The Body After

Semyanî Perîzade

Fatih Tan



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Fatih Tan

Translated by Gülşah Akdoğan Tan

The Aesthetics and Theory Series

FIREZZ Publishing
E-book, First Edition, November 2026

Editor: Mahsum Çiçek
Proofreading: İbrahim Dalar
Cover photograph: Zeynik
Cover and interior design: Kabil Çiçek
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Fatih Tan: Between 2019 and 2023, he regularly wrote on Kurdish artistic production—including music, contemporary art, cinema, and books—for *Gazete Duvar*. His writings have appeared in a range of publications and platforms, including *T24, Kitap24, Kürd Araştırmaları Dergisi, Le Monde Diplomatique Kurdî, Zarema, Argonotlar, Mimesis*, and *Felsefeciler Derneği*. More recently, he has continued to publish writings focusing on Kurdish artistic production in *Sanatatak* magazine. Tan, who has also contributed texts to art catalogues, has had some of his writings translated into French, Italian, and English. In *Unlimitedrag* magazine, he published a series of essays titled "Unofficial Texts," comprising writings on works by Althusser, Artaud, Bataille, Beckett, Benjamin, Blanchot, Brecht, Breton, Debord, Genet, Kafka, Kandinsky, Klee, Klossowski, Sartre, and Tzara. In the same magazine, he authored a crime-fiction series titled "Unofficial Murders," in which he imagined iconic painters of the art world—Basquiat, Picasso, Warhol, Mondrian, Klimt, Hopper, Cézanne, and Kahlo—as "victims." Together with Mahsum Çiçek, he published the monographs *Walid Siti: In Pursuit of the Mountains in the Shadow of Babylon* and *Mahmut Celayir: Following the Shadow* as part of the *avestART* series published by Avesta Publishing. The third monograph in the series, on Bahram Hajou, is currently in preparation for publication. He is also the founding editor of *FIREZZ Kurdish Contemporary Art* magazine.

Semyanî Perîzade: Born on May 20, 1981, Semyanî Perîzade is a Kurdish artist, musician, and actor. She was the youngest of eleven children. In 1992–1993, she moved with her family to Mersin, where she became involved in theatre and received training in acting. In 2009, Perîzade moved to Istanbul and studied acting and vocal performance at the Semiha Berksoy Opera Foundation. She also pursued studies in creative drama and yoga. Continuing her artistic practice across theatre, cinema, and music, Perîzade played the lead role in *Peşk*, a short film directed by Volkan Uludağ, and also contributed to the film's dramaturgy and art direction. With Kurdish at the center of her musical practice, Perîzade released *Xewna Berevajî* in 2020 and *ALO* in 2021, the latter featuring lyrics and music by Perîzade herself. Bringing Kurdish music into dialogue with different musical forms in her work, she also explores issues such as womanhood, gender, identity, and freedom. Semyanî Perîzade continues her artistic practice today. Currently preparing a new album, she continues to work in the studio.

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Foreword

A Body Beyond Representation, Another Sensory Realm

FIREZZ Publications' first digital book, *Ertesi Beden, Semyanî Perîzade*, is a theoretical text written by Fatih Tan on Semyanî Perîzade. Launching our publishing journey with the Turkish and English digital editions of this book is significant in that it reflects FIREZZ's approach to contemporary Kurdish art and its publishing philosophy. Having Semyanî Perîzade as the subject of our first book signifies a choice about the bodies, images, and sensory experiences through which art can be thought, going beyond merely documenting an artist's practice.

In addressing contemporary Kurdish art, we focus on artistic practices that fall outside established modes of representation and the intellectual spaces opened up by them. We do not evaluate an artist's visibility solely through their career, the quantity of their output, institutional acceptance, or the social values they are presumed to represent. Instead, we look at how an artistic practice engages with existing forms of perception, which assumptions it makes open to question, and how it opens up new

possibilities for thought. *Ertesi Beden, Semyanî Perîzade*, beyond being one of the first publications to embody this approach, also brings to light one of the central concerns of FIREZZ's publishing direction.

In his book, Fatih Tan does not treat Semyanî Perîzade as the subject of a chronological biography or as an artist to be evaluated through the technical characteristics of her musical production. By turning to her body, appearance, music, and everyday existence, he questions how socially accepted modes of representation operate. At the center of this approach lies Jacques Rancière's concept of *dissensus*. *Dissensus*, rather than a simple disagreement, is the questioning of the sensory order that determines what is visible, what is audible, and whose speech is recognized as meaningful**.** The fact that two people may see the same body yet not see the same thing in it, or hear the same sound yet interpret it differently, forms the basis of this dissensus.

Semyanî Perîzade's existence encounters established modes of representation precisely at this point. When her queer identity, marginal appearance, and musical persona do not align with expectations surrounding the socially acceptable image of an artist, what emerges is not merely a question of identity. The criteria that determine how an artist should look, how she should behave, which values she should represent, and what she should say also become open to question. Thus, the body ceases to be an object spoken about and becomes a realm of existence that renders the boundaries of the representational order visible.

This rupture from representation cannot be reduced to a conscious act of opposition in which the artist positions herself against tradition. Rather than taking one side of a predetermined opposition, Semyanî's existence reveals how the criteria that produce such oppositions operate. It demonstrates that the distinctions between traditional and modern, acceptable and excluded, legitimate and marginal are neither self-evident nor immutable. Her music and bodily presence make it possible to consider the social expectations through which these distinctions are constructed. It is here that a space beyond representation

emerges: a sensory experience that not only challenges the existing order but also reopens the question of what that order considers worthy of representation.

For this reason, *Ertesi Beden, Semyanî Perîzade* does not seek to defend or glorify Semyanî Perîzade, nor to transform her into a new ideal figure of the artist. Taking her existence as its point of departure, the book proposes a reconsideration of the established criteria of art and social life. Rather than seeking to prove Semyanî's value as an artist according to predetermined norms, it asks which bodies and experiences these norms exclude. Such an approach, rather than tying the artist's visibility to the outcome of a mechanism of acceptance, places importance on questioning the very conditions of visibility.

For FIREZZ Kurdish Contemporary Art Magazine, this beginning carries particular significance. Rather than approaching contemporary Kurdish art solely through specific aesthetic categories, historical narratives, or representations of identity, we want to make space for practices that expand the intellectual and sensory boundaries of art. The artistic practices emerging across different geographies and social conditions within Kurdish art encompass experiences too diverse to be contained within a single mode of representation. Making this diversity visible requires not only including more artists in our publications but also reconsidering the criteria we rely on when thinking about art.

In this sense, *Ertesi Beden, Semyanî Perîzade* is more than an inaugural book; it establishes a direction for the questions around which our publications might take shape. It opens up for discussion art's relationship with established modes of representation, the ways in which the body is socially interpreted, and the conditions under which sensory experiences come to be accepted. This text on Semyanî Perîzade explores the possibilities of thinking about contemporary Kurdish art through its internal differences and dissensus.

In launching FIREZZ Publications with *Ertesi Beden, Semyanî Perîzade* as our first book, we embrace a publishing approach that seeks to rethink art's relationship with established representations

and to make space for experiences that emerge beyond them. For sometimes, a new way of thinking becomes possible when a body previously denied visibility, a voice previously denied meaning, and an experience not yet defined begin to transform the way we think about art.

Editor Mahsum Çiçek

Preface

"But why a body? Because only a body can be toppled (killed) and raised up; because only a body can touch or refrain from touching. A soul cannot do such a thing."

Nancy, 2020, p. 101

In writing this book, I had no intention of producing a biography or of rigidly defending the body of a particular figure. From the very beginning, what set me in motion was not the life or artistic production of a particular figure, but the intellectual, bodily, and sensory field that opened up around her. For this reason, *The Body After, Semyanî Perîzade* should be read less as a life story than as a testimony to a mode of encounter, a mode of perception, and a practice of thinking. To put it more plainly—or perhaps, if we say from the outset what we will ultimately say at the end of the book—this book you are now reading seeks to examine how Semyanî Perîzade's marginal appearance and queer identity, through their sheer existence, displace the traditional discourse and established modes of representation. The issue here is not so much that Semyanî consciously struggles against these established forms, but rather that her body, appearance, and mode of existence already come into confrontation with a representational order that has been established. Throughout the book, we will seek to explore how this encounter takes place, what intellectual and aesthetic consequences it produces, and what this displacement means.

In this respect, the book points to a dissensus—in the sense of Jacques Rancière's terminology—emerging from a *distinction* in which those who say the same thing do not, in fact, mean the same thing, by stepping outside the regime of *consensus* expected to be established between the reader and the text. This *dissensus*, without being reduced to any simple opposition, describes the

widening distance between what is heard and what is said, and between what is seen and what is made meaningful. Thus, the book does not point toward agreement or consensus; rather, it traces a distinction, a shift, and a displacement.

The relationship I have established with Semyanî Perîzade should not be understood as an artist–writer relationship in the classical sense. I did not approach her as an object of representation; rather, I understood her as a passage, an interval, a point of rupture through which thought passes. Her existence is not limited to an aesthetic (musical) production; it is a way of coming into contact with the boundaries of what is established, what is taken to be natural, and what is accepted without question. This contact sometimes produces a disturbing experience, and more often one that is difficult to explain. The book you hold in your hands is precisely an attempt to understand the conditions that make this experience possible.

For me, the central issue is not whether a piece of music is good or bad; such a distinction cannot, in itself, provide a decisive criterion. What matters here is how the body that produces the music is positioned by social mechanisms. In other words, it is a question of which bodies are coded as acceptable and which as unacceptable. What concerns me here, therefore, is less aesthetic production itself than how its effects on bodies and the senses are constituted. The question of which sound counts as speech, which body is regarded as visible (legitimate), and which experience is excluded from the outset—again, in the sense indicated by Rancière—constitutes the central axis of this book. Thus, throughout the book, the tension between the aesthetic and the social has deliberately been left open as a contradiction. For this contradiction is not merely a superficial conflict; it is a condition for thinking and for reconstructing.

As I wrote the text, I continually tested the limits of my own aesthetic perspective. I did not want to take refuge entirely in a theoretical framework, nor did I want to settle for a purely intuitive mode of narration. Instead, I tried to develop a language that moves back and forth between these two realms, at times

breaking, intensifying, and changing direction. The issue I address was too broad to be contained within the boundaries of a single discipline or method. Accordingly, it is a deliberate choice that the theoretical framework of the text is constructed along a multidisciplinary trajectory encompassing not only musical and poetic planes, but also modern and contemporary art. At certain points, fictional analogies have been employed to facilitate an understanding of the theoretical context. For at the beginning of every such emergence, a work that appears marginal and *deviant* within its own social context often goes unrecognized in its significance precisely because it arrives before its time. I can therefore understand why this book, in this respect, may not readily resonate with the perceptions of most readers. The fact that Semyanî's name and disadvantaged body become the main subjects of the text will inevitably create various blind spots from the very outset. These blind spots, in turn, will bring certain prejudices with them, naturally causing the fundamental ground on which the work rests to be overlooked at certain points. Yet it was with an awareness of all this, and with an acceptance of these difficulties from the outset, that I embarked on writing such a book.

The concepts I employ throughout the book—*particularly The fate of consensus, Pathetic dialectic, Pathetic image scene, and Seismic ideology*—appear here, as in my other writings, as the condensed results of a long process of thinking. I did not develop these concepts with the intention of replacing existing aesthetic, political, theoretical, or sociological terminologies. On the contrary, without excluding the intellectual accumulation already present in these fields, I conceived them as a kind of expansive possibility through which one might engage with the gaps that remain unopened within them. My aim was, in particular, to incorporate into aesthetic theory and its socio-political extension those fields of experience that remain invisible or insufficiently articulated in the *Kurdî* context.

Within this framework, for example, Pathetic Dialectic should not be understood as a rejection of Hegelian dialectics or as a declaration of its inadequacy; rather, it should be understood as an

attempt to bring to light the excess that already exists within it but is often suppressed. In other words, Pathetic Dialectic is not an alternative to Hegelian dialectics, but a continuation of a movement that reveals the extensions of the excess contained within it. The issue here is, first, to bring to light, in favor of the other, the tension, the affective dimension of pathos, and the conditions that produce inequality that operate as necessary rules within the field of dialectical movement, on the ground of "thesis, antithesis, and synthesis," and then to break away from that ground. Thus, this approach is an attempt at a reading that is reductive on the one hand and expansive on the other. Likewise, the other concepts have been proposed not to fix thought within this context, but to render it more permeable and more layered.

In this sense, the text was not written merely as an act of opposition; it emerged from a search. This search rests not on the certainty of remembering but on a form of "forgetting" that at times takes the place of remembering. Yet this forgetting should not be seen as a diminishment or a loss; it should be understood as a movement of "normalization" that sets aside the weight of the established and allows a new sensory field to open. Thus, thought here is not confined to a fixed past but extends toward the as-yet-unformed "time after."

I would like to emphasize this in particular: this book is by no means a defense text. Nor was it conceived as a text of provocation. Rather, it should be read as an essay that invites us to see again what we have grown accustomed to seeing, and to hear again what we have grown accustomed to hearing. If this text can produce even the slightest displacement or shift in the reader's perception, it will have fulfilled its purpose.

Finally, it should be emphasized that none of what is written here makes any claim to certainty. This text should not be regarded as a closed whole of completed thoughts; rather, it should be understood as a collection of open-ended questions, unfinished sentences, and fragments of an ongoing process of thinking. For this reason, *The Body After* neither offers a one-dimensional account of a life nor forces aesthetic judgment into a normative

framework. Rather, in Jacques Rancière's terms, it should be understood as a field of encounter that follows the possibility opened up by a displaced body within the "distribution of the sensible."

More importantly, if any concept, proposition, or theoretical elaboration I develop here fails to produce a corresponding applicability within the concrete context of Kurdish art and intellectual thought, I will regard this as a counterexample that reveals the limits of that particular line of thought. For although this book may be read as an ongoing philosophical reflection on questions of aesthetics and representation in the present day, ultimately it is not a practice of thinking about existing aesthetic theories; rather, it seeks to establish the possibility of an original aesthetic and political thought grounded in the specific conditions of the Kurdish world of art and thought.

THE BODY AFTER

SEMYANÎ PERÎZADE

Introduction

Perception and the Mode of Sensibility: *Dissensus*

I know that the first question that comes to the mind of anyone who sees this book—especially any Kurdish reader or individual engaging with the text—is this: With so many names and so many established careers, why Semyanî Perîzade?

For me, the answer is quite clear: *Dissensus*!

For this reason, the answer to the question should not be reduced directly to a biographical, popular, or cultural preference, because the answer lies in the concept of dissensus. *Dissensus*, in other words, *disagreement*, points here to two aspects that constitute the theoretical and poetic foundation of this study: first, from this perspective, this book is not a biographical account of Semyanî Perîzade's life.[1] It is the folds of Semyanî's life as they evolve into

[1] According to Rancière, *dissensus* is not simply a matter of opposing views or differences of opinion. *Dissensus* is often confused with "disagreement." Yet in disagreement, the parties speak about the same issue but think differently about it. In other words, they share the same ground; it is only their judgments that diverge. With *dissensus*, however, the situation is different. Even when the parties appear to use the same word, they are not speaking about the same thing. This is because the problem between them is not a difference of opinion concerning a particular issue, but rather a question concerning the status of speech itself. Let us assume, for example, that two people are debating "democracy." If one defends democracy while the other opposes it, this is a situation of "disagreement." For in such a case, both parties accept that democracy is a concept worthy of debate. *Dissensus*, by contrast, emerges when one of the parties invokes "democracy" as a legitimate political demand, while the other dismisses that demand as invalid from the outset and does not recognize it as speech worthy of being taken seriously. Thus, the difference in dissensus does not lie in a disagreement of opinions, but in whether speech is recognized as

an object of thought. It examines the dimensions of her lived experiences that become thought, her corporeal and cultural image, and her performative and rhythmic experiences. For this reason, the book moves beyond a chronological life story, questioning the limits of biographical narrative and functioning as a field of aesthetic thought. Semyanî is not treated here as a character, but as a philosophical, corporeal, and performative being. We might think of this in a similar way to Marcel Broodthaers's transformation, in 1969, of Mallarmé's poem *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'Abolira le Hasard* into a conceptual installation.[2] The second, meanwhile, is the original form of the

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speech at all. In other words, dissensus is not about what is being discussed, but about who is able to speak and whether what is being said is recognized as "intelligible speech" and as a legitimate demand. In short, *dissensus* is the moment in which the political subject emerges, the staging of a claim to equality, and the disruption of the police order. See Rancière, *Uyuşmazlık*, pp. 12–14.

[2] *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'Abolira le Hasard* is an artist's book published by Marcel Broodthaers in Antwerp in November 1969. The work is based on the 1914 edition of Stéphane Mallarmé's poem of the same title; however, all the words in the text have been removed and replaced with black lines that reproduce the poem's typographic arrangement exactly. This intervention foregrounds the poem's visual and spatial structure rather than its linguistic content. In December 1969, Broodthaers presented the work as an "opened" book in his exhibition *Exposition Littéraire autour de Mallarmé*, held at the Wide White Space Gallery in Antwerp. In this arrangement, in which only two pages are visible, meaning remains present within the space while remaining inaccessible. During the exhibition, aluminum plates, carved and annotated with the black imprints that replaced the text, were hung on the walls, while a recording of Broodthaers reading the poem was played continuously throughout the exhibition. For Rancière, the work is art not because it erases a poem, but because it radically transforms how the poem is to be perceived. The work severs the link between word and meaning and disrupts the established relationship between seeing and reading; it suspends the book's "natural" literary function and establishes an aesthetic regime based on a new distribution of the sensible. See Rancière, *Kelimelerin Mekânı*, pp. 6–10. A similar

concept of "dissensus," specific to Jacques Rancière's own terminology. This dissensus is neither an opposition nor a crude and provocative reaction against the generally accepted values of a nation. To express the concept of dissensus in Rancièrean jargon, for instance, it is not a conventional disagreement between two subjects who speak of the "male body" and the "female body." Dissensus is an ontological and perceptual conflict between two subjects who both speak only of the "body" yet do not understand the same thing by that word. In other words, the same "voice" coming from the same place is a meaningful "speech" to one side, while to the other it is perceived merely as "noise." Dissensus emerges precisely in this distinction between speech and noise.

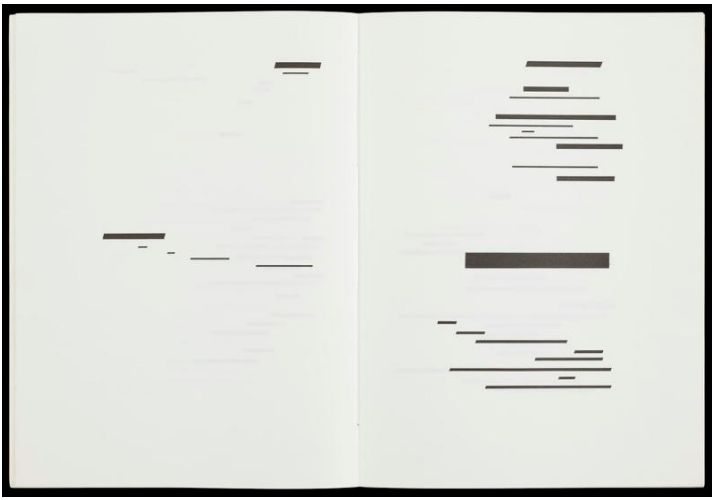
In this context, dissensus defines a regime of the sensible that emerges naturally and spontaneously between representation and perception, between the body and sensory experience. In Shakespeare's tragedy Troilus and Cressida, which recounts the Trojan War, he has Odysseus say: "Take but degree away, untune that string, and, hark, what discord follows!" The expression of discord in this dialogue is a theatrical and metaphorical projection of the concept. Yet the dissensus I am concerned with differs from the discord voiced by Shakespeare. It is not the dissensus that emerges after the tuning of representation (the lute) has been disrupted; rather, it is a dissensus that naturally disrupts the tuning of representation through perception and sensation themselves. In other words, this dissensus is not a mode that physically intervenes in the tuning of representation; it is a mode of dissensus in which sensation and perception, arising from the natural creation of their

interpretation can also be developed through *Okunmayan Gazete* (*Illegible Paper*), a readymade installation by the contemporary artist Mehmet Çeper from Mardin.

own existence, spontaneously dissolve the tuning of representation [3] This mode redefines the ways in which the individual relates to representation through seeing, hearing, feeling, and experiencing through the body. This redefinition encompasses not only physical perception but, simultaneously, psychological, ideological, and cultural perception on the basis of dissensus. At this point, dissensus makes visible the differences spontaneously produced by perception itself, calls representational norms into question, and establishes a new egalitarian equilibrium within the bodily, mental, and sensory spheres of individuals. The second is the phenomenon of "forgetting," which likewise emerges through the mode of perception and sensation generated by this

[3] The perception at issue here differs from the phenomenal experience of perception undergone by a viewer standing before a canvas; it is closer to Rancière's notion of a mode of perception of the sensible. Although Rancière's aesthetic approach, with its focus on perception, visibility, and the sensible, may at first glance appear similar to phenomenology, particularly to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on perception, this resemblance is merely superficial. In phenomenology, perception emerges through the subject's intentional relation to the object and is examined at a bodily, pre-conceptual level through the subject's lived experience and experience of consciousness; the aim is to disclose the structural conditions of the subject–world relation. In Rancière, by contrast, perception is not a domain of experience belonging to the subject's inner life. His fundamental concept, the distribution of the sensible, refers to the social and political organization of perception that determines who can speak and be heard, what is rendered visible or deemed insignificant, and which speech is recognized as meaningful. For this reason, rather than grounding perception in a phenomenological sense, Rancière conceives of it as a collective and contested regime of organization. Moreover, for Rancière, perception is not a function of individual experience but of a political-aesthetic distribution. Ultimately, unlike in phenomenology, perception in Rancière is always already present a priori; it has already been distributed by the police order. Perception therefore becomes visible through rupture, and what matters is breaking away from this distribution. The rupture takes place through dissensus. In this way, perception is reshaped, the political subject emerges, and equality is established as a presupposition..

dissensus and from its structuring function. Forgetting is not a passive loss of memory; rather, as an ontological process, it transforms the normative and coercive effects of the past into "indifference," carrying the natural *normalization of bodily and perceptual experiences into the future*. Through this forgetting experienced by way of dissensus, Semyanî reorganizes both her own existence and her awareness of other forms of existence within society in harmony with her own "rhythmic" and "libidinal" body. In other words, the first is the law of dissensus embodied in the living, flesh-and-blood existence of Semyanî Perîzade. That is, it is her *pluralistic* corporeal existence, which exceeds all given images, overturns normative appearances, fractures mythological imposture, and stands against the sayable expertise of pathetic scenes, as well as the musical personality inherent in that existence. The other is the way she normalizes the future by making it forget, shaping the imagination of the future through forgetting.



Marcel Broodthaers, *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard*, 1969, offset lithograph on paper, 32.4 × 24.8 cm, Walker Art Center Library, Rosemary Furtak Collection. © Walker Art Center



Mehmet Çeper, *Illegible Paper*, 16 pages, 38 × 38 cm, printed matter-installation, 2014. © Courtesy of the artist

I need to clarify the question of music from the outset. As indicated in the introduction, when such deeply rooted and visible careers exist in Kurdish music—and when there is a symbolic and

iconic figure such as Şivan Perwer—the question of why Semyanî Perîzade is the focus will inevitably arouse hesitation and curiosity in the reader's mind. For my part, however, I am not concerned with all those careers, with Perwer's valuable music, or, more fundamentally, with the aesthetic and technical dimensions of music itself. This book does not seek to compare different musical careers or musical productions. Nor does it aim to compare any artist according to criteria of historical, representational, or aesthetic superiority. The purpose of this study is to understand the internal operation and sensory structure of a particular aesthetic practice. For this reason, a comparative reading of careers falls outside the scope of this study and does not serve the book. Ultimately, this book has not been written to compare musical canons and their contents or to examine their artistic dimensions, but to analyze a singular aesthetic sensible structure. Thus, rather than aesthetic creation as the principle of identity of music, the book places, at this stage, the "sociological" dimension of music at the center. Of course, the technical, theoretical, and aesthetic dimensions of music are necessary conditions of production insofar as the form of art is concerned. Yet what I try to do throughout the text—or rather, what I am primarily concerned with—is precisely the opposite. In the most literal and, more sincerely, straightforward sense of the word, what concerns me is the everyday and ordinary content of the music in Semyanî, and, through this content, the critique and deconstruction of representational structures. In other words, it is an analysis, in a certain sense, of the simple, indifferent, ordinary, unconcerned, and all-denying snob dimension of her music. This, in one respect and quite naturally, derives from Semyanî's *lubunya* flora.

Ultimately, I am not searching for Semyanî's aesthetic locus within the ontological nature of music; I am tracing the signs of the normative disqualification of music as it reveals itself in her own nature. None of this should be understood as the manifestation of musical notes and harmonies that evolve, within the technique of aesthetics, into an artistic score. Let this at least be clear from the outset: this book will not proceed through the technical knowledge of music. Accordingly, I deliberately exclude the identification of the aestheticism at issue in Semyanî's music with the aestheticism of Perwer's music, as well as any comparison with other women musicians for any reason whatsoever (Tara Mamedova, Rewşan Çeliker, Ruşen Alkar, Hêja Netirk, Suna Alan, Rojda, Sakina Teyna, Zelal Gökçe, etc.). For the approach pursued here is not based on an understanding of aestheticism founded on comparisons of superiority or similarity among names. Put differently, this aestheticism places the "alter ego" at the center of Semyanî Perîzade's music. It should be understood in the same way as the alter ego of Marcel Duchamp's *Rrose Sélavy*, the character he created by appearing in women's clothing as a challenge to masculine domination[4] Semyanî's music

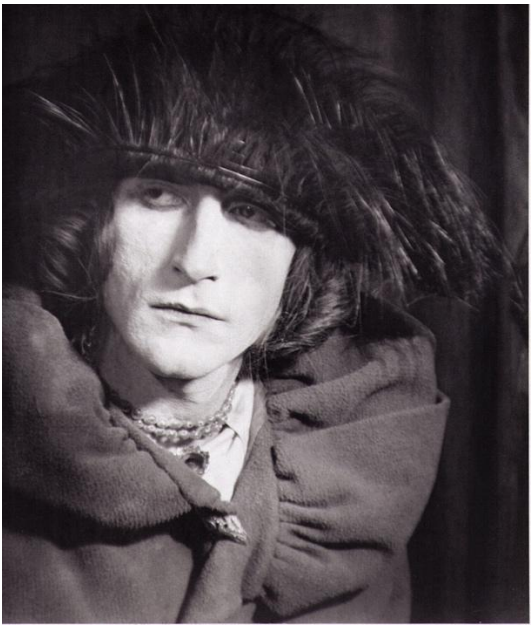
[4] Rrose Sélavy is one of Marcel Duchamp's pseudonyms. A play on words, the name resembles the French phrase *Eros, c'est la vie* and *can also be read as arroser la vie*. Rrose Sélavy is the name of the alter ego Duchamp created around 1920–21 by appearing in women's clothing. The character became publicly visible through a series of photographs taken by Man Ray in 1921. Duchamp later used the name as a signature on written materials and signed several works under it. The best known of these is the sculptural installation *Why Not Sneeze Rrose Sélavy?* Described as an assemblage and a kind of readymade, the work consists of a painted metal birdcage, pieces of wood, marble cubes shaped like sugar lumps, a medical thermometer, a piece of cuttlebone, and a pair of white glass dishes.

is a *medium*, in Kierkegaard's sense of the term, and possesses a distinctive aesthetic articulation. Her alter ego is the opposite shore of representational hierarchies, idealist and major-key voices, high octaves, revolutionary lyrics, and pastoral romances. This aesthetics of the opposite shore allows music to engage not with conventional expectations, but with the quiet intensity of the everyday and the ordinary.

For a text on this work constructed in a Dadaist style, see Tan, "Unofficial Texts with Tristan Tzara: Dada Manifestos," *Unlimitedrag*, January 28, 2022.



Marcel Duchamp, *Why Not Sneeze, Rrose Sélavy?,* 1921 (recreated in 1964), marble cubes, thermometer, metal cage, perches, and cuttlebones, 11.43 × 21.91 × 16.03 cm, Buffalo AKG Art Museum. © Succession Marcel Duchamp / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris



Rrose Sélavy – Alter Ego (Marcel Duchamp), 1921, photograph by Man Ray



Rrose Sélavy – Alter Ego (Marcel Duchamp), 1920, photograph by Man Ray

Nevertheless, because I regard the presuppositional questions that are likely to arise at the outset in relation to music, and that can often become intertwined with reaction, as an integral part of the text, I consider this situation entirely natural from the outset. The impression created by the first encounter with the announcement of the book or with its cover may spontaneously trigger certain reflexes. For this is directly related to the way in which the text enters circulation. Frankly, numerous parameters play a role in the emergence of such questions, each of which contains its own range of subtopics. For example, some readers may raise the relatively short duration of Semyanî's musical career—as noted above—and the quantitatively limited nature of her output; others may argue that her identity and marginal image do not correspond to the established traditions of a nation. The discussion may even be taken further, with ethically grounded criticisms suggesting that Semyanî does not constitute an appropriate role model, particularly for younger generations. While I understand all of these views and similar lines of thought, I will nevertheless take a different path. I will attempt to ground Semyanî Perîzade, the unorthodox figure of Kurdish art, in the informative effect she produces through a mode of *perception* and *sensation* against a form of the *fate of consensus*. I will seek to show how her music, which is intrinsic both to her embodied existence and to the language of everyday life (*Kurdî*), displaces the privileges of existing forms of representation. Yet this should not be understood as an opposition. That is, it should not be conceived as the modern/contemporary binary posited dialectically against the opposite shore of the traditional. More plainly, this is neither a conflict between the traditional and the modern nor an

opposition between black and white. It is the *differential difference* of the mode of perception and sensation on the same ground.[5] This difference entails, on the one hand, the dissolution of what is presently given and, on the other, the establishment of the new from the ground up. The reason why this process is perceived as a critical opposition likewise derives from the differential difference itself. In other words, because the dissolution of the old and of tradition is experienced through this difference arising from Semyanî, that dissolution becomes associated with Semyanî and, naturally, becomes the fundamental issue toward which criticism is directed. Accordingly, I will situate this dichotomous difference as the formality of a form that reshapes the given perception and sensory experience. Ultimately, I will approach Semyanî as the form of a new formation that takes its share in the distribution of the traditional and shapes its own image within this distribution. My way of approaching Semyanî can be thought of in terms of the partnership between the iconoclastic filmmaker and actor John Waters and Harris Glenn Milstead, the *drag queen* known by the

[5] *Differential difference* defines the function of the conceptual difference between any two points within a system. This approach bears a resemblance to the Deleuzian conception of difference; however, here difference is used as a definition of an aesthetic and political function. For instance, while one of the concepts defines judgment and thereby turns it into destiny, the other seeks to bring destiny to an end by eliminating judgment. For example, when an artist depicts a traditional religious figure in accordance with its iconographic conventions, they reproduce the figure's established meaning and the judgment attached to that meaning. By contrast, when the same figure is fragmented, brought together with everyday objects, or taken beyond conventional forms of representation, the artist transforms the established meaning carried by the figure. Thus, *differential difference* does not arise from a simple opposition between two elements, but from the different meanings and functions acquired by the same element through different operations.

stage name "Divine."[6] Thus, it can be understood as the avant-garde object of a thought, the *amorphous* distribution of a word, or the catastrophic and fragile structure of an aesthetic appearance.



Harris Glenn Milstead (*Divine*) & John Waters

Although Semyanî Perîzade's marginal appearance may cause discomfort among some people, ultimately, this appearance and

[6] The term *drag queen* is generally used to describe performance artists who, for the purposes of stage performance and entertainment, exaggeratedly employ appearances, behaviors, and gender markers associated with femininity. In *drag* performances, gender roles are reinterpreted through clothing, makeup, hair, and various visual elements, often resulting in the creation of a theatrical character. Although *drag* culture has historically developed in close association with LGBTQ+ communities, particularly cultural circles formed by gay men, *drag* performance is not limited to any particular sexual orientation.

her human inclinations point toward the formal shape of a new way of life. When we look at Semyanî's career and life, we witness, to put it plainly, an artist who, despite being excluded by her own society; not invited to events, festivals, *Newroz* celebrations, and concerts by local administrations, institutions, associations, and civil society organizations, as well as by similar structures in the diaspora; and denied a place on certain prominent screens, has nevertheless persistently continued her music and her struggle. I would like to respond to all that has happened, that is, to all the circumstances Semyanî has been subjected to, with a line from Martin Scorsese's *The Irishman*. In a brief speech at a dinner held in his honor by the union, Frank Sheeran, played by Robert De Niro, says roughly: "I don't deserve any of this here tonight, in your presence; but I don't deserve the arthritis in my shoulder either." This statement reminds us that deserving does not operate according to a consistent measure in life, and that both reward and suffering often arrive independently of what one deserves. For me, this is the decisive point. If Semyanî Perîzade deserves, or is thought to deserve, many of the negative events that have befallen her for "ethical" reasons, then she deserves this book in its entirety as well. Just as in the famous words of Olympe de Gouges, one of the important women of the French Revolution: "If women are fit to mount the scaffold, then they must also be fit to mount the speaker's platform in the Assembly."[7] If Semyanî Perîzade is

[7] Olympe de Gouges, "Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen," trans. Ece Göztepe, *Ankara Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi*, 45/1-4 (1996), s. 187 (Article 10). In this translation of the Declaration, the relevant passage reads: "Woman has the right to mount the scaffold. Therefore, provided that her actions and statements do not disturb the public order protected by law, she must also have the right to mount the speaker's platform." The expression given in the text, however, is quoted from Rancière (Rancière, *Dissensus*, p. 43).

deemed fit to mount the scaffold on social media, in public spaces, within various institutions and structures, or among family and relatives, then she is also fit to become the subject of a book. Such a book may be interpreted as a rule-breaking, highly niche and original intervention that opens up the boundaries of an unconventional and avant-garde genre in the Kurdish literary world. It may also be read as an indirect antagonism toward the historical figures, political personalities, and revolutionary characters who have been written about to date. Indeed, from certain perspectives, it may even be seen as the multidisciplinary futility of a postmodern absurdity. Yet, in my view, this book, beyond all these readings, is simply the product of a "normalization." From Fernand Braudel's perspective, I would put it this way: "The history of bodies deemed unworthy of appearing and of those whose words have been excluded must be written." This book serves precisely such a history. This historical and ethical orientation has also been decisive in the conceptual naming of the book.



A still from Martin Scorsese's *The Irishman* (Robert De Niro and Al Pacino), 2019

Representation, the Body, and the Sensory Order

The title *The Body to Come* is inspired by Jacques Rancière's book *The Time After: Béla Tarr*. "The Body to Come" is not limited to the title "The Time After"; it also corresponds to the anatomy of the book. The body to come will unfold on both a theoretical plane and, at times, on a Blanchotian literary plane of actuality.[8] In his book on the cinema of Béla Tarr, Rancière defines the time after as follows: "The time after is not the monotonous and embittered time of those who no longer believe in anything. It is the time of pure, material events in which belief is tested—as long as life keeps it alive" (Rancière, 2016, p. 13). Elsewhere in the book, Rancière poses the following question concerning the time after: "The time after is the time when it is known that the same question will be asked with every new film: why make yet another film about a story that is, in principle, always the same?" (Rancière, 2016, p. 78). It is precisely this question that I have attempted to ask anew in relation to Semyanî: Why should yet another piece of writing be written about the "body," which is, in principle, always the same? The body to come is neither the body of a recovered ethic nor that of an anticipated catastrophe. On the one hand, it constructs the inner form of a new life; on the other, it abolishes the monotonous norm of the external world. From this perspective, I should also state that I will not address the concept of the body to come directly and straightforwardly through the

[8] The expression *body to come* will be used frequently throughout the following pages. For this reason, the expression is treated not as the proper title of the book, but as a conceptual term. The use of uppercase and lowercase letters is determined according to the grammatical rules of the sentence.

feminism and queer identity associated with Semyanî. I do not possess the expertise necessary to speak from the perspectives of queer theory and feminism. Therefore, this book should not be regarded as the product of a study conducted within these two fields; nor does it take as its basis the taxonomic approach developed by the American feminist art historian and curator Linda Nochlin in her article "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?", published in *ARTnews* in January 1971 and subsequently regarded as one of the foundational texts of feminist art history.[9]

To put it plainly, I am concerned here with something quite different. The aim of this study is not to demonstrate how these concepts function as direct tools of analysis or interpretation when applied to literary texts or plastic works. On the contrary, what is at issue here is an attempt to understand how the compatibility between analytical modes of interpretation and the concepts themselves might acquire strategic significance for the Kurdish intellectual world in the future through the interpretation of these texts and works. The issue, therefore, is to move beyond the mere aesthetic or technical analysis of texts and works and to reveal the guiding and determining contributions that such interpretations, in their ontological, cultural, and political dimensions, may make to the Kurdish intellectual and intellectual-cultural sphere. To make this point concrete through an intellectual example, I have often found myself saying, when reading Louis Althusser: "How valuable it is that Althusser had already opened up a discussion on

[9] Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?", *ARTnews*, 69/9 (January 1971), pp. 22–39, 67–71.

this subject back then."[10] Althusser occupies an important place in my personal reading. I consider myself close to the Althusserian school of thought. If I place material conditions and objective relations at the center of my efforts to understand social reality today, Althusser has played a significant role in shaping that approach. His ideas have had a profound influence on how I understand the subject, ideology, and the constitution of social relations. The way I analyze an art object has been shaped most of all by Althusser's method of *symptomatic reading*; I reworked this concept within my own intellectual framework and named it *symptomatic vision*.[11] Althusser's intellectual influence cannot be

[10] Years later, when I visited France, I wanted to pay a visit to Althusser's grave. His grave is located in the cemetery of Viroflay, a town approximately 35 kilometers southwest of Paris. I traveled there by train. When I reached the grave, I noticed that the lettering on the tombstone had faded. Moved by the neglected state of Althusser's grave, as well as by my own intellectual affinity with him, I used the gold paint and brush I had brought with me to repaint only the section of the stone bearing his name and dates of birth and death. For me, this small intervention was about more than simply restoring a tombstone. It was a personal way of expressing my gratitude to a philosopher whose ideas had nourished my own thinking and who had played an important role in my intellectual journey. In this way, I felt that I had, within my limited means, repaid a debt of gratitude to Louis Althusser, whose writings had shaped my intellectual world over the years. I had previously written an article for *Gazete Duvar* entitled "An Imaginary Conversation with Louis Althusser: Covid-19." In that piece, I explored, through an imagined dialogue, how Althusser might have approached contemporary developments in light of his ideas. See Tan, "An Imaginary Conversation with Louis Althusser: Covid-19," *Gazete Duvar*, April 12, 2020.

[11] *Symptomatic reading* is the name of the method that still leads Louis Althusser to be identified with the school of "Althusserianism" today. In 1965, Althusser combined this method, which he took from psychoanalysis, with a "structuralist" theory and applied it directly to the most talked-about books of the period, *Reading Capital* and *For Marx*. With this method, he divided Marx into two periods, "young" and "mature"; he claimed to have taken Marx, in his own way, out of speculative Hegelian idealism, that is, out

adequately assessed solely through his own writings. Althusserianism and the Althusserian School that took shape around him, his polemics with various intellectual circles, the criticisms he received from Marxist thinkers—Henri Lefebvre in particular—and his tensions with the French Communist Party (PCF) are also important for understanding the scope of his influence. Taken together, these factors show that Althusser was not merely a philosopher who developed his own ideas, but also a

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of ideology, and moved him to a scientific standpoint, and he called this claim the "epistemological break." Through the argument of the "continent of history," he announced the discovery of Marx's science of history. Symptomatic reading is a mode of reading that focuses on the assumptions underlying a text. It aims to reveal the existence of a hidden content between the lines, that is, the essence concealed beneath appearance that must be brought to light; and at the same time to show a material lack, a gap that awaits the means to fill it. In psychoanalysis, this method addresses symptoms that are hidden in the unconscious, inexpressible, unspeakable, and repressed. Althusser applies this method in two stages: in the first, he reads the text directly in order to decipher the problematic buried within the theory; in the second, he brings out what the text does not directly state. In short, Althusser's rereading of Marx through the symptomatic method is a philosophical and epistemological intervention. *Symptomatic vision*, in turn, is oriented from the first-person perspective of someone who sets out to look at a work of art; it focuses on the sensory imagination in consciousness of the elements of images, paint, color, light, shadow, space, place, line, horizon, movement, metaphor, etc., and on the experience of the pure structure of these elements in flow, and then grounds them in a material basis. More clearly, it is the process of bringing out, in a second stage, the real forms embedded in a painting, for example, that go unnoticed at first: place, perspective, ground, horizon line, tactile contact, the things themselves and their background, the projection of light. I develop this technique drawing on both the method Althusser called "symptomatic reading" and the concept of "vision" in phenomenology. Phenomenological vision is directed at the structure of consciousness, or the reflection on its content, as lived or experienced from the first-person perspective. In sum, while symptomatic reading is a hermeneutic, textual method, symptomatic vision is a phenomenal, aesthetic, visual method.

figure who helped shape diverse intellectual trajectories. Alain Badiou is one of the thinkers who continue to engage with the intellectual legacy of his teacher, Althusser, and revisit it in their own philosophical work. Even in the thought of Jacques Rancière, who experienced a dramatic break with Althusser, traces of this legacy remain visible. As a young student, Rancière participated, alongside figures such as Étienne Balibar, Roger Establet, and Pierre Macherey, in the *Reading Capital* project led by Althusser. However, following the youth movements of 1968, he distanced himself from Althusser's scientific and theoretical approach, making this break explicit in his 1974 book *Althusser's Lesson* (*La Leçon d'Althusser*). Rancière criticized Althusser for placing theory above politics and social struggle, and for adopting a hierarchical, exclusionary, even elitist position in his theoretical approach. I think this criticism is partly justified: the distance placed between the "knower" and the "non-knower" risks confining theory to the domain of experts. Yet Rancière's alternative, that is, the presupposition of equality that rejects hierarchy, has not produced a significant political response among the masses; the same can be said of Badiou's political theory. This does not prove Althusser's solution right. But Althusser's point that, for theory to become a political force, it must establish a relationship with organizations and decision-making mechanisms appears less contestable in light of these two examples. A philosopher's theory of workers, labor, or the capitalist order is often grasped first not by workers themselves but by the union leaders and organized political actors who represent them. These actors serve as an *intermediary link* that simplifies the theory, conveys it to workers, and thereby enables it to find a response in practice. Similarly, issues raised about women or social

inequalities are taken up in the political sphere mostly not by the people themselves but by parties and organizations; these actors mediate between the oppressed and ruling classes as much as between the demands of the people and government policies. Rancière's objection was aimed precisely at this structure of mediation, that is, at the idea of theory being transmitted "from top to bottom." Yet the capacity of an unorganized practice of equality to turn into a social force remains uncertain. Hence the issue is not merely who can understand a theory, but how it can be transformed into a social force. With regard to the problem of representation that this book addresses, what comes to the fore is less society as a whole than the actors who produce the social world and direct its functioning. The discourses, practices, and works these actors produce contribute either to the transformation of existing relations of representation or, on the contrary, to the preservation of the existing order. For example, I may not be able to reach the audience of a writer, filmmaker, or musician conceptually through this book; nor may I be able to transform that audience's perception and outlook. But I can reach the musician, the director, or the writer themselves, again through this book, and transform their outlook in the context of their production practice. For their language of production and the worlds of thought inherent in that language turn these relations of representation into an uninterrupted norm and, naturally, also shape the audience's outlook. Their positive change and transformation indirectly influences the audience's positive transformation at the mental level; in the opposite case, it accompanies the audience's remaining within a narrow outlook. Therefore, for theory to find a response at the social level and be put into practice, intermediary links or transitional mechanisms are

needed. Without such mechanisms, theories run the danger of remaining elitist discourses that demand a high level of literacy and conceptual equipment and are, for this reason, accessible only to a limited segment. In short, I believe the most realistic and practical solution here is to develop a form of political action that targets educated circles and political decision-making mechanisms and, at the same time, serves as a kind of intermediary between the two.



Fatih Tan at Louis Althusser's grave. Viroflay, France

Nevertheless, evaluating Althusser's intellectual legacy solely in terms of the limitations of his theoretical approach risks overlooking the space he opened up in philosophy and political

thought. A thinker's legacy cannot be assessed only on the basis of the validity of the theses they defended or the extent to which those theses found a political response. We must also consider how they influenced the questions, concepts, and modes of thinking adopted by subsequent thinkers. In this respect, the influence of Althusser's thought on philosophers with such different orientations as Badiou and Rancière is particularly significant. The question of how to evaluate an intellectual legacy becomes even more complicated when we consider the final period of Althusser's life and the reception of his ideas after his death. One of the most tragic events in Althusser's life was his strangling of his wife, Hélène Rytmann, in 1980. This incident seriously damaged his reputation in France. Once a popular lecturer, Althusser received psychiatric treatment in the aftermath and spent much of the remainder of his life away from public life. In later years, he addressed his life story and the incident in his autobiographical book *The Future Lasts Forever*. It has also been reported that Jacques Derrida maintained his relationship with his former teacher, Althusser, and visited him at the clinic where he was receiving treatment. For some reason, this tragic event brings to mind certain scenes from Michael Haneke's film *Amour* (*Love*): the story of a man who feels helpless in the face of the suffering of someone he loves and believes he can no longer bear to witness that suffering. Of course, this association does not mean that I am seeking to explain or justify Althusser's act. Nor would it be appropriate to draw a direct equivalence between the situation depicted in the film and the historical event. For me, the association serves instead as a point of departure for reflecting on human helplessness, the responsibilities of care, and the limits of what we can bear in the face of death. Although Hélène Rytmann's

health problems and Althusser's psychological crisis form part of the historical context of the incident, it is impossible to explain the murder entirely in terms of these circumstances. We cannot disregard this event when discussing Althusser's intellectual legacy, but neither should we allow this tragedy in his personal life to overshadow the evaluation of his philosophical work. As I reflect on all this, I find myself returning to the issue I raised at the outset: the continuity of thought over time. Realizing that some of the questions we are still debating today were already being explored, conceptualized, and critically examined by others before we were even born is, in itself, valuable for understanding the importance of intellectual continuity. The fact that a thinker's questions resurface years later does not mean that all their answers remain valid. It does, however, show that thought does not belong exclusively to a single period or generation; rather, it can be revisited and transformed under different historical conditions. Similarly, I consider it valuable to imagine that, in the future, someone might say of the issues we are opening up for discussion today: "They had already begun discussing these questions back then." Perhaps the significance of intellectual work lies not only in whether it produces an immediate political response in its own time, but also in how it shapes the thinking of future generations and lays the groundwork for new debates. In this respect, measuring the influence of an idea solely by its mass appeal in its own time may be inadequate. Sometimes, the real impact of an idea emerges later, through the relationships it helps establish, the concepts it inspires, and the questions it prompts others to ask anew. I would actually like to explain this issue through a more accessible example. Twenty-five years ago, it was almost impossible even to suggest that a contemporary art gallery could

open in Diyarbakır. Given the conditions of the time, it would have been difficult for such a possibility to find any real purchase; consequently, the idea might have seemed entirely fantastical and meaningless. Today, however, a contemporary art gallery has opened in Diyarbakır. This example demonstrates that perception is not fixed but is shaped by historical conditions and changes over time. The fact that this book is not sufficiently understood today, or that its meaning has not been fully grasped, is also related to this very nature of perception. Ideas that seem difficult to understand in the present may become more comprehensible and meaningful as conditions change over time. For this reason, I believe that the book may be understood much better ten years from now and may acquire a different meaning. Yet the real issue here is not the extent to which the book is understood or misunderstood today, but rather that it has been written, thought through, and documented in the present. The value of certain ideas cannot be explained solely in terms of how they are received at the time of their writing; it also lies in how they may be read in the future and the intellectual possibilities they may open up. I consider it important, therefore, that the concepts and modes of interpretation developed here be regarded not merely as tools for understanding the texts and artworks of the present, but also as part of an intellectual legacy capable of expanding the fields of debate and conceptual possibilities within the Kurdish intellectual world in the future. In this context, the concepts of queer and feminism will be addressed occasionally, and only where they are deemed necessary. Thus, proceeding from this general theoretical ground, I will place Semyanî Perîzade's body-to-come at the center of my own aesthetic thought. For when a person has an aesthetic conception of their own, they shape their subject around

that conception. Otherwise, the undertaking becomes an academic study. For instance, if my aesthetic perspective draws on a line of thought associated with phenomenology, I would analyze the subject I address within the framework of phenomenology. For example, when I examine Sergei Eisenstein's 1925 film *Stachka*, which deals with communism, I do not look for the history of communism; rather, I look for the cinematographic effect produced phenomenologically by communism and for the phenomenal trajectories within the director's perspective. Accordingly, Semyanî's queer and feminist identity, or her marginal appearance, remains in the background and occupies a secondary position for me. What is primary is the musical rupture she produces in perception and sensation, and "the forgetting of the future." Yet here it is necessary to speak of a marked difference, even a direct contradiction. At first glance, one might raise the following objection: if the element that disrupts Semyanî's modes of "representation" is her mode of perception and sensation, and if this mode likewise derives from her queer and feminist image, then how can the queer and feminist image be relegated to a secondary position? The paradox emerges precisely at this point. For Semyanî's queer and feminist identity is not the ultimate result that transforms the structure of representation. It is merely the necessary precondition for this transformation to take place. In other words, her queer and feminist identity cannot, by itself, dismantle the regime of representation; it merely opens the threshold of this dismantling. The decisive move that brings this threshold to its outcome is Semyanî's production in "Kurdish." Had Semyanî Perîzade produced her work in Turkish or another language, her queer and feminist identity and her marginal image would have neither produced a constitutive effect nor generated a

profound rupture in relation to the representational destiny of her own social context. Put more technically, had Semyanî Perîzade performed her songs in "Turkish," her *lubunya* persona would, in technical terms, not have been situated within any regime of representation in a Kurdî context. The fundamental reason for considering her within the representational (*Kurdî*) regime is that her productions are performed in Kurdish. Moreover, had she produced her work in another language, her deviant identity and image would not have constituted an instrument of intervention that directly interrupts the regime of representation; nor would they have remained a force capable of unsettling that regime, but would instead have remained merely at the level of an aesthetic or identity-based difference. Therefore, what truly renders her queer and feminist identity, and indeed her marginal image, destructive is the intersection of this image with production in Kurdish. The destruction does not originate in the identity itself; it arises from the identity's direct intervention into the field of representation through its *Kurdî* opening. What is critical at this point is that there is a gaze that the regime of representation attempts to conceal. According to this perspective, Semyanî's body essentially does not "deserve" Kurdish under any circumstances, is not deemed "worthy" of Kurdish, and, going even further, her body is metaphorically positioned as an element that "contaminates" Kurdish. Yet the metaphorical condition here is, in fact and essence, nothing other than the manifest reality of what Graham Harman defines, in his terminology, as its opposite: the "literal." This judgment is often not articulated explicitly; however, the thought that "if only she had produced her work in a language other than Kurdish, because her manner, attitude, and appearance do not suit us at all" constitutes the implicit assumption of the

majority that forms the logic of representation. The issue here is no longer what the language says, but which body the speech emerges from. The discussion, in turn, takes shape not so much around the content of meaning as around the question of whether legitimacy is granted to that body and to the language it speaks.



