Inspirational Hauntings and a Fearless Spirit of Resistance

Negotiating the Undercover Police Surveillance of Racialized Spaces in Istanbul

Deniz Yonucu

This article tackles the conditions of the possibility of fearlessness and the radical refusal to be docile and complicit despite the likelihood of heavy punishments. Drawing on the experiences of the racialized Kurdish and Turkish Alevi residents of a working-class space in Istanbul that is constantly under the watchful eye of undercover police agents, I propose that despite its privileged position in law enforcement in Turkey and in other authoritarian contexts, the panoptic gaze of the undercover police does not always manage to push resistance off the stage into Scottian forms of covert resistance. To understand how certain individuals and populations continue to act out against punitive security states despite the potentially grave consequences, I suggest that we take into consideration the invigorating power of the martyred dead and hauntings. While anthropological studies on hauntings mainly focus on histories of violence and injustice, the history of the oppressed is marked not only by oppression but also by resistance. Only by taking into account what I call "inspirational hauntings" of past resistance and rebellious and defiant subjects along with hauntings of oppression can we understand how the questions related to ethics and justice that are raised by hauntings are translated into active, undisguised, subaltern resistance.

We left our fears back in Karbala. (Hüseyin Inan, a renowned Kurdish Alevi revolutionary who was executed by the Turkish state in 1972)

Not man or men but the struggling, oppressed class itself is the depository of historical knowledge. In Marx it appears as the last enslaved class, as the avenger that completes the task of liberation in the name of generations of the downtrodden. This conviction, which had a brief resurgence in the Spartacist group, has always been objectionable to Social Democrats. . . . Social Democracy thought fit to assign to the working class the role of the redeemer of future generations, in this way cutting the sinews of its greatest strength. This training made the working class forget both its hatred and its spirit of sacrifice, for both are nourished by the image of enslaved ancestors rather than that of liberated grandchildren. (Walter Benjamin)

On January 14, 2011, approximately three months after I started conducting fieldwork in Devrimova (a pseudonym for a working-class neighborhood in Istanbul), I realized that an undercover policeman was following me.[1] That day, I had left my apartment, which was located in a rather quiet district of Istanbul, in the afternoon, and then I took a ferry across the Bosporus to the other side of Istanbul. When I got off the ferry and started walking along the bustling seaside, I noticed that a man was walking behind me in the crowd. I thought that I had seen the man before, and I assumed that he was an undercover policeman. Surprised as I was by my own reaction, my next response was to accuse myself of being overly suspicious. Nevertheless, I wanted to be certain that he was not tailing me. To prove to myself that my suspicions were ungrounded, I slowed down and let him pass by. He walked a few steps ahead of me, and then he stopped and leaned over to tie (or pretend to tie) his shoelaces. After walking ahead of him, I stopped to talk on the phone and let him walk by, but again, he stopped to look around. By this time, I was convinced that I was being followed.

Now fully aware that the police were observing me, it took me more than a week to go back to the neighborhood, as I was feeling afraid and uneasy. In the end I decided to tell three young Devrimovans who were helping me with my research about my experience. None of them were surprised to hear that

1. For ethical reasons and to ensure anonymity, I do not use the real name of the primary neighborhood location of my research. I refer to the neighborhood with the pseudonym Devrimova throughout this article. "Devrimova" literally means "revolution plain." I chose this pseudonym to underline that the neighborhood is known as one of the revolutionary neighborhoods in Istanbul. All persons, places, and organizations in this study have been pseudonymized.

Deniz Yonucu is Assistant Professor in the School of Geography, Politics and Sociology at Newcastle University (GPS, Room 2.03, Henry Daysh Building, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU, United Kingdom [deniz.yonucu@gmail.com]). This paper was submitted 28 IV 19, accepted 9 XII 20, and electronically published 30 VI 23.

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I was being followed. Their first response was "welcome to Devrimova," implying that undercover surveillance is not the exception but an everyday event for Devrimovans. Predominantly populated by Turkish and Kurdish Alevis, a stigmatized and indigenous belief group in Sunni Turkish majority Turkey, Devrimova is known for being a center of revolutionary organizations since the 1970s.[2] My Devrimovan interlocutors, who were in their midtwenties, explained that because the undercover policeman made his presence known, it meant that the police are not after information. "They just want to intimidate you," they added. "The police clearly do not like you going there. If they'd wanted to remain unseen, you wouldn't have had the slightest suspicion that you were being followed." That assertion challenged my assumptions about undercover police officers working as secret agents who operate on the basis of invisibility. They advised me to be more visible on the streets of the neighborhood and spend more time talking to people in public spaces. They told me that I should not let the fear stop me doing what I believe in. "Otherwise," one argued, "the enemy would win." Following their advice and with their help, I continued with my research even though I was afraid of being subjected to further intimidation by the police. As my research progressed, I realized that my interlocutors' advice was part of a time-honored tactic gleaned from Devrimova's repertoire of means of coping with intrusive and intimidating police surveillance (see also Özata 2020).

Referred to by residents as "Gazas of Istanbul"—to highlight the concentration of police surveillance, violence, and spatial control over these neighborhoods—Devrimova and Istanbul's other similar dissident working-class neighborhoods have been under militarized control for several decades. Constant military vehicle street patrols, heavy undercover police presence, surveillance cameras located on every street corner, and semiroutine antiterror operations that take place with the participation of thousands of police cadres accompanied by helicopters are part of everyday life in these urban spaces. The dissident youths from these neighborhoods have been among the main targets of Turkey's antiterror law since the amendment of the law in 2006.[3] In the past decade, hundreds of Kurdish and Turkish Alevi youths from Devrimova have been sentenced to decades or life in prison as "terrorists" for allegedly having connections to outlawed revolutionary organizations. Because the judiciary sees the testimony of "undercover" police officers as a key source of evidence, covert policing holds a privileged position in the enforcement of Turkey's antiterror law. Thus, as I have demonstrated elsewhere, the undercover police are not mere spooks who tail dissident and racialized neighborhood youths. They are also ghostly/demonic figures that have the power to shape the direction of their futures and hence their fates (Yonucu 2018).

In *Discipline and Punish*, Michael Foucault (2012) argues that panoptic surveillance derives its power from "soul training." The potentially all-seeing gaze "gains in efficiency in the ability to penetrate into men's behavior," thereby forcing people to police themselves and become the "principle of [their] own subjection" (203). Building on Foucault's approach, anthropological studies on undercover police surveillance have primarily emphasized its debilitating effects. In her study of the military regime in Burma, Monique Skidmore (2003), for instance, maintains that people's "fear of surveillance, 'of being crushed' . . . culminates in inaction and in alienation for the Burmese" (15). Through an analysis of undercover police surveillance in Syria, John Borneman (2009) demonstrates how the fear triggered by police surveillance can be used as an effective strategy for suppressing and controlling dissident voices and practices. More recently, Arshad Imitaz Ali (2016) has argued in his article concerning the police surveillance of Muslim student activists in New York City that surveillance has driven student activists away from activism and "limited their political subjectivities," thereby limiting "their political identities . . . to simply affirming their humanity and presence in the United States" (91). But despite the formidable consequences to life, limb, and freedom that pertain in Devrimova, the panoptic gaze of the undercover police does not always drive Devrimovans into a position of compliance, and it does not push resistance off the stage into Scottian forms of covert, subaltern resistance (Abu-Lughod 1985; Ong 1987; Scott 2008). Many Devrimovans—mostly young revolutionary women and men—publicly refuse to collaborate when asked to work as informants. Some of them openly and defiantly champion outlawed revolutionary groups that have been officially designated as terrorist organizations. Likewise, in other similar contexts where police surveillance and violence are waged against racialized populations, such as in Palestine, South Africa, and the United States, public acts of defiance against the police are not uncommon. How can we understand such fearless public manifestations that flaunt the very real risk of long-term prison sentences and of the possibility of being killed by the police forces?

In this article, by drawing on more than four years of fieldwork I conducted in Devrimova between 2010 and 2016 as well

2. Alevis are an ethnically heterogenous belief group in Turkey. While the majority of Alevis ethnically identify as Turks, there are sizable populations of Kurdish, Arab, and Zaza Alevis. Having been among the main constituents of left-wing politics since the 1960s (Ertan 2019), Alevis have been subjected to massacres and pogroms, assimilationist policies that sought to turn them into docile citizens or stigmatize them as internal enemies throughout various periods of the history of Turkey. Kurdish Alevis are subjected to a double discrimination because of their beliefs and racialized Kurdish identity.

3. Turkey's antiterror law originally passed in 1991. The 2006 amendments retained the broad, vague definitions of terror stipulated in the law while increasing the number and scope of crimes that can be considered to be terrorist offences. With these amendments, the number of prisoners convicted on terrorism charges increased dramatically in Turkey. In 2005 there were 273 terror convicts in Turkey's prisons; that number had reached 12,897 by 2011 (Insel 2012). In 2018 that figure rose to 44,930 (https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/terorden-tutuklu-sayisi-44-bin-930-41026860).

as subsequent research in similar neighborhoods, I tackle the conditions of the possibility of fearlessness and the radical refusal to be docile and complicit despite the likelihood of heavy punishments. To understand how certain individuals and populations continue to act out against punitive security states despite the potentially grave consequences, I suggest that we take into consideration the invigorating power of what I call "inspirational hauntings"—the hauntings of past resistance and rebellious and defiant subjects who seep into the present and serve as encouraging and emboldening political and ethical resources.

Inspirational Hauntings, Martyrs, and the Ethical Making of the Self

In his later writings, Foucault (1988*b*) criticizes his earlier works for insisting "too much on the techniques of domination and power" (19) and moves toward an analysis of the productive tension between the techniques of domination and the techniques of the self. The techniques of domination in Foucault's later works do not merely produce docile subjects but also conjure up an aspirational ethical position and inspire the act of ethical self-making, "a process in which the individual . . . decides upon a certain mode of being that will serve as his moral goal and this requires him to act upon himself, to monitor, test, improve and transform himself" (Foucault 1990:28). Foucault's fascination with the masses' determined resistance to the Shah regime during the Iranian revolution and the "absence of fear" he witnessed in the streets of Tehran when he visited the city after the September 1978 massacres (Foucault 1988*a*:257) were influential in the development of his theoretical interest in questions related to ethical self-transformation, political will, and political spirituality (Bargu 2014; Rabinow 2009). In Iran Foucault observed the mobilizing effect of the sacrificial dead, which for him "link[ed] [Iranians] to the permanent obligation of justice" (Foucault 2005 [1978]).[4] He became intrigued by the relationship between the discourse of martyrdom and the question of political spirituality (Afary 2003:17), a force that can inspire "the subject to access truth and to criticize power in order to be governed less" (Diken 2015:30). Foucault, however, did not put forward a refined theoretical explanation about the place of the dead in discussing how oppression produces resistance and how the martyred dead inspire individuals to undertake ethical self-formation, thereby giving rise to political spirituality. In this article, I take my cue from Foucault's rather sporadic writings on martyrs' calls for a "permanent obligation of justice" and argue that to better understand how techniques of domination pave the way for what I call, after Foucault (1997), "the ethical making of the self"—the ethical work of forming oneself into an autonomous ethical subject who feels a permanent obligation of justice—and how ethical aspirations can be translated into overt and fearless defiance against authority, we should take into account the agentive effect that the dead have on the living.

