blank pages cannot be read. Without the news there is no newspaper, the blank newspaper can only become a sign of something else. What was being bought was not the newspaper as a material but the newspaper as a symbol. It could be the sign of one’s dedication to the Kurdish movement or a gesture of help to the newspaper. In either case, the newspaper was not the organizing principle of such practices but became a means for attaining or performing something else. The same logic which enabled the blank newspaper to sell more, through time led it to become more and more commodified, in the sense of becoming the expression of a value of another thing. It became meaningful only in relation to something else, which degrades it to a sign of something else, deeper, outer, distant. The affective qualities in it were congealed, like that of a fetish, which had to be respected but kept at a distance. Without its ability to descend into everydayness and inform bodily practices, the newspaper became something which

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<sup>221</sup> Sayfaların boş olması, artık okuyucularımız tarafından oradaki haberin devlet tarafından sansürlendiği bilindiği için, okuyucularımızın zaman zaman bize ‘sansürsüz nüshasından alabilir miyiz?’ gibi telefonlar açmasına sebep oluyordu. Daha demokratik kitle örgütlerinden. Çok kısıtlı olmak koşulu ile sansürsüz bir kısım gazeteyi elden kendilerine ulaştırıyorduk. Zaten *Yeni Politika* gazetesinin okurları gazeteyi devletin uyguladığı sansürlere tepki olsun diye alıyordu. Bir sayımızda bir sayfamızı boş bırakmıştık, o sayı daha çok satmıştı. Devletin uyguladığı sansür karşısında insanlar gazete boş da olsa çıksın istiyor gibiydi. Artık süreç içerisinde boş sayfa sorun oluyordu. İnsanlar haber okumak istiyordu.



was considered to express something without the social and historical and material substance that gave rise to it.

The increasing practice of censorship, on the other hand, signalled the change in the primacy of technologies used for preventing the circulation of the newspaper. The legal measures were held to ensure that nothing subversive for the being of the state would find its place on those white pages. These subversive images and narratives would be purified and the page would be blank again until non-subversive pages could take their place. The newspaper was confiscated in the morning, and when it was allowed to be published, most of the newspaper was blank. Such legal measures pushed the bodies of both distributors and the paramilitaries off the frame by diminishing the role of state violence as well as preventing the contribution of the newspaper community to the circulation of the newspaper. Now it was clash of legalities, not bodies. Since it was already printed in a censored form, there was no need for paramilitaries to search for the newspapers, run after the newspaper distributors and kill the journalists. The encounters occurred in the legal domain, with notification papers and confiscation orders and so on, not in the domain of everyday practices performed at the level of bodies. The employment of legal means has drastically changed the everyday practices of the newspaper community and their bodily relation to the newspaper. The decrease in the intensity of the relation between bodies and the newspaper because of the increasing predominance of legal means, diminished the affective capacities of the newspaper.

#### Of Satellite Receivers

Meanwhile, as the struggle became more and more juridical and the state started to confiscate the newspaper while it was in print, a new medium, MED TV, started broadcasting from London in 1995. This new medium created enthusiasm among

Kurdish people, since it was the first television broadcasting in Kurdish besides Turkish and Arabic. When I asked an ex-worker of the newspaper in Diyarbakır about the decrease in the everyday distribution of the newspaper, he told me that it could mostly be due to the TV channels. He said: “Now there are TV channels in Kurdish you know, so they are interested in any more.”<sup>222</sup> The enthusiasm generated by the introduction of the TV channel, broadcasting mostly news and discussion programs about the dirty war and the Kurdish movement, was great when the situation of the newspaper at the time was considered. At a time when getting hold of the newspaper became harder and harder, and when finally succeeding there was nothing to read in it, MED TV became a more reliable source of information. Yet this technology also led to a clash between the people and the paramilitary and state forces, and the installation of such a culture also contributed to the decrease in the power of the newspaper. While the newspaper was the only source of getting news, MED TV presented another domain of information for which a collective fight was necessary, and coupled with the diminished capacities of the newspaper the multiplication of the sources dislocated the socio-symbolic attention given to it.

(In Diyarbakır between 1992 and 1995) the daily circulation of the newspaper was around 10000-15000. After the increasing repressions, the number decreased a little bit, for it could not be sold openly. Now, I don't know the circulation exactly but it should be around 2000. Let me tell you, now people are different; before their only tool of communication was the newspaper. There were no TVs or other media channels. In the last period, Med TV came out in 1995. Remember, Med TV started broadcasting then. And there were Qırıxs, you know. Those Ln1s (satellite receivers) were worth money. Some were stealing those Ln1s. Those satellite receivers, you know. Once I took the newspaper to a reader in Balıkçılar. A thief had stolen an Ln1. I gave a newspaper to a Qırıx. The thief approached said ‘Brother, I stole lots of Ln1s.’ This Qırıx replied ‘People are buying satellites to watch TV, and you are alienating them from the movement. Are not you a part of Diyarbakır people, Kurdish people?’ ‘Look’ he said ‘If I report you, look! Take these Ln1s back to where you got them from.’ The child said ‘How come?’ and he