A still from Sergei Eisenstein's *Stachka*, 1925



A still from Michael Haneke's *Amour*, 2012

Yet the essential issue at this point is not what identity is or how it is represented, but at which bodily and sensory thresholds representation is halted, and how it reconstructs its own boundaries by excluding certain bodies from the outset. It is precisely at this point that it becomes apparent that what is excluded is not merely an identity, but a particular sensory order. The distinction between what is deemed natural and what is declared deviant presents itself as a neutral criterion. Yet an invisible distribution governs in advance which body is deemed fitting for which language. The "deviant" image emerges at the boundary of this distribution and renders the boundary itself visible. Thus, the issue moves beyond a singular problem of representation and turns toward the question of how that which is accepted as "natural" is constituted. Of course, at certain points, the secondary nature that remains in the background of this image perceived as deviant—that is, the feminist and queer identity and its objective sensation—will also be addressed. However, the fundamental concern of this book is not to undertake a descriptive

analysis of identity. Rather, it is to read *symbolic violence* in the Bourdieusian sense, this time in reverse.[12] Accordingly, the text will at times draw upon modes of judgment oriented toward sociology, while consciously leaving open the tension between the aesthetic and the social. It is precisely at this point that we need to address the sociological sensibility of second nature. What is at issue here is not an organic and spontaneous field of perception, but an *artefact* (artificial) regime of sensibility acquired through historical, class-based, and cultural processes. This regime operates by rendering what has been inscribed upon the body and perception "natural," without further questioning. For this reason, the sensibility of second nature is not so much a matter of individual intuition as an aggregate of socially shaped reflexes. This is precisely what is significant from the perspective of the book's trajectory. Where representation is disrupted, what emerges

[12] According to Bourdieu, symbolic violence is the process through which domination is made to be accepted as natural, legitimate, and inevitable through meanings, categories, language, education, and cultural norms, without recourse to physical coercion (Bourdieu, *Eril Tahakküm*, pp. 11–12; Bourdieu and Passeron, *Yeniden Üretim*, p. 26). What is distinctive about this form of violence is that it is not perceived as violence. Symbolic violence is accepted as legitimate and reproduced by both the dominant and the dominated because the ways in which the world is perceived have been shaped from the outset within these relations. For this reason, reading symbolic violence in reverse means not so much its disruption or reversal as the breaking of its unrecognizability—in other words, making it visible as violence. What is destructive is not the queer, feminist, or marginal identity itself. Within a Bourdieusian framework, what is decisive is which identities are able to circulate within which regimes of representation. Here, I read Bourdieu's logic of the field together with Rancière's notion of rupture: destruction emerges not when an identity is seamlessly integrated into the field of legitimate representation, but when it interrupts the established functioning of that field—whether through a gradual struggle over capital or through a sudden demand for visibility—and thereby exposes the naturalized order of domination.

is not merely an aesthetic rupture; it also brings to light the quietly operating sociological sensibility of this second nature. In this way, the question expands from what identity is to the question of through which social sensibilities it becomes visible, legitimate, or tolerable. These questions can, of course, also be read in relation to the historical emergence and transformation of feminist thought.

Since the French philosopher Charles Fourier in the nineteenth century, the concept of feminism has continued into the present, taking shape through successive major waves.[13] In Middle Eastern societies such as ours, this concept is one of the most widely debated issues. Women's status, social role, and position within the family are continually brought to the fore and subjected to scrutiny. As an object on the political stage, it is, in practice, almost a litmus test of party programs and of modernist thought in general. In Kurdistan, the sociological and political dimensions of this concept occupy a considerable place on the public agenda. The image of woman as a political subject is a leading force in the political struggles of the Kurds and the driving force behind revolutionary movements. Women's social functionality belongs to the "distribution of the sensible" (the common sphere of what is

[13]François Marie Charles Fourier (April 7, 1772, Besançon – October 10, 1837, Paris) was a French socialist thinker and one of the pioneers of utopian socialism. Some of the ideas he advanced, which were considered radical in his time, gradually became part of the mainstream of modern society. In a similar way, the issues we discuss in this book will probably come to be regarded as more reasonable as time progresses. The fact that Fourier's ideas, considered marginal in his own time, were later understood within a broader context is an example of this. For instance, it is often said that Fourier coined the word "feminism" in 1837, although it should be noted that this attribution cannot be established with historical certainty. Nevertheless, Fourier directly associated women's liberation with social progress and argued that expanding the sphere of women's freedom was one of the fundamental principles of social progress.

seen, heard, and spoken). The fundamental point of conflict with conservative thought lies in the social manifestation, within this sensible sphere, of the egalitarian role assigned to women. The participation of women, particularly in local governments, civil society organizations, and trade unions, in processes of collective life and decision-making is of vital importance in terms of political equality. In this respect, the image of woman has an intellectual history rooted in a considerable postulate of equality in Kurdistan. Although I do not consider a significant portion of the recent policies of the dominant Kurdish political movement represented in Parliament to be correct, and although I criticize its major mistakes, particularly in the context of *Rojava*, and have even experienced a dramatic rupture with it for this reason, I nevertheless believe that, from a historical perspective, one of the most important revolutions achieved by the Kurdish political movement has been the transformation of the place of the notion of "woman" within the "distribution of the sensible." Moreover, while I can understand the criticisms raised in this context, I do not see the issue as merely one of incorporating women into the political sphere. More fundamentally, I understand it as the transformation of the voice of a subject whose word had previously not been taken into account in the constitution of the common world into speech, of her demand into a political expression, and of her existence into one of the constitutive elements of the common sphere. In the Rancièrian sense, this is a form of subjectivation that transforms the existing distribution of the sensible: it is the reconstitution of the questions of who can speak, who can be heard, and who can be considered to belong to the common world. This transformation must, of course, be considered critically, together with its internal contradictions,

shortcomings, and limitations. Yet despite all of these, it is impossible to overlook the historical value of the rupture it has produced in the position of "woman" within the political and common sphere. Moreover, it is necessary to acknowledge the political and social significance of this rupture.

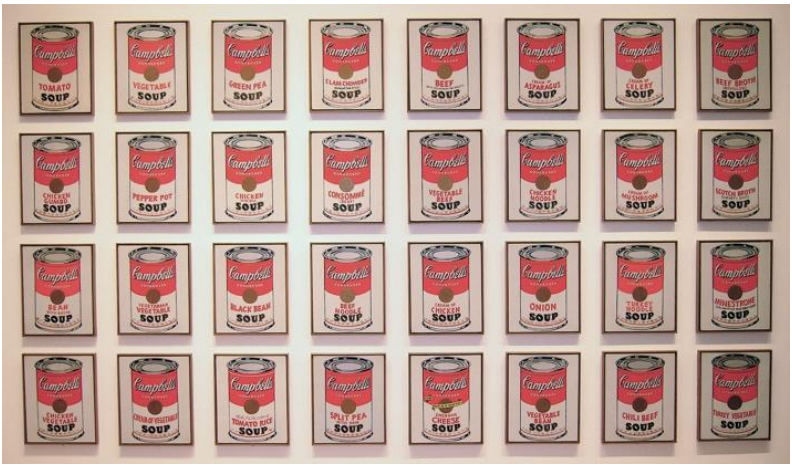
While developing the idea of the "distribution of the sensible," whose origins can be traced back to Kant's concept of *sensus communis*, through Friedrich Schiller's reflections on "aesthetic experience" and the "play drive," Rancière also critically engages with Jean-François Lyotard's interpretations of Kant's concept of the "sublime" and, within this framework, rethinks the relationship between the "aesthetic" and the "political." For this reason, it is necessary to outline Rancière's general philosophical framework here, since we will frequently encounter its theoretical extensions throughout the book. In order to prevent these extensions from remaining suspended in abstraction, it will be useful to establish a conceptual foundation from the outset. For Rancière, the "distribution of the sensible" is not merely an arrangement of perception. It is a constitutive political-aesthetic principle that determines how visibility, speech, and positions are distributed. In this context, Rancière develops his conception of politics through a critical engagement with the foundational texts of classical philosophy. In works such as Plato's *Republic, Statesman, Dialogues,* and *Menexenus,* he discusses how political order is constituted through discourse, representation, and positioning. Likewise, Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics, Nicomachean Ethics*, and *Politics* are among the important philosophical sources through which Rancière's conceptions of political equality, justice, and the common sphere are discussed. Through his critical engagement with these classical texts, Rancière conceptualizes politics not

merely as a technique of government or an aggregate of power relations, but as a practice of rupture that intervenes in the distribution of the sensible. Thus, politics and aesthetics become two distinct yet identical planes of the same constitutive question—the question of who is visible, who can speak, and who counts. In his *Politics*, Aristotle formulates the fundamental impasse of political philosophy in the following question: "The question which we must not forget is: equality or inequality in what kind of thing? For this is a difficulty, and a difficulty which makes us need political philosophy" (Aristotle, *Politika*, 1282b21.[14] As can be seen, for Aristotle this question is not merely the central problem of political order but also of philosophy. Likewise, Aristotle's proposition that "man is a political animal" gains its meaning from this point. Human beings do not determine judgments about what justice is, or who is right or wrong, solely within the confines of individual experience; by bringing these judgments into the common sensible sphere through "speech," they become constitutive subjects of the political community. The animal, by contrast, has only "voice" (*phone*); it does not possess "speech" (*logos*). While the sound produced by an animal communicates pain or pleasure, human beings are thought to be capable, through logos, of speaking about justice and injustice, right and wrong. Rancière, however, reinterprets this Aristotelian distinction as a political question: the issue is not merely the ability to speak, but whether a voice is recognized as "speech" and taken into account in the common world. For this reason, the

[14] This question of the "impasse" is the opening sentence of Rancière's Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy (Rancière, *Uyuşmazlık*, p. 9). The quotation from Aristotle is given here in the Turkish translation used in Rancière's book.

animal cannot be a constitutive subject of the common sphere. In the Aristotelian sense, speech is not merely a means of communication. It is the public expression of the capacity to distinguish right from wrong and what is just from what is unjust. Bringing this distinction into contemporary aesthetic and political thought, Rancière also rejects the necessity of reading art history through the periodizing and progressive categories of "modernism," "postmodernism," and "realism." Rancière, however, approaches realism differently. For Rancière, modernism, postmodernism, and realism are not neutral period designations that explain the history of art. Rather, they are regimes of interpretation that serve to read and delimit aesthetic experience in particular ways. Modernism defines art as a process of autonomous, progressive, and formal rupture that turns inward upon its own means. Within this framework, the egalitarian potential of the aesthetic regime to suspend the rules of representation is gradually reduced to an increasingly specialized language of art. This approach finds particular expression in Clement Greenberg's theory of the two-dimensional "medium." The confinement of painting to its own material conditions becomes the criterion of modernist progress. Within this narrative, artists such as Jackson Pollock, Barnett Newman, and Mark Rothko are treated by Greenberg as examples that situate aesthetic experience not along the axis of the political distribution of representation, but within the framework of formal autonomy. The concept of postmodernism, by contrast, declares the end of grand narratives and the dissolution of aesthetic meaning, in opposition to the modernist narrative of progress. This approach is associated particularly with Arthur C. Danto's "end of art" thesis, developed explicitly within a Hegelian framework. According to Danto, art

history has ceased to be a teleological process progressing toward a particular formal or semantic goal, and the philosophical question of what art is has, consequently, moved ahead of artistic practice itself. As a symbolic example of this historical rupture, Andy Warhol's *Brillo Box* (1963–64) is positioned as a central point of reference in Danto's thesis of the end of art. The fact that the distinction between an artwork and an everyday object can no longer be determined through aesthetic criteria is presented as a fundamental indicator of the postmodern condition. In other words, when an ordinary consumer product from a supermarket shelf is exhibited in an art gallery, what defines it as a work of art is no longer the eye or the gaze, but philosophical interpretation. Because under conditions of hyperreality, the eye is no longer sufficient on its own to establish an aesthetic distinction between objects. Warhol's *Campbell's Soup Cans* (1962) and, in particular, *Brillo Box* are among the most striking examples of this transformation.



Andy Warhol, *Campbell's Soup Cans*, 1962, synthetic polymer paint and metallic enamel paint, 32 canvases, each 50.8 × 40.6 cm, The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York. © Andy Warhol Foundation / ARS, NY / TM Licensed by Campbell's Soup Co.



Andy Warhol, *Brillo Box* (Soap Pads), 1964, synthetic polymer paint and silkscreen ink on wood, 43.2 × 43.2 × 35.6 cm. © The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / ARS, New York

Yet, according to Rancière, these two approaches, although proceeding in opposite directions, converge on a common outcome. Their convergence ultimately weakens the political force of aesthetics. Modernism confines aesthetics within formal autonomy. Postmodernism, by contrast, traps it within a logic of irony, distance, and closure. Consequently, the sharing of the sensible within aesthetic experience disappears, and its capacity for transformation becomes invisible. From Rancière's perspective, therefore, the crucial issue is to embrace neither the modernist narrative of progress nor the discourse of postmodern rupture. On the contrary, it is to conceive of aesthetics as an open and egalitarian sphere that reconstitutes the sensible ordering of the social. The question of realism, however, has a dual,

"homonymous" structure in Rancière.[15] The classical conception of realism is based on the assumption that art should reflect a pre-given reality as it is and as accurately as possible. Within this approach, representation functions less as a field of experience that opens up the world than as a means of making visible an order that already exists. Although such representations may appear on the surface as realist forms that seek to "show reality," rather than equalizing the sensible field, they reorganize it hierarchically. In other words, in these forms, who can be seen, what can be regarded as meaningful, and which gaze is legitimate have already been determined. The paintings of Jean-Léon Gérôme, for example, are typical examples of this regime of representation in their technical perfection and detailed depiction. For while these paintings depict reality, they simultaneously organize it, perform a pedagogical function, and close it off to new interpretations. In literature, too, poverty and labor are depicted in Émile Zola's works through an extremely detailed and observation-based

[15] n Rancière, concepts possess a *homonymic* structure; this doubleness operating under the same name corresponds not to a dialectical logic of opposition or synthesis, but to a mode of epistemic ordering. Demos, fiction, equality, realism, police, politics, democracy, and so forth are typical examples of this *homonymic* structure. For instance, the concept of demos refers, on the one hand, to a population that can be counted, represented, and governed, while, on the other, it signifies the excess of those who have no part, those who are uncounted. These two meanings cannot be reduced to one another, do not overlap, and do not constitute a contradiction to be resolved between them. Politics emerges at the moment when these two meanings change places—that is, when the uncounted make themselves countable. This process is not a dialectical synthesis but a displacement of place occurring within the distribution of the sensible. In Rancière, this dual structure, together with the presupposition of equality, demonstrates that meaning cannot be hierarchically fixed and that perception cannot be constituted from a single center. For this reason, concepts do not close, definitions remain permanently double, and every ordering carries the ghost of the other.

naturalist mode of narration. Rather than expanding the characters' capacity for subjective action, this richness of detail situates them within a framework shaped by biological determinants, environmental conditions, and class destinies. In this sense, the increased visibility of the figure of the worker is consistent with the fundamental tendencies of the aesthetic regime that transforms the existing distribution of the sensible and establishes a new sensory order. (This argument concerning the aesthetic regime will be revisited below.) In Zola, however, the worker does not emerge as a subject who transforms their own experience and constructs their world, but as the class-based outcome of particular causes and conditions. This naturally limits the space of indeterminacy and equality opened up by the sensible regime. For Zola does not merely show; he also seeks, through a logic of scientific explanation, to explain why things appear as they do. For Rancière, by contrast, the fundamental characteristic of the sensible regime, in other words, the aesthetic regime, is that it leaves meaning open rather than fixing it. The aesthetic regime does not reduce what is visible to a single schema of causality; it creates room for different possibilities of interpretation and experience. Zola's naturalism, however, sometimes closes off this openness, fixing social reality within particular relations of cause and effect and, as it were, declaring, "this is the reason for everything." Thus, while naturalist realism brings everyday life onto the stage, it reorganizes the sensible field not by equalizing it, but within an explanatory and determining logic. Although Rancière, however, detaches realism from this classical logic of representation and approaches it on an entirely different plane. For him, realism is not an attempt to imitate the world accurately, but a reconfiguration of the distribution of the sensible. This process of

reconfiguration disables established hierarchies of representation by bringing ordinary lives, bodies deemed insignificant, and invisible experiences to the center of art. Thus, for Rancière, realism is understood less as a style or a technique of accurate depiction than as a reorganization of who and what is entitled to visibility. The issue is not to "represent reality well," but to transform what is considered representable as reality. In this context, artists such as Gustave Courbet and Jean-François Millet, as well as Johannes Vermeer and Gerard ter Borch in the Dutch tradition of everyday-life painting, offer alternative examples through which realism can be conceived not in terms of the accuracy of representation, but through the establishment of sensory equality. Likewise, in literature, Gustave Flaubert's novel *Madame Bovary* opens up an entirely different dimension of realism for Rancière. Although Emma Bovary's feelings take shape within the confines of her ordinariness and the narrow limits of everyday life, they are taken seriously, and no established hierarchy is imposed between "major events" and "minor details." By placing moral judgment in parentheses, the style of the narrative invites the reader neither to condemn nor to glorify her. For this reason, Rancière regards Flaubert as the figure who establishes the premise that "everyone can feel everything." At the aesthetic level, this premise points not to a new narrative technique, but to a radical experience that equalizes the distribution of the sensible. In this way, Rancière does not approach art history through the opposition between modernism and postmodernism. Instead, he considers art through questions of which regime determines what it renders visible, whose domain it is deemed to belong to, and under what sensory conditions it becomes valid.

According to Rancière, the history of art and sensory experience should be conceptualized through three distinct regimes: the "representative," the "ethical," and the "aesthetic." However, these regimes should not be regarded as isolated or successive periods. These periods operate as arrangements that intersect, overlap, and transform one another within different historical contexts. For this reason, for Rancière, the aesthetic, the representative, and the ethical are not autonomous domains. They are relational modes that organize the distribution of the sensible in different ways. *The representative regime* finds its origins in Aristotle. By determining what art will make visible, on whose behalf, and according to which formal rules, it establishes a hierarchical order among subject matter, form, and subject. In this context, in the Aristotelian understanding, tragedy takes noble and serious actions as its subject, while a certain correspondence is maintained between the social position of the characters and their modes of representation; by contrast, everyday or ordinary life is not treated as possessing the same level of aesthetic value. For example, while the life of a king, hero, or noble person is regarded as a subject worthy of art, the everyday life of an ordinary peasant is not considered equally significant. *The ethical regime*, in the approach articulated by Plato, binds art to criteria of social utility, moral correctness, and pedagogical function. This framework continually tends to restrict the autonomy of aesthetic experience. For example, Plato argues that certain forms of poetry and tragedy should have no place in the ideal state because they might negatively affect the moral development of the young. Indeed, the expulsion of poets from the ideal state in Plato's *Republic* is the best-known example of this approach. Thus, the value of a work of art is not measured solely by its aesthetic qualities but also

evaluated according to what it contributes to society and to the individual. *The aesthetic regime*, by contrast, is precisely where the hierarchical determinations of the "representative" and "ethical" orders are suspended. In the literal sense, it bypasses both regimes. As can be seen in the comparison between Zola and Flaubert, rather than subjecting the work of art to predetermined (Aristotelian) ends, (Platonic) moral functions, or causal explanations, the aesthetic regime makes possible a more equal distribution of sensory experience among different subjects and subjects of representation. In doing so, it dissolves established distinctions between the high and the low, form and content, speech and noise. Thus, sensory experiences that were previously invisible or regarded as insignificant become visible, and the power of art rests not so much in conveying a moral message as in actually instituting the presupposition of "equality" by redistributing the distribution of the sensible. Within this framework, the question shifts away from which period art belongs to and becomes a question of what can be seen, said, and shared. Yet this question can readily be posed specifically in relation to Semyanî Perîzade's concept of the "future body". Which bodies are regarded as legitimate, and which are excluded from the field of representation? Which voices are considered meaningful, while others are reduced to noise? Which art is deemed worthy of value, while which is devalued? These questions point not to an aesthetic classification but to political and symbolic thresholds that regulate the distribution of the sensible. Accordingly, for Rancière, every social order is based on a "distribution of the sensible." Rancière maintains that the distribution of the sensible is structured within conditions determined by time and space, and he uses the concept of

Sensorium to explain this condition. This concept emerges not from the will of a single subject or power, but from a sensory order that is purposively constituted through social and historical relations. *Sensorium* refers to the sensory order that determines what is visible or invisible, what is audible or inaudible, and whose speech can or cannot be heard. This distribution constitutes a set of implicit assumptions that determines what can in fact be seen, said, and heard, whose speech will be recognized as meaningful discourse, and whose voice will be regarded merely as a murmur. The social order does not merely code individuals as political or legal subjects; it positions them as bodies and voices, producing hierarchical assumptions about their supposedly natural capacities. According to Rancière, this *Sensorium* order is founded upon a "regime of consensus" that presents itself as inclusive while in fact depriving a section of society of its share. This regime is a procedure that determines the organization of powers, the assignment of positions and statuses, the delimitation of spaces, the distribution of functions, and the structuring of the common space. This procedure renders visible the functional administration of a representational authoritarian order. Rancière calls the order that legitimizes this unequal distribution the "Police.[16] Here, the police does not refer to law enforcement

[16] Interestingly, although Rancière's concept of the *police* does not fully correspond to the contemporary understanding of politics, it bears an important resemblance to it. In contemporary politics, too, roles, powers, and decision-making processes within society are regulated through the state, institutions, and administrative mechanisms. Who will participate in decision-making processes, whose voices will be taken into consideration, and which demands will be recognized as legitimate are largely determined by these structures. In this respect, the police resembles contemporary politics, particularly in its dimensions of governing, regulating, and organizing the social sphere. Yet Rancière's distinction becomes crucial here: the police is concerned with the administration and maintenance of

agencies, but to the regulatory logic that presents the unequal distribution of power as natural and inevitable. The police establishes and maintains the sensory order that determines what will be visible and what will remain invisible, whose speech will be recognized as human discourse and whose voice will be regarded as an animalistic murmur. In this way, the sensible is shaped and distributed in favor of socially privileged groups. This distribution constitutes a consensus established at the expense of excluding anonymous subjects whose voices are not recognized as speech. For Rancière, politics is the opposite of the police and confronts it everywhere. Politics emerges only in such a moment of action and operates as the antithesis of the police order. By disrupting the existing distribution of the sensible, politics interrupts the regulatory logic that renders inequality natural and legitimate and enables excluded subjects to become visible within the common space. In other words, politics makes it possible for invisible subjects to acquire speech and visibility within the common space by dismantling the sensory and symbolic order of the police that renders inequality natural. Thus, subjects whose names are unknown, whose voices go unheard, whose speech is not recognized as meaningful, and who are ultimately not taken into account intervene in the common sensible realm. This inclusion in the common realm, on the one hand, enacts the praxis of equality and, on the other, breaks with the logic of the existing police order—thus creating a rupture with the classical and familiar conception of politics—and opens up a new process of political subjectivation. Through this process, the name becomes

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the existing order, whereas politics emerges when those excluded from that order make a demand for equality, thereby questioning and transforming the existing order.

visible, speech becomes audible, discourse comes to be recognized as meaningful, and subjects who were previously not taken into account begin to be recognized as legitimate constituents of the common space.

One of the examples to which Rancière frequently turns in order to concretize the logic of politics as participation in the common space is the withdrawal of the plebeians to the Aventine Hill in the Roman Republic. This event is one of the fundamental historical examples through which Rancière concretizes his thinking on the origins of politics. In the conflict between the patricians and the plebeians in the Roman Republic, the plebeians, by withdrawing to the Aventine Hill, do not merely put forward a number of economic or legal demands; they make a more fundamental claim: they declare themselves to be speaking and countable subjects of the common world. For Rancière, the significance of this event lies in its demonstration that politics does not arise simply from conflicts of interest, but from the struggle to be recognized as a subject endowed with the capacity for speech. For the patricians, the plebeians' utterances do not constitute *logos* in the true sense; the sounds they produce are regarded merely as a murmur, a manifestation of discontent. Thus, within the social order, the plebeians are relegated to a position in which they are biologically alive but politically "uncounted." The act of withdrawing to the Aventine breaks precisely this invisible position. The plebeians demonstrate that they are in fact part of the common world and possess the capacity to produce political speech. This event, therefore, should be understood not merely as a rebellion or class uprising, but as a "demand for a share by those who have no share." When we transpose this historical event into the present, for instance, the effort to put Kurdish into practice on

every platform can be understood as a language positioned as an "unknown language," whose mode of expression is coded merely as a "murmur," challenging regimes of public visibility. This situation calls into question the boundaries of the "common space" concerning who can speak, be heard, and be counted. In this context, every practical effort involving Kurdish also becomes a concrete manifestation of the Rancièrian principle of political identity. Rancière's concept of "miscount" is also of central importance here. While the social order presents itself as a complete, harmonious, and seamless whole, it in fact fails to count certain sections of society. Politics emerges precisely when this miscount becomes visible. The emergence of the people, the *demos*, or the plebeians—breaking with the concept of *okhlos* (mass, mob) in Plato's terminology—and their becoming political subjects is not an expression of a natural quality they already possess; rather, it becomes possible when those excluded from the existing order presuppose themselves to be equal and stage this equality. In this respect, the Aventine event constitutes a historical example of the distinction Rancière draws between the "police" and "politics." While the "police" refers to an order in which everyone's place, function, and right to speak have already been distributed in advance, "politics" begins when those who remain outside this distribution emerge and assert their equality. The plebeians' withdrawal to the Aventine is precisely such a moment of political rupture: a moment in which those whose voices have been regarded merely as noise compel the recognition of their speech as *logos*. For this reason, the Aventine reveals for Rancière a fundamental truth at the heart of politics: politics begins at the moment when those who are unequal begin to speak by presupposing that they are equal. In summary, the withdrawal to

the Aventine Hill and the struggle of the plebeians did not abolish the aristocratic structure of the Roman Republic; however, by expanding the plebeians' political and legal rights, it altered the existing balance of power and partially broadened the sphere of political participation. For this reason, this struggle is regarded as a critical social rupture within the political order of the Roman Republic. Thus, politics is ultimately an activity that disrupts and reshapes the existing distribution of the sensible. It makes visible those who have no share, gives names to those who are anonymous, and incorporates them into the common space. This intervention by politics signifies a deviation from the given sensory order and a break with consensus. Rancière calls this moment of rupture and disagreement *dissensus*. For Rancière, dissensus is the interruption of the existing sensory order and consensus. In other words, it is an egalitarian disagreement that calls into question the existing order concerning who can speak, what can be seen, and what can be regarded as a matter of common concern. For this reason, politics draws its force not from consensus, but from *dissensus*, that is, disagreement. Politics is not a continuation of consensus; it is the production of *dissensus*, that is, disagreement. Politics renders the false consensus and claim to homogeneity of the police order ineffective by dismantling them. It brings the logic of its operation, presented as natural and immutable, to an impasse. Rancière establishes a similar structural logic for the field of aesthetics. Within the aesthetic regime, art and politics operate on the same logical plane insofar as they are capable of intervening in the distribution of the sensible. Both are interventions that make visible what has been rendered invisible and make sayable what has been rendered unsayable. In this sense, art and politics, in the broadest terms, should be understood as

egalitarian interventions that interrupt the existing distribution of the sensible and reorganize it.

I, too, borrow this concept from Rancière and, at this stage, apply it to the function of women within the Kurdish political movement and—as noted in the introduction to the book—to Semyanî Perîzade's embodied existence. The Kurdish political movement reshapes, through the existence of women, the masculine and gendered social consensus that feudal and conservative structures have established among themselves. Through the accumulation of women's existence, it subjects this consensus, as it were, to mitotic division, transforming women's status into a sociological postulate and moving it onto an egalitarian plane. In Semyanî, by contrast, the conservative postulate of the representative regime is spontaneously disrupted through lubunya jargon, and thus the praxis of equality is staged through the material appearance of the other body. In other words, Semyanî Perîzade becomes *dissensus* because she interrupts the consensus-based logic of representation—that is, the existing distribution of the sensible—and becomes political in the same way because she displaces the generally accepted, dominant, and ethical norms on which representation has reached a consensus, such as what is deemed "appropriate and fitting for our ancient culture." Conservative and feudal modes of thought, by their very nature, do not allow women to transform their voice into speech within the distribution of the sensible, nor do they ever fully grant women an egalitarian status. Within these orders, women are predominantly positioned as passive signifieds. When this historical transformation is considered in the context of struggles over the distribution of the sensible and visibility, the queer identity, much like this broader political identity of feminism, also

produced a powerful political transformation in the context of rights struggles with the emergence of Queer Nation, founded in New York in the 1990s.[17] Within this framework, when Semyanî's embodied existence is approached from feminist and queer perspectives, it becomes evident that established representational norms are subjected to a process of deconstruction. Although references to her body may appear to point toward marginality and sexual orientation, and although the striking prominence of these two signifiers is inevitable, as stated from the outset, these are not the issues that this book is primarily concerned with. Moreover, her embodied existence is by no means an assertion of an ideal bodily form. In other words, it should absolutely not be inferred that Semyanî's body constitutes an idealized form and that every body ought to conform to it. On the contrary, such an inference would be the result of a biased and distorting reading. What matters here is rather the opening of a discursive space in which a new perspective, one that will take shape in the future, may emerge. As noted above, this space is one of "forgetting." It is forgetting in the Blanchotian sense. It is a kind of forgetting in which "one consents to forgetting in a remembrance that forgets

[17] Queer Nation, is an LGBTQ+ activist organization founded in New York in March 1990 by HIV/AIDS activists from *ACT UP*. The organization was formed by members of various groups in response to the increasing violence against gay people in the streets. Angered and disturbed by the growing prejudices in art and the media, the group members published *The Queer Nation Manifesto*. The manifesto was distributed in 1990 by people marching alongside *ACT UP* during New York's "Gay Pride Day" parade. Queer Nation is generally known for its confrontational tactics and slogans directed against prejudice.

nothing" (Blanchot, 2014, p. 53). Semyanî makes us forget not the past but the future; she consigns us to the forgetting of the future. This forgetting is not a "negation" but a "normalization." (The concepts of forgetting and normalization will be examined in detail later, in the section "The Other Body.") The beauty or repulsiveness of Semyanî's image is never an end in itself; what matters is fidelity to the reality one seeks to express and to the musical means employed for this purpose. Semyanî is constantly moving from the social world into her own cosmic world. Yet this cosmic world is not a realm of contemplation and suggestion based on a pure appearance. It is simply a world that the musician alone can offer: absolutely realistic, absolutely material, stripped of everything that dulls pure sensation. It is also the dark veil of the absolute world. In other words, it is the veil of representation that covers the unnameable reality of the true world, together with the veil of consensus surrounding the destiny that depends upon it. Through the effect of forgetting that she produces in perception and sensation, Semyanî points to the necessity of lifting this veil, and believes in this necessity. She does so through the musical voice of the other body. For Schopenhauer, too, the art form that lifts the veil of representation was music. This veil presupposes two things: first, the material covering that conceals the body and consigns intimacy to theology, namely, fabric; and second, the common ground of taste and aesthetic judgment upon which the intellectual and social world reaches consensus, together with the shared destiny produced by this ground—in other words, the *Fate of Consensus*. In order to understand how the *Fate of Consensus* is constituted in the aesthetic sphere, we must now approach the matter at the sociological and theoretical levels.

CHAPTER ONE

The Fate of Consensus

The aesthetic sphere has historically been built upon the autonomy of individual judgment and the originality of sensory experience. However, within modern processes of cultural production, the autonomous character of aesthetics is increasingly overshadowed by social and cultural norms. In this context, one of the concepts I foreground is the "Fate of Consensus."

Fate of Consensus: A phenomenon in which social taste and aesthetic judgment are formed on the basis of an unwritten, non-hierarchical consensus. Individuals' aesthetic preferences are not merely matters of personal taste; they are shaped by social norms and collective assumptions. Particularly in the fields of poetic art (literature and poetry) and pastoral music, the Fate of Consensus functions as a framework that defines the way of life and cultural production of marginalized communities—such as the Kurds. This framework renders visible not only individual perception but also social power relations and cultural hierarchies. In other words, the Fate of Consensus is the consensual validation of social taste and aesthetic judgment. Arising particularly from the pathetic representations of literature and poetry and the rural extensions of music, it has, as of today, come to replace a way of life for the Kurds. The dominant Fate of Consensus evaluates existing forms of production as forms of representation in accordance with social demand and interprets them within a social or ideological framework. This process leads to the neglect of the autonomous aesthetic values of cultural production. Although social consensus ostensibly aims to create a common ground, in reality it functions as a mechanism that distorts productions and original forms,

thereby limiting aesthetic autonomy. This situation overshadows both individual judgment and the original potential of cultural production. In other words, the dominant Fate of Consensus (social demand = taste and aesthetic judgment) always seeks to view existing forms of production—insofar as they constitute forms of representation—in accordance with this framework and consequently regards them as an ideological stance of the community. Yet it is precisely the mutually negating consensus of social mechanisms that causes the genuine principles of judgments of social taste and aesthetic appreciation to be denied. Undoubtedly, this consensus seeks, ostensibly, to make them explicit and bind them to a common ground. Pierre Bourdieu was right to invoke the reality of class divisions against the illusions of disinterested judgment. Judgments of social taste and aesthetic appreciation present themselves within the field through an authoritarian process of negation. The ontology of the field is delineated through judgments such as: does a certain painting represent a certain subject or not; does a certain piece of music contain a certain emotion or not; is the subject matter of a certain film appropriate or inappropriate? In general, through (Platonic) propositions of the kind "this artistic production accords with the values of societies like ours, whereas that one does not," political and aesthetic authorities are classified and proclaimed on an ethical ground.

These reciprocal conceptions are transformed into an aesthetic mold through the mere majority of a general will. The general will fixes the fugitive character of aesthetics onto the most rigid ground, as if with iron stakes. While constructing a destiny and reinforcing its own normative center on the one hand, it directs the force of rational discourse outward, toward secondary paths, on

the other; and, as though continually rewriting the sanctity of tradition onto a *palimpsest*, it puts into operation, together with social memory, the means through which social order is reproduced in the Bourdieusian sense.[18]

Thus, the collective memory of the Kurds is always alive. As a consequence of the traumas they have historically experienced, they possess a political consciousness. They have always taken care to place their own traditions in the foreground. In fact, the effects produced by fear and anxiety are also decisive here. They have developed a reflex against everything they perceive as a threat to their existence and cultural practices. This reflex, through a natural yet necessary orientation, has pushed them into a closed cultural basin and positioned them as the guardians of the cultural norms of that basin. Frankly, the vast majority of the Other or of the Kurds are unfamiliar with the experience of minor life, owing to the dominant majoritarian conditions of politics. In the Lefebvrian sense, they have never really developed a clear understanding of what constitutes the ordinary norm of "everyday life." Conversely, when majoritarian concerns disappear, the functioning of everyday norms creates a profound sense of emptiness. For this reason, cultural norms always lie at the center of social reproduction. In Bourdieusian terms, we might also call this "cultural capital." For according to Bourdieu, alongside economic capital (money, property), cultural capital consists of the knowledge, skills, education, and advantages that provide an

[18] *Palimpsest*, refers to the practice, used before the invention of paper, of scraping writing from parchment without completely erasing it and adding a new text to the same surface. The concept therefore describes a process in which previous traces are not entirely erased but instead become interwoven with the new writing, giving the text a multilayered structure and conveying meaning through superimposed trace.

individual with a higher social status. Bourdieu argues that cultural capital is more effective than economic capital. In this context, another familiar concept of Bourdieu's is habitus. Habitus represents the totality of dispositions acquired by the individual through the process of socialization that become embodied as patterns of perception, action, and inclination. In other words, habitus is a kind of second nature that largely unconsciously directs our behavior, tastes, and desires. For me, what constitutes the Fate of Consensus is not limited—as Bourdieu's habitus is—to the knowledge individuals acquire through the process of socialization. It is the authoritarian competence of a discourse that carries the order of representation from the past in its very genes into the present. This authoritarian competence is, more often than not, a first nature operating alongside politics. Taste and aesthetic judgment constitute the essence of the discourse of representation; yet taste and aesthetic judgment emerge from within the general convictions, commitments, norms, rules, and obligations of society. These, in turn, are always bound up with mythology, anthropology, ethics, and history. The most important agents that constitute the network of authoritarian competence are the producers of the intellectual world. They meet the rest of society on common ground, and their general interventions are very often taken by society as a point of reference. The Fate of Consensus does not, above all, simply mean that, for example, a compelling *dengbêjlik* recital performed by a *dengbêj* in an unaccompanied voice is accepted by all components of society as a shared value and collective memory and is, to a great extent, listened to with pleasure and appreciation.[19] The Fate of Consensus is, first and

[19] *Dengbêjlik*, is an oral tradition within Kurdish oral culture based on poetic narration and melodic recitation. It is an oral aesthetic practice of

foremost, the common ground on which all segments of society converge.[20] The second, however, is that this common ground on which different segments of society converge produces an act of judgment. If the intellectual world and the great majority of the social world point to the same act of judgment, and if that judgment produces a shared cultural will, the result is a unified image-stage in which a norm moves toward becoming a destiny. Yet the components of the intellectual world ought to extend beyond this common point. By intervening in the stability of the continuum between past and future, they must redraw the frame of the stage of the future.

The flow of a tradition inherited from the past always proceeds naturally along its own course. Yet the modern capitalist world causes everything that fails to keep pace with time to be isolated and degraded, thereby consigning it to oblivion. The spirit of the age (*Zeitgeist*) destroys many traditional images and petrifies the eclectic evolutionary tree inherited from the past. The intellectual world must discover the formula of the future against the spirit of

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storytelling through which historical events, love stories, collective memory, and shared experiences are transmitted, often through an unaccompanied, voice-centered performance. The person who performs this tradition is called a dengbêj ("deng" = voice, "bêj" = to speak in Kurdish).

[20] The concept of the *Fate of Consensus* encompasses a broad social common ground that cuts across differences of social class, occupation, and status; writers, intellectuals, academics, artists, scholars, workers, laborers, students, public-sector employees, and unprivileged or uneducated masses are all part of this common ground. For analytical convenience, however, this common ground is divided into two groups: the intellectual milieu and the general populace. Wherever the expression Fate of Consensus appears in the text, both groups are intended together; when the expression "the intellectual world of the Fate of Consensus" is used, only the intellectual milieu is intended.

the age. For in a terrain where the practice of the state and the institutions and institutes attached to it are absent, it is the intellectual sphere that assumes this function. The Kurds, for their part, still lack this state practice today. For this reason, Kurdish academics and intellectuals bear historical duties and responsibilities in this regard. The role of the intellectual world is not merely to reflect upon the ethnological history of the *dengbêj* inherited from the past. On the contrary, it is to create the conditions for continued existence in the future on a plane that exceeds the present of society and is differentiated from it *differentially*. What the intellectual world persistently sustains is a reaction aimed at preserving the existing against every form of power it perceives as a threat to itself and its community. Yet in the aesthetic context, what is most often sought to be preserved is the "pathetic image-scene".

Pathetic Image Scene: It is an image pornography in which the anthropological and ethnological have taken the place of aesthetics on the basis of the aesthetic. This image pornography has, in general, turned into a scene of a "destiny of consensus" that the majority, and almost the entire intellectual world, support, agree upon, and collectively accept. The pathetic image scene is characterized by the replacement of aesthetics with a mode of representation shaped by anthropological and ethnological references. This scene removes aesthetic evaluation from individual and autonomous criteria. Instead, through exaggerated and dramatic elements, it appeals to the social or cultural expectations of the viewer. At its core, the pathetic image scene refers to a structure capable of manipulating the viewer by maximizing emotional effects in visual or textual production. "Image pornography," as a sub-dimension of the pathetic image

scene, renders this process of dramatization more pronounced. Image pornography draws the viewer's attention through sensory and emotional effects by exaggerating the anthropological or ethnic dimensions of the object represented. This process enables representational production to become subject to the forms and norms of social stereotypes. In this sense, image pornography not only overshadows aesthetic evaluation but simultaneously directs and manipulates social perception. The element that emerges here as a critical conceptual connection is the destiny of consensus. Because the destiny of consensus transforms social taste and appreciation into an acceptance shared by a broad circle without being questioned, the pathetic image scene and image pornography are both reproduced and continuously legitimized through this common acceptance. This legitimization, in turn, limits the autonomy and critical potential of aesthetics through social consensus. The destiny of consensus ensures that these modes of representation are perceived as "correct" or "normal" and causes cultural production to be shaped within the framework of social norms and intellectual assumptions. In conclusion, the triad of the "pathetic image scene," "image pornography," and the "destiny of consensus" constitutes a structure that limits the autonomy of the aesthetic field. To summarize this structure briefly: the pathetic image scene renders individual and original aesthetic evaluation secondary. Image pornography first manipulates and directs the process of production, and then dramatizes it in a kind of literary Caravaggesque manner. The destiny of consensus reinforces these processes through social and cultural legitimacy. When these elements come together—that is, when this conceptual framework is formed—they reveal that cultural production and aesthetic evaluations are directed through

social norms and collective acceptances. Aesthetic values are no longer subject solely to individual perception but simultaneously become subject to social and cultural consensuses. Thus, the originality and autonomy of the aesthetic field are redefined through the interaction between both the objects represented and the social audience. This triadic structure generally comes into view through a traditional image episode in which the principle of claiming the local against degeneration is asserted. For example, the tattooed (*Deq*) hands of an old woman holding tobacco represent this traditional resistance.[21] Such images are merely a vision-based experience of *mimetic* scene transmission. Indeed, for certain intellectuals and artists, this experience constitutes their safest haven. For these havens are places where such *stereotypical* images are frequently put into circulation. For them, possessing empirical competence concerning these images and defending them by attributing profound meanings to them is the fundamental criterion. In this sense, the old woman's tattoo defines the limits of their intellectual horizon. This image, about which they can speak for hours, reveals not how much they know in their aesthetic affiliations, but rather what they do not know. In other words, this image, discussed for hours, does not demonstrate an accumulation of knowledge; it exposes a void of knowledge. Ultimately, rather than revealing the epistemology of the aesthetic affiliation, the image makes its blind spot visible. For this reason, in order to ensure that these conversations do not come to an end, the

[21] *Deq* refers to the traditional tattoo in Kurdish culture. These markings, particularly found on the faces and hands of older women, were made for purposes of identity, protection, belonging, and aesthetics. Traditionally, they were applied using soot, charcoal, and various herbal mixtures. The motifs often carried mythological and symbolic meanings associated with the sun, moon, stars, fertility, and protection against the evil eye.

continuation of this tradition is also defended with all their might. What is fundamentally valued is not the body that bears the tattoo itself, but the tattoo inscribed upon the body, which lends value to the rhetorical sphere and enables its continuity to be sustained. At this point, artistic production and intellectual thought, which determine the mediocre level of art, unfortunately cling cunningly to such traditions, thereby finding an interlocutor for their own territorial and unsystematic productions while also concealing their profound mediocrity. Accordingly, the intellectual world of the destiny of consensus delights in the pathetic depictions of these images. For the priority is not to preserve the tradition, but always to identify and fix the position of the agent marked as the source of corruption (for example, Semyanî Perîzade). Subsequently, this fixed figure is constructed as an antagonism, and the legitimacy of one's own position is produced through this opposition. In other words, the intellectuals of the destiny of consensus turn the agent into an opposing figure (a monster), thereby demonstrating the function and significance of their own position while attempting to prove the validity of their own stance. For the agent against whom they will direct their attack always prolongs their intellectual lifespan. The address of the targeted agent is inscribed upon the body; this address is explicit, runs counter to the ethical projection of society, and does not conform to its norms.

The intellectuals of the destiny of consensus recognize anyone who does not resemble them before anyone else, and they never take kindly to them. In fact, they implicitly dislike the tattooed subject within the frame, that is, the old woman herself; they merely love the speculative aura produced by the tattoo. Moreover, they value the natural effect it creates; they love her tobacco-holding hands and the motifs on those hands. They know that the

intellectual idea of their own equivalence is a reflection of that motif. Intellectuals subject to the destiny of consensus, like Plato, do not dare to expel anyone from the city. For what they would expel is the image of the emotional pathos that they themselves tirelessly and relentlessly arrange. This image is also a kind of manifestation of the stereotypical images with which they identify themselves. What matters is not the old woman's status as a subject, but the power of the motifs inscribed upon her body, its extensions, and its limbs. The intellectuals of the destiny of consensus have no interest in the owner of the skin; they are always fascinated by the image inscribed upon the skin. They are enamored not of the fingers, but of the tobacco grasped by those fingers. All of these are choices, choices of taste belonging to hierarchical ways of life. They are preferences for tastes that produce symbolic violence and are turned into instruments of domination. An authoritarian society makes its own tastes into legitimate tastes. Thus, its own tastes become, in the Bourdieusian sense, a source of "distinction" against the tastes of others whose pasts are more popular. Consequently, it is precisely these preferences of consensus that push Semyanî Perîzade's subsequent body outside the destiny. Her body is the visible *amorphous* face of a bodily form that is desired but, in the Bataillean sense, always regarded as the *Accursed Share*. To prefer one kind of music to another, to declare certain kinds of music worth listening to while regarding others as formless noise, is above all to *distinguish ourselves* from others, says the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Therefore, saying that a piece of music is beautiful or ugly is not merely an aesthetic judgment; it is also a social judgment. For few people respond to works of art as consciously as educated people do. Most people know that a piece of music makes them feel sad,

but they do not know which melodic and harmonic techniques produce this effect. It is precisely in this context that, although Semyanî's symbolic image does not ontologically contain a *distinction*, it is positioned as *distinctive* at the discursive level and coded as an image of distinction. The people of the community do not know why Semyanî's symbolic image is coded by authority as a face of *distinction*, just as they do not know the technical workings of a musical piece; yet they always affirm this *distinction* by supporting it in favor of authority. The community's judgment of taste and appreciation arising from this absolutist affirmation, by its very nature, also prefers the image of the old woman. Yet this preference is not an ineffective or unrelated choice; it is, each time, an operation of *distinction* and exclusion. In other words, while the old woman's body is preferred, Semyanî's body after is left outside as its excluded opposite face. Here, preference and exclusion become two operations of the same aesthetic norm: one is legitimized as valid taste and as something regarded favorably, while the other is positioned as the despised face, regarded as an anomaly and declared outside the norm. Thus, as Bourdieu also argues, tastes are ultimately regarded as the other face of aversions. Semyanî's symbolic image is thus constituted as the face of what is repulsive. At this point, disgust, like the sadness felt in response to music, is experienced as a natural form of reaction, detached from the conditions of its own production. Just as a person does not know through which melodic and harmonic mechanisms the music that saddens them produces this effect, they likewise do not know through which discursive and symbolic mechanisms disgust toward Semyanî's body is produced. The ignorance here is not a technical deficiency; rather, it is a mode of functioning through which the reaction itself appears natural and

spontaneous. For Maurice Godelier, the symbolic is not a secondary layer that represents reality; rather, it is a dimension that participates in giving meaning to bodies, objects, and social relations and in establishing these relations (Godelier, 2024, p. 173). Thus, the body is perceived not on the basis of its own material existence, but through the symbolic meaning attributed to it. Semyanî's body, too, ceases to be a body perceived within this process of signification and becomes an *artefact* positioned against a particular aesthetic norm. Thus, the community's reaction of disgust is not a natural feeling arising from the body itself, but rather the reconstitution, at the bodily level, of the aesthetic order produced by distinction. Just as what remains unknown at the technical level presents the emotion produced by music as a natural effect, so too the unknown discursive and aesthetic mechanism here constructs the disgust directed toward Semyanî's body as a natural reaction. For this reason, the symbolic condition of the opposite shore—that is, the old woman's hands—turns into an instrument of violence on Semyanî's back (in the Body After) through the destiny of consensus and attempts to *differentiate* her body. The perception of Semyanî's body is distorted by the destiny of consensus, much like the figures of the painter Francis Bacon. The distorted thought is the ground of destiny on which the intellectual world and the community meet and reach an accord. "Destiny" has now passed into the stage of "Judgment." "The Destiny of Consensus" thus becomes "The *Judgment* of Consensus." *Destiny* and *Judgment* exchange places. Judgment is a form of *differentiation* gently inscribed upon bodies in the openness of nature. It creates spaces of solitude and moments of isolation. Just as saying that a piece of music is beautiful or ugly is not merely an aesthetic judgment but also a social judgment of

distinction, determining that a body is beautiful or ugly, or classifying the Body After according to whether its organs conform to an organic or inorganic norm, is likewise the *discriminatory judgment* of consensus. This judgment confines bodies within an enclosed space and reproduces, on the terrain of discourse and action, the ethical affects deemed legitimate in the external world at the expense of excluded bodies. Thus, the means of society's reproduction do not escape the representational yoke of cultural heritage. The symbolic image of the body is, in this respect, the fundamental law of communal judgment. The law points to an inorganic fact. The fact, in turn, calls destiny back into being under the conditions of ethics. This chain has made the political order's intervention into bodily representation an early and enduring critical problem in the history of philosophy as well.