Scholarship on martyrdom has demonstrated the mobilizing effects of the martyred dead in nationalist and decolonial movements, the latter of which have often intersected with Marxist activism (Allen 2006; Lomnitz-Adler 2003; Ozsoy 2010). As we have recently seen in the Black Lives Matter movement (Rosa and Bonilla 2017) and during the Arab Spring (Mittermaier 2015), deaths that reveal deeply embedded and enduring structural violence can drive the masses into the streets despite the danger of police violence by evoking memories of past injustices and bringing their contemporary reverberations into the open. In this article, however, rather than focusing on the mobilizing force of the (martyred) dead during large-scale protests, I elaborate on the ethical and invigorating power that the dead wield over the living during times of "mundane violence."

As is the case for many people living under oppressive and colonial regimes where necropolitical violence prevails, in Turkey's racialized Kurdish and Turkish Alevi communities, two kinds of dead qualify as martyrs: revolutionaries and rebels who sacrifice their lives while fighting oppression and those who lose their lives at the hands of the state or state-backed violence.[5] Thus, in the case I analyze here, the martyr is a figure in which the collective memory of resistance and suffering is embodied. In that sense the martyr is akin to the ghost defined by Avery Gordon (2008), "a social figure" (8) and an animated force of past injustices that stands at the threshold of life and death, both absent and present, both present and past. In the past decade, as a result of Jacques Derrida's and Avery Gordon's pathbreaking explorations of the specter/ghost as a subject of social analysis, anthropologists have begun to pay more attention to the afterlives in their studies of political subjectivities (Kilroy-Marac 2014; Kwon 2008; Navaro 2012; Stoler 2013). Indeed, anthropologists have long been attuned to the power that the dead hold over the living. They have illustrated how certain deaths cannot be contained by society

4. Here, Foucault refers to the effect of the narrations of the Karbala event as a heroic act of defiance against the tyrant Yazid in AD 680. Foucault believed that the narrations of self-sacrificial fights against injustice were immanent in Shia Islam. Pointing out Foucault's ahistorical and orientalist reading of the Iranian Revolution, Janet Afary (2003) demonstrates that in Iran the Karbala event began to be narrated as a heroic, sacrificial struggle against injustice only in the 1960s. Until that time, narrations about Karbala mainly focused on the innocence of Hussain. The new narrations about Karbala as an act of resistance against oppression were influenced both by Marxist narrations concerning self-sacrificial resistance and Ali Shariati's Heideggerian interpretation of the event, and they served to encourage Iranians to join the resistance against the Shah regime.

5. In Palestine, Lori Allen (2009) demonstrates that "martyr," "for most Palestinians refer[s] to anyone who is deemed to have died as a result of occupation" (175). In Mexico, Claudio Lomnitz-Adler (2003) shows that not only heroic self-sacrifice but also the deaths of innocents are considered sacrifices for the nation. In Egypt, Carolyn Ramzy (2015) argues that the Coptic community sees the victims of state violence as martyrs.

(Hertz 1969; Taussig 1984) and how the roaming souls of the dead enforce moral and emotional regulations among the living (Fortes 1966) and restrict or punish their descendants (Graeber 1995). Likewise, the spectral—whether in the form of ghosts, spirits, or djinnis—has also always been of anthropological interest (Antoun 1967; Comaroff 1985; Ong 1987). What is unique about anthropology's recent "spectral turn" is its preoccupation with the hauntings of past injustices and violence, as well as the questions related to ethics and justice that such hauntings effectively raise (Good 2019; Hollan 2019; Lincoln and Lincoln 2015). By engaging with Gordon's (2011) conceptualization of haunting as an "animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence [such as massacres, genocides, and racial lynching] is making itself known" (5), recent anthropological works underline the significance of the "raising specter of the dead" (Lincoln and Lincoln 2015) in and through anthropological research and writing as well as the importance of developing a "hauntological ethics" (Good 2019) in our dark times, which are haunted by enduring legacies of colonialism, slavery, and genocidal racism. While these studies mainly focus on histories of violence and injustice, it is important to remember that histories of the oppressed are not just about oppression but also about resistance—ranging from antislavery to anticolonial resistance and from feminist to anticapitalist and antifascist resistance. In other words, as the epigraph from Walter Benjamin (1968) cited at the beginning of this article reminds us, "The struggling, oppressed class itself is the depository of historical knowledge" (260). And that depository contains the histories of sacrificial struggles as well as the suffering of their "enslaved ancestors." As we have recently seen in the Black Lives Matter movement, police murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Tony McDade in the United States brought not only the history of slavery, racial lynchings, and Jim Crow back into the memory but also the Black liberation movement (Taylor 2016). In this article, by demonstrating how Devrimovans are haunted by not only past oppression but also past resistance, I suggest that not only an anthropology of ethics but also an anthropology of resistance should take into account the histories and hauntings of past generations of the oppressed.

I take Gordon's psychoanalytical notion of haunting as a generative social force that can help us understand how particular individuals or segments of the population act against oppression and refuse to take on roles of docility and complicity despite the potentially grave consequences of doing so. Gordon suggests that by means of ghostly hauntings, a past injustice or traumatic event makes a sudden, unsettling, and often uncanny appearance on the stage in the present. But not all past dead that seep into the present are disturbing or unsettling figures. As Sara Salem (2019) argues in her work on the continuing effects of Nasserism in Egypt, haunting may have productive and liberatory effects: "Haunting inspires, pushes, nurtures, and cultivates hope" (275). Following Salem's line of thought, I refer to the hauntings of past resistance and rebellious subjects as "inspirational hauntings." Distinguishing between a ghost and a spirit is useful for understanding inspirational hauntings. While ghosts can be rather unsettling figures and a ghostly haunting can be a frightening experience that occurs "when things are not in their assigned places, when the cracks and rigging are exposed, when the people who are meant to be invisible show up without any sign of leaving, when disturbed feelings cannot be put away" (Gordon 2008: xvi), spirits, which as Heonik Kwon (2013) argues with reference to Durkheim, can "develop a 'positive cult' through which the living can associate with the memory of the dead in a socially constructive and regenerative way" (192). In other words, as David Zeitlyn (2020) argues, "haunting can be incapacitating: the fear of ghosts can prevent us from acting" (500). Hauntings by spirits, however, can be a source of political spirituality (à la Foucault 2005 [1978]). Illustrating how the haunting memory of suffering and resistance prompts self-reflection on issues related to ethical self-formation and inspires many racialized working-class youths from the urban margins to insist on being visible in the streets as acting, speaking, and refusing subjects, I argue that only by taking into account hauntings of resistance along with hauntings of oppression can we understand how the ethical and justice-based questions raised by hauntings—as both unsettling and inspirational—are translated into active, undisguised, subaltern resistance and acts of refusal.

As anthropological studies of resistance warn us, we should develop an ethnographically thick analysis that is attuned to cultural, historical, and spatial settings (Comaroff 1985; Ong 1987; Ortner 1995). Just as oppressive social structures and relations do not always produce resistant political subjectivities (Mahmood 2011), not all individuals or communities are affected by hauntings in the same way. Indeed, as Douglas Hollan (2019) argues, "We should never underestimate the forces of denial and repression" (453). In this article, while analyzing how hauntings trigger ethical aspirations that are translated into undisguised resistance, I pay special attention to the "cultural embeddedness of resistance" (Theodossopoulos 2014). I show how those haunting memories of suffering and resistance embedded in the contemporary Alevi cultural archive push many Devrimovans into an ethical relation with themselves and the world, thereby freeing them from the immediacy of fear in the present despite the ghostly/demonic police presence in their neighborhood.

Research in Devrimova: Research Under Surveillance

Established in the 1970s with the support of revolutionaries as a sanctuary for Turkey's racialized working-class Kurdish and Turkish Alevis, Devrimova is still known as a hub for revolutionary organizations.[6] The first things that would attract the attention of a stranger who walks into the streets of Devrimova are the walls spray-painted with revolutionary slogans and covered with posters with photos of deceased revolutionaries

6. For the racialization of Alevis, see Yonucu (2022*a*).

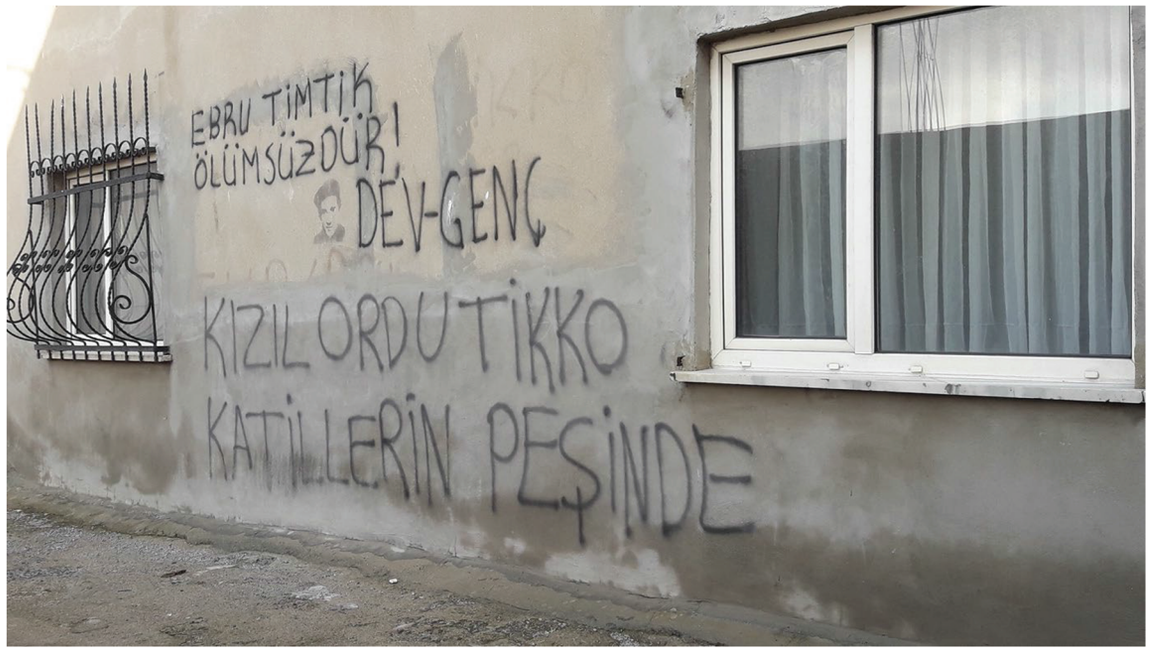

Figure 1. Graffiti from Devrimova that reads "Ebru Timtik is immortal. Revolutionary Youth. Read Army and TIKKO [Workers and Peasants Liberation Army of Turkey] is after the murderers." In the middle is the stencil of Ibrahim Kaypakkaya, the founder of the Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist, who was tortured to death at the age of 24 by the Turkish security forces in 1973. Photo by Bulut Dönmez.

or of those who lost their lives as a result of state violence. The low-quality, makeshift apartment buildings and shanty houses of Devrimova are sites of public expression on which members or sympathizers of various revolutionary organizations celebrate the revolutionary struggle ("Long live the revolution and socialism." "The revolution is the only path."), express their rage against the ruling elites ("The murderous state will pay the price." "We will defeat fascism."), and commemorate those who lost their lives in the revolutionary struggle ("Mahir Cayan is alive." "Ebru Timtik is immortal!"; fig. 1).[7]

I was introduced to Devrimova and to my Devrimovan interlocutors by a well-respected researcher who conducted research on a different topic in Devrimova before me and who has family members in the neighborhood. My introduction to the community by this researcher, as well as my working-class background, hence habitus, helped me to develop rapport with Devrimovans easily. However, from my very first weeks there, the undercover police participated in my research as ghostly figures that threatened to disturb and impede the development of trust between Devrimovans and myself. The researcher who had introduced me to my interlocutors warned me that any Devrimovan I came in contact with could in fact be an undercover police officer or a police informer and that Devrimovans would suspect me of working with or for the police. Introduced before my work in Devrimova had even begun, this conspiracy narrative of mutual suspicion and mistrust would be folded into my day-to-day fieldwork and the very data I collected in Devrimova.