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<sup>222</sup> “Normalde Kürtçe kanallar var ya artık ilgi duymuyorlar...”

said ‘Otherwise I will tell about you to friends and they will hang you up to a pole.’(Distributor)<sup>223</sup>

The issue of satellite receivers has not been discussed properly but for years it had been a reason of confrontation between the ‘security forces’ and the people in the Region. The establishment of MED TV in 1995 was like a revolution for the people in the Region who would watch TV in their own languages without prohibition for the first time. It did not take too long for satellite receivers to appear at the rooftops. This situation irritated the state in a short time and then the war of breaking satellite dishes and resisting state forces for protecting satellite dishes on the rooftops began. Even if the state succeeded partially in breaking down the satellite dishes in villages, and threatening the villagers not to buy new ones, it could not prevent them in cities. The state tried, yet in a big city like Diyarbakır, among thousands of it which rooftop will you get on to break down the satellite? Even when they were broken down, in two or three days satellite dishes appeared on rooftops again. Preventing them was impossible. Eventually, the people won the war on satellite dishes against the state”<sup>224</sup>

The introduction of this new technology, MED TV, took the place of the newspaper thanks to its representational character produced by its technological qualities. The audio-visual representation techniques composed of moving pictures with sounds create a sense of immediacy and give reality depth. For the movements of the

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<sup>223</sup> (Diyarbakır’da 92-95 arası gazetenin tirajı )10-15 bin civarıydı. O baskılar olduktan sonra biraz düştü tirajı. Açıkta satılmıyordu çünkü. Şu an, son dönemlerde bilemiyorum, 2 bin civarında var bildiğim. Ama sana söyleyeyim, son dönemde insanlar başka, insanların bir tek iletişim noktası gazeteydi. Çünkü ne televizyon vardı, ne bir şey. Bu son dönemlerde MED TV, 1995 yılı. Televizyon açıldı ya, MED TV. O zaman ki Qırıxlar vardı. Bu Ln1’ler para ediyordu. Ln1’leri çalan bir kesim vardı. Uydu alıcısı var ya. Çanak. Şimdi birisine gazete götürdüm, Balıkçılar’da. Bir hırsız Ln1 çalmıştı. Şimdi bir Qırıx’a gazete verdim. (Hırsız) geldi dedi ‘Abi ben o kadar Ln1 çalmışım.’ Bu Qırıx ona dedi ‘Millet izlemek için kendine çanak alıyın, sen götürisen onları hareketten soğutisen. Sen Diyarbakır milleti, Kürt milleti değilsen?’ ‘Bak’ dedi ‘ben seni şikayet edersem bak! Götür sen bu Ln1’leri nerden getirmişsen oraya takacaksın’ Çocuk dedi ‘Nasıl oluyor?’ dedi ‘Yoksa ben arkadaşlara seni söyleyeyim yarın seni direğe asarlar.

<sup>224</sup> Bölgedeki çanak anten mevzuu pek tartışılmadı ama "güvenlik güçleri" ile bölge halkı arasında yıllarca çatışma nedeni oldu. 95’te, MED TV’nin kuruluşu, ilk kez kendi dilinde yasaksız televizyon izleyecek bölge halkı için bir devrim niteliğindedir. Damlarda çanakların türemeye başlaması uzun sürmedi. Bu durum kısa süre içinde devleti de rahatsız etti ve sonrası devletle bölge halkı arasında damlarda çanak anten kırma-kırdırtmama savaşı oldu. Devlet her ne kadar köylerde çanakları kırıp, köylüleri bir daha almamaları yönünde tehdit etse ve kısmen başarmış olsa da şehirlerde bunun önüne geçemedi. Denemedi değil ama Diyarbakır gibi koca şehirde hangi dama çıkacaksın da çanağını sökeceksin? Ki çanağını söktüğün evlerin damlarında birkaç gün sonra çanaklar tekrar belirliyordu. Önüne geçmek imkânsızdı. Sonuçta devlet-halk arasındaki çanak anten savaşını halk kazandı.” \_Mesut Onatlı, Kürdistan’daki Çanak Antenler Neyi Anlatıyor (What does the Sateleitte Recievers in Kürdistan Tell), 05 February 2011, Avaible [online]:

[http://www.rojevakurdistan.com/turkce/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=984:kuerdistandaki-canak-antenler-neyi-anlatiyor&catid=47:kuerdistan&Itemid=107,](http://www.rojevakurdistan.com/turkce/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=984:kuerdistandaki-canak-antenler-neyi-anlatiyor&catid=47:kuerdistan&Itemid=107)

camera erases the process of montage, compared to the images on the newspaper, the reality is considered to be screened as such, as it happened in reality. This audio-visual technology, in this sense, produces a sense of undistorted reality whose factual qualities seek no validation. To understand Kurdish on the other hand, was for most of the Kurdish people easier than reading in Turkish. Broadcasting in Kurdish, then, both increased the number of Kurdish addressees of the news, while decreasing its Turkish components. The newspaper was published in Turkish; the use of Kurdish in MED TV also points to a change in the supposed publics of these two media. While for the Kurdish people, MED TV led to the organization of daily time according to the broadcasting hours of the TV (broadcasting only two hours a day at the beginning) the same could not be held true for others.