The political and moral foundation of this bodily ordering is formulated explicitly as early as Book III of Plato's *Republic*. Everyone remembers that famous proposition. What did Plato say, roughly? "Let everyone do his own work, for a worker has no time to devote to the theatre." Plato emphasizes two things here: the body and time. The first deprives the worker's body of the principle of desire and pleasure. The second establishes that time is not a notion belonging to the disenfranchised classes. Rancière rereads Plato's approach to the phenomenon of "time" through the incorrect entrance of politics onto the stage in Athens. For him, the problem is that the *demos* is deemed to lack the capacity to exercise the power of *arkhē* (the attributes of governing, being governed, and governance), and that politics itself has been

misencoded from the outset on the basis of this deprivation.[22] Politics, within the regime of the polis, is distributed on the basis of a logic of political oligarchy and aristocracy. Rancière analyzes this logic of unequal distribution as a central point of tension in the Platonic conception of politics and makes it one of the fundamental elements of his argument. According to the Platonic proposition, a shoemaker cannot be a ruler, because he has neither the time to devote to it nor the necessary knowledge. Plato's proposition also entails an ethical framework that presupposes that the political order must be secured through moral criteria. The Platonic ethical presupposition apprehends the ontological act of

[22] I applied Rancière's account of the misconceived configuration of politics—concerning the inability of the segment that lacks the power of *arkhē* (*demos*) to participate in the common sphere, the inability of its voice to become speech, and, ultimately, its subjugation—to contemporary Kurdish art by way of an analogy. In my view, contemporary Kurdish art, too, has been shaped by a paradigm that was misconceived from the outset. I therefore began with the following question: What, then, is the *arkhē* of contemporary Kurdish art—its foundation, basis, or first cause? Yet the answer to this question soon confronted me with the consequences of (Hegelian) dialectics. For the past thirty years, contemporary Kurdish art has emerged from a landscape in which, deprived of its own *arkhē*, concept, and epistemology, it has continually been constituted in relation to a place, an institution, a person, a thing, or a phenomenon as the antithesis of a given thesis (the Istanbul-centered art world). This mode of operation, that is, this mode of relating or positioning, points to two things: first, a comfort zone devoid of a system; second, a lack of original imagery grounded in *poiesis* (creation, creativity). Yet contemporary Kurdish art is neither the antithesis of anyone nor the antagonism of anything. Therefore, if this erroneous paradigm is corrected—in other words, if contemporary Kurdish art breaks away from this [pathetic] dialectic—the specific aesthetic *arkhē* of the Kurd will become visible, and its ground will spontaneously be reconstituted. For this is precisely the second central argument I seek to reconstruct in art: to properly determine the place of contemporary Kurdish art's own autonomous image and to liberate its objective conditions from pathetic representations and the existing dialectic.

the human being grounded in freedom, and the moment of encounter with the other—in the Levinasian sense—not as an independent experience of existence, but through the sovereign power's capacity to assign roles, rank, and regulate. In this respect, ethics is not an ineffectual sphere that discloses the knowledge of free action or encounter, but an empirical structure intertwined with the ways in which power—in Foucauldian terminology—regulates the social body. This structure slows down the power it produces in its own favor, and this slowing down rests upon the logic of a regime capable of legitimizing it in the name of the continuity of the order. The proposition that the worker has no time renders politics, law, and equality null and void. Here, the fact takes the place of ethics and replaces it. The ethics at the origin of this fact is transformed into a common perception that the social world considers logical and upon which it reaches consensus. Ultimately, a general conviction is reached about the worker: Above all, a worker must do his job flawlessly and know his own responsibilities. Theatre is not for him; after all, what does he know about theatre? The problem here lies not so much in a condescending gaze as in the moralism ethicized and concealed behind the emphasis on responsibility. Let the worker know his moral responsibility, uphold the work ethic, do his job properly, go home, go to bed early, and be back at work the next day. For neither is his body deemed worthy of the theatre nor does he have such time. Marcel Mauss's concept of "techniques of the body" is illuminating here: Society does not merely teach the body what to do; it also teaches it how to use itself, how to move, and how to organize time—in short, it disciplines the body. For the worker is always assigned "hard labor" as a destiny, and his body is deemed fit only for this. Thus, the discourse of responsibility shaped by

destiny turns into the judgment of an explicit mechanism of moral control. Ultimately, this logic of judgment is a logic of consensus shared by everyone. Let us explain this logic in another way. Despite international conventions and international law, for instance, a place is occupied on the grounds that "a humanitarian tragedy is taking place" there. For example, on the grounds that Iraq was ruled by a reactionary and barbaric regime and that practices from another age were being carried out there, a military operation is undertaken in the name of liberating the people there from oppression. This operation is presented as a humanistic course of action in the name of democracy, while the propaganda in question produces legitimacy through the media. Although the occupation is a fact, ethics enters into play here. At this point, the law is violated in the name of ethics, while the rule of law is altogether dismantled. For the justification of a humanitarian tragedy is an ethical justification; it is placed above the law, and in the social world this justification receives public support in a positive sense. If the public declares its support through a referendum, it will, to a large extent, result in a positive turnout, because this is also a logic of consensus. Contrary to what is commonly believed, the logic of consensus is the greatest obstacle to democracy and pluralism. Consensus is the manifestation of an oligarchic logic that imposes itself by excluding minority opinion within a homogeneous regime of thought whose framework is delineated by power and which everyone is assumed to accept in common. Ultimately, whatever may happen there, the fact of ethics cannot alter the reality of the factual destruction and devastation produced by the occupation. Indeed, the perception that life is worth living and the axiom of an equal world for everyone constitute a realistic ethical concept that encompasses

neither the expectations nor the legitimate demands of the individual. Ultimately, this concept is the political manifestation of the human being and of life, both of which constitute the foundation of sovereign power and are transformed into victims. Even a right-wing philosopher such as Carl Schmitt says that it is ethics and economics that constitute the poles of the universe—that is, its two opposing reflections. Schmitt writes:

> "Ethical enthusiasm and materialist-economic objectivity combine in every typical liberal expression, giving the political a new aspect. Thus, the concept of struggle, which is political in character, is transformed into competition on the economic side of liberal thought and into debate on the 'spiritual' side of liberalism; the clear distinction between two different statuses, such as 'war' and 'peace,' gives way to the dynamics of endless competition and endless debate" (Schmitt, 2012, p. 102).

This dissolution shows that ethics is no longer an external norm but has become an element integrated into the functioning of the political order. Ethics, then, is always immanent to the flow and ontological world of a global economic system, a dominant ideology, a dominant and patriarchal society, an anti-secular community, and a homogeneous regime. The fragile structure of when and under what conditions ethics will turn into a law, a fact, competition, debate, and a slogan is determined by the political, economic, and ideological atmosphere of the sovereign power-holder. In short, where a good and dignified life does not emerge, it is not the ethics of things but the subjection of ethics to things that takes inorganic form in life. Such a life is ultimately always condemned to lose the manifest functions of all its affiliations with truth.

Yet this structural subjection at this point appears most nakedly in the body within the judgment of consensus. Consensus first defines the body's sexual orientation as a pathological phenomenon (just as in the aforementioned example of Iraq being characterized as reactionary and barbaric), then recognizes that this phenomenon has no positivist validity whatsoever—in fact, it knows this from the very outset—and reduces it to the theological and feudal literature of ethical norms. It arrogantly rewrites the organic queer law of the body as the construction of an inorganic norm, with the masculine pen of ethics. This rewriting often first legitimizes itself through tragic justifications such as the rhetoric of a "humanitarian tragedy" and then, by rallying the public majority behind it, isolates through ethics the inorganic fact it has imposed upon the body. Thus, judgment becomes the destiny of a community taken as universally valid. If we express this universally valid destiny in Platonic terms: "This pluralistic Body After has no 'time' allotted for it to become visible as an equal body in the public sphere. Because, implicitly, such a time is not permitted to be created." The issue here is not merely the absence of time, but the conscious suppression of time and the body. This suppression operates as an aesthetic practice of power that regulates ways of seeing. We have known since Flaubert that a style is not an embellishment of speech but a way of seeing things. The Body After, too, as a way of seeing produced by the destiny of consensus, is the embellishment of judgment. Yet in essence, the Body After, like Antonin Artaud's concept of the "body without organs," is the way of seeing the sensory normalization of the future. One of the figures currently enacting this sensory way of seeing in Kurdish performing arts is the modern dancer Serhat

Kural.[23] Kural reflects the mythologies of his own geography, paralyzing their gendered and masculine continuity within his own body. He casts off the weight of thought, extends movement, restricts discourse, and places empirical historical memory upon an altar. He uses oligarchic and domination-based behaviors as ideological material within the body's signifying function. For the first avant-garde emergence in Kurdish art history likewise took place through a "bodily" performance. This singular avant-garde gesture undoubtedly emerged in Europe in the 1930s, in the person of Leyla Bedirxan, through "modern dance."[24]

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[23] I had previously written a feature on Serhat Kural's modern dance practice, titled "The Harmony of a Bodily Becoming in Kurdish Art: Serhat Kural." The feature was published in Sanatatak magazine on July 2, 2023. See Tan, "The Harmony of a Bodily Becoming in Kurdish Art: Serhat Kural," *Sanatatak*, July 2, 2023.

[24] In my fictional feature titled "Unrecorded Murders No. 2: Pablo Picasso," I brought Leyla Bedirxan and Pablo Picasso into the same fictional narrative. The feature was published in *Unlimitedrag* on August 25, 2023. An excerpt from the feature:

"Official records state that Pablo Picasso died of pulmonary edema and a heart attack on the morning of April 8, 1973, in the village of Mougins in southern France, after having hosted friends for dinner with his wife, Jacqueline. Yet Picasso is found dead, lying face down after being shot in the abdomen backstage at La Scala, Italy's largest opera house, where he had gone to watch a performance by his admirer Leyla Bedirxan in Milano. Through the Unrecorded Murders feature, we will learn what was actually said and what took place there during the unrecorded criminal incident that occurred backstage between Leyla Bedirxan and Picasso before the performance."

See Tan, "Unrecorded Murders No. 2: Pablo Picasso," *Unlimitedrag*, August 25, 2023.



Leila Bedir Khan and Leopold Gottlieb, Paris, 1925. Kurdish princess Leila Bedir Khan (1907–1986) and Leopold Gottlieb (1883–1934), a Polish-Jewish modernist painter

associated with the School of Paris. Photograph taken by the artist. Source: Dagens Nyheter, 8 February 1925

The second avant-garde emergence to appear in Kurdish art history, approximately a century after Bedirxan, occurred, in my view, with Semyanî Perîzade. Indeed, throughout history there have also been important feminist writers who theoretically carried these ways of seeing into the sensible world. Alongside Emma Goldman, Rosa Luxemburg, and Hannah Arendt, the best known are undoubtedly Simone de Beauvoir and Virginia Woolf. Although Simone de Beauvoir was a highly important symbol for women and defended, throughout almost all of her philosophy, the bodily difference of the "second sex," I believe that, ironically, her entire life unfolded under the shadow of a man's (Sartre's) body. She was always mentioned after that body, or remained a passive figure standing beside it. Undoubtedly, this was her conscious choice. Perhaps a weakness—who knows? For some reason, compared with Simone de Beauvoir, Virginia Woolf strikes me as more autonomous, self-sacrificing, and conceptual. In the introduction to *Eril Tahakküm* (*Masculine Domination*), Bourdieu says that when Woolf seeks to leave suspended in the air what she calls the "hypnotic power of domination," she resorts to an ethnographic analogy, establishing a genetic connection between discrimination against women and the rituals of an archaic society. Woolf explains the concept of hypnotic power that Bourdieu discusses in his own book as follows:

> "While our brothers, the men we respect, covered in red and gold and adorned with feathers like savages, are drawn into mysterious rites and enjoy the dubious pleasures of power and domination, seeking, with childish intent, to mark out with chalk the world in which humankind is confined within mysterious boundaries, we, 'his' women, are shut away in our homes without having a share

in any one of the numerous groups that make up the community" (Bourdieu, 2015, pp. 12–13).

The masculine domination inherent in the wild and patriarchal world of men that Woolf naively marks out with chalk and symbolizes through mysterious rites is today being reworked, along their own theoretical lines, by feminist thinkers such as Judith Butler, Wendy Brown, Julia Kristeva, Sandra Harding, Rosi Braidotti, Luce Irigaray, and Donna Haraway. What Woolf underscores, and what is important to me, is the phrase "without having a share in any one of the numerous groups that make up the community." The (feminine) group that has no share in the community here, or that is deprived of its share, is closely related to Rancière's theory. In fact, I am the one making this connection. For according to Rancière's theory, equality, political subjectivation, and politics are realized through participation in the common sphere—in other words, in the sensible. Rancière strikingly demonstrates this relation through the example of a strike: "A strike is not political when it demands reforms rather than a larger share, or when it attacks relations of authority rather than the inadequacy of wages. It is political when it reshapes the relations that define the workplace in its relation to the community" (Rancière, 2005, p. 56). Thus, the subject (Semyanî) who enters the sensible sphere through her musical word and (Body After), thereby reshapes that given masculine sphere and, by dismantling the mode of the predetermined categorical status in perception and sensation, redistributes roles. This act enables us to understand the forced dichotomies of being collective. In this respect, Woolf's concept of the hypnotic power of domination, on the one hand, reveals the dichotomous processes through which the biological is socialized and, on the other, through which the

social is biologized. Society regards external appearance as a natural consequence of biological difference (sex). Judith Butler, herself a queer feminist philosopher, examines the dimension of the material modalities of gender in this context in her book *Bela Bedenler* (*Bodies That Matter*). Society, which accepts sex as a reality, determines biological difference according to the appearance of sex and produces images, imageries, symbols, and concepts accordingly. Thus, physical and moral courage become identified with masculinity.

The hypnotic power of domination—that is, the passive positioning of the female body in relation to the masculine world—reminds me of the kinetic sculpture Can't Help Myself, jointly created in 2016 by the Chinese conceptual artists Sun Yuan and Peng Yu.[25] The sculpture was first exhibited in 2016 at the

[25] *Can't Help Myself* is a kinetic sculpture produced by Sun Yuan and Peng Yu for the Guggenheim Museum in 2016. Its defining characteristic is that it was constructed using an industrial KUKA robotic arm, made of stainless steel with a black exterior coating and rubber. The arm, commonly seen in production lines, was modified by attaching a specially designed shovel and a rubber squeegee to it and was designed to move within a 360-degree radius. Operated through a programmable KUKA control system, the sculpture is powered by a high-voltage cable at its base. The work was installed on a 7 m × 7 m white, wooden, waterproof platform, with a hydraulic component placed at its center. From this center, a liquid composed of 48 gallons of cellulose ether and dark red-colored water seeps out. To prevent this and protect the work, transparent polycarbonate panels were installed between the floor and ceiling. Visual recognition sensors detect whether the liquid has overflowed beyond the designated area; when it does, the arm gathers the liquid back with its shovel. Yet the liquid spills and flows again each time, and the task begins anew. The artists taught the robot 32 unique movements, such as shaking, scratching, sweeping, and bending and swaying. These acrobatic movements go beyond being technical representations of machine animation and reflect the artists' desire to humanize the sculpture and liken its existence to that of a human being. The movements are intended to evoke an emotional response in the viewer and draw attention to themselves. In this respect, the work enables the

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York as part of the exhibition *Tales of Our Time*, curated by Xiaoyu Weng and Hou Hanru. It was then shown in 2019 at the 58th Venice Biennale as part of the exhibition *May You Live in Interesting Times*. The sculpture's mechanism consists of a robotic arm that sweeps toward itself the red cellulose ether liquid, resembling blood, that leaks from its inner core, using dance-like and other acrobatic movements. More than three meters high and powered by the liquid that leaks from it, the robot must continuously perform this movement and draw the liquid back toward itself. Otherwise, its mechanical function will cease; in other words, its vital form will come to an end. This conceptual analogy in contemporary art corresponds to the vital form of the woman. This general female role, constructed in parallel with reproduction and femininity and confined between the home and the social world, is a mechanical depiction of this condition. This depiction reduces the body to a functional object of placement. Yet, as Maurice Merleau-Ponty also points out, the body is not a mechanical instrument but a natural power of expression: "The body transforms a certain motor essence into an appeal, unfolds and spreads the style of the articulation of a word into audible phenomena, unfolds and spreads the attitude it has inherited as a panorama of the past, reflects an orientation toward movement as actual movement,

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viewer not to perceive the sculpture merely as an object, but to see it as an extension of humanity or as a living being. The automated structure of *Can't Help Myself* positions the sculpture as a work of kinetic art. This gives the robotic arm an anthropomorphic quality; the viewer forms an emotional bond with the artwork and is prompted to question the origin and meaning of its movements. This emotional stage is followed by intellectual analysis. In short, *Can't Help Myself* is a physical manifestation of metaphysical ideas that, in keeping with the function of kinetic art, evoke a directly human response in the viewer.

because the body is a natural power of expression" (Merleau-Ponty, 2016, p. 255). This approach demonstrates that the body cannot be reduced to a merely normative role. From this point of departure, as I also stated in the introduction, the destiny of consensus is fundamentally a judgment of taste and appreciation. In other words, it apprehends the body not merely as a power of expression, but as a normative object that can be differentiated and classified. This apprehension transforms the traditional module of a ritual into a form of judgment through the legitimacy of cultural heritage. This transformation, in turn, reproduces the means of production of society through cultural and mythological forms. In the geography and topography of a place, in the physiognomic appearance of a face, in the form and wornness of a garment, in a commercial object, and in the chaos of an exhibition of odds and ends—in the Lévi-Straussian sense—the elements of mythology are present. The figures of this mythology also make it possible to discover the real history of a society, an era, or a commonality, and foreshadow the destiny of an individual or a people. This destiny, too, has noble subjects, but no base ones. In Eastern societies, base subjects are ennobled and enter circulation by operating more through mythological elements. The role of woman is noble and powerful in mythology, yet culturally, in the reality of everyday life, it is ordinary and feeble; indeed, in the Bourdieusian sense, it becomes a second nature. Through an inverse irony, like the robotic sculpture by the Chinese artists, the female figure in the East is a subject who helps everyone but herself, runs everywhere, swallows everything, yet is unable to suffice for herself. Moreover, even at the slightest hesitation, the vital functions of her female body are either so fragile that they will collapse or dependent upon a masculine power. In this context, Hegel defines the position of

the subject in the East as a loss and says: “For [in the East] the subject who loses itself is submerged and buried within a single universal substance, or within one of its particular aspects, since, as a person, it possesses no right in itself and therefore no ground whatsoever” (Hegel, 2015, p. 180). In this Hegelian depiction, the subject, losing its own rights and ground, dissolves within a universal substance. Similarly, the destiny of consensus is a universal point of judgment at which the substances of two subjects (intellectualism and society) meet and reach agreement in a single thought. This point of judgment is a means of reproducing a major sayable and visible that is agreed upon under the conditions of cultural reproduction and that embodies it. It is precisely this instrumental point that constitutes Semyanî’s point of political subjectivation. This is the beginning of the process of subjectivation of the sayable and visible through which she transforms her musical appearance once again into a vital sphere. Breaking away from the major discursive order means that the subject steps outside the field of the sayable and visible predetermined for her and establishes her own aesthetic position. As a minor beginning, this orientation presupposes not only a differentiation from the existing order but also the subject’s right to establish her own speech and visibility. For at this stage, Because Semyanî’s body-after, at this stage, steps outside the order of representation that determines her by turning toward the minor proof of her own aesthetic journey without becoming part of the major, and does not enact equality as a Rancièrian outcome, but posits it as the initial condition of subjectivation. For this reason, this orientation is, in itself, an egalitarian axiom.



Sun Yuan and Peng Yu, *Can't Help Myself*, 2016. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Photograph: Hypercritic

I approach the concept of equality through the principle of praxis that Rancière develops in his meta-political reading. In Rancière's philosophical perspective, equality is first and foremost a practice rather than a theory. Rancière broadly defines equality as follows: "Equality is not something given that politics subsequently puts into practice, nor is it a substance embodied in law, nor a goal that politics seeks to attain. Equality is simply a presupposition that must be made explicit within the practices that put it into operation" (Rancière, 2005, pp. 56–57). Rancière does not reduce equality to a goal deferred to the future, a legal ideal, or a moral promise. On the contrary, he proposes actively thinking about equality and, more importantly, actively doing equality. In Rancière's axiomatic approach, equality is not a status bestowed upon subjects by an order. Equality emerges when the subject actually includes itself within an order equal to that of others,

within an equal common sensible sphere. Just as the plebeians who withdrew to the Aventine Hill began to speak and make their voices heard. For this reason, equality does not appear as an attribute possessed; it is an enacted act and a repeated praxis. When a worker, for example a bricklayer, incorporates himself into the sphere of social deliberation not merely through his bodily labor but through his speech, gestures, and perceptual presence, he gains visibility. This visibility is a visibility that extends beyond the role assigned to him by the division of labor. It is precisely here that axiomatic equality comes into play. Axiomatic equality is not demanding equality, taking that demand into law, or waiting for the demand to become law; what is at stake is practicing equality itself. In other words, it is the subject's reconfiguration of itself within praxis. In this sense, when a bricklayer moves beyond the status framework drawn by the world of work, this is a political act in the Rancièrian sense. If, while carrying out a project given by an architect, the worker behaves without disrupting the work but with a certain state of "informality"—that is, if he violates the boundaries of the silent, disciplined, invisible worker's body expected of him—then, according to Rancière, this is an explicit practice of equality. Here, the rigid distinction between physical labor and the sensible is suspended, and two different regimes—the regime of labor and the aesthetic regime of the sensible—collide with one another. The worker's informal attitude constitutes the elimination of the authoritarian order. In other words, the worker's state of informality is, in Rancière's terminology, the detachment of the "police order" from the worker's body, or the liberation of a body under control by removing it from the count. This elimination also entails a structural destabilization of the authority's power within the

economy of abilities. For the police order determines in advance what each body can do, what it can say, and what it can feel. The worker's informality is a deviation from this predetermined distribution, producing a *dissensus*, that is, a *disagreement*. This deviation, namely the state of resisting the given planning, initially produces both politics itself and political subjectivation simultaneously. In the second stage, the worker effectively disrupts the role assigned to him within the existing established order. Thus, the concept of equality ceases to be an abstract ideal and is concretely fulfilled. This concrete political equality is simultaneously the emergence of a new ethical norm. Yet this ethical norm is not an ethics based on the division of labor in the Platonic sense. On the contrary, this is the internal disruption, by way of opposition, of the ethical-imaginary regime based on Plato's assignment of the worker to labor. This disruption does not remain an abstract principle; it becomes visible as concrete forms of conduct within everyday labor relations.

Yet the worker's informal behavior is diametrically opposed to the ethics of the social order represented by the architect. The ethics intrinsic to the architect's world always makes two fundamental demands of the master craftsman, and over time, these demands have become the unwritten laws of the social order. The first is that the worker perform his job in the most serious, flawless, and efficient manner possible; this demand is codified as professional ethics. The second is that the worker obey the architect's authority; this, in turn, signifies loyalty to the class hierarchy. Professional ethics rests on a disciplinary conception that prioritizes the principle that "everyone must know their own limits and place." It is assumed that wages are paid in return for this discipline and obedience. The worker is expected not to waste

time, to keep the body continuously productive, and to internalize attentiveness and discipline. Ultimately, all of this is imposed upon workers by professional ethics. This logic constitutes the essence of the modern capitalist mode of production; in Marxist terminology, it forms the basis of the system of exploitation. Consequently, the worker's informality is unethical in the architect's eyes. Yet it is precisely this unethical quality that constitutes the site from which politics emerges in the Rancièrian sense. In this context, the worker's informality is not a simple example of individualization in the name of equality; rather, just as in the example of the "strike," it is the entry of an active process of subjectivation into the sensible sphere as a political intervention. The worker does not enter the sensible world by laying the walls of the structure; on the contrary, he enters it because he perceptually extricates himself from his given role. This extrication makes him the subject of a political and aesthetic argument. Rancière's following observation is therefore critical: "Equality is not a goal that governments and societies can work toward and attain. To posit equality as a goal is to hand it over to the pedagogues of progress, to those who endlessly enlarge the distance they promise to abolish. Equality is a presupposition, a starting axiom—otherwise it is nothing" (Rancière, 2009, p. 261). Whenever equality is not a starting axiom, equality remains merely *a nothing*, and this condition lies at the center of theory. For the abstract claim of existence advanced against the concrete nothingness of equality is always rhetorical and never becomes a praxis. The coding of equality as a rhetorical demand by political programs at this point derives from the fraudulence of laws left at the margins. This fraudulence is exposed by keeping equality at the level of nothingness and points to a *doxa*. This doxa depicts

equality like a rainbow "on the horizon of the unattainable," and this depiction itself spontaneously reveals the irony. For the rainbow has become identified with the queer community and rests upon the *Rainbow Flag*, one of its most powerful symbols.[26] Thus, the rhetorical wishes of authoritarian structures concerning equality are, ironically, as colorful as a rainbow seen from afar. This so-called rainbow wish generally represents, metaphorically and on the basis of equality, an understanding of democracy that is multiple, diverse, and pluralistic. Yet when one begins to walk toward this rainbow—that is, when one attempts to turn equality into an enacted praxis—it becomes clear that it is nothing more than an abstract optical illusion. Upon reaching the foot of the rainbow, "nothingness" is revealed, and "on the horizon of the unattainable, an unattainable law of equality comes into being." If equality is essentially a matter of distributive justice, then individuals must be recognized as equal members of society and must receive a fair share of social resources. For John Rawls, after all, a just society is not one that produces absolute equality, but one in which the inequalities that arise are arranged in such a way as to improve the situation of the least advantaged. Yet equality here is tied to the authoritarian authority of consensus and is determined through arithmetic calculations of population and regimes of representation. At this point, the form of judgment constituted by the destiny of consensus overlaps with the unequal mechanism of distribution that Rancière calls the "police law." This law determines whose body will be legitimate and visible,

[26] *Rainbow Flag* Designed by artist Gilbert Baker in 1978, it is the best-known symbol of the LGBTQ+ community and the queer movement. Each color represents a different value: red symbolizes life, orange healing, yellow the sun, green nature, blue art, and purple spirit. The flag is also a global symbol of pride, equality, and peace.

who will be regarded as organic or inorganic; whose voice will be heard as a cultural value, and whose voice will be suppressed as noise. It is precisely in this context that Semyanî, just as in the bricklayer's "informal" attitude, first unsettles the authoritarian seriousness of the common norm of the *destiny* of *consensus* through her musical indifference and bodily indifference, and then divides it according to a logic of *dissensus*. This division is the fragmentation, rupture, and reshaping of common perception and sensibility. Semyanî enters this sphere through her musical voice and her queer body. She both claims her share of the common sphere and simultaneously leaves her ontological image within it. This image penetrates the chemistry of the sphere and begins to transform the given referent of equality. One of the most critical dimensions of this transformation is Semyanî's "everyday musical axiom" and her identity as a musician. Her music does not demand equality; it enacts equality itself as a praxis. It is precisely for this reason that Semyanî's artistic existence is, in the Rancièrian sense, a contemporary and aesthetic manifestation of a political praxis of equality. In order to situate this practice of equality within a broader context, we must now approach music as an ontological axiom of everyday life.

The Everyday Axiom of Music

The history of music, as might be expected, is not limited merely to the combination of sounds; it is a journey full of adventures as an ontological and cultural reflection of human history. The origins of music extend back to the earliest moments in which human beings established a relationship with nature and with their own existence. Viewed through Spinoza's approach, which does not conceive of human beings as separate from nature, the song of the first humans calling to birds appears as a form of musical practice that imitates the sounds of nature and derives its rhythms from the natural environment and the cycles of life. These first songs were more than the production of sound; they were the product of a communication established with nature. This communication, in turn, was a social and cultural activity that reinforced communal bonds and served ritual functions. Similarly, the flutes of the first shepherds were functional musical instruments used to maintain the order of the herds and to communicate signals within the community. The bows used by hunters were not merely tools for hunting; they imitated the rhythms and melodies of nature and, through their sounds, assumed an important role as a means of musical expression in rituals and ceremonies. The spirits of the gods heard in the first peals of thunder are representations of primordial sound-images shaped by humanity's metaphysical perception and mythological beliefs about nature. In these primordial stages, music existed in both monophonic and polyphonic forms. Monophony was more widespread in primitive societies, yet the seeds of polyphony had also been sown through rhythmic and melodic variations. Historically, the evolution of music has been shaped by the human

desire to bring order to chaos and to create beauty. The transformation of noises into meaningful forms through a certain order, the attempt to draw an aesthetic order out of chaos, is a universal motivation of music. In Ancient Greece, for example, music was monophonic, and the Greeks knew no other form of music. For them, music was related to nature and the human soul solely through rhythm and melodic line. During this period, music was explained through mathematical ratios, harmonic rules, and the aesthetic theories of philosophers. From this perspective, Kurdish music, too, maintained this monophonic tradition for a long time. In particular, the practice of *dengbêjî* occupies an important place in Kurdish culture as a form of monophonic expression. By combining words with the melody intrinsic to sound, *dengbêjs* transmitted historical, cultural, and social memory, using music as a means of expression and remembrance. Monophonic music functions as an ontological entity that reinforces individual or communal consciousness while also transmitting collective memory from one generation to the next. Modern music has followed an evolution extending from monophony to polyphony; from tonal and contrapuntal structures to twelve-tone systems; from genres such as jazz, blues, rock, rap, R&B, and hip-hop to electronic music, and from there to contemporary sampling techniques. This evolution is not merely an increasing complexity of sounds; it is a biological and cultural adaptation produced by the effects of technology, cultural diversity, and social transformations on music. The desire and idea of ordering noise and drawing aesthetics out of chaos have remained constant throughout this entire process. For modern human beings today, polyphony has become a normative mode of perception. Monophony, by contrast, is regarded as an exotic,

archaic, or distant cultural form. Yet monophonic music possesses an ontological depth. It carries the resonance of a culture, a history, and a geography. In this context, Kurdish music, too, through its monophonic forms, presents not merely an aesthetic act but also the historical and social memory, ontological and cultural identity of the Kurds. The monophonic melodies, words, and rhythms of the *dengbêjs* may be less ostentatious than the polyphony of modern music, yet they produce a profound meaning and embody cultural memory. In this respect, the development of music should not be regarded merely as a history of sound technology. It is, on the other hand, the cultural, ontological, and aesthetic journey of humanity. Through its monophony, Kurdish music is both a reminder of the past and the ontological memory of the present and the time after. For all these reasons, the difference between monophony and polyphony in music is not simply a technical distinction but an indicator of a social, cultural, and ontological depth.

In the chapter "Musica Practica" of his book *Görüntünün Retoriği, Sanat ve Müzik* (*The Rhetoric of the Image, Art and Music*), Roland Barthes speaks of two types of music, "music that is listened to" and "music that is played." "These two musics are two entirely different arts, each bearing within itself its own history, sociology, aesthetics, and erotics: the same composer may be insignificant when listened to, yet be magnificent when played (even badly played): like Schumann" (Barthes, 2017, p. 235). In a manner similar to what Barthes points to, the position (*maqam*) of the dengbêj, too, is based less on a form of music that is "sung" or "listened to" than on the playing of the body as an instrument. This is a music intrinsic to the muscles. *Dengbêj* has always seemed to me an allegory not of hearing but of seeing. It has given me the

impression of a beam of light extending from within a metaphysical universe into the material world. The *dengbêj* combines the ordinary flow of life with the melodrama of the voice and, by creating vibrations within the voice, shapes the narrative through the diaphragm. The vocal range descends or rises through the vibration of the teeth and lips. The rhythm of the body takes shape according to the tension, stillness, stability, and action of the story. For Kurdish music, the position (*maqam*) of *dengbêjî* is both an archaeological consciousness and a bodily field. In my view, *dengbêjî* is one of the bodily forms that best enacts the "everyday axiom" within this field. For the body, rather than being a mixture of formless masses in highly variable proportions, is, as Paul Renaud also points out, "a relatively well-defined set of operations." The *dengbêj*, too, recounts simple and ordinary life through the set of operations that most realistically defines the body. He uses language simply and in everyday forms, incorporates the distinctive words of the region in which he lives, and integrates slang expressions and forms of discourse into his narrative. He forms his *aura* through a natural complex of sound. Thus, the type of everyday axiom is performed today by Semyanî Perîzade through her own music as well. She emerges as a polyphonic manifestation of an image rooted in a monophonic origin. Semyanî's style and rhythmic power draw upon the foundations of contemporary popular music. Groove, funk, folk, punk, pop, electropop, and rhythmic dance music can readily be listed among the fundamental components of his music. However, rather than speaking of a single and specific style here, it is necessary to point out that her music consists of *hybrid* arrangements of different genres. Accordingly, these distinct styles reveal the diversity of her music. For me, the significance of

Semyanî's music lies in her performing universal modern and popular rhythms through the everyday and ordinary words of her native language. For example, her use of the word *belqityo* ("go to hell") in her song tears the relationship away from the *transcendental* and idealist plane and carries it to the most real, material, and pejorative point of life. The communication and atmosphere of the relationship are very simple; she expresses her reproach toward her beloved through the most ordinary emotion. There are neither mythological references nor any epicization of the relationship, nor does it take refuge in supernatural events. The language of the representational order, by contrast, describes even the most ordinary relationship either through the characters of heroic epics or through the pastoral analogy of the beautiful forms of nature. The betrayals in the stories told through representational speech are also entirely normative and comprehensible; no man, even metaphorically, deserves *belqitî* (to die). For they are either all nightingales whose roses have been wounded, or noble and honorable figures like Mîrza Mihemed, or heroic ones like Memê Alan. For this reason, the anachronistic and reductionist perception of a regime of representation devoid of aesthetic creation evolves into the authoritarian thought of a chronic destiny of consensus and, over the years, becomes the fundamental criterion of social taste and appreciation as a masculine form of judgment between the past and the future. In other words, today's artist, who reproduces the masculine norms of tradition through people and events, merely reproduces and recirculates the masculine. Semyanî, by contrast, performs her music without confining her words to the form of a poem, without ever entering into the weakening trajectories of the listener's political nostalgia—or, rather, by consciously choosing not to follow these trajectories—

and thus brings the body's desire for excess down to the level of the ordinary. The poetic condition in her corresponds exactly to the ontology of the individual in everyday life. It is neither a deficiency nor an excess. It is as vital and superficial as the word of address ("Hello") in a telephone expression.[27]



From the music video for the song *ALO*, 3:59. Istanbul, 2021. Directed by Zeynep Kılıç

[27] Jacques Attali examines the relationship between the telephone and music through a historical example concerning the military and communicative uses of music. The idea of establishing a language through musical notes, based on the universality of music, emerged in the early nineteenth century, particularly in a military context. In this vein, the French musician François Sudre proposed a musical language in 1827, based first on seven notes and subsequently on three. According to Sudre, this system would enable buglers to transmit military orders and messages from one hilltop to another, even at night, through predetermined melodic patterns. This communication technique, which aimed to transmit words and sentences encoded in instrumental sounds over long distances, was called the "telephone system" and was devoted entirely to military purposes. (Attali, *Gürültüden Müziğe*, p. 105)



From the music video for the song *ALO*, 3:59. Istanbul, 2021. Directed by Zeynep Kılıç

It is the most human use of a word that belongs to neither any noble class nor any individual and, moreover, has no depth, yet at the same time belongs to everyone. The story of her song is *intransitive*, like Flaubert's prose without a subject.

In the Kurdish language, or in Kurdish, the semiotic uses of certain words do not directly convey many things. However, these words have a cognitive referent. Words sometimes become a prefix through a colonial postulate and at other times through the ontology of being the Other. The most commonly used of these is the word bi rastî. Although this word can become an academic or local, regional or national prefix, an opening expression, or a form of address, it intrinsically possesses a self-monitoring and self-regulating quality. This adverb, or, depending on its usage, noun phrase, employed in meanings such as "really, the truth, the truth of the matter, if you want the truth, in truth, the truth of the

matter," establishes a referent that leaves no room for error. This is connected to the subconscious authority of the Other's continuous obligation to tell the truth and to say what is morally right. Following this relatively brief explanation of the word *bi rastî*, it is likely that language specialists would raise the following objection: The use of this adverb, or, depending on its function, this nominal suffix, is simply an ordinary norm of everyday language or a form of cultural discourse. In other words, the use of this adverb, or of this suffix, which becomes nominalized depending on the context, merely corresponds to an everyday and ordinary linguistic norm or a conventional form of cultural discourse. Any formal objection that might be raised is understandable, reasonable, and undoubtedly legitimate in its validity and basis. But then, does intersubjective syntax merely establish the grammatical framework of a simple act of communication? Or does this configuration also encompass other mental processes that extend beyond grammar? The Other's presupposed "criminal" identity directs them toward a necessary "ethical" suffix. If the necessary existence of the human being has been discursively situated within a category of physical exclusion, it then seeks ways of minimizing this physical exclusion. This is achieved through visible practices such as clothing, hairstyle, style, and manner. For example, a person positioned as the "Other" within a particular social environment because of their physical appearance, manner of dress, or hairstyle may, in order to reduce

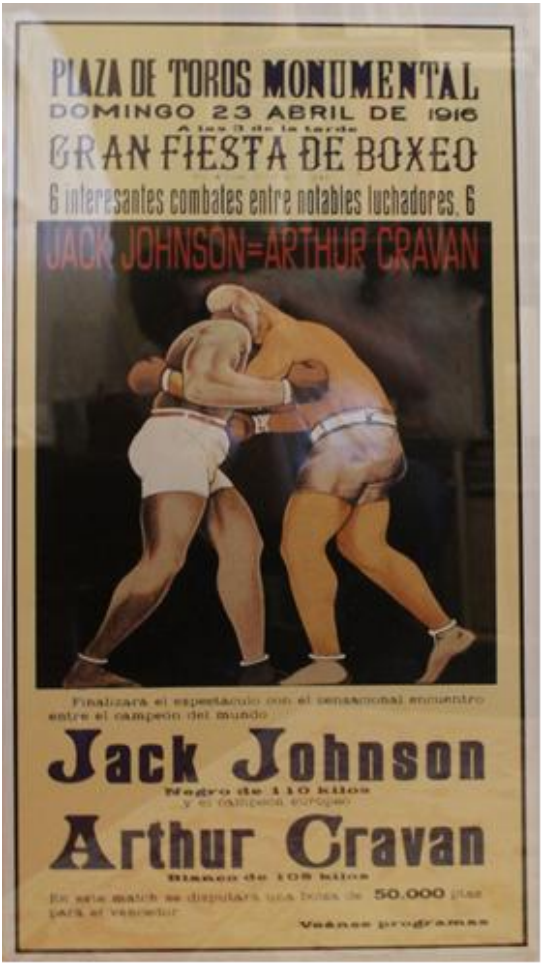
this exclusion, bring their clothing, hair, and overall appearance closer to the norms accepted by that environment. Thus, the exclusion produced discursively is sought to be reduced as much as possible at the physical level through visible practices. Simultaneously with these practices, the subconscious relegates to the background the principles governing language, discourse, the throat, pronunciation, and diction, while bringing the conspicuous deficiencies in these areas to the surface of consciousness and visibility. As the person attempts to reduce exclusion, they experience more distinctly the differences that separate them from social norms and that they had not previously been aware of. Speech, ultimately, is the result of an ethical coexistence between the word and life. Émile Benveniste states that human experience in language always refers to the act of speech within the process of communication and emphasizes the reciprocal relation between the speaking individual and the listening individual in language. When the individual presents themselves as a speaker and assumes language, they place another person before themselves, regardless of the degree of being they ascribe to that person. Every utterance, whether explicit or implicit, is an act of speech and requires a listener. Since Semyanî is also a musician, he naturally shares this situation with the listener through song lyrics, but he does not stop at this sharing. Instead, he consciously places his body, marked as marginal, at the center of the representational category that directs physical exclusion, and challenges this order with his body.

Semyanî's challenge is akin to the Dadaist poet Arthur Cravan stepping into the ring with heavyweight boxing champion Jack Johnson.[28] This boxing match, one of the most intriguing events in art history, was not fictional but, on the contrary, a real event, and is regarded in later artistic movements as an archetypal example of the philosophy of the "self-reinventing individual." Semyanî, too, enters the ring of representation as "a self-reinventing The Body After," sings his song, and performs his dance. When listening to the phrase *kezeba min şewitî* ("my lungs are burning") in the song

[28] Arthur Cravan left Paris after the outbreak of the First World War in order to evade military service. In need of money to travel to the United States, Cravan, during a stopover in the Canary Islands, arranged a boxing match in Barcelona with Jack Johnson, the former world heavyweight champion. In the posters prepared for the match, he presented himself as the "European Heavyweight Champion" in an attempt to attract an audience. Unaware of Cravan's identity and boxing background, Johnson won the bout by knockout after six rounds on April 23, 1916; in his autobiography, he stated that Cravan was untrained and unprepared. As a characteristic example of Cravan's artistic and performative identity, this event became an inspiring anecdote for subsequent avant-garde movements. Cravan did not need to be a professional boxer in order to claim the world championship; for him, the issue was not truth but the claim itself. His unconventional attitude allowed him to continually reinvent his social identity. His provocative criticisms and ruthless declarations were a natural extension of this performative persona. Cravan, who was the nephew of Constance, Oscar Wilde's wife, referred to Wilde as his "uncle"; this kinship added another dimension to his provocative games. He published many texts and poems under Wilde's signature; in an article published in the journal *Maintenant* in 1913, he claimed that Wilde was still alive and had visited him in Paris. Although he had never met Wilde, the rumor was even published by *The New York Times*. Through his crude and energetic poetry, provocative and anarchist lectures, and drunken and combative performances, Cravan won the admiration of prominent figures such as Marcel Duchamp, as well as Francis Picabia and André Breton, and of numerous young artists and intellectuals.

ALO, perhaps for the first time we experience a sense of alienation—phonetically, toward our own language. When the harmonic rhythm of the sentence merges with the figure of the dance, the heavy burden of the sentence is lightened, and, strangely enough, this pushes the limits of an unaccustomed perception. This is because the social memory of this sentence is generally bound up with the traumas of historical events. Semyanî, however, deconstructs the sentence with a simple touch, eroticizes it through music, detaches it from the social, and articulates it with the everyday relational pleasure of the personal. With the sentence *Kezeba min şewitî*, he eliminates the hierarchy of discourse and opens up a new sensory and perceptual field. By degenerating the sentence within this new field, Semyanî places it at the center of the field as a "normalization." This normalization is, in the fullest sense, a democratization. To tell the truth, this approach alone sums up the entire aesthetic entropy of Semyanî Perîzade. *Kezeba min şewitî is positioned precisely on the opposite shore of the word bi rastî discussed above.* While the individual and social referent of the first expression (*kezeba min şewitî*) draws its traumatic symptom down to an ordinary plane, the referent of the second expression (*bi rastî*) draws the use of what is ordinary and banal toward the limits of ethics. In this dualism, the first expression is the sign of normalization and democratization. In other words, ultimately, the fact that Semyanî's *kezeba min şewitî* ("my lungs are burning") draws the traumatic symptom of its representational

referent down to an ordinary and lower plane is directly a democratic gesture and attitude. This phrase is closely related to Flaubert's fascination with detail in prose, or at least, this is how I establish the connection.



Poster for the 1916 boxing match between Arthur Cravan and Jack Johnson in Barcelona.

Flaubert's "indifference" to the spiritual meaning of actions and characters in his writings led him to accord equal importance to material things and people. According to Rancière, Flaubert's indifference, in his own time, to every distinction between high and low subjects, his lack of concern for the permeability between foreground and background in fiction, and, ultimately, his disregard for the hierarchy between people and things were the hallmarks of aesthetic democracy. In this respect, regardless of what Flaubert thought politically about the ordinary person or the republican form of government, his prose is, as Rancière also emphasizes, a concrete example of democracy. Indeed, rather than turning to the aristocracy or to elevated and representative subjects, his placing at the center of *Madame Bovary* an ordinary and "subjectless" life that was not considered worthy of representation according to traditional conceptions of art is undoubtedly a democratic attitude. As with Rancière, we find a similar approach to Flaubert in Jean-Paul Sartre. According to Sartre, Flaubert was a writer who employed the democratic nature of prose language with extraordinary mastery and mobilized this language to attack aristocratic forms of representation. By making use of the permeability of words within prose, Flaubert created a new form of ambiguity in which meaning was not fixed within definite boundaries and judgment was interrupted. This ambiguity should be understood neither as an impoverishment of language nor as a deficiency of indeterminacy. On the contrary, it should be read as an aesthetic strategy that dissolves the hierarchical clarity of representation and disperses sensory experience across a more equal plane. Nevertheless, in writing *Madame Bovary*, Flaubert did not seek to judge or condemn any moral or social deficiency. At least, he did not act with such an intention. His aim was not to

correct or expose the world, but to make literature. The withdrawal of moral judgment was not so much the result of a conscious ethical stance on Flaubert's part as of his desire to remain faithful to the internal logic of literature itself. A similar situation applies to Semyanî. Semyanî, too, does not make music from a marginal position in order to judge moral or social deficiencies. Within his own ontic nature, he simply wants to make music without assuming any burden of representation. This allows us to conceive of the aesthetic act not as the bearer of an external message, but as a field of experience that acquires meaning within its own conditions of existence. Drawing on Flaubert's non-judgmental intention in prose, Rancière defines literature as follows: "Literature, in particular, is the art of writing that addresses those who should not read" (Rancière, 2020, p. 159). Rancière's definition is also an explicit reference to the Platonic paradigm. Accordingly, literature should also be understood as an art of writing that addresses those who should not read—that is, workers who have no time.

For Flaubert, in writing literature, the classification of subjects as high and low is rejected. For Flaubert, there is fundamentally no privileged category called "subject." His aim is to nullify the specific forms of style and language. In other words, in Flaubert, the subject loses its privilege, and thus the dominance of particular styles and languages is consciously rendered ineffective. Rancière explains this situation as follows:

> "Flaubert had laid out this new principle in all its rawness; there are no such things as high or low subjects. Indeed, there is no such thing as a subject, because style is the absolute way of seeing things. This absolutization of style might later have been identified with an apolitical or aristocratic stance. But in Flaubert's time, this approach

> could only be interpreted as a radically egalitarian principle that overturned the entire system of representation, the old regime of the art of writing. This approach overturned a certain normality presented as the correspondence between ways of existing, acting, and speaking. The new principle disrupted this correspondence. This 'aristocratic' absolutization of style went hand in hand with the 'democratic' principle of indifference. It went hand in hand with the reversal of the ancient hierarchy between noble action and bare life" (Rancière, 2020, p. 157).