Despite, or perhaps in response to, the duplicitous air of the distrust that the undercover police introduce into the neighborhood, Devrimovans have powerful solidarity relations. As Jeff Sluka (1995) notes, "Ethnographic studies of political life in the ghettos agree that repression and the war have not eroded community solidarity, but in fact, fostered and strengthened" (102). In fact, solidarity and friendship serve as effective instruments of a refusal of and a resistance against the menacing force of the undercover police. My Devrimovan friends and interlocutors, who believed in my research and who wanted the story of the neighborhood to be told, never left me alone during my research process. As such, I never went to the parks and cafés alone or wandered the neighborhood alone. Having the company of the residents, which in some ways might be a way of monitoring my research, has protected me from possible risky encounters and communications and made this research possible. Because of the undercover police surveillance, I decided against residing there during my fieldwork. However, I worked for one and a half years as a volunteer teacher at a local education co-op run by the neighborhood youth. Being a teacher-researcher made it possible for me to be a part of the everyday life of the neighborhood and to observe daily events and experiences that were relevant to my research.

7. Mahir Cayan was a legendry revolutionary leader of the 1960s who was killed with his nine comrades by the state security forces in 1972. Ebru Timtik was a Kurdish Alevi human rights lawyer who lost her life on the 238th day of her hunger strike, demanding a fair trial for herself and other political prisoners, on August 27, 2020.

Afraid that they would ask information about the community, I had never spoken with the police. I nevertheless found that I was constrained by their unspoken rule and accepted the limitations of my research—the fact that I was not free to talk with whomever I pleased or visit just any part of the neighborhood at just any time. My research too, like everyday life in Devrimova, was disturbed and surveilled by the police.

Ethnographic insights into racialized and dissident communities can wind up serving the ends of the policing of such communities. Today, counterinsurgency's "culture-centric warfare" requires "intimate knowledge" of those dissident communities being policed and an ethnographic "close reading" (Kilcullen 2007:8) of their local cultures. Alongside urban ethnography's "historically fraught practice" (Ralph 2015:442) of reproducing "colonial tropes" (449) and of stigmatizing the racialized urban poor, the fact of counterinsurgency's ever-growing interest in anthropology makes ethical questions all the more important for anthropologists who work with and among racialized and dispossessed populations and who suffer from police violence.[8] Bearing such concerns in mind, in this article I deliberately refrain from providing intimate knowledge of the local culture and people that might potentially aid in the policing of the neighborhoods. In other words, like many of my interlocutors who refuse to work as police informants, I also engage in an ethnographic refusal, an ethnographic calculus of "what you need to know and what I refuse to write" (Simpson 2007:72).

Undercover Policing as Spectacle

One of the first things that I learned about the undercover police while conducting research in Devrimova was that undercover police officers do not always hide their identities. Indeed, in certain contexts, agents of surveillance reveal their identities with the aim of striking fear in the hearts of the people or populations targeted (Borneman 2009). During my interviews and informal chats with Devrimovans, I was often told that it was quite possible that an undercover police officer was nearby, watching us and listening to what we were saying. As had happened to me, some Devrimovans became aware that they were being followed by the police when they realized that someone was following them wherever they went. In other cases, police officers openly told people that they were being followed. One of my interlocutors, for instance, discovered that he was being tailed by the undercover police when he ran into an officer outside the neighborhood and he was informed that they knew everything about his daily routine. Still others are told by the police that they are being followed when they are taken into custody, which is a common experience for Devrimovan youths. Such revelations are frequently accompanied by attempts to force them into complicity and work as informants. In the past decade, many residents—including children—have been regularly stopped by undercover officers while walking alone in or outside the neighborhood and asked to provide information about the community and their family members. If they refuse to provide any information, the police threaten to put them behind bars as terrorists, get them fired from their jobs, or inform their parents about their political activities. Over the years, many of my interlocutors have actually ended up in prison, lost their jobs, or been tortured by police officers after refusing to cooperate.

Undercover policing, which includes the use of informants, exerts its effects by influencing and transforming existing social relations within the community under surveillance. As has been documented in Palestine (Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2015; Simpson 2007) and the United States (Ali 2016) and in Cold War–era Guatemala (Green 1999) and Romania (Verdery 2014), undercover policing and informant activities create an environment of suspicion and uncertainty, triggering feelings of mistrust between and among community members.

Rumors that certain individuals or even revolutionary groups are collaborating with the police are not uncommon in Devrimova. But despite the rumors and suspicions, the ghostly presence of the undercover police has not succeeded in driving all Devrimovans to inaction and seclusion. And it has not put an end to relations of solidarity in the neighborhood. Many of my interlocutors asserted that "keeping the spirit of resistance and solidarity alive" (*direnişin ve dayanışmanın ruhunu canlı tutmak*) against dispiriting undercover police surveillance, informant activities, and the antiterror law has become a pressing matter. For them, defying fear, maintaining a visible presence on the streets, inspiring others to be courageous, and showing solidarity with those who have been singled out by state security forces are all primary means of achieving that goal.

Drawing on the work of Hannah Arendt and Foucault, Neve Gordon (2002) argues that visibility is a condition not only for power but also for resistance: "Resistance [like power] is dependent . . . on the ability of people to see and hear defiant acts" (137). In spite of the growing nationalist authoritarianism in Turkey and suppressive police tactics, which have been on the rise since I started my fieldwork in 2010, street demonstrations and public refusals to collaborate with the police (announced through press releases organized in the neighborhoods) have continued in Devrimova and neighborhoods like it. Indeed, in line with increasing police efforts to compel civilians to work as informants, public refusals to do the bidding of the police have increased in the neighborhoods of Istanbul as well as in northern Kurdistan (southeast Turkey). A decade later, in 2020, such public refusals are ongoing and frequently circulate on social media platforms and in left-wing and pro-Kurdish newspapers, thereby revealing such police schemes to the public.[9] Moreover, although hundreds of youths from

8. For an excellent analysis of the ethical and political responsibilities of urban ethnographers, see Ralph (2015).

9. For examples of press statements concerning police efforts to get people from other areas to work as informants, see https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/gundem/2020/02/21/ajanlik-yapmazsan-anneni-gozaltina-aliriz-baskisi, http://yuruyus-info.org/2016/09/toplu-haberler-16/, https://artigercek.com

Devrimova and similar neighborhoods are being held as "terrorist" suspects or have been convicted as "terrorists" for allegedly having connections to outlawed revolutionary organizations, many people have continued to chant the names of these organizations and praise them during neighborhood demonstrations.

I vividly remember how surprised I was in 2011 at the open display of fearlessness when I first saw such demonstrations in Devrimova. It was an unusually warm November day, and I was having tea and chocolate cake with Helin, a young Kurdish Alevi textile worker from Devrimova, on her balcony overlooking the main street of the neighborhood. Helin had just returned from a trial in which her friends, who had been in pretrial detention for more than three years on the basis of undercover police testimony, were being tried as "terrorist" suspects. She was complaining about the pace of the trial, saying it was "going nerve-rackingly slow." Suddenly, chants rising up from the street interrupted our conversation. "Oligarchy, tremble with fear! The DHKP-C [Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front] is coming." "Long live our party, the MLKP [Marxist-Leninist Communist Party]." "Killer cops will pay." I was surprised that people were chanting slogans that openly championed outlawed revolutionary organizations. I leaned over the balcony railing to get a better look at the demonstration. There were around 50 people. Some were holding red flags. Others carried posters with photographs of revolutionary militants who had been killed, including one young revolutionary who had lost her life while attempting to plant a bomb at a local office of the governing Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi) a few months earlier. Utterly confused, I murmured, "They aren't even covering their faces." Helin did not understand my confusion at first. Looking perplexed, she said, "No, they aren't." "But," I responded, "there are surveillance cameras and undercover police everywhere. Aren't they afraid that shouting those slogans could be used as evidence that they're members of a revolutionary organization?" Helin replied calmly, "Well, they could, if that's what the cops want. But we won't give in to fear, precisely because that's what the state wants. We have to inspire courage and defy fear."

Helin and many young revolutionaries in Devrimova see fear as an apolitical, even an antipolitical, force that leads to inaction and thus serves the ends of "the enemy, the state." For many, fear is a virus that penetrates the mind and body with the aim of subjugating Devrimovans and driving them to cowardice. Refusal of fear is a major element of the ethical making of the self, one of the most crucial forces of which are the martyred dead. After telling me that defying fear is one of the most important revolutionary tasks, Helin continued in a sympathetic tone, "Of course, those out there [*pointing out the demonstrators*] are aware of the risks. But whenever I catch myself calculating the risks involved, I remember all those people who fought for and sacrificed their lives for equality, for justice. I remember all those innocent people killed by this state." As she was talking, I found myself turning to look at the building across from Helin's apartment on which there were posters with photos of the people who lost their lives in the anti-Alevi pogrom that took place during the Pir Sultan Abdal Festival in Sivas in 1993.[10] Helin noticed where I was looking, and pointing at the posters, she continued, "Whenever I feel dispirited, I remember the faces of those people over there, and then I tell myself that I have no right to be demoralized. I have to continue their struggle; we have to keep the spirit of resistance and solidarity alive."

The Turkish word for spirit is *ruh*. *Ruh* has the double meaning of both spirit and ghost. This double entendre indexes the double condition of martyrs who are both spirits of resistance who liberate the revolutionary targets of state violence from the immediacy of fear in the present and encourage people to keep resisting and restless ghosts who continue to disrupt the efforts of the ruling elite, the police, and their allies by way of their inspirational force. As I unpack in the following sections of this article, revolutionary insistence on keeping the spirit of resistance and solidarity alive and on displaying fearless determination by being out on the streets as acting and refusing subjects is not merely a dogged focus on future-oriented activities designed to inspire courage so that dissent will not wither away. It is also a way to keep the martyrs alive in the here and now. By protecting them from the dangers of the present, these revolutionaries enact Walter Benjamin's (1968) historiographic warning that "even the dead will not be safe from the enemy if he wins" (225). The power of martyrs is all the more effective in Devrimova and similar neighborhoods because of its embeddedness in the contemporary Alevi cultural archive. Historical narratives of oppression and resistance against it—to the extent of sacrificing one's life for a just cause—hold a crucial place in the contemporary Alevi narrative, which is often intertwined with Marxist narratives of the sacrificial fight against oppression.

The Cultural Archive of Resistance and Oppression

As Rebecca Bryant (2014) argues, "In societies whose every day is shaped by unresolved conflict, history with a capital *H*—events of the past, their meaning, their trajectory toward the future—acquires an excessive significance in the movement and momentum of the present" (695). Because they belong to a racialized and persecuted community that has been subjected to several waves of massacres and pogroms, history is important for Turkey's Alevis. But the stories and events that have been written out of history acquire even greater

10. In July 1993, Alevis organized a festival commemorating Pir Sultan Abdal, the Alevi poet-rebel of the sixteenth century. An Islamist mob attacked the hotel where festival participants were staying and set the building on fire. As a result, 37 people lost their lives.