To be able to watch MED TV, the satellite dishes had to be installed on the rooftops of the houses. The dishes at the top of the roofs became another domain to be defended against the state's intervention. The confrontations led to the imprisonment of some because of having a satellite receiver, others got beaten for their supposed sympathy for the terrorists, and some were sued for watching MED TV. These practices endowed In1 receivers with affective qualities. Yet as can be understood from its technological character, the powers of these In1 receivers and watching MED TV were limited when it comes to constituting intensive affective attachments. The collectivity it informs is more cognitive as its material and technological qualities indicate. Unlike the newspaper, it does not need the movement of bodies for its daily circulation. And the materiality of the TV does not allow a bodily relation with it or inform embodied practices, which are the locus of affective investments. In the course of its broadcasting, the social intimacy produced through face to face interactions and bodily affections were said to be limited to the

TV workers alone. MED TV was a much more private and limited way of taking part in the public, since such a public can be formed only by paying attention<sup>225</sup> rather than exposing oneself to state violence. Of course violent encounters occurred because of the satellite receivers and dishes but compared to the story of the newspaper it was a more or less safer technology. In its way then, MED TV also contributed to the social death of the newspaper, by substituting its primacy and presenting a less-burdened way of being informed of the struggle and witnessing the criminality of the state.

#### The Voice that is in Need to be Heard

The circulation of the newspaper is understood as the voice of the people in terms of an acoustic code. Like the voice, the newspaper operates as something while not an organic part of the body, coming, from in-between the body, carrying the marks, wounds, sorrow and joy of the body on itself.<sup>226</sup> On the other hand, as the voice of the people, it speaks the truth; it refers to the immediate experience of presence without any mediation or distortion. The newspaper is regarded as the voice of the people in the sense that it is not a noise but a voice, not zoe but bios, not an existence reduced to animality, but one struggling for political ends.<sup>227</sup> In this regard, the newspaper was the political voice of the people that both expressed and judged the sufferings caused by state practices. Like voice, it extended beyond the body, it circulated on the surface of the social, it broke out of the confined reality of the sufferers as well as the reality of confinement.

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<sup>225</sup> Warner, "Publics and Counter-Publics"

<sup>226</sup> For a discussion on voice see Mladen Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2006), *Gaze and Voice as Love Objects* ed. by Renata Salecl and Slavoj Žižek (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996) and Slavoj Žižek, *Lookin Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992)

<sup>227</sup> Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More*

It is possible to regard the newspaper as the voice of the freedom of Kurds partially. *Özgür Gündem* emerged to sing gently and put into words the sufferings of Kurdish people, as well as peace, fraternity and injustices. (Journalist)<sup>228</sup>

There are various examples of this acoustic codification of the newspaper. The newspaper was supposed to express what was happening in the dirty war, by communicating these facts to others. In this way it was one of the tropes constituting a witnessing voice against the atrocities of the state. Yet looking at the historical we can't say that this task was accomplished. This is not to accuse the newspaper for not being able to construct this voice, but to set out an argument that requires a careful examination of the ways in which this failure took place. Together with the three seemingly simultaneous processes of the radicalization of the newspaper, the increase in censorship, and the introduction of TV channels, the practices of paramilitaries and state officials diminished the capacity of the newspaper to communicate, engage and relate. Yet there is more in these socio-political transformations, which requires us to dwell upon the question of witnessing and communicating state violence.

Hunger strikes as a form of protest are about impossibility, obligation. If you think of places in Turkey and around the world, where people resort to hunger strikes, you see that they are mostly people who do not have any other choice, for instance those in prisons. There are not many protest alternatives in prisons. However, how true or right is this regarding a newspaper? Before judging it as right or wrong, one has to underline the issue of impossibility. Concerning the injustices and wrongs done to a newspaper, the most important protest that it could stage would consist of providing proof documents or making different sorts of news about the injustices inflicted upon it. However, we were in such a position that using this kind of a protest we were not able raise our voice and make ourselves heard. In proportion with state oppression, neither the state, nor the press, nor even democratic societal organizations saw or heard us. Thus in a way we were obliged to resort to other venues through which we could get our voice heard and tell about what had happened to us. Marches, funerals and hunger strikes could be

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<sup>228</sup> Gazeteyi Kürtlerin, kısmi olarak, özgürlüğünün sesi olarak mütalaa etmek mümkündür. *Özgür Gündem*, Kürt halkının ıstırapları yanında, genel olarak barış, kardeşlik ve zulmü, oranın halkının ıstırabını, eski deyimle terennüm etmek, dillendirmek için ortaya çıkmıştı.