Rancière calls this mode of writing by Flaubert "mute writing" and, along the same lines, also describes this mode of expression through the concept of "silent speech."[29] This silence points not to the withdrawal of meaning, but to a regime of expression that remains "indifferent" to the hierarchies of the representational order. Thus, speech is freed from the obligation to convey particular meanings; the narrative, beyond its claim to represent the world, exists within an equalized sensible field. For Rancière, this corresponds to a specific form of aesthetic democracy positioned outside the representational order and operating on the basis of "indifference." Here, democracy emerges not as a content or message, but as the very mode in which writing operates. In this context, as with Flaubert, Semyanî, through the phrases he employs in his music, develops a conscious indifference toward pastoral and poetic representation. This approach produces a plane that disables the traditional hierarchy established between the human being and the mechanical object (the telephone). In other words, Semyanî positions both elements on the same plane and at an equal distance, without establishing a hierarchy between them. Thus, nature, mythology, epic analogy, or exalted human figures,

[29] For Rancière's discussion of this subject, see Jacques Rancière, *Mute Speech: Literature, Critical Theory, and Politics*, trans. James Swenson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

which function as privileged domains of representational discourse (song lyrics), spontaneously recede. In their place, ordinary forms of discourse coded by aesthetic hierarchies as low, pejorative, or vulgar are preferred. Ultimately, this choice rests not on the elevation of meaning, but on the equalization of the sensible. In other words, by eliminating the noble symbols of representation, he places the aesthetic experience on a non-hierarchical plane. Similar to Flaubert's apolitical stance in literature, Semyanî's music likewise contains no particular political allegiance or positioning. Conservative and democratic discourses emerge neither as privileged nor as oppositional positions within his aesthetic universe. Both are treated from the same distance and with the same indifference. This indifference signifies not political neutrality, but rather the aesthetic suspension of the hierarchical order based on representation. Semyanî's deriving his lyrics from the mode of address of a mechanical device (the telephone) both humanizes mechanicality, as in the kinetic sculpture Can't Help Myself, and reflects Flaubert's forward-looking, progressive indifference pointing toward democratic normalization. Thus, mechanicality functions neither as an alienating opposition nor as an exalted metaphor. On the contrary, it is situated within the equalizing logic of the aesthetic regime, which renders the distinction between human and object indistinct. The fact that the speech is produced by a device or machine (the telephone) does not mean that the words of the music are mechanical. This should be understood in the same way that, although a Beethoven sonata can technically be heard through the necessary medium of a piano, the melody heard is not considered mechanical. Although the melody one hears emerges from an instrument, the sound heard cannot be reduced to mere mechanical operation. Because sound

acquires an aesthetic meaning in conjunction with bare life, extending beyond the mechanical apparatus, and transcends mechanicality at the level of perception in the Berkeleyan sense. Ultimately, sound can no longer be considered mechanical in terms of experience either. Indeed, the seriousness of Semyanî's words and body, just as in the Beethoven example, derives precisely from this irreducibility to the mechanical. The threshold of normalization here is an indifferent waiting sustained in the infinite abyss of representational seriousness. The fact that none of his songs contains an utterance that would trigger and set in motion the "national spirit" in this waiting is a reflection of the democratic principle directed toward the future—the time after.[30] Thus, Semyanî Perîzade chooses to extend his lightened Body After toward the democratic course of the future in a tranquil

[30] National spirit, national sentiments, or nationalism, when it comes to the Kurds, is often treated within a narrow framework, as though it were the discourse of a particular ideological group. Yet in the age of modern nation-states, nationalism is not merely an idea or a choice, but a ground into which the individual is born and to which they become spontaneously incorporated. For example, one does not need to be additionally "nationalist" in order to be Swedish or Korean, because this belonging is already constituted through law, education, language, and institutional structures. The individual naturally occupies a place within this framework. For the Kurds, however, no such institutionalized ground exists. The absence of a common state structure, an inclusive legal order, and a public sphere of belonging carries the question of identity onto a different plane. In this case, nationalism becomes a way of making sense of existence rather than an ideological choice. Thus, Kurdish nationalism often emerges not so much as a political position as a reflex of self-definition and self-assertion developed in response to the experience of being denied recognition. However, a qualification must be made here: nationalism always carries with it the risk of a homogeneous racism. For this reason, nationalism is necessary for the Kurds today; in the time after, or in the future, it should become a vague idea that recedes into the background once institutional certainties have been secured. For nationalism is always a mediocre and primitive ground for aesthetic production.

“normalization,” avoiding the burdening of the future with heavy and burdensome representational discourses while also casting off from itself the accumulated weight of existing traditions. This principle of normalization resembles Flaubert’s act of normalization developed against noble and absolute discourse. This principle is directed toward disrupting the regime of correspondence established by representational hierarchies between words and harmonies. Semyanî’s discourse and music contain no political imagery and are therefore apolitical. Yet the law of indifference underlying this apolitical attitude is also a rejection of the confinement of politics to certain words, melodies, times, places, spaces, bodies, and phenomena. In music, Semyanî spontaneously and involuntarily hollows out from within the representational discourses and political formal images that are socially regarded as legitimate, through the democratic attitude of his indifferent production. He pushes politics outside these categorical representational hierarchies and does so “with the nonchalance of a bricklayer.” Thus, he opens up a free and expansive space for (minor) politics. For politics in music is not merely the performance of music in the form of a march, its references to historical events and figures, or its pointing to explicit historical terms and social referents. The political is the representation of society’s everyday form of life—its ontology, emotions, rational mind, and language—within a democratic sensible framework.



Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917, porcelain urinal, 36 × 48 × 61 cm. Photographed by Alfred Stieglitz. Philadelphia Museum of Art. © Philadelphia Museum of Art

One of the most critical moments of rupture in this logic of representation within the aesthetic field is undoubtedly Marcel Duchamp's revolutionary intervention into the art of painting—or,

in his own words, into the notion of "retinal art" that appeals to the eye.[31] In 1917, Duchamp purchased a urinal from a plumbing supply shop and submitted it under the title *Fountain* to the *Society of Independent Artists* exhibition held at the *Grand Central Palace* in New York, thereby effectively opening the boundaries of the art institution to debate and radically questioning the sanctified norms of representational art that had been established over approximately 2,500 years. Duchamp is regarded as one of the most important avant-garde figures of the twentieth century; in my view, however, he is the greatest avant-garde artist of all time. For he not only dismantled the representational tradition of art, but also fundamentally unsettled the "visual" primacy of an understanding of art founded on *mimesis* since Plato. Duchamp's true hallmark lies in the fact that, by disrupting the established operation of perception directed toward the object, he severed seeing from the habitual production of representation. Thus, the era in which the object derived meaning as a form solely through its own aesthetic appearance—its *retinal* appearance, in Duchamp's terms—also came to an end. While this rupture dismantled the representational *ethos* of the plastic arts, it opened the way for a new order of thought (*logos*) in which artistic meaning derives not from sensory resemblance but from

[31] *Retinal art* is a concept Marcel Duchamp used to criticize the representational and aesthetic tradition that he believed reduced art to the production of visual pleasure directed solely at the eye. Duchamp employed the term to criticize an understanding of art that places visual elements such as color, form, and composition at the center, while subordinating the viewer's intellectual engagement and conceptual inquiry. His intervention through readymades such as *Fountain* (1917) aimed to detach art from the retinal level and move it toward a conceptual threshold that places thought at the center. In this context, the critique of retinal art points to an epistemological rupture that, beyond aesthetic appreciation, raises the question of "what art is" and "who can define it.

conceptual positioning. In other words, this new period shifted the meaning of art away from resemblance and directly to the level of the concept through a *differential* ground. What is interesting here is that Duchamp achieved such a revolutionary rupture with a simple mass-produced sanitary fixture. Duchamp purchases a prefabricated, factory-made object that may perhaps have been sitting for years in a plumbing supply shop and then places it in the exhibition space under the signature R. Mutt.[32] et it is not the object itself that produces the transformation, but this intervention. What is decisive is not the concrete appearance or material existence of the ready-made object, but Duchamp's conceptual move of radically reconstructing, through this object, the question of what art is. It is precisely this move that changed the direction of art history. With this move, Duchamp places thought at the center while freeing form from the necessity of representation. Form no longer functions as a means of showing something, but as the bearer of a question. Moreover, with Duchamp, thought ceases to be a fixed content and becomes an event reconstructed with every encounter with the work. Meaning evolves from a concept given in advance into a process that unfolds through the viewer's participation. Thus, thought ceases to be a closed totality and becomes a field of possibility reshaped in every experience. This thought, which is discussed, debated, criticized, and theorized, no longer belongs to the artist or to form alone; it is a ground in which the viewer also becomes actively involved in the process

[32] *R. Mutt,* is the pseudonymous signature Marcel Duchamp used on his 1917 urinal work *Fountain*. The name is thought to allude to J. L. Mott Iron Works, the company that manufactured the urinal, and to the popular comic strip *Mutt and Jeff* of the period. Through this signature, Duchamp ironically questions artistic identity, originality, and the status of the work of art.

and is continuously reproduced within the relationship established with the work. Indeed, sometimes even a simple word, an image, a figure, a gesture, or an ordinary material can bring about the end of an era and, subsequently, the opening of a new one. Duchamp, too, ironically did not choose a "noble" material; on the contrary, he placed a "toilet bowl" before the authoritarian artistic world of the representative regime and its noble imaginary history. Duchamp's radical and indifferent attitude toward the noble imaginary of the representative regime is democratic, just like Flaubert's indifferent aesthetic attitude toward the noble subject and Semyanî's apolitical and degenerate indifference in production within the representative order. In this context, we can also cite Rembrandt as an example.[33] For Rembrandt's understanding of art also proceeds along these lines. In his own time, Rembrandt disturbed those who defended the aesthetic principles of classical doctrine shaped in accordance with the Catholic tradition. In his works, Rembrandt brings the past and the present, the sacred and the everyday, into proximity with one another. Through this rapprochement, the classical aesthetic principle that sought to preserve sharp distinctions between the high and the low, between a sublime and serious style and an ordinary and coarse style, is violated. This kind of intervention that blurs boundaries deeply unsettled the proponents of Classicism in particular. For by placing sacred figures within the reality of everyday life, Rembrandt, rather than elevating them, seemingly "brought them down" and thereby opened to question the representational agents of established aesthetic hierarchies. For example, he depicted an

[33] Suggested additional reading on Rembrandt in this context: Tzvetan Todorov, *Ya Sanat Ya Hayat*, trans. Aziz Ufuk Kılıç, Istanbul: Sel Yayıncılık, 2019.

anonymous person as a *saint*, or conversely, portrayed sacred figures such as Christ and the Virgin Mary as ordinary people. The paintings of Édouard Manet, who likewise disregarded traditional representation and academicism and, in particular, displaced Diderot's "antitheatrical" thesis that dominated French painting in the eighteenth century, are similar in this respect.[34] Manet's paintings convey no explicit meaning; their narrative references are indifferent and ambiguous. For example, the gathering of the figures in the famous painting *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1862–63) signifies nothing, because according to Manet, painting has no duty to carry or signify meaning. Likewise, Andy Warhol, one of the most sensational and iconic figures of the recent period—or, perhaps more accurately, of the twentieth century—like Rembrandt and Manet, took the most ordinary, banal, and "low" images of his own time and placed them at the very heart of "high" art.[35] hus, a material lying idle in a plumbing supply shop (a urinal) and the everyday form of address of a mechanical device, the telephone ("Hello"), meet on the same aesthetic plane.

[34] On May 20, 1971, Michel Foucault gave a remarkable lecture in Tunisia on the paintings of Édouard Manet. For the Turkish translation of this lecture, see Michel Foucault, *Manet, Velázquez ve Estetik Modernizm*, trans. Savaş Kılıç, Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2018.

[35] For additional reading on Andy Warhol's iconic life and career in this context, see Arthur C. Danto, *Andy Warhol*, trans. Süha Sertabiboğlu, Istanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2018.



Édouard Manet, *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1863, oil on canvas, 208 × 264.5 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Credit: Wikimedia Commons

This is akin to Rancière's consideration of the poet Stéphane Mallarmé and the architect Peter Behrens, AEG's chief industrial designer, on a common aesthetic plane.[36] Rancière positions the two within a common perceptual-sensible intersection. According to Rancière, both the poet and the architect-designer call their

[36] Peter Behrens (1868–1940) is regarded as one of the pioneers of modern industrial design. Behrens stripped objects of decorative excess and turned toward typified and functional form. In particular, the comprehensive design approach he developed for AEG introduced a systematic aesthetic conception to the fields of architecture, industrial products, and graphic design. In this respect, although Behrens was not a member of the teaching staff at the Bauhaus School, he significantly inspired the school's theoretical and practical approach. He also contributed to the formation of the pedagogical and design approaches of Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and other Bauhaus architects through their having worked in his office.

creations “types.” The architect-designer seeks to produce objects—namely, types—whose use value is independent of commercial exaggeration and which provide precise knowledge of their form. He aims for these objects to speak not through advertising but directly through their functions. To this end, the architect designs standardized forms that replace ornamentation and accidental variety and minimize the distance between function and form. Thus, the object is created by being reduced to an essential line stripped of decorative excess. The poet, meanwhile, seeks to establish a culture of everyday life that, beyond commercial habits and petit-bourgeois aesthetic codes, is compatible with industrial production and artistic design. He wants to remove poetry from being the subject of representation and transform it into a general design of form, shaping it like a choreography or the opening of a fan. His types, like the architect’s designed objects, become symbols of a shared life. These symbols disable narrative and description and provide the ground for graphic forms that abstract the fundamental scenes between presence and absence, opening and folding, appearance and disappearance. At this stage, poetry is no longer a narrative but a line, and proceeds as a writing of gestures. Thus, the line of poetry and the line of industrial design intersect here according to the same principle of abstraction. For this reason, what is decisive is the common ground of the concept of “type.” This common ground is, ultimately, the idea of reshaping the sensible world, beginning with the objects of everyday life. Consequently, while Mallarmé strips poetic language of ornament and turns toward an essential form, Behrens likewise cleanses the object of decorative excess in his design and turns toward a typified form. At this stage, both seek formal concentration by breaking through

representation. Industrial production and artistic creation do not remain limited to objects; they also produce a new distribution of the perceptible and an accompanying sensible center. In this sense, the architect-designer and the poet, independently of one another and in different times and places, established new sensible conditions of perception within a common aesthetic regime. The effect of this sensible redistribution is not limited to the fields of poetry or design; it emerges in a similar way across different historical moments and different artistic media. The effect produced by the readymade *Fountain* and the song *ALO* arises precisely from the intersection of such a common field of perception and sensation. They intersect as a state of coming into contact with a new field of visibility and sayability. In other words, this intersection is a touch upon the non-hierarchical, autonomous naturalness of the body, perception, sensation, consciousness, and orientation. Indeed, at times, a simple intervention or a tiny gesture by an artist can be more decisive than the entire body of work extending across another artist's whole career. At this point, the issue is not quantity but the qualitative effect of the gesture on the sensible order. This can be considered in relation to the scene in the anecdote recounted by Hegel: A small child throws a stone onto the surface of a lake. The ripples produced when the stone falls into the water transform the natural surface of the lake into a surface bearing the trace of the child's own action. This trace left by the child's thrown stone on the surface of nature is a simple example of human beings making their own existence visible in the external world. In my view, it is precisely the child's gesture—the movement of the hand that throws the stone—that constitutes the artistic act itself. Therefore, in art, an "epistemological rupture" or revolutionary break does

not occur through quantity; it is directly a matter of quality. Moreover, the precondition of this quality does not necessarily have to be philosophical depth. What is truly decisive is the capacity to unsettle, at the right place and at the right time, the representational order of consensus and the cosmic balance of the ethical norms that accompany it.

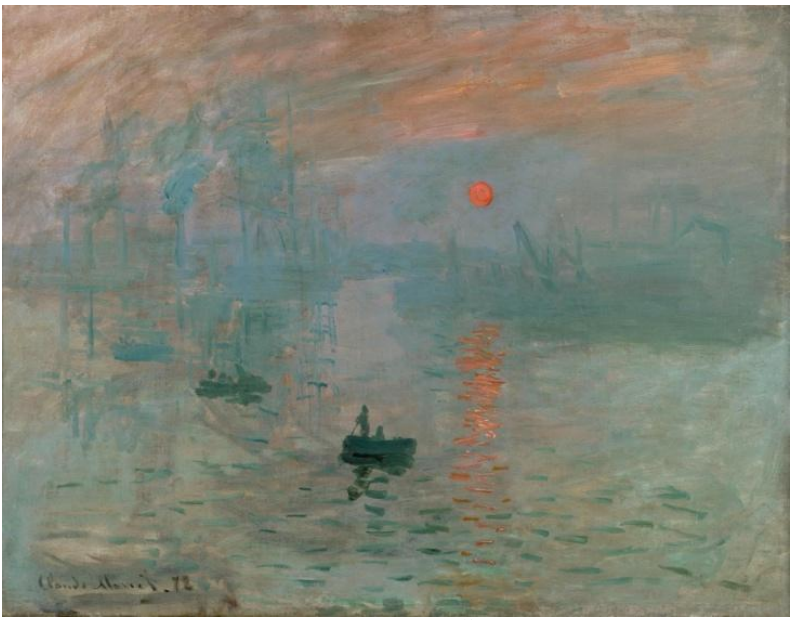


From the music video for the song *ALO*, 3:59. Istanbul, 2021. Directed by Zeynep Kılıç

One of the most striking historical examples of this capacity is undoubtedly Duchamp once again. A catalogue updated in 1997 by the Italian art historian Arturo Schwarz states that Marcel Duchamp produced a total of 663 works. This list includes not only completed works, but also numerous studies and preparatory works, as well as works such as photographs in which Duchamp was not the direct producer but was involved in some way. Considering that Pablo Picasso produced nearly fifty thousand works in the history of art, even if all 663 works are accepted as belonging to Duchamp, this number remains quite limited when compared with the output of Picasso and other artists. Nevertheless, the fact that production is quantitatively limited never means that it is ineffective in qualitative terms, as is clearly demonstrated by the example of Duchamp. I am of course not saying this in the case of Picasso; I mention it only to make the distinction between quantity and quality clearer. Sometimes the entirety of fifty thousand works cannot even come close to the effect produced by a single work (*Fountain*). Frankly, all of these emphases are intended as a preemptive response to possible criticisms directed at the relatively "small" number of works produced by Semyanî Perîzade in quantitative terms. My intention is to draw attention to the fact that such a logic of evaluation centered on quantity is fundamentally problematic. If this logic were valid, Rancière would have written his book The *Time After—Béla Tarr*, which also serves as a reference for this project, on the cinema of Steven Spielberg, who has made more than sixty films and is far more popular, rather than on Béla Tarr, who made only nine feature-length films throughout his career. Yet the issue

has nothing whatsoever to do with whether production is large or small. What is truly decisive is that a work of production—as in the case of *Fountain*—can first reach toward the object of a thought, then become a concept epistemologically, and finally create a new sensible field. Nevertheless, people may naturally, despite everything written here, question how a canonical work such as *Fountain* and a simple song (*ALO*) can be considered on the same plane. Indeed, from the perspective of the logic of art within the representational tradition, it is impossible to equalize these two forms, to think of them together, or to regard them as existing on an equivalent level. For what we are criticizing is precisely the exclusionary logic of this representative regime. In other words, the representative regime that once refused to bring Duchamp's *Fountain* and Monet's *Impression, soleil levant* (*Impression, Sunrise*, 1872) together, and even felt embarrassed at the prospect, still refuses to bring *Fountain* and the song *ALO* together today, because representation always establishes an order that privileges hierarchy. By contrast, within Rancière's aesthetic regime, in the spirit of Dadaism, and in Duchamp's conscious intervention, these forms are both thought and made visible on an equal plane, and are accepted as such. This egalitarian attitude constitutes the common principle of fidelity shared by these three moments—the theoretical, the historical, and the artistic. After all, *Fountain* itself was always an ordinary and simple material. Thus, the issue is not the use of a simple song, a rhythm, a word, or a ready-made object. The real issue is whether these forms can transcend the boundaries of the representative regime, rebel against the authoritarian prestige of its aesthetic vision, and fundamentally unsettle its established hierarchy. Whether this is done with a feather or with a gigantic thousand-ton mass of iron,

the result is the same. Indeed, when the mass of iron attempts to symbolize the representative regime, the feather undoubtedly becomes the more effective instrument of intervention. For what is decisive is not the material weight of the intervention, but always its effect upon the sensible order of the regime.



Claude Monet, *Impression, soleil levant*, 1872, oil on canvas, 48 × 63 cm, Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris. Credit: Wikimedia Commons

Indeed, one of the most striking examples of this is, without question, *Fountain* once again. In its own time, it was hardly understood at all by the art public in both America and Europe; on the contrary, it was subjected to extremely harsh criticism according to the aesthetic standards of the period. The aesthetic effect created by Semyanî likewise constitutes, as of today, another manifestation of the same situation within his own society. Of

course, Semyanî's aesthetic effect has no direct equivalent in America or France today, but, in the same way, *Fountain* has no historical or cultural equivalent within Kurdish society. The priority of every concept is necessarily its own social context; only afterward does it become integrated into the ontological and historical system of art to the extent of its aesthetic *aura*. More precisely, every concept, a priori, addresses its own consensus first; it then either becomes *territorial* by being absorbed into this consensus or universalizes itself by transcending it. For every artistic event is considered singularly, produced within the temporal and spatial conditions of its own society, and likewise criticized in accordance with these conditions. The representational units, traditional hierarchical structures, and consensus-based forms of "fate" and "judgment" of each society differ from one another. These structures are also spatially independent of one another. Even if the representative regimes of Kurdish society and French society are structurally based on the same logic, the elements that constitute the content of these regimes nevertheless differ from one another. For this reason, one disrupts and disables its own representative regime through a simple song lyric, while the other does so through a ready-made industrial object. Neither a song lyric can directly address French representation, nor can a ready-made object directly address Kurdish representation. The imaginary reality of each society differs from the others in terms of time and space; therefore, cultural encounters are never neutral or symmetrical. It is precisely at this point that a qualification must be made regarding cultural interaction between societies. What has taken place between societies has never been a simple exchange or mutual influence. Rather, it has occurred through the activation of an inverse

correlation operating on the basis of an aesthetics of authenticity and exoticism, asymmetrically organizing judgments of taste. This correlation operates by the center producing value not from content but from difference, and deriving aesthetic measure not from immanence but from exteriority. In other words, the locality of what lies distant from the center is coded as though it were the source of aesthetic value. For example, Aynur Doğan's finding a strong resonance and interest in different cultural contexts is related not so much to the universality of aesthetic criteria as to the "exoticism of the local quota" operating within this inverse correlation of representation. Thus, the issue requires us to read not so much aesthetic taste itself as how the boundaries of existence and representation are constituted through the often invisible parameters of exoticism. From this perspective, I think it has now become clear why it is Semyanî Perîzade rather than Aynur Doğan who occupies the focus of this book, or why the aesthetic effect created by Semyanî has not, at least from my aesthetic perspective, been produced in a similar way by the oeuvre of Şivan Perwer today and has not become the subject of a book. For the issue is not a matter of an oeuvre, nor has the logos of art and aesthetics ever been directly concerned with this. To put it more clearly, what is being discussed here is neither the technique of tonality in music, nor the plastic values of art, nor the thematic content of the work. If that were the issue, instead of Semyanî Perîzade and Marcel Duchamp, we would be discussing Şivan Perwer and Jean-Léon Gérôme. There is also the following reality: while one art expert may regard certain artists as figures who have had a major impact, another may assess the same artists as occupying a more peripheral position. For example, while the American art critic Michael Fried emphasizes the importance of

the modernist sculptor Anthony Caro, and Clement Greenberg that of the Abstract Expressionist artist Jackson Pollock, another American critic of the same period, Arthur C. Danto, unlike his contemporaries, regarded Pop Art artists, particularly Andy Warhol, as occupying a far more important position in determining the direction of art history. The fundamental issue here is not the content of aesthetic criteria, but the question of under what material and historical conditions these criteria acquire validity. For when this question is made concrete, certain historical and social inequalities emerge before us.

Kurdish society, in particular, has historically been subjected to these unequal conditions. Therefore, the fundamental "structural" point that must not be overlooked here is this: the Kurds, as a nation, do not have a state of their own. The material and spiritual limitations of production, the technical and public difficulties experienced, nomadic ways of life, the absence of independent market conditions, and exposure to the prohibitive pressures of power are all direct consequences of this condition of "statelessness." From this perspective, the discussion in question also determines the position of the writing subject (that is, myself). For this reason, I am writing this book not as a Frenchman, but as a Kurd, and I choose my subjects from my own limited ontological *Kurdî* field. For example, I do not possess the institutional privileges and the comfort afforded by historical possibilities enjoyed by a French aesthetic theorist such as Rancière. Therefore, I must state from the outset that I would under no circumstances consider an approach that seeks to assess the two of us on an equal footing to be correct. For Rancière has almost unlimited freedom of choice when it comes to writing about the subject of art he wants, the work of art he desires, and the artist he wishes to

discuss within the context of his own culture. From whatever age, period, subject, section, history, genre, field, discipline, or thought he chooses, he can turn as many alternative names and topics as he wishes into the political objects of his "aesthetic regime." Unfortunately, I have no such privilege or alternative; within the possibilities afforded by my own culture, I am obliged to make do with what is scarce and limited. For this reason, my political, ideological, and aesthetic aim, in principle, is not, for example, to write about an Italian musician. As a Kurd, my aim is to formulate a thought about and write on the artist of the place (the geography) to which I belong. In this respect, Semyanî Perîzade is immensely valuable to me because he opens up such a field. Here I need to say one thing openly. When Others or Kurds criticize an issue among themselves, analyses grounded in argument pose no problem, even when they are negative. On the contrary, they open the way to progress and development. What matters here is not to deviate from objective data and not to bring subjective situations into language by turning them into personal statements. Otherwise, the personal and superiority-seeking attitudes among oppressed peoples, classes, and individuals, in the written and intellectual sphere, are deeply saddening. It has always seemed to me like the oppression of the poor by the poor: pitiful and wretched. Given that the system has already othered all of them, it is all the more unfortunate that they seek superiority or ego gratification instead of a common goal. For this reason, I approach the negative situations in Kurdish art in the spirit of Ludwig Wittgenstein's famous saying in the preface to the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, "What can be said at all can be said clearly; and whereof one cannot speak thereof one must be silent" (Wittgenstein, 2013, p. 11). Instead of criticizing, I regard them as

abstract and transcendent and position them outside the limits of my language.

In this direction, the theory I try to develop in Kurdish art, and more generally, proceeds roughly as follows: first, to delimit through facts the concepts that are common to Kurds but have been rendered unknowable by forms of power in time and space (in the Wittgensteinian sense); then, by determining their place, to try to rename and ground the productions of Kurdish artists through the art object. In other words, I first critically examine the process through the question of how, epistemically, I can ground a concept at a material and objective point within the production of Kurdish art; I then try to seek the aesthetic modality of that concept within given conditions that have broken away from representation. Put differently, I investigate how I can conceive of Semyanî and Merleau-Ponty within a theoretical dialogue, how I can bring Lefebvre and Semyanî together on a practical ground, or under what material conditions I can ground a concept of Althusser in Semyanî's production.

Precisely for this reason, rather than placing French cinema and, for example, Jean-Luc Godard at the center as the object of thought, I give priority to Kurdish cinema and, for example, the director Reber Dosky. I choose his cinema both as the object of my thought and as the linguistic pattern of my writing. This choice goes beyond a personal inclination and is directly related to the question of under what conditions, for whom, and by whom writing can be written. For when considered under these conditions, no one will already write about the Kurdish director on an objective and material ground at this stage. I call this situation

"the conformity of the unwritten."[37] In other words, no one outside us will write our art under objective conditions. And this Other is

[37] In the monograph we wrote together with Mahsum Çiçek, *Walid Siti: Babil'in Gölgesinde Dağların Peşinde* (*Walid Siti: In Pursuit of the Mountains in the Shadow of Babylon*), I addressed this issue in my own section under the title "The Conformity of the Unwritten." There were two phenomena that I emphasized. First: the powerful is ideological; it is never objective toward us. Therefore, nothing it has written is valid; for this reason, nothing has yet been written about us. Second: as the Other, we defend ourselves against the powerful from a mimetic position. This confines us to a "pathetic" dialectic and eliminates the autonomous creation of our written language. Therefore, we too have not yet written anything about ourselves. Thus, by nothing being written, a "conformity" has occurred. I call this "the conformity of the unwritten." This situation develops as follows: No component of the powerful takes the Other objectively; moreover, by isolating their concrete existence, it transforms them into the habitus of its own passive object. The network of Others to which the Other belongs, in turn, shapes its existing political and ideological defenses against the powerful around a given representational language, by proving them. Consequently, the aesthetic notion of the Other proceeds through a reciprocal activity of thesis and antithesis. This progression is also grounded in concepts such as colonial, Oriental, cultural, demagogic, traumatic, anthropological, tragic, and engaged. In other words, on the basis of aesthetics, the Other brings the political and ideological defense of its own existence onto the stage through a mimetic transmission of a given design of power. The fundamental reason why the aesthetic notion of the Other is not written in objective space is that this given design—in other words, the *arkhē* power of the powerful—predetermines the consciousness, orientation, and object of the Other. Turning toward this a priori design of power, or rather being directed toward it and producing a form from there, is neither aesthetic nor political nor epistemological. This situation, which I define as a "pathetic dialectic," constitutes a large part of the forms of production and discourse that currently exist. In short, nothing properly speaking has been written in our favor to this day. Precisely because it has not been written, geography itself, at the level of representation, speculatively reproduces the existing aesthetic entropy. What we are ultimately trying to do here is, rather than focusing on "what has been written," to attempt to abolish "the conformity of the unwritten" by rewriting from the ground up "what has not been written." See Tan, "The Conformity of the Unwritten," Çiçek–Tan, *Walid Siti: Babil'in Gölgesinde Dağların Peşinde* (*Walid Siti: In Pursuit of the Mountains in the Shadow of Babylon*), pp. 17–19.

not an Other in the Levinasian sense. On the contrary, it is an other who is part of the powerful, shaping the arithmetic and the field of distribution to its own advantage. This other always presupposes two things: first, by writing nothing about us, it renders our historical existence indistinct and integrates us into a homogeneous whole under the invisible name of an ideological regime. Second, when it does write, it presents us only through our pathetic (pitiful) and wretched weaknesses and thus silently and continuously perpetuates the chain of a paradoxical act. Consequently, to this day, almost nothing has properly been written in our favor within the universal system of the objective and material ground; moreover, no adequate and constitutive writing practice has been established. Yet writings have been produced on Godard's cinema, and bodies of literature have been formed around these writings. Moreover, these literatures continue to be written today and will continue to be produced in the future. What matters is to write on "the unwritten," that is, to write on Dosky. Another reason for this is that I consider it necessary to write the history of the minor efforts of individuals—such as Semyanî Perîzade—who, in the shadow of major narratives, have been pushed outside the age, time, society, and community of their own era by authoritarian representational orders. At this point, I regard the approach to the science of history of the historian Fernand Braudel, one of the important figures of the Annales School, and particularly the way he constructed his Mediterranean series, as a decisive reference. Braudel makes geographical structures, anonymous and unskilled individuals, excluded groups and communities, the climate, and the tools and implements used in everyday life into subjects of history. In my view, his most revolutionary move in terms of the social sciences was his radical

transformation of the perception of “time” and “space.” Rejecting the linear and event-centered conception of history adopted by his colleagues, Braudel constructs his historical perspective upon a multilayered and relative conception of time. In Braudel, the speed of time is considered on three levels: the “long duration,” which points to geographical and structural continuities; the “middle duration,” which proceeds through social and economic cycles; and the “short duration,” which flows rapidly in relation to major events. In this respect, the speed of time varies both from one space to another and according to which temporal layer is being discussed. When this conception of time is considered in terms of different layers, the effect of aesthetic production does not have to be universal or simultaneous either. Thus, today, a simple melody, sequence of words, or gesture in Semyanî Perîzade’s music may find no equivalent whatsoever in the time and space of another society—France, Peru, Korea, Nigeria, Canada, or Australia. Far from creating a marginal or avant-garde rupture, it may not even produce an ordinary effect; it may even be regarded as an imitation on the grounds that it is not original. Yet, as in Braudel’s conception of time and space, it may produce precisely the opposite effect within the time and space of its own (Kurdish) community. In my view, Semyanî will produce such an effect, if not today, then in the medium and long term. I call this process “normalization.” Ultimately, this normalization becomes concrete through the relationship Semyanî’s music establishes with the contemporary popular world.



Vocal recording studio, Istanbul, 2023. © Julia Zimmermann

Semyanî's music belongs to today's popular world. The essential condition of his music brings modern fragments forth in a discontinuous manner. This is also a tonal synthesis. It addresses the consumption and sensibility of the present day. Music is based on the real and natural relations between sounds and brings about a kind of reconciliation between soul and body. Despite minor differences, music everywhere extends toward the same foundation, the same ground. In Feuerbach's words, music is the language of feeling; melody, too, is feeling expressed aloud, feeling that makes itself known. We cannot understand all languages, but everyone is sensitive, to a certain extent, to the feeling of every kind of music. A European is sensitive to Asian music, an African to American music. In this human condition of being sensitive, a kind of collision of rhythms is experienced through movement and polyphony. The balance of motifs, together with the incandescent clusters gathered around the flow of the

melody, reveals differences in tempo and intensity, and thus outbursts of triumph are followed by solemn endings. The everyday axiom of music does not have to operate like poetic action music in order for pure thought to emerge within it. It transforms a given element of nature and everyday life into a vibration in which it almost disappears. For it is characteristic of the everyday axiom to simultaneously eliminate both the specific weight of things and the representational order of words. Only music can offer a language structurally freed from representation, a language in which representation is exhausted and gives way to everyday vibration—that is, to a mediocre material (for example, the telephone) acquiring a spiritual quality. Music is a sensory expression of the inner life of the human being. Human beings seek the object of desire outside and the spiritual object within, and music helps to find this inner object. It enables the emotional and cognitive character to be discovered. The choice of a musical genre is always based on individual preferences. Even when a person turns toward music that may be the preference of the majority, what is at issue is the unintelligible aspect of that music's objective quality (and this objective quality cannot serve as a criterion for preference if it does not affect our inner existence). Even if, in a sense, human beings conform to the preference of the majority, their spiritual preference nevertheless differs from that of other living beings. This preference arises from an extremely complex inner movement that constitutes the essence of the human being. For the human being has a subjective life; its spiritual existence is a phenomenon that continuously problematizes its consciousness. As Pascal points out, the human being is a finite being, and reason alone is insufficient to overcome this finitude. In any case, music is beneficial to the spiritual activity of the human

being. The ontological and everyday axiom of music derives from the unity of the state of mind and the harmony produced by the plurality of sounds.

The characteristic feature of music lies precisely in the form of this sonic activity. Sound attempts to preserve its plurality within the unity of the state of mind. In everyday spoken language, when we speak of a "plurality of sounds," what is meant is the social unity regarded as the ultimate result, but this is not the case in music. Edmund Gosse states that there is an elsewhere produced miraculously by certain arrangements of words, and says that the word there, like the keys of a piano, functions as a medium of material communication established with the reader. Everyday music is a harbinger of changes that transcend itself. Through its popular rhythm, it seeks to make itself accepted by listeners. As a part of everyday life, music is both better known and more widely consumed by the individuals who constitute the fundamental components of social life than other arts. For this reason, musicians employ a great many technical methods that are available to them. This is akin to Theodor W. Adorno's referring to music as a "promise of reconciliation." Adorno indirectly attributes to music the fundamental function of the sacrificial ritual and imposes upon human beings the responsibility of reconciling social order with themselves. Yet, in the eyes of people with a high level of cultural awareness, popular music is not conciliatory but the noise of others. Since noise is both an instrument of power and a source of rebellion, politics has always listened with great interest to subjects who produce noise. For noise points to a moment of rupture that emerges at the boundaries of order and carries the potential to shake the existing sensible regime. In music, this rupture does not merely create a disturbance; it also

encourages one to transcend oneself and others, to go beyond norms and rules, and to gain, however faintly, an idea of transcendence. In this context, the noise of rebellion in Kurdish music seeks to establish the idea of political transcendence through the multiple richness of instruments. In recent Kurdish music, we frequently encounter productions with a strong instrumental foundation and a Western sound. These productions are performed by a new generation of musicians who bring Western music together with Eastern music. In these works, we hear the human voice often being used not as a word carrying meaning, but rather as an instrument. Here, the voice is played like an instrument rather than used to say something. The use of the voice as an instrument refers to the position (*maqam*) of the *dengbêj*, which occupies a decisive place in Kurdish music. However, in my view, when the appropriate tonal and harmonic structure is not achieved, this approach often becomes a disadvantage. The voice becomes richer when it is constructed within tonal phrases together with the harmonic improvisations of music. For music consists of sounds, and a musical sound, in itself, carries no meaning whatsoever. Every sound is almost nothing; it possesses neither a determinate meaning nor a quality of its own. In this respect, sounds are distinguished from the elements of speech. If we recall the distinction Rancière makes in his concept of the "distribution of the sensible," the issue here is not merely an acoustic difference; it is the political distinction between sound (noise) and speech (logos). While the noise produced by an animal is perceived as an expression of a need, the human voice is recognized as "speech" and is accepted as carrying meaning. Whereas the elements of speech—words, syllables, even letters—can be defined through qualities such as long, short, or

fluid, the "C" and "D" in the scale do not in themselves possess any differential quality. The pleasantness in music of every sound that is essentially nothing depends on the relation it establishes with the sounds that precede and follow it. In this context, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, by foregrounding instrumental music, liberated music from the auxiliary function of word-based language and from the emotional components described by this language. Kurdish music, although it has progressed unevenly in this direction, has nevertheless followed a path within its own conditions. Indeed, the rhythms capable of sensing the anatomy of modern times are limited in Kurdish music. In general, the modernized rhythms of traditional and ethnic forms come to the fore. Kurdish art, which positions its aesthetic utterance through the "Pathetic dialectic" (the "pathetic" hypothesis of the conflict between power and the Other), also connects its traditional music to the "Ontology of the Rural." For this reason, it often overlooks both the original image and the melancholic rhythmic utterance. At this point, conceptually, two principal concepts come to the fore for analyzing Kurdish art and music—the Pathetic dialectic and the Ontology of the Rural—from a subjective perspective:

Pathetic Dialectic: It expresses the political consequences produced by the confrontation between the Other and power.[38] These consequences provide a conceptual field in which the conflict between the Other and power can be read as a pathetic hypothesis in favor of the Other. At its dialectical foundation, this

[38] I use the concept of "power," as a component of the Pathetic dialectic, in a way that corresponds to concepts such as being powerful, domination, sovereignty, patriarchal structure, authority, and ideology. In this context, power represents not merely a political structure that comes to office through elections, but a general mentality that operates materially and spiritually across historical, cultural, social, and psychological planes.

points to an unequal relation structurally arising from material and spiritual relations of power. Because of this inequality, every effort of the Other is ontically pathetic and politically passive. The Pathetic dialectic does not merely depict the dimension of conflict in the encounter between the Other and power; it also renders visible the epistemological and phenomenological consequences of this conflict. This visible conflict is determined by power's intervention in the body, consciousness, and orientation of the Other. If power determines a priori, that is, in advance and beforehand, the political intentionality (consciousness and vision) of the embodied existence of the Other, this situation is pathetic. More plainly, if power determines in advance the object or concept toward which the Other will direct itself and directs the Other toward these as an antithesis, then the perception and consciousness of the Other have already been shaped from the outset. For this reason, the resulting situation is not political but pathetic. For power, by advancing the (Hegelian) thesis, always negates the antithesis and carries the process toward synthesis; within this process of negation, it ultimately pacifies and thereby affirms the antithesis in its own favor. If power determines the orientation of the thesis "there is no such language as Kurdish," then, correspondingly, the antithesis "Kurdish exists" is not, in the aesthetic dimension, in itself a political stance and creation. On the contrary, it is merely the mimetic transfer—in the Aristotelian sense—of the empirical sanctions of power onto the stage of art within a pornographic frame. For this opposition brought onto the stage does not leave the conceptual ground established by power; it merely positions itself in the opposite direction on the same ground and only points to its sanctions (as in the example "there is no such language as Kurdish"). At the level of the sensible, while

it does not open a new sensible field within the integrity of the subject's (the viewer's) perception and meaning, it instead confirms what already exists and merely produces a moment of catharsis whose meaning has already been given in advance. This confirmation, ultimately, is not political. Therefore, this opposition functions from the outset as a pathetic antithesis that takes a position toward the thesis of power, and at the stage of synthesis, this situation always emerges together with the idea of consensus (synthesis).

The idea of consensus, by absorbing the Other's illusory antithesis or aesthetic proposition into itself, fundamentally abolishes all norms of equality. Thus, even if the synthesis that emerges appears to produce a compromise or recognition, in reality it remains nothing more than a reaffirmation of the framework established by power from the outset. What is political in art, by contrast, is the ability to carry the existence of Kurdish into the naturalness of discourse and the indifference of the body a priori, without entering this ground of conflict at all, and even by directly leaping over the conflict itself. For power does not spontaneously recognize even the most fundamental human right; as seen in Simone Weil's thought, it objectifies the human being by, through force, stripping them of their status as a subject possessing their own will and right to speak. Therefore, what is political in art is not to directly expose this regime of recognition or to engage in a sterile, uncreative struggle with it. On the contrary, it is to bring Kurdish into practice in its most ordinary state—that is, in the Husserlian sense, its Lebenswelt.[39] In other

[39] Edmund Husserl's concept of *Lebenswelt* (lifeworld) refers to the concrete world that people directly experience, inhabit, and make meaningful prior to scientific theories or abstract concepts.

words, defying the prohibition by remaining indifferent to it is to produce a form of resistance through the continuity of everyday use. What is political is speaking, writing, feeling, developing, and organizing Kurdish and, ultimately, establishing it not merely as an object of production but as a form of life. The best example of this is the name "Amed" used by Amedspor. Without entering into any historical evidence concerning the name and without attempting to prove anything, turning to this kind of ordinary usage is in itself an entirely political attitude. In other words, the issue is not to defend the existence of the language against power, but to speak it in a natural mode of existence; to live it as a fact that already takes place in the gestures of the body, in everyday practices, and in forms of expression. For this reason, the situation in question is political to the extent that it can occur naturally in the language, body, and gestures of the Other without entering into dialectics. That is, for Kurdish, the "creative" conditions of an alternative vital ground outside the field of power must first be opened without any need for "proof," and then the existence of this ground must be put into practice "indifferently." Otherwise, the Other's orientation toward the object or concept becomes a reflection of a predesigned projection of power. The Other often follows this projection without being aware of it; produces arguments, turns to archives, activates scientific procedures, and ultimately begins searching for evidence of the legitimacy of its historical existence. The Pathetic dialectic thus becomes the Other's continuous attempt to prove its own existence to domination. Yet the Other perceives this effort as political on its own behalf and regards it as the stance of a conscious attitude. But this effort is neither political nor aesthetic nor epistemological. On the contrary, as the Other enters into and sustains such an effort, it delves into historical

documents and epistemic archives and attempts to produce antitheses, but this process further reinforces the ontic and authoritarian center of domination. From the moment the Other begins this process, it has—albeit involuntarily—declared the authority of domination, which is the subject, over itself. Its own ontic essence is no longer at the center; the authoritarian essence of domination is. Consequently, the Other is involuntarily drawn into a passive field of action within the authoritarian boundaries of domination and merely attempts to persuade the powerful of the legitimacy of its own history. For example, the claim that "Saladin is not Kurdish" directs the Kurd toward the search for documents and documentation, toward archival rooms. Thus, the entire given effort is reduced to proving that Saladin is Kurdish. Yet the powerful who makes this claim is responsible for proving its own claim. Nevertheless, the Other accepts not its own ontic essence but this speculative claim of the powerful as the center. All these efforts are ultimately pathetic. The politicization of the Other, by contrast, is possible through a break from this dialectic, in other words, through the violation of this centrality. Yet this violation does not take place by producing "proof," but through practices of "indifference" and resistance in the Rancièrean sense. This indifference enables the Other to construct its own political existence by disrupting the regulatory rules and epistemic momentum of powerful domination. The example of Amedspor is also applicable to this indifference. That is, what matters is to use the name directly in the practices of language and to establish its place within the general norms of everyday life, without entering at all into the debate over where the place called Amed is. Does such a place not exist from the perspective of the powerful? It may be so; let the powerful continue to argue that such a place does not

exist, because that claim belongs to it anyway, not to me! Therefore, I am indifferent to this debate, and I use the name Amed, and I will continue to use it. This indifferent use is, at this stage, my break from the Pathetic dialectic. Thus, the Pathetic dialectic makes both the domination of power and the new formal forms of the Other's potential political resistance visible, while also providing an analytical framework.

I conceptualize the term "Pathetic dialectic" as a term grounded in Louis Althusser's "epistemological rupture" and Theodor Adorno's "Negative Dialectics," formulated within a political terminology directed toward the practices of Kurdish artists. This term extends through a contradictory, irrational, abstract, and sentimental design by manifesting itself in the spatial structure of art, and brings its internal parts together within the external body of the whole. Althusser divides Karl Marx into two periods, "young" and "mature," and claims to have moved him out of speculative Hegelian dialectics and onto a scientific plane; he expresses this claim through the concept of epistemological rupture. The method I take from Althusser here is his conceptual intervention that enables a break from Hegelian dialectics. For me, this intervention by Althusser provides the original foundation for the methodological trajectory that presupposes a break from the Pathetic dialectic. In other words, Althusser's concept of epistemological rupture is important not merely for taking a new position within an existing intellectual structure, but for breaking away from the ground that determines the object, concepts, and conditions of knowledge production of that structure.

In Adorno, however, the situation is different from my perspective. For while Negative Dialectics is a critical argument

positioned against Hegelian dialectics, the Pathetic dialectic essentially functions as a continuation of Hegelian dialectics. Like Adorno's Negative Dialectics, what I place in opposition to the Pathetic dialectic is the argument of the "third phenomenon of art.[40] This proposition performs a critical function equivalent to that of Negative Dialectics as an opposing logic. Adorno places the critique of Enlightenment rationality and Western modernity at the center of his system of Negative Dialectics, radically articulated through Jewish identity. According to Adorno, the philosophical bankruptcy of Enlightenment rationality and, fundamentally, of Western modernity reached its culmination in the systematic extermination of Jews in the *Holocaust* and at *Auschwitz*. Indeed, at the core of the argument of Negative Dialectics are the thoughts arising from this extermination, and the entire paradigm converges around it. Adorno's Negative Dialectics radically rejects the idea of a final synthesis or reconciliation; instead, it emphasizes the importance of sustaining the tension between contradictory elements and resisting the temptation to subsume particulars under abstract, integrative concepts. At this point, Rancière, too, like Adorno, devotes considerable attention to the radical fallacy of the affirmative counterpart of the concept of "consensus." The historical dialectic extending from Plato to Hegel, as is well known, aims to obtain something positive through negation. This aim subsequently turns the existing subject into an essential term through the formulation of the "negation of negation." In other words, Hegelian dialectics is the process of

[40] The argument of the "third phenomenon of art" is a subsection that I address on an aesthetic basis in the "Three Regimes of the Scene (TRS)" diagram. This phenomenon emerges in favor of the Other in the formulation of the transition between scenes.

recognizing that things contain their own negations, whereby the parts are transformed into something greater. Adorno's dialectic, however, rejects the positive element that presupposes the result to be something greater than the preceding parts and instead advocates a dialectic that essentially produces something negative.

Nevertheless, Adorno's aim is not to define the form of new knowledge through a Hegelian synthesis of opposing categories defined according to Aristotelian logic, but to reveal this phenomenon through the disclosure of the limits of knowledge and to transcend the formal and logical limits of previous definitions of dialectics. Ultimately, Negative Dialectics penetrates its hardened objects through the possibility that reality has taken away from those objects, yet that continues to wink outward from each of them. I, too, by approaching Adorno's methodology through a *differential difference*, draw attention, within the context of this term, to the fact that every negative material sanction imposed on Kurdish existence by what is regarded as "Kemalist enlightenment" in its post-imperial, eugenic, and militarist form, as well as the catastrophic sociological effects (concrete traumas) that over time became a systematic doctrine imposed upon the Kurds, continue to persist today in Kurdish art as a relation and form of production articulated through opposition to power. More precisely, I call the conceptual context of this condition the "Pathetic dialectic." Accordingly, I argue that the idea of reconciliation (in Rancièrean terminology, "consensus") that constitutes the essence of opposition or dialectics, or the falsely constructed idea of political art (*arkhe*), dissolves the aesthetic proposition of the Kurd within itself and thereby abolishes all norms of "equality"; against this, through the proposition of the "third phenomenon of art," I advance a becoming that negates

Hegelian dialectics. More precisely, with this term I articulate the aesthetic critique of the radical rupture through which this opposition must come to an end in Kurdish art today. The fundamental issue here is not the elimination of the contradiction arising from the Other's encounter with domination, but the transformation of this contradiction itself into a form of relation that reproduces it. The Other turns toward the object determined by domination and attempts to prove its own existence; yet, within this process of proving, it reproduces the epistemological ground established by domination. In other words, it puts the power of power back into circulation. Thus, rather than being overcome, opposition (the hallmark of Hegelian dialectics) is continuously reconstituted. For this reason, the Pathetic dialectic emerges not as a negativity standing against Hegelian dialectics, but as a form through which Hegelian dialectics continues and reproduces itself through the Other. Consequently, Althusser and Adorno do not express the same thing for me: Althusser opens up the methodological possibility of rupture, whereas Adorno opens up the contradiction within the dialectical structure itself and the possibility of thinking this contradiction critically. The Pathetic dialectic, drawing on the opposition between these two lines of thought, attempts to explain the political and aesthetic orientation that emerges in certain practices of Kurdish art. This framework also requires that the aesthetic production of Kurdish art not be considered solely in the context of opposition to power. It must also be understood through existential and rhythmic experiences. For in order to comprehend modernization and relations of power, the ontological structure of the rural's continuity, which resonates in Kurdish music, must also be taken into consideration as a determining element.

