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THE AFFECTIVE MATERIALITY OF A LAMENTING MOUNTAIN: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY ON VIOLENCE AND DISPLACEMENT IN SOUTHEASTERN TURKEY

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AĞIT YAKAN DAĞ: GÜNEYDOĞU TÜRKİYE'DE TESİRİN MADDESELLİĞİ, ŞİDDET VE YERİNDEN EDİLME ÜZERİNE BİR OTOETNOGRAFİ

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For Nergis, and for my grandmothers Hanım and Nazlı
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ..... **iii**

LIST OF FIGURES ..... **vii**

ABSTRACT ..... **viii**

ÖZET ..... **ix**

INTRODUCTION **1**

CHAPTER 1: "THE REGION" **4**

1.1. MULTIPLE LAYERS **8**

1.2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY **10**

1.3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND **12**

1.3.1. Affect Theory **13**

1.3.2. Silence as "The Crack" **16**

1.3.3. "Ghost" and "Ruination" **20**

1.4. METHODOLOGY **22**

1.5. RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY **25**

1.6. THESIS OUTLINE **27**

CHAPTER 2: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND **30**

2.1. TRANSITION PERIOD FROM OTTOMAN EMPIRE TO THE FORMATION OF TURKISH REPUBLIC **32**

2.2. TURKIFICATION POLICIES **34**

2.3. HARPUT (KHARPERT) **36**

2.4. VIOLENT CROSSROADS **39**

CHAPTER 3: TOPONYMIC ERASURE **43**

3.1. DISPLACEMENT AND RESETTLEMENT **44**

3.2. A WALK **49**

3.3. A LAMENT **52**

CHAPTER 4: THE SACRED MOUNTAIN **56**

4.1. GARAGAVEN MOUNTAIN **59**

4.2. YIKILHAN, SAYBOYNU, KANLIDERE **64**

4.2.3. "There is Nothing to See in There" **64**

4.3. JINN IN THE VILLAGE 67
4.4. THE UNSETTLED PRESENT 69
4.4.1. Digging/Knocking/Voicing the Nonhuman Narratives 69
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION 72
REFERENCES 75

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. A bridge with a dried lake. The Abdulvahap Mountain -known as Kilise Dağı or Muşar Dağı- is visible on the right. Photograph by me, August 2021..... 4
Figure 2. Ruined houses in the village 7
Figure 3. Village and Town Names in Ağın District 40
Figure 4. The remains of old stone-mud houses 42
Figure 5. The village name comes from "dink" and "ding" which means a large mortar. The mortar placed at the center of the village. Now it is ruin 43
Figure 6. The flag of Turkish Republic on the slope of the mountain overlooking the highway. Elazığ - Malatya Road 46
Figure 7. The wooden dowry chest which was carved inlaid and studded, in the basement..... 52
Figure 8. My grandmother and my uncle walking to the graveyard on the Garagaven Mountain 61
Figure 9. The broken tombs of the graveyard in Garagaven..... 63

For more photographs: https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjzFLgd

ABSTRACT

This research looks into the multiple layers and waves of mass violence in Dibekli (Dingidar/Dengdar), a village in Elazığ, southeastern Turkey, also known as the Armenian and Kurdish region. This autoethnographic research looks at the material, spiritual and affective bonds with the past held by displaced villagers, the aftermath of mass violence and colonial ruination of the geography. This study concentrates on the violent crossroads and overlapping processes of unfinished histories that are differential yet connected and that are not enacted in the same temporality as politics in the "now". I intend to shed light on the rupture in the transgenerational transmission of the narrative/knowledge while addressing the historical and political affects of the "critical" events in the region. What is "left behind" can be traced by "looking backward" to the ghostly traces on the mountains, the absence of communities and their silenced place in the memory of Turkey's present. Re-thinking the past in different forms, I propose to take the "melancholic remnants" of the village, the spirituality of mountains and the materiality of displacement, by drawing on recent affective geographies and anthropological inquiries into ruination, silence and hauntedness. This will be drawn through ethnographic encounters centred around concepts of nonhuman entities and spiritual beings including ruined stone houses, sacred mountains, and a vanished creek as a frontier witness, active participants of violent processes. Beyond all of this, I argue that, for the presence of jinn, the laments and the silence that have been attached to them are not only affective reminders of the past but also a haunting force of the present. Offering conceptual categories from affect literature and space, I strive to indicate how silence reactivates the traces of another: the ghostly trace of the Armenian dispossession extends to the present day. Silence and secrecy invite us to seek multiple layers and new possibilities for storytelling merging with theory while considering the (im)possibility of autoethnography to work on mass violence.