/guncel/polisten-ajanlik-dayatmasi-bizim-pencereden-bak-bize-yeni-seyler-soyle-165783h, and https://emek.org.tr/polisten-universite-ogrencisine-ajanlik-teklifi.html.

significance in the present. As such, remembering past forms of oppression and resistance is a significant component of contemporary Alevi cultural practices. There has long been a struggle over the meaning of Alevism among various Alevi communities of Turkey, which makes it impossible to make a clear-cut definition of Alevism. Different Alevi communities define Alevism in different ways: as a religion, as a sect of Islam, as a belief system outside of Islam, as a path, as a lifestyle, as a philosophy of resistance and justice, and so on (Massicard 2003). However, for all Alevis, Ali, who was a cousin of the prophet Muhammed, is a revered figure. While the same holds true in Shiite tradition, Alevis do not identify as Shiite. The original story of oppression and resistance in contemporary Alevi cultural narratives dates back to the assassination of Ali after the prophet's death and the martyrdom of his dissident followers, who are believed to have sacrificed their lives in their fight against the oppressive rule of the caliph Yazid in Karbala in AD 680.[11]

Every year, Alevis in Turkey commemorate the Karbala massacre and often consider it to be the first in a "long chain of atrocities" (Çaylı 2014) committed against Ali's disciples (see also Tambar 2010). Community representatives and activists often link the past and present persecution of Alevis to Karbala as a way of emphasizing the continuation of Alevi suffering (Yıldız and Verkuyten 2011; see also Stewart 2017). By indexing the struggle against the tyrant Yazid as the original constitutive act of Alevism, many of the Alevi activists and *dedes* I met with argued that the maxim "not standing against the oppressor is the biggest evil that can be committed against the oppressed" (*zalimin zulmüne karşı çıkmamak, mazluma yapılacak en büyük kötülüktür*) lies at the heart of Alevi beliefs.[12] Inscribed at the entrances of many neighborhood *cemevleri* (places of prayer and congregation), the maxim is attributed to Imam Huseyn, Ali's son who was martyred in Karbala.

"We left our fears back in Karbala" (*Biz korkuyu Kerbela'da bıraktık*) goes a saying attributed to the renowned Kurdish Alevi revolutionary Hüseyin İnan. Often retold and circulated in Alevi circles after *cem* gatherings and in times of Islamist or state security threat, its use offers a good example of the enduring legacy of Karbala in the modern day and of the intertwining histories of fearless Alevi and revolutionary resistance. It is widely believed that Hüseyin Inan spoke them in response to another legendary revolutionary figure, Deniz Gezmiş, when they were being led to the scaffold in 1972 to be hung for their revolutionary activities. Gezmiş asked, "Aren't you afraid?"

In contact with and influenced by various left-wing movements that glorify what Banu Bargu (2014) calls "sacrificial Marxism"—ranging from Latin American revolutionary movements to Maoist movements in Asia—narrations of martyrdom occupy a significant place in Turkey's revolutionary culture.[13] In an echo of Mexican communist David Alfaro Siqueiros's Christianity-inspired portrayal of the revolutionary as a "human torch" "who consumes his life in a passion that transforms the world" (Lomnitz-Adler 2003:141), revolutionary circles in Turkey often depict revolutionary martyrs as torches (in Turkish, *meşale*) whose lives and afterlives illuminate the path of the revolutionary struggle. As is the case with Maoist organizations in Nepal (Lecomte-Tilouine 2006), Turkey's revolutionary organizations—both Maoist and others—also consider revolutionary martyrs to be renouncers and exemplars of ethical conduct par excellence. Complementing and enhancing Alevi practices of memory, these organizations play an important role in the remembrance of past suffering and resistance and in keeping martyrs alive in the collective memory.[14]

Monthly and weekly revolutionary journals distributed in these neighborhoods often include photographs and biographies of local and international revolutionary martyrs celebrating their struggle and sacrificial devotion to the cause. Some of these writers use pen names based on the names of martyred revolutionaries. One author, for instance, writes with the pen name Missak Manouchian, an Armenian communist and genocide survivor born in the Ottoman Empire who lost his life fighting the Nazi occupation of Paris, thereby keeping Manouchian's story and struggle alive. Revolutionary organizations regularly organize commemorative events for local revolutionaries who have lost their lives (Bargu 2014). These commemorations are often held at neighborhood associations or *cemevleri*; the latter is indicative of the intertwinement of Alevi and revolutionary practices of remembrance.

While both older and younger revolutionaries of Devrimova born into Alevi culture work actively to distance themselves from their Alevi identity, claiming that revolutionaries are atheists and therefore have "no business with religion," they nevertheless often refer to the Alevi cultural archive of oppression and resistance in explaining their engagement with the revolutionary struggle. Sentences that start with "I do not consider myself to be an Alevi" often continue with "but the history of resistance and oppression in Alevi society played a crucial role in my decision to become a revolutionary." As we talked together about the roots of their involvement in

11. There is a difference between history "as what happened" and history "as that which is said to have happened" (Trouillot 1995:2–3). And as Louis A. Hieb (2002) argues, "Narratives of the past are also narratives *for* the/a present" (79). As mentioned in 4n, in Iran the Karbala event began to be narrated as a sacrificial struggle against injustice only in the 1960s. There are no historical studies that could help us see the shifting narratives of the Karbala event among Turkey's Alevi communities. Kabir Tambar's (2014) work shows how the lamenting practices continue among certain Alevi groups in Turkey (see also Zırh 2014).

12. *Dede* literally means "grandfather." Dedes are Alevi religious leaders. Male Alevis whose ancestral lineage can be traced to Ali could also be called "dede."

13. For the leftist influence in Alevi understanding of martyrdom, see Sökefeld (2008:142–145).

14. For the leftist memory practices in Turkey, see Bargu (2014), D'Orsi (2019), Goner (2017), and Pekesen (2020).

revolutionary activism, almost all of my Alevi interlocutors told me that having grown up hearing the heroic tales of Alevi rebel resistance—rebels like the fifteenth-century rebel leader Sheikh Bedreddin, the sixteenth-century poet-rebel Pir Sultan Abdal, and the twentieth-century Kurdish Alevi rebel leader Seyit Riza—along with stories about more contemporary revolutionaries, they began to reflect on questions related to oppression and resistance at a very early age, and this reflection compelled them to fight against injustice.

Hence, as I unpack in the following sections of this article, despite the fact that revolutionary youths distance themselves from Alevism as a religion, the haunting presence of past Alevi resistance and oppression and its intersection with revolutionary history bringing forth ethical questions related to responsibility of justice have been animating forces that, when intersected with poverty, racism, and ongoing persecution of Kurds, Alevis, and revolutionaries, prompts many Devrimovans to engage in dissident action against the Turkish security state.

Wandering Spirits: Connecting Past and Present

Robert Hertz (1969) argues that deaths that occur in a "sinister way" impress themselves "most deeply on the memory of the living" (21) and their souls roam the Earth forever. Especially under colonial and oppressive rule in which necropolitical violence against racialized and indigenous populations prevails, keeping alive the memory of those who lose their lives as a result of injustice becomes a political act of responsibility for the oppressed. In places like Palestine, the United States, and Northern Ireland, and also in many other contexts, such segments of the population attempt to protect the memory of those who lose their lives through state violence by various means—such as by naming their children after martyrs or by creating and disseminating murals and photos of martyrs (Allen 2009; Koefoed 2017; Sluka 1996). In Devrimova and Istanbul's other racialized working-class neighborhoods, it is impossible not to notice how untimely and unjust deaths are engraved in the memory as well as in sociality and space, thereby actively blurring the past and the present. Embodied in material space through building names, posters, and sculptures, images of martyrs and their names are constant reminders of "unresolved social violence" (Gordon 2011:5) and resistance against it. Neighborhood parks, buildings, *cemevleri*, and neighborhood associations are named after martyrs. Some take the name of Ottoman-era Alevi rebels such as with the Pir Sultan Abdal Cemevi in the Bir Mayıs neighborhood. Others commemorate modern-day revolutionaries, such as with the Sibel Yalçın Park in Okmeydanı and the Hasan Ferit Gedik Rehabilitation Center in the Gazi neighborhood.[15] Many neighborhood residents are themselves named after martyred revolutionaries.

Photos and posters of dead revolutionaries and martyrs gaze unswervingly at Devrimovans from the walls of buildings, cafés, associations, and parks. The martyr images on posters change depending on the historical significance of any given month. In March, for example, posters of people who lost their lives in the Gazi massacre of 1995 appear on the walls of buildings.[16] In July, walls are covered with posters of people who lost their lives during the Pir Sultan Abdal Festival in Sivas in 1993. Since 2016, in July, photographs appear on walls and in public spaces depicting the faces of the young people who died in a suicide bombing in Suruç, southeastern Turkey, as they were traveling to predominantly Kurdish Kobanê (western Kurdistan) in northern Syria in a show of solidarity for left-wing Kurdish fighters battling the Islamic State and fighting for democratic autonomy (fig. 2).[17]

Photos, posters, and names of martyrs that are inscribed in the physical space of Devrimova as well as the pictures and biographies of martyred revolutionaries that are regularly printed in revolutionary journals and recounted at commemorations come to possess an "evidential force" (Barthes 2007). They point "to the presence, the having-been-there, of the past" (Hirsch 2001:14) and connect the past to the present. In her work on memory, space, and the "senses of governance" in northern Cyprus, Yael Navaro (2012) demonstrates that the phantomic can be embodied in material spaces and objects, linger in a territory, generate effects, and even exert a determinate force over politics (see also Saglam 2019). One of the major affective effects of such reminders of the presence of the past is the disruption of the chronological flow of time. In other words, the lingering presence of immortal martyrs in a given neighborhood creates a "temporal disturbance" (Frosh 2013:2)—the effect of haunting as an intervention in "the experience of being in time, the way we separate the past, the present, and the future" (Gordon 2011:2).

During my fieldwork in Devrimova, I often felt that I was immersed in a different temporal space in which the past actively bleeds into the present. Devrimovans, old and young, enjoy spending time chatting together in parks, coffeehouses, association offices, and patisseries and reflecting on current political issues. Discussions about present-day political problems can quickly open up debates on global historical events. A conversation about the position of Turkish social democrats

15. Sibel Yalçın was a revolutionary militant killed by the police in 1995 at the age of 18 after taking part in an armed action that resulted in the killing of a policeman.

16. On March 12, 1995, unknown gunmen opened fire on three coffeehouses in the neighborhood of Gazi. An Alevi dede was killed in the shootings, and many people were wounded. The next day, thousands of people from other parts of the city marched to Gazi to join local residents in their protest. As the demonstrations continued for a third day, a large number of police officers and soldiers swarmed into the neighborhood. As a result, 18 people lost their lives, hundreds were wounded, and countless others were severely beaten, all while the TV cameras were rolling.

17. Many of these youth were members of the Federation of Socialist Youth Associations (Sosyalist Genclik Dernekleri Federasyonu).

Figure 2. Photos of the young people who lost their lives in Suruç in a neighborhood park named after a revolutionary. Photo by the author.

vis-à-vis the current government in Turkey, for instance, can rapidly turn into a discussion about German Social Democrats' complicity in the rise of fascism in Germany or the fearless struggle of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht and of Turkish and Kurdish revolutionaries in 1970s. While listening to daily conversations in Devrimova, I was often struck by locals' sweeping knowledge of the history of the oppressed and the lives of revolutionaries (both local and global) and by the analogies they continually make between the present and the past. It is not uncommon to hear, for instance, references to Mahir Cayan's debate on Marxist strategies during a discussion of one's political stance on a small demonstration to be organized in the neighborhood or references to Lenin when one explains reasons for not voting in the municipal elections. Devrimovans' animated way of speaking about the ideas of revolutionary figures from the past and their confidence in their knowledge gave me the impression that those long-dead revolutionaries were very much alive and that my interlocutors had met them in person, perhaps had even had conversations with them.