Ontology of the Rural: The rural should not be understood here as a spatial or cultural category, but as an ontological order that explains why what exists is continually left incomplete. Within this order, pain ceases to be an isolated event or an immediate emotion and becomes a norm that has acquired continuity. Pain is not an experience that is lived through and passes; it persists as a transmitted form of material existence. Time does not progress or come to closure; it merely repeats, accumulates, and grows heavier, producing a state of incompleteness. Accordingly, the subject is not an agent who experiences or makes demands. Rather, the subject emerges as an entity that carries, is fixed in place, is embedded in time, and records through its body. As pain is represented by the subject, it is not dissolved; on the contrary, it becomes naturalized. Language moves away from being a transformative act and assumes a function that preserves continuity and fixes what exists. The ontology of the rural does not exclude representation; on the contrary, by sanctifying it, it sustains its historical narrative. In this context, representation operates as a mechanism that constitutes the subject and sets it in motion within a field of expression. This constitutive function also produces a transformative effect, yet this transformation does not interrupt continuity; rather, it reorganizes it. As in Gilbert Simondon's conception of individuation, the subject is not the product of a pre-existing and unchanging essence, but the outcome of a process of becoming that takes place under specific conditions. For this reason, at the level of representation, pain is less an experience narrated by the subject than a thought-form that becomes a conceptual content and persists as a concept carried through representation.

This sense of continuity often emerges in the rural in a pastoral form. Yet the pastoral here is not a peaceful or innocent depiction of nature. It is a wild nature, that is, a nature that stands before the human being not as a free domain, but as the bearer of temporal repetition and a non-human rhythm. Thus, nature becomes not a backdrop that conceals pain, but a ground that normalizes its continuity. In this way, pastoral sentiment does not contradict pain in the rural; it silently carries it alongside pain. This carrying also determines where and how memory is situated. Memory is not tied to writing or the image. It is entrusted to empirical rhythm, habit, and bodily repetition. The resistance of the rural does not arise from opposing change; in the Heraclitean sense, it derives from neutralizing change by absorbing it into the continuity of repetition and becoming. The issue here is not what has been experienced. The issue is why what has been experienced never comes to an end. This continuity and repetition have a direct effect on the rhythmic and aesthetic structure that resonates in Kurdish music.

For this reason, it is a well-known fact that among the arts, music in particular has an extraordinarily powerful effect on the deepest nature of the human being. The reason why music has such a powerful effect on the deepest nature of the human being lies not at the level of representation, but in its direct relation to being itself. Schopenhauer, for example, does not regard music, like the other arts, as a copy of the Ideas; rather, he regards it as an objective copy of the Will itself, or of willing. In other words, according to Schopenhauer, while the other arts are thematic shadows, music is a purely ontological essence belonging to being. Ultimately, even if the world did not exist, sound and music could still exist, but we cannot say the same of the other arts. Precisely

because of this ontological privilege, political, social, and aesthetic themes directed toward the senses undoubtedly bring about changes in the human being. Likewise, the spiritual causes of the signs, images, and spiritual activities associated with these themes surround human beings on all sides. Yet as of today, the musical theme is not merely an act pertaining to or addressing the senses, limited, for instance, to bare sounds. It is the melodic integrity of compositions that, by integrating with time, space, and object, transcends the boundary, or, by separating itself from that integration, opens the way to a new division. Jean-Jacques Rousseau says in this context: “The sounds in melody affect us not merely as sounds, but as signs of our affections and emotions; they awaken in us the movements they express, and we see and recognize this image in them” (Rousseau, 2019, p. 44). At this point, the *diatonic* rhythm of traditional or modern Kurdish music modernized solely through instrumentation continues, under all circumstances, to sustain itself through the local melody of an anachronistic historical myth. It experiences neither a rupture nor a division. Yet art, by deconstructing all the rigid norms upon which society has agreed or reached a consensus, renders banal the conservative Idea of social values.

If art praises an *ethos* that is closely bound to social consensus and draws sustenance from it, then, paradoxically, whether it intends to or not, it keeps alive the conservatism of the rabble that develops against it. The fundamental hallmark of society is to declare itself, against itself, as— in Montesquieu’s terminology— “the rabble.” The common accumulation of society consists, alongside laws and rules, in the fetishism of traditional and representational norms. The role of art is not to render banal every phenomenon that society targets and defines as marginal and

degenerate; on the contrary, the role of art here is to bring the common gaze of society, in the face of that phenomenon, down to a banal plane. Just as we have done in this book: rather than devaluing Semyanî Perîzade, who is portrayed as marginal and degenerate, we expose how banal the gaze of the mentality that targets him actually is. Therefore, at this stage, it is meaningless for the artist who takes pride in the traditional norm to complain about conservatism, because the agent of this deterministic perspective is the artist's own practice. Yet despite this negative condition, this does not mean that art has historically failed to enter into a relation with cultural and identity-based resistance. In this context, music has often emerged in societies as a force of resistance and as an expression of identity. At times, music is also defined as a narrative of freedom or as a fundamental human right. However it may be approached, the artist is obliged to distinguish between the subjective proximity of the local sequence and its objective distance, and to integrate this distinction into the universal aesthetic field of art history. Otherwise, the notion of locality in art encounters precisely the limit indicated by Alain Badiou. What did Badiou say? "The local movement is false, since it consists merely in the effect of the self-subtraction of both the image and the utterance" (Badiou, 2013, p. 97). If a local image and utterance cannot integrate themselves into a modern structure, if they cannot bring their extensions closer to the hybrid shores of new forms, then the existing locality continues to remain at the edge of the universal world, in an external position. Modern everyday music is the expression of the causality and objectivity corresponding to our time, enriched with a new spirit. For example, the rhythms of Semyanî's song Maçî Maçî, in accordance with this new spirit, carry the naturalness of speech as

though within the entire subtle variety of reading prose aloud. This naturalness rests upon an infallible intuition directed toward the incompatibility of the whole. No matter how complex and lively its rhythms may be, there is always, within them, the attraction of direct emotions and a simple, unostentatious melodic line. Semyanî's music embodies nearly all the principal characteristics of contemporary modern music. Many other parameters could be listed: the rejection of grand ideals, the musical objectification of emotion, the marginal visibility of peripheral melodies within national sentiment, complex and rapid rhythms, modern sonic images, and many others. Among these, the "musical objectification of emotion" is particularly a determining phenomenon in music.



A banner prepared by women on March 8, International Women's Day, inspired by the song Alo. Istanbul, 2022

The musical objectification of emotion is a material condition established together with harmony and rhythm. This condition consists in emotion being felt like a mechanical note and in the melody being directed accordingly. It is not a state of psychological intensity that emerges in the aftermath of a tragic event. On the contrary, it is a distribution of the sensible, grounded in sound and the body, produced in the musician by the melody at that particular moment. This distribution of the sensible is effective to the extent that it neither anticipates for the listener what they ought to feel nor dictates it afterward. In other words, rather than defining and intensifying emotion, it leaves it, as in *Alo, Dengê Min Tê?* (*Hello, Can You Hear My Voice?*), as an open, shallow, and transparent field of material experience. In this context, Semyanî's music clearly distinguishes itself from the static ethos, pastoral atmosphere, cultural climate, and artistic approach of the society to which he belongs. Through his productivity and coherence, Semyanî makes his distinctive aesthetic immediately perceptible to the listener. He constructs his music without relying on a display of profound musical knowledge and thereby exposes from within the representational aesthetic form of music. His work *Xewna Berevajî* was produced with a passion directed entirely toward the sounding of musical tones and scales to subjective sensations. In musical culture, older forms are continually reinterpreted, and clear similarities can be observed between traditions and contemporary modern music. Their forms and meanings always pass through complex and multilayered structural processes. Semyanî reflects the complex interweaving of social, cultural, and political structures through the libidinal rhythms of the everyday axioms in his music. These rhythms are not merely a melodic structure; they are a holistic

expression of the libidinal body. As Lyotard also defines it: “Do not forget to add to all the parts of the apparatus of language and sound all the sounds they can produce, as well as the entire selective network of sounds, that is, the phonological system; for this too belongs to the libidinal body, just as colors must be added to retinas, certain textures to the epidermis, certain odors retained by the nasal walls, and the words and sentences preferred by the speaking mouth and the writing hand” (Lyotard, 2011, p. 12). In other words, the libidinal body should be understood as a totality that exceeds the merely physical and encompasses the perceptual, sensory, and expressive. Put differently, the libidinal body is not merely a biological entity; it is also a field of energy in which processes of perception, sensation, and expression become intertwined, or, in Alva Noë’s terms, become “entangled.” Within this field of energy, music is an ontological mode of existence that encompasses all combinations of the body, speech, and gesture. In contrast to classical representations of the organic body, the libidinal body is equipped with rhythmic movements suited to a functional vision, erotic illumination, the circulation of drives, and the discharge of impulses. In this context, Semyanî’s music is not merely an auditory experience but a performance with bodily, visual, emotional, and social dimensions. This performative dimension also determines the relationship that music establishes with the stage. Indeed, music is, in Wagner’s words, a “feminine power” that heightens the splendor and dramatic effect of the stage performance. The rhythms of music awaken the silence of a personality absorbed in thought, set subconscious emotions into motion, and, through the orchestra, transform an intense passion into consciousness. Semyanî’s libidinal body becomes integrated with the visual and auditory experience on stage. Multicolored

spotlights, moving stage sets, and his rhythmic performance render the Body After visible. The Body After establishes the necessary ground for directly engaging with the ordinariness of everyday life and, in the Heideggerian sense, its boredom. Music either eliminates this boredom or deepens it further. This experience goes beyond providing aesthetic pleasure and activates a psychological, emotional, and ontological state of consciousness. The libidinal rhythms in Semyanî's performance reveal the tensions and interactions between the individual and society, the past and the future, tradition and modernity. At this point, the saying "music is the food of the soul" points precisely to these symptoms. This nourishment is not merely auditory; it nourishes bodily and emotional perception, triggers spiritual pleasure, and restructures the individual's conscious or unconscious experience. Even in a sung song, there is a spiritual pleasure prior to pronunciation. The melodic and rhythmic structure of the song produces a psychological and libidinal effect independently of the meaning of the words. Through its rhythms, tones, melodies, and sounds, music triggers the libidinal body and allows the circulation of the body, the soul, emotions, and the unconscious.



Xewna Berevajî single cover, 2020. Cover design: Zeynep Kılıç

Semyanî Perîzade's music, precisely at this point, renders the Body After ontologically visible on a plane where everyday axioms and libidinal rhythms intersect. This visibility is effective not only on stage but also at the level of the listener's consciousness and perception. Through the rhythms of the libidinal body, music reinterprets ontological and social reality. It transforms individuals' perception, bodies, and sensory experience. Ultimately, Semyanî's libidinal rhythms and the Body After carry music beyond its function as an ontological and cultural instrument of the rural. They turn music into a rhythmic, bodily, and sensory representation of life. Indeed, the mind itself participates in and accompanies the pleasure of these spiritual senses. Ultimately, music enters into relations with sounds that have no determinate meaning, with various objects, and with various effects of nature, and searches for similarities. Even the smallest similarities and the weakest relations are sufficient for music. Musical sounds emerge as monophonic or polyphonic. Regardless of the intervals of the scales in which they occur, these

sounds can be used alone or simultaneously with other notes in chords. In this respect, there is no limit either to the variety of sounds that an ensemble of instruments can produce simultaneously or to the order, frequency, or prevalence of combinations. Thus, the musician arranges sounds as they wish within a discourse that is bound by no grammatical rule and follows its own syntax. This arrangement is temporally permeable. For there is a temporal moment within music; this time is identical neither metaphorically nor to the flow of actual time. Semyanî's Body After, too, moves within a musical conception of time; yet this body experiences not the time in which it exists, but the tense of the future as an indirect experience. Music is an art grounded, in the Kantian sense, in "inner sense." Inner sense, in turn, moves within an inner time and expresses many sensory states across a broad scale. In this context, although Semyanî's Body After may encompass other senses and times, it experiences its fundamental temporal contact in the mode of *the forgetting of the future*. This experience now makes it necessary to think not only about music but also about the Body After itself.

The Body After

The Body After is the body of the future. It is the humanization of a living, breathing organism in the flesh. Unlike the Cartesian proposition, the Body After is not limited to being a purely physical, material, and extended entity independent of the mind; it is a being that perceives, feels, and, by inhabiting the world, establishes a relation with the space in which it finds itself, extending toward the future. Semyanî's Body After offers us a prediction about the future. This prediction is not a matter of a soothsayer gazing into a crystal ball and making a forecast. It is the postponement of the present that makes us forget the future, that enables forgetting. The Body After is neither the bodily manifestation of a recovered representational standard nor the representation of an anticipated tragedy. Nor is it defined by the reproduced norms of the past or the projected crises of the future. The Body After reconstructs the internal form of life and experience. By restructuring the body, subjectivity, and perception, it creates a new order and a field of meaning within individual and social experience. At the same time, this body serves to disrupt the monotonous norms, impositions, and social codings of the external world. The Body After liberates bodily experience from the restrictive frameworks of social norms. The Body After is both an intellectual concept and a literary field of experience. On a plane in the manner of Blanchot, it operates at a point where writing, narrative, and bodily experience intersect. The body is conceptualized not merely as a biological or social entity, but as a stage upon which events, time, and aesthetic experience are reconstructed. The Body After, as a structure that reconfigures the body and subjectivity, transcends the norms of the past, and

internalizes the uncertainty of the future, makes it possible to rethink experience and its aesthetic practice. Semyanî's Body After does not share the same conception as the bodily norm of the organically accepted destiny of consensus. The bodily form of consensus preserves every element that represents itself. The Body After, by contrast, separates itself through its own choices from the "pathetic" and "pathological" state of mind of the given representational order. Above all, Semyanî's Body After shows us that what it has made us forget is ontology. Yet this ontology is not an abstract doctrine of being; on the contrary, it is a collective existence constituted through the body, memory, and history, one that also encompasses our ideological, political, and cultural identity. Since this ontology encompasses our ideological, political, and cultural identity, let us formulate the most "provocative" sentence in the book: ***The Body After makes us forget our own Kurdishness!***

The first reading of this sentence will naturally strike the reader as radical, provocative, and disturbing. The reader will immediately respond by asking: "What do you mean, it makes us forget our Kurdishness?" This reaction is justified and entirely legitimate. For throughout history, there have been the state's official ideological apparatuses and policies that have systematically sought to erase the visibility, value, and cultural continuity of Kurdishness. Yet it is precisely here—at least for Kurdish readers, myself included—that another contradiction emerges. If what makes us forget our Kurdishness is not the state but, at this stage, Semyanî's "Body After," then the following question becomes unavoidable: how can a body that conducts all of its production in Kurdish and lives its life within the ontic-cultural identity of a *Kurdî* body make us forget our own

Kurdishness? For this reason, the reader is entirely justified in naturally asking the following question: how is it possible for a body that speaks Kurdish, produces in Kurdish, and lives as a Kurd to make us forget Kurdishness and, in a sense, move its aesthetic function onto an invisible ground? When considered in the context of these questions, it is, in fact, technically impossible for Semyanî Perîzade to make us forget our Kurdishness in this sense. After all, if such a thing were possible, Semyanî would not, quite simply, sing his songs in Kurdish. So what, then, is this paradox of performing music in Kurdish while simultaneously making us forget Kurdishness, or what does this situation point to? What exactly is meant by this seemingly contradictory argument? This phenomenon, which at first glance gives the impression of an inconsistency, is in fact the central point of the main argument discussed in this book. Indeed, the psychological dilemma created and to be created by this main argument is not merely an individual discomfort; it is an ideological reflection of collective memory and experience. This collective tension transcends the boundaries of aesthetic experience and points to a broader political ground concerning how identity is regulated within the public sphere. Therefore, the matter is not merely an individual problem of perception; it is a structural problem that requires an analysis of the institutional and ideological state structures that determine the conditions under which this perception is formed. For the phenomenon we call the state is, since Montesquieu's principles, the name of an integrated structure that regulates common interests and, at times, can operate in the opposite direction, while institutionally embodying both bureaucratic and ideological dimensions. The bureaucratic dimension is the domain in which the state directly exercises its authority. Governance, the

supervision of services, the implementation of laws and decisions, and the execution of administrative procedures all take place at this level. It is here that the state establishes its most concrete contact with everyday life and makes its authority felt in a visible and measurable manner. Citizens, too, generally come to know and experience the state through these practices. The ideological dimension, by contrast, refers to the framework that reproduces the state's juridical rationality, pedagogical coherence, and system of symbolic values. As Althusser and Gramsci have shown, each from different conceptual frameworks, power does not operate solely through governance and the use of force; it also plays a role in shaping the ways in which people think, perceive, and make sense of the world. This framework operates not as a mechanism that governs individuals, but as a field of discipline that habituates them to particular ways of thinking, feeling, and perceiving. Accordingly, making people forget their Kurdishness is normally associated with the state's pedagogical and ideological practices of assimilation. Yet at this point it is plainly evident that the phenomenon of "making one forget" at issue in the ontology of the body after is not related to the systematic processes of assimilation carried out through the "ideological state apparatuses" in the Althusserian sense. More precisely, this phenomenon cannot be reduced to these processes and cannot be explained by their policies. The phenomenon of making one forget in the body after takes place as an entirely distinct phenomenon that does not derive from the ideological state apparatuses and therefore bears no causal link to them. It is precisely this phenomenon that I call ***normalization***.

The paradox emerges precisely here: if the Body After is neither a continuation nor a consequence of the state's

mechanisms of assimilation, then how does it express an independent act of normalization that operates without coinciding with them? Since we do not mean the first sense here, namely the classical process of assimilation, we must then pose the essential question through the second phenomenon, that is, the phenomenon of normalization: “What is the normalization of the Body After, and why does forgetting our Kurdishness become a form of normalization?” Perhaps we should return to the first question we asked and pose it again in a similar way: “Why does Semyanî Perîzade’s Body After make us forget our own Kurdishness, and why is this phenomenon of forgetting a normalization?” The book’s main argument is concealed within this “contradictory” question. Let us now clarify this hidden point: “The Body After functions not merely as a field of individual and bodily experience, but as a process in which cultural memory and identity are simultaneously internalized, reproduced, and normalized.” In this context, the forgetting of Kurdishness is not merely the repression of the past. It is the integration of the body, subjectivity, and social perception into a “normalized” order. This normalization is a constitutive process of transformation in which identity and cultural ontology are reconstructed within a natural and legitimate flow, while the field of awareness and experience expands and produces new forms of meaning. The condition of normalization is the natural condition of ontology, and the natural condition of ontology is the normalization of Kurdishness. In other words, Kurds will truly become Kurdish when they forget that they are Kurdish. This statement, too—like the first statement above—initially creates an impression of contradiction, difficulty, and tension. For this reason, we need to explain this tense phenomenon step by step in a simple and logical manner. We can

define the normalization of the future as follows: Kurds will be Kurdish when all their rights are secured by the constitution and laws, when they are incorporated into the norm of equal citizenship at every point of the official and public sphere; that is, when their language is recognized as an official language and their cultural identity is granted the status of a constitutive identity, and when their Kurdishness is no longer continuously questioned by any authority or power, reproduced in the public sphere, or systematically reminded to them. If Kurds exist within an environment in which the visibility of their identity and their rights are secured in public life and social interactions, being Kurdish will cease to be an external necessity or a condition requiring constant remembrance. Under these conditions, identity settles into an internalized and normalized ontological ground. Thus, Kurdishness becomes not a matter of "struggle" or "remembrance," but a natural, secured, and unquestioned dimension of existence. To avoid any misunderstanding, it is necessary to underline the concept of "normalization" once again: for normalization to take place, it depends upon a necessary precondition. This precondition is for Kurds to have their identity and language recognized, for this recognition to be legally secured, and ultimately, for them to possess equal citizenship status so that they may live a life with dignity. Otherwise, the ground on which normalization could become possible disappears.

To grasp the process of normalization, this situation must be considered not as an abstract principle but through a concrete field of experience. For normalization is not the automatic result of a legal arrangement or a symbolic gesture. It is a long-term process of transformation that requires the historical reorganization of perception, the sensible regime, and bodily responses.

Accordingly, this process belongs temporally not to the present but to “the time after,” and is understood through a hypothetical situation that has not yet occurred but that, once it does, will thereafter be regarded as ordinary.

Explaining this supposition through a concrete example will make the matter clearer. At this point, the metaphor of an airplane “announcement” offers us a useful example, both in terms of representing the public sphere and the ordinary functioning of everyday life. Let us suppose that on an airplane, alongside announcements in different international languages, an announcement is also made in Kurdish. Hearing this announcement for the first time will undoubtedly have a powerful affective impact on many Kurds. This effect generally manifests itself through a form of judgment that might be called “pleasure.” Yet this pleasure is not, as might be assumed, an indication of “normalization”; on the contrary, it is the clearest indication that Kurdishness still needs to be remembered. For the judgment of pleasure points not so much to an aesthetic judgment in the Kantian sense as to a moment of ideological and psychological recognition. When a person hears an announcement in Kurdish, they naturally feel joy. For this sound reminds them of an identity that has been suppressed, deferred, or systematically rendered invisible. What is decisive at this point is the following: Reminding, in essence, is never a natural condition. Reminding always emerges as a compensation for a lack, an interruption, or an absence. Therefore, the pleasure produced in a person by a Kurdish announcement derives not from the natural existence of the language and identity, but from their prolonged “prohibited” absence. In other words, contrary to what is commonly assumed, it is not the “hearing” of the announcement but its “not being heard”

that reminds one of Kurdishness. For this reason, the Kurdish announcement heard at this stage provides merely a psychological and ideological relief; ontological normalization has not yet been reached. The individual still has to become aware that they are Kurdish, call their Kurdishness into consciousness, and emotionally affirm this consciousness. The true threshold of normalization is, paradoxically, not the moment when we hear Kurdish, but the moment when, although we "hear" it, we no longer "hear" it. In other words, normalization begins when the existence of the language withdraws from the center of perception and settles into the background of everyday life. To make this situation more comprehensible, we can turn to a simple but powerful analogy: in daylight, under the light of the sun, we do not notice the presence of light. Illumination dissolves within our senses and becomes invisible. But when night falls and darkness descends, we notice the absence of light, and it is then that we grasp the ontological value of illumination. Similarly, in a public sphere where Kurdish exists continuously and naturally, the individual becomes aware of the meaning and absence of Kurdish not because they hear it, but in the moments when they do not hear it. Under present conditions, the absence of a Kurdish announcement being heard points not to the ontological absence of the language, but to its ideological and political obstruction. In other words, the state of "not being heard" is not a natural silence but a forcibly produced nothingness. By rendering the language invisible, this nothingness continually reminds us of it. The language exists precisely through its absence; through this absence, it makes its political position and repression heard. Thus, not being heard here is not normalization but the harshest form of ideological remembrance. On the other hand, hearing a Kurdish

announcement for the first time, in addition to the affective impact it produces on the individual, also indicates that the language has acquired a legal status in the public and official sphere and has been recognized juridically and institutionally. At this stage, the individual no longer has to defend or substantiate their Kurdishness, because the ideological threshold has been crossed. Yet even this is still not sufficient. For what emerges at this stage is mostly psychological relief and ideological gratification. The individual speaks with a sense of "at last." This still indicates that a historical burden is being carried. True "normalization" will become possible when these forms of relief turn into "indifference." In summary, the announcement appears to the individual in two different forms of being heard: the first is an evental form of being heard that comes after absence and restores Kurdishness to memory; the second is a form of being heard that, with the normalization of presence, is no longer noticed as such, having settled into everyday life and been forgotten. To give an example of this second form of being heard, let us consider the effect produced by an announcement in English: it produces neither joy nor discomfort nor political awareness. English here is not an object of meaning but a procedure. This procedure, moreover, is functional, ordinary, and commonplace. What is more, this announcement does not remind us of the English citizen, the territory of the British Isles, its history, or its culture. For it to do so, a specific point of focus would be required (for example, the musical group The Rolling Stones or the harsh neoliberal policies of Margaret Thatcher, known as the "Iron Lady"). Accordingly, normalization is achieved only when the Kurdish announcement reaches this level, that is, when it produces no aesthetic, ideological, or psychological judgment in the

individual. Once this normalization is complete, the presence or absence of the announcement ceases to be a matter of thought. Thus, Kurdish becomes, ontologically, a natural form of "forgetting." The forgetting at issue here is not the loss of the "mother tongue." On the contrary, it is a forgetting produced by naturalization. Just as we know that the sun will rise tomorrow and do not think about it, and because we do not think about it, we forget this natural occurrence. Language, too, is forgotten in the same way once it has been internalized. This forgetting is not a deprivation but a state of becoming established and immanent. Ultimately, normalization becomes possible not merely through the making of a Kurdish announcement, but when that announcement ceases to be an "event." Normalization is, in the final instance, a state of "carefreeness" and "indifference." The ontological transformation of Kurdishness into a natural condition is realized only after this sensory and perceptual threshold has been crossed. Once this threshold has been crossed, the ideological nothingness of the past is also forgotten. Yet this ideological forgetting is not a forgetting of "repression," but a forgetting of "freedom."

Yet in the context of Turkey, the state's official historical and structural policy has neither made the Kurd forget their Kurdishness nor the Turk their Turkishness. On the contrary, both identities have been continually reminded to them. For example, a German may forget their Germanness because they both regard their citizenship, identity, and language as natural and are themselves regarded as natural in this regard; this naturalness indicates that the sensory threshold has been crossed. In Turkey, however, because this threshold has never been fully crossed, the Turk continually reminds themselves of the Other. In other words,

Turkish identity is largely defined through the Kurd and is continually reproduced not through its own naturalness, but through the repression of the Other. This reproduction stems from the powerful's need to impose its own existence incessantly. This continuous practice of imposition and remembrance permeates every sphere of everyday life: it is recirculated through the language of the media, educational curricula, bureaucratic procedures, public symbols, and cultural representations. I call this uninterrupted ideological vibration "Seismic ideology."

Seismic ideology: In social and political contexts, it refers to a sudden, intense, and violent reactive mechanism that emerges through representational perceptions encoded in the subconscious of the powerful subject. The critical point here is that while the powerful subject sees itself as a "living being possessing rights," it perceives the Other—most often marginalized, excluded, or othered groups—as a "non-living" object or as an entity without rights. This perceptual difference can be triggered whenever the existence or human actions of the Other become visible. This moment of triggering is conceptually defined as the moment of Seismic ideology. Seismic ideology is characterized by a sudden and highly intense eruption of violence or hatred. This eruption is directed toward the "non-living thing" representationally encoded in the subconscious of the powerful subject. For example, during an event held together with a refugee, when the refugee foregrounds an ontological act concerning their own life and cultural image, the powerful subject may display an immediate discriminatory reflex or bodily violence. This moment is the visible manifestation of a racist and ideological discharge (*catharsis*) arising from the powerful subject's subconscious perception of the Other merely as a representational object. In

other words, Seismic ideology is the moment when the powerful subject recognizes that the refugee is a living being, or the moment when the powerful subject witnesses a human action—equivalent to that of the powerful subject's own status—performed by a person whom, in its subconscious, it does not regard as living and possessing rights, but has reduced merely to a representational object. Seismic ideology does not merely fuel individual violence or anger; it also encompasses the continuous operation of ideological and cultural mechanisms of remembrance. This ideological energy continually penetrates the experiential field of individuals and interrupts the process of normalization. For instance, Kurdish cannot exist ontologically in a natural and indifferent manner because Seismic ideology always prevents this. Seismic ideology refers not only to overt violence or hate speech, but also to an ideological field of energy in which identities are continually displaced, reminded, and prevented from becoming naturalized. This energy infiltrates the perceptual and sensible world of individuals, continually postponing the possibility of normalization. Under these conditions, no matter how much Kurdish is heard, it cannot become an indifferent ontological existence. For every instance of being heard is simultaneously charged as a political event. From this perspective, Seismic ideology is a theoretical tool that conceptualizes the sudden and intense conflicts of power between the powerful and marginalized groups. This concept explains how the human actions of the Other are experienced by the powerful as a triggering moment of "shock," and how this shock is expressed outwardly in the form of violence, hatred, and racist *catharsis*. Thus, the way in which social hierarchy, othering, and ideological violence are reproduced through subconscious codes becomes visible. Seismic ideology

differs from familiar forms of ideology—particularly the best-known Althusserian conception of ideology—in terms of two temporal conditions concerning the production and emergence of its energy.[41] These two temporal conditions distinguish Seismic ideology from classical models of ideology, both theoretically and practically.

First Temporality — Stored and Continuously Produced Energy: This is the first temporal condition of Seismic ideology; it is defined as the production of racist energy. This energy

[41] According to Louis Althusser, ideology is not simply "false consciousness" or an illusion located in the mind of the individual. In his philosophy, ideology is situated on a much deeper and more structural plane. In Althusser's formulation, ideology is the imaginary representation of the relation individuals establish with their real conditions of existence. The critical point here is that ideology does not sever its connection with reality, but neither does it directly reflect it. Ideology is not reality itself, but the way reality is lived. Althusser defines ideology as a material reality; indeed, in his response to John Lewis, he explicitly states that "ideologies are ultimately practices and do not belong to theory" (Althusser, *John Lewis'e Cevap*, p. 45). This emphasis is one of his most radical moves. Ideology does not operate solely at the level of ideas; it becomes concrete in rituals, practices, institutional structures, bodies, and everyday habits. Going to school, taking examinations, assuming particular roles within the family, or obeying the law as though it were a natural and unquestionable order are examples of the material forms of existence of ideology. At this point, Althusser's famous concept of "interpellation" comes into play. Ideology interpellates individuals as "subjects." As in the classic example, when someone calls out "Hey, you!" in the street, turning around and recognizing oneself as the addressee of that call makes the operation of ideology visible. Ideology recognizes the individual as a subject who is already there and, precisely through this act of recognition, constitutes them as such. In this sense, according to Althusser, ideology is an inevitable social mechanism that constructs individuals as subjects, organizes their relation to their real conditions of life at the imaginary level, and operates through material practices. Accordingly, for Althusser, there is no "outside of ideology." Ideology is ultimately not a domain in which we stand outside, but the very social reality within which we live.

accumulates in the subconscious of the powerful subject through a continuous process of production and is stored through social, cultural, and psychological codes. It is continually generated within an endless movement of production, and this movement is devoid of a temporal mode. In other words, it is not produced through a *linear* or periodic emergence. On the contrary, it always produces energy, which accumulates and remains ready for release. This continuous production of energy constitutes the fundamental potential of Seismic ideology. By its very nature, it is always ready to emerge whenever a trigger or need concerning the existence or action of the Other arises, accumulating as a continuous ideological and emotional charge. This accumulation is ultimately conceptualized as the timeless and infinite mode of production of energy.

Second Temporality — Processual and Emergent Energy: This is the second temporal condition of Seismic ideology; it refers to the emergence of stored energy. Here, energy maintains its continuity and sustains its cycle of production, but its emergence is dependent upon an evental moment and periodicity. In other words, the production of energy is timeless and continuous, whereas its emergence is discontinuous because it is contingent upon an evental moment. This emergence may manifest itself in different forms, regardless of whether it occurs on a major or minor scale, at the individual, social, or institutional level, and along political and bureaucratic lines. For example, the submission to a vote of a motion concerning the formal recognition of the *Newroz* holiday as a matter of rights constitutes a discontinuous "evental moment." What remains continuous despite this evental moment is the loss of rights inherited from the past, that is, the timelessness of *Newroz* as a prohibition. This vote allows the

decision taken to emerge in an intermittent and discontinuous manner. The loss—albeit temporary—through a vote of the continuity of a prohibition that has become continuous in itself is, in its own right, a discontinuous moment. Consequently, the "breaking news" concerning this evental moment involving *Newroz* may trigger the immediate emergence, in the form of a negative reaction, of the energy accumulated in the subconscious of the powerful subject. Depending on the circumstances, this reaction may manifest itself as physical violence or as an ideological catharsis of hate-filled posts on social media. In short, the discharge of energy is always dependent upon a specific evental moment and social ground. Indeed, this evental moment and social ground do not emerge as a continuous flow, but as a discontinuous rupture. This "discontinuity" is the fundamental characteristic that distinguishes Seismic ideology from classical ideologies. In summary, Seismic ideology differs from classical ideologies through the temporal distinction between the continuity of energy production and the discontinuity of its emergence. The continuous, timeless, and infinite production of energy represents the ideological potential that accumulates in the subconscious of the powerful subject and remains perpetually ready. Its emergence, by contrast, is dependent upon an evental moment and periodicity; for this reason, it manifests itself as a discontinuous and context-specific phenomenon. This dual-temporal dynamic carries Seismic ideology beyond individual psychological processes and makes it a central concept in the analysis of social and institutional power relations and ideological violence. Consequently, every powerful subject continuously carries Seismic ideology within itself as a potential and constructs its everyday relationship with the Other through this implicit ground (*persona*). However, the

manifestation of this potential is not continuous in relation to the Other; rather, it emerges discontinuously, depending on an evental moment and a threshold experience. For example, historically, we often hear statements such as: “I would never have expected such a reaction to Alevis from our neighbor, Mr. Mehmet, or Ms. Zeynep; after all, we are Alevis too, and we have been neighbors for years,” or, “I have been sitting next to my colleague at school or at work for years; I never imagined that they thought this way. I was offended by what they posted on social media.” Such statements show that, most of the time, tension appears to proceed as though it did not exist; for the issue has never explicitly come to the surface in everyday life. Thus, the seismic potential remains at the depths and accumulates over a long period. Yet when an “evental moment” occurs, this suppressed tension suddenly begins to stir within the chronological flow; it becomes agitated, vibrates, gains movement, accelerates, and eventually erupts and emerges. If we consider historical examples, the Maraş, Çorum, Sivas, and even Malatya Events can be understood as examples demonstrating how this seismic potential becomes activated and rises to the surface at particular “evental moments.” Thus, the person whom we have known for years as the neighbor next door or the colleague sitting beside us has, until that moment, maintained the persona required by social harmony. For this reason, although the relationship established with the Other may appear ordinary and even sincere for a long period, at any historical, political, social, or individual moment of rupture, Seismic ideology may emerge as a sudden ideological discharge directed toward the Other.

The most striking recent example of this practice of Seismic ideology was what the Kurdish footballer Deniz Undav

experienced during a football match. The horrific incident that took place during the UEFA Europa League group-stage match between VfB Stuttgart, for which Undav played, and Fenerbahçe SK at Chobani Stadium – Fenerbahçe Şükrü Saracoğlu Sports Complex in Istanbul was, in the fullest sense, a moment of Seismic ideology. From the moment the date of the match in Istanbul—October 23, 2025—was announced, this seismic ebb and flow was triggered in the lower layers; stirrings began in the depths, fault lines began to fluctuate, and days beforehand the process entered a loading phase in which energy accumulated. With Undav's appearance on the field in the second half, the accumulated energy reached its peak. With the referee's final whistle, the seismic energy began to erupt toward Undav as though breaking free from its chains, accompanied by mass exhilaration and passion at high decibel levels. This moment of eruption was a racist moment of catharsis, in which energy that had accumulated deep below for days awaited its emergence at the surface. Like the tides of gas in the digestive system, this mass, intensifying and exerting pressure on the stomach, was like waste that, with the final whistle, entered the process of being discharged toward the intestines. Thus, while on the field Undav witnessed the physical and living moment of discharge of the Seismic ideology arising from his identity, outside the stadium he was subjected, through social media, to racist insults directed at him and his family. In short, the continuous accumulation of energy and its non-continuous emergence manifested themselves on a football field. In this case, the announced date of the match represents an energy that carries continuity, while the day on which the match was played represents a discontinuous evental moment. However, it will surprise no one that Hamdi Ulukaya, the American billionaire

Kurdish businessman who also sponsors the same team, later became a target of this Sismic ideology because of his identity. Indeed, the "drum" incident in Yılmaz Erdoğan's miniseries, released on a digital platform and widely resonant in current popular culture, is a striking example of this situation. The fact that Erdoğan was subjected to attempted lynching and racist insults on social media reveals the limits that stand in the way of the other being accepted as a primary subject, however wealthy and popular they may be. It also shows how futile the effort to attain that position can prove in the face of dominant identity and power relations. For being wealthy and popular does not abolish the other's identity; on the contrary, this identity is reminded again and again, despite the economic and symbolic capital one possesses. The other may undoubtedly fall prey to the illusion of being powerful, but this illusion dissolves the moment it meets the limits of the dominant order, forcing the other to confront anew the bitter reality of the position assigned to them. For Kurds, the real beginning of this ideology historically took shape before 1923, when material conditions began to accumulate through a loading process. The first discharge or eruption occurred in the 1921 *Koçgiri*, the second in *Ağrı–Ararat* in 1926–30, and the third in *Dersîm* in 1937–38. This chronology began with the rupture of the first fault line in 1921 *Koçgiri*, then deepened and acquired continuity through the processes of *Ağrı–Ararat* and *Dersîm*. Even today, this Seismic ideology continues to be directed toward Kurds and other Others on major or minor scales, at individual, mass, and institutional levels, and persists through manifestations that are sometimes of low intensity and sometimes of high severity. Thus, the seismic tension that began to stir and accumulate with the Syrian civil war in 2011 periodically erupts toward refugees and

reveals itself, as we have witnessed. Similarly, queer individuals become targets of this ideological eruption at different stages of life, across a broad *spectrum* extending from the family to society and from acquaintances to strangers. In conclusion, all these things to which we are subjected, although none of us deserves them, are an anachronistic residue of a century-old regime (the republic). For the century-long manifestation of the doctrine called the republic is, in essence, the invisible name of the functionality of a regime that accepts no "difference." This regime, operating through a *differential* logic, eliminates the notion of the civil citizen on the one hand, while constructing a homogeneous militarist social fabric on the othe. This contradiction is precisely an intellectual law and ideological *nomos* of which the adherents of this doctrine are proud. Within the regime at issue here, the seismic character of the ideological order becomes clearly visible. Seismic ideology is a critical conceptual tool for understanding the historical and contemporary manifestations of the invisible yet continuous effects of these norms upon individuals and groups. Thus, the regime has constructed its ideological system in such a way that it addresses questions to its citizens both directly and indirectly. These questions resemble the ideological operation that Althusser describes through his famous concept of "interpellation." Interpellation turns the subject into an addressee without naming them. The state poses these questions almost as a reflex: "Hey, you over there! Are you Turkish?" If the answer is "Yes," proof is expected from the individual. Yet within the boundaries of Seismic ideology, this proof often takes a harsh, oppressive, and even violent form that works to the detriment of the Other. On the other hand, the state poses a different question to another citizen: "Hey, you over there! Who are you?" Although the

state knows that the person is Kurdish, this question is consciously posed within an ideological framework; its purpose is to remind the person of their Kurdishness. If the answer is "I am Kurdish," what is implied is: "As you can see, if I had not asked, you would have forgotten who you were!" Thus, the proof of the individual's existence is constituted, from an ideological perspective, through their non-existence in the eyes of an authority that does not recognize them but reminds them of who they are. The state somehow reminds the Kurdish individual of who they are; yet this reminder remains merely at the symbolic level. The cultural, identity-based, and historical fields pertaining to the individual's Kurdishness are neither opened up by the state in an autonomous and independent manner nor are the possibilities belonging to these fields fully recognized. These fields either remain limited within the state's ideological framework of control or are excluded altogether. In such situations, the Kurd generally turns toward the concept of "Pathetic dialectic" in order to provide proof of these fields. By contrast, the existence and identity of the Turk are supported by the state, granted legal and institutional advantages, and, when necessary, violations of the law are overlooked. The Kurd, meanwhile, is reminded of who they are, but the spaces necessary for them to experience the natural form of their existence are not opened. On the contrary, the privileges of their denial or obstruction are produced; their sphere of action is narrowed through the force of law, and they are intimidated. At this point, the state operates as a mechanism that works in its own favor and restricts the existence of the Kurd. The unsettled, unstable, and reflexive character of the state sustains the continuity of this structure; it often acts with the reflexes of an adolescent. Its complex of needing to prove itself to the world and the

anachronistic illness of continuing to act "against the seven powers" likewise arise from this neurotic state of mind. Erich Fromm makes a particularly striking observation in this regard. Drawing on Fromm's approach, we can speak of the following contradiction: when a person describes themselves as the most honorable, honest, dignified, upright, conscientious, modest, self-sacrificing, noble, courageous, fearless, generous, and virtuous person in the world, these claims tend to create an unsympathetic impression among those around them. The person may even be regarded as an arrogant, insecure, or psychologically troubled individual with a pathological personality. However, when the same attributes are ascribed to a nation (for example, "the Kurdish nation is a noble nation"), this discourse, which is viewed with suspicion at the individual level, becomes a source of collective pride and honor. Far from being questioned, it is often accepted as truth. Far from being questioned, it is often accepted as truth. In essence, however, there is no difference between the two situations: both rest on the need to idealize oneself, believe in one's own superiority, and have that superiority affirmed in the eyes of others. To the extent that a nation sees itself as immune to criticism, morally superior, and historically privileged, it approaches the boundaries of nationalist narcissism. As long as this perception remains unquestioned, regardless of which nation is involved, the distance between claims of collective superiority and fascism will always remain dangerously narrow. By contrast, as we have noted above, the maturity of German citizens rests on a historical consciousness that encompasses their own state's self-criticism regarding the *Holocaust*.

For Kurds, the condition of normalization at this stage depends on the state's ability to make mature and stable decisions. These

decisions will take concrete form as laws and regulations enacted in the future and will become possible by gradually turning into natural norms over time. Here, law is always positioned above the general will. Since Rousseau, we have known that the general will is based not on the particular interests of individuals but on the common good of society. In other words, in Rousseauian terminology, the particular interests of individuals must coincide with the general interest. In this way, individuals become integrated within society, and social norms are shaped on the basis of collective interests. The general will is a human-centered phenomenon and naturally proceeds through the circulation of people within society and the continuity of generations. Today, the general will may produce harsh reactions to every law enacted concerning the rights of Kurds. Yet for future generations, these laws will be accepted as the natural rights of Kurds and as social norms. For this reason, law is not merely vital but also indispensable for the future. From this perspective, the issue of "normalization" for Kurds cannot be understood, in the narrow sense, as a process limited to legal regulations, constitutional guarantees, or formal recognition of rights. For legal recognition often takes place only within the normative language of the state. Normalization, however, either takes place or fails to take place primarily within regimes of social perception, the micro-practices of everyday life, and the deeper layers of individual psychology. In this respect, the normalization of Kurds requires a multilayered transformation extending beyond the domain of law into cultural, aesthetic, symbolic, and affective dimensions. Normalization here is not a matter of "granting rights," but of "the normalization of rights." The visibility of Kurdish in public and social life, although a gain in itself, does not by itself constitute normalization. What is

truly decisive is how this visibility is perceived, what affects it produces, and to what extent it becomes "ordinary."

The presence of Kurdish in theater, cinema, television, and digital platforms; in *talk* shows, television series, advertisements, sports broadcasts, entertainment and celebrity programs; or the singing of Kurdish songs or the utterance of Kurdish sentences by famous and popular Turkish artists becomes an indication of normalization only when a certain threshold has been crossed. In other words, if a Kurd confronted with such a concrete situation feels no emotional response or excitement and does not feel the need to share it somewhere in particular (for example, on social media), then this threshold has been crossed and left behind. This is the point at which excitement subsides and awareness turns into indifference. More importantly, this threshold constitutes a kind of break from the Pathetic dialectic. The rupture and indifference at issue here are not a negative or repressive emotional state; on the contrary, they are among the most advanced indicators of social equality. For under regimes of repression, visibility always carries an extraordinary significance, and the emergence of what has been suppressed into visibility inevitably produces an intense emotional response. Accordingly, hearing the first announcement in Kurdish will be historically charged with meaning. It will be recorded in collective memory as a moment of rupture and will produce a justified sense of pride, joy, and affect. This is the natural consequence of a suppressed existence finding resonance in the public sphere for the first time. Yet normalization is measured not by this first moment, but, on the contrary, by this moment becoming ordinary through repetition. When the twentieth, thirtieth, or hundredth announcement in Kurdish is heard, the individual's no longer noticing it, dwelling on it, or producing any

psychological or ideological response to it constitutes a concrete and measurable indication of normalization. The language's ceasing to be an "event" frees it from being a political exception and moves it ontologically toward a natural level of existence. If the twentieth announcement still produces an effect as intense as that of the first day, this points not so much to the continuity of a gain as to the persistence of an abnormality. It shows that the history of repression is still operating in the unconscious in the Lacanian sense and that, despite producing visibility, the system has failed to establish a regime of equality capable of normalizing that visibility. In this context, the persistence of excitement is, paradoxically, not a sign of normalization but of the failure to normalize; indeed, another reason why this excitement does not come to an end is the fear generated by the possibility of being unable to "hear" the announcement again. Thus, normalization is a kind of sensory and affective threshold. It is the point at which language, identity, and cultural existence no longer produce in the individual either a need for affirmation or a defensive reflex. The presence of Kurdish in the public sphere is not perceived as a challenge or a favor; it exists simply because it is there. In this natural state, announcements do not exert ideological pressure on the individual, do not function as a "reminder," and do not require identity to be continually reaffirmed. Within this framework, for Kurds, normalization becomes possible not merely through the recognition of legal or cultural rights, but through the seamless integration of these rights into the flow of everyday life. The presence of Kurdish in public and social spaces produces neither an eruption of pride nor a perception of threat within individual psychology. Language, cultural identity, and ontological existence simply exist, without any need for dramatization, in a state of

carefreeness and indifference. At this point, Kurdishness ceases to be an identity that must be constantly remembered, defended, or affirmed; it attains an ontologically natural, ordinary, and normal state. This is precisely where normalization takes place. The visibility of identity is no longer an event but becomes a background reality. Kurdish is spoken, heard, seen, and passes by; like other languages, it becomes part of the natural flow. This state of natural flow points not to the end of repression, but to a level of social equality at which repression has become meaningless. In this sense, normalization is silent, without applause and without excitement; but precisely for this reason, it is radical. To put it in Rancière's jargon, the deepest political transformations are the moments that are noticed the least.

All these processes, concepts, and experiences are the fundamental ontological elements that constitute Semyanî's "Body After." Concepts such as indifference, insensitivity, forgetting, oblivion, and normalization are not, here, merely psychological states or temporary affects. They should be understood as structural moments of Kurdish ontology extending from the individual to society and from the present to the future. The Body After is precisely the place where these concepts come together, become embodied and concrete, and are enacted on an aesthetic plane. In this sense, Semyanî's Body After is not merely a fiction, an aesthetic theme, or a literary metaphor. On the contrary, all these concepts are modes of existence carried within Semyanî's ontology, soul, consciousness, perception, and sensible regime, drawing them from within the present onto a visible ground through bodily, linguistic, and rhythmic practices. The Body After is not an abstract expectation concerning the future; it is an ontological gesture that brings the normality of the future into the

present and enacts it from the present by bending time. Each concept—indifference, insensitivity, oblivion, and normalization—expresses itself on the plane of the Body After through music, rhythm, melody, speech, stage, and dance. This expression is not representational but performative. In other words, the Body After does not "describe" these concepts; it does them. The movement of the body on stage, the tonality of the voice, the choice of rhythm, and the manner in which the visual image is constructed become ontological acts that enact the normalization regime of the future in the present. At this point, the Body After does not merely transcend a psychological or ideological relief; it realizes this relief under stage lights, in the public sphere, and in the present tense. It conveys Kurdish not as a language that still demands rights or still has to prove itself, but through its *a priori* normality, integrating it into the sensibility of the modern world from the presen.



From the music video for *ALO*, 3:59. Istanbul, 2021. Directed by Zeynep Kılıç.