Keywords: affective materiality, violence, ruination, silence, hauntedness

ÖZET

Türkiye'nin güneydoğusunda Elazığ'da Dibekli (Dingidar) köyüne odaklanan bu otoetnografik araştırma kitlesel şiddetin çoklu katmanlarını ve kesişimlerini göstermeye çalışır aynı anda bu coğrafyanın kitlesel şiddet ve bölge doğasının sonrasında yerinden edilen köylülerce korunan geçmişle ilintili maddi (material) ruhani (spiritual) ve tesirli (affective) bağlarını inceler. Bu çalışma farklı ama bağlı zamansallıklarda geçmişin ve "şimdi"nin politikalarıyla bitmemiş tarihlerin gömülü anlatıları ve bilginin nesilden nesile aktarımındaki kesintiyi/kesiği göstermeyi amaçlar. Dağlardaki hayaletimsi izlere, toplulukların yokluğuna ve Türkiye'nin bugünkü hafızasında sessiz kalmış tanıklıkların "geriye bakarak" izini sürer. Bu çalışmada, geçmişi farklı formlarda yeniden düşünerek, köyün "melankolik kalıntılarını," dağların maneviyatını ve yerinden edilmenin maddiliğini, devam eden yıkım, sessizlik ve musallat kavramları üzerinden ele almayı öneriyorum. Şiddet içeren süreçlerin en öndeki tanıkları ve aktif katılımcıları olan yıkılmış taş evler, kutsal dağlar, ağaçlar ve yok olmuş bir dere başka bir hafıza örme tekniği gösteren etnografi çalışmaları aracılığıyla beraber düşünüyorum. Yanı sıra cinlerin, ağıtların, sessizlik anlarının sadece geçmişin anımsatıcıları olmakla kalmayıp "şimdi"nin musallat olan bir gücü olduğunu öne sürüyorum. Affect literatürü ve benzer disiplinlerde farklı duygu coğrafya çalışmalarının önerdiği, insan dışı varlıklarla beraber düşünmeyi olanaklı kılan kavramsal kategoriler ile birlikte sessizliğin bir diğer öteki izlerini nasıl harekete geçirdiğini veya tıkadığını günümüze dek uzanan hayaletimsi iz(ler)ini göstermeye çalışıyorum. Bu çalışma, otoetnografinin imkansızlıklarını bir olanaklılık durumu olarak dikkate alır ve devam eden kitlesel şiddetin çoklu katmanlarını yeni anlatım biçimleri ve imkanları ile temas kurmaya çalışır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: tesirin maddeselliği, şiddet, yıkım, sessizlik, musallat

INTRODUCTION

In 2019, I attended my paternal grandmother's funeral. My paternal grandmother was a ninety-two-year-old woman who lived in a district of Beşyüzevler in Fatih, Istanbul. She had lived there since the early 1960s after she left her hometown village, Dibekli (Dingidar) in Elazığ, southeast Turkey. It was a moment of disturbing and disconcerting feelings that were unveiled in the funeral home. Moans and cries filled the parlour and the lamenting continued in a dismal rhythm that expressed sorrow and pain for the loss of this loved one. My aunt was distraught, covered in tears, expressing emotions and memories for her lost mother. In the middle of her lamentations, my aunt voiced her distress about how she waited so long to talk with her mother, "but time has gone without talking about the past." A memory overwhelmed her from her childhood years. She had been left in the village when her parents moved to Istanbul because her parents could not afford the cost of having her, and also because "girls were not seen as valuable as boys". She recalled how she endured her time spent in the village with unpleasant pain, while she waited for her family to turn back, for years. Now, those long-buried painful years of waiting appeared within her grief, in a lament. A dense cloud of unattached feelings of that sort wandered around the room, spinning amid the atmosphere of the funeral. Such a loss brought back disturbing reminders of memory. Death evokes physical responses, not only the hurt shown at the loss of a loved one but the emotional toll of oft forgotten memories coming to the fore. Lamenting has a bodily response not only for the loss transpired at the funeral but also has an affective account in terms of reverberation or the unconscious reminder of past; a lament can transmit unsayable things, inexpressible feelings, across different layers of senses. At a funeral, people try to catch your eye, they are unable to say what they feel. They pointedly don't talk about certain memories and fail to bring up others. All of these awkward strategies evaporate in the sound of those wailing for their loss. I sat in this dismal parlour, listening to one of my relatives. She told me

with a sense of pride how her daughter became a "hafız"[1] last year. A woman of Alevi[2] origin who would try hard to become "hafiz" and also identify herself as such in the community seemed unusual to me. Afterwards, we went to the nearby mosque to the burial ceremony for my grandmother's funeral, although Alevis had a different place named "Cem Evi" used for this purpose. I asked one of my relatives if there was any "Cem Evi" in the vicinity. "We are neighbors here. We do not make a distinction like that in the neighborhood," she responded with an emphasis on "distinction". What can be the reason for the distinction? The funeral was not based on making any distinction or to present itself as not being discriminatory against others. But somehow, even without the intention, it had unwittingly made itself distinct, and in some way discriminatory in itself. As an Alevi community they knew how they were required to keep their religion/culture a secret within the community and not to reveal it outside. It was an atmosphere of constant fear and distrust. It was founded within a complex understanding of what could be said and known, with knowledge of how they would (not) be allow(ed) to reveal their religious difference and its practice. It can be hard to say how damaging this "distinction" was, after all those years. The funeral led me to see how the ordinary (an overly assumed sense of what we know about) is shuttered by the obscuring of hidden narratives, the taboo-like secrecy of religion/identity, and waned wishes.