regarded as forms of protest and ways of making our voice heard which emerged as a result of the impossibilities of that period. (Journalist)<sup>229</sup>

While the newspaper was supposed to give a voice to the sufferings of the people, it found itself face to face with the same mechanisms that produced such sufferings in the first place. Targeted, violated, humiliated, still it did not stop. Entrapped in the very sensible topography that it strove to challenge, the newspaper day by day became inaudible, it could not any longer activate proper reactions against state violence. This situation led the newspaper workers to rely on their bodies to be heard, like the newspaper community who relied on their bodies to be heard, to preserve the circulation of the newspaper. They had no other means remained, but their bodies. 'Sharing the fate of the people' extended beyond any sense of metaphor and the literality of such a statement is the actual loss of voice. State violence re-tuned the senses in a way which also made the newspaper inaudible. This transformed the character of the representation into what was in need of representation. In this way the newspaper was included in the same reality that it was supposed to communicate, give a voice to and tell. The sovereign expenditure of a huge quantum of energy, re-coded it into its own topography again by diminishing its ability to give voice and fine-tuned the sensory experiences of the subjects towards the newspaper.<sup>230</sup> Thus, rather than being the voice of Kurdish people, they shared the same fate with the Kurdish people: the newspaper now strove to make its own

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<sup>229</sup> Açlık grevleri, bir eylem biçimi olarak imkansızlıktır, mecburiyettir. Dünyada da Türkiye'de de açlık grevine başvuru yapılan mekanları göz önüne aldığımızda daha çok imkansız ve mecbur kişiler, gruplar açlık grevi yaparlar, cezaevleri örneğin. Cezaevlerinde fazla bir eylem alternatifi olmuyor. Oysa bu bir yayıncı organı için ne kadar doğru. Doğruluğundan yanlışlığından ziyade, o imkansızlığı dile getirmek gerekebilir. Gazetenin en büyük eylemi, yayıncı organının mağdur olduğu konularda da ortaya koyacağı belgelerdir, yapacağı haberlerdir. Fakat biz onlarla artık sesimizi duyuramaz hale gelmiştik, çünkü devlet de basın da hatta demokratik kitle örgütleri de bizi görmez, duymaz, işitmez hale gelmişti, devlet baskısıyla orantılı olarak. Biz de farklı biçimde sesimizi duyurabilmek için, başımıza ne geldiğini anlatabilmek için farklı kanallara başvurmak zorunda kaldık. Yürüyüşler, cenaze törenleri, açlık grevleri, basın toplantıları... o dönemin imkansızlıkları dolayısıyla ortaya çıkan eylem biçimleridir, ses duyurma biçimleridir denebilir.

<sup>230</sup> Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*

voice heard, which was coded as inaudible. Or, in other words, the newspaper literally became the voice of the people, they succeed in this task to such an extent that it became in-affective in making itself heard. In this sense the newspaper needed another newspaper to communicate what it had gone through while communicating what others had gone through.

### On Witnessing Violence and Destruction of Facticity

In both *On Photography* and *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag, was concerned with the question of whether photographs have the ability to “communicate the suffering of others in such a way, that viewers might be prompted to alter their political assessment of war.”<sup>231</sup> Through her works, she changes her positions, yet she asserts the inability of narrative to elicit such alteration, for “while narratives make us understand: photographs do something else. They haunt us.”<sup>232</sup> While narratives can provide an ethical pathos, photographs can strike us only momentarily. The photographs depicting the practices of violence, then, are devoid of any ability to emplot, (of inserting the event into a collective narrative which always implies a perspective or a frame that is both social and moral) while the work of emplotment is left to the medium of narrative alone. Without narrativization there is no telling power of photography.

Re-examining the questions put forward by Sontag, Butler argues that “the movement of the image or the text outside of confinement is a kind of ‘breaking out’, so that even though neither image nor the poetry can free anyone from prison, or stop a bomb or, indeed, reverse the course of the war, they nevertheless do provide the conditions for breaking out of the quotidian acceptance of war and for a more

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<sup>231</sup> Butler, *Frames of War*, p.68

<sup>232</sup> Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Picador, 2003), p.83



generalized horror and outrage that will support and impel calls for justice and an end to violence.”<sup>233</sup> And when circulability is destroyed “the report on the destructive act circulates in the place of what is destroyed.”<sup>234</sup> She is more optimistic than Sontag, in the sense that she believes the representations of war can affect the bodies in ways that can alter the interpretative schemas through which lives are separated as liveable and non-liveable.