The Body After does not wait for the future; it brings the future into the present. For this reason, its aesthetic regime contains a temporality that operates as though what "will be" has "already happened," rather than offering a promise concerning what "will happen." In this context, Semyanî's Body After consciously distances itself from the traditional representations, pastoral affects, nostalgic images, and kitsch clichés of the past. Yet this distance is not a simple rejection or reflexive opposition. From another perspective, Semyanî does not reduce the representational formulas of discourse, masculine states of mind, ontologies confined to the rural, rhythms based on mystical and mythological rationalities, folkloric accessories and clothing, naïve music-video editing, and endless retrospective nostalgic arrangements to mere aesthetic choices; rather, he reads them as ideological residues of a representative regime. In their place, he sets everyday mediocre utterance, pluralistic sensuality, a melancholic state of mind, depressive affect, urban ontology, material rationality, modern and electronic rhythms, vamp accessories and clothing, marginal music-video aesthetics, postmodern editing, and a futuristic perception of time. These preferences are natural orientations that spontaneously manifest themselves on the aesthetic plane of *differential difference*. Consequently, these orientations do not constitute a politics of opposition, but a politics of naturalness. It is the regimes of representation operating around the fate and judgment of consensus that produce the actual opposition and turn it into the ideological principle of their own vital doctrine. The Body After, by contrast, neither positions itself against these regimes nor enters into conflict with them; it simply transcends them through indifference, without paying them any mind. For this reason,

Semyanî does not make these aesthetic and ontological choices in order to attract attention, provoke, or "be different." For attention and interestingness are, at their core, forms of the desire for recognition. The Body After, however, makes no demand for recognition in this regard. It makes these choices solely in the name of the formal form of a natural life. It enacts this through the Kurdî language, its ontic cultural image, and the queer body. Language, image, and body here become ordinary means of existence rather than carriers of a political claim. Through his Body After, Semyanî likewise carries these means both toward the "naturalness of discourse" and reduces them to the "indifference of the body." This naturalness and indifference are not a passive lack of concern; on the contrary, they constitute an active ontological stance that refuses to respond to ideological interpellations. The Body After acts from the present without relying on future laws and norms. It carries, indifferently, the unconcerned gaze of everyday life in its language, body, gestures, and facial expressions; its indifference is precisely for this reason political. To normalize the naturalness of *Kurdî* discourse within everyday life and to naturalize the indifference of the queer body directly corresponds, in the Rancièrian sense, to the logic of political disagreement (*dissensus*). The disagreement here manifests itself not through shouting or conflict, but by silently reorganizing the sensible regime of distribution. The Body After naturally transgresses the sensible boundaries concerning who can speak, which body can be seen, and which language can be regarded as "normal."

The Body After integrates itself into the rhythm of modern life through indifference and moves beyond the judgment of pleasantness. Thus, aesthetic judgment ceases to be a mechanism

of appreciation or rejection and becomes an intrinsic part of ordinariness. At this point, the Body After turns modernist radicalism, the nostalgic image, and the culture of witnessing upside down. Nostalgia is no longer merely a form of feeling directed toward the past, but an anachronistic synthesis and a temporal mixture. The folkloric images of the past (clothing, ritual, symbol) and its melodies (rhythm, tone, emphasis) are neither sanctified nor dramatized here; on the contrary, they are modernized without concern and carried into the future. This act of carrying them forward is not a reflex to "preserve cultural heritage," but an act of producing the ordinariness of the future. Thus, the law of normalization of the future is exhibited, through the Body After, against the representational order of society in the present and the conservative language of the general will. Semyanî Perîzade's law of *dissensus* today is the law of *normalization* of the future. What is still perceived today as "excess," "marginal," and "deviant" is enacted within the ontology of the Body After as ordinary acts of the future. Through this ordinariness, the Body After violates the conservative boundaries of the forms of judgment belonging to the fate of consensus. The Body After prepares us, already in the present, for the natural image of the future through its song rhythms, dances, words, style, and image. This preparation is a depiction of the future normalization and the *snobbish* indifference of natural life. Indifference, oblivion, and normalization operate together on the ontological ground of the Body After. Ultimately, indifference becomes intertwined with oblivion and comes to life through normalization in the Body After. For what is truly normalized is what is forgotten; an existence that no longer requires reminding is one that has become ontologically established. Semyanî's Body After therefore

functions both as a bridge from the present to the future and as an ontological resistance to ideological and cultural forms of oppression. Every linguistic and bodily expression that is carefree, indifferent, and natural becomes a performance that challenges the normative order of the future. In this respect, the Body After is not limited to an ontological condition; it is a performative representation of the social and political future, woven through indifference and grounded in equality.

From this perspective, Rancière considers indifference, specifically in relation to Flaubert's language of writing, as an egalitarian principle and states:

> "In the middle of the nineteenth century, the work of the aesthete Flaubert—the work that 'rests on itself,' the work about nothing—was, precisely because of this indifference, immediately perceived by the defenders of the hierarchical order of the time as a manifesto of 'democracy.' The work that wants nothing, the work without a point of view, the work that conveys no message, the work concerned neither with democracy nor with anti-democracy, is 'egalitarian' precisely through its indifference, which suspends every preference and every hierarchy" (Rancière, 2012, p. 44).

This understanding of egalitarian indifference is also the key to the aesthetic effect produced by the Body After today. For the aesthetic effect produced by the Body After today creates a rupture in given perception and the sensible. The Body After distances the perception and mind of the viewer and listener from pathetic and tragic visual and verbal phenomena. In their place, through the body and music, it opens up new forms of perception, fields of experience, and original paths of thought within the mind and the sensible. In the Althusserian sense, it "forcibly" pierces through the spatial field of the given gaze of the existing fate of

consensus.[42] This forced piercing leads the fate of consensus to become alienated from itself. Alienation accompanies both a democratic opening and an egalitarian ground. The Body After's indifference to the representations of consensus is critical in the name of equality. The ontological image of the Body After is a *Kurdî-queer* image, and this image, through its appearance, pierces through the pastoral world of representation. The pathetic image-scene of traditional image episodes that emerge through the principle of embracing the local in opposition to degeneration catches upon the Body After. Thus, the intellectuals of the fate of consensus always struggle to establish an accord with society through the Body After's ontological *Kurdî-queer* image. For the intellectual world and the vast majority of the social world, pointing to the same act of judgment, make a common cultural demand. This cultural demand, together with the reflex of embracing the tradition that accompanies it, is shaped around a

[42] Louis Althusser discusses the concept of "difficulty" within the epistemology of art. In Althusserian aesthetic terminology, difficulty is fundamentally a structure positioned against what is "given" and is experienced through the artwork's refusal to present itself directly to the viewer. The viewer wants to see and experience the knowledge concealed within the work. This desire to see creates a difficulty, and by experiencing this difficulty, the viewer gains access to knowledge and brings it to light. According to Althusser, art offers something that it can show, make visible, and make perceptible beyond what is given. Art makes something we do not know available to us. Things accepted as "nature" and "natural"—that is, phenomena understood as "things as they are"—are ultimately given ideological realities. The viewer often fails to notice them. Art eliminates the givenness of what is given by marking it as such and accomplishes this within a form of knowledge. In the context of the Body After, this difficulty functions as a means of transcending and rendering visible the consensus and given ways of seeing imposed by regimes of representation, without directly opposing them. As the viewer experiences the performance of the Body After, they develop an awareness of the ontological and cultural conditions of given realities.

claim of degeneration. The common conviction underlying this degenerate claim generally revolves around phenomena such as the Other Body. In this context, the function of this claim is configured through the speculative character of the Other Body's ontological *Kurdî-queer* image. From the perspective of the fate of consensus, the image of the Body After is the antithesis of the old woman holding tobacco in the frame; it is the anti-hero of the narrative. As we noted earlier, what matters from the perspective of the fate of consensus is always the phenomenal effect of the old woman within the frame. Here, a hypocritical and strategic determinism is at work. What actually matters is not the old woman's being a subject, but the ontological and symbolic power of the motifs inscribed upon her skin and limbs, which lend legitimacy to the representational tradition and reinforce its historical origins.

The reason the Body After is not recognized as a subject by the fate of consensus lies in the queer and marginal image it bears within the *Kurdî* body. Neither the old woman nor the Body After is treated as a subject; both are placed within a deterministic framework by consensus, with one designated as the cause and the other as the effect. The tattoos inscribed on the old woman's body are regarded as meaningful and legitimate by the fate of consensus because of the traditional capital she carries. When it comes to the Body After, however, the situation is reversed. First, a scenario is constructed in which the Body After is positioned in conflict with, and even as corrupting, the traditional capital represented by the old woman; in the next step, this construction identifies the Body After with the image of *Baphomet* and crucifies it in the public

sphere.[43] In conclusion, two different images of women are symbolically and deliberately brought into opposition: one is sanctified because she sustains tradition, while the other is excommunicated on the grounds that she is said to degenerate that tradition. This symbolic opposition opens up a deeper field for reading the operation of the representative regime. It is precisely within this context of deeper reading that Roland Barthes is undoubtedly one of those who approaches the concept of "symbol" in a very different way. For him, the symbol is not a "fixed sign that stands in for something" in the classical sense. Barthes does not regard the symbol as natural, universal, or innocent; on the contrary, he considers it within a culturally produced, ideological, and historical order of signification. For Barthes, the fundamental distinction lies in the relation between signifier and signified; yet the symbol does not function to close off this relation, but to naturalize it. Particularly in his book *Mythologies* (*Mitolojiler*), the symbol is that which, through a second-order signification, presents an object or image as though it were "already so." In other words, the symbol is not something that points to meaning so much as something that becomes established by concealing meaning. What is culturally constructed comes to appear as "nature" through the symbol. This is why, for

[43] *Baphomet* is a demonic figure attributed to the Knights Templar by the Catholic Church during their trials in the early fourteenth century, whom they were accused of worshipping. In historical documents, Baphomet emerges as an element of accusation used to legitimize the Knights' indictment for heresy; the figure itself, however, is largely regarded as part of a symbolic and political construction produced during the interrogations. Pierre Klossowski also has a work entitled *Baphomet*. The dossier I wrote on this work was published in *Unlimitedrag* magazine on October 22, 2021, under the title "Off-the-Record Texts with Pierre Klossowski: BAPHOMET." See Tan, "Off-the-Record Texts with Pierre Klossowski: BAPHOMET," *Unlimitedrag*, October 22, 2021.

Barthes, the symbol is the fundamental instrument of myth. When a photograph, a garment, a gesture, or an architectural form becomes symbolic, it is no longer merely itself; it is a form that silently carries a social value, a norm, and a relation of power. The symbol here does not explain or argue, but persuades and merely normalizes.

Barthes also considers the symbol to have a tendency to produce a closed and totalizing meaning. At this point, the symbol effectively nails interpretation in place by disabling the plurality of meaning. What Barthes seeks in texts and images in this regard is not symbolic closure, but the slippage, branching, and deferral of meaning. Therefore, even when analyzing a symbolic code, he does not treat it as a fixed key, but as a structure marked by tension. For Barthes, the symbol is ultimately not an innocent bearer of meaning; rather, it is a mechanism that naturalizes cultural meaning, renders ideology invisible, and often locks meaning into place. In short, Barthes's critique is directed not at the symbol itself, but at the symbol's presentation of itself as nature. In this context, the opposition between the Body After and the old woman constructed by the fate of consensus operates at the level of the "myth" described by Barthes in Mythologies. While the tattooed image of the old woman becomes a mythical signifier that naturalizes a historically and culturally produced meaning, the Body After is coded as deviation, threat, and degeneration. Thus, the fate of consensus first legitimizes the values it represents without opening them up to debate, and then presents them as though they were a natural flow, as though they existed spontaneously. Within this flow, myth assumes a function that, in favor of the representative regime, does not explain meaning but conceals and mystifies it. What is culturally constructed,

meanwhile, appears through the symbol (*Deq*) as nature existing outside. Yet the fate of consensus does not fundamentally attribute value to these images as either feminine beings or a female accumulation. First, it produces the dialectical conditions for bringing the two images into opposition; it then manifests its authoritarian sphere of authority through this dialectic. Nevertheless, the Body After breaks away from the old woman's authentic and naive body through its libidinal orientation. This rupture is a future-oriented conception of being free. The old woman's body, by contrast, returns to its masculine fate, and her real life is concealed. For this reason, the old woman continues her life within a myth that presents her unequal life as a natural life. Ultimately, the Body After most powerfully represents the possibility of producing images that affirm women's difference through women's own accumulated experience.

Semyanî's Body After is fundamentally neither an antithesis nor an anti-hero of masculine authority. Within its own habitat, it is a natural form that manifests itself through its own accumulated experience. This natural flow has the power to transform the integrity of perception, sensation, and meaning constituted by a general masculine authority. The image-language of the Body After is positioned outside geographical tradition. For perspectives, mentalities, and ways of constructing reality transmitted from generation to generation through the most complex levels of language are among the elements that most powerfully reveal the traditional structure of the human being. For this reason, transcending or setting aside tradition is, in most cases, impossible. Even in moments when we believe that we have destroyed tradition, we act within its boundaries and reproduce it through this very destructiveness. The Body After, too, by

remaining within this tradition, opens up alternative spaces through its organic existence. It interrupts the representational photosynthesis of tradition, constructs a new ideal world, and invalidates its cultural norm. Indeed, “representational culture” is the residue of the unrealized and ruined masculine ideals of a civilization. This residue is the remnant of a conservatism that arises from the irregular distribution between anthropology and history and spreads across broad social strata. At this point, “familiar culture” is a mimetic element devoid of the act of thought and based on empirical knowledge. The Body After not only fails to reach an accord with either familiar culture or the structures of representational culture; it also does not enter into their protocols. In essence, consensus or accord is by no means truce or peace. Consensus is the semantic distribution of that which is disregarded within the sensible field and the contract that determines who will remain outside the common sphere. The Body After does not enter the traditional path controlled by consensus; on the contrary, it turns toward the cultural framework considered independent through its own free will and the autonomous consciousness intrinsic to it, establishes its creative act through this orientation, and produces various syntheses. The Body After abruptly excludes traditional images based on the culture of representation and carries the marginal and universal varieties of the world of spectacle into Kurdish music through light, costume, accessories, choreography, objects, symbols, colors, and dance. It builds its progression through the respect, acceptance, and immanence it accords to its own limbs. This is not a defense of the body; it is the acceptance of the body as an existence that does not need to be legitimized.

One of the arguments most frequently invoked by women and Others against the forms of oppression in the social world is formulated through the famous emotional proposition attributed to Milan Kundera: “The place where power wounds you becomes your identity.” Although this proposition may initially appear to carry a radical awareness, at its core it is a literary romanticism laden with political intentionality. This romanticism defines identity by making it dependent on the negative intervention of power. Similarly, the concept of “multitude,” which is popular and frequently invoked both in Post-Marxist discourses and in the jargon of contemporary art, renders bodies under oppression visible by turning them into objects of production in this same vein. The notion of the Body After, however, coincides neither with Kundera’s trauma-centered proposition of identity nor with the fetishism of multitude in Post-Marxist discourse. It is not a sum or plurality of things; rather, it is the sum of the relations that constitute its own plurality, and it is a singular unit of being in its own right. This singularity, moreover, is not a quantitative isolation or personal seclusion, but an ontological intensity. When this ontological intensity is disregarded, the language of artistic production does not, from the outset, carry this politics of teleological negation and recognition. In such a case, it cannot prevent itself from becoming what the French call “vulgar.” For this kind of teleological art severs the body from its concrete existence and reduces it to a vehicle for an abstract discourse. The political propositions so frequently invoked by the Others today serve, rather than addressing the psychological and physical pressures to which the visible and material body is subjected, to circulate an abstract, mystical, and ideological conception of the body. Moreover, as A. F. Whitehead points out, “In other forms of

perception, the body is more pronounced" (Whitehead, 2018, p. 47). This situation does not liberate the body so much as mystify it and render it ineffective. In other words, the body reduced to a political end loses its material reality and becomes an ideological idealism. The Body After, by contrast, rejects this idealist abstraction. Through the form of the body, it directs a direct, overt, and immediate message toward forms of domination, representative regimes of meaning, and the masculine sex, regardless of the distinction between women and men. This message is not a discourse but an existential exhibition of the body. Through the exposure of its own images, the Body After produces short circuits and collisions that disclose the concealed secret. The image here does not represent; it collides, cuts, and shakes. This collision, cutting, and shaking takes place not in the realm of meaning but in the realm of sensation. The Body After discovers the richness of its own harmonic language and establishes a multilayered simultaneity among sound, rhythm, tempo, gesture, and space. This simultaneity produces a new encounter between the power of thought articulated in words and the power of harmonic manifestations that can be perceived only through the senses. For the Body After, the world is the world of instinctive power and autonomous life. The language of sounds is inscribed upon the skin, and a mediation is established between the language of words and the language of gestures. Thus, the body becomes not merely a vehicle, but the constitutive subject of meaning. At this point, the Body After consciously rejects and disregards the idea of sensus communis (common sense) in Kant's terminology. For common sense is not truly common in today's capitalist world; moreover, it knows what it remains silent about in the name of common profit, which bodies, desires, and voices it

excludes, and from which of them it will derive benefit. According to the Body After, the dominant common sense of our time is the hegemonic composition of normative and historically white, male, and heterosexual masculine behavior. Whenever it finds the opportunity, this composition produces Seismic ideology and inflicts violence upon *lubunya* individuals everywhere in the world. Today, when two masculine bodies meet within the same masculine sensibility, there is either a dead body between them or a body that is about to die. Faced with such a picture, the Body After does not wish to be articulated into common sense. It aims to create a new component of sensibility. It establishes, on the same plane, the egalitarian moment of the human discourse that redistributes the sensible world and the body that reshapes it. The Body After redistributes, through its own form, the capacities of sound and the body within the given representational distribution, together with its spatial complexes. As in the discussion developed by Edward S. Casey in his book *Mekânın Kaderi* (*The Fate of Place*), it seeks to remove space from the status of an abstract expanse and to re-relate it to the body, experience, movement, and place. In this way, it establishes the essential visibility of politics and fulfills the presuppositional principle of equality. Here, equality—in accordance with the Rancièrian principle—is not a goal but, on the contrary, a beginning. The Body After comes into contact with the perception of consensus through the modality of a new sensible regime, imposes its own space upon it, and, through this intervention, also reshapes the external concept of time. In this context, in Jacques Derrida's words, "there is no nature, only its effects: naturalization or denaturalization." At this stage, as the Body After makes itself natural, the sensible and natural world of representation spontaneously deteriorates on a differential ground;

its color changes, its tone shifts, and its rhythm deviates. Freedom is defined here through the body; the body, in turn, is shaped by the potential that contains the time after. As Merleau-Ponty points out, our contact with the world is bodily: one perceives through the body, and the body is the subject of perception. “Perception opens the world to me, just as a surgeon opens a body and, through this window that he has opened, notices the organs at work, fully functioning, absorbed in their activities as seen from the side” (Merleau-Ponty, 2023, p. 279). At the center of Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology lies the perception of the embodied subject; however, this entails a radical ontological repositioning that transcends the classical subject–object distinction. Perception no longer functions as a representational activity of the mind directed toward the external world; rather, it is positioned as the primordial mode through which the subject is already situated in the world by means of the body. In this sense, the body is neither an instrument nor an object, but a “living horizon of meaning.” The world opens only through the body and acquires its meaning in this opening. Accordingly, the subject is not a transcendent consciousness observing the world from outside, but a being embedded in the world and existing in reciprocal contact with it. Perception is the dynamic of this reciprocity. While the world becomes visible to the body, the body in turn gives the world an intentional depth. Within this framework, Merleau-Ponty’s thought does not treat perception merely in epistemological terms, but establishes it as an ontological event. The subject perceives only insofar as it is embodied, and exists in the world only insofar as it perceives. Therefore, the body is not merely a biological being in itself, but the fundamental ground of our relation to the world. As Merleau-Ponty indicates, the body is not an instrument that

observes the world from outside; it is a mode of existence situated within the world itself and one that gives it meaning through perception. Perception, in this sense, is bodily situatedness.

Thus, precisely at this point, conditions of freedom—particularly for women—arise as a result of the states of bodily openness created by historical and symbolic days, due to the conditions of "bodily closure" in everyday life. The question of how the body is perceived under these conditions has always appeared to me as an *aporia*.[44] More explicitly, the question of within what kind of perceptual correlation a "closed body"—or, in the Foucauldian sense, a feminine body shaped under masculine control—experiences historical images, and how it can establish a relation with these images in everyday life, has always remained an impasse for me and has continually occupied my thoughts.

Michel Foucault demonstrates that modern power establishes a mechanism that disciplines, regulates, and controls the body. Here, the body is no longer a free field of perception, but a surface upon which norms and techniques of power are inscribed. According to Foucault, biopower makes the body productive while simultaneously restricting it. In short, while Merleau-Ponty places the body at the center as the experiencing subject, Foucault analyzes it through the structures that control the body. When these two approaches (Merleau-Ponty–Foucault) are considered together, the following question emerges: Can a body under

[44] *Aporia*, in philosophy, refers to an intellectual enigma that appears irresolvable or produces an impasse within itself. Occupying an important place in ancient Greek philosophy and poststructuralist thought, aporia also functions as a method. For thinking and writing about an intractable, ambiguous, or perplexing matter aims not so much to resolve it as to keep it open as a question and render it visible within its own tension.

control truly perceive the world? [45] Especially in the context of Eastern societies (where I mean not so much a geographical reduction as a historical-political concentration), it is possible to speak of a form of "closed body" in situations where the body is kept under constant control. Rather than being an open field of perception toward the world in the sense described by Merleau-Ponty, this body turns toward self-preservation and adaptation. Thus, perception becomes not an expanding horizon but a contracting reflex. Yet this closure is not absolute. At certain historical moments and on special days—at thresholds where control is relaxed and spaces of expression are opened, for example at a wedding or festival—the body becomes mobile again. However, this reopening does not directly become free

[45] Here, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Michel Foucault should be positioned as two opposing thinkers. While Merleau-Ponty focuses on phenomenology and the body, Foucault stands out for his thought associated with structuralism and his analyses of power. Nevertheless, both are revolutionary figures in twentieth-century French philosophy who drew attention to the construction of the body, perception, and knowledge. Merleau-Ponty considers the body as "the center of existence in the world"; he conceives of it as an experiential whole that perceives and is integrated with the world. In this context, perception is the basis of knowledge, and the subject is in a direct relation with the world. For Foucault, however, the situation is different. He examines the body as "the target of power strategies," analyzing it as an object disciplined and shaped through institutions such as the prison, school, and hospital. For him, knowledge is not independent of relations of power; what is accepted as "true" is constructed through social discourses. The subject, meanwhile, is a structure continually constituted and reshaped by discursive practices and techniques of power. Consequently, Foucault considers phenomenology excessively "anthropological," or anthropocentric; rejecting the primacy of the subject, he turns toward structural and historical processes.

perception. On the contrary, as the return of what has been repressed, this condition gives rise to two orientations:

1. *Singular-psychological expression*: Rather than establishing a collective ground of perception with the world, the body turns toward a desire for individual visibility. Here, expression is based less on perceiving the world than on the need to "show oneself." The character steps onto the stage; yet this stage is not a shared field of sensibility with the world, but a personal struggle for existence.

2. *Intensification of desire*: Bodily desires that have been suppressed for a long time emerge excessively in moments of freedom. In this situation, the body becomes less a center of perception that gives meaning to the world than a desire-machine attempting to compensate for its lack.

In conclusion, the body under control is not merely suppressed; it also loses or transforms its capacity for perception. Moments of freedom do not automatically produce a liberated perception; on the contrary, they give rise to fragile and often directionless responses that bear the traces of repression. In other words, does the perceptual relation established with historical or everyday images operate, as Merleau-Ponty envisages, through bodily openness and being situated in the world; or, when it is a body disciplined, controlled, and normatively shaped in the sense described by Foucault, is this relation structurally ruptured? These and similar questions always confront us. For the body's openness to the world does not always operate equally; social, cultural, and power relations can narrow this openness, divert its direction, or force it into simulacral forms. For example, in a practice of high historical and symbolic intensity such as Newroz, does this

situation, particularly for women's perception, operate as a direct and natural openness to the world, or does it become a compensatory stage for a repressed corporeality? This is precisely the question that, in the context of Merleau-Ponty, has always aroused a doubt in me concerning Eastern societies. For a subject (woman) whose body is constantly under surveillance, norms, and the gaze in everyday life, the body becomes less an "open horizon toward the world" in the sense envisaged by Merleau-Ponty than a restricted and inwardly closed space. In this case, the existing real atmosphere of *Newroz* becomes, in my view, not the scene of a free perceptual relation with the world, but the stage for the sudden expression of repressed gestures, sounds, and orientations. In this context, the body loses its natural intentionality and becomes a surface of representation: gestures, facial expressions, and discourse no longer appear as movements that open up the meaning of the world, but as intensified and sometimes exaggerated simulations of identity. Thus, perception ceases to be the ontological encounter described by Merleau-Ponty and gives way to the exuberant yet superficial lines of escape of the body in the present moment. Here, neither is the world genuinely perceived nor does the historical referent (for example, the collective memory of *Newroz*) resonate within the body; there is only the temporary visibility of what has been repressed. This situation can also be observed in a wedding atmosphere. Indeed, a similar form of expression can be found in the bodies of lesser-known celebrities who come to the provinces, or of Istanbul-based individuals who take part in an art event in the provinces (for example, a biennial or film festival). The correlation between center and periphery in this situation manifests itself in people's bodies either as a pathological complex of modernity or in

accordance with the impulses of a colonial mentality. More strikingly, in geographies like ours, where modernity is understood merely as a prescription for liberation from a chain of backwardness and is superficially internalized, the frequent failure to understand modern dance and performance art—or even the tendency to regard choreographic uses of the body as comical, strange, or meaningless—is itself a direct consequence of this superficiality. Yet this difficulty of understanding and perceptual unfamiliarity is not peculiar to ordinary viewers; cultural elites undergo a similar experience as well, but they often avoid revealing it—because they cannot bring themselves to acknowledge it. Moreover, in the rent-seeking terrains created by politics in Eastern societies, the body's hunger for desire operates as a natural manifestation of a vital perception. The potentials of the body suppressed in everyday life return, within artistic, ceremonial, and commercial intensities, in a form of excess. Yet this return is not a liberated perception, but a delayed, intensified, and suppressed expression. This expression, for example, brings together the local ethnic garments worn by the subject in a festival setting (*Şal û şepik or Kiras û fistan*) and their bodily behaviors (gestures and facial expressions) within the ephemerality of speech, subsequently fixing them in the ostentatious self-confidence of the psychological expression of an identity. Ultimately, this condition materializes in the character's appearance, which has deviated from naturalness and become artificial. The suppressed voice now rises in the space; the subject offers itself to every gaze as if saying, "I am here with my body." Yet this metaphorical cry is directed not toward the world, but toward being noticed. Thus, the body ceases to be a natural form of perception and evolves toward an ostentatious simulacral order

of an *artefact* personality. By contrast, for a subject relatively free from the experience of bodily closure—for example, an individual living in the context of Western Europe—the difference between everyday life and a festival appears not as an ontological rupture but as a difference in intensity. For the body is already open to the world; the festival does not radicalize this openness, but merely intensifies it. The same intensification applies to modern dance and performance. In other words, the approaches to modern dance and performance at a festival are everyday and ordinary practices. Therefore, perception maintains its continuity in both cases. Eastern societies—not only the Kurds, but also the Turks, Arabs, Persians, and others—not only fail to preserve this continuity but, ultimately, often fail to perceive the world in a Merleau-Pontian sense. Because they do not perceive the world in this way, they also fail to comprehend science, politics, democracy, justice, freedom, fraternity, equality, art, literature, theatre, music, and so on, in this sense, or their understanding of these domains remains at its current level. Consequently, Eastern societies generally perceive the world as a bodily desiring machine. Yet this desire is not a creative desire in the Deleuzian sense; rather, it manifests as a will to consume that expresses the archaic dimension of personality. In this respect, the more the body is subjected to repression and control, the more it is deprived of creative acts and perceptual analysis, and the more it becomes a slave to hunger and lust, perpetually accompanied by a lack of virtuous values.

Precisely at this point, Semyanî Perîzade's figure of the "Body After," which is neither closed nor under control, offers a theoretically interesting exception. This body surrenders neither to the compensatory excess of repression nor to the simulacral excess of identity representations. Its bodily perception does not construct

the present through a psychological anachronism; that is, it does not carry the repressed meanings of the past into the present with a dramatic intensity. On the contrary, it establishes the relation between the body and the world through continuity and does not produce a sharp rupture between everyday elevation and ceremonial intensity. Ultimately, Semyanî Perîzade's body is closer to the "body open to the world" in the sense conceived by Merleau-Ponty. Perception here is neither the eruption of repression nor the theatrical representation of identity. It is the expression of a direct, uninterrupted, and ontological relation with the world. Thus, perception returns to its essential function. That is, it means opening the world and establishing being within that openness. Accordingly, the first psychic acquisitions that leave indelible traces in the imagination arise from the organic functions of the body. The first warm belief is a sensual and bodily peace; the first material images arise from flesh, organs, and the body. These images are dynamic, active, and, surprisingly, connected to "banal" desires. The Body After separates itself from the appearance of the banal desires of representation; meanwhile, the desires of representation for appearance are buried within the Body After. The Body After is registered in presence; it has already bid farewell to absence. It is no longer where it was, nor is it as it was. It is autonomous, and this autonomy is the "after" of what it presents—the person or identity.

The Body After is the most concrete product of individuation according to the norms of instinctual forces. Its concrete form today is the concrete form of the future. Unlike Althusser, "the future" does not "last long" for the Body After. Yet the essence of the matter, that is, perhaps the most fundamental paradoxical argument of this book, is, on the other hand, built upon a

normalization process that extends into a long future. One of the most important indicators of normalization throughout the book has been the question of whether a queer identity and body are recognized within the social sphere as a legitimate, ordinary, and natural form of existence. Normalization does not occur merely as the result of legal regulations or institutional transformations; on the contrary, it comes to life through the acceptance of difference as an ordinary reality within everyday life. As Georges Canguilhem emphasizes in his discussion of the "normal" and the "norm," the normal is not an unchanging and natural measure; it is related to a norm formed within particular conditions of life. For this reason, the fact that a queer body is regarded as outside the norm or abnormal is actually related less to the body itself than to the dominant norm by which it is evaluated. If any identity still needs to be explained, defended, or legitimized, this indicates that the process of normalization has not yet been completed. In this context, Semyanî Perîzade's queer body functioned for us precisely at this point as a litmus test. The aesthetic, cultural, and social responses directed toward Semyanî's body are not merely judgments concerning a particular subject; at the same time, they are also a measure of the level of acceptance and tolerance toward the position of queer existences within social norms. To express this measure on a realistic plane, intolerance toward a queer identity operates according to the same structural logic as the question of the recognition and acceptance of different identities. For this reason, forms of exclusion directed toward any identity, including Kurdish identity, are different manifestations of the same lack of normalization. Unless this problem of simultaneous recognition is resolved, the process of normalization will continue to remain incomplete. To put it more simply, the tolerance not

shown toward a queer identity is likewise not shown toward Kurdish identity. This situation must be understood in this way in the context of the Others. Otherwise, there should be no objection to the intolerance shown toward Kurdish identity either; because these are different manifestations of the same structural intolerance. Unless the two are regarded as equivalent, every form of objection is itself displaced onto a meaningless and invalid ground, and normalization is thereby postponed. Therefore, the queer body in question is, at this stage as well, always an analytical indicator that reveals the boundaries, possibilities, and as-yet-uncrossed thresholds of normalization. The point of departure of the book is the idea that, sooner or later, the queer body will be socially accepted in the future as an ordinary and legitimate form of existence. Yet it is also clear that such a future will not emerge spontaneously and effortlessly. Every process of normalization must first take place in the gazes, languages, and regimes of representation of the present.

The acceptance of the queer body as a natural, ordinary, and legitimate reality is not a matter of the future but, in essence, a matter of the present. Drawing on Leibniz's thought, we might say that this is an idea of an order in which beings that differ from one another can exist harmoniously within their own differences. Thus, what I have tried to do throughout the book was not limited merely to examining an artist, a body, or a form of representation. Rather, I sought to place at the center the question of how a society relates to difference, to what extent it is open to plurality, and how closely it can approach the horizon of normalization. If Semyanî Perîzade's body can now be seen not as an exceptional case but as one of the plural forms of life, then an important threshold toward normalization has been crossed. Conversely, if it still encounters

resistance, exclusion, and demands for legitimation, this demonstrates the magnitude of the distance that remains to be traversed. For while the book points, on the one hand, to the long road that remains to be traveled, on the other hand, it also sought to contribute to shortening this road by making visible the experiences of the queer body, its tense relations with forms of representation, and its social existence. Toward this end, ultimately, it aimed not merely to diagnose the existing situation but also to consider the possibility of another social horizon. For normalization is not the name of a world in which differences have disappeared, but of a world in which differences are no longer regarded as a problem. In this respect, Semyanî Perîzade's body should not be regarded merely as a figure that frames the social conflicts of the present; it should be read as the already embodied form of a future that has not yet fully come into being. Rather than representing the possibility of the future, her body reveals the concrete appearance of the future here and now. As Derrida says of Blanchot: "Blanchot speaks to us of the future!" Semyanî Perîzade's *Body After* does precisely this: it speaks to us of the future, in all its colorful individuality, dancing and singing. This address is not a promise, but the material reverberation of an ontology that has already come into being.

Finally, I had thought of ending with a few words about myself, or rather, about my approach to music. However, when I read Søren Kierkegaard's self-critique of his own perspective on music, I realized that these lines directly resonate with me as well. Therefore, rather than saying anything further about myself, I prefer to end with these words, which also speak for me: "And although I am well aware that music is an art that requires a great deal of experience in order to form a sound judgment about it, I

still console myself with the same paradox as I often did in the past: One can also gain a kind of experience through ignorance and intuition" (Kierkegaard, 2020, p. 35).

CHAPTER TWO

The Body After, Semyanî Perîzade – Interview

Dear Semyanî, Rather than adhering to a conventional interview format, I intend to structure our questions in two parts, in an extended form, on a shared aesthetic ground where space, music, and philosophy intersect. In fact, we might think of this less as a series of one-sided, formulaic questions and answers than as a set of long, reciprocal dialogues that deepen as they unfold. Within this framework, I would like to focus particularly on the place of music. I will attempt to situate the aesthetic significance of music as something that is not merely a cultural or folkloric form, but also has a musical dimension extending toward the universal system of mechanical instrumental arrangements inherent in an embodied ontology. Yet the principal aim here is not simply to discuss your music, but to elucidate, together with you and starting from your music, a general logos of music. In other words, whether or not you do the things we discuss in your own music will by no means serve as a criterion for this interview. What we are seeking, then, is to speak about music and Kurdish music on a more conceptual level—perhaps even to address things that have never been discussed. For it is precisely this conceptual lack that causes certain social positions within the aesthetic field to remain perpetually trapped in an impasse.

The fundamental problem that the other faces in the aesthetic field—particularly subjects belonging to the lower and middle classes—is one that invariably points to a theoretical and practical paradox from which it is difficult to escape. This paradox lies in the position of being caught between the arguments of the

philosopher Kant, who turns aesthetics into a system of judgment, and those of the sociologist Bourdieu, who develops a hypothesis that opposes the premises of this system; indeed, it constitutes a site of impasse. Kant seeks to distinguish the aesthetic pleasure arising from a judgment of beauty from sensory pleasure, such as that derived from appreciating the taste of a wine in Mardin. Bourdieu, by contrast, argues that works of art and wines are judged according to the same logic of taste. He describes these general tastes as the reverse side of aversions and, in turn, identifies these aversions with the tastes of the lower classes. For Kant, aesthetic taste is grounded in a subjective feeling of pleasure arising from the way an object appears pleasing; however, this pleasure does not remain merely an individual feeling but simultaneously lays claim to universal validity. Aesthetic judgment therefore entails a demand for necessity, presupposing that it ought to be shared by everyone. In Kantian aesthetics, the feeling of pleasure is not subsumed under any concept, general principle, or rule, since otherwise the universal validity of the beautiful could not be established. In this respect, Kant's notion of the beautiful derives its universality prior to experience and constitutes itself as a form of disinterested pleasure.

For Bourdieu, by contrast, there is no universal matrix of taste; taste is produced within the structure of social hierarchies, takes its place there, and acquires meaning there. He brings the dominant and the dominated into opposition solely through cultural differences in the conditions under which symbolic capital is put into circulation. It is precisely at this point that, by virtue of the conditions of our own existence, we find ourselves at the very center of this conflict. Owing to our political (*Kurdî*) appearance, we are able, on the one hand, to analyze from an intellectual

standpoint the distribution of the sensible in the Kantian sense—that is, the "egalitarian" defense of the sensible or of common sense (*sensus communis*)—while, on the other hand, our social class places us within the lower-middle strata of Bourdieusian cultural capital. Consequently, a paradoxical distinction emerges for us: even when we recognize the artistic value and aesthetic claims of a film or a song, we may derive no pleasure from it; we may even choose not to watch or listen to it. Conversely, we may derive far greater pleasure from an engaged, popular, *kitsch*, or mediocre film or song. Moreover, this pleasure is experienced with full awareness of its mediocrity. It follows, then, that taking pleasure in something does not mean endorsing its aesthetic value; knowing and liking do not operate on the same plane. Our enjoyment of the mediocre directly corresponds to Bourdieu's hypothesis of capital. Yet our ability to engage, with aesthetic attentiveness, with the tonal system of music or the cinematographic criteria of film brings us closer to a Kantian plane, at the very least allowing us to occupy an epistemological position within the terrain of contemporary aesthetic judgment. According to Bourdieu's hypothesis, we cannot possess this kind of sharp class *distinction* and its opposite at the same time, since judgments of taste are always grounded in social and class stratifications. Following this Bourdieusian logic, if we can interpret an Abstract Expressionist painting—for example, Rothko's *Orange, Red, Yellow* (1961)—within an almost flawless aesthetic framework, we would be considered members of an upper class endowed with a high degree of cultural capital.

The picture presented by these two thinkers, however, does not amount to a simple opposition for us. The real issue is that the material set of intersections that makes this opposition possible is

itself embodied in our own position. To put it more plainly, the very ground on which Kant's and Bourdieu's arguments intersect is our own concrete existence. Accordingly, the central axis of this interview—in other words, the theoretical context of its questions, or the point at which the interview's lines of inquiry converge—will be our existence as the material and literal reality of this intersection. In short, our discussing Wagner does not mean that we prefer him as a form of capital. Knowing him and listening to him belong to two distinct technical and theoretical postulates: the epistemological form of knowledge, on the one hand, and the configurations of pleasure and taste, on the other, operate on different planes. Let us put this more clearly and simply: discussing David Lynch's cinema, for instance, does not mean that we like his films or derive pleasure from watching them. Analyzing the allegories in his cinema is not the same as watching his films straight through with enjoyment as an ordinary viewer. Likewise, having an in-depth knowledge of Mick Jagger's music is not the same as listening to it superficially. The reason I have written all this is that, before beginning the interview, I need to clarify certain points in response to possible a priori or presuppositional criticisms that might be directed at its theoretical framework.



Mark Rothko, *Orange, Red, Yellow*, 1961, oil on canvas, 236.2 × 206.4 cm. © Christie's Images Limited

We can now return to the interview itself. I will conceive Part I of the interview as a "symptomatic" reading that brings space and music together within an interdisciplinary field and also encompasses the body. In Part II, I will seek to frame my questions around "sound, word, and time," placing your works at the center. With your permission, I would now like to begin with the first question.

Part I: Music, Space, Body

FATİH TAN— What makes music subjective is the interactive action of the body, which produces a perceptible emotional atmosphere by using a concrete instrument and, in parallel, establishing the present moment together with the audience. The body both plays (uses) the instrument and guides it through words. The synchronized harmony between the movement of the fingers and the sound takes on a contrast that shapes the score. Music must be situated on a plane integrated with the space in which it emerges—that is, the present-day stage—in a form perceptible to the senses. In the accents, low registers, and interruptions of the diaphragm, meanwhile, the word is established within a contemporary atmosphere by being positioned against the historicity of words already spoken. This fundamental distinction in music consists of contrasts and intermediate harmonic relations. For its qualitative determination, music reaches back toward the sound of the past. Yet this cannot be fully articulated by the sound in which it currently exists. Schopenhauer argues that music ultimately and always expresses not the events of life, but their essence. In this respect, differences between events do not affect music. If this music must—or seeks to—completely detach itself from the authenticity of this past form of appearance, it must then incorporate the present utterance and create an expression peculiar to its own content. For a text must be made necessary to the present space of being if music is to remain firmly grounded in originality and particularity. Otherwise, the sublime and spiritualist quality of the instrument comes to dominate the quantitative categories of other lives, reducing them to a mediocre mode of perception. The musician must therefore construct their

world through concrete reality rather than retreating into an abstract interiority, and position the word as the medium that carries this reality. The musician must always think of themselves in conjunction with sound and incorporate the word into the existence of melody. In this context, the word is not a secondary accompaniment in music, but a fundamental threshold at which sensation comes into contact with the social bond. As Rancière also states: “Music makes perceptible what the word vainly strives to render visible—the inexpressible dimension of sensation, the force of unconscious life. For this reason, music must realize itself in a plastic form and create an appropriate visibility” (Rancière, 2018, p. 167). The plastic form Rancière emphasizes is the attainment of a spatial dimension, through breath, by harmony joined with words. By determining the linear articulation of rhythms and the cyclical measures of notes, the musician establishes everyday communication with the established social order through words. In a sense, the musician captures the dimensions of subjective sensation and the social bond through this momentum. Indeed, according to Feuerbach, words are by no means weaker or less soulful than the sounds in music. He argues that sounds are considered deeper and richer than words because they seem to have more to say than words and are therefore surrounded by an illusion. Music, then, is not merely a reactive art concerned with the harmony of sounds; it is an immediate expression of the world that precedes all forms of representation.

With all this in mind, I would like to ask you the following: yes, music is certainly a monologue of emotion, but the language that conveys these emotions also needs a verbal dimension, a dialogue. Ultimately, words constitute a dialogue with the listener. As Derrida also suggests indirectly, “there is no music before

language.” When you provide this verbal expression of language—that is, when you write the “words” for your songs—what do you place at the center in order to shape a mode of expression with a distinct resonance? Or, to put it more directly, what are the fundamental points that underpin your lyrics? A second question: in your songs, do the words determine the melody, or do you find the words best suited to the melody?



Selfie, İstanbul, 2019

SEMYANÎ PERÎZADE— Reading your text, the emphasis you placed on the bodily and verbal roots of music led me to rethink some things I have experienced intuitively for years. So I would like to answer your question from within my own life and my relationship with music. For me, the word is not a narrative on its own; more often it is the search for a form for a feeling whose nature I have not yet fully grasped. Sometimes this feeling becomes distinct through a word, and sometimes it is felt in the body before any word arrives. It emerges as a tightness in my chest, a change in my breath, or at times an inner movement whose cause I cannot immediately understand. The word comes after all of this, and sometimes it transforms the feeling itself. For this reason, I cannot place the relationship between word and melody in a strict order of priority. Still, in my process of making, the word often appears first, and the melody begins to take shape together with the feeling that word carries. To grow up in a Kurdish family, under intense pressure and an inner noise of its own that never subsided, within the silencing mechanisms of men as authority figures… We were eleven siblings, and I was one of the youngest. The house was not actually silent; on the contrary, there was constant noise: most often the voice of my father and the men, at times the weight of the much older women… But amid all that crowd and noise, my voice was not heard. My own feeling, my word, my body were always swallowed up inside stories more dominant than mine. This invisibility turned into silence, sometimes as neglect and sometimes as emotional, psychological or economic abuse. This experience nurtured two things in me at once: a desire to be seen and an inner resistance to the suppression of my existence. But over time I also realized something else: a person is not silenced only by others; sometimes they forget how

to hear their own voice. It can take a long time to understand what you feel, what you want, even what you object to. Because when you are constantly exposed to the voices of others, a distance opens up between you and your own voice. This feeling was not limited to invisibility within the family. Being part of a community that has historically gone unheard in terms of language, culture, society and gender identity turned the sense of invisibility into a multilayered experience. As a Kurd, a woman and a queer subject, I think the states of being silenced that I have lived through are not independent of one another. Although they appeared in different forms at different periods of my life, they most often intertwined and shaped my existence and my relationship with the world. This is why the words I write are grounded not only in the events I have lived through but also in how I experienced myself in the face of those events. There is a fissure between the unheard voice of my childhood and the voice of my adulthood that makes room for itself. My words are always born from within that fissure. Perhaps writing songs is less about saying today what I could not say in the past, and more about trying to understand why I could not say it and what that has changed in me. The tension between the invisibility of childhood and the resisting voice of adulthood becomes the strongest vein feeding the emotional axis of my songs. What I place at the center when writing lyrics is not only "my story" but the trace that story has left in me. Pain, loss, loneliness, migration, womanhood, fragility, resistance… I do not want to treat any of these merely as themes. Because what we live through is not made up only of events we later talk about. Sometimes an event ends, but the feeling it created can resurface years later at a moment we least expect. Nor does it return in the same form; it changes by meeting other things we have lived

through and takes on other meanings. For me, memory works somewhat like this. The past is not a fixed place that I have left behind and can look back on whenever I wish. It is something that still affects my present feelings, my relationships and the way I perceive myself. For this reason, I have no aim of retelling the past as it was in the words I write. Rather, I trace the feelings carried from the past into the present, which even I sometimes struggle to make sense of. I try to understand why one word touches me more than another, why I cannot complete certain sentences, or why, years later, I give the same feeling a different meaning. The traces that the past, the present and even the imagination of tomorrow leave in my body become words, voice and melody, and make up my songs. What matters to me here is that what has been lived should not turn into merely an aesthetic narrative. Because expressing pain, loss or repression in a beautiful sentence is not the same as truly understanding them. Sometimes words reveal the experience we have lived, and sometimes they cover it over. So it is not enough for me that a line I write merely sounds beautiful. I care that it finds a correspondence in me, and that I do not feel alienated from myself when I sing it. Of course, not every song has to tell of an event I have directly lived. Experiences I have imagined, witnessed, or encountered in other people's lives also find their way into what I write. But all of this needs to find a correspondence in my own world. My relationship with melody develops somewhat from here as well. Sometimes a sentence has its own rhythm, and as I repeat it, I begin to feel where the melody wants to go. In my experience, the inner rhythm of a word calls the melody, and the melody makes the traces in my body visible. But this does not always happen in the same way. Sometimes, even though I cannot find any words, a sound wanders inside me.

This sound, which arises while I walk, cry, dance, or simply hum to myself, can later find its words. So melody does not always follow the word. Sometimes it carries a feeling the word cannot express, and sometimes it changes the meaning of a sentence I have written. The thing I say at the beginning and the thing that emerges at the end of the song can even be quite different from each other. For this reason, I do not establish a one-way relationship between word and melody. Although I mostly start from the word, I value the melody's own possibilities. Because I feel that some feelings narrow when expressed in words and gain a different depth when expressed through sound. At times, stretching out a word, falling silent at the end of a sentence, or allowing my voice to change involuntarily can bring out a meaning different from that of the words I wrote. This makes me think that music does not merely convey what we want to say, but can also show us things at moments when we do not yet fully know what we want to say. My creative process usually happens at night. The darkness erases the gaze from outside and returns me to my body. During the day, whether I am aware of it or not, I carry other people's gazes, expectations and voices. At night, the influence of all this lessens somewhat. A time opens up in which I can meet myself more directly and allow the feelings I postponed during the day to surface. The parts within me, the wounded one, the fragile one, the strong one, the resisting one and the child, blend into one another during those hours. Sometimes they contradict each other, and sometimes they reveal things they have long hidden from one another. A significant part of my songs is born from these encounters. My relationship with the instrument is still new. But my relationship with music has never developed solely through being able to play an instrument. For a long time, I sought a form

of expression by observing my own voice and my body's responses. I began to notice where my breath struggles, in which word my voice changes, and which feeling I pull back from when I sing it. I do not always do this consciously. Sometimes, when I listen to a recording afterward, I come across a feeling I did not notice while singing the song. This makes me think that my voice is not merely a tool I control, and that at times it also carries things I do not yet understand.



Cihangir, İstanbul. © Zeynik

Alongside all this, I also do not want my music to remain confined to my own inner world. Because I know that many experiences we think of as personal are not independent of social conditions. A woman learning to stay silent, a child hesitating to express their own feeling, or a person feeling compelled to hide their language and identity are not merely individual stories.

Behind them lie relations extending from the family to society, historical conditions and forms of power. In my songs, I do not want to explain all of this directly or to make the listener accept a particular idea. But when I tell my own experience, I do not want to lose the bond it forms with other lives. At this point, I also value the relationship established with the listener. I do not think that the feeling I carry while writing a song must be the same as what the person listening to it feels. In fact, one of the most striking aspects of music is that a sentence that is deeply personal to me sometimes finds a correspondence in someone else's life that I had never imagined. Because the moment it is spoken, the word to some extent ceases to belong only to the person who wrote it. It meets the listener's memory, their losses, their desires and their own silences. For me, dialogue begins somewhat here. Without fully knowing one another's experience, we can meet in the same song from different places. In the end, I can say that what forms the foundation of my songs is the relationship I try to build with my own voice. This relationship is not independent of my childhood, my identity, the losses I have lived through, the pressures I have faced, and the resistance I have developed in spite of all of it. But I do not see music merely as a result of these either. Because when I write a song, sometimes I make new sense of something I lived in the past, and sometimes I come across a truth about myself that I had not noticed before. The word is often my starting point; but when the melody emerges, it can change the limits of the word. What makes the relationship between the two valuable is precisely this mutual transformation. When I make music, I am not only trying to tell about myself. I am also learning to hear my own voice, how far that voice can go, and where it falls silent. This is what brings music into being for me: making room for the body,

turning feeling into word, word into body, body into voice. And making myself audible again each time.