I had a "somber" feeling that lingered with me after the funeral. What was haunting me? I was thinking of my grandmother's last wish: She desired to be buried in her homeland. In the meantime, another fragment of the buried familial story came to the surface during my regular visit to my maternal grandmother's house in Üsküdar, Istanbul. She was in her mid-80s and was a woman who dedicated her whole life to

[1] *Hafiz* is a highly respected person who memorises the entire Qur'an.
[2] The Alevi belief system prevents us from making generalizations due to its variety of cultural, traditional, and local aspects, it is also hard to define what Alevism is because of the contradictions and limits of religious/cultural identity in Turkey. Alevis believes to be the followers of Imam Ali after the death of Islamic prophet Muhammad. The Prophet Muhammad choses Imam Ali as the caliph before he died. However, Ali was not allowed to be caliph. Alevis believe that Ali was betrayed. This historical turning point divided the Muslim community. Alevis shifted away from the mainstream Muslim community.

her home and children, with the exception of her husband because of his disloyalty. Like my paternal grandmother, her last wish was to visit her home village Dibekli (Dingidar) for one last time before she died. It had been almost seventy years since my grandmother left her village like many others of her relatives, villagers who had migrated to Istanbul in the 1950s. During one such visit, my grandmother told me some of her moments in the village. I found it difficult to believe these stories. Her gestures, fears, even her jokes fluctuated between a past and a present, all memories belonging to the wistful village. She reminisced over heartbreaking and difficult experiences in the village. Some were unknown stories that became notorious in our family about the "suspect" origin of our family heritage. There were two moments from my familial history, selected out of countless other rotten memories which drew me towards tracking the village. I began searching for a history and my hidden familial history extending to the Dibekli (Dingidar) village in Elazığ, in southeastern Turkey.

CHAPTER 1

"THE REGION"

In August 2021, I travelled to the village to get a sense of my grandmother's stories and to understand the current situation and the atmosphere of the village. Travelling to the southeast of Turkey, to a vastness of barren landscapes surrounded by elevated mountains that block your gaze. You can see remnants; ruination, the absent presence of villages and already vanished creeks were among other flashes of seizure on the road. It was impossible not to be at once haunted by ghostly villages, remnants of absent communities and yet still be thrilled by the silent nature that seems to be waiting for nothing to happen. The pale-yellow coloured landscape generates a sense of hauntedness.



Figure 1. A bridge with a dried lake. The Abdulvahap Mountain -known as Kilise Dağı or Muşar Dağı- is visible on the right. Photograph by me, August 2021.

Considering the southeast of Turkey, it differs in terms of geopolitical assumptions imaginations, it would be more accurate to consider these in terms of the "orientalist" or "nostalgic gaze" that is constantly referring to the authenticity of

geography with a boast of a desire and phantasy (fantasy) or sympathy attached to multicultural and multireligious background often narrated through the *cliché* of the "cultural mosaic" and "cultural generosity". These are puzzling which have been naturalized and formulated in a way that ignores and refuses the complexity of colonial presence: "underdeveloped", "backwardness", "political disorder", "conflict zone". "Generous", "forbearing", "hospitable", "multiethnic" reflect often a geo-narrative phantasy. Emphasizing on a phantasy which fluctuates in between "what we imagine" and "what we know about" is all far from acknowledging the colonial presence, the political and structural violence, damages and losses, resistance and struggle, the - communities whether dead or alive, present or absent.[3]

The spatial area has undergone numerous significant political historical and spatial transformations. The region is the eastern Turkey of recent times, which is also referred to as a Kurdish and Armenian region. Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined political communities" refers to geographical categorizations that are measured not by actual places on maps but exist within the consciousness of people (2006:45). All parts of the region did not share the same historical and current struggles, but despite divisions there were intersections of experiences and personal and collective memories. It has experienced discriminatory policies, practices and mass violence including displacement, decimation, deportation, forced assimilation, not only of non-Muslims communities but also various minority populations dating back to the Ottoman Empire and this has continued after the formation of the Turkish Republic. Besides, in the early 1970s the imposition of food embargoes, ecological interventions coupled with mega-dam projects resulting in water restrictions and agricultural production detrimentally affected the region in a variety of contexts.

Before my trip to the southeast for my ethnographic fieldwork in Dibekli (Dingidar) village, I heard some common questions from my friends that gave a certain

[3] I refer to Colin Davis in "*État Présent: Hauntology, Spectres and Phantoms*" and his explanation of hauntology "replacing the priority of being and presence with the figure of the ghost as that which is neither present nor absent, neither dead nor alive" (2013:53).

atmospheric emphasis to my traveling from West to the East. “Is this your first time going to the region?” and “Are you going to the region? They were having trouble saying “Kurdistan” and were using the term “the region” (*bölge*, in Turkish) instead. They also shared certain criticisms they had formed regarding my highly romanticized vision about my research project, “Are you going back to your roots?” (“Köklerine mi dönüyorsun?”), “Are you going back to your mountain?” (“Dağlarına mı dönüyorsun?”). Such connotations and implications about a researcher who wanted to study her ancestor’s village, searching for her roots or heritage as an outsider situated far from the place, however, my intention is neither to (re)turn to my roots or search for my heritage by looking with a nationalist or nostalgic gaze toward the region or by finding or creating an original noble story from the sands of history. On the contrary, my approach is to contextualize the Dibekli village as a place of violent crossroads connected across yet different temporalities that were created through dispossession, liquidation, and the repressive measures of the Ottoman Empire and Turkish nation state. This study revolves around the question of what is “left behind” and how a “left behind” place follows us or can be tracked as affective histories of the present.

It was a very hot summer, end of August. My maternal grandmother, aunt, and uncle accompanied me on the trip.[4] It was the “grape harvest season,” said my grandmother. On the two-hour drive through a vast barren landscape, the atmosphere in the car was both joyful and gloomy. We talked about a variety of things ranging from the remembering of old names of villages we passed, the history of sacred mountains, past atrocities, and the discrimination from before they left the village in the 1950s and recent water issues in the area. The talk changed through the areas we were passing. As we kept driving through the Malatya-Keban main road, we moved between villages and towns with different ethnic and religious grounds, Sunni-Alevi-Christian communities and Kurd, Turk, Arab,

[4] My grandmother went to the village a few times in the summers, especially after the 2000s. However, my aunt and uncle have been there only two times since the age of six. More than ten years have passed since my first visit. I was twelve when my father took me to the village to create a connection with my roots.