While she is discussing the inability of the photographs from the Abu Garib prison to arouse sufficient public response against US policies, her discussion rests on the terrains of representability, the limits of the frames used in visual representations, the seeing subjects’ inability to respond ethically and so on. Yet she does not question the relationship between state violence and facticity, the phenomenology of pain and communicability, the paradoxes of the gesture of witnessing and the socio-political limits of compassion. Works on the cultural politics of political violence, argue that political violence does not only produce objects of representation, in forms of mutilated bodies, disfigured corpses, destroyed artefacts, ruins and etc., but also acts upon the very act of representation itself. Political violence not only determines the object of representation but also the relation of representation. In the first half of the 1990s, *Özgür Gündem* was circulating on the surface of the social, containing the images and also the narratives of sufferings of people in the face of state violence. However, rather than informing the public in ethical ways and mobilizing it against the perpetrators of such violence via the affect of hatred and outrage, *Özgür Gündem* itself became the victim of such suffering. To put it in Butler’s terms, together with the evidence of the event, the report on the act of destruction was also destroyed.

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<sup>233</sup> Butler, *Frames of War*, p.11

<sup>234</sup> Ibid p.10

The news composed of images and narratives of the victims of state violence were not able to elicit feelings and even the atrocities against the newspaper could not find an echo in the public. Denied factual validity and ethical response on behalf of the spectators/readers, news as facts, were inserted into the universe of the archive. The reign of the archive opened these facts to historical inquiry in the midst of their temporal and spatial presence. In this way, the facts of the present day were dislocated as objects for the historical inquiry yet to come. In the midst of the present, the facticity of these facts needed historical reconstruction. Today, 20 years later, we are still debating on the number of people disappeared, villages that were burnt down, people killed by the paramilitaries, or forced to migrate from their lands. Yet the newspaper was writing about them while these events were taking place. And this writing down of the events themselves led the newspaper to share their fate and consequently to be enumerated among these events.

Today it is said that 3 millions of people migrated from their villages and cities, their villages were burnt down, their villages were evacuated. This did not happen in one or two days. It was a process. It began in Şırnak. Şırnak news was also censored. As I said, these news were published. *Gündem* wrote them down. This village was evacuated, that village was burnt down. They were on *Gündem*. However, they (these news stories) were used to file charges against us. And today they talk about the burning down of villages of three million (back then). (Journalist)<sup>235</sup>

Marc Nichanian argues that in times of collective massacre the sovereign literally destroy any proof that will witness to the fact, but also destroys the facticity of the events. “Because the genocidal machine is in its essence, denegating and negationist machine...consequently its operations can never become a fact. For a fact is that in the face of which no ‘different opinion’ can ever occur...the machine is dedicated to

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<sup>235</sup> Bugün deniyor ki, 3 milyon insan köylerinden, kentlerinden göç etti, köyleri yakıldı, köyleri boşaltıldı. E bir günde olmadı, iki günde olmadı. Bu bir süreçti. Şırnak’ta başladı. Şırnak haberi de toplatıldı. Dediğim gibi bu haberler çıktı. *Gündem* yazdı bunları. Filan köy boşaltıldı, filan köy yakıldı. Yazdı. Ama bunlar suç konusu yapıldı. Ve bugün de işte üç milyon kişinin köylerinin yandığından bahsediliyor.

destroy the very notion of fact.”<sup>236</sup> A fact is a shared reality, something against which no one can hold a different opinion, yet genocide as he argues, is something whose facticity is destroyed to such an extent that the events have to be proven anew with each historical debate and inquiry.<sup>237</sup> What is at stake is not the lack of proof or evidence, on the contrary there were every kind of documents, testimonies and so on. Yet what is at stake is not the lack of evidence but its inability to assume the quality of facts. In this sense, violence works not only to destroy any evidence but also produces the inherent limit of the representation of the event by the archivization of facts, thus opening the factuality of the facts to debate.

The destruction of facticity, however, is not only the result of a genocidal machine but is built into the very phenomenology of the pain itself. As Scarry argues, while to inflict pain is to be certain, to be in pain is to be in doubt. “For the person in pain...having pain may come to be the most vibrant example of what it is to have certainty, while for the other person it is so elusive that ‘hearing about pain’ may exist as the primary model of what it is to have doubt.”<sup>238</sup> The infliction of pain results in undoing of the world of the sufferer and the loss of voice and doing it again in the image and the voice of the perpetrator. The experience of pain is marked with incommunicability, since the reality of the sufferers is always doubtful. Let me give you two examples from the testimonies about the Diyarbakır Prison, which is regarded by prisoners as the Auschwitz of Kurds.

Aziz Nesin said ‘Boys, lots of things have been told about this prison. You are among the ones who had been there, I want to hear from you.’ I said ‘Ok.’

