POWER AND "POST-PRODUCTION" OF IMAGINATION:

An Inquiry into Images of Creative Dissent From Istanbul

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My eternal gratitute to Prem Kumar Rajaram, Balazs Vedres, Daniel Monterescu, Çınar Özenç, Serra Hakyemez, Alexander Mirchev, Lida Lamza, my loving family and all my friends in Budapest that became my family in such a short time, that supported me at all times to help put this work together...

How can we understand the arise of a new form of resistance, operating through the production of "imageries" to create alternative knowledges? Are they actually able to dissolve the concentrations of power to a state of balance? Or do they unintentionally reproduce the very forms of power that they oppose to?

With the adoption of Foucauldian understanding of power and discourse production, this paper presents and analyzes the creative dissent expressed by three groups based in Istanbul. Callon & Latour's concept of "black boxes" are understood as mediums through which power can translate and reproduce, in an age defined by constant proliferation of "images" and "spectacles." The paper will draw attention to the ways in which creative dissent could be used as a form of resistance, underlining its potential challenges.

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INTRODUCTION

"Money, money, money!" exclaims an infant while someone else in the crowd commands in a hurry: "In the bag, put them *all* in the bag!" The image shot with an amateur hand-held camera is shaky but the spectacle is obvious: there's money pouring down from the topmost floor of a shopping mall. One security guard is taking notes on a piece of paper from one of the upper floors, another one shouts from within the crowd: "It's forbidden, forbidden!" What was once to the hurrying crowds, a distance of few steps to enter and exit the mall with shopping bags in their hands transforms into a spot of gathering to collect as many banknotes as possible. The ordinary ever-passing time of daily life pauses to make room for a new sort of unanticipated hurry. As the camera zooms into the banknotes, the surprised audience watching the video shot on scene may feel relieved for a moment (for some reason that they can't exactly explain) to see that they are fakes. Although there's always the ones that put the "money" right into their wallets, without even looking at them carefully – perhaps they're saving it for a later time. There's pictures of Mickey Mouse, George W. Bush Jr. and the portrait of a popular Turkish parody character 'Şahan' characterized by a unibrow and unshaven beard on the banknotes instead of "Benjamin." In the next scene, an elderly man is talking on the phone while smiling at the piece of green paper he holds in his hand. Maybe he knows that they're fakes, probably he's just telling the person on the phone in amusement about what just happened or reading the small print on either of the $100 and $52 banknotes:

"Bravo, you caught it, idiot"

"Is this enough for your credit card debt?"

"United slaves of America"

"In war we trust"

"When you're thinking of what gift to buy to your mother, think about how many mothers and their children are working like slaves to produce it."

It's the second Saturday of May in 2008, right about the time of the shopping frenzy one day to the mother's day. After weeks of planning, the "%52", a quasi-anarchist youth group, is finally putting on their performances in two major malls, one on the European side of Istanbul, the other on the Asian. The agents throw 240 fake dollars down on the people and videotape it as they observe their reactions. The fountain placed to rain down on a "Lipton" billboard in one of the malls is circulating water that is now colored "red."

This performance may not strike some as odd or genuine, as more and more alter-globalist groups are making use of radical performance or art part of their struggle against consumerism or authority. It could be argued that they are the post-modern artistic heirs of the Dadaists, Surrealists and "The Situationist International" who took up producing art for political purposes. Today, the development of technological means and growing influence of globalization allows for everyone to express their opinion and disseminate their productions through the means of mass media, creating alternative knowledges and political standings.

This paper will take up and discuss the newly emerging forms of "creative dissent" in an age dominated by "imaginations" and "images," primarily through a Foucauldian understanding of power and discourse production. Through presenting and discussing the creative forms of dissent expressed by three groups called "%52", "İç Mihrak," and "Atıl Kunst," based in Istanbul, it will argue that the usage of such creative methods may be used for dissolution of power, through helping the creation of a base whereby multiple "truth claims" can coexist, allowing for a transformation of "thought structures" in a way that different values and a multiplicity of opinions are appreciated. Yet it will also point out to the

potential setbacks of the usage of these methods, through unintentional attempts at negation of existing "truth claims."

The emergence of all three groups, whose only common attribute is the fact that they express their dissent via visual and performative methods, has occurred in the last 2 years, at the height of a period of rapid transformation in terms of the implementation of various reforms in Turkey. The struggle for and processes leading to democratization has both allowed for their emergence and been a focus of their criticism. While it would be problematic to categorize them as part of an anti-global movement that commonly makes use of such creative methods (due to their agenda primarily concerning local politics and the social issues related to it) there are parallels in terms of their critiques and influences. Their activism aims, via the use of such methods, instead of empowering or defending the exclusivity of one sort of value or idea over another, to work through and help think beyond them for a "better future." Furthermore, theirs is a means of expression that they believe may possibly, channeled in a single moment of personal interaction with their audience, open up a sphere of discussion and deliberation free from the influence of values and ideas functioning through norms and dogmas.

The first part of this paper will focus on a providing the Turkish context and a theoretical framework. Tracing the building up of the idea of "governmentality," (Foucault, 2003) as a post-structural phenomenon that disciplines bodies through internalization of certain thought structures like "norms," Callon & Latour's concept of "black boxes" that translate power will be adopted to demonstrate the role of "images" and "imaginations" as mediums for its subtle transmission and reproduction. (1992) The changing social role of "imagination" (Appadurai, 1990) and "images" (Debord, 1995) will be underlined in relation

with the emergence of current-day forms of "creative dissent," and their "post-productions." The second part of the paper will be a presentation of the groups' creative dissent, and an analysis of their expression try to answer the question of whether their oppositional standpoint may unintentionally reproduce the very power structures that they're opposing to.

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF TURKEY

As mentioned, it is possible to see parallels with the rest of the anti-global and/or new social movements from around the world in terms of the techniques and critiques of the three groups that are the focus of this study. On the other hand, as the sphere of their activism is largely limited to the political and social issues directly affecting Turkey, they allude to certain actors and events in Turkey continuously via their productions. Therefore the subtexts and symbols of their dissent relying heavily on how they perceive the state, would be impossible to grasp without first providing at least a brief historical background into the political context of Turkey. This section will try to underline some of the main conditions leading to the groups' emergence, as well as introducing a variety of patterns, actors and events that have become the object of their criticisms. Therefore this condensed history of Turkey, is mostly put together from selections of related important events and actors that the creative dissenters of this paper make use of in their productions.

The section will summarize short intervals of oppositional processes that have been interrupted several times throughout the history of the Republic, causing "social amnesia," and a return back to top-down rule of the country. Turkey has witnessed 3 coup d'etats and 1 post-modern coup[1] overall, and numerous political parties were shut down throughout. In the

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[1]   The coup d'etat in 1997 is often referred to as a post-modern coup (Candar, 1999; Özal, 2003; Tank, 2001; Aras, 2002; Cornell 1999 etc.)

post-80s period however, the army significantly stepped back in the political scene with regards to how it was before and the later developments allowed for a political culture where we can speak of "governmentality" at work.

One of the most established ways to analyze the Turkish society was through a prominent social scientist Şerif Mardin's opposing concepts of "center" and "periphery," (Mardin, 2007) to trace the process of nation state formation in Turkey. According to this view, an elite class of well educated revolutionaries managed in the aftermath of the First World War to not only successfully resist the foreign occupation in the current day territories of Turkey but also to establish a republic, their first and foremost mission became to tend the wounds of what was left from what was called the "sick man," Ottoman Empire. The primary purpose was to build a nation-state that was to rapidly "catch up" with the "level of the contemporary civilizations." (Atatürk, 1933) This modernist and western-oriented project of "engineering a nation," was conducted via the establishment of what Korel Göymen calls the "bureaucratic ruling tradition" (2004) and by whom Hasan Bülent Kahraman refers to as the "historical bloc" (2007) shaped by the cooperation of urban elites, state bureaucracy and military, supplementing Mardin's theory and shaping the "center." As opposed to this, "the periphery" was constituted of landowners *(ağalar)*, rural mass and religious quasi-authorities (Mardin; 2007; pp 38-39.) Furthermore, this "center" was embodied in the Republican People's Party (CHP) in the political scene, most of whose members were urban intellectual elites many with a military background. Hasan Bülent Kahraman summarizes the situation as such:

"*The center highlighted the importance of the state, remained attached to the modernization models of the late 19th century and went for what could be identified as 'passive modernization', meaning the radical and comprehensive transformation of the legal system at large. The other side*

defended the technological, substructural and economic transformations... It should also be noted that the peripheral powers in Turkey guarded their traditional values and norms and in this sense they have positioned themselves as a conservative bloc set against the radicalism of the historical bloc. This side also defends a certain model of 'alternative modernity' against the pure Westernization of the country. Religion and the meaning attributed to it here play a crucial role in occasionally bringing forth the tension between the army and the civilian actors." (2005, pp 2)

Characterized by a strong statist approach towards economy[2], rationality, strict secularism, nationalism[3] and Kemalist reforms towards Westernization[4], fearing the failure of this "modernization project" brought about an excessive urge on behalf of the center, to control (Maksudyan, 2007; pp 40) the periphery. CHP had ruled for almost thirty years during the single-party period and this is why the Democratic Party (henceforth DP) was very popular when they won the majority of the seats in the parliament in 1950, with the second elections after the transition to the multi-party system in 1946. This first real triumph of the "periphery" endured for 10 years, until the coup d'etat carried by the military in 1960; in order to save "the democracy from the crisis it's in"[5] with an emphasis on the *impartial* nature of the coup. (Zürcher, 1993; pp 351; emphasis added) DP leader Menderes and two ministers (Zorlu and Polatkan) were sentenced to death in 1961. (pp 362) Even though military rule had lasted for 2 years only, the following period from 1960 – 1980 is characterized by growing political

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[2]   The Turkish state led a closed-economic system up until 1980s.

[3]   It has often been stated that Turkish national identity, however much it was argued to have been constructed with regards to citizenship and/or to a common national identity based on living in the same land, has actually evolved quickly into a racially bounded phenomenon based on ethnicity and language. (Aktar, 1996; Oran, 1997; Parla, 1992; Yıldız, 2001; Maksudyan, 2007)

[4]   To be able to grasp the impact of the top-down reformation processes brought upon by the revolution, it may be useful to take a look at the extent of Westernization and how it was implemented: Atatürk's reforms included a wide range of elements pertaining to various aspects of social life, such as the conversion of the alphabet from Arabic to Latin, calender from Hegira to Gregorian, abolishment of the Sultanate, Caliphate and the Islamic Law giving way to representative democracy, the implementation of a secular law heavily based on the Swiss Civil Code and formation of a Directorate of the Religious Affairs, introduction of the women's suffrage and introduction of a dress code heavily restricting religious identification.

[5]   DP had started on with liberalist economic policies and a reversing some of the small-scale restictions on Islam (e.g. Switching the call to prayer to be conducted in traditional Arabic instead of Turkish) While the first half of the 50s witnessed an economic boom parallel to a conduct of foreign policy that included participation in the Korean War that allowed for the accession into the NATO, the second half of the decade witnessed high rates of inflation and debt. A wide range of cencorship laws were implemented, to prevent dissent. These were some of the reasons of why the coup was carried on.

instability and tension, parallel to the increasing number of parties emerging in the political scene insufficient to hold a majority in the parliament and thus forming coalition governments. Turkey witnessed two more coup d'etats from the military in this period, one in 1971 and another in 1980, the latter being a result of both economic demise and growing political violence between the leftist and the rightist groups. The extent of this political violence was not limited to youth organizations of political parties, there were numerous independent organizations. The situation could be summarized as such: "Certain youth groups from the left extreme and Grey Wolves[6] together with religious radicals on the right were fighting to reign over the streets and university campuses."[7] (pp 383) The final coup in 1980, was extreme for this time the military did not only aim to re-write the constitution and attempt to remove and sentence party leaders[8] and members from office, but they also discharged mayors and city councils and undertook a variety of radical anti-terror measures[9]. This political upheaval, whereby the youth and intellectuals were largely involved with, cost numerous lives through political assassinations, random shootings, bombings and finally the supression of the army executing not only the most prominent activists but prosecuting and sentencing numerous others.

From the '80s on the transition from a closed to a globally oriented open economic system caused in a backlash in the statist nature of the republic. While the new constitution largely restricted civil liberties, the youth that was perceived between the 1923 – 50 period as "the embodiment of the new nation" and between the 1950 – 80 period as "rebels" posing "a

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6 Grey Wolves were founded as a youth organization of the Nationalist Movement Party, (MHP) a left wing party which Pan-Turkism is one of its ideological pillars. The name is derived from the Ergenekon Legend, after Asena, a female grey wolf that is believed to have helped lead Turks to freedom from captivity.

7 My translation from Turkish.

8 It is ironic that one of the generals, Alparslan Turkeş, once a military official who had played an important part in conducting the 1960 coup was now being arrested and banned from political life by the army. He had entered political life in 1965, and by the time of the 1980 coup he was leading the Nationalist Movement Party.

9 Zurcher mentions that within the first year of the junta rule, 122.600 detentions were carried from among the "suspects" list. (pp 407) While this alleviated the frequency of political violence to a great extent, torture was not uncommon and the list of suspects included a wide range of intellectuals (proffessors, university students, journalists, legal practitioners etc.) and unionists merely expressing either leftist or Islamic opinion overtly or covertly. (pp 408)

major threat to the nation", were now perceived as "individualistic and selfish consumers", their attitudes an extension of the "turning the corner"[10] mentality of the era. (Neyzi, 2001) As the forbidden leaders returned back to the political scene, role of the media increased in terms of forming a public opinion and a Turkish-Islamic synthesis[11] was promoted more and more by the Motherland Party in power. These developments as a whole resulting in a chain reaction of events: While a number of policies were conducted granting more and more tolerance to religion,[12] a process of increasing freedom of expression was observed on the cultural and personal front. (Neyzi, 2001; pp 422) When on one hand, the new generation of youth was experiencing life in a far less depoliticized environment, the late '80s were paving the way for increasing political instability. High inflation rates, the "emergence" of the Kurdish problem, rising Islamicization, accession into the EU and increasing globalization were matters of growing public discourse after the '90s. A number of reform packages were introduced over time, aiming for democratization. In 1997, a "post-modern" coup was conducted by the army due to growing fears of Islamization, pressuring the coalition led by the Welfare Party[13] to step down yet not dissolving the parliament or annuling the constitution. From 2001 on, Justice and Development Party (AKP) that is considered as "mildly Islamic" is in power and while the economy seemed to recuperate within the first years of their rule, the

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[10] "Turning the corner" was an expression that came to be used increasingly in this era, referring to the possibility of making a big financial break and not having to about "anything anymore." Prime minister Özal, leader of the Motherland Party, who served following the transition into the civilian rule after the coup in 1980 was perceived as the living embodiment of this philosophy, he came from a low-income family in the small rural city of Malatya and paved his way up with his own efforts. (Zurcher, 2003; pp 412)

[11] The Turkish-Islamic synthesis emphasized the convenience of Islam as a religion for the Turkish peoples, both in historical and cultural terms. It was first brought forward in the '70s with the purpose of uniting the Nationalists and Islamists, both of whom were considered to be on the right of the political scala, against the leftists.

[12] A rapid increase in the construction of new mosques, opening up of religious schools granting equal status with other high schoolsin terms of being qualitifed to take the university entrance exams and religious publications, broadcasting and media organs were some of these implementations. Yet perhaps the most contraversial of all is the "headscarf issue" that surfaced when the Motherland Party attempted to pass a law that would null the headscarf ban in government offices and universities, which the Constitutional Court ruled out. Yet from the 80s on, a movement of Islamic female students that "sought the right to enter university classes wearing headscarves" (Göle, 2003) triggered a certain amount of polarization around the issue to this day.

[13] The Welfare Party (RP) was heir to the National Order Party (MNP) that was shut down after the '71 coup, National Salvation Party (MSP) that was shut down after the '80 coup, all led by Necmettin Erbakan, an Islamist right-wing politician. RP, too, was shut down by the constitutional court after the '97 coup and Erbakan stepped down. The dissolution of the RP resulted in the formation of Virtue Party, shut down in 2001, later to divide into a traditionalist group forming the Felicity Party and the reformist group founding the Justice and Development Party (AKP) currently in power since 2001.

implementation of a number of reform packages seems to be one of the foremost issues of public concern in terms of rapid transformation towards democracy.

Mardin's analysis of the "center" and "periphery" would be insufficient to explain the political context of today. A second look into this brief Turkish history, which the paper has attempted to summarize as much as possible at the sake of superficiality, suggests that these two oppositions that may have once existed, grew similar and the indistinguishable with time. Furthermore, especially after waves of massive immigration from the rural areas to the cities starting with the '50s parallel to the development of industrialization, it became very hard to speak of a distinction between a "center" and "periphery" in societal terms either, for the two are now intertwined, creating intermediate and new middle classes, at the very least. Political parties from different sides of the scala reappropriated their ideologies over the course of repetitive coups, with regards to what "was/is acceptable," usually relying heavily on populist policies which were reflected in both their member and voter profiles. Perhaps this is why Kahraman claims:

"On the one hand it [opposition] implies the counter-interaction with the state, in general... it is not easy at first sight to understand why there is such an urgent need for an opposition in Turkey. I argue at this point that what is being sought after, is not a real opposition but an alternative to the existing government and there is a wide difference and gap between these two concepts." (2005; pp 3-4)

With the transition brought upon by rapid globalization and the implementations of the reform packages on the way to the EU accession, prioritization of the creation of a diverse, plural and democratic state seems to have shifted the current discourse in these last few years towards finding of "alternatives" instead of a viable "opposition." The distinction between "opposition" and "alternatives" become more salient when taken up in terms of the criticisms

of the three groups of this study. The ongoing processes of democratization, neo-liberalization and dynamics of individualization rendered the existing political cleavages in Turkey more visible and diverse social groups, also influenced by the new social movements, problematized their lack of multiple democratic representations in various spheres by constituting "counterpublics." (Warner, 2002) The three groups of this study, emerging out of this political environment, question the existing knowledges and aim to underline the importance of a multiplicity of truths, values and norms by pointing out to a way of "opposition" without making any claims of authority or by provision of "alternatives."

Yet before moving any further, in order to be able to draw a complete picture of what might have and is still going on, it would be useful to leave interpretations of history aside and take a look at theories applicable to the Turkish context to see how power may function and shape potential opposition.

SKETCHING OUT A THEORY

With the increase of the role of media, neo-liberalization of the economy and accelerating processes of globalization, "governmentality" functions through various structures of power in Turkey today. This section, will first, by providing an understanding of the relationship between power and discourse, situate the role of "images" and "imaginations" in this process as mediums of translation and reproduction of power. Next, it will introduce the ideas of "creative dissent" and "post-production" as means to dissolve the implications of this sort of power to a state of balance, pointing to the potential challenges of their use.

GOVERNMENTALITY AND THOUGHT SYSTEMS

Foucault brings up the concept of "governmentality" as an "art of governence" that has emerged in the late 17th and 18th centuries that had its own genuine procedures, instruments and equipments. Compared to how feudal power applies to the land and what it produces, this new mechanism of power is, applied to bodies and what they do (2003; pp 35-36) whose mechanisms of coercion serve to guarantee the cohesion of a social body (pp 37) whereby "multiple bodies, forces, energies, matters, desires, thoughts, and so on are gradually, progressively, actually and materially constituted as subjects, or as the subject." (pp 28) According to Foucault, power is not localized or constituted in a certain central form or body, or in the hands of a definable group, class or community. It is a vast array of institutions, formations, discourses and it:

"applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches to him his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word "subject": subject to someone else by control and dependence and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge." (1995; pp 781)

The shift from a "feudal sovereign power" to a modern and "disciplinary" notion of power was a reflection of changing relations of work and requirement of different sorts of trained individuals to be able to perform various specialized tasks, that grew more and more elaborated with time. This training, according to Foucault was achieved through structures and internalization of various processes of discipline. He makes use of Bentham's model of modern prison system shaped as a panopticon to explain how "docile" bodies become subjected through power that seems to function not only at a bodily level, but also mentally.

The panopticon is built around central point that is "both the source of light illuminating everything and a locus of convergence for everything that must be known" (1991, pp 191) able to surveil everything around it with a single gaze. There is no way for the prisoners located around this central point, within the walls of the building to be able to tell whether they are being watched at a specific moment or not. Therefore the prisoners gradually internalize the disciplinary individuality, which becomes an invisible yet more continuous form of "interpellation" that Althusser mentions (1971). This sort of a surveillance also serves for power to become anonymous and subtle, both in terms of the lack of visibility of the observer and in terms of the establishment of a hierarchy within which all that are subjected to the its gaze serve to reproduce it as well on different levels. Foucault stresses that the "art of punishing," in the regime of disciplinary power, neither "expatiates" nor "represses," for it introduces differentiations of values for the nature of individuals in terms of "following the overall rule," and consequently, through comparing, hierarchizing, homogenizing and excluding; it "normalizes." (1991, pp 195)

One of the most important tools of this surveillance, that serves to create subjectivities on both a bodily level and on a mental level, is the production of discourses. Discourses are "ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between them." (Weedon, 1987, pp 108) Power is constituted through these discourses, via the means of systems of meaning and truth currencies wherein alternative discourses are subjugated and/or marginalized. Through "discursive fields," such as law, family or media within which competing discourses, influence how individuals form meanings, identities and values, structure social and practical relations through which they are expressed. "Truth claims" or norms that are born out of these relations serve, in a complex system of relations for this anonymous and subtle form of disciplinary power, to sustain itself through their reproduction.

Though these claims and norms may change over time, the phenomenon that discourse keeps being heavily influenced by power persists. Therefore this form of social power, circulating in the social field and creates varying and overlapping degrees of subjectivities.

Foucault presents a picture that is difficult to disentangle. A potential argument that could be made against his theory of "governmentality," with regards to his perception of the dynamics and processes of power at work is that it hardly leaves any room for personal agency. While this may perceived to be true, we might just as well say that the personal agency as a whole is what creates, determines, shapes and reshapes what power is and how it functions. Barthes' statement that declares the "Death of the Author," establishes to constitute "author"(ity) as merely a "scriptor" that produces a certain piece of work, yet upon being read, the work is written over an over again with each reader taking up the role of the author through his/her interpretation. (Barthes, 1999) De Certeau points to the everyday practices of life that poke the consituent order in a naturally anarchic way, the use of "tactics" by individuals to create a space of their own within the space that is constituted by the use of "strategies" by institutions and structures of power. (De Certeau, 1988) Acknowledging the importance of agency with regards to the contitution and reproduction of power, the next section will emphasize how power translates through "black boxes," through the incorporation of agencies.

BLACK BOXES AND POWER AS TRANSLATION

"Governmentality" can only act on people's bodies, when it creates internalized thought systems eminating from the center of power towards its periphery of influence. These systems of meanings and ideas serve, in a dialectical relationship, to reinforce and also

reproduce, its truth claims, that people will act upon. This could be explained through an analogy of a network of railways. While potentially anyone can walk anywhere on foot, railways are quicker and more efficient. The railways are organized in a non-central way, there's a hierarchy in the "use value" of the roads, and surveillence can be carried out especially in the most used and crowded routes by the existence of predetermined junctions (and the lack thereof.) The network of railways can be constructed by anyone and anywhere yet some roads are to be prioritized, that is to say constructed faster, and with more efficacy. While new roads, that connect new destinations keep being constructed and the existing roads are upgraded over time, always connected to the network itself, old and unused ones are abandoned. Destinations on these railways where people travel from one another, and different stops, could be considered as "statements," in general, while the network of railways as a whole "as system of thought" consisting of statements denoting "what is" and "what isn't." "Governmentality," on the other hand, is the phenomenon that everyone's traveling on established and surveillable railways, instead of walking on foot. It ensures that there are only certain junctions people take, to be able to observe and discipline them into using some of the roads more than others. These junctions are explicit "truth claims." Governmentality, therefore, values certain statements over others, by turning them into junctions where only certain associations between various statements, ideas and values are going to be made.

It was emphasized that some railways are created faster and more efficiently than others. Individuals respond differently to various forms of "interpellation" or are "subjectified" in their own particular way, yet there are overlapping conditions of subjecthood, identity or "truth claims" that reproduce certain forms of power, at certain times or spaces, to the extent that they penetrate deeper into various groups, communities and societies more than others. Yet, before building further on the analogy, how power functions

through mentalities should be investigated in detail. Drawing from Callon and Latour's article *"Unscrewing the big Leviathan or: how actors macro-structure reality and how sociologists help them to do so"* it is possible to trace an important feature of power, that is how it acts through "translation." Just like how Callon and Latour invalidate the hierarchy between micro-level and macro-level actors, it is possible to do so with regards to the individual and mass-based implications of power. It all depends on being able for power to "bend space around itself, make other elements dependent upon itself and translate their will into a language of its own." (1992; pp 286) Furthermore deriving from their definition of what "black boxes" are, stating that:

> *"any actor grows with the number of relations he or she can put, as we say, in black boxes ... that which no longer needs to be reconsidered, those things whose contents have become a matter of indifference. The more elements one can place in the black boxes – modes of thoughts, habits, forces and objects – the broader the construction one can raise. Of course, black boxes never remain fully closed or properly fastened ... but macro-actors can do so as if they were closed and dark,"* (pp 284 – 285)

the same can be claimed for the way in which power functions through discourse production. An agent's sphere of influence grows through simplification, by acting through black boxes, "so they can go on and count on a force while negotiating for another." (pp 285) Black boxes, just as how they allow for micro actors to become macro actors, allow for power to be transmitted, reproduced, disseminated and eventually encompass through what's not being explicitly pronounced when making arguments. A similar concept that Bourdieu employs to describe such black boxes is "doxa," (1977) which tends to favor the disposition of the "field" with regards to reproduction, be it cultural or social. New discourses can only be created and existing discourses can only be transformed via association to other existing discourses, not in a vacuum. The black boxes stand on the treshold of this process of

association, they are taken for granted, unexpressed statements, values, norms and ideas in this sense, hidden in the subtext of what's been said and presented, which do not "need" further explanation or examination. "In logical terms," one "could not make chains of arguments, that is, stabilize discussion of certain premises to allow deductions, or establish order between different elements," (1992; pp 285) without making use of "black boxes."

The black boxes are stops and destinations on which there are no junctions, yet could potentially turn into junctions, or explicit "truth claims." They are the stops that one advances without having to make a juncture. In the statement, for example, "Virginity can be cured, if it's diagnosed early[14]" there are several black boxes that through which the statement is ordered on: "Virginity is something requires treatment" "Virginity needs to be diagnosed early," Potential questions regarding how diagnosis or the treatment is to be carried, are concealed in the metaphor. Even though this statement tries to deconstruct the stigmatization of non-virgins by the Turkish society, it subverts the statement in a way that the stigmatization is reproduced on virgins. It appeals to hidden "truth claims" that people need to understand and internalize to a certain extent, prior to this statement for it to be valid.

The purpose of "creative dissent," then is to open up these black boxes, for discussion and deliberation, in other words create more and more junctures, "multiple truth claims" to interpret and operate on, which permit people to be able to take multiple routes within a much more elaborate and complex thought system. Just like how De Certeau emphasizes the randomness of people walking on the streets as an everyday form of resistance (1988), the more "truth claims" there are, the more junctions will there be to allow for an equal distribution of power over the rail systems and the randomness of people traveling from one destination to another, passing through junctions which cannot be predefined and surveilled

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[14] The statement is emic, written on one of the stickers produced by "İç Mihrak." Retrieved on June 6, 2008 from www.icmihrak.blogspot.com

by power will create a naturally anarchic movement difficult for power to follow with its gaze.

THE ROLE OF "IMAGES" IN SHAPING THOUGHT SYSTEMS

"Imagination" has a dialectical relationship with the processes that shape thought systems. They are the land on which railways are built, to refer back to the analogy. While on one hand, they are shaped and structured by thought systems, on the other hand they are potential surfaces of tranformation. Appadurai, points out to the new role of imagination "as a social practice" (1994; pp 327) in the current global era. As the technologies of "information dissemination" developed, quite parallel and dialectical to the processes pertaining to "production," starting with the period when Foucault locates the inception of this new form of power he calls as "governmentality;" the word "mass" became an undeniable part of the daily culture: Mass production, mass culture, mass entertainment, mass media and the such. Where people required less face to face interactions with one another to communicate, learn or interact, "imagined communities" came into existence. (Anderson, 1991) A by-product of capitalism which intended to achieve more and more with less and less, the perception of a world made up of nation states transformed into one of a "global village," and neo-liberal capitalist influence in the cultural sphere increased drastically. Appadurai suggests that "post-industrial cultural productions have entered a post-nostalgic phase" (pp 327) where he identifies different global culture dimensions: "ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, finanscapes and ideoscapes," (p 328) in other words, building blocks of what he refers to as "imagined worlds, that is, multiple words which are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe." (pp 329)

In an era defined and shaped by imagination, power uses instruments of imageries that adhere to people's imagination, to "translate its will" and reproduce itself. As a medium for this kind of a translation, "visuality" operates as a language that people can relate to and transmit ideas more "efficiently," due to the potential of incorporation of multiple elements containing "black boxes," into a simplified form of graphic expression. Various critiques have sought to explain this new aspect of power. They emphasized how experience started to lose its depth and got reduced to simpler mechanisms of perception, turning individuals into masses, masses into subjects, subjects into markets. It is Adorno & Horkheimer who claims: "The pleasure of aesthetic sublimation is its representation of fulfillment as a broken promise." (1993, pp 38) Baudrillard establishes a sphere of "hyperreality" that emphasizes the lack of difference between real and imaginary, defining it as "a space whose curvature is no longer that of the real nor of truth," whose artificiality is embedded in a systems of "signs of the real that are substituted for the real," where material is given priority over meaning. (1999, pp 327)

Perhaps one of the most prominent critiques of power's influence in the cultural sphere is Guy Debord, who talks of a "society of spectacle," shaped by the modern conditions of production presenting itself "as an immense accumulation of spectacles," (1995, pp 12) which could not be reduced to a mere aggregate of images for it is rather "a relationship between people that is mediated by images" where the sum is bigger than its parts. (pp 12) "The spectacle" is real in its unreality, bringing about a "Weltanschauung that has been actualized and translated into the material realm." (pp 13) It is the new language of translated will, or power, which creates, maintains and acts around "black boxes" by means of representation, denoting everything that appears as good and implying that all that is good, in some form or other, appears.

Just like capitalism, Debord describes the spectacle as tautological as its means and ends are one and the same and cause of a major form of alienation from the real life of which the spectators are not aware of. Evoking Foucault's description of the "Pastoral Power" as offering salvation in this world and not the next (1982), Debord asserts:

"The sacred has justified the cosmic and ontological order which corresponded to the interests of the masters; it has explained and embellished that which society could not do... Thus all separate power has been spectacular, but the adherence of all to an immobile image only signified the common acceptance of an imaginary prolongation of the poverty of real social activity, still largely felt as a unitary condition. The modern spectacle, on the contrary, expresses what society can do, but in this expression the permitted is absolutely opposed to the possible. The spectacle is the preservation of unconsciousness within the practical change of the conditions of existence. It is its own product, and it has made its own rules: it is a pseudo-sacred entity." (pp 20)

Debord makes a critical argument about the use of images for reproduction of existing power structures, especially with regards to capitalism. Yet he knows that "images" and "spectacles" are sources of power that could be used as a means to dissolve concentrations of power, too. He suggests a certain technique of "détournement," which is a way of subversion expressed in a situationist manner. Taken up by the Situationists as a primary method, "détournement", or "détournement of pre-existing aesthetic elements," brings about "an integration of the past and present artistic production into a superior construction of a milieu. In this sense there can be no Situationist painting or music, but only a Situationist use of these means." (1958) Therefore, going back to the initial analogy, "images" act as various kinds of "road signs" and "billboards" about the road and the destinations that inform, describe, warn and advertise. They have the potential to influence, through "translated wills," to act on the "stops" and "destinations." While they can make new stops (statements) themselves, they help

destroy others but most importantly they have the potential to help turn a regular stop in to a "junction," keep it the way it is or make help build stops that are not junctions; in other words they have the potential to act on and open up the "black boxes" by tranforming them into explicit "truth claims," just as they have the potential to reproduce them. The more the potential for alternative "truth claims" proliferate in coexistence, the more options will there be for people to choose from. The unorganized randomness emerging due to multiple options of routes to take, will make it harder for power to subject them through its gaze.

CREATIVE DISSENT AND POST-PRODUCTIONS

"Creative dissent" then, is an attempt to use "images" and "spectacles" against the concentration of power, by dissolving it down to the state of balance, through the creation of more and more "truth claims" until there are endless possibilities of ways of thought. It could both be used a "strategy" and a "tactic;" (De Certeau, 1988) it could be taken up by social movements, or be a "practice of everyday life." It could adhere to thought structures directly, or indirectly through bodily practices. As the literature on the topic is quite limited, there exists a terminological confusion. There are various ways of expressing, practicing and interpreting "creative dissent," and it would be better to elaborate on some of the ways in which it's practiced and on how it's been discussed in the existing literature.

Debord suggests the use of "détournement," a technique for subversion of images. Similar techniques have been proposed and put to use by others: Kalle Lasn, suggests the subversion of "memes," which he defines as "units of information (a catchphrase, a concept, a tune, a notion of fashion, a philosophy of politics) that leap from brain to brain to brain." They "compete with one another for replication, and are passed down through a population...

Potent memes can change minds, alter behaviour, catalyze collective mindshifts and transform cultures.... Whoever has the memes has the power." (2000; pp 124) With this philosophy in mind, Lasn founded the Adbusters Media Foundation, located in Canada, whose primary activism aims to "culture jam"[15], in other words to subvert media "memes," especially those of advertisements, in order to reverse their influence. Groups such as "Rtmark" and "Billboard Liberation Front," use "culture jam" mostly in terms graphic works, such as posters and stickers. Yet there are other ways of expressing creative dissent not limited to items or posters, street art or stickers. Guerilla theater, is a form of political theater/direct action that is satirical or carnavaleque in nature, which through its tactics draws attention to political events in order to subvert "common discourses" about them. Kershaw writes that the term was first used by Ron Davis to indicate an action that aims to "teach, direct towards change, be an example of change" (2005, pp 105) Present day examples of such performances could be found in the creative dissent expressed by collectives of "Reclaim the Streets," and "Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army," which have thousands of participants from around the world. "Improv Everywhere" whose motto is "We Cause Scenes![16]" and "Zombie Mob" events organized in different cities are "flash mobs," which gather together large numbers of people for short unexpected performances based on irregular events, that may or may not have an explicit message. Yet others such as "The Yes Men" imitate prominent persons, representatives of corporations or their public relation instruments such as websites, through organized pranks and by using irony, for the purposes of what they call "identity correction[17]." Such radical performances are often considered as new forms of activism, which combines "protest with high levels of conventional participation." (Jenkins & Wallace, 1996, pp 183)

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[15] Carducci mentions that "culture jamming" is defined by Handelman and Kozinets as "an organized, social activist effort that aims to counter the bombardment of consumption-oriented messages in the mass media (2004: n.p.)" Yet the way the word is used in popular culture for description of this kind of activism now renders it to be more inclusive, nor merely restricted to activism with regards to "consumption," as it's the case with "The Yes Men," or "Atıl Kunst."

[16] For more information, see http://improveverywhere.com/

[17] For more information, see http://www.theyesmen.org/

Allen argues that "viral activism," creates a post-identity, which renders the activist anonymous, thus reversing "one of the central effects of Enlightenment humanism, identified by Foucault, 'the implantation of identity'." (Allen, 2003, pp 18) Allen writes, analyzing the kind of activism performed by "Rtmark," that when compared to other forms of activism which aims to turn spectators or consumers into activists, this is largely abandoned in viral activism. The "consumer" is understood primarily as a recipient (of commodities, of ideas) produced by others. Individual identities of audiances or activists are pushed into the background for they're irrelevant, the purpose is merely to create a sphere of discussion and deliberation. (pp 19) Carducci, referring to "culture jam" as both a movement and a technique, like cubism or dada, for making art, states that it may remedy certain "market failures,"[18] like those of instrumental reason and whose "means-end rationality cannot account for bonds of civility in society, the deeper meanings of human existence, and whose myopia in this respect has led to environmental destruction and exploitation around the globe." (2006; pp 134)

However much one could claim that any sort of resistance is a creative act in itself, I have taken up the word "creative dissent," due to the insistance of its producers on the "importance of creativity and imagination" as a tool for change and "dissent" through an obvious dissatisfaction with existing knowledges and "truth claims," in order to describe this new way of expression, as a term that refers to practices such as "culture jamming," "viral activism," "guerilla theater" generally. Furthermore, I will use the term "post-productions"[19] to refer to the visual imageries created through "creative dissent," such as graphic artworks, performances and the likes that are produced with an activist impulse. A "post-production" is a "altered version" of what has already been produced, imagined or contemplated. It contains

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[18] Carducci refers to Heath and Potter's critique as the susceptibility of "culture jam", too, like others to become an instrument of commercial interests, and evidently reproduce the very thing that they're resisting against. While beyond the purposes of this paper, it should perhaps be noted that the biggest flash mob ever made in Istanbul so far with the participation of 200 people in Taksim Square, one of the most central and popular locations in Istanbul, was organized by Google for a logo campaign.

[19] Post-production is an emic term, used by "Atıl Kunst" to describe their work.

implicit or explicit elements from one or more existing works, imageries and statements, themselves put together from bits and pieces into whole, and in the process of post-production, embedded with at least one new meaning, statement or interpretation. These "road signs" and "billboards" are produced by adhering to people's imaginations, are creations of their imaginations and from within the network of thought systems. They aim to create alternative and multiple "truth claims," through their momentary interaction with their audience, to turn existing stops into junctions; open up "black boxes" into discussion and deliberation.

Abu Lughod warns against the scholarly tendency to romanticize in order to "to rescue for the record" the forms of resistance, that were "previously devalued and neglected" where subversions are more common than collective insurrections and small or local resistances are not tied to overthrowing of systems or ideologies. (1990; pp 42) If the relationship of power and resistance are interpreted in its dialecticity, then analyses based on the creative dissent expressed through post-productions will suggest that they are potential slippery slopes. While their existence built on existing productions do not rob the "post-productions" of their value – in fact quite the opposite, is there any other way of transforming a society, if not via producing new ideas, meanings and statements by means of association to the existing others? On the other hand, one should recognize the potential pitfalls of how they might be practiced. When the eventual goal is to create multiplicities of truth claims, intentional or unintentional negation, disruption or condemnation of existing "truth claims," either through explicit statements and/or claims to "authorship," that are bound to operate through existing "black boxes," are merely attempts at shifting the original "truth claim," not provisions of multiple truth claims. This does not allow for randomness of processes functioning through thought systems, it merely shifts the location of the "junction" to some other place and open up a "black box" while closing up at least one other, which would still allow for power to be able

to surveil and discipline the thought systems. The next section will introduce and analyze the expression of creative dissent and the post-productions of the 3 groups of this study in detail, especially with respect to this last point.

IMAGES OF CREATIVE DISSENT FROM ISTANBUL

METHODOLOGY

This chapter aims to introduce and critically analyze the post-productions and expressions of creative dissent by three seperate groups in Istanbul. Even though there are more groups than three, both in Istanbul and other parts of Turkey that express their creative dissent via such means, the lack of time and resources to be able to conduct this research limited the number of groups to three. Furthermore, these activists are hard to reach as they're very keen on their anonymity and this is one of the reasons why Istanbul was picked as a field location. Its high population, its cosmopolitan nature where globalization is also more of a concern than almost in any other city allowing for a plural environment easy for the groups to work and sustain themselves, allowing to be both visible and anonymous at the same time and the usefulness of my previously established contacts in the city to be able to reach these groups established a basis suitable for such a research in Istanbul.

For the purposes of field work, I have spent time for two weeks, around 2 hours each day, with the "52%" simply because it's the biggest group and hardest to grasp in terms of its dynamics. As their oppositional position is not restricted to the Turkish state, its apparatuses or capitalism, but extend to the educational and academic spheres, I have experienced considerable access and entry problems with the group. After preliminary e-mail

correspondances, they welcomed me as an acquaintance. Throughout the fieldwork I have felt a distance created by my identity as a researcher, yet my active indulgence and participation in their small-scale actions[20] as well as discussions and exchange of ideas, helped reduce this distance. Therefore I have not been able to conduct formal interviews, neither do I have any record of my conversations with the group. I have mostly indulged in participant observation through conversations, discussions and day-to-day works such as putting up of posters and stickers. Again due to the limitations of time, I was only able to conduct semi-structured in depth interviews with the members of "İç Mihrak," and "Atıl Kunst," which lasted between 2 – 3 hours. I had access to some of their unpublished or posted graphic artworks, too.

The use of my field work reflects itself at large in terms of a proper understanding of the groups themselves and a deeper interpretation of their idea(l)s. Exact phrases from the field or published sources are written in italic, and put in quotation marks. Information related to the description and ideas of the groups are mostly drawn from the field, yet almost all of the visual material are collected directly from their publications and web-posts. The captions underneath the illustrations are the original captions translated to English.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE GROUPS

Amongst these groups "52%" is the biggest in terms of participants and well known due to the fact that it's getting more and more media attention by day through its protest performances. These groups are recognized within their own communities, subcultures, other activists and artists that they interact with. They operate as collections of small, self governing non-hierarchical entities, that is to say, "autonoms." All three groups have come about within

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[20] As they did not carry out any of their performative protests while I was there, I wasn't able to participate in an action of larger scale. I followed the preparation process of the performance described in the introduction chapter of this paper, though.

the last two years, the reasons for which are diverse, yet congruent to the rapid democratization process that has been taking place in Turkey on different levels for at least a decade or so. Dissemination of their products, be it their ideas, videos or graphic art relies heavily on the maintanence of an internet website, updated periodically. A second space of operation are the streets and public places, where they perform, propagate, protest or make use of street art. These spaces, allow for them to be able to express themselves by minimizing the risk of getting commercialized, or put to trial due some of the expressions they use in their post-productions.[21] Unlike the other groups mentioned in this article, the primary agenda of all the groups seems to be based on issues relating to internal politics and authority, rather than global consumerism or corporate identities. The age range of activists, in general, vary from 15 – 40 years old, which means they grew up in the post 1980s period of Turkey when deliberate apolitization of the youth due to the political violence of the prior era was most prominent. This might also be interpreted in a way for the older activists to find a way in between violent activism and passive acceptance, then again, it's statement that can only be substantiated through further research.

52%

52% defines itself as a youth movement with the motto "creative action against the power of cruels." As its name refers to ratio of the population of everyone under the age of 26 to the overall population in Turkey, anyone younger than 27 is fit to be a potential member of the group. They are based in Istanbul, yet in cooperation with members from other cities they put on protests, such as in Izmir and Kocaeli. It is hard to put a number on how big the group

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[21] Several public figures in Turkey, including Nobel prize winner Orhan Pamuk and intellectual Elif Şafak have stood trial due to a law, usually referred to as the "301." In 2007, a notable Armenian Turkish intellectual was shot by an extremist while being tried in court on grounds of "301." It has been criticized a lot for the restrictions it puts on free speech by a certain clause strictly prohibiting "insult to Turkishness." As this paper is getting written, the government is taking steps towards changing it, if not getting it removed from the constitution at all.

is, as any person who feels and acts as a "52%"er is considered an "autonom." The ones that are in constant contact with one another, for the purposes of organization and preparation for future actions add up to around 20 people or so (on average, and this number varies from time to time) but it is possible to observe on their website "52%" tags and slogans on walls and other public places from all around Turkey, which suggests that there is a considerable number of people who do feel and act like a "52%"er. The age of 52%'ers mostly range from 15 to 26. Yet they are in constant contact with and supported by others that are older. The members are mostly males, yet there's no gender discrimination amongst the group. "52%" is a given name, a statistic that is perceived by the group as a "classification," an "identification" granted by the state and its various apparatuses. Therefore the concept of an age range do not reflect the group identity realistically, the name comes from an attempt to subvert an interpellation on their behalf, does not function as a main principal of inclusion.

52% is a quasi-anarchist group, that is to say, nowhere on the website or anywhere else they express their "anarchist" orientation explicitly due to the negative connotations of the word "anarchism" in Turkey.[22] Yet most the members are proud anarchists. The fact that they have a political orientation, as anarchists, though, is irrelevant for this merely demonstrates their will to live in a "utopic future," free from everything that they're against. They are aware that it's not something that will be achieved in many a generations' time, and this merely affirms their dissatisfaction with the existing knowledges as a whole. Their two primary agendas could be summed up as: resistance against authority at various levels[23] and global neo-liberal capitalism[24] which they view as related phenomena. As they also strive to self-

[22] Anarchists in Turkey do not have a strong tradition like the Communists or Socialists, nor are they well known. Therefore it has been easier in Turkey for the word "anarchism" to have been mostly appropriated to convey associations of violence, terrorism and chaos; than other countries. One vivid example of the use of the word could be found in a book published by the Higher Educational Board, "Reasons and targets of anarchism and terror in Turkey." (1985)

[23] Their manifesto posted online at www.yuzde52.org has various clauses whose titles are: "politics," "gerontocracy," "fascism," "hierarchy," "surveillence," "war and militarism," "sexism," "heterosexism," "academician mafias," "European Union," etc.

[24] To give examples of a number of titles in their manifesto: "sexual abuse of childen and the youth: global pedophilia," "toys," "consumer culture," "plazas and skyscrapers," "poverty," "health industry," "clash of civilizations" etc.

construct their identity as opposed to what they perceive is a "given" one, issues of gender, race, ethnicity etc. are too, part of their agenda. Their primary concern, though, is with that of visibility, of the youth itself. They believe that there's a gerontocratic ruling tradition in Turkey with parochial ideas whose validity seems to extent to schools and families, that express their "value" for the youth by merely repeating the old motto: "youth is the future." In response, they repeatedly use the slogan "We don't want to die at 17 and get buried at 70," to state that "youth is here and now." While they believe everyone is born free (and as an anarchist) but is molded from the family on, disciplined by the state apparatuses such as the school, the media and various dynamics other dynamics such as capitalism; and eventually is forced to let go of his/her potential to be able to live as a free human being. Most of its members are mostly school students, few college students and a drop-outs that live on temporary jobs when they need money. They often protest against the university entrance exams (henceforth will be referred to as ÖSS[25]) in Turkey, the violence growing in high schools and colleges either due to their politization[26] or the malpractices of educational crew (sexual and otherwise abuse, corruption etc.) emphasizing the value of "life" over "death,[27]" as a common metaphor. They do not believe in the value of getting a school education, not just in Turkey but anywhere else: they indicate the correct question for one to ask on the matter, not

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[25] University Entrance Exam in Turkey, "ÖSS" is a test that a student is obliged to take if they want to study in a university in Turkey. It can only be taken once a year in June once the students graduate from high school. While the test lasts for 3 hours and a variety of questions ranging from math to social sciences are asked, the students' score is calculated depending on the students' specialization. After the grades are determined, with a weighted average of the test, the overall GPA of the student in high school, and ÖSS success score of their high school itself, comes a process where they can make a limited choice throughout summer from amongst the departments of the universities dependent on the specialization they they previously determined. (e.g. A student wishing to study medicine, should determine a specialization of science two years before the test and should they decide to apply for a university department to study "public relations" so to say after to years where one is normally able to enter with a social sciences specialization, their final score would fall significantly.) Many students that take the test, even if they pass cannot enter a university due to the limited number of quotas. Therefore in order to get high grades, students enroll in ÖSS preparation courses and take private lessons, all around Turkey. 52% criticizes this system as forcing the students to spend at least two years of their life focusing on nothing but this one single test, that once they take may not even get them in enrolled in a program and once they do, they might not be happy with their choice of program for they have been forced to determine a specialization at the age of 15. They underline that even when students complete their degree and get their diploma, there are no guarantees for employment.

[26] The remnants of the political violence of the 1980s still persist on a small scale in high schools and universities, whereby small student groups that are members of leftist or rightist youth organizations practice physical violence against one another.

[27] 52%'ers draw attention to what separates them from the "traditional" mentality of activism in Turkey. They are proud to be able to say that none of their members died, or sacrificed themselves for the sake of freedom that will be achieved long after the passing of their existence.

"what kind of an education?" but "why education?" They do not concern themselves with provision of any sort of a ready-made alternative policy to be used against the mechanisms they're criticizing (e.g. do not bother themselves with questions of "what if there are no schools, no state?") for the main purpose is not these structures to switch from the application of one form of power to another, they do not want power at all, or rather an equal distribution of it. This is a very difficult ideal for some to grasp, they emphasize, this is why imagination holds such an importance in their "struggle." (They emphasize their use of the word "struggle" instead of opposition; for they believe "opposition" is merely the statitude of a candidate for power) A person needs to be first able to imagine the possibility of a life that is completely different than the one s/he's living in, then not be afraid of the indeterminent conditions that are bound to take place towards its achieval and ends. Chaos, to them is an undeniable aspect of life itself, as they often emphasize the invalidity of Newtonian physics in a period of quantum physics. This reflects in their outlook towards life, in which there can be no clear cut, predetermined opinions, values or ways to do anything and in how they value differences of opinion amongst their members as well as others.

While they're not so much concerned with graphic details neither in terms of their website design (it's based on a traditional anarchist color scheme of red, black and white) or their posters and tags on the walls; 52%'ers are mostly known for their creative performances. Perhaps the one protest where they made their names heard, both amongst the youth and popular media (even though little attention in the media) was the one in Bosphorus University.[28] On March 29, 2007 they attended a Koç[29] Holding presentation during the career days held at the Bosphorus University like regular students. Somewhere in the middle of the presentation by a representative of the holding one activist gets up, holding a small bag in his hand and asks loudly whether it was her that had dropped the bag he's holding. She asks him

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[28] Direct video recording of this and other performances can be found at http://www.yuzde52.org/eylem.php.
[29] Koç Holding is one of the biggest family corporations in Turkey. The name "Koç" literally translates to "Ram," and the logo for the holding also is the head of a ram.

what it was, and right after telling her that they're "ram's balls" he throws two testicles on her one by one. Right after the activist shouts "This is a slave market, and the 52% of this land is dispersing this slave market!" around twenty activists or so, some wearing Guy Fawkes[30] masks, lift a banner that says "Behind this presentable circus show is the bloody career of how the Koç Holding usurps our lives. Calling the sheep to revolt against the Ram!" and fire up colorful smoke bombs. As the students starts to leave, they too, exit the building warning "the sheep not to run over one another" and on the way out destroy a stall belonging to another firm on the floor below.

I another protest performed on June 2, 2008, two activists place their arms halfway into a 150 kg barrel full of cement and do a sit-in at one of the most central spots of Istanbul, the Taksim Square, shouting "Cheers to life, down with the ÖSS!"[31] Later on when the police and journalists arrive, as well as the curious public stopping by, as two police officers tried to break the cement and lift up the barrel they shout "Lift[32] the ÖSS, not of the barrel, you're going to break our arms!," and "Even if you can take us out of the cement, how are you going to take the 1.5 million students out of the ÖSS graves that they're buried in?"

A yet another example of their creative dissent, is a performance they carried out in May 2007 at Bosphorus University, once again, where the a group of males from 52% put on headscarves and chant "We're all wearing headscarves!".[33] Surrounded by perhaps around 200 male and female students, they are accompanied with applauses and whistles; they enter the university and after crying slogans for some more time, they throw bags of moth balls in front of the security guards of the school.[34]

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[30] The cartoon "V for Vendetta" is an inspiration for the group, from which the movie was based on. Their website is full of manipulated images and videos from the movie.
[31] .(Turkish: ÖSS'ye inat, yaşasın hayat!) ÖSS is short for "Öğrenci Seçme Sınavı" the official name for the university entrance examination in Turkey. The word "inat" denotes tenacity, not giving up against a challenge as well as damnation in this context.
[32] In Turkish, the word "lifting" also means to abolish.
[33] It is forbidden for women to enter universities and other state public institutions wearing veils in Turkey.
[34] The word for security guard in Turkish is "güvenlik görevlisi," the slang is "güvenlikçi." They're playing on words

These performances attempt at creation of alternative "truth claims" about current issues concerning Turkish society, specifically the youth. The very first performance described in the introduction chapter of the paper, is a very good example of how post-productions can establish mutliple truth claims, without negating others. There is no addressee, or object of their dissent and the presentation is only meaningful with participation of the passer-bys in the mall. People watching the performance can make multiple interpretations, and establish their own truth claims with no specific message that negates other potential truth claims. The same is true for the ÖSS protest with "a barrel full of 150 kg cement." While there are pronounced explicit messages denoting claims, the metophor of what may mean to have one's arm stuck in cement is left to the imagination of the audience. On the other hand, their protest against the Koç Holding, despite the attention grabbing pun, explicitly aims to prescribe ultimate and exclusive truth claims about the university career days, corporations or the people present at performance themselves. Though it aims to shift the existing knowledges on how one should view or think, it does not allow for a space of alternative "truth claims." The final performance mentioned, is also problematic for multiple truth claims to be able to sustain themselves. While one interpretation of the performance suggests an emphathy of males in the subjectification of women, another interpretation may negate this by objecting to the fact that there are no females in a performance that asserts "we're all wearing headscarves."[35] If the performance suggests the audience not to interpret it in the latter way, it then establishes an authorship in which the audience is prescribed a "one and only" way of thinking where multiple "truth claims" cannot stand next to one another.

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by cutting the word down to "güve" which means "moth" in Turkish. The 52% creates its own definitions regarding traget personalities and processes. Two other examples of this can be traced in how they refer to university proffessors as "generals in robes," and the current rector of Bosphorus University, Ayşe Soysal, as "Queen Ayşe I."

[35] This may seem like a rather essentialist critique, but it's one of the potential critiques that may potentially be made by the audiences of this performance.

İÇ MİHRAK

One of Kemal Atatürk's most famous speeches, the one where he addresses the "Turkish youth," includes a warning against the internal and external evils that pose threat to the well being of the Turkish Republic.[36] Though he uses the word "*bedhah*," meaning evil and malicious person; the word has been taken up in popular discourse, evolved into "*mihrak*," to mean "focus of threat" with the purpose of representing individuals or organizations, "inside" or "outside," as plotting to destroy the "well-being of the Turkish Republic or nation." The ambiguity of the term practically makes anyone potentially susceptible to this description, who opposes or questions the status-quo in anyway whatsoever. This was what "İç Mihrak," had in mind when they decided to take up this name, its direct translation being "Internal Threat." Specifically referring to the use of the term with regards to "Turkish nationalism," they aim to *"criticize from within."* The members of İç Mihrak, which has been active for 1.5 years, are anarchists and just like the "52%" they too try to revolutionize "minds," instead of trying to propagate for their entity and the "ideals" of their group. They are a community of 10 – 20 people, whose numbers are instable and age range varies from around 30 to 40. They define themselves on their blog as:

"İç Mihrak, is a housing-project that disturbs its neighbors for not being able to tell who goes in or out. The number, composition and "internal worlds" of their members change yet the noises of laugher coming from its collective culture-jam atelier stays. While İç Mihrak mostly works through stickers, it's open to every method that will distrupt peace and order on the streets... It does not save

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36   The related section of this speech goes: "O Turkish Youth! Your primary duty is to preserve and defend Turkish Independence and Republic for evermore. This is the sole foundation of your existence and future. This foundation is your most precious treasure. Even in the future, you will have enemies at home and abroad, who will want to deprive you of this treasure." (Excerpt from Atatürk's speech on Sept 20, 1927; translation mine, retrieved on June 5, 2008 from http://www.mebnet.net/ataturk/genc-hitabe.htm)

you from clichés, it constructs new worlds of clichés that you will be buried in. İç Mihrak does not

relieve you, it desires to keep you at a constant state of tension and stimulation. İç Mihrak does not

show you the correct way, it just proves that there are numerous alternative routes that will tire you

from walking."[37]

Unlike 52% who tries to establish spaces of cooperation and collaboration free from authority and power, İç Mihrak points to the inseparability and fluidity of power and resistance. One of the interviewees had given the account on how he deliberately decided to study psychiatry, which he defined as the most hierarchically structured, modernist, Western oriented branch of the most hierarchically structured discipline, that is to say the practice of medicine, operating through epistemological hierarchy, simply due to his desire to experience and learn by first hand how power functions. They view the act of prioritization of issues as part of an approach that tends to implement a hierarchic and structuralist mechanism of thought; therefore do not hold any "problem" or opinion more important than other. Among the issues they problematize, are what they call "the triangle of" hierarchy, authority and totalitarianism, gerontocracy, gender issues and ecological matters. They problematize the the extent of *"aesthetic bombardment,"* from all sources of power and defend a *"breaking down of the existing aesthetic traditions"* where one produces art merely based on his own viewpoint that not only reflects but also reproduces his totalitarian thought structure. Furthermore, they criticize past and some of the present anarchists as not being able to break free from the influences of power, and *"turning into the monster"* themselves. Therefore, just as life is important for them, death too is crucial, they as they emphasize *"İç Mihrak must die, if it needs to,"* and wish that there was no

Illustration 1: "In order to be able to reach the level of contemporary civilizations, listen to yourself and maturate."

need for the establishment of İç Mihrak in the first place. For them, death indicates change and rebirth through adaptations to these conditions of change. Even though, they say, only one of their members have a proffessional artistic background, what's important is the *"decipherability of their works"* of creative dissent. They subvert the *"advertisement language,"* to achieve this, and define their works as *"ironic, provocative and emotional."* They define activism as *"aesthetic terrorism,"* a strive to break apart the existing thought structures and aesthetic traditions. They also encourage others to download their stickers and use, reproduce and manipulate in any way whatsoever, as they believe they have no rights to private property and are themselves making use of existing graphic material anyway.

Illustration 1 states that "everyone has 3 personalities." These different personalities are put in order of a vicious circle, that goes from "the one a person wants to be:" symbolized by a dollar sign, "the one s/he thinks s/he is: symbolized by the party flag of The Republican People's Party and "the one s/he really is:" expressed by a symbol that may have been interpeted to be both derived from the Nationalist Movement Party flag, and the Ottoman flag that a lot of Islamic groups allude to in their symbolisms. Underneath the image, says "Dharma Publications: Personal Development Series" and refers to an actual publication company, which really has a series of books for personal development. It makes at least three "simple" statements about "everyone," operating through hidden and given "black boxes."
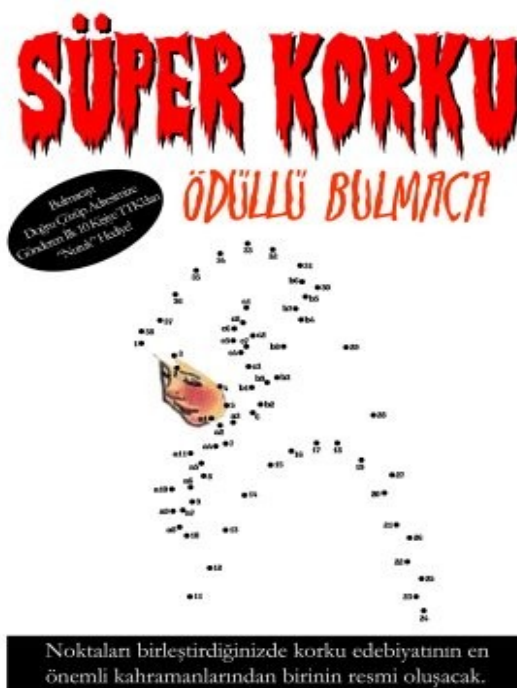
Illustration 2: "Daughter of Devil: Coming soon to a theater near you!"

The sticker on Illustration 2, that looks like the cover page of a magazine is titled

"Super Horror." Almost like a magazine extra, the subtitle announces a "Trophy Puzzle," with a black bubble next to it explaining that the first 10 person to solve the puzzle and send it to their address will be awarded a copy of the "Nutuk[38]" by the Turkish Historical Society. The

Illustration 3: "Giant service of education from İç Mihrak! Stickers of Primary School Cue Cards. Print and put up, so your child learns to read. And it's approved by the ministry!"

black box underneath further explains the picture: "Once you connect the dots, one of the most imporant characters[39] of horror literature will appear." Needless to say, there's a veiled woman in the hidden picture. It offers a puzzle which needs to be solved, yet also offers an answer for this puzzle. The analogy is creative, yet it leaves little room for interpretation.

Primary school students in Turkey have been, until recently, learning to read through cue cards, such as the ones in Illustration 3. Even though a traditional cue card, made up of individual words that one could use interchangably to form sentences would read, "Ayşe, look bird, how nice (is a) bird" or "Ali, throw the ball, Mehmet catch the ball" etc, these cue cards read "Ayşe, look, coup[40]! How nice (is a) coup!" In the background is a notebook where students learn the handwriting technique, and the smallprint on the sticker says: "Advised by the National Warping Ministry Board of Cruel Training[41]." alluding to the "National Education Ministry Board of Instruction and Training[32]." The sticker is suggestive, even

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38 "Nutuk," is a Turkish word used for long, public speeches. Here, it refers long speech made at the 2. CHP Party Congress between September 15 – Independence at length. Considered a fundemental publication regarding includes, in its final section "Atatürk's adress to the Turkish Youth," a se

39 There's no word in Turkish that discerns the "protagonist" from the "anta translation, referred to as the "hero(es)," which does not indicate the exa translation as "character."

40 Coup d'etat.

41 Original: "Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu." "Training" "Terbiye," which includes a moral connotation. While one definition of t definition is "training" (e.g. of animals.)

Illustration 4: "You're angry at mirrors, you get to my nerves bro!"

though there's room for multiple interpretations. On the other hand whatever this interpretation may be, potential associations made with the images presented will suggest "truth claims" that are bound to negate the existing others, not to mention the obvious "truth claim" made about the education board.

Illustration 4 is in fact, pretty self explanatory, it states: "Public is the closest friend of authority." The caption is lyrics from a well known song by Turkish pop-singer Tarkan. The simplicity of such a big statement contains so many[42] "black boxes," aside from being totalizing, that it's authorship reproduces and reinforces the existing "truth claims" of power structures themselves.

heteroseksüelliğiniz için
tedavi aramayı
denediniz mi?

☎ eşcinsel danışma hattı
0212 244 57 62

İÇ-MİHRAK
LAMBDA.için

Illustration 5

Illustration 5, is a sticker from a series of 12, prepared for an exhibition of LambdaIstanbul, an LGBTT association. These stickers subvert typical questions asked for various reasons to homosexuals and other LGBTT individuals. The sticker that is presented here asks "Did you try getting a treatment for your heterosexuality?" The other stickers include questions like: "Would you want your child to be a heterosexual despite the problems he's going to face?" "What do you think might be causing your heterosexuality?" "How do you know you won't like it if you have never tried being with someone of your own sex?" and "Why are you insisting so much to express your

APTAL!
LİNÇ
ETMEK
YERİNE,
DİNLE!

iç-mihrak

Illustration 6: "Counter-lynch sticker."

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[42] There are hidden statements about "who the public" is or no explanations about "why it's the closest friend of power?"

heterosexuality in public?" When seen together, it is obvious that these questions are subversions of questions asked to homosexuals asked with the intention of triggering self-reflection on how homosexuals may be subjectified through discourse production. Yet on their own, the stickers lose meaning and and new black boxes[43] are introduced in a way tho reproduce the same discourses used to subjectify homosexuals, but this time against heterosexuals.

Illustration 6, is another explicit one, stating: "Idiot! Instead of lynching, listen!" Even though this sticker was prepared with good intentions, it implicitly states "the reader is a lyncher," "the lyncher is an idiot," "the idiot must listen." Once again, there's no room for interpretation or a possibility for multiple truths to co-exist.

ATIL KUNST

Atıl Kunst is made up of 3 female artists whose age range varies between 25 – 40. The group is about 2 years old, and the idea for its formation, according to them, emerged in 2006 when they participated in an exhibition of Turkish-German artists in Bremen. They expressed that they were disturbed by the amount of discourses revolving around the word "kunst," which is German for "art", and which they couldn't associate with the "sterileness" of the environment. They articulated a contrast between Turkey's political and social context versus the one they experienced in Bremen, and playing around with words as part of a joke on the matter, they ended up questioning the function of art. In the name "Atıl Kunst" is an allusion to a popular expression from a series of movies, shot in the early '70s, where the protagonist Tarkan, an early Anatolian hero with a wolf, which is a mythical figure for the Turks, hails: "Atıl Kurt! (Go wolf!)" he seeks the wolf's help. It is possible to make several associations with the name, their seek of help from "art," direct relation to the movie in a both ironic and

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43   e.g. "Heterosexuality requires treatment."

serious way, wherein the "wolf" is also an important nationalistic symbol.

Though, on their website, they state that what they do could be considered culture jam, they define themselves as *"spotlight bombers,"* and are actually doing a *"very simple job,"* *"using art as an excuse."* In other words, their material comes from popular culture and current events, mostly of policial or social nature. They also define their works as "post-productions,[44]" referring to the importance of existing materials they make use of.

They do not identify themselves with any of the present ideologies, neither are they anarchists. While they mostly exhibit their work as stickers posted on their webpages[45] and through a 500 person e-mail list, they explain that there was a time when they printed and put the stickers up on the walls on streets. As they either saw no challenge in doing so, or in some locations people hardly recognized them or yet because they ripped them off right away and people had to clean afterwards; they decided to take up a more expressive turn. Noticing that the most apparent form of street art in Turkey was the one in "public toilets," they put up their stickers in the toilets of "Hafriyat", a culture and art center in Istanbul. They describe that soon the toilets, with individual participation from others got filled up with stickers and that they decided it was "too suffocating," and cleaned the toilets. As this short account of a brief past of Atıl Kunst demonstrates, they are keen on (self-)critization and transformation. While they use art as an

Illustration 7

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44   As mentioned in another footnote, the term is directly derived from their use of the word.
45   Gundemfazlasi.blogspot.com and atilkunst.blogspot.com

"excuse" to "do something," they are not preoccupied or concerned with "art" itself when it comes to Atıl Kunst. Every week, they produce one piece and post it online under the name "excess of the spotlight".

In the background of Illustration 7, are banners that voice some people's objection to a "new" traffic order put down by the municipality in Istanbul. It's operative phrase, when translated into English means: "we strongly condemn," except, it's literal translation is "we violently condemn." The typography on top of this background is a play on words, for in Turkish "kınama" means both "don't condemn" and "condemnation," depending on the context. As there is no context given, the meanings one could derive from the text varies depending on the audience. It could be interpreted in multiple ways such as "Don't condemn violently (strongly)," "Violent (strong) condemnation," "Don't use violence to condemn," and "Condemnation by use of violence." Furthermore, there's no visible object or adressee that will cause any of the statements to negate others.

Illustration 8: "Harvest"

Illustration 8 is a graphic application on a hankerchief. The title states: "Field of ampleness/richness," with missiles springing from the ground. There are various ways to make statements through this post-production. Even though one could argue at first that the amount of potential associations containing just two elements, "missiles" and "ampleness" might be limiting, the task of making the association(s), once again, is left to the imagination of the audience.

Two women are wearing headscarves and putting on masks of Tayyip Erdoğan, current prime minister in Illustration 10. The phrase in red reads: "Become 'venerable' and be protected." On the bottom right is the logo of "Board of Women's Protection (KKK)." It is an obvious response to the perceived Islamization in Turkey. While interpretations made through other elements introduced in the graphic, there is one statement contained in the subtext, and that is "if you become a follower of AKP (Justice and Development Party) or start wearing a headscarf or express your religiosity explicitly (or whatever the alternative versions of this that may be that are contained in another black box associating Islamization and AKP) you will be protected."

On Illustration 11, is a man with a stick resembling a police officer, and behind him is a sticker that reads "Love it or leave it," on a Turkish flag. This is a slogan used a lot by the nationalist discourse in Turkey. The title above the image leaves the question hanging in the air: "Are we not enough/sufficient?"

The last example of their work, Illustration 12, is again, a play on words. "Ordu," in Turkish means "army." Yet when one changes it to "kordu," it reads as either "it used to put" or "ember." The next reads

Illustration 9: "K.K.K."

"took over the rule." When these seemingly irrelevant expressions come together, it can be interpreted in a way that they actually make use of an idiom say "el koydu," which literally translates to "put their hands on something" and means "took over, seized, acted in on a situation," Ergo, the sentence, once again could be read in several ways. "Before it was Ember (an expression emphasizing its lack of strength a while back) and now it's taking over," or "It used to act in/take over, and it's taking up the rule now," or "The army has taken over." The

phallic suggestion in the post-production is obvious. This last post-production too, while creating a false impression of leaving room for interpretation, through a multiplicity of elements that could be associated with the verb "el koydu/put their hands on/acted on," the verb is single. On the other hand, as the verb itself is not a normative one, whether or not the statement made with a non-normative verb transforms into a judgment or not is left to the imagination of the audience. Yet again, considering potential interpretations that might arise out of the association of different elements the artists perceived as worthy to be included in the post-production, it's very likely to be judgmental rather than not being so.

Illustration 10: "Love it or..."

Illustration 11: "Once upon a time..."

CONCLUSION

Power exists in unequal concentrations where anyone and everyone has the agency to transform it. Yet a disciplinary notion of power that subjectifies individuals operates through the production of discourses and normalization of its "truth claims" that serve to shape and reinforce mental thought structures:

> *"...multiple relations of power traverse, characterize, and constitute the social body, they are*

indissociable from a discourse of truth, and they can neither be established nor function unless a true discourse is produced, accumulated, put into circulation, and set to work. Power cannot be exercised unless a certain economy of discourses of truth functions in, on the basis of, and thanks to, that power." (Foucault, 2003, pp 24)

As De Certeau exemplifies in how the natural randomness of people walking on the street is an everyday practice of resistance, (1988) one of the ways to dissolve this kind of an understanding of power goes through the creation of multiple co-existing "truth claims." The analysis made on a case by case basis on the post-productions of the 3 groups suggest that, while at times, post-productions allow room for moments of interaction with the audience where multiple truth claims can exist, there are other times when the mental associations introduced by these post-productions negate existing "truth claims." These are mostly the times when the productions are created with claims to "authorship," or when they're totalizing. When this happens, their rejection of being an opposition that is not a candidate for power loses its validity, the statements themselves merely turn into "alternative" yet exclusive ultimate truth claims.

One thing that must be emphasized upon making specific statements on the groups themselves, is that the examples presented in the previous section are hand-picked among a large number of post-productions. This means, that in order to demonstrate how "thought systems" may be reinforced depending on the elements included in the post-productions that shape and at times limit the amount of mental associations that could be made, also depending on the nature of these elements such as whether they suggest judgment or make statements themselves, many other post-productions obscure to the readers were omitted. Therefore in the process of selection of these examples, any data that might have been used with the purpose of arriving to general conclusions about the groups themselves, in terms of whether they reproduce the very power structures they opposed to or not, have also been omitted. If

the paper intended to arrive at any conclusion about the majority or totality of the post-productions created by these groups, or attempt at making general statements; they would have to be made by the neglection of this fact, and a logical fallacy would be made resulting in the argument introduced by this paper to get lost in translation.

Yet what could at least be argued, as been presented, that all that make use of creative dissent, may at times fail to transcend the prescribed notions reflecting exclusive statements that do not leave room for the coexistence of multiple truths or incorporation of "black boxes" in their post-productions. Nevertheless, transformation of societies in a way that the "other" is also normalized is tied to attempts at dissolution of power on normative discourses and eventually arriving at a balance, especially with regards to the expression of creative dissent.

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