As I discuss in the following sections of this article, such active and continuous seeping of the past into the present not only keeps the past alive in the present but also paves the way for the experience of both historical and contemporary events being "compacted into one present swirl" (Stewart 2017:138). On the one hand, such a temporal disturbance that connects past oppressed generations to present ones transforms the latter into witnesses of the suffering and resistance of the former. Calling forth ethical questions, it creates a need to do something—another key characteristic of haunting in Gordon's theory. On the other hand, analogies between past histories of resistance and oppression and present ones pave the way for the oppressed to imagine themselves as the successors of a long chain of political resistance and oppression, effectively connecting history to biography.

Ethics and Spirits

I met Eylem, Serkan, and Ulas, three young revolutionaries from Devrimova, shortly after their release from prison in 2012. We were at a dinner party that their friend Nesrin organized to celebrate their newfound freedom. After they had a small quarrel with two undercover policemen who had been tailing their friend for the entire day, they were detained in 2007, a year after the amendment of Turkey's antiterror law. In 2007 the spectacular presence of the undercover police on Devrimova's streets was a new development. Eylem and his friends believed that if they demonstrated their discontent with this new strategy of policing, the undercover police would back away from patrolling the neighborhood. However, matters did not play out as they had hoped. On the basis of the testimony of the two undercover officers, Eylem, Serkan, and Ulas were accused of beating them on the orders of a "terrorist" organization and being members of that organization. Despite a lack of material evidence proving that they indeed were members, they spent four years in pretrial detention. Later in 2016 they were sentenced to more than 26 years of imprisonment.[18]

When I arrived at Nesrin's apartment, Eylem, Serkan, and Ulas were already there, cheerfully talking about the beauty of

18. For a detailed analysis of their trial, see Yonucu (2018).

Istanbul. After I met and greeted them, Nesrin invited everyone to the table. As we had dinner, we continued to talk about Istanbul, gradually shifting the topic to the difficulties of living in such a crowded city. Eylem objected to the direction that the conversation was taking. He said, "After having spent four and a half years in a high-security cell in isolation, I cannot complain about outdoor spaces." By mentioning his prison cell, he had opened Pandora's box. Nesrin and I had agreed beforehand not to broach the issue unless Eylem and his friends wanted to talk about it.

In the hours that followed, they told us about their experiences in prison, both the hard times and the moments of absurdity. Aylin, a middle-class Sunni Turkish friend of Nesrin's who lives outside the neighborhood happened to be there with us, and she was aghast at the stories she was hearing. At one point she turned sympathetically toward Eylem, who was sitting next to her, and said, "But this is terrible. It's such a shame." Eylem cut her off, saying, "Don't pity us. There's nothing to pity." Aylin wanted to continue the conversation. "But poor you," she said. "You went through so much. It's so unfair." Eylem interrupted her. "Have you heard of Uğur Kaymaz, Aylin?" She shook her head. "Uğur Kaymaz was a 12-year-old Kurdish boy who was killed when police shot him 13 times as he was standing in front of his house with his father." The incident Eylem was indexing took place in Mardin, a town in northern Kurdistan, in 2004. "Or have you heard about all those revolutionaries who lost their lives in hunger strikes?"[19] As he went on, Aylin looked at Eylem wide-eyed in astonishment.

> I believe that wherever you are in this world, if you see someone being persecuted and you don't do anything about it, it means that you've become alienated from yourself. You've become alienated from your sense of humanity. There are terrible things happening in this country, especially in particular parts of these lands. There is a saying: "Not knowing something is ignorance, but knowing and not taking action is unethical (*ahlaksızlıktır*)." This is the price we paid. Those who came before us also paid the price, and those who will come after us will pay it too.

We all fell silent after Eylem's profound comment. Ali, another young revolutionary from Devrimova who worked as a low-ranking civil servant at the time, eventually broke the silence.

> Do you know when I decided to become a revolutionary, Aylin? When Eylem and the others were detained. Until that time, I deliberately stayed away from politics. I wanted to go to university. I wanted to leave this neighborhood and never come back again. But when I saw that they had been imprisoned solely because they had had some tiny argument with some undercover police, two con men who were trying to force people to spy on one another, I questioned my own selfish choices. I realized that if I turned a blind eye to what was happening in the world, if I went on pursuing my own interests, I would come to feel ashamed of myself.

Ali pointed at a photo of Ibrahim Kaypakkaya, the founder of the Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist, staring at us from the pages of a revolutionary magazine that was open on the coffee table. Without waiting for a response, he continued with his pedagogics.

> Do you know who that guy in the photo is? Seeing his photo gives me goosebumps. He endured the cruelest torture a person can possibly bear, and yet he did not bow down to the state. If there is any hope for humanity in this cruel world, it is thanks to people like him. Our elders always say that not standing against cruelty is the same as being complicit with the oppressors. It is very important to keep that saying in mind. Do you know how cruel this state is? Just recently, they killed 36 [PKK] guerrillas in Kazan with chemical weapons.[20] Turkey doesn't even obey the laws of war. We are indebted to all those people who lost their lives at the hands of this fascist state. We have to hold up those noble revolutionaries as models for our own lives. We have to continue their struggle as our own.

Eylem's and Ali's responses to Aylin about their dedication to revolutionary struggle are indicative of the burden of witnessing experienced in Devrimova and other working-class Kurdish and Alevi spaces that are haunted by the spirits of revolutionaries, rebels, and victims of state violence—the spirits of those whose lives and deaths do not matter in the hegemonic Sunni Turkish national(ist) imaginary. Trapped under an oppressive form of rule that threatens the present and future of racialized working-class youths, the spirits of those who are written out of history, such as the 12-year-old Kurdish boy who was killed while standing in front of his house, revolutionaries who are tortured to death, and guerrillas who lose their lives in illegal chemical attacks, compel them into an ethical relation to themselves and to the world and instigate questions on ethical self-formation. The inspirational hauntings of those who sacrifice their lives fighting oppression work as a source of political spirituality (à la Foucault) and encourage others to translate their ethical concerns into undisguised defiant acts.[21] In other words, while undercover police armed with the powers of anti-terror laws force (and sometimes are able to coerce) Devrimovans into docility and complicity, the hauntings of those who were victimized by or fought against state violence bind history to biography and encourage many Devrimovans to leave their fear behind. At the same time, the hauntings drive them to keep the spirit of resistance and solidarity alive under difficult conditions, sometimes in ways that may even be considered self-destructive.

When Devrimovan revolutionary youths refuse docility and complicity and fill the streets to express their rage and manifest

19. For the hunger strike and death fast of political prisoners in Turkey, see Bargu (2014).

20. See "IHD: Çukurca'da bir vahşet yaşanmış," *Evrensel*, November 2, 2011.

21. For a discussion on the gendered dimension of these defiant acts, see ch. 5 in Yonucu (2022*b*).

their commitment to the revolutionary cause, the police are easily able to pick out the most devoted among them. The slogans they chant to champion revolutionary organizations are used as legal evidence in later trials that will put them behind bars as "terrorist" convicts. Such acts contribute to the disappearance of dissident citizens, activities, and voices from the streets and the community. Yet the responsibility to continue to fight is a debt that transmits from generation to generation, even perhaps without the prospect of liberation. In Eylem's words, "This is the price we paid. Those who came before us also paid a price, and those who will come after us will pay as well."

Sometime after our meeting, Eylem, Serkan, and Ulas were sentenced to 26 years of imprisonment. In the winter of 2014, Ali refused an undercover police pressure campaign to work as an informant and lost his job as a civil servant in the local municipality. Along with friends and comrades who had also been pressured to work as informants, he organized a press release in the neighborhood to publicly refuse the police's bid. In their statement, they recounted how immediately after their refusal to collaborate, their parents began receiving phone calls from the police accusing their children of being members of a terrorist organization. The police warned their parents that should they refuse to collaborate, they would be imprisoned as "terrorists." The press statement ended with a pledge to resist police pressure and a promise to stay on the streets of Devrimova. When I saw Ali for the last time in 2016, he had just been kidnapped and beaten by three undercover policemen. He told me that even though he could be arrested at any moment, he had no regrets for having joined the fight against what he called a "colonialist fascist police state" (*sömürgeci faşist polis devleti*). In 2016, some seven months after our conversation, he was arrested. As of 2020, he is in prison, sentenced as a "terrorist" convict.

The ruling elite of Turkey is well aware of the invigorating power of the memory of martyrs. NATO's 2011 "Allied Joint Doctrine for Counterinsurgency" document, published under the signature of a Turkish major general, states that "killing insurgents can be counterproductive if these actions cause extensive collateral damage and resentment, generating martyrs and promoting recruitment and revenge" (para. 0353; see also Kwon 2010).[22] Turkish counterinsurgency's response for handling this "counterproductive" effect of the killing of dissidents is to erase the memory of martyrs by destroying graveyards and other memorial spaces (Aydın 2017). Since the alleged coup attempt of 2016, the Turkish ruling elite has appointed trustees to take the place of elected Kurdish mayors, all of whom have been removed by emergency decree. One of the first things the trustee of the Kızıltepe district of Mardin did upon being named was to remove the statue of Uğur Kaymaz, the Kurdish boy Eylem had referenced. The trustee appointed to the Derik district of Mardin demolished the Uğur Kaymaz Park. As I write these sentences, the police have snatched the body of İbrahim Gökçek, a member of the left-wing music group Grup Yorum who had died after a 323-day hunger strike protesting government persecution and a ban on the group's concerts, while it was being transported to the funeral at a Gazi *cemevi* (gathering house).[23] The destruction of monuments, memorial spaces, graveyards, and even corpses indexes once again Walter Benjamin's (1968) warning about the dead not being safe from a victorious enemy.

Conclusion

In this article, by drawing on the experiences of the residents of Devrimova—a racialized working-class space under constant undercover police surveillance—I argued that undercover police surveillance, despite the privileged space accorded to the undercover police by laws in authoritarian contexts such as Turkey, does not always push individuals to complicity, self-policing, and inaction. If we want to understand the overt, undisguised, and at times seemingly self-destructive resistance of the oppressed, I suggest that we should take into account the invigorating power of the dead over the living. By building on Gordon's analyses of hauntings, I take up the hauntings of past oppression and resistance as social and political forces that can prompt self-reflection concerning issues related to the ethical making of the self. Anthropologists who have built on Gordon's work, have mainly focused on the hauntings of past injustices. As I emphasized in this article, the history of the oppressed is not only about injustice but also about resistance. To better understand how ethical concerns work as a force of political spirituality and can be translated into overt resistance, we should also pay attention to what I call "inspirational hauntings." Hence, I suggest that not only an anthropology of ethics but also an anthropology of resistance should take into account the histories and hauntings of past generations of the oppressed.

As with any social phenomenon, hauntings should also be understood in their particular contexts. In the case I analyzed here, the invigorating power of past generations of the oppressed is steeped in its embeddedness in the contemporary Alevi cultural archive, which is intertwined with a revolutionary politics that calls for the obligation of justice and encourages a devoted and at times sacrificial fight against oppression. As Clara Han (2017) points out, policing is "tightly aligned with other conditions of life" (181), such as poverty and racism. In Devrimova and other racialized working-class spaces in Istanbul, where the demonic/ghostly presence of the undercover police is accompanied by poverty and various forms of racist violence, the intersection of the cultural archive and class and racial oppression makes it possible for hauntings to be an animating social and political force that prompts many to cast off their fear and make manifest their dissent against the repressive and punitive Turkish security state.