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<sup>236</sup> Marc Nichanian, *The Historiographic Perversion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p.27

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, p.4

I started to tell. Then Mesut continued. Then I told again. So, we told him about twenty seven, twenty eight events. While we were telling about these Aziz Nesin was lost in thought. Then at a point he turned to us and said ‘Boys, I thought of my imagination as sophisticated. However, I see that Kurds’ imagination exceeds mine.’ That is, he did not believe in what we told him.<sup>239</sup>

If our conversation will be recorded and published, then I want to emphasize a number of points. First of all, I apologize from the readers since I may not correctly remember the dates of the events I will tell about. Secondly, the stories I will be telling may sound exaggerated, believe me they are not. On the contrary, I will try to use moderate expressions. I made these points at the beginning, because what happened there was unbelievable. Therefore nobody believes us. Sometimes when I think about it even I fall into doubt and tell myself ‘Things that happened to us, were they real?’<sup>240</sup>

The doubt surrounding the experience and the reality of the prisoners is so intense that even they themselves are not sure if such things happened or not. “Whatever pain achieves, it achieves in part through its unsharability...by bringing about this absolute split between one’s sense of one’s own reality and the reality of other persons.”<sup>241</sup> According to Scarry, the unsharability of the pain is ensured “through its resistance to language.”<sup>242</sup> Yet the split is not only about the signifiers but also the signified. Not only there is no adequate way of signifying such experience, but even if they are told in minute detail, they cannot arouse in the listener the reactions anticipated by the teller, for these experiences cannot be located in the shared world

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<sup>239</sup> Aziz Nesin ‘Çocuklar’ dedi, ‘bu cezaevi ile ilgili çok şey söylendi ancak siz orada canlı yaşayanlardansınız, sizden dinlemek istiyorum’ dedi. ‘İyi’ dedim. Ben anlatmaya başladım...Benden sonra Mesut devam ediyor. Sonra ben anlatıyorum...Neyse böyle 27-28 tane olayı Aziz Nesin’e anlattık. Tabii biz bunları anlatırken Aziz Nesin çok dalmıştı...Sonra bir ara dönüp bize baktı ve şunu söyledi: ‘Yahu çocuklar ben kendi hayal dünyamı çok geniş biliyordum. Ama bakıyorum ki, Kürtlerin hayal dünyası benimkinden daha çok genişmiş.’ Yani anlattıklarımıza inanmadı... Serbesti, *Diyarbakır 5 No’lu Askeri Cezaevi*(Diyarbakır Military Prison no 5), Sayı 14, Eylül-Ekim 2003, p.117

<sup>240</sup> Eğer burada konuşacaklarımız kayda geçirilip, yazılı olarak yayınlanacaksa, birkaç noktayı vurgulamak istiyorum. Birincisi, peşinen okurdan özür diliyorum ki, anlatacağım olayların tarihleriyle ilgili yanlışlarım olabilir. İkincisi, belki anlatacağım abartı gibi gelebilir, inan ki abartılı değil, tam aksine ölçülü ifadeleri kullanmaya çalışacağım. Onun için başta bir kayıt koydum, orada yaşananlar inanılır gibi değildi. O yüzden kimse bize inanmıyor. Ben bile bazen düşündüğümde hayrete düşünüyorum ve ‘Acaba o yaşadıklarımız gerçek miydi?’ diyorum. Serbesti, *Diyarbakır 5 No’lu Askeri Cezaevi*(Diyarbakır Military Prison no 5), Sayı 14, Eylül-Ekim 2003

<sup>241</sup> Scarry, *The Body in Pain* , p.5

<sup>242</sup> Ibid. p.5

of facts. The experience of pain separates the world of the listener from the world of the sufferer. Rather than pertaining only to the inexpressibility of the pain, however, the doubt haunting the reality of the victims of state violence stems from the destruction of their facticity. The impossibility haunting the constitution of shared reality and reaction, the ability of these events to assume the quality of facts, also point to a decrease in their affective capacities. The re-coding of the newspaper into a position of inaudibility goes hand in hand with the destruction of its affective capacities by all means. Therefore the destruction of facticity is also related to the destruction of capacities to relate and communicate, like the loss of language.

Yet some scholars writing on the representation of violence argues that the non-communicability of violence results from the inability of others to relate to the pain of others. Veena Das argues that the incommunicability of pain is not only a failure of the intellect but also a fallacy of the soul.<sup>243</sup> In other words, it is not only the inability of these experiences to assume their facticity, but also the inability of the rest of the public to construct the facticity of these events. However these calls remind us of the urge for compassion and empathy, which leaves the facticity of the facts to the mercy of the dominant public culture and it is this which enables such atrocities to take place. If we learn to touch, to relate to the victims of state violence in proper ways, Das argues, the language could be restored again. The case of *Özgür Gündem*, however, reminds us that the language was there but it could not signify anything. State violence having both diminished the powers of the newspaper and the spectators in dramatic ways, crafted the domain of their possible relations in a way that made touching other impossible. It reminds us that the border separating the spectators of violence from the suffering of the victims is not only external, i.e., it is

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<sup>243</sup> Veena Das, "Language and body: Transactions in the Construction of Pain." In Veena Das, *Life and Words: Violence and The Descent Into The Ordinary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007)

not simply that people do not know properly what is going on. But more importantly it is internal and faced with such representations in various forms witnessing to the realities of state violence, people are stuck in doubt and the representations are deprived of their facticity.