Armenian villages, and towns. Some of them they called “mixed” or “covered” but they also included absent communities, particularly Armenians. After having passed the towns, we stopped at Keban Dam[5] to look above to the Dibekli village. It was barely discernible at first because the village lies in a growing area amidst tall trees, in contrast to the barren landscape around. Up ahead, a few kilometres from Keban Dam, we entered the small paths of the village. There was not much left from the stone-mud houses. They had decayed and become unstable, with broken windows and roofs that had lain derelict for years, while others had already collapsed and were now hiding behind undergrowth, dead lawn, and walnut trees.

Figure 2. Ruined houses in the village



[5] Turkey’s first mega hydro-project Keban Dam was placed over an area of what used to be several villages in the late 1950s and induced the processes of displacement, migration, impact on local peasant communities as well as changing the fundamental characteristic of the region. It was called a “natural disaster” by my interlocutors as a result of decreased water in the region.

1.1. MULTIPLE LAYERS

Dibekli village is the only Alevi village in Ağın district. It was settled in the mountainside that is locally called Garagaven (Karakaven). This mountainside has a well-known importance in the village as a sacred earth-being, the source of healing and sacred stones; as well as its surrounding other mountains, Böğürlü, Sayboynu, and Yıkılhan. The area was home to Armenian settlement, especially Ağın (Vağaver) and the Arapkir (Arapgir) district a few kilometers away from the village. In the village, there are other powerful spiritual and sacred places such as fountains, houses, trees for the Alevi culture. These are not only cultural and religious sacred places and shrines but also "affective" memorial sites. This is especially, Yıkılhan mountain, a place remembered by some of the villagers for the killings in 1915 and that now bears the ghostly traces of and remnants of Armenian properties. An isolated hillside has the Alevi settlement[6] where atrocities were carried out by their Sunni-Muslim neighbors and by the sovereign violence of Ottoman Empire and republican regime. In turn, Dibekli villagers isolated themselves from the surrounding towns and remained in isolated relations within the community for years. Even today, the memories of past atrocities – as nearby Sunni villages intrude over their Alevi village – are still present in conversations among themselves, but not in public. Their painful experience and witness of pressure constitute their connections with the past. They say, while heaving a sigh, "Ah! A lot of suffering and trouble all those years. We had experienced so many things," which was one of the perpetual claims. The long breath of the signifier, "ah," was extended not solely by the weight of personal, collective, and historical memory of suffering. This also served to sustain the people's remembrance of a time of abundance and the blessings of the land.

[6] The village has connections and roots with Onar Alevi village because the *dede* or *pir*, who is the religious specialist of Alevis, comes from Onar village to visit Dibekli at least once a year. During these visits the *Cem* is organized and the dede leads the Alevi ritual. Alevism and its religious knowledge are transmitted through dede and his talips. These descriptions derive from my fieldwork notes based on conversations with Suna, one of the locals.

At the end of the 1950s, the tide of migration to Istanbul from the village accelerated. Before that period, I was told that there were 110-120 households, (*hane*, in Turkish) in the village. Villagers (mostly men) first moved temporarily to seek jobs to Istanbul and then settled permanently but even after they continued to visit their village, staying a couple of months over the summers. After that, the village stood, without inhabitants. However, there has been a recent increase in those who have returned permanently. Their returns have become more visible after the 2000s. A few people have decided to re-inhabit their ruined village; for instance, a 65-year-old couple with their young son recently re-settled in the village permanently due to economic burdens and the difficulties of paying the costs of living in Istanbul. During the first migration process, the main aim of these former villagers (my grandmother's generation and their families) was to work and buy an apartment in Istanbul. "Buying a house" was the main hope which included expectations and attempts to establish "a better life" for them. This is relatively different from what Laurent Berlant describes as the "cruel optimism" to reach "the good life". Berlant uses the term referring to the conditions of the mainly western neoliberal middle-class world under which the "good life" is a series of attachments obtained "to compromised conditions of possibility whose realization is discovered either to be impossible, sheer fantasy, or too possible, and toxic" (Berlant 2011:24). Rather I suggest the term "readiness to compromise" or "redemption" for what they left behind was their living under the atrocities of local sovereigns, and the state power as well. Their search for a "better life", it has conquered them already in their compromises or in the way that their life was already "mortgaged". And it continues with their re-settlement of the village.

The suspended temporality and murky atmosphere of the village has been traced within multiple forms: The former villagers witnessed numerous forms of violence and atrocities directed at their Alevi identity by the state and local powers before they left the village in the 1950s. The temporal yet connected difference, the region has been "left behind" by communities who were forcefully deported, displaced, and exterminated by the Ottoman empire and mass atrocities toward "other"

ethnically and religiously defined communities during the republican regime. While what is implicit about the forms of violence that targeted "minoritized"[7] communities are not outspoken, the layers of mass violence now take the form of silent gestures and fragmented stories of my interlocutors that collide with the "secrets" of my family history. The "suspicious" Armenian origin, in a way, turned into a knot in the fieldwork, in the present time. The knot became more invisible and hard to untangle as it met the junction-point of "critical events".

1.2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This research intends to portray an answer to the question of what it means to be "left behind" and what a "left behind" ruined place can (and cannot) tell us. This research gathers stories about the village in ruin chasing the minor moment of silence, rumors, local unspoken memory, and rupture, gap or "crack"[8] in familial history transmission about state practices and past atrocities witnessed in the region. These are fragmented, contradictory, intertwined narratives about past atrocities. Remnants in the mountain, the appearances of jinn in the basement of a sacred and ruined house are relational to the historical and political effects of layered and ongoing mass violence in Dibekli village, Elazığ, southeast Turkey.

This study addresses a series of questions: How can the conditions of the past dismiss or exclude certain individuals, things, practices? How is it possible to construct an ethnography in a "left behind" village surrounded by "sacred mountains" which are shrouded in silence? What mechanisms operate to facilitate silence? In which political circumstances can the narrative of past atrocities be allowed or not allowed to be revealed? In which ways and through what "cracks" can the transmission of narrative or historical injury shatter the present?

[7] See Melissa Bilal 2004 and 2013 for a detail discussion the term "minoritized" community in Turkey.

[8] Deleuze's term "the crack" suggests rethinking memory time and image. For Deleuze, "the crack of transmission" is not about what is conveyed from the past to the present. The crack is more about the possibility of a curve to the future. In that context, the crack emerges in the present from the past recurrence deviating from what is moving from the present to the past. For further discussion see, Patricia Clough (2007:13).

This thesis engages with these questions ethnographically by drawing attention to the reverberations of mass violence of sovereign practices: displacement, dispossession, and forced migration. This research revolves around these questions and follows the conceptual intersection of recent anthropological discussions on space/landscape in the context of affective ethnographies. This thesis also concentrates on the relations between human and non-human entities, while exploring the connections through personal, collective and spatial history of violence. Non-human entities such as the mountains, houses, shrines, trees, and jinn emerge within the ethnographic fieldwork and, I further ask: How are they involved in histories of violence? When exactly does a jinn appear? How does what is "left behind" somehow return to us as force haunting the present? When we are bound by rupture in transmission, how is it possible to remember violence through traces and remnants on the mountain? How do mountains remember through their "melancholic" remnants? What does it mean to take and keep stones from a mountain? What does it mean to walk on that mountain? What does a walnut tree tell us?

The studies on violence and trauma have been discussed predominantly within the anthropo-centric framework. However, pulling out "the human" from the centre I attempt to explore the sacred mountains, holy trees, and spiritual beings through their affective potentiality, emphasizing the complex intersections of political violence on bodies, narratives, and landscape. Affective potentiality opens a new space to think about theoretically and analytically the "historical injury," "silence," "ruination". I examine "life" in a "left behind" village through affectively attached objects, spaces, and relations; the melancholic remnants of earlier waves of dispossession and violence, and the affective forces of sacred memorial sites, such as sacred mountains, and its charged stones, ruined houses and the jinn in their basements, shrines and holy trees which are the traces of a violent past and the witness of the present. I consider them as affective memory sites which constitute threads between past, present and future as reverberations of violence to examine their potential critique of memory politics in Turkey.

The rupture in the transmission of knowledge and narratives to the next generations is political. It can be traced as "transgenerational haunting". In their formulation of "transgenerational haunting," Abraham and Torok argues that an untold trauma does not vanish with the one who at first experienced it, but it returns emerging from the places where secrets remained buried deep. The secrets of my familial past become part of a "haunted" process: the experiment of writing an autoethnography. Autoethnographic study opens space for the minoritized and marginalised voices to be heard within academic realms as it was adopted in critical theory and cultural studies. It brought me closer to the multiple layers of both the narrative and non-narrative and enabled me to see nonlinear connections through the affective understanding of the spirituality and offered alternative methods of writing. In *Ordinary Affects*, Kathleen Stewart (2007) uses autoethnography to portray affective encounters of small cases, flashbacks, and disconnections in everyday life. In her article *'Ontology' is just Another Word for Colonialism,* Zoe Todd (2016) looks at the ways in which ongoing structural colonialism in social science addresses denial within academic discourse and offers a decolonial approach to reckon with critical indigenous thinkers. My methodological approach is much closer to listening, telling, and connecting the silence while looking at the rupture/crack/gap; to what is unseen, of things that cannot be fully uttered, that remain unspoken, and that are about to disappear. It is not my intention to only tell a story about my hidden family history, but to rethink alternative ways of storytelling to give silence a place[9] and to theorize the ghostly traces in the village.

1.3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

I will here discuss the recent theoretical work on "affect". The study of affect and theories of affect that have become associated with the "affective turn", have been addressed by a range of scholars in associated disciplines since the mid-nineties,

[9] Silence has emerged as a central theme in oral history, identity, and memory works. The priority of oral history has been discussed in relation to silenced stories and narratives of marginalized groups. However, my intention is documenting, narrating, picturing silence positions, gestures, whispering stories and haunted landscape to give a place for silence rather than give voice to silenced histories.

after the work of Gilles Deleuze (Clough & Halley 2007; Massumi 2002; Thrift 2008). This is at a time when "the critical theory is facing the analytic challenges of ongoing war, trauma, torture, massacre, and counter/terrorism" says Patricia Clough (2007). Affect is at first considered as a trivial category and falls outside of the dominant approaches of cultural theory in the cognitive mechanism and those psychological categories which have been referred to as structuralism and poststructuralism. This emergent theory found its movement along with subsequent publications as it shifted the theoretical discussion by moving beyond various traditional limitations of the humanities and social sciences.[10] Instead of the influence on discourse and language, referring to the "linguistic turn" and "representation theory," affect studies are open to the study of interest, rethinking subjectivity or psyche, the subject-oriented identity, body and matter.

1.3.1. Affect Theory

There is no single definition for affect. The term "affect" has its origins in the Greek and Latin word "affectus" which means both "passion" and "emotion". The terms are used in various synonyms found to describe the categorization of emotions in ancient Greek. The affects, first postulated by Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, are structured in terms of four main passions: "distress, pleasure, fear, and desire" (Susan James, 1997). According to this view, these were passive states and later definitions are identified with Darwinian psychological ground and the modern psychology was mostly anticipated in Descartes' idea that emotions (*pathe*) are passive states of bodily motions. In the mechanistic turn, passions and affects are passive (Brennan 2004:103-106). In this way of thinking, dichotomies exist between individual and environment, subject and object, human and nature, mind and body, activity and passivity; they are based on reductionist explanations of biological determinism Neo-Darwinism reduced to social facts that downplay its complexity. On the other hand, Baruch Spinoza in *Ethics* reconsiders the ontology of political subjectivity in the seventeenth century. Spinoza's term "conatus" appears as a striving force which

[10] See Sianne Ngai, *Ugly Feelings* (2005) for further discussions on affect literature.

is the basis of our passions. For Spinoza, passions are functional, beneficial, or harmful causes. Spinoza, as he defined in the *Ethics,*[11] configures the body capacities as its affects and affectedness in terms of how the forces of encounters can diminish or increase our power in a dynamic way.

Affect theory directs an important turn in the thinking when describing the distinction between emotion and affect. Although the theoretical tendency toward the reduction of affect into the categories of emotion or feeling, a central criticism that is directed toward that emotion and affect as very different kinds of things. Affect cannot simply be reduced within the borders of subjectivity or cognitive rational emotions and contained or subjectivized feelings while employing criticism of psychoanalytic notion and shifts discussion from psychoanalytic interpretation to the intersubjective field.[12] As argued by several scholars, the notion is critically distinguished from "emotion" categories and definitions and goes much beyond that of subjectivity or the self. Brian Massumi (2002) makes use of the concepts of affect and intensity following the articulation of Deleuze and Guattari's reading of Spinoza and posits affect as autonomous from cognition from "mental deliberations, and that affect can thereby be decoupled from meaning". In other words, affect is not the same thing as feelings, emotions, or passions.[13] "Affect is not simply emotion", writes Thrift, "nor is it reducible to the affections or perceptions of an individual subject" (Thrift 2000:219). Thrift's spatial theory of affect rethinking the relations between subjectivity and space following Deleuze's own theory of affect follows this post-subjective trajectory. "Affects are not feelings", writes Deleuze, "they are becomings that go beyond those who live through them (they become other)" (cited in Thrift 2000:219). The notion of "affect" in the Deleuzian interpretation, then, is diametrically opposed to any theory of subjectivity, including, and especially, the psychoanalytic notion of "the

[11] Spinoza, Benedictus de. (1994). A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Works. Trans. by Edwin M. Curley. Princeton and Chichester: Princeton University Press.
[12] Theorizing the subject as fundamentally intersubjective meant that a body is always in relation to other bodies.
[13] See Teressa Brennan (2004) introduction in *Transmission of Affect* for further discussion on the distinction of affect, feeling, emotion and passion.

unconscious". Rethinking psychoanalysis in the postmodern era, Deleuze and Guattari produce a different kind of praxis that problematizes the field of subjectivity. Deleuze defines desire in terms of a production rhizomatic criticism of Freud's emphasis on the connection between desire and death drive. It is also developed more in Lacan's work on desire as it conceives of a lack through the question of the Other as it is associated with lack, production, intensity sensation and force. Indeed, when Deleuze suggests a factory of desire, where the intensity is closely related to production referring to Spinoza's term *conatus*, with interrupted, non-stationary flows in fragments as it produces nomadic forms of thought (Leys 2011:441-42). Ayse Parla's work on precarious hope poses a critical stance toward the distinction between affect and emotion (2019:89). Parla criticizes the understanding of emotion as subjectivized feeling and narrativized experience, refuses the affect as a pre-discursive impersonal intensity[14] and offers a theoretical bridge between them in her conceptualization of hope. Contrary to her, in this ethnography, I prefer to use the "radical version of affect" rather than the "emotion" drawing on the literature of the affective turn and aftermath discussions. I am inspired by several scholars who have discussed affect as the intensities and energies. In the forms of encounter between human and nonhumans at the intersections between materiality and subjectivity, (Thrift 2008:222) that emerge and mobilize through "potential connections," (Stewart 2007:4) but also emerge within historical and political contexts through "dissonant ruptures" (Yıldırım 2019:453). In these lines of thought, affects are emergent, connecting, in-between-ness beside-ness; (Gregg and Seigworth 2010:2) they fluctuate "beneath, between, beyond" (Staiger, Cvetkovich, and Reynolds 2010:4). Things might be hanging in the air, "a sense of something happening?" that produces a feeling, or something half felt, or barely felt, circulate as "atmospheric attunements" (Stewart 2011) or "stick" (Ahmed 2010:29) to the people, things or landscape.

[14] Ayşe Parla (2019) criticizes Nigel Thrift's (2000) conceptualization of affect which implies "pre-linguistic registers of experience and could not be read as an emotional domain and goes beyond human imagination (2000:219). Thrift was inspired by Deleuze and Guattari's notion of affect in A Thousand Plateaus (2004), and she has developed a "non-representational theory" that specifically argued that "affect is non-discursive".

“Is there anyone who has not, at least once, walked into a room and “felt the atmosphere”? writes Teresa Brennan, arguing that we are not self-contained in terms of our energies and our experience is an instance of the transmission of affect (Brennan 2004). For Brennan affective transmission between human beings and their environment lies in the concepts of transference as well as counter-transference rather than language and discourse to analyse the threads and mechanism. In this sense, she emphasizes intersubjectivity and relationality between people and things. Brennan’s term “transmission” implies an intersubjective transmission of affective energy which is a type of continuum resonance, with “not interrupted” communication between individuals and their physical and social environments. In the light of my ethnographic fieldsite, I argue here, the historical form of knowledge not transmitted or absorbed when living through restless obstacles. I propose to a way of knowing which is not explicit yet fragmented and not always narrativized (Caruth 1997) but is formed at the affective level drawing attention to rupture, crack, gap as “dissonance affects” (Yıldırım 2019). The transmission can be heard referring to Deleuze’s notion “the crack” to think differently about memory and trauma, “unclear whether one is in the past or the present, resulting in haunting in time, of time, a folding of time” (Clough 2007:6).

1.3.2. Silence as “The Crack”

Silence emerged as a conceptual knot in my field site. I posit silence here in its multiple forms as something that “sticks” to the landscape, objects, relationships.

> “What gestures the unspeakable? In this other sociology, which is willy-nilly another politics, the ghost gesticulates, signals, and sometimes mimics the unspeakable as it shines for both the remembered and the forgotten. This other sociology stretches at the limit of our imagination and at the limit of what is representable in the time of the now, to us, as the social world we inhabit.” (Gordon 2008:150)

Silence emerges as rupture/cut/crack/gap on the personal memory and collective histories and creates trouble between official history and memory. Silence is crystalized as rupture or "crack" in memory and constituted from a fragmented, incoherent narrative fluctuating between past and present. I refer to a cut in transmitting the knowledge of past events throughout generations and a refusal to speak of various reasons, particularly regarding the 1915 Armenian deportation[15] as much as those atrocities committed toward the "minoritized" Alevi community in the village. In other words, the process embedded in a situation that nobody transparently explained to anyone regarding what happened, falls outside the official narrative and disparate interpretations. In this particular form of silence, I refer to something that is not clearly uttered or not always narrativized but emerges as a gap[16] in which the narrative escapes expression. It generates in the subject an inability to speak about the past but can be traced through disturbing bodily gestures, the turning of one's neck or the lowering of one's voice unintentionally. As Yıldırım aptly puts it, "Fractured speech. Whispers through gritted teeth. Smells. Goosebumps. Frowns. Nervous laughter," and further argues that "abrupt, unexpected, and shocking: this is how culture also happens, in its relational and untamed volatility" (Yıldırım 2019:461).

In that sense, I argue that there is an intuitive cut outside of narrative, when considered as transgenerational haunting as referred to by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok (1994), who indicate (as criticism of Freud's term repression) that "the forgetting of trauma is passed down from one generation to another, mesmerizing, putting all in a transgenerational bodily transference." In other words, the haunting of the present by the past or the wounded historical past can be passed down through familial generation but also transmitted through collective experience along with a

[15] See Adnan Çelik and Kemal Dinç (2015) for an important analysis on transgenerational transmission of memories and narratives regarding the 1915 Armenian disaster among Kurdish people in Diyarbakır (Amed).

[16] The conceptualization of silence in cultural or social categories renders silence as a non-voice, marking it as an absence of voice. However, I argue that silence is one of the dominant ways of transmission as sensory knowledge.

nation-state context (Khanna 2003:255).[17] Grace M. Cho's work on trauma focuses on the traumatic history of diasporic Korean women aftermath of Japanese colonization. Cho's discussion on trauma is based on the Deleuze's notion of machinic assemblage. Cho argues that there is a shared theme of transgenerational haunting on the diasporic bodies expressing that it is what an earlier generation saw but could not say they saw. As Colin Davis argues - referring to Abraham and Torok - the undisclosed traumas of early generations might disturb the lives of their descendants even and especially if they know nothing about their distant causes (2013:54). Abraham and Torok reconsider psychoanalytic theory and offer therapeutic practice of dealing with transgenerational trauma and family secrets. In that point I argue that dealing with the past in the form of writing an autoethnography might be traumatizing.[18] The experimental form of writing can open the possibility of healing, but it may also produce a sense of haunting that "haunts writing as the motive force" (Clough 2007).

Avery Gordon (2008) describes hauntings as forces that affect us in different ways and as something that demands our attention. Gordon further asserts that haunting is distinctive "for producing something to be done" and revealing "the possibilities of the political." For Gordon, haunting differs from trauma arguing that "haunting was precisely the domain of turmoil and trouble" and "that moment (of however long duration) 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, when something else, something different from before, seems like it must be done" (2008: xvi). Accordingly, Marianne Hirsh posits post memory as "the relationship of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their births but that were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right'' (Hirsh 2008: 103). In other words, the figure of

[17] In *The Dark Continents* (2003), Ranjana Khanna widens her focus on the affective force of colonial mechanism and colonial melancholy through a rereading of the canonical works of Fanon, Mbembe and Mannoni.
[18] See Patricia Clough, (2007: 6) Introduction for further discussion about the effects between trauma and autoethnographic writing.

burden forms attachments and links to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma transmitted through generations indicating that it is "the secret psychic substance of their ancestors' lives" (Abraham and Torok 1994: 166). Freud's privileged theory of unresolved grief and melancholia presents a compelling framework to conceptualize registers of loss, depression, and trauma to both psychic and material processes of assimilation. In this ethnography, I propose the conceptualization of tristesse rather than trauma related to the violent and rupturing effects of these historical and political processes. I offer tristesse as an exude of affect that can be felt in the form of transgenerational haunting over time and for longer. I also have bound with this transgenerational haunting process as a writer. I take these critical writings seriously by insisting on asking about a policy that keeps particular bodies, cultures or communities in a certain line or place, and noting that how these communities can maintain their living depends on the way it is transformed into another. Within this policy-laden context in which vulnerable bodies, cultures, or communities in particular places are either erased or constructed, they find ways to keep on living in the area through which an "unsettled presence" clings to the thread or possibility of haunting.

Heather Love in her book entitled "*Feeling Backward"* focuses on historical injury, a history of shame and social exclusion over queer history. Love asserts that we need to look backward to understand how history proceeds to affect us in the present instead of staying behind. Love writes that "damaging aspects of the past that tend to stay with us (we will never forget) (we will never go back)" and wondering "is it possible to engage with the past without being destroyed by it" (2009:2). Thinking with Love, her point enables me to consider the traces of "historical injury" that may stay with us as a haunting reminder in the present that also relentlessly reveals itself as the ordinary. In my study, it may be a failed attempt to rescue the past,[19]

[19] In her account of the "left behind" in the inspirational book *Feeling Backward*, Heather Love describes it by referring to how Walter Benjamin emphasizes the violence to which the angel is exposed in his failed attempt at redemption. Like Lot's wife, the angel faces backward; like Odysseus, however, he keeps moving forward while he looks backward. Benjamin suggests that taking the past seriously means being hurt by it. He is damaged both by the horrible spectacle of the past and by the outrage of leaving it behind.

or, from another perspective, that my inquiry is narrating, documenting, archiving the moments of minor silence in the absence of narrative. I argue that the absence of narrative has a link to the foundational violence of the state practices. This narrative has not been transmitted to generations but the memory of violence found in ghostly traces of Armenians, from the mountain Yıkılhan, as well as throughout the landscape.

1.3.3. "Ghost" and "Ruination"[20]

This research explores the conceptual intersection of recent anthropological discussions on space through the conceptual intersection of "ghost", "remnants", and "ruination" as conceptual categories in the affective geographies. The affect literature gives equal account for the relationship between human and non-human actors such as trees, animals, plants, stones, mountains. Recent affective ethnographies offer conceptual tools for thinking about nonhuman actors as actually existing beings, transformative actors, political witnesses, and agents such as "mountains," (de la Cadena 2015) "concrete," (Rubai 2016) "spiritual beings/jinns" (Biner 2020) and "gardens and mulberry trees," (Yıldırım 2022). In this line of thought these affective accounts and conceptual offerings opens a new space to the possibilities of sensing in multiple ways and enable us to create connections and crossroads that extend beyond the distinction between human and nonhuman agencies through their potentialities while it invites us to think together with regard to the political possibility.

The geographical silence of the region generates a sense of hauntedness. Here, I follow the conceptualization of affective geographies. In studying the affective geographies, I am interested in considering non-human agencies, spiritual connections when theorizing how the rupture in narrative engages with the historical injury that has left its remains "in the now". This kind of displaced

[20] See Edensor 2005; Stoler 2013; Navaro 2012; Rao 2013; Saadi 2021, for a detailed discussion over the concept of ruin and ruination.

relation is not fully articulated but deeply sensed.[21] Therefore thinking with affect provides a lens that recognizes "sensing" and opens up "sensory knowledges."[22] My ethnographic encounters include a series of presences and dispositions, nonhuman actors, intensities of ruination, remnants, mountains, and the ghost-like quality of villages through the sensation of something happening, emerging, a trace of something that cannot be named, or not fully articulated. Therefore, affect theory enables me to theorize dispossessed bodies and ruined places in the context of materiality and spirituality. My materiality routes me to engage with affect theory in order to examine silence gestures, non-human actors, "melancholic remnants" and the atmosphere out of form. The house, the mountain, the walnut tree, and the ghosts/jinns that I am not considering them as the background representative of violence, but I rather suggest that these nonhuman entities transform, regulate, mediate, and act in the aftermath of mass violence.

Mountains are powerful earth beings and sacred trees, stones and places attributed sacredness by the villagers create unexpected affective bonds. The mountains resist a narrowly defined narrative, yet they produce connections through "melancholic remnants" and "ghostly traces" which tell a story that fluctuates between the past and the present. These are also affective memory sites of mass violence that tell that the historical injury can be accessed with the ghostly traces[23] whether buried or "vanished" in the landscape. This is what Lefebvre says: "space does not disappear but leaves traces" (1991:162**)** because the invisibility of ghostly traces can be only accessed with disappearances. I refer to "historical injury" especially for ghostly traces of ruined Armenian properties on the mountain, and the "left behind" belongings that