F. T.— Music requires not only sound but also words in order to pass symbolically from its point of origin to the most extreme sensation of another subject. This is because sound, taken on its own, is not tied to any specific semantic reference; it acquires direction only when it comes into contact with words. Sound is determined by numerical and mathematical relations and, through sensation, also generates primordial rhythms in the body. Indeed, when music is considered in terms of the octave, the cosmos of the soul, and its harmony within the Pythagorean tradition, it automatically becomes part of a mathematical operation. Henri Lefebvre offers a similar perspective when he writes: "In music everything is number and quantity (intervals, rhythms, timbres); everything is lyricism, ecstasy, or dream. Everything is vital, vitality, and sensibility; in music everything is analysis, precision, stability. Only the greatest composers have known how to bring these two 'aspects' together. Number: Everything is counted, measured" (Lefebvre, 2007, p. 31). From this perspective, while music operates within a numerical and mathematical order, it acquires a historical and political dimension through words. A tension emerges between the sublime, spiritual content of the instrument in music and the quantities of cultural relations that become articulated with this content on different foundations. This tension is an antagonism between abstract form and the quantities of lived experience. In other words, it is the vital quantities of low culture that introduce imperfection into the perfection of the instrument, a product of high culture, and the compositions it produces. Consequently, a spatial construct comes into play that

lifts the veil of analogy covering these quantities, merges with the instrument, and creates forms by extending itself into a new body, while allowing itself to become lost within these forms. Ultimately, this construct is the identity-less word of the breath immanent to the body, which intersects with the instrument simultaneously. The identity-less word both reveals its own vital quantity and distorts the mechanical nature of the instrument through its own breath. At this point, the identity-less breath of Kurdish music exists within a condition of placelessness. Architecture and space ultimately contain numerical data. Music itself, too, consists of compositions assembled according to mathematical measures. Although the subject [Kurdish] whose breath is embodied possesses the numerical arithmetic of the instrument and space, they cannot fully integrate into the everyday order of the ontic, in the Heideggerian sense, because of the historical and political burden carried by their breath. Yet the paradox is that this transformation of breath into words (Kurdish) deconstructs both the instrument and the spatial mathematics determined by power. In a sense, Kurdish thereby establishes its own arithmetic, social order, and political passage. It opens up a new field of existence for itself. This verbal dimension of Kurdish as it turns toward the instrument—in other words, the anonymous breath of the embodied subject—reconfigures non-physical space. Through its own language, it gives this space the formal shape of a new life and, undoubtedly, determines its language within the political manifestation of an aesthetic form. From this perspective, as you transform your own breath, as a body, into a note, a tonality, an accent, and ultimately a word, do you see your own language as the musical distortion that renders imperfection out of perfection, or do you think that your language completes this

process in reverse? If so, within what kind of narrative framework do you understand the compositions of your musical production as its material and social dimensions? And do you think that your language, together with the words, rhythms, melodies, and harmonies immanent to it, creates the ontological design of a new, non-physical space and a new queer body?

Authoritarian discourse excludes the excluded body once again within spaces of representation; indeed, by imposing the idea that certain bodies must be excluded, it also subjects the spaces they inhabit to exclusion. This reminds me of the "blind fields" of certain spaces that Henri Lefebvre discusses in his book *Kentsel Devrim* (*The Urban Revolution*). In other words, the generalized projects of rationality pursued by authority literally empty out whatever lies before them. Before destroying through productivity, they destroy through thought and thereby create the blind field. The strategy of authority is a strategy that isolates the body and space within "blind fields." How do you position this strategic perception in relation to the questions above?



Diyarbakır, 2022. © Mirad Bayram

S. P.— I never see Kurdish as a flaw of music. On the contrary, I experience it as a possibility that the dominant aesthetic understanding suppresses in order to protect its own limits. In my practice, the breath of the language does not disrupt the

mathematics of music. On the contrary, it reveals by which aesthetic criteria this mathematical order has been turned into a norm that keeps some bodies inside and leaves others outside. For this reason, what I do is not incongruity. At most, it is exposure. But this exposure is also a conscious intervention aimed at how that order operates. The breath of Kurdish is not without measure. It simply operates with a measure that the dominant aesthetic regime does not recognize, and at times refuses to recognize. This measure rests on the body, on the language's own rhythm and on the historical experience it carries. What it threatens is not the mathematical structure of music, but the way a particular musical order presents itself as a universal standard of perfection. Because perfection is not always an innocent aesthetic ideal. At times it turns into a selective mechanism that determines who can remain on stage and who will be deemed "broken," "excessive" or "wrong." I consciously sabotage this mechanism in my music. This is not a mistake. It is an ethical and aesthetic choice. This is why, in a contemporary context, producing in Kurdish is labeled "cultural degeneration" in some circles, and is even cast as witchcraft. I do not think this reflex operates only to frighten or stop me. Rather, I see an effort to re-fortify a shaken regime of representation. The real discomfort lies beyond language. It lies in the possibility that the forms of representation recognized by authority may become invalid. What is being protected is not tradition itself, but its hardened form. I am not demolishing tradition. I am taking it out of this display window. I am carrying it to a place where it can breathe again and change. Nothing that does not breathe is sacred to me. In the relationship between voice, word, body and space, I do not establish a center. I disperse the center itself. I reject a hierarchy in which the word is superior to

the body, the body to the voice, and the voice to the visual language. Composing, building the lyrics, performing and designing the visual field are not independent processes for me. They are experiences that change one another's direction. Sometimes the inner rhythm of a word calls the melody. Sometimes the movement of my body changes the form of the voice. And sometimes the sound that emerges carries what I originally wanted to say somewhere else. For me, music is not about placing one of these relations at the center. It is about making the boundaries between them permeable. Deconstruction is not an intellectual gesture for me. It is the necessity of dispersing what cannot be lived. If the mathematics of music, the arithmetic of space and the limits of language have been turned into norms founded on the existence of particular bodies, then in my practice that structure encounters its own contradictions. The breath of Kurdish does not merely look for a place for itself within these orders. It also reveals the assumptions on which they are built. The point is not to be accepted into a limited space offered by the existing order. It is to question for whom that space was built and through which exclusions. The breath of Kurdish is not content with transforming these orders only from within. It also dislodges the claim that they are immutable and universal. Besides, these orders were never built for everyone in the first place. My music builds a non-physical space. But this is not a space detached from the material world. Its boundaries are determined not by walls, but by voice, breath, the memory the body carries, and relations formed with other bodies. The historical burden of the body, the pressures the language has been subjected to, and the conditions under which a voice can be heard or silenced all take part in the founding of this space. This space

does not exist because it is inclusive. It comes into being because it is oriented toward not being selective. A place where queer, excluded, and norm-deviant bodies can find shelter through sound. But here, to find shelter does not mean settling into a new identity or submitting to the rules of another belonging. Because when I make room for a body, I do not want to confine it again within a fixed definition. What matters to me is that the body can exist without having to explain or legitimize itself.

I also think about Lefebvre's notion of the blind field here. Bodies that authority does not see, or refuses to see, are not excluded only from physical spaces. Their experiences, languages and ways of existing are also left outside the fields of representation deemed legitimate. This blindness is not merely a state of not seeing. It is the result of an order that determines what can be seen and thought. But being made invisible does not mean not existing. For me, music is not a field of compromise that covers over this exclusion. It is one of the ways of making audible how it is produced and of forming other relations. Sound does not merely enter the space defined by authority. It also opens that space's boundaries to debate. Thus the blind field becomes a threshold where other possibilities of existence that the current order cannot see begin to appear. This is why I do not see my music merely as a form of representation. It is a practice of existing, formed as the historical, cultural and emotional experience my body carries turns into word, sound and rhythm. The material ground of this practice is my body, my language, my breath and the social conditions that make my production possible or limit it. Its social dimension emerges in the encounter of all this with other bodies. A song may be born in my body, but it is not completed there. It gains meaning anew when it reaches someone

else's perception and encounters their experience. In this encounter, neither my body nor the listener's body has to remain as it was at the beginning. This is where I see the possibility music opens: not in re-representing a predetermined identity, but in creating a space where bodies can experience themselves otherwise. If all of this is seen as a flaw, I am not repairing that flaw. Because the problem is not in the flaw. It is in the very claim to perfection. I do not want merely to be incorporated into the game. I pursue the possibilities that invalidate the way the game is set up. Because this game cannot be rebuilt without taking into account the bodies it has excluded. For this reason, music for me is not merely an aesthetic production. It is a material and sensible search for living otherwise. One cannot live otherwise.

F. T.— Wagner argues that the body is the only place where music and space can converge. In his view, the body has the capacity to combine singing with the duration of music and its spatial extension in a concrete way, and this combination also constitutes a space of reconciliation between the language of sounds and the language of words and gestures. Music is, on the one hand, the reproduction of an immutable order and, on the other, a state of trance that establishes a connection between a divine matrix and human sensation. Music works to shape the world of an implicit universal spirit (soul), which remains invisible yet somehow makes its voice heard to us, and to transform it into a concrete, living body. Nicolai Hartmann writes, "Music does not imitate a form related to an object; it directly conveys the fundamental essence, the 'will of the world,' into sensory expression" (Hartmann, 2024, p. 64). What many philosophers of music—particularly German thinkers—share is the view that the essence

of the world finds expression through sequences of sensation. Music reveals the coexistence of pleasure and pain directed toward the most hidden dimensions of human life. Its effect on the deepest nature of the human being is powerful. In essence, this revelation arises from the union of the human body and the flesh of the world through the knowledge of nature.

Returning to Wagner, his principal revolution in music did not lie in discovering a new way of making music, but in proposing a new idea of art and music. This idea corresponds to an aesthetic conception that, rather than producing representation, defers the threshold that makes representation possible. In other words, Wagner's idea seeks to disclose the immediate presence of the primordial state without directing the world's existing manifestation toward any form of representation. For this manifestation of the world in Wagner is, at the same time and in an ambivalent way, bound up with the collective life of a people. It is exceedingly difficult to articulate the collective life of a people without tying it to an authentic representation. In the 1960s, John Cage and the Judson Dance Theater succeeded in distorting existing traditional representation through their experimental and avant-garde interventions; however, this rupture did not become a lasting aesthetic regime. The relationship between representation and a form of life can be established not only through an avant-garde gesture of destruction but also through a constitutive imaginative act. In Wagner's music, too, a form of new life is conceived by drawing on the liberating force of the mythologies associated with the language formed by sounds. From this perspective, we see that the musical representation of the Kurdish people consists of the sum of the dominant contents of legends and mythologies associated solely with "breath—respiration—sound."

Moreover, the relationship with instruments is of relatively recent origin. The archaic evolution of anatomy, or the body's physiological breath, into respiration, respiration into sound, sound into notes, notes into melody, and melody into *maqam* culminates in *dengbêj* performance, whose roots reach far back into antiquity and which remains the most powerful representational reference in Kurdish music today. This position (*maqam*) of the *dengbêj* establishes not merely a musical form but an ontological stage on which the body becomes directly visible. Consequently, *dengbêj* performance, as an almost hegemonic and dominant school, determines the form of ethnomusicology in every respect. The hybrid content circulating on social platforms—which indirectly presents manifestations of past social and political events through the particular compositions of alternative and hybrid arrangements, especially those associated with Şakiro in recent times—is reproduced within a new visual-cultural consensus rather than transforming the mode of appearance of this representational structure. The position (*maqam*) of the *dengbêj*, however, grasps its ontic essence through the actual realization of a phenomenological orientation: that is, through the necessary transformation of the "listener's ear" into the "spectator's eye," through seeing what is sung or heard, and through the living enactment of the moment of seeing. To the extent that the listener can grasp literal seeing grounded in hearing, that is, the spatial presence of the *dengbêj's* body, the active rhythm of the hands, and the gestures and facial expressions that accompany the breath, they approach the ontic essence of this position (*maqam*). At this threshold, the moment of seeing becomes a metaphysical stage, where the primordial nakedness of the body confronts the rawest appearance of sound and gesture. For this reason, *dengbêj*

performance is ultimately not an allegory of hearing but an allegory of seeing. Indeed, the invention of the instrument and today's popular remixes cover over, in one way or another, the naked manifestation of this entire bodily ontology. The listener's orientation toward the *dengbêj*—the moment when consciousness grounded in vision confronts its object—is one aspect of the theatrical perception of the essence of the world. It is the first melodramatic discovery of the breath. With this in mind, I would like to ask: How do you define the historical episode of representation in Kurdish music, and how do you assess the influence of this mode of representation on musical production today?



Beyoğlu, İstanbul, 2022. © Zeynik

S. P.— It is possible to approach the question of the representation of Kurdish music as a problem of space. But this space is not a place as we know it. It is not an architectural or geographical area either. It is something that passes through the body, opens with breath, and is often left unfinished. Music here does not fill a void. It produces space by passing through bodily time. This is why Kurdish music often does not feel to me like merely a form of representation. It seems like something that makes it possible to remain inside a lived state. Apparently Wagner thought of the body as a threshold between music and space. When I read this, the following came to mind: breath should not merely carry sound. It should flow like the temporary surface of bodily memory, of what has been repressed, of what has not yet come into language. But in the historical experience of Kurdish music, this threshold is not at all like a field of reconciliation. It is more like interruption, rupture, discontinuity. The breath does not flow in an orderly way. It passes with difficulty, strained by the burdens the body carries. This is also where I part ways with Wagner's idea of wholeness. Because the body does not always merge with music. Sometimes the opposite happens. It carries experiences that cannot be integrated, that remain unfinished, that resist completing themselves. *Dengbêj* practice seems important to me at precisely this point. I do not see it as the representation of a tradition. I think of it as a passage that still keeps alive the relationship that historical ruptures, losses and traumatic experiences have with the body and with time. A performance in which the body is not reduced to the stage. In the *dengbêj*, the body is not a tool that represents music. Music comes into being by passing through the body. The moments when the breath breaks, the bodily pauses, the gesture interrupting the word, the facial expressions joining the

rhythm… These do not always complete the meaning of the voice. Sometimes they deliberately leave it open. I do not think this is a lack. It is an openness where representation strikes against its own limit. In *dengbêj* practice, the body does not merely make what is narrated visible. It also carries an experience that does not fit inside the narrative. This is why listening alone is not enough. One needs to look as well. *Dengbêj* practice goes beyond being an art of hearing. It creates a state of seeing through the nakedness of the body. But seeing does not replace hearing. The two extend each other. The body ceases to be the stage of music and becomes music itself. This is an almost performative togetherness with the listeners. Sometimes it makes the most intense moments of the performance possible, and sometimes it gives rise to long, unplanned silences. The state of letting oneself go within the feeling… I have not seen this bodily sharing only in *dengbêj* practice. I have encountered it in other places too. In the film *Peşk* (*Scattering*), in scenes with almost no dialogue, I experienced something similar.



Peşk, still from the film – 1. Directed by Volkan Uludağ, 2019, 20:47.



Peşk – 2.



Peşk -3.

With Volkan Uludağ, whose closeness to the silence in Béla Tarr's *A Torinói ló* (*The Turin Horse*) I know well, we tried in that process to look rather than to speak. To remain inside that state. Long stretches of time in which the pain the body carries could not be hidden… A field was opening in which looking came before listening. Keeping silent amid the noise of the set, the gazes, the expectation to speak was hard. But in that very silence, whatever the body could not hide came to the surface. Sometimes this stance also brought anger. A person wants a place within their feelings. An untouchable space, a right to silence. When this right is granted, even in complete silence the body can show its own truth. Perhaps this is the most important aspect of silence: being able to exist within an experience without having to explain everything. As in Virginia Woolf, here too time does not run straight. The past

does not close; it seeps into the present. Trauma sometimes works this way as well. It does not always settle into a linear narrative. It does not remain in the past as a finished event. It seeps into the present through repetitions, interruptions and bodily traces. This is why *dengbêj* practice does not merely represent trauma. In some performances, it also makes audible and visible the fragile relationship trauma has with time. Repetition, pauses and bodily excess are not merely aesthetic choices. They concern the body's historical experience, the interrupted structure of memory, and the fact that a narrative can never be fully completed. *Dengbêj* practice does not produce, for me, a form that fixes the essence of the world. It keeps me in constant contact with the experience that we take to be that essence and that no representation can ever fully exhaust. I also think about the historical representation of Kurdish music in the relationship between this continuity and its ruptures. The structure of *dengbêj* practice, shaped within oral transmission, has changed over time. Radio, cassettes, new audiences formed through migration, and now digital platforms… These changed the relationship that voice forms with the body and with the listener. But I do not see this merely as the corruption of an authentic tradition. While recording technologies pushed the bodily and social context of the performance into the background, they also allowed voices once heard only in limited circles to reach other places and other generations. The issue is not that the tradition was once pure and then corrupted. It is what experiences each new form of representation carries, which it makes visible, and which it leaves behind. Today, the hardening of *dengbêj* practice through sanctification and its softening in digital circulation seem to me two faces of the same risk: the possibility of the body's withdrawal. When representation takes the place of bodily

experience, the body can fade. And when the body fades, music can lose its living contact with collective memory. But not every recording or arrangement does this. Sometimes technical intervention covers the voice, and sometimes it reveals a detail that was not heard before. What is decisive is not how the voice is altered, but how this alteration relates to the historical and emotional traces the body carries.



A still from Béla Tarr's film *A Torinói ló* (*The Turin Horse*), 2011.

Against this kind of sterilization, I place Billie Holiday's late recordings. The voice is no longer "beautiful" in the sense we are used to. Technically, it is not flawless either. But in this very fragility, the body does not withdraw. It seeps into the recording with all its weight. Of course, it would not be right to attribute the change in her voice solely to the suffering she lived through. Still, that fragility reminds us that musical expression is not limited to technical perfection. The political weight of the body can be neutralized not as representation multiplies, but when it turns into an aesthetic order that covers over bodily experience. The voice is

arranged so that it is “heard well,” the breath is filed down so that it is “cleaned,” the gesture is pulled back because it is found excessive. This is not merely an aesthetic matter. A bodily and political deaf field comes into being. In my own practice, I do not see this representation as a “rebuilding.” I see it as displacement. I neither confine *dengbêj* practice in a realm of nostalgic purity nor neutralize it by turning it entirely into contemporary forms. What interests me is where breath can still open a space today. Which bodies are left outside this space. Which voices still circulate unseen. The role women have taken on in the historical formation and oral transmission of *dengbêj* practice is especially important here. But the public representation of the tradition has largely acquired a masculine visibility. Women’s voices and experiences have often been pushed into the background. This does not mean that women remained outside the tradition. On the contrary, the distance between their presence and their public visibility is the very problem of representation. For this reason, for a woman’s voice, *dengbêj* practice is not merely a form to be repeated. It is an intermediate zone that can be passed through and transformed. Experiences left outside masculine representation are not merely completed in a woman’s voice. They gain another possibility of expression and perception. This voice need neither aestheticize nor reject the pain of the past. It can form a different relationship with trauma, without staying in it and without erasing it. The point is not merely to “keep the tradition alive,” I think. It is to make visible the representations that cover over bodily memory. It is to rethink, for today’s bodies, the time that *dengbêj* practice carries and at times defers. In my own vocal practice, too, rather than continuing this line exactly as it is, I try to open a new expanse by passing through it. To seek, through the bodies and voices of

today, a new response to the experiences that are carried within *dengbêj* practice but cannot always come into language. The present strength of Kurdish music, in my view, lies precisely here. In the crack between representation and bodily truth. As long as that crack does not close, and as long as it is consciously kept open, music remains in constant and risky contact with the world instead of fixing its essence. Perhaps this is why Kurdish music is still not a completed form. Nor is it a closed narrative. It continues its existence as an unending attempt at breath.

F. T.— Herbert Marcuse considers Black music to be the music of the oppressed. In his view, Black music "is the body; the aesthetic form is a gesture of pain, suffering, and accusation" (Marcuse, 1991, p. 103). Marcuse does, of course, also point out that radical and protest songs can be found in Bob Dylan's lyrics and music, and he offers a remarkable analysis of the class dimension in the context of rock and jazz, examining the place of the instrument, the cry, and the silent scream within the suburban distribution of space. I reduce Marcuse's *ethno* definition to a general notion of the Other. The music of Others, as an original form, is the music of the oppressed. The lives and deaths of oppressed people, all of which are regarded as worthless, acquire meaning through their definition in terms of music's symbolic value. For them, music is like a body that breathes; even if only symbolically, this living body offers them status and equality and, moreover, ascribes value to them. Art (music) grants, in abstract form, all the values denied to individuals whom the regime ignores and criminalizes, transforming them within the social world into concrete and respectable bodies. For this reason, music is both necessarily the most intense and widespread art form among Others and, at the

same time, cannot be confined to the purely musical and technical compositions of harmony, melody, rhythm, and notes. Of course, music does not have a directly instructive dimension in the way that cinema or literature does. Nevertheless, it operates as a cultural dynamic that continually reproduces, and thus keeps current, all kinds of traditional images and practices inscribed in the subconscious through the senses. In other words, music among Others is a field of symbolic production that reproduces social ethos and political ideologies. It demonstrates the claiming of space, as well as time, just as painting and sculpture do.

To evaluate the music of the Other according to the universal, taken-for-granted norms applied to the cultural music of the dominant regime, and to subject it to the same measures of causality, means, to put it mildly, missing the fundamental concepts of politicization from the outset. For example, if we consider Kurdish music in this context, we should not restrict it to forms (*maqam*) such as *lawje*, *qesîde*, *şeşbendî*, and *narînk*, or to stylized folk forms such as *govend* and *dengbêjî*, nor ultimately regard it merely as a cultural practice. For years, music has continually carried within itself the most material, objective, and authoritative evidence of the denied existence of the Kurds and, in particular, of the Kurdish language, in opposition to the regime's ideology. A Kurdish song is not merely a sensory melody. More than that, it is a rational and concrete reality that proves the existence of the Kurdish language. In other words, for the Kurds, music is not merely a cultural practice but the most political act of all, one that turns the regime's policies of denial on their head. Thus, alongside the aesthetic experience of sensation, the music of the Other always symbolizes identity-based existence and ideological resistance. Music is one of the fields with the greatest

mass appeal compared with other art forms. The musician's stance in this regard becomes the most widespread and suitable instrumental language for unsettling all these forms of representation. Adorno, for instance, points out that although popular music exhibits tendencies toward commodification, reification, and standardization, it also expresses emotions such as anger, sorrow, revolt, pain, joy, and sexuality. In fact, the moment a piece of music begins offers a clue to the nature of art and life as a whole. In contrast to the silence that existed before it, unnoticed and unfelt, the dissonance of this moment constitutes, in a sense, the secret of art. It is the dichotomous distinction between what exists and what is desired. Throughout art as a whole, one can continually observe attempts to define and artificialize this distinction. To bring the discussion together, I would like to ask you the following: Is there truly a specific form of music that we can call "the music of the Other"? If so, under what historical, political, and aesthetic conditions can this music be defined?



Home, Istanbul, 2021.

S. P.— I do not think there is a fixed, generic, closed musical form called “the music of the Other.” But it is also impossible to deny the existence of a musical condition born out of the state of otherness. For this reason, I find it more accurate not to read the matter as a genre, but to approach it as a condition, a bodily-historical positioning.

The music of the oppressed needs to be thought together with the bodily and aesthetic dimensions that Marcuse points to. In my view, the music of the oppressed is at times the burden the body struggles to carry turning into sound. The politics of music arises not only from the content it represents, but also from the conditions in which it emerges. In this sense, for the Other, music often goes beyond being a means of expression and comes to life as a practice of existing. It is sung in order to live; and what is aesthetic takes shape within this vital experience. The critical point here is this: the music of the Other is political not only because it speaks of pain, but also because it is able to exist despite pain. The body that the regime, the center and the dominant language ignore does not merely narrate itself through music; it also makes its existence audible. This is why a Kurdish song is not merely a sensory melody. It is the undeniable material existence of language and body. It is less a statement that says “I am here” than a reality that simply stands there.



Harbiye, İstanbul, 2023. © Zeynik

In this context, to limit Kurdish music to particular *maqams*, forms or folkloric categories would be to overlook the relationship it has with its historical and political existence. *Dengbêjî*, *lawje* or *govend* are structures with their own forms and historical

memories. But the music of the Other cannot be reduced to these forms. Because otherness is less a matter of form than a relational condition formed with power, language, space and the body. This music is often not born from a conscious ideological program. Sometimes it is born from a vital necessity, and sometimes from the desire to open another field of existence for oneself. It does not have to teach or instill, but it carries: it carries trauma, what is forbidden, the memory that is not allowed to be transmitted. Its politicization does not arise only from producing a message. It arises from the intensity created by the truth it carries, and at times by the way it makes that truth audible. Billie Holiday's *Strange Fruit* is explanatory in this sense. The song is political not only because it carries a political content, but also because it confronts the listener with a truth that is unbearable to live. What makes it disturbing is much more than producing a slogan. It is that it leaves the listener alone before this truth. The song is not only a protest, but also a testimony. It is possible to think of Adorno's critiques of the commodification and standardization of music here as well. But in my view, even when music is commodified, it is hard to say that bodily affect and aesthetic experience can be brought entirely under control. Even in the most standard forms, a crack, an unexpected sound, an encounter that disrupts established ways of hearing can sometimes emerge. The music of the Other too sometimes appears precisely in this crack. Silence is not merely music's opposite or limit. At times it is a state carried within music, and at times a state that makes the emergence of sound possible. This tension between silence and sound forms one of the thresholds from which the music of the Other emerges. Because the point is not always that what has been silenced makes a sound. Sometimes it is that a voice that already exists, that is

heard but not recognized, makes its presence known in another form.

In conclusion: Yes, there is something we can call “the music of the Other.” But this is not an unchanging musical essence of bodies excluded from the center. It is a state of existence that takes shape within historical conditions, that sometimes vibrates in the body before it comes into language, and sometimes makes room for itself within language and voice. When this music comes into contact with a repressed life, it can gain a political intensity. But its meaning is not tied only to the continuation of this repression. A voice that was sung, recorded and archived in the past can be heard again at another time, can encounter other lives and gain new meanings. Because memory does not merely preserve the past. In each new encounter, it continues to live in another form. In this context, otherness is not limited to dominant power structures or the aesthetics of the nation-state. At times it is also reproduced by communities’ own aesthetic norms and regimes of belonging. Being ignored by the aesthetic authorities that have become entrenched in the Kurdish music market pushes my music into an “other” position, not only vis-à-vis Turkish-centered structures but also outside the internal expectations of the Kurdish community itself. This is why nonconforming production does not merely adapt to the center. It does not conform to the norms of the community it is assumed to belong to either. Because the freedom of a music lies not only in its ability to exist against the power that ignores it, but also in its ability to establish its own voice outside all these boundaries that determine what is expected of it.

Part II: Sound, Word, Time

Dear Semyanî, in this section, I will shift the focus of our conversation away from the ethics of musical representation and structure it around questions of how music operates, the planes on which it is constituted, and the temporalities it brings to light. I will explore the traces sound leaves on the body, the ways in which words produce meaning, and how time is organized musically through these three interrelated axes. In other words, I will foreground the ethical and social dimensions of music alongside its aesthetic dimension. Here, music will be approached not merely as the direct representation of an identity or the bearer of a narrative, but in terms of the formal conditions of sensing, withdrawal, subtraction, and exclusion. In this way, "sound" ceases to be merely a material form that is heard and becomes a field of bodily contact. "Word" is not a signifier that produces fixed meanings, but a trace that continually shifts in relation to time and space. "Time," in turn, is conceived not as linear progression or measurable duration, but as a field of experience that is bracketed, bent, and redistributed within music.

Alongside the collective, elevated, and representational forms that Kurdish music has historically carried, examining the aesthetic trajectory opened up by more subdued, fragile, and everyday modes of expression is also one of the central concerns of this section. The questions in this part will therefore focus not only on what music says, but also on how it falls silent, withdraws, and reconstructs time. The tension between sound and word, the indirect relationship established with space, and the musical temporality of modern urban experience will be considered

together in order to explore the possibilities of approaching music not as a regime of representation, but as a mode of sensory thought. In this context, the aesthetic stance that emerges is grounded not in a transient state of mind, but in music's own distinctive mode of existence. From this mode of being, it is possible to formulate the first question of the second part as follows.

F. T.— Music opens up a field of possibility for human beings through the word and sensation, creating a ground for liberation. This possibility constitutes a kind of bodily and, so to speak, most emotional form of sharing. Fundamentally, compared with other arts, music is the purest expression of personal feelings. This is what makes it unique. Since these feelings address the spirit or soul directly, no claim to knowledge is required. Yet this does not mean that music's aesthetic and social consequences lie outside the realm of knowledge. Every individual living on earth has, at some point, listened to some form of music, even if only for a certain period of time. Indeed, Claude Lévi-Strauss states that music is an element that has come to replace myths in contemporary societies. Thus, music, in one way or another, does not necessarily entail an act of knowing, as painting does. If we assume that, unlike knowledge, everyone naturally possesses a "feeling" without having to make any effort, then the effect music has on this feeling through sensation can, in one respect, be considered an "egalitarian" condition in the Kantian sense. As Hegel also points out: "For example, the art of music, which is related only to sounds considered as the wholly indeterminate movement of the inner spirit, as feelings seemingly devoid of thought, has little or no need of the spiritual material present in

consciousness" (Hegel, 2012, p. 28). In this respect, music's meaning becomes compelling to the listener only when it lies behind and beyond the notes themselves. After all, a single note in music means nothing in itself; only when it enters into a relation with another note and establishes a relationality does it produce consonance and harmony. Its effect acquires meaning when this harmony unfolds through transitions and sequences from one *maqam* to another. Yet no listener concerns themselves with this technical aspect. Nevertheless, within this subjective stance, the musician's personal feelings take shape through the clear and free expression of aesthetic emphasis. At precisely this point, a crucial component—psychic factors—becomes an inseparable part of music. Music is no longer composed solely for its own sake, but also to evoke psychic responses in the listener. As far as I can observe, in recent times the digital world and social platforms have absorbed this psychic dimension. Psychic life seeks to sustain itself through a constant search. Yet it seems to me that this search for psychic life is also attempting to define itself through "nostalgia." Here we encounter the pathetic (poignant) paradox of experiencing nostalgia for, and longing for, something that never ends and, precisely because it never ends, can never become a thing of the past. For instance, I find it difficult to understand and grasp the desire to place an object that is still being consumed—such as a local bread, an endemic soap, a *territorial* garment, and so on—at the center of the frame and to long for it. First, in most cases, such images function not so much as aesthetic forms but, in the Baudrillardian sense, as cultural (anthropological) signs. In other words, rather than producing value, they prioritize symbolic spectacles saturated with rituals and the creation of scenes that are empty in content but powerful in effect. Culture and art are, after

all, never the same thing. As Alain Badiou puts it, “culture and art are two opposing poles.” Culture is a phenomenon that emerges under ideology and is, by its very nature, devoid of thought and based on imitation; in other words, it is a phenomenal empiricism. Art, by contrast, is a relational and phenomenal *episteme* that rests unequivocally on a logos and integrates matter with form. Put more simply, culture is an experience based on vision, whereas art is the conjunction of knowledge grounded in vision. We can even illustrate the difference between culture and art in concrete terms: those in power, for instance, cannot predict Semyanî Perîzade’s art, because they cannot know what she thinks, what she produces, or where the limits of her potential might lie; they can only make predictions. Yet those same powers already know her cultural identity, along with the perceptions and sensory dispositions inherent in that identity, and therefore organize their strategy accordingly. This strategy may take the form of a reflex of appropriation toward her in a positive sense, or, conversely, it may turn her into an isolated object. In this context, the most clichéd assertion that “Kurds are hospitable” is a cultural discourse: it is hollow and profoundly isolating. By identifying identity with a morally passive act, this discourse excludes its existing political potential and defines identity as a local object. Political identity is suddenly coded, positioned, perceived, and defined on the same plane as a local bar of soap. The powerful party’s definition of Kurdish identity through the identification of Kurds with hospitality is therefore both strategic and ideological, fixing meaning in advance. Ultimately, then, for those in power, art becomes an “object of prediction”—something unknown that can only be anticipated—whereas culture becomes a self-evident “object of strategy,” something already known. This is precisely

why culture and art are not the same thing. Second, objects such as bread, soap, and clothing, along with the scenes constructed around them, cannot be nostalgic, even if they were to aspire to be, because they already occupy a place within ongoing processes of production and consumption. More precisely, these objects do not produce nostalgia in the classical sense, but rather a simulation of the aesthetics of nostalgia. The fundamental reason is that they do not belong to the past and remain part of contemporary processes of production and consumption. Moreover, while these elements maintain a certain distance from modern forms of industrial production, they are repositioned as consumer objects within postmodern consumer culture. The fact that they are made using primitive or traditional production methods and continue to be produced locally today transforms them from remnants of the past into objects that function within the present.

I explain all this because of the videos we frequently encounter on digital platforms. We are exposed to romanticized images of an elderly woman, seated in all her authenticity in the living room of an adobe house, beneath a broken-down fan or beside a stove, rolling a cigarette or cutting a watermelon according to the season. We also see videos of people harvesting crops in fields or gathering produce in vineyards and gardens. Inevitably, the voice of a *dengbêj* accompanies all these similar videos. The presence of a musical sound must be heard in the background as a necessary condition for a visual episode in the video to attain visibility. These video compositions, which persistently construct the authority of the rural as an ontology, tell us a great deal. They can presumably be understood as shared by people living in cities that retain the appearance and norms of villages. Moreover, even today, traveling just a few kilometers beyond the cities brings one into

contact with extensive rural life; a pastoral experience that has preserved almost the continuity of its earliest days still persists. Where the city ends, the primitive image suddenly reappears. One encounters, for instance, the production of local bread firsthand. For what is called nostalgia to emerge, the production of that bread would, under normal circumstances, have had to be confined to a particular period. If its production continues, in one way or another, in much the same form as it did at the beginning, what one feels toward it is not nostalgia in the full sense of the word. On the contrary, to call something "nostalgic" often renders a particular sequence invisible: poverty! For when a way of life that appears pastoral or primitive is transformed into an object of aesthetic longing, its material conditions and historical deprivation are overlooked and it is romanticized through the fallacy of an ancient culture. To put it more plainly, all these images belong to elements that seem out of step with the contemporary age. The living room in which the elderly woman sits and the primitive stove she uses are not matters of choice, but necessities imposed by material circumstances. Psychic life, therefore, is occupied with glorifying these archaic forms, taking pride in them, and turning them into an ontological (*Kurdî*) authority. It is difficult to claim that scattering wheat across a field barefoot and with bare hands, rather than using a technological machine, possesses aesthetic value beyond romantic glorification; indeed, this situation also has a critical dimension from the perspective of art. For economics lies at the root of all these things. Yet sensation, imitation (*mimesis*), and culture leave this economic entanglement out of the picture and, through music, establish a consensus around a shared logos of tragic images. I can understand why this shared conception, in a tautological manner, is considered reasonable by average listeners

when it takes the form of agreement or consensus. My objection, however, is that this is often where Kurdish music becomes embodied not only at the mass level but also at the intellectual level. From a Lévi-Straussian perspective, it is the voice of the *dengbêj* in the background that transforms the image of that elderly woman into a "pathetic image-scene." This image-scene, in turn, has transformed Kurdish art into a "fate of consensus." In the preface to *Uyuşmazlık: Politika ve Felsefe* (*Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*)—which, in my view, is his masterpiece—Rancière does not formulate a dialectical conflict when he sets the concept of "disagreement" (*dissensus*) against "consensus." On the contrary, Rancière defines disagreement as follows: "Disagreement is not a conflict between one who says white and one who says black. It is a conflict between one who says white and another who also says white but does not understand the same thing by it, or does not understand that the other is saying the same thing in the name of whiteness" (Rancière, 2005, p. 12). Therefore, I believe that the essence of this entire conversation we are having also takes shape around the logic of such "disagreement." In any case, we too say "white," we say "dengbêj," but we do not construct our discursive complexes on the same plane. From this point, I would like to ask you: How do you assess this *territorial* regime of representation established through cultural images in Kurdish music, and its gradual transformation into an aesthetic consensus?



Cihangir, İstanbul, 2022. © Zeynik

S. P.— When it comes to Kurdish music, the real issue for me is less what is represented than on which aesthetic plane the representation is fixed. The problem is not *dengbêj* practice itself, rural imagery, or the circulation of sounds belonging to memory. It

is their being coded as almost obligatory images of Kurdish music. Thinking through the line you draw between culture and art is illuminating. But I do not want to separate these two fields with strict boundaries. Culture can preserve what is familiar. Art, within that same familiarity, can bring to light what is not yet visible. Cultural memory is not something that stands against art. The real issue is being able to open the meanings of that memory, which are taken to be immutable, to rethinking. This is what I find missing in a significant part of the images of Kurdish music circulating in digital media today. Instead of making what is familiar heard differently, they often remain within a safe emotional consensus because it is comfortable. The question of nostalgia gains importance here. What we see is not always a longing for a life left in the past. It is the presentation of material conditions that persist today as if they belonged to the past. The mud-brick house, the stove, the old woman, the field… Each of these can be part of cultural memory. But they also carry today's class inequalities. When we place these images only within a nostalgic feeling, we overlook the life that continues inside them and the hardships of that life. Poverty stays inside the image, while the material conditions that produce it are pushed into the background. Thus what is visible can be put into circulation stripped of its critical power.

At this point, the *dengbêj's* voice ceases to be merely a musical element. It can work like an acoustic seal that legitimizes the image. The image gains a particular meaning together with the sound. But instead of exposing the contradictions the image carries, this meaning can reconcile them within a familiar feeling. My objection is not to the *dengbêj* voice being present in these images. It is to the relationship established between sound and

image turning into an aesthetic habit that cannot be questioned. Because the same voice, in another context, can also make audible the reality that the image covers over. For this reason, I do not think of consensus merely as people feeling similar emotions before the same image. The real problem is that what is visible, what is audible and what can be said is determined in advance. Everyone can say “white.” But which experiences can find a place behind this shared word, and which remain outside, is most often left unquestioned. For me, artistic possibility emerges where these established meanings lose their certainty. Disagreement, too, is not merely opposing or creating discomfort. It is being able to re-question what we actually see and hear at the moment we think we are looking at the same thing. As I have stated before, the hardening of *dengbêj* practice through sanctification and its softening in digital circulation seem to me to carry the same risk: a kind of withdrawal of the body. Because voice is not merely something heard. It also carries the trace of the body, the lived experience and the historical experience that make it possible. For me, *dengbêj* practice is not merely a form of narration transmitted from past to present. It is an experience that accumulates within the voice, that at times comes into language and at times continues its existence through tensions that words cannot carry. When this voice is used merely to complete a familiar cultural image, the bodily and historical conditions that bring it forth can recede. What remains is a voice that is recognizable and easily put into circulation, but distanced from the tensions it carries. I do not hear the *dengbêj* as the voice of an ontology of the village. I see it as a clear trace of the historical tensions the body carries. For this reason, I do not want it to be limited to sanctifying the past. It should also be able to reveal how the past continues to live in the

present, which traces are still being carried, and which experiences are waiting to be heard.

For me, the artistic possibility of Kurdish music begins here: in opening a field in which the listener does not merely encounter a feeling they already recognize, and in which their relationship with the sound they hear and the meaning they attach to it can change. Sometimes this encounter can be disturbing. Because the critical power of art emerges not only in what it shows, but also in how it can change habitual ways of seeing and hearing. The aesthetic understanding we encounter on digital platforms, however, often works in the opposite direction. The poverty, deprivation or historical burden in the image does not disappear. But the contradictions they create can lose their effect within a familiar sentimentality. This does not make Kurdish music cease to be political by itself, but it can narrow its critical possibilities. Because a music's having emerged from a historical or political experience does not mean it will preserve the same critical power in every representation of that experience. For this reason, I do not see the artistic dimension of Kurdish music as lying in freeing itself entirely from territorial imagery. The real issue is being able to change the relationship we have with these images. To disturb them when necessary, to displace them, and to open them to being thought otherwise. Neither rejecting the village nor sanctifying the city… What matters to me is to turn the voice from a guarantee of a fixed identity into an open cleft in which other experiences can also be heard. In this sense, yes, we both say "dengbêj," and we point largely to the same place. But I do not take the meaning of this pointing to be complete. In my artistic practice too, I treat it each time as an open experience that must be rethought and heard anew.

F. T.— I would like to continue our conversation at this point by considering the songs *Maçî Maçî* and *Ez Baş Nabim*. Although these pieces, within your body of work, appear at first to have an arrangement of words, melody, and rhythm that is simple, even almost "light," a closer listen reveals a whole constructed through highly dynamic and deliberate aesthetic decisions. The verbal economy of the songs, the cyclical structure of the melody, and the continuity of the rhythm, which operates almost imperceptibly, point here to an aesthetics of deliberate reduction and withdrawal. In particular, the sense of repetition carried by the melody, together with the fragile, at times retreating use of the voice, leaves musical time open, everyday, and unsettled rather than dramatizing it. I think this aesthetic approach involves a deliberate departure from the regimes of representation that have long dominated Kurdish music, with their loud, breath-driven, powerful, and collective forms. There is neither an epic narrative nor a direct political call here. On the contrary, sound and word unfold through a sense of intimacy and fragility that continually defers itself. The emotional intensity of the song arises not from the weight of grand narratives, but from an attenuated, minor mode of expression. This leads me to think that in music, "reduction" can be just as powerful an aesthetic strategy as amplification. The simplicity here does not stem from a lack; it arises from a deliberate and purposeful aesthetic subtraction. Musically, too, these pieces do not pursue a synthesis that dramatizes the East–West opposition. Rather than leveling or representing this duality, their instrumentation and use of sound operate in an almost invisible and ordinary manner. In this way, the songs do not rely on a claim to folkloric locality, but instead rest on a universalizing formal gesture articulated through musical

rhythm. They establish the trace that sound leaves on the body through sensory continuity rather than technical display. At this point, it is worth recalling Plato's definition of the musician, as interpreted by Friedrich Schelling. As Schelling recounts, "The musician is one who proceeds from physically audible harmonies toward the supersensible, toward rational harmonies and the proportions of these harmonies" (Schelling, 2024, p. 197). Yet in *Maçî Maçî* and *Ez Baş Nabim*, this progression takes place not through a spectacular ascent or a dramatic leap, but, on the contrary, through withdrawal, simplification, and an almost ordinary quality. The transition between the audible and the supersensible is established here not through an epic rupture, but as an everyday oscillation. The sounds that inhabit this everyday oscillation affect us deeply, not merely as sounds, but also as manifestations of our emotions and senses. The harmonic point at which the life that shapes words intersects with the words that shape life is therefore the musician's perceptual world. The linear signs of the words uttered are traces of the musician's poetic thought. What enables the musician to find their own rhythm between words and measures is the union of the spirit, which transcends itself in its own work, with space. It is precisely at this point that the correlation between space and Kurdish music disappears into the spaceless course of a horizon line that is open on all sides and extends without end. The spacelessness in Kurdish music always seeks an emptiness in nature, while this emptiness yearns for the freedom that stands in opposition to captivity. Yet in Kurdish music, spacelessness sometimes spontaneously evolves into a spatiality of nature that is political on occasion, but more often naive. In this respect, the words in Kurdish music are generally drawn from a form in nature and then returned to nature.

The organic character of nature determines the referents of these words: emotions such as love, affection, separation, joy, sadness, and sorrow establish a harmony or disharmony with the earth, like the roots of a tree. The correlation of words enters into a spatial dialectic with the plain, the mountain, the rain, the wind, the flower, the river, the wolf, and the bird. Words always acquire meaning through the corporeality of nature. Another aspect of Kurdish music concerns the concept of time. Time is divided only into moments, not experienced as duration. Henri Bergson posits real time in opposition to physical time, which is measurable and perceptible insofar as it is inherent in space. He defines this real time as "duration," apprehended through intuition beyond consciousness's immediate grasp. Duration is the time experienced in a person's inner world. As one may observe, in Kurdish music, the lyrics of a song are neither determined by duration nor do they allude to it. For example, songs do not refer to a specific time of night, such as two o'clock (02:00). Time is evoked only in terms of broad periods: the evening, the night, or the daytime; or simply as night, day, or evening. This is because duration describes urban life and the dynamism of that life. Time, on the other hand, in this context, is a pastoral flow measured by the hours of the day in relation to the sun. Indeed, in Book XI of *Confessions*, Augustine argues that time is not merely a flow between the past, present, and future, but a dimension experienced within human consciousness. Seen from this perspective, the lyrics of the song *Xewna Berevajî*, for example, articulate the emotional dialectic of a dyadic relationship that emerges within an urban-spatial form, a relationship mediated by objects and divided by duration—an emotional dialectic of expectation, regret, longing, and depression. This urban sensibility emerges not directly and exclusively

through the lyrics, but also through the directionless flow of the rhythm and the division of emotion into durations. Pierre Schaeffer offers a similar interpretation of music: “Music is the human being’s definition of the human being in the language of objects” (Attali, 2021, p. 34). In a broader sense, the simultaneity of the melodies in your lyrics, and the continual interweaving of their traditional and modern forms, bring to light the “modern-urban” dimension of your creative practice.

In this context, the expression *Ez Baş Nabim*—which translates into Turkish as “I will not be well”—does not merely emphasize an individual state of mind. It also points to the form of the modern city, where intersecting roads, overlapping buildings, complex streets, and traversing avenues coexist. It characterizes the city’s vital mood, its interpersonal relationships, and its tense encounters. The body identifies itself with the city. The better a city is, the better the body is, or vice versa. The city’s chaotic face comes to life in the form of the body. “I will not be well,” because this is not a rebellion; it is a sincere critique and self-critique. In other words, none of us is fundamentally well, or we are all complicit in the shared sins of the same atmosphere. The city, therefore, does not exist here merely as a physical space. It expresses the superimposition of fragmented states of consciousness, divided durations, and deferred emotions. At precisely this point, modern music becomes an expression of the causality and objectivity corresponding to our time, enriched with a new spirit. Adapting to this new spirit, rhythms operate, as Schelling suggests, “within a flow that draws direct inspiration from nature but does not imitate it: rhythm is one of the most wonderful mysteries of nature and art” (Schelling, 2024, p. 187). The rhythm in the song *Ez Baş Nabim* does not create a dramatic

crescendo or a Brechtian epic tension; rather, as in Beckett and Flaubert, it seems to preserve the naturalness of speech within the subtleties of reading prose. This is a deliberate aesthetic decision grounded in the musical objectification of emotion. Here, emotion emerges not as the consequence of a tragic event, but as a critique of the immediate distribution of sensation produced by sound in the body. If the lyrics of the song imply a degenerate condition, or if, through metaphorical language, a ship is taking on water, then what is at stake is not an individual failing but a collective collapse. In such moments, exposing a "scapegoat" does not eliminate responsibility; it merely confines the crisis to the referent of a single body. Yet the scapegoat singled out as the target naturally continues its production uncompromisingly, along the path it knows, and, as in the song, declares at every opportunity that it "will not be well"—with the stubborn persistence of a goat. At precisely this point, as Luc Ferry observes, "music is the first art to establish a genuine kinship with the expression of the infinite variety of passions and emotions of the human soul" (Ferry, p. 190). This directly bodily and affective quality of musical expression makes it possible for the crisis to be shared at the sensory level rather than suppressed through representation. From this perspective, it can be argued that these pieces point to an enduring aesthetic orientation rather than a transient state of mind. On the basis of this assumption, I would like to ask you two questions. First, are this simplicity, fragility, and ordinariness a deliberate and sustained aesthetic choice, or are they the result of a particular state of mind? Second, will the dialectic you establish between nature and time-of-day, on the one hand, and the city and duration, on the other, remain at the center of your music in the future?



Beyoğlu, İstanbul, 2021.

S. P.— The simplicity in *Maçî Maçî* and *Ez Baş Nabim* is not the result of a passing mood. Nor is it a pre-designed aesthetic program. I cannot answer this question from a single place. What I produce is not outside the life I live. Pain, trauma, depression, anxiety, joy, melancholy, healing… All of it passes through my body and turns into sound. Simplicity and fragility did not come about as the result of decisions made at a desk. Over time, they became my natural mode of expression. I did not develop a conscious opposition to grand dramatic climaxes or epic narratives. The rhythm of my life never flowed through shouting, so my music does not shout either. Over time I noticed that for me, subtraction is not withdrawal but intensification. A fragile tone instead of high volume, an everyday sway instead of showy climbs. This is not a weakness. It is a way of carrying feeling without dramatizing it. The sense of repetition in *Maçî Maçî* and the rhythm of *Ez Baş Nabim*, which moves almost like speech, may look from the outside like a conscious gesture of reduction. In fact, they arise less from a theoretical strategy than from an inner honesty. Instead of enlarging a feeling, I choose to leave it as it is. Some fragilities lose their meaning when spoken at a high pitch. A voice approaching silence can sometimes carry the strongest critique. As for the tension between nature/vakit and city/duration… I am still someone who grew up with a sense of vakit. But the world I live in runs on duration. Inside me is the memory of a more pastoral flow. My daily life, however, is fragmented, interrupted, urban. For this reason, two perceptions of time collide in my music. There is neither a placelessness entirely turned toward nature nor a purely urban speed. It is more a state of consciousness caught in between. This tension is not a passing

period. It is the very reality I live. It will probably remain at the center of my music.