The problem pertaining to the representation of violent practices, then, is much more complicated and deeper. It is not the question of how to represent it properly, but also how to endow the representations with the power of representability. This brings us back to the operations of the constitutive law that governs the domains of intelligibility, legibility, factuality and so on, as well as the domains of sensory experience which separates the worlds of the sufferers from the world of the listeners. In this sense, one should re-question the function of law in the validation and positioning of facts as well as in the separation and bringing together of the worlds. The violence of law, the law of violence, determine what takes place between the earth and the sky, by splitting again and again the domain of the sensible and also the domain of the factual. The law becomes the ultimate horizon against which the reality of minor realities is tested. We have to be reminded how the capture of the movements, energies and affects of the bodies under this sky, endows the law with such mystical qualities. Before anything else, one should challenge the force of this law, for any dialogue between two worlds to begin. And this challenge takes place in the domain of the sovereignty, where bodies are figured and disfigured, decomposed and recomposed, put to or exposed to death, binded or unbinded. In the midst of state violence, every act of representation is disclosed through the violent appropriation of the bodies. In the face of state violence, no neutral position unmediated by violence is possible. In this sense there is no witnessing of the witness. Rather than searching for proof in the testimonies and

representations of violence, or in other words transforming testimonies into archives to make them function as proof, we must turn our attention to the existing coordinates of the sensible and the factual. We have to see that the archive, the becoming-proof of these representations, is coextensive with state violence.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION

In April 2011, the daily *Günlük* newspaper declared that it would be published under the name of *Özgür Gündem* again. Again. May be the right word would be still. 19 years later, after numerous deaths, tortures, threats and still untold humiliations. The name *Özgür Gündem* reactivated the memories of all histories and stories of violence, as it reactivated the discussions about the fate of *Özgür Gündem*. While the newspaper has been published until now with different names, the legal and extralegal state practices targeting the circulation of the newspaper becomes a matter of discussion only with the name of *Özgür Gündem*. This fact reveals the position of previous newspapers, which are considered to be the successors of *Özgür Gündem*. As an ex-worker of *Özgür Gündem* recounts, readers continued to ask for *Özgür Gündem* while buying its successors. In face of *Özgür Gündem*, the successive newspapers operated as its metonyms.

In this study, I analyze the peculiar characteristics of *Özgür Gündem* as a material-object which circulates daily. Rather than conceiving materiality as a passive domain to be made meaningful by human agents, I conceive the circulation of *Özgür Gündem* as a material which intervenes in the organization of everyday practices. By following its everyday circulation and the everyday practices organized around its circulation, I focus on what it did to bodies, places and other material objects. So I ask, how did the circulation of *Özgür Gündem* affect the bodies, places and other materials it touched? *Özgür Gündem*'s peculiarity, I argue, cannot be analyzed if its affective dimension is underestimated. Affects, as employed here, refer to the interplay between different bodies –material or human – in terms of their effect on each other's capacities to endure, communicate, relate and engage. By the



work of affects, the daily practices that give rise to *Özgür Gündem* are incorporated in and transmitted by its material composition.

In Chapter 1, I tried to describe the historical and social context as well as the quotidian practices that intensified the affective dimension of *Özgür Gündem*. Through the affective investments produced by the state practices and the practices of the newspaper community, I argue that *Özgür Gündem* became an object that could change one's bodily-material composition drastically. In Chapter 2, I argued that the legal and extralegal state practices aimed at preventing the circulation of the newspaper, worked to produce sorrowful affects which diminished one's bodily capacities severely. In this sense, by censoring news, killing journalists, attacking distributors, taking readers into custody and burning down coffee houses that sell *Özgür Gündem*, the state strived to weaken the capacities of the newspaper as well as the bodies to relate. The overall state practices, I argued strived to produce an affective economy of sorrow, which coded *Özgür Gündem* as harmful for the bodily compositions of other bodies and materials, while making every effort to diminish the affective intensity of the newspaper.

In Chapter 3, I underlined the operations of another affective economy that enabled the circulation of *Özgür Gündem* in the face of devastating state violence. Through the work of sublimation, the newspaper's circulation became a vital issue, a collective duty which was indispensable for the perseverance of the self and the sense of collectivity. Various practices that enabled the circulation of *Özgür Gündem*, like writing for the newspaper, transporting, distributing, selling or reading it, required living in exposure to state violence. I argued that these practices were embedded in an economy of joy, which coded *Özgür Gündem* as sublime and thus worked to increase the affective capacities of the newspaper, bodies and materials. After 1995, I

argued, the newspaper entered into the social death phase of its life trajectory. In Chapter 4, I pointed out the decrease in the affective capacities of *Özgür Gündem* in the sense that its capacities to communicate facts and activate bodily practices lost their force severely. I argued that *Özgür Gündem*'s daily circulation was reduced to the work of the archive, which, by stripping the facts from factuality, opened them to historical investigation. In other words, I argued that the decrease in the affective capacity of the newspaper opened the factuality of the news to debate and transformed these facts into debatable propositions that had to be documented, validated as facts via historical inquiry.