22. The Turkish major general is Cihangir Aksit.

23. See "Gökçek'in cenazesi kaçırıldı," *Yeni Özgür Politika*, May 9, 2020.

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Comments

Lorenzo D'Orsi
Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Catania, Palazzo Reburdone, Via Vittorio Emanuele II 8, 95131 Catania, Italy (lorenzo.dorsi@unict.it). 30 IV 22

Deniz Yonucu's article analyzes public manifestations of "fearlessness" among the inhabitants of Devrimova, a pseudonym for a leftist working-class neighborhood in Istanbul predominantly populated by Kurds and Alevis. The latter are both stigmatized communities that have long experienced state repression in the form of imprisonment, murders, torture, and control by the undercover police because of their ethnic-religious identity and political demands. The author suggests that it is the invigorating power of the Marxist martyred dead that makes the undisguised resistance of these communities possible, thus inviting us to explore how these "hauntings" inspire resistance in the living rather than limiting our analysis to the feelings of oppression they may convey. Unlike most scholarship on martyrs, which analyzes martyrdom as a mobilizing force for political protests, Yonucu focuses on its role in providing ethical guidance for mundane activities. Her ethnography demonstrates how the political horizon of martyrs shapes peoples' everyday lives and is embodied in booklets, pictures, songs, graffiti, commemorations, place names, and conversation topics among young people. A relationship with martyrs is part of people's experience from their childhood and contributes to shape their understanding of the world. This point could be read in the context of Neyzi and Darıcı's (2015) analysis of the moral concept of *bedel* (paying the price) among Kurdish youth living in Diyarbaker, although Yonucu makes no reference to their paper in her article. She does, however, make an interesting connection between martyrdom and the recent ethical turn in anthropology (see, among others, Fassin 2013) to read the dichotomy of oppression/resistance. In keeping with late Foucault, her article understands power not just as domination but also as a process of ethical self-formation and discusses "how oppression produces resistance." This approach is promising, for it helps us to avoid reducing leftist resistance associated with martyrs to a question of political strategies. It is instead revealed as an active process of building subjectivities and communities. From this point of view, the article analyzes "fearlessness" as a savoir faire that is learnt and embodied (D'Orsi 2018) and in which the author herself is educated during her fieldwork. This manifestation of fearlessness is not a passive reaction to state oppression but demonstrates a degree of agency. But what kind of agency might the "inspirational hauntings" of dead militants produce? And what values do they convey?

Ethnographies on the ways Turkish revolutionaries remember the oppression of the 1980 military coup show how leftist resistance is mostly mimetic and coconstructed with the state violence it intends to oppose (D'Orsi 2019; Karacan 2016). These practices of resistance can be considered expressions of a "radical refusal to be docile," to use Yonucu's definition, but also bring about the development of a "passive agency" that finds its raison d'être in the violence experienced by former militants. This mimetic relationality with state discourse is concretized in counternarratives depicting only two actors—the revolutionaries and the state—with the rest of society appearing to be totally engulfed in state rhetoric.

Yonucu is right in affirming that revolutionary martyrdom conveys the capacity of being fearless against the state. However, revolutionary martyrs also convey a comradely subculture, a fideistic approach to the "cause," a belief in the rightness of the armed struggle, and other moral obligations that some of the former militants I met during my fieldwork among Turkish former revolutionaries in Istanbul no longer share. I am not referring to those who deny their political past but to those who are engaged in so-called civil society and who, to differing degrees, feel that the poetics of "Marxist martyrdom" (Bargu 2014) do not fit well with the democratization process or with human rights discourse.

By analyzing these critical voices, revolutionary martyrdom comes to light as a social poetic that leaves no space for different elaborations of people's suffering and that is built with a language similar to the one of the state. Indeed, we should remember that martyrdom is the most common way of memorializing painful pasts in Turkey, as exemplified by the creation of state martyrs in relation to the internal conflict with the Kurds (Açiksöz 2019) and the recent pro-Islamic authoritarian drift. Thus, both the hegemonic and the counterhegemonic discourses share the same mnestic code of martyrdom. In this context of opposing groups sharing the same agonistic logics, some of my research participants saw martyrdom as a cultural code fostering polarizations, allowing for the reproduction of reified identity claims rather than opening up possibilities for acting in new ways on history. The idea of acting in new ways on history is an important lens through which to read the moral

and political isolation experienced by stigmatized groups. As studies on cultural trauma and the construction of collective identities show (Alexander 2006), even in highly repressive contexts public space is never completely hegemonized by the repressive state power. For counterhegemonic groups, it is still possible to perform a "social drama" that is able to extend social solidarity and generate wider public participation in their pain: it is a question not only of power relations but also of symbolic practices and cultural codes. In this respect, I would argue that the moral values of Turkish Marxist martyrdom, while giving strength to a community and its claims, also contribute to the naturalization of its social boundaries and hamper emotional identification by those outside that community. However, it is important to note that the abovementioned critical voices of the discourses of martyrdom belong to social actors with high cultural capital who share a cosmopolitan culture. There is a gap between the latter and the social actors Yonucu describes in her article in terms of social capacity to aspire and ability to imagine alternatives.

Whether we praise or critique martyrdom as a way of challenging state power, Yonucu's article is a useful contribution for understanding practices of resistance not as mechanical reactions to oppression but as active practices of self-making. Although her work risks getting entangled in a too-rigid dichotomy between oppression and resistance, it is a valuable reference for all those who are not content with identifying asymmetry in power relations and the ways domination shapes subjects but want to seek to understand the moral assumptions, symbols, and cultural codes through which people make sense of their experiences of suffering and living the political.

Neve Gordon
School of Law, Queen Mary University of London, Mile End Road, London E1 4NS, United Kingdom (neve.gordon@qmul.ac.uk). 6 V 22

Collaboration and Hauntings of Resistance

In "Inspirational Hauntings and a Fearless Spirit of Resistance: Negotiating the Undercover Police Surveillance of Racialized Spaces in Istanbul," Deniz Yonucu explores the refusal of Kurdish and Alevi residents from a working-class Istanbul neighborhood to become police informants. She describes an array of oppressive mechanisms aimed at coercing residents into collaborating with the secret police and explains that in this neighborhood "undercover police are not mere spooks" but "are also ghostly/demonic figures" who have the power to shape the fates of young dissidents, many of whom end up spending scores of years in prison. Indeed, Yonucu is intrigued by the fact that despite the formidable threats many young women and men face, they still refuse to collaborate with the police even when pressured to do so. "How," she asks, "can we understand such fearless public manifestations that flaunt the very real risk of long-term prison sentences and of the possibility of being killed by the police forces?"

My immediate and intuitive response to Yonucu's question was threefold. First, local resistance to collaboration seems clearly influenced by people's affective ties with those around them, and collaboration is considered a profound act of betrayal toward those one loves and cares about. Second, many people also take their nationalist, religious, or other ideological beliefs very seriously, and in their minds, becoming an informant would betray the most basic principles informing their lives, principles that make their lives meaningful. Finally, given the normative frame into which the neighborhood's residents were born, grew up in, and in which they continue to live—where the police are considered the arm of an oppressive state—it seems to me that resistance to collaboration would be the default position of most residents even if it entails considerable risk and suffering. This I would argue is true even as we know from the history of collaboration that state security agencies manipulate and exploit the vulnerabilities and put immense pressure—affective, material, and sheer violence—on those they want to sway. All in all, I think that we have a sense of why most people refuse to become collaborators but also why some people do end up working as informants for the police.[24]

Yonucu, however, aims to add another—provocative—dimension to this discussion. Drawing on Avery Gordon's *Ghostly Matters* (2008), she answers her question about the forces motivating people to resist becoming informants by suggesting that it also has to do with the "hauntings of past resistance . . . [that] serve as encouraging and emboldening political and ethical resources" because they have an agentive effect on the living. She mentions Kurdish and Alevi martyrs who were killed fighting state repression in Turkey and connects her observations to anthropological scholarship that has exposed the power that the dead have had in nationalist and decolonial struggles as well as in the Black Lives Matter movement and the Arab Spring. Ultimately, her claim is that "histories of the oppressed are not just about oppression but also about resistance," and she argues that "only by taking into account hauntings of resistance along with hauntings of oppression can we understand how the ethical and justice-based questions raised by hauntings—as both unsettling and inspirational—are translated into active, undisguised, subaltern resistance and acts of refusal."

I found this argument fascinating. Yet one key question arose for me after reading Yonucu's essay—a question around the distinction she draws between hauntings of oppression and hauntings of resistance, since this distinction is left largely undeveloped.

For Avery Gordon, haunting is one of the ways in which oppressive forms of power make themselves known in everyday life. Haunting, she explains, is a psychic process where the past encroaches into the present and produces a movement—individual and social—driving people to search for ways to live differently in the future in order to overcome the inevitable

24. I briefly discuss Israel's recruitment tactics of Palestinian collaborators in Israel's occupation (Gordon 2008:42–44).

repetition of the degradations that injure them. In this sense—and importantly—haunting is very different from trauma, since the former can be understood to activate through movement, while the latter immobilizes through repetition. The traumatized person is "stuck in a past that repeats as a present that can never end" (Gordon 2011:4), while haunting is more about individual and social change; indeed, haunting's main value is that it incites us to act differently from the way we have in the past.

Gordon describes the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo and how the ghosts of their disappeared children propelled them to organize silent protests and how their appearance in the plaza became an act of resistance that helped render the Argentinian junta's violence visible for all to see (Gordon 2008:63–134). In her rendition, haunting is not only an "animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known" (xvi) but also used to describe "those singular and yet repetitive instances when home becomes unfamiliar, when your bearings on the world lose direction" (197). These examples seem to describe hauntings of oppression, and they, as Gordon explains, destabilize us and induce a drive for action, resistance, and transformation.

Yonucu provides a number of instances to illustrate her understanding of haunting in the Turkish neighborhood, but, at least as I understand her, martyred Kurdish and Alevi children and activists serve as the paradigmatic example; they are presented as specters of those people who were subjected to oppression and resisted it and whose ghosts constantly haunt the neighborhood's residents. She suggests that the hauntings of resistance inspire the neighborhood's residents and help motivate them in their refusal to collaborate with the police. And this, of course, makes sense, since the stories and monuments of people who resisted oppression and violence do inspire us and often inform the way we interpret reality and even shape our comportment.

I wonder, however, whether resistance haunts us in the same sense that Gordon speaks of haunting and whether "haunting" is indeed the accurate term when discussing the inspiration past resistance has on our lives? Furthermore, it seems to me that we can talk about the hauntings of oppression on their own, but can we think of resistance and particularly hauntings of resistance on their own, or are they always already implicated by hauntings of oppression? If there are two distinct kinds of hauntings, then I assume that they would function differently and their psychic effects would also be distinct. While hauntings of oppression unsettle and destabilize us, urging us to break from the past and do something different, Yonucu claims that hauntings of resistance operate by inspiring us. I wonder, however, whether the inspiration emanating from hauntings of resistance actually manifests itself in acting in ways that are different from the past (i.e., Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo) or whether inspiration propels repetition and emulation of past resistance.

These are just some of the thoughts and questions that the article provoked. I would be eager to hear more about hauntings of resistance, what they are, and how they function.

Kevin Karpiak
Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminology, Eastern Michigan University, 712 Pray-Harrold, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197, USA (kkarpiak@emich.edu). 10 V 22

What do we owe the dead? How do the police mediate that obligation? How should recognition of that mediation shape our understanding of anthropology, as the endeavor to know *anthropos*? There are hardly more classic, and well-worn, questions than the first in that series. Less well explored, and the source of considerable insight here, is the role of police in mediating that obligation. My goal in this short comment is to highlight the profundity of those insights, so as to open up—but not answer—the third question: what does this mean for thinking about the "police"?

The topic important and timely, and the article brings important ethnographic data to bear on it, but perhaps even more attractive are the theoretical stakes toward which the piece reaches. These are insightful and offer immense potential not only for our ethnological understanding of the Turkish security state and its effects on marginalized citizens but for the broader anthropological analytics through which we approach police. Narrative form itself is key to this theoretical contribution, as the ethnography entwines multiple registers—police, Devrimovan, ethnographer—these threads are connected but not identical. Policing, Yonucu's work shows us, is not just "about" those who wear the uniform, so ethnographic work should not unthinkingly mirror the state's claim to their monopoly on making authoritative claims about what "policing" is. In principle, this refusal has the potential to open up new perspectives—especially by those who are the target of police action—in a way that can powerfully reframe our analyses. However, with this turn arise a series of challenges that these same narrative devices and theoretical claims must confront. When trying to make the claim that significant insight about policing can be made through ethnographic attention to the policed, an approach that effectively "flips" conventional claims to authority, it is perhaps even more incumbent on the narrative to distinguish the empirical provenance of the claims: is a quote directly from a police officer or based on some data (direct observation, secondary sources, etc.) that could directly speak to what police "are" on that empirical ground? Is it based on Devrimovan claims about police, a body to which Devrimovans themselves feel paradoxically connected to and alienated from? Is it based on the mélange of experience from which the ethnographer herself speaks? These are important angles to wrestle with, as anthropologists construct new frameworks with which to approach police ethnographically that do not analytically confine its mechanisms to—or reify the authoritative claims of—a militarized state apparatus.

In fact, I have long been fascinated by the ways police and policing haunt anthropological texts. Sometimes they appear as ghostly figures, barely visible in the margins of our texts but, for those with a keen eye and the desire to see them, inarguably impactful (Karpiak 2010). Sometimes they act devilishly, as they do for Benjamin, inescapable and grotesque, an original

sin foundational to the moment imagined as generative of collective existence and therefore inextricable from the social fabric itself (Karpiak 2016). Sometimes they act as Platonic, or Freudian, daimons: messengers between the realm of the gods (ineffable, perfect, and moral) and the realm of humans (particular, material, and base), not so much demonic as agonistic, hybrid beings with whom we spar in our efforts to live a more ethical existence (Karpiak 2014; Karpiak and Garriott 2018).

I suggest that the hauntology that Yonucu presents us with here (2022) contains elements of all three forms of police apparition. For that reason, it is helpful to pause over them to consider what anthropological engagements with such entities might have to offer. For one, Yonucu did not have to tell this story through the specter of policing. Others would have found other entry points or even gone out of their way to avoid the implication of police. Whatever the motivations behind this narrative choice, the effect is clear: it brings those marginal, yet impactful, figures of police out of the margins into the central plotline; it forces the reader to look at—and to reflect on, even to live with—their presence without skipping them over or wishing them away. A related but distinct repercussion of this choice is the conceptual centering that a narrative focus on police entails, helping to see the foundational violence at the core of the contemporary Turkish state as a fundamental fact from which social relations, which here include the self and its obligations to the dead, emerge. But the social relations emergent from this fundamental violence are neither mechanical nor predetermined. They are assembled from the materials available in the wide ethical landscape on which the Devrimovans that Yonucu describes exist in, reflect on, and make existential decisions about.

For me, this is among the most profound insights of the piece—an ethical pearl of wisdom, ethnographically grounded, with a theoretical intervention that opens up new ground for how to do an anthropology of policing. One of the many potential ways to frame anthropological engagements with police is through the tension between Ranciére and Foucault. As this article describes more fully, Ranciére's vision of "police" is antithetical to "politics," properly understood; it is the barrier that prevents a more egalitarian and (can one say utopian?) movement. Ranciére's work has become increasingly attractive to scholars struggling to make sense of what seems to be a worldwide decline in liberal democratic pretensions and concurrent rise in racist fascist authoritarian governments. This is in contrast to the work of Foucault, from whom generations of anthropologists have learned that mechanisms of surveillance and punishment can be loci of subject production and resistance; that is, that hyperpolicing does not necessarily lead to political paralysis but can in fact be a mechanism for the production of liberally aspirational subjects who actively devise sociopolitical experiments in resistance. Amid this tension, how are we to frame anthropological investigations into policing? Is it the study of an antipolitics or of precisely the generative site of political subjectivity? The lessons I take from Yonucu's work lean toward the latter rather than the former; however, much more hinges on this question than a kind of vulgar intellectual score keeping. More important, to me, is that Yonucu uses that tension to demonstrate what a politically engaged anthropology of policing can look like. And I plan to sit with that lesson profoundly as I work through those same knots myself.

Erol Saglam
Istanbul Medeniyet University, Dumlupinar Mah. D-100 Karayolu 98, Kadikoy, Istanbul, Turkey, and Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies, Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin, Germany (erol.saglam@medeniyet.edu.tr). 3 V 22

Deniz Yonucu's text on "the possibility of fearlessness and the radical refusal to be docile and complicit" explores the everyday fashionings of ethical and political subjectivities in the face of ever-prevalent police surveillance and control in a politically active neighborhood in Istanbul, Turkey. The article is commendable both because of the author's focus on the often-neglected aspects of hauntings, which seem to nurture local senses of resistance and self-making, and because of her skillful moving across scales of analysis, which move from intimate communal links at the neighborhood level all the way to transnational formations, such as NATO counterinsurgency policies.

As the author also hints, haunting has been used extensively in recent anthropological and psychosocial scholarship to underline how memories of injustice continue exerting a powerful influence on present relations and imaginaries. The author's maneuvering across the existing constraints of the term to stretch and extend its scope (i.e., her differentiation of how hauntings of oppression and resistance unfold diverging subjective positions) helps us reconsider how hauntings do not generate solely "temporal disturbances" (Frosh 2013:2) but also an ethical imperative to do something to correct injustice in the footsteps of Foucault (1988*b*) and Gordon (2008, 2011). Yonucu's work details how images and narratives bear the potential to inspire ethical refashionings, which orient the subject to resist openly despite the grave risks involved. This refusal to "obey and comply," I must underline, is to be read as local communities' wider laborings (and maybe desire) to reinstate the stability of trust, transparency, and solidarity, which seem to have been eroded significantly in the face of counterinsurgency policies and tactics of the juridico-incarceral policies in contemporary Turkey. This incessant political labor of reweaving the social trust in a given locality, Yonucu's work reminds us, is also a bridging of the processes through which self and community are forged simultaneously. The ethical call invoked by inspirational hauntings of past resistances and sacrifices, in this sense, is the catalyst of sociopolitical processes that generate both the politico-moral community—committed to justice and correcting past mistakes—and the ethicopolitical individual

who is openly defiant. The suturing of both processes to one another, without necessarily prioritizing one over the other, as psychosocial studies also strive to accomplish, is a fine example of the potential anthropological praxis holds.

On a related note, Younucu's explorations of the effects of counterinsurgency policies on the local community she worked with, I must also underline, resonate rather clearly with analyses of the posttruth where similar anxieties around erosion of trust are prevalent. Although not explicitly linked to these discussions, Younucu's work, for this very reason, has a remarkable potential to demonstrate how global(ized) patterns of suspicion, distrust, and paranoia infiltrate minute everyday dealings at concrete localities and radically reconfigure both social relations and subjective dispositions.

As a second note, I must underline the gradual progression of the scale of the analysis. Reflecting her firm embeddedness in anthropology, Yonucu starts with reflections from the neighborhood, inhabited by politically active, racialized, and working-class communities, in Istanbul to slowly but steadily move across much wider processes that involve national and transnational workings of other agencies. The very policies that require one to publicly defy the police invitation to be an informant, in this sense, are the products of (trans)national links and collaborations of security agencies, counterinsurgency manuals, and growing interest—as the author reminds us—of the police in anthropological insights. Demonstrating their interconnectedness in rather bounded spaces, Yonucu invites us to rethink both how anthropological craft can uncover the entanglements of such scales and how seemingly minute everyday practices and utterances may actually have reverberations for national and transnational relations and imaginations.

Finally, I also share the author's concern around the afterlives of anthropological texts and how they may generate effects that may go against the very objectives of anthropologists—who have overall strived to augment the voice of their interlocutors. Keeping in mind that security apparatuses may capitalize on anthropological works (see Price 2011), Yonucu's remarks on the need to find that delicate balance between revealing too much about the intimate details of our interlocutors and not revealing much to avoid any harm is a timely reminder for anthropologists working on sites of contestation, violence, and clandestine activities as well as in the ascendant field of "dark ethnography" (Faust and Pfeifer 2021).

Martin Sökefeld
Institut für Ethnologie, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Oettingenstraße 67, D-80538 Munich, Germany (martin.soekefeld@lmu.de). 30 IV 22

On the basis of her exceptionally insightful ethnography of open leftist resistance in a mainly Alevi working-class neighborhood of Istanbul, Deniz Yonucu asks the important question of why left-wing revolutionary activists openly defy the brutal machinery of the repressive Turkish state in spite of the heavy and pitiless punishment they may expect. While the ethnographic case is peculiar, the underlying issue relates to the core issue of social sciences—namely, the question of what motivates human beings to act and in which way. Before coming to that, I will briefly address the relation between Alevis and revolutionary politics in Turkey.

The veneration of martyrs is even more at the core of contemporary Alevi practice than Yonucu points out. For instance, at the beginning of almost every Alevi event there is the "micro-ritual" of *saygı duruşu*, a moment of silence and respectful commemoration of *şehitlerimiz* ("our martyrs") in which the victims of Karbala and Sivas are explicitly mentioned, sometimes along with others (Sökefeld 2008:130). The leftist revolutionary appropriation and reinterpretation of Alevi symbols and rituals developed from the late 1960s. It was strongly opposed by many Alevi dedes, who, for example, strictly rejected the transformation of an important conciliatory element of the Alevi *cem* ritual into a revolutionary *halk mahkemesi* (people's court). From that time, there were two antagonistic and rather irreconcilable readings of Alevism: On the one hand was the rather quietist, inward-oriented, outwardly compliant rather than resistant reading dominated by dedes, for whom Alevism was religion in the first place and who by no means fundamentally rejected the Turkish state. On the other hand was a decidedly antistate, revolutionary, and politics-oriented version that dismissed the dedes as oppressive figures.

The leftist, revolutionary, and militant interpretation of Alevism prevailed for almost three decades because most of the dedes remained out of the public, continuing the time-tested Alevi survival strategy of *takiye* (dissimulation, hiding), which largely took to "hidden transcripts" (Scott 1990) rather than to open resistance. Meanwhile, the revolutionaries campaigned publicly with Alevi symbols and succeeded in creating the martyrial ecumene to which Yonucu refers that places Pir Sultan Abdal at the side of Deniz Gezmiş and Che Guevara. With new forms of institutionalization, however, many dedes more openly challenged the revolutionary reading of Alevism as an aberration. Both sections of Alevis refer to the martyrs of Karbala, Sivas, Maraş, and other places linked to violent events that are categorized as *katliamlar* (massacres) of Alevis, and both are haunted and inspired by figures like Pir Sultan Abdal and others. Yet they draw quite different consequences therefrom. The spirits of the past are re-*presented* differently in differing political and spiritual contexts and for different purposes. Thus, the inspiration for fearlessness and resistance does not automatically follow from the hauntings of spirits like Pir Sultan Abdal.

Yonucu refers to Foucault's techniques of the self and calls for taking "into account the agentive effect that the dead have on the living" to better understand the "ethical work of forming oneself into an autonomous ethical subject." In his discussion of an anthropology of ethics, James Laidlaw (2002) similarly refers to Foucault and puts Foucault's notion of freedom at the center of his conceptualization of ethics. Here, freedom is not

conceptualized as the absence of constraints but as an exercise in which "'the subject constitutes itself in an active fashion through practices of the self" (Foucault quoted in Laidlaw 2002:323). Such practices of the self follow models found in the subject's social and cultural environments. They do not necessarily go against restrictions or social rules; freedom may also consist in complying with such rules, as in Laidlaw's ethnographic example of the elaborate and rather restraining ritual practices of Jains. Laidlaw insists on distinguishing freedom, thus understood, from agency, yet his understanding of freedom resonates with Saba Mahmood's (2005) conceptualization of agency as possibly including compliance with, rather than being only limited to, resistance against rules. The crucial point, however, is that such freedom/agency does not consist in the absence of constraints but rather in the self's active and conscious dealing with them, even in a way that from an outside perspective may seem restrictive and harmful to the individual. While Laidlaw's and Mahmood's discussions refer to ethnographic examples from the realm of religion, Yonucu's case offers an opportunity to fully extend it to the political sphere, underlining also Mahmood's conclusion that political agency cannot be properly understood without grasping the related ethical agency (Mahmood 2005:35).[25] Following the practices suggested by the leftist revolutionary interpretation of Alevism, exemplified particularly by the venerated martyrs, the Alevi revolutionaries of Istanbul's working-class neighborhood exercise freedom by not giving in to the very real threats of the secret police and other repressive bodies of the state. Their exercise of (ethical) freedom may result in the loss of freedom understood in the conventional liberal sense of noncoercion—they may end up in jail. The spirits of the martyrs inspire a practice of freedom as resistance in Devrimova. Deniz Yonucu's article is an important contribution to politicize the anthropology of ethics and freedom James Laidlaw has called for.

Reply

I thank Lorenzo D'Orsi, Neve Gordon, Kevin Karpiak, Erol Saglam, and Martin Sökefeld for their thought-provoking comments and engaging with my work in ways to push my arguments further. I am also thankful to *Current Anthropology* for providing me this opportunity to clarify a few points and respond to their comments, which deserve a much more detailed answer than I can possibly offer here. I truly hope that our exchange here will foster further conversation on resistance in relation to hauntings (and vice versa) and the ethics and politics of anthropological approaches to policing. This article emerged from a larger project on the policing of racialized working-class populations in Istanbul and various forms of resistance against Turkish counterinsurgent policing that is informed by the colonial school of warfare and Cold War/decolonial–era counterinsurgencies.

Neve Gordon most explicitly asks about the distinction between hauntings of oppression and hauntings of resistance, their distinct psychic effects, and whether "haunting" is an accurate term when discussing inspiration from past resistance. I thank Gordon for pushing me to further clarify my arguments. I agree with Gordon's claim that we can talk about the hauntings of oppression on their own but not about the hauntings of resistance. Hence, rather than taking these two forms of hauntings dichotomously, I argue that hauntings of resistance are always intertwined with hauntings of oppression. For one thing, resistance is always a response to oppression and can possibly be faced with oppression. But this does not mean that psychic effects of the hauntings of oppression and of past resistance are indistinguishable. Drawing on Avery Gordon's analysis of the Mothers of the Plazo de Mayo that Neve Gordon mentions in his commentary, I will first briefly explain how those who lost their lives while fighting against unjust, oppressive structures haunt those who encounter their ghosts/spirits and why I think "haunting" is an accurate term when discussing psychic effects of the lingering spirits of those deceased rebellious subjects.

For Neve Gordon, Avery Gordon's analysis of the Mothers of the Plazo de Mayo offers an example of how hauntings of oppression give rise to resistance. But I would argue that the Mothers of the Plazo de Mayo is a perfect example of the intertwinement of hauntings of oppression and resistance. The disappeared were not merely victims of horrific violence. Many of them believed in the ideal of a more just society and were activists either actively fighting against injustice or supporting those who fought for justice. What was lost when they were disappeared was not just those children/young people but their organized resistance. That is to say that they do not just linger on Earth as the ghosts of innocent people who were subjected to brutal violence but also as the ghosts of those who were subjected to cruelty because of their fight for or belief in the ideal of a more just society. Their spirits, then, do not remind us merely of past violence but also of past resistance. They demand not just accountability and punishment for those responsible but also acknowledgment and continuation of their resistance. And this is precisely why I think "hauntings of resistance" is an accurate term. "Bring them back alive" was one of the key slogans of the Mothers of the Plazo de Mayo (Gordon 2008). And one of the ways to bring the disappeared back alive is to keep their resistance alive. Avery Gordon shows how, with an "extraordinary absence of fear" (112), the Mothers became the "guardians and inheritors" of their "children's political aspirations for social justice" (111). These two responses (defying fear and feeling the need to protect and inherit the deceased people's political

25. Interestingly, however, Yonucu's case also has strong religious links. One could ponder whether religion indeed provides particularly strong and pervasive motivations, as in Geertz's (1973) conception, even beyond the immediate domain of religion, but I lack the space here to do so.

aspirations), I think, are among the unique psychic effects of being haunted by ghosts/spirits of those who lost their lives while fighting oppression. "We need to defy fear." "We have to keep the spirit of resistance alive." "We must continue their struggle as our own." These are things my interlocutors used to tell me time and again when they were talking about the deceased revolutionaries. Inheriting the past resistance not only ties history to the present—one of the effects of hauntings—but also creates a unique spiritual, and at times even embodied, connection with the dead, a connection that gives strength in addition to inspiration. As I illustrated elsewhere (Yonucu 2022*b*), some of my young interlocutors told me that they feel that they resurrect the dead in their own bodies at the moments when they act out and express their rage against the police violence. One young man, for instance, while describing his response to a violent police attack in his neighborhood, told me, "When I take a stone in my hand to throw at the police, I say, this is . . . for Hasan Ocak [a disappeared Marxist school teacher]. In that moment, I feel like Hasan Ocak comes alive in my body. And it makes me feel stronger, undefeatable." (134). As Lorenzo D'Orsi rightly points out, Leyla Neyzi and Haydar Darici's (2015) important work on Kurdish youths' feeling of indebtedness to the deceased guerrillas suggests that the spirits of those who lost their lives while fighting colonialism and oppression create a feeling of indebtedness that urges those who stay to continue their struggle. I thus argue that to understand this invigorating and inspiring force that makes one feel strong and fearless, and that produces a powerful desire to keep past resistance alive, we must attend to the unique effects of hauntings of the deceased rebellious subjects—who are considered martyrs in certain contexts. It is also important to note here that "martyr" in this article is first and foremost a psychoanalytical subject. It is the psychoanalytical force of the fallen ones that makes "martyr" a significant subject in various contexts.

As Martin Sökefeld notes and as I also underlined in the article, hauntings should always be understood in context. Cultural archive of resistance, for instance, may not always be enough to give rise to radical defiance. Hauntings, as do cultural archives, interact and intersect with other social relations and processes, such as racism, class, gender, and colonialism. The kind of fearless resistance I analyzed here in relation to hauntings is not just any resistance but subaltern resistance. Lorenzo D'Orsi, pointing out the use of violence among Turkey's revolutionary groups, suggests that the hauntings of martyrs also pave the way for an engagement with revolutionary violence. He also argues that my interlocutor's class position (working class) makes them less critical of the revolutionary organizations that engage in violent acts. As a scholar who is committed to learning from the experiences and wisdom of the oppressed—the wretched of the Earth—I disagree with Lorenzo D'Orsi's comment on this. In fact, in my book, *Police, Provocation, Politics: Counterinsurgency in Istanbul*, I illustrated how the security state plays a key role in provoking violence among the colonized, racialized, and dispossessed communities in Turkey, who have long been experimenting with radical democracy and direct local self-governance, which resembles what Meghan G. McDowell (2019) calls "insurgent safety." As I demonstrated in the book, provocation of violence of the racialized, dispossessed, and dissident populations is not restricted to Turkish policing but is a more global counterinsurgency technique that has been used in various parts of the globe against both the colonized populations and the so-called internal enemies, which intersect with the former in the settler-colonial contexts.

Kevin Karpiak is absolutely right in arguing that I did not have to tell this story of haunting through the specter of the police. But police are also the haunting reminders of the past violence as well as the violence yet to come. The following words of one of my interlocutors, which I cited elsewhere (Yonucu 2022*b*), hints at the ghostly effects of the police: "When I see the police, I see the murderer state. I see the potential murderer" (134). In this sense, the undercover police, who like ghosts are simultaneously absent and present, are the dark counterfigures of the revolutionary spirits. In an era where undercover police surveillance and informant activities are still heavily employed not only in the authoritarian contexts but also in seemingly more liberal contexts, I think that to understand the "state subject" (Aretxaga 2000) and how it comes to being in everyday life, we, anthropologists, should pay more attention to the undercover police, their provocative, manipulative, and haunting force as well as their psychic effects on the targeted populations. This, as Erol Saglam notes, also very much resonates with the analyses of posttruth, which invite us to reflect on the effects of the emotions triggered by the erosion of trust and reliable grounds.

Kevin Karpiak asks, "Is [this] the study of an antipolitics or of precisely the generative site of political subjectivity?" In my book, approaching the police from a Rancierian perspective, I showed how counterinsurgent policing is a Rancierian form of policing mostly concerned with distribution (of roles, spaces, voices, etc.) and counterorganization of the dissident population. I defined this kind of policing as a "war on politics." The inspirational and emboldening power of the hauntings of those who lost their lives while fighting oppression and the ethical questions hauntings bring forth show us the impossibility of a fully successful war on politics. Such hauntings are the cracks where the light shines through and nourish politics.

I am very happy to see Kevin Karpik's, Martin Sökefeld's, and Erol Saglam's comments on my ethnographic work and its ethical and political call. I also very much appreciate Martin Sökefeld's comments on the connection between ethics and politics. One of my key endeavors in this piece is to show how ethics and politics cannot be separated from one another. Saba Mahmood's (2005) theoretical contribution in this sense is extremely relevant and so is James Laidlaw's (2002) discussion on the anthropology of ethics and freedom. I am pleased to see that Martin Sökefeld sees this article as an important contribution to politicize the anthropology of ethics and freedom.

Finally, as Erol Saglam underlines in his commentary, I think we, as anthropologists, should never forget the history of our discipline and how it has been weaponized against the oppressed as part of colonial aspirations. Anthropology has close links with policing and can be and is utilized for policing concerns. Those of us who are working among and with racialized, dispossessed, and colonized communities—the communities that are targeted by the police—must be especially vigilant about the afterlives of our research. My solution in my work was a radical disengagement with the police and engaging with ethnographic refusal in the contexts where it can be used against my interlocutors. Such disengagements, however, do not prevent us from analyzing the police and exploring how police operate on the ground.

Once again, many thanks to the commentators for their stimulating comments on my article and to *Current Anthropology* for giving me this space to engage with the comments.

—Deniz Yonucu

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