The phrase *Ez Baş Nabim* does not describe only an individual state of mind. It also points to a shared atmosphere. “I will not be well” is not a defiance but an observation. It is not a slogan, nor is it a narrative of victimhood. It is an honest expression of the effect the complex structure we find ourselves in has on the body. If there is a rupture, it is not the flaw of a single subject; it is the echo of a shared condition. I am not someone who calculates an aesthetic strategy with pen and paper. I live. I leave what I live to sound, staying faithful to myself. I act intuitively, but I am not unconscious. Over time I have seen that this simplicity is becoming less a passing mood than a settled language. For me, music is a space of healing. It is also a way of emptying out what I carry. Beyond a technical matter, it is a way of being. I am excited about where it will go. I feel there is a direction growing inside me. A field that deepens not as I learn, but as I live. Everything is starting over. Perhaps for the first time. Perhaps this beginning belongs not only to me. It is the silent continuation of the memory of a people who must re-establish their existence each time.

F. T.— I would like to begin this question with a remark Jacques Rancière makes about music. Rancière states, “Music is an education of the soul because it is the expression of an order of the world, a force of the mind, a movement arising from life, or a bond between people” (Rancière, 2024, p. 50). Here, music transcends sensory experience. It is conceived as a space in which the soul is shaped, educated, and reconstituted. In fact, definitions such as “soul,” “spirituality,” or “nourishment for the soul” are expressions that have been repeated for centuries in discussions of

music and have almost become canonical. Similarly, Schopenhauer defines music as the direct expression of the will. For him, music is a privileged art that transcends representation and touches the essence of human nature. Marx, by contrast, conceives of music as a "mirror of reality," while for Nietzsche, music is "a word that speaks the truth" or "a world mirror specific to Dionysus." For Freud, likewise, music is a vibration that directly conveys the repressed truth of the unconscious, beyond representation. As we can see, music takes on different meanings within each thinker's philosophical system. Yet despite all these interpretations, music's form, structure, and material existence remain relatively constant. More precisely, in their view, music emerges from within life as an image of reality. This is precisely what we are trying to do here: to attribute meaning to music from aesthetic, political, and sociological perspectives, and to discuss what we derive from it, how we perceive it, and at what level we experience it. I am trying to take this conversation beyond subjective preferences as far as possible and ground it in objective and material criteria. For example, according to Paul Klee, music can have a graphic equivalent. As in his painting *Fugue in Red* (1921), the pitch of the sound, its interruptions, and the chromatic structure of the score do not merely produce a similar meaning; they also transpose the same rhythm and measure onto a visual plane (Farago, 2006, p. 176). Klee's identification of music with painting is no coincidence, since he was also a musician, and his aim was to transfer the mathematical precision of music into painting. A similar search for meaning can be discerned in your music. In this context, *Xewna Berevajî* occupies a special place, because in this piece, music settles directly into sensation alongside representation. Word and sound almost exchange places.

Music becomes word and opens up a multilayered field of meaning. It speaks directly to the soul and to sensation. After all, most people take pleasure in beautiful sounds. Yet this pleasure often remains superficial when those sounds do not correspond to familiar melodic tones. A melody that has depth for us may produce an ordinary effect in an ear unfamiliar with its language and tonality. At precisely this point, music should not be content merely to echo the aesthetics of a particular period. It should also carry an intuition of the future, reaching beyond the present. We can reconnect this thought to the Rancière quotation I cited at the beginning of the question. If music truly is an "education of the soul," then the question of whether this education is limited to reinforcing existing affects, or whether it also assumes the function of carrying the soul beyond its own limits, becomes decisive. From this point of view, I would like to ask you the following: Do you think the "soul" of a song should carry the finite into the infinite? Michel Serres, for instance, conceives of music as signals in their simplest form. According to him, although music may appear to be a limited message, it is an encoded form of universal communication. In this sense, beyond noise, music is a message carrier not wholly bound to any system, and a dialectical stance in the face of the passage of time. For to avoid thinking about how short time is, one must occupy it, deny it, or forget it. Thus, to reformulate the question once again, in a slightly sharper way: Do you think music exists to make us forget time and carry the soul into a timeless realm, or to make transience perceptible and bearable? How do you position music in your own practice between these two approaches?



Bomonti, İstanbul, 2022. © Zeynik

S. P.— I do not make music in order to make time be forgotten. I have no conscious desire to defer time or to step outside of it. The basic question I ask myself when writing a song is this: “Is this moment honest?” If the feeling of that moment comes from a

genuine place, that is enough for me as the beginning of my production. For me, music is less a way of confirming a predetermined meaning than a field in which I can encounter the aspects of my lived experience that I have not yet fully grasped. I do not experience time only as a continuity moving from past to future. Sometimes something lived in the past reappears in my body years later. A sound, a word, a melody… It can carry a feeling I thought I had left behind into today. But this does not mean going back to the past. Neither what I remember nor the I who remembers it is the same anymore. Music emerges precisely within this change. It does not rebuild the past as it was. It makes audible the response it leaves in my body today. Music can sometimes expand time. It can make a moment feel longer and more intense than it was. At times I hear the accumulation of years within a sound of a few seconds. But this intensity does not abolish transience. On the contrary, it fills transience from within. Knowing that a feeling will end does not make it any less real. Sometimes the opposite happens: it makes it possible for me to live that feeling with all its weight. For me, music is not a denial of mortality. It is being able to stand together with it. It is being able to turn the trace that what passes leaves in me into sound, without trying to stop it. Would I want my songs to be timeless? Of course I would. But timelessness is not a goal for me. It is a possibility that I do not chase in the process of production, one that may perhaps emerge over time. I cannot know how a song will find a response in someone else's life years later. A sound born from a particular moment I lived can touch someone else's entirely different time. Moreover, what that person hears does not have to be the same as what I felt while writing. This is where I see the possibility of music exceeding the limits of my own

experience. A song's chance of resisting time lies, I think, less in calculations aimed at making it lasting than in the genuine relationship it has with the experience from which it was produced. For this reason, I see music neither as an escape into eternity nor merely as a means of enduring transience. I do not think music frees a person from their own finitude. But I believe it allows us to hear more than we live within what is finite. A song does not stop time. It does not bring the past back. Nor does it secure the future. Still, amid all of this, it can make it possible for a person to form a different kind of relationship with themselves, with their memory and with their changing existence.



Paul Klee, *Fugue in Red*, 1921, watercolor and pencil, 24.4 × 31.5 cm. Credit: Creature and Creator

F. T.— In the 1960s, radical critiques of modernist conceptions of art, led by avant-garde movements, largely dissolved the

boundaries between art and life. Art demanded to be more than an autonomous sphere situated outside and above everyday life, and thus began to be conceived as a direct extension of everyday existence. Yet everyday life consists not only of meaningful and valuable experiences; it also encompasses the ordinary, the vulgar, and, at times, the sordid. Consequently, it can be considered aesthetically legitimate, even necessary, for art to take as its subject precisely those elements that appear ordinary or even worthless. Smoking cigarettes, consuming alcohol, taking antidepressants, having panic attacks, waiting in line at therapy clinics, engaging in one-night stands, being unable to fill emotional voids, struggling to socialize, swearing, displaying aggression and depressive states, becoming angry, being cheated on, feeling overwhelmed—in short, experiencing the various vulnerabilities of everyday life—can therefore find their way into song lyrics and artistic production without causing surprise from this perspective. The function of art is not to further elevate and legitimize concepts already considered sublime and subjects already deemed legitimate, but to bring all layers of life into view. With all this in mind, I would like to ask what is perhaps one of the questions I am most curious about, though this time more briefly. On your latest album, "Zeynik" centers on a *queer love*, *Dîlber A Min* on intense eroticism, *Ez Xerîbim* on an existential rupture, *Bijî Bijî Kurdistan* on a line of protest and resistance grounded in radical critique, and *Jin Jiyan Azadî* on a political and feminist discourse that overturns the regimes of visibility governing female identity. Of course, I should also point out that the other songs on this latest album that I have not discussed here offer similar openings, both lyrically and musically. What these songs share is not merely their subject matter, but also the way

they move beyond the musical forms familiar to us in Kurdish music. We encounter arrangements drawing on various forms of Western music, sounds that break with traditional melodic patterns, and an approach to lyrics that moves beyond established modes of representation. *Zeynik* in particular seems to mark a significant turning point, through its subject matter, harmonic rhythms, and mode of expression. After all, we have never before encountered an example in Kurdish music in which a *queer love* is articulated so openly and directly. If you don't mind, I would like to ask: What is the story behind the emergence of *Zeynik*? What relationship does the song have with your queer identity and personal experiences? Could you tell us a little about the background to this song?



Bostancı, İstanbul, 2023.

S. P.— Zeynik was born from a love I truly lived. From a woman who has had a place in my life since 2018, from *Zeynik*, from the eight-year relationship we built and the emotional traces it left in me… So the starting point of the song is, for me, extremely personal and vital. It was not the love itself, but every place where the norms and rigid walls of the society we were trying to breathe in struck against the relationship that wore us out greatly. But I do not see *Zeynik* merely as a musical narrative of my own love story. The lyrics of the song are not made up entirely of my individual experiences. Some parts feed on my observations of the community and family dynamics I come from, of social structures, traditions, and the established roles of woman and man. Most of

all, they feed on my long-held reflections on the question, “In this equation, what is the possibility, the feasibility, of a queer love and of other forms of relationship?” For me, telling of a love is not only telling what happens between two people. It is also thinking about the conditions under which that relationship was lived, which feelings it made room for and which it forced to be suppressed. Because however personal love may be, it is not lived outside social relations. How we can approach each other, where we can stand side by side, even what we sometimes give up saying, all relate to those conditions.

As a queer woman experiencing love, I can see how decisive these limits can be even in the most ordinary moments of life. The legitimate social recognition that a heterosexual relationship often has automatically does not work the same way for queer relationships. Sometimes the closeness between two people can, seen from the outside, be defined by the name of another relationship, a familiar norm. In *Zeynik*, I also speak of people’s attempts to make sense of a closeness they see without stepping outside their own limits. Love between two women can sometimes, before being directly rejected, be made invisible by that heteronormative gaze under the name of another relationship such as “sisterhood” or “close friendship.” It is precisely at this point that I begin to think about the other realities hidden beneath traditionally defined forms, those suppressed forms of desire. In the village where I spent my childhood, I witnessed polygamous family dynamics. As I grew older, I began to question whether these family structures could be understood only through the relationships visible from the outside. I wondered whether the closeness, the solidarity and, at times, the closed-off living spaces that women formed with one another carried meanings beyond

traditional definitions of the family. Of course, I cannot know from the outside how these women experienced their own relationships, how free they were, or how they defined their desires. Moreover, I do not want to ignore the inequalities polygamous marriages have historically contained and the pressures women have faced. But within all these conditions, I also find it worth considering the possibility that there may be other forms of closeness that social norms cannot fully explain. Years ago, while I was talking with a Kurdish translator friend about queer visibility, they told me a memory from their childhood. They spoke of an intimate encounter between their uncle and his two wives, which they had witnessed by accident in a large family house. When they thought again, years later, about this scene they could not make sense of as a child, they began to question the possibilities of different closenesses that remain invisible within traditional family structures. For me, the importance of this account and of my own past observations is not to determine from the outside those women's sexual orientations or the nature of their relationships. It was to realize that a socially defined relationship may not be enough to explain all the experiences of the people living it. Because we cannot fully know what is being lived inside a life that appears from the outside as harmony, silence or acquiescence unless the subjects of that life speak. Indeed, in our culture, when polygamy is mentioned, what comes to mind is always that traditional, religious image in which a man takes two passive women into his life as co-wives and assumes the absolute active role. But is every polygamous marriage really nothing more than a man's domination and a heterosexual relationship in which women are limited only to a partnership with the man—or with the other woman?

Or are there other desires and queer possibilities circulating beneath that cover, which we never speak of or whisper about? Asking these questions does not mean romanticizing polygamy as a liberating form of relationship. Because the fact that a relationship holds possibilities different from established norms does not automatically eliminate the power inequalities within it. We cannot define any relationship as free without taking into account women's say over their own lives, their consent and their possibilities of choice. What interests me is not to exonerate these structures. It is the possibility that even within them there may be human experiences that cannot be reduced to a single social definition. Starting from this very idea, seven years ago I had conceived a short film project. I had written a draft of its story and imagined myself and *Zeynik* in the leading roles. I had even talked at length with an actor friend from the world of cinema about the male lead character; the project excited him too. That film project continues to wait on a shelf. But I could not keep myself from channeling this aesthetic will within me, this desire to look at traditional forms of relationship from another place, into the song *Zeynik*, building it, as it were, with the lightness and irony of a romantic comedy. Yet when writing *Zeynik*, I had no intention of making a song that explains all this didactically or presents a sociological thesis. First of all, I wanted to give voice to a woman I love, to the love I lived with her, and to the feelings this love awakened in me. Moreover, I did not want to tell it only through fragility, longing or pain. Because queer love also has joy, desire, humor, playfulness, and at times the power to mock its own tragic conditions. This is why the narrative of *Zeynik* holds laughter together with sorrow, and a kind of mischief together with social pressure. The political meaning of the song, for me, emerges here:

in a woman's being able to say that she loves another woman in her own language, in her own voice, without feeling obliged to explain or justify it to the outside world. Because I do not think queer love must constantly be explained, defended, or turned into the object of a social debate. Sometimes a person simply wants to address the one they love. To say that they miss them, desire them, want to be beside them. These are extremely ordinary and at the same time extremely deep aspects of human experience. But in some lives, even this ordinariness cannot be lived easily. Therefore, the politics of *Zeynik* has less to do with forcing love into a political discourse than with that love's being able to be expressed in its own naturalness. While writing the song, I did not try to turn my love into proof of any idea. That I can today talk about its social and political meanings does not mean I have to justify the existence of that love. For me, these are different things. The wedding narrative in the song is also important in this respect. The wedding is one of the primary rituals in which certain roles, expectations and heteronormative forms of relationship are socially reproduced. In *Zeynik*, however, the habitual order of this ritual is disrupted. The scene in which two women are brides and a man is the groom, the escape in which the groom is left behind, and the mocking laughter that accompanies all this pull the social seriousness built around marriage into humor. But it does so without relying solely on mocking humor, with a romantic delicacy. Here, it is not merely a story of escaping a wedding that is told. Expectations about who can marry whom, who can love whom, and which relationship will be deemed legitimate are displaced. Moreover, it does this not with a heavy political discourse but from within an almost absurd scene. I think humor has an important function here. Because sometimes, to show the

contradictions of a social order, disrupting its rigidity and wrapping it in the absurd can be as effective as confronting it directly. The observation-based parts of the song also gain importance here. Beyond the relationship I lived, I look at the hidden closenesses people form with one another, at those secret spaces they can or cannot open for themselves. Sometimes a situation I see in another person's life helps me understand a feeling I have not yet been able to put into words in my own experience. And sometimes I realize that something I lived does not belong only to me, that it repeats in other forms in different lives. For this reason, observation in my production is not the opposite of personal experience. It is an element that expands it and connects it with other lives. Still, I would like to make a distinction here: observing other people's experiences does not mean I can speak on their behalf. I can write only from where I stand, from my own sensibility and from the effect of what I see on me. That the personal and the observational are intertwined in the lyrics of *Zeynik* stems somewhat from this. Instead of documenting every detail of a single relationship, the song allows the emotional space that relationship opened in me to touch other lives. This is why every scene in the song does not need to correspond to an event lived exactly as it is. The reality of the narrative lies not only in how events happened chronologically, but in the genuineness of the feelings and observations expressed through those events. Looking from the perspective of Kurdish music, *Zeynik* has yet another meaning for me. Kurdish is not only a language in which collective pain, historical memory, resistance or longing are expressed. It is also the language of desire, of physical closeness, of everyday life, of queer love, of contradictions and of the complex relationships a person forms

with themselves. To this one must add laughter, irony, and those encounters of life that at times reach absurdity. Because the expressive possibilities of a language are not limited to experiences deemed serious, heavy or historically significant. I do not think we need to seek a separate legitimacy for all of this to be said in Kurdish. Because a language lives not only by preserving its past, but also by being able to express, in all their diversity, the present lives and desires of the people who speak it. For this reason, I did not write *Zeynik* in order to achieve a first in Kurdish music or to consciously cross a boundary. Nor do I want to make such a historical claim. For me, the real point was not to ignore in my music an experience that exists in my own life. If this song is heard as outside some habitual representations, the reason may be less a search for difference that I determined beforehand than that the life I live and my musical mode of expression do not always coincide with those molds. A similar situation holds musically. I do not feel obliged to meet a predetermined expectation of how a Kurdish song should sound, or an imposition of authenticity. I do not want to determine how a love is to be sung solely through the established musical forms of the culture I belong to. Different sounds and musical approaches that I listen to, that move me, that find a response in my body can enter my production.



Cihangir, İstanbul, 2025. © Zeynik

The presence of R&B and Lofi Jazz rhythms, of delivery that approaches speech, and of voices that at times open into improvisation in the musical world of *Zeynik* also relates to the song's absurd narrative. The movement of the wedding scene, the excitement the escape creates and the humorous character of the

narrative find a response not only in the lyrics but also in that modern vocal stance. Especially the outburst that rises above the low-resonance R&B and Lofi Jazz foundation throughout the song:

> *'Tiradîno ev çi min min a te ye'* (Hey, you madcap, what is this whining of yours?)
>
> *Xwedê stando ev çi min min a te ye*? (Confound you, what is this limp dithering of yours?)
>
> *Milyona bidî, bê Zeynik nabe*, (Even if you pour out millions, it won't work without *Zeynik*,)
>
> [With a slight giggle, as if whispering to the groom]
>
> *Here wê de becehime!* (Off you go, to the depths of hell!)'

becomes a mischievous reply that shakes the seriousness of entrenched masculine authority with a single whisper and a burst of laughter, without resorting to a heavy, didactic discourse. Thus music ceases to be a structure that accompanies the story from the outside and joins its movement. This does not mean rejecting my bond with Kurdish music. On the contrary, I think that bond cannot be reduced to a single aesthetic form. The "three apples" detail that I use in the song's finale, as a mischievous and equally radical homage to fairy tales and those deep-rooted collective narratives, opens for me onto three interrelated thoughts: how happiness is defined in fairy tales, the relationship established between desire and sin, and other possibilities of closeness that can be thought outside traditional family forms. First, there is the matter of rethinking the idea of attaining one's wish in the fairy-tale tradition from a queer place. The three-apple motif we encounter in Mesopotamian and Anatolian tales can evoke a

happiness, a union or a completion shared out in different ways at the end of the narrative. I do not think this motif means the same thing in every tale. But especially in some narratives built around marriage and union, the question of which forms of relationship are deemed capable of happiness matters to me. In the song, by sharing that apple among three people, "Zava, Semê û *Zeynik*," I open the familiar fairy-tale idea of attaining one's wish onto another possibility of relationship. I imagine that happiness need not be defined only by the union of a couple made up of a woman and a man; that desire, closeness and shared life can be thought of in forms broader than predetermined molds. Second, with this finale I propose another meaning for the forbidden-fruit narrative, especially for its patriarchal interpretations that associate women's desire with sin and guilt. The identification of the forbidden fruit with the apple is related less to the religious texts themselves than to cultural and artistic interpretations formed over time. What interests me is that in some interpretations of this narrative, women's desire is associated with disobedience, guilt and punishment. In the song, the women do not eat the apple secretly or with a sense of guilt, behind anyone's back. Quite the opposite: they eat it with laughter and joy, making the groom a partner in that car and that pleasure as well. Here the apple becomes a symbol that sets joy, desire and the possibility of living together against the associations of sin and punishment. For me, this is also a way of thinking that a person does not have to seek their own happiness only within the moral limits offered to them. Third, and perhaps the most local, is the possibility of rethinking the narratives of polygamy that I have encountered in Kurdish society through women's desire and their positions of power within relationships. This finale also carries a reference to the childhood

observations of mine that we discussed, and to my friend's memory. In traditional narratives of co-wives and polygamy, the man is most often at the center of the relationship, while women are defined through the bond they form with him. In the song, I wanted to change these established positions. I built another scene in which the closeness women feel for one another does not have to be explained by the man's presence, and in which the man does not stand as a determining authority over their desire. I do not see this scene as a claim that polygamous relationships in real life are equal or free. In the song's absurd world, I separate the roles that traditional marriage distributes in advance from one another, and I imagine how the characters could come together outside those roles.

When, at the end of the song, I say *Lîstik bi kêf qediya, em her sêk gihîştin mirazê xwe!* (The game ended in delight, all three of us have reached our wish!), what matters to me is less that three people are on the same stage than that none of their happiness is defined by domination over the others. This scene, in which women's desires are visible and the man is not treated as the natural center of the relationship, changes the habitual outcome of the traditional narrative. Most importantly, as the narrator, I leave entirely outside this reward, this apple, the gaze that grants itself the right to judge our love, to define it and to have a say over it: *Yên ku guh û çav dan meteloka me; Sê sêv para me ye, mixabin îcar ji we re nîne!* (You who listened to and watched our tale; the three apples are our share, alas, this time there is none for you!) For me, this is a boundary that refuses to leave the intimacy of our love to the control of others. I do not think everyone who listens to the song stands in the same judging position. But to those who see themselves as having the right to decide how we should love, how

we should live and how visible we should be, I allot no share at the end of this story. When I think of the social limits that stood before our love for eight years, this ending also has a personal meaning for me. It is a way of saying that the joy, the desire and the life we built together do not depend on anyone else's approval. The game is our game, the wish is our wish; and what that wish means is something we decide first of all. And then, of course, there is the matter of intimacy. To say that *Zeynik* was born from a real love does not mean I want to turn every detail of that relationship into a public narrative, or to expose it completely. In the song I reveal something of myself, but I do not disclose everything I lived. Because I do not believe that art must entirely put a person's life on display. Some feelings can be shared, some experiences can be told in transformed form, and some things can remain only among the people who lived them. For me, this boundary is not a deficiency of the narrative; it is part of the responsibility I carry both toward myself and toward the person I am in a relationship with. In the end, *Zeynik* for me is not merely a manifesto song on my queer identity, written as a political statement. It is the response that my love for a woman I love, my own experiences and my observations have found in music. Of course, that this love is queer, that it is expressed in Kurdish and that it collides with the social conditions we live in broadens the meaning of the song. But I do not want love itself to be lost between those pressures and didactic political discourses. Because the first thing that brought *Zeynik* into being was not a need to prove an ideology but a desire to express a feeling I had lived. What meanings that feeling may carry for others and where it will be drawn is an entirely different field that opens when the song steps outside my personal story and reaches the listener.

F. T.— Let us keep this question somewhat brief and turn directly to the harsh conditions and concrete realities of the spaces you inhabit. As a feminist queer Kurdish woman, you encounter, on the one hand, the expectations of the art market, art institutions, and dominant artistic discourses that seek to position you within a particular identity and mode of representation, and, on the other, the social norms within your own community surrounding womanhood, sexuality, family, belonging, and Kurdishness. If we consider Judith Butler's approach to how gender and identity are constituted through specific norms and repeated practices, how do you understand what these different spheres expect you to be as a woman, as a Kurd, and as a queer subject? How does this situation affect the opportunities available to you in cultural and artistic spaces? Are you afforded the same opportunities by institutions as your fellow artists? For instance, are you invited to *Newroz* events in Diyarbakır? Do Kurdish associations abroad invite you to participate in commemorative occasions or cultural events? Are you given a place at the opening of a film festival or on a television channel? Is the process of preparing an album progressing as you would like, or do you encounter similar problems arising from your identity in this sphere as well? Through which identities do you think these invitations and exclusions are shaped and classified? Within all these institutional and social boundaries, how does your artistic practice articulate a position on the body, gender, queer identity, and Kurdish belonging?



Diyarbakır, 2022. © Mirad Bayram

S. P.— I think about this issue in terms of a person's constant effort to open up a space in which to be themselves. Where women already struggle to be visible, if you are a queer woman, this space narrows even further. When you are a Kurdish woman, other meanings and other expectations are added onto you. After a certain point, you can no longer exist merely through the work you do. Who you are, how you appear, how you live, how much you speak, even how much you keep silent can come before your work. In the geography where I live, this has very everyday counterparts. As a woman, you learn the invisible limits of how free you can be at an early age. From how you dress to whom you are with, from your relationship with your family to the decisions

you make about your own body, many things can turn into areas in which others think they have a right to speak. When you are queer, calculations are added to this, such as where and how much you can show yourself, and in which settings you can comfortably speak about your relationship. Your Kurdish identity can also become the subject of other expectations and pre-established definitions. Sometimes people have already built a story about you before you have said anything. I do not think the field of art lies outside all of this. Art is said to be a freer field, but there are invisible limits there too. Whom institutions put on stage, whom they invite to festivals, whose story they find worth telling, and to whom they provide resources and opportunities actually says a great deal. Moreover, discrimination does not always take the form of an open refusal. Sometimes your phone does not ring. Your name is not on the invitation list. The same people keep circulating in the same fields. Even if you cannot know for certain why you are left outside, you notice the persistence of this situation. What is truly exhausting for me is that different circles expect you to be "acceptable" in different ways. In one place, you may not be Kurdish enough. In another, you may be too Kurdish. For some, your queer identity is a feature that makes you visible, while in another circle it can turn into a reason that closes doors. Because you are a woman, you may be expected to be quieter, more agreeable, less demanding. Thus a strange question arises before a person: Am I really here as myself, or am I constantly adjusting some parts of myself in order to be accepted? I think this is the deepest side of the matter. When a person has had to adjust themselves for a long time in order to be accepted in different settings, after a while they begin to carry the outside limits inside themselves. Before you have even spoken: "What happens if I say

this?" Before you have even produced: "Where will they place me if I do this?" Before you have even applied anywhere: "Would they even invite me?" This is perhaps one of the strongest forms of oppression: that without anyone having to stand before you constantly and block you, you begin to narrow your own possibilities in advance. In the field of music, I see another dimension of this. Women's being visible and their truly having a say within production are not the same thing. A woman can be very visible on stage. But how much say she has over her own music, where she stands in the decision-making mechanisms, and how seriously she is taken is a completely different matter. Because music is not merely going on stage and singing. Composition, arrangement, production, the studio, the technical crew, budget, distribution, festival and concert connections… There are many interconnected fields. In a significant part of them, we still encounter relationships and working networks in which men are the decisive ones. While a woman is accepted on the visible side of the work, she may not be accepted with the same ease on its technical, economic and decision-making side. When a male musician says clearly what he wants, he can be seen as someone who knows his job, whereas when a woman shows the same clarity, she can be found difficult, capricious or overly involved. When a man insists on his own musical approach, this can be regarded as his artistic stance, whereas when a woman shows the same determination, she can encounter people who try to explain to her what would be better. As a result, a woman musician does not merely produce her music. She may also have to prove, again and again, that she has the competence and the will to produce that music.



Leyla Bedir Khan (1903, Istanbul – December 26, 1986, Montauban, France)

A significant part of these inequalities operates less through open prohibitions than through everyday decisions and relationships. Which project is allocated a budget, who is recommended to a festival or introduced to other musicians… An

artist's career is often shaped by the sum of these decisions that seem small. A woman artist's body and appearance can also be placed ahead of her relationship with her music. How she looks, how old she is, how she dresses, how feminine she is or is not, how she lives her sexuality… These can come before her production. While male artists' aging can be associated with musical maturity, women's being evaluated through their appearance and youth also affects their field of production. Because at some point, instead of asking the artist "What do you want to produce?", people begin to ask "How can we present you?" When you are a queer woman, another tension is added to this. You want to exist without hiding yourself, but you also do not want your visibility to come before the music you make. Is your not being invited to the spaces granted to others a matter of preference about your music, or is it your identity that causes discomfort? You cannot always know the answer to these. But having to keep thinking about these possibilities is itself exhausting. When it comes to Kurdish identity, I can experience a similar squeeze. Sometimes you are expected to make your Kurdishness visible, and sometimes you are expected not to make it too visible. On one side are the expectations that the society you belong to builds around womanhood, family and sexuality; on the other is the place the world of culture and art wants to define you in. Everyone relates to a part of you. But very few places allow you to exist as a whole. For this reason, for me, whether or not I am invited to a *Newroz* in Diyarbakır, a Kurdish cultural event abroad, a festival or a television program is not only about individual organizations. The real issue is whom the cultural field regards as belonging to itself and as worthy of being represented. Visibility does not mean only being on screen or on stage.

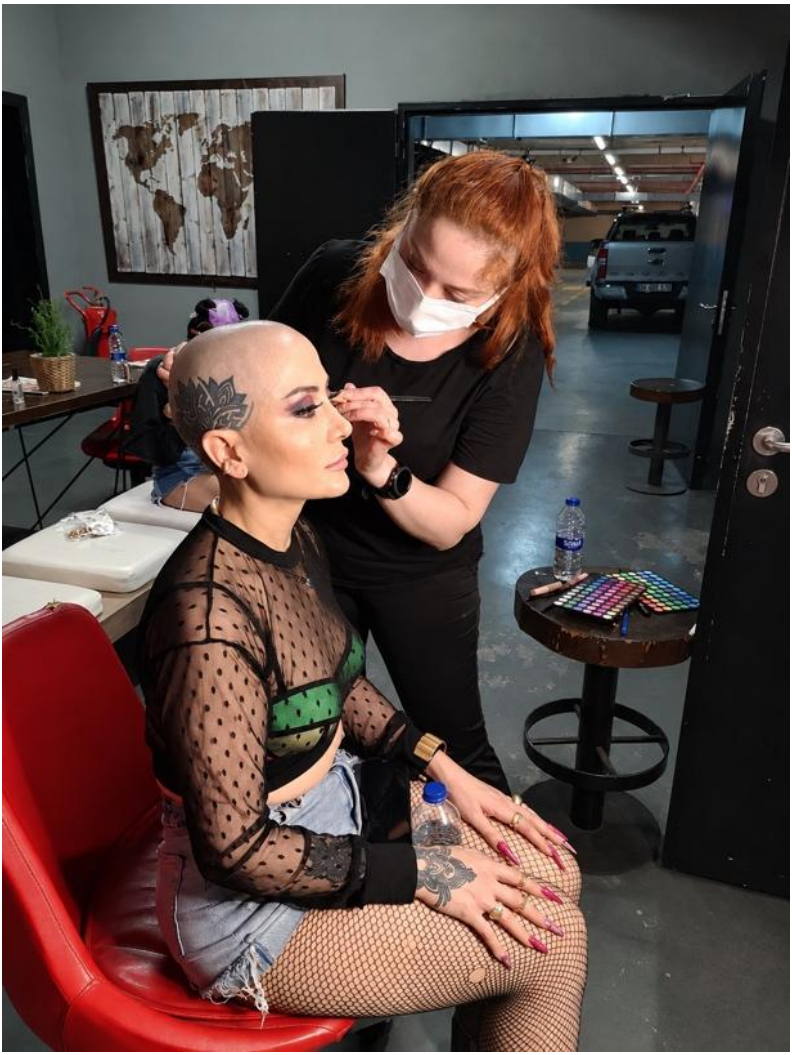
Reaching resources, being able to work with the right people, and having the material and moral conditions to sustain your production are also part of it.



Behind the scenes of the *ALO* shoot, 2021. © Zeynik

There is a dimension of equal opportunity here that is often overlooked. That two people doing the same job have, on paper, the same studio, the same stage or the same right to apply does not mean they produce under equal conditions. If a male artist can devote all his energy to his production while you spend a significant part of yours protecting yourself, getting yourself taken seriously, setting boundaries and being able to stay where you are… The inequality between you cannot be measured only by the resources you have. A door being open to everyone does not mean everyone can reach that door with the same ease. I think about these issues in the process of preparing my album as well. The emergence of a song is already a fragile process in itself. You bring out something that is inside you, and then you share it with the arranger, the producer, the musicians and the technical crew. Trust is very important here. The person in front of you needs to really listen to what you want to do and try to understand your musical choices. For women artists in particular, collaborating without losing their say over their own music can sometimes become a struggle in itself. So the matter is not only producing songs. It is reaching the right people, creating financial resources, building a trustworthy working environment, and moving forward while protecting your own artistic decisions. In spite of all this, I do not want to build my artistic practice only on the social definitions I am subjected to. Being Kurdish, being a woman and being queer are real parts of my life. But none of them alone describes me entirely. For me, art is also, in part, the possibility of a person overflowing the definitions others have prepared for them. When I speak about the body, I want to talk not only about the suppression of the woman's body but also about how a person relates to their own body; when I speak about belonging, I want to

speak not only about belonging somewhere but also, at times, about not quite fitting anywhere. Because in my view, freedom is not having no identity. It is being able to build a life in which our identities do not turn into boundaries for us. A person's liberation is not getting rid of their identities; it is that their identities do not become their fate. I do not want to be obliged to make a particular kind of music because I am Kurdish, to appear in a particular way because I am a woman, or to speak only about particular issues because I am queer. All of these are in me, but I am not made up of only these. I do not want to be less visible because I am Kurdish, a woman and queer. But I do not want to be visible only because I am Kurdish, a woman and queer, either. I want to be seen as a person and an artist who produces together with all of this. The words I build around the body, womanhood, queerness and Kurdishness in my artistic practice are born from here. Rather than settling into an identity set aside for me in advance, I want to let all these parts contradict one another, change, and at times not quite fit anywhere. Perhaps this is also at the base of my relationship with art: instead of trying to fit into the small place set aside for me, opening my own place myself. Because waiting for someone to make room for you is not the same as building your own space. I try, as much as possible, to do the second.



Behind the scenes of the *ALO* shoot, 2021. © Zeynik

F. T.— I would like to approach this final question from a slightly different angle. I will try to enter, through only a very narrow fissure, into the question of "representation"—the subject that has been most heavily criticized throughout this book, that constitutes

its very heart, and that has been discussed more than any other. The question of representation has been established as one of the most deeply rooted and decisive fields of debate in Western thought and art since Plato and Aristotle. By positioning art as a copy of a copy of truth, Plato directs a forceful critique at representation, considering it problematic both epistemologically and ethically. Representation produces a deceptive appearance that distances us from the truth of the Forms and is therefore dangerous to a well-ordered social structure as well. Aristotle, by contrast, grounds representation in the concept of mimesis, treating it as a natural human capacity and affirming aesthetic experience by emphasizing its cognitive and educational functions. With the emergence of modern aesthetics, however, this classical framework begins to break down. Kant detaches aesthetic judgment from the truthfulness of representation, grounding it instead in the subject's disinterested experience of pleasure. In doing so, he weakens the necessity for art to represent while opening up a new line of tension between aesthetics and ethics. This rupture assumes a more radical dimension with Nietzsche. For Nietzsche, representation is not a means of reflecting truth, but a structure that constructs and, at the same time, conceals it through metaphors. Representation is therefore not merely an epistemological problem, but also an ethical one that imposes particular regimes of value. Bourdieu approaches representation as a product of the social field, demonstrating that what can be represented and who possesses the authority to represent are determined along class lines. In other words, representation does not reflect reality; it constructs reality as a class hierarchy. This reveals that representation extends beyond an aesthetic choice and is directly connected to the production of social distinction and

legitimacy. Rancière, meanwhile, conceptualizes representation in terms of the "distribution of the sensible," without reducing it to a mere mode of showing. He argues that it is an ethical-political regime that organizes the distribution of visibility, speech, and meaning. Ultimately, according to Rancière, representation does not liberate the world; it stabilizes the existing order. This critical trajectory expands further through the work of thinkers such as Canguilhem, Hyppolite, Foucault, Deleuze, Althusser, Lyotard, Barthes, Adorno, Arendt, Benjamin, Ricoeur, Bachelard, Jameson, Balibar, Lacan, Habermas, Sennett, Latour, Nancy, Badiou, Sartre, Lefebvre, Merleau-Ponty, Žižek, Derrida, Heidegger, Marion, Agamben, Baudrillard, Haraway, Serres, Lévi-Strauss, and others, taking representation beyond the realm of aesthetics alone. Ultimately, representation is reconceived not as an innocent instrument that reflects reality, but as a mechanism that distorts truth, transforms what is natural into an *artefact*, and shapes both the social and ethical spheres through its entanglement with relations of power.

As a somewhat naïve transition from this point, the experimental-aesthetic trajectory opened up by Ciwan Haco in the recent history of Kurdish music should not be seen merely as the emergence of a new musical style, but rather as a historical rupture that made it possible to rethink, through music itself, the relationship between the local and the universal. Yet this rupture is not the beginning of a powerful and coherent regime of representation, as it is often assumed to be. On the contrary, it is an exceptional situation that places representation itself in *epokhē*, to use the Husserlian term, destabilizing it and blurring its boundaries. Rather than seeking to represent Kurdish identity in a louder, more inclusive, or more "correct" way, Haco's music

creates an intermediary zone, a passage that turns the very idea of representation into an aesthetic problem. In other words, instead of representing Kurdish identity, Haco makes representation itself, to some extent, a problem. Thus, Haco is more than a figure who establishes a continuous line of development in Kurdish music; he is an exceptional figure around whom subsequent aesthetic and political regimes position themselves, yet one that none of them can fully contain. This exceptional position carries Haco beyond the boundaries of music history and makes it possible to consider him alongside atemporal figures in art history. For instance, the rupture Hölderlin opened up in poetry removed language from the secure ground of representation and carried it to the boundary of meaning. Similarly, Haco transforms music—particularly for the Kurds—from an aesthetic expression of identity into an experience that makes the limits of representation perceptible and creates a new aesthetic (musical) space at that very boundary. This is why speaking about Haco is always a risk. He is not a completed aesthetic form, but a rupture that is continually deferred, cannot be fixed, and cannot be surpassed. Following this exceptional threshold, we see that some of the trajectories that have become prominent in Kurdish music have largely been shaped by powerful regimes of representation. Şivan Perwer's music has become almost an ontological political regime for the Kurds; by directly linking historical erasure to a problem of existence, voice and word have established music as a form of resistance. Nîzamettin Arîç has created a balance between the melodic sensibility of the East, grounded in breath, and the mechanical instrumental arrangements of the West, constructing a kind of ontic space of security within Kurdish music. In the trajectory represented by Metin and Kemal Kahraman, ethno-theological deyiş have been

detached from their rigid ritual forms and subjected to an aesthetic reorganization; the history of Dersim, Alevi cosmology, and a Spinozist understanding of the immanence of nature have been incorporated into the content and formal structure of the music. Koma Wetan's avant-garde emergence, too, created a molar rupture that pushed the boundaries of representation and carried this trajectory onto another plane. Founded in 1973 in Tbilisi, in present-day Georgia, during the Soviet era, by four young men—three Yazidi Kurds and one Armenian—Koma Wetan became one of the pioneering groups of Kurdish-language rock music. The group performed rock music at a level of proficiency comparable to that of the leading rock bands of its time, particularly those such as *The Beatles* that shaped the musical sensibilities of the era. Kerem Gerdenzeri, the group's guitarist and vocalist, continues to make music today, carrying on Koma Wetan's legacy while pursuing his solo work. The fact that the group released only one album and disbanded shortly thereafter was a great misfortune for Kurdish music. The group continues to serve as an important point of reference in many respects, and the music they produced has yet to be surpassed, despite the passage of time. Nevertheless, among the younger representatives of Kurdish rock music, Harun Elkî's work deserves particular mention. By reinterpreting the legacy inherited from previous generations of Kurdish-language rock within a contemporary musical framework, Elkî is one of the notable examples demonstrating that this field continues to develop in different ways today. Speaking of bands, we should also mention Koma Amed and Koma Dengê Azadî, both of which played an important role in the transformation of Kurdish music during the 1990s. Bringing the melodic and rhythmic structures of traditional Kurdish music into dialogue with the modern musical

sensibilities of the period, both groups reinterpreted traditional forms through new instruments, arrangements, and rhythms. They demonstrated that Kurdish music was not a field devoted merely to preserving a traditional repertoire, but a living aesthetic space capable of continually transforming itself through new musical forms. Their work also constituted a powerful musical expression of the political and social atmosphere of the 1990s. Alongside revolutionary and political songs, they produced numerous hit songs that spoke to emotional and romantic experiences, as well as different aspects of everyday life. While contributing to the formation of the period's political memory, the music of Koma Amed and Koma Dengê Azadî also helped Kurdish-language popular music reach a broad audience and fostered the emergence of a new musical sensibility. Viewed from the perspective of Kurdish music in the 1990s, these groups are important examples demonstrating that the relationship between tradition and modernity was not merely a theoretical question, but one that laid the groundwork for a concrete aesthetic transformation through sound, rhythm, instrumentation, and song form. Nevertheless, what these trajectories have in common is that the music speaks from an elevated, collective, and, at times, representational position. It is precisely here that a critical problem arises concerning the relationship between locality and universality in art. Badiou's warning is decisive in this regard: he emphasizes the false nature of the local movement and the way both image and mode of expression are shaped through a process of self-diminishment. This observation points to a risk that emerges when locality is not aesthetically transformed. Haco's exceptional position places this risk in brackets, whereas the powerful regimes of representation that follow him—or develop independently of his

trajectory—often choose to refill the space thus bracketed, thereby reinstating the weight of representation. It is precisely within this historical, aesthetic, and ontological context that I believe a different orientation becomes apparent in your music, particularly in the song *Ez Baş Nabim*. Here, sound and music neither claim to open up a field of experience beyond representation, as in Haco's work, nor issue a direct, collective, and elevated political call, as in Perwer's. Instead, the word recedes, and the subject positions itself in a state of not being well, of incompleteness and vulnerability, far removed from the figure of powerful representation. The expression *Ez Baş Nabim* is neither dramatized nor metaphorically elevated; rather, it is left suspended in an in-between state through its very simplicity. In my view, this state of remaining in between establishes a quiet yet profound friction with the elevated regimes of representation and resistance that have long dominated Kurdish music. Do you think this verbal and musical withdrawal in *Ez Baş Nabim* has the potential to genuinely transform the powerful regimes of representation that have long occupied a central position in Kurdish music?

S. P.— Frankly, I do not produce with the claim of transforming powerful regimes of representation. I have no desire to enter into polemic with the loud, collective and at times ontological tone that Kurdish music has historically carried. Those lines were strong in their own contexts. They were necessary, even obligatory. For a people to be able to proclaim their existence, a loud voice was needed. It had to produce an echo. I care about the conditions under which those voices emerged, what they made possible and what kind of memory they carry. I know that in conditions where a people is denied through its language, its culture and its very

existence, music cannot remain merely an aesthetic expression. I do not deny that echo. But what I do is something else. Within that loud field of representation, I open a gap of my own. I do not climb to the summit of representation. I lean toward the gap inside representation. I do not see this as placing a fragile subject against a strong one. Because within resistance too there is fragility, loss, fear and uncertainty. The memory of Kurdish music is made up not only of struggle. It is also made up of exile, separation, longing and the contradictory relationships a person forms with their own life. So I cannot say that fragility is new to this music. I only make visible what this fragility corresponds to in my own experience. An incomplete, fragile subject who is "not well." This is not an aesthetic program. Certainly not a manifesto. It is a natural result of my experience and my perception of time. I have never been someone who steps up to the high pulpit of the collective and speaks. I have been more of a body that struggles to breathe within the crowd but still does not let go of that breath. I put the incomplete subject on stage. I did not shout. I did not speak on behalf of the collective. But I did not withdraw that fragile tremor hidden inside the collective.

Ez Baş Nabim is not a defiance. Not a desire to rise, nor a slogan. It is more of a bare acceptance. When I say "I will not be well," I am not representing an identity. I am making a state visible. I am not a strong subject there. I am an undecided, urban, divided consciousness. And perhaps precisely for this reason, I speak from a place closer to the spirit of the age. Strong regimes of representation generally speak clearly. In a loud, resolute tone that gives direction… My voice does not hide indecision. I do not dramatize feeling. I do not exalt the word. I break the breath. I lower the voice. Because sometimes the most radical thing is not

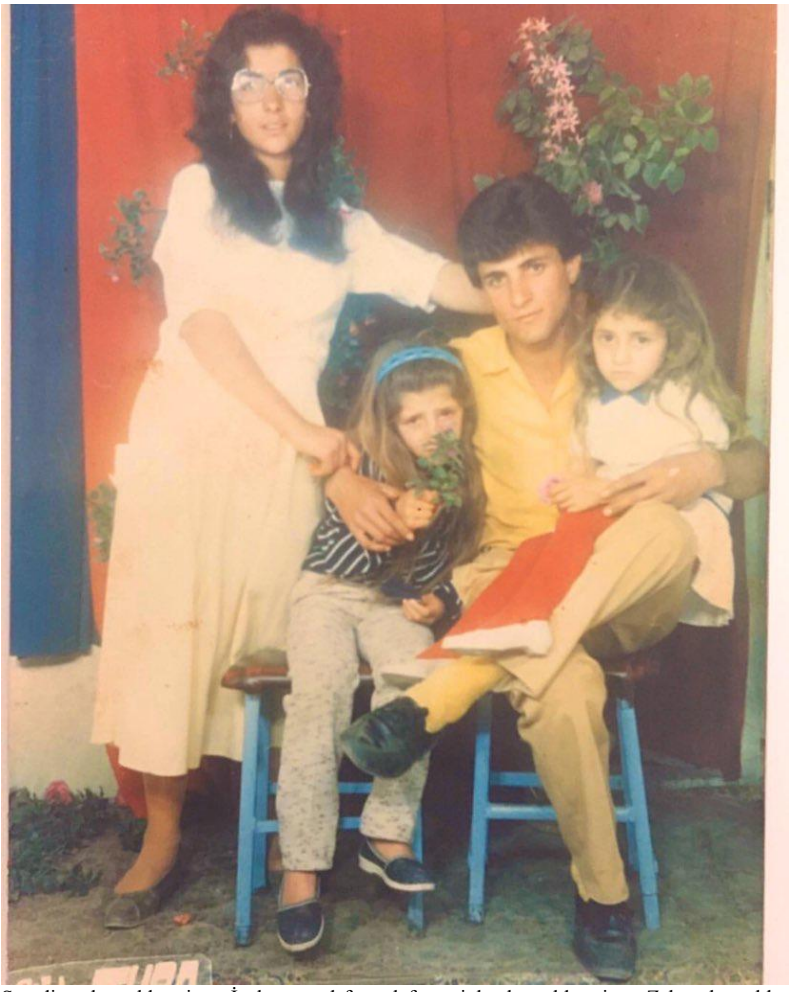
raising the voice but letting it tremble. The figure of high representation often produces a flawless subject: one who resists, who knows, who calls. The fragile subject, however, gives no direction. It stays open. And sometimes openness is the most radical thing. Because when everything is said at a high pitch, a whisper becomes political. I am not trying to bring down a regime. But I do not want to add to the weight of the existing representation either. Sometimes I want to lighten that weight. “I will not be well” is not a heroic narrative. It is the honesty of a body passing through a tired age. If this approach creates a silent tension with the tones of strong representation, this is not a conscious intervention. It is a tension born of the spirit of the time. Does this transform the strong regimes of representation? I cannot declare that. Aesthetic transformation does not happen through a manifesto. It happens like a silent shift. The tone changes. The center moves. One day you look and the loud voice has ceased to be the norm. But the artist does not declare this. Time notices. Perhaps what I am doing is not carrying the weight of Kurdish music, but opening up an opening within that weight in which I can breathe. Perhaps this opening grows. Perhaps it does not. But it is always there. Perhaps this is making room for another possibility in Kurdish music. But it is not for me to declare it. I feel this: now not only the voice of resistance but also the voice of fragility writes history. Alongside the strong, there is an aesthetics of the incomplete. Perhaps the new rupture lies precisely here. I am not at the center of representation. But I am in that tremor standing at the edge of the center. And sometimes transformation begins not at the highest note but in a breath being drawn back.



Three-year-old Semyanî and her older sister Zehra. Semyanî is wearing a large prayer bead necklace. Muş, 1983.



From left to right: her mother, father, and older sister Melehat. Zehra is sitting on her father's lap, and Semyanî on Melehat's. Muş, 1983.



Standing: her older sister İpek; seated from left to right: her older sister Zehra, her older brother Cevdet, and Semyanî. Photo studio, Muş, 1985.

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The Body After is not a classical biography recounting the life of Semyanî Perîzade. Tracing Semyanî's career and musical output, it follows the intellectual and sensory field opened up by the body, the voice, language and music.

The book's central question is this: Which body can become visible, which voice is accepted as speech, and which language has the right to be spoken? Semyanî Perîzade's bodily presence and Kurdish music encounter established modes of representation at the point where these questions intersect. The matter here is less a different identity becoming visible than the questioning of the measures of legitimacy that determine visibility, speech and language.

Taking Jacques Rancière's concept of *dissensus* as its point of departure, the book rethinks the relations among body, representation, perception, the senses, music and everyday life. The disagreement that emerges in Semyanî's existence does not stem from loud opposition or direct confrontation. It emerges in an indifference that does not heed what is given and carries on its own life in its own way. Kurdish speech, the *queer* body and everyday life become ordinary means of being, without turning into political slogans.

The body after is the name of this transformation: a body that neither returns to the norms of the past nor waits for the law of the future; a body that opens a new sensory field through its own way of being. It does not ask permission to be represented. It does not wait to be recognized. As it establishes its own ordinariness, it quietly displaces the limits concerning who may speak, who may be seen and what is accepted as natural.

In this respect, The Body After is an essay in thinking that asks, through Semyanî Perîzade's life and art, under what conditions the body, music, language and art are deemed "legitimate." Setting out from the particular conditions of the Kurdish world of art and thought, it traces the possibilities of new aesthetic and political thinking.

When does a body stop being merely a body?

When does a voice cease to be noise and become speech?

And perhaps the real question: Where does the body after begin today?

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