This study can be read as an example of how the political attempts of the Kurdish community to demonstrate their sense of reality is met with and countered by paramilitary and legal practices that widened the gap that further separated their reality from that of the rest of the country or that produced their reality as separate. Of course, the story of the circulation of *Özgür Gündem* does not offer a totally comprehensive framework for understanding the Kurdish problem in Turkey. I have to admit that I could not sufficiently discuss either the Turkish political history or the Kurdish political movement. Furthermore, I have to admit that I could not give a comprehensive account of the socio-historical context of and the political-legal climate of the 1990s. I hope, the narratives quoted and the events told do offer a sense of the 1990s if not a historical account of it. For in this study where I attempted to tell the particular story of *Özgür Gündem* with a special emphasis on its affective dimension, I focused on the senses of everyday experiences and the production of affects. The stories are told alongside the affective, as the dimension from which the historical, social and symbolic dimensions are told. It is this telling which prompted me to concentrate on the affective as what has remained over the 20 years that span

the events and their telling. What is at stake is not the predominance of the affective over these domains but an effort to answer the question of how the historical, social and the symbolic can be conceived from the perspective of the affective. How can bringing forth the question of affects and senses contribute to historical, legal, symbolic accounts of the Kurdish problem? In which ways the history of *Özgür Gündem* told from such a perspective, can tell us about the present condition of the Kurdish problem?

I think this study provides us with two related insights to the Kurdish problem. To focus on the affective dimension of the legal and extralegal encounters between the state officials and the Kurdish community enables us to see how on the one hand every encounter reactivates a history, thus is a repetition, and, on the other hand, how at every moment, every encounter is considered to be without a history, thus considered anew. For instance, the reactions of Kurds to single events are considered as excessive of the requirements of the situation, irrational, and witness to the tendency of Kurdish political organizations to resort to violence. I think what reactivates such responses is more about how the situation affects the bodies, which previous event it is linked with, which events it brings to mind and so on, than the actual composition and results of the event.<sup>244</sup> The historical accumulation of affects through lived experiences and told stories produces the excess of the situation. And, the disappeared bodies, closing of political parties, summary executions and so on, reminds one of the 1990s she lived, the 1980s she heard, and the 1970s she listened to... However, I do not claim here that the material composition of singular events are not significant, of course they are. What I want to underline is that even if the

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<sup>244</sup> See Protevi on the 'history' triggered by the images in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. John Protevi, *Political Affect*

event is of particular importance, what fuels the excessive responses is the historical accumulation of affects, the work of affects as bodily memory.

On the other hand however, there is the constant erasure of history. What regards these experiences as excessive and irrational is the constitution of the moderate and the rational without history. According to the predominant view, there is no history to these responses, nothing has happened in history, and nothing is happening historically. The predominant negationist attitude rests on the constant denial that there is a history to the excess. It negates the historical wrong with the historicity of the wrong. According to the predominant negationist attitude, nothing happened in the 1990s as nothing happened throughout the modern history of Turkey, at the same time that the Kurdish political actors claim the indispensability of the recognition of the historical wrong done to them for any idea of reconciliation. A discussion cannot take place. The dialogue cannot begin. What is discussed is how the discussion can take place, with whom it will take place, on which issues and from which perspective will it take place.

The life trajectory of *Özgür Gündem* in this sense can be very illuminating for any discussion of the historical experience of the 1990s, its contribution to the Kurdish problem, and the predominance of the negationist discourse. *Özgür Gündem* could be considered as an attempt to endow the catastrophic quotidian experiences, especially in the Region, with facticity. Even if they are not objective truths, at least facts are based on a shared sense of reality, a shared understanding of what happened, what is happening. *Özgür Gündem*, in this sense, was one of the most effective domains in which the Kurdish community worked to become an equal partner in a dialogue whose words had the character of facts. This line of argumentation moves us away from any understanding of politics based on

communicative action, which “presupposes partners always already constituted as such and discursive forms that entails a speech community.”<sup>245</sup> It argues that “political argumentation is at one and the same time the demonstration of a possible world in which the argument could count as an argument, one that is addressed by a subject that is qualified to argue, over an identified object, to an addressee who is required to see the object and to hear the argument that he ‘normally’ has no reason either to see or to hear. It is the construction of a paradoxical world that puts together two separate worlds.”<sup>246</sup>

As I argued, bringing forth what happened in the 1990s is not an easy gesture. Documenting is not enough, neither is monumenting. There are no facts. First the world should be made anew. Yet at this point we have to add that such political argumentation that strives to put together two separate worlds is not free of violence. The world is done and undone through violent practices. It is the bodies who are mobilized, exposed to violence, targeted and humiliated that produce the capacities of words and worlds. Paying attention to the work of affects rather than facts, to the sense of reality rather than the reality itself can offer new ways for communicating and relating to the 1990s.

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<sup>245</sup> Ranciere, *Dissensus*, p.38

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, p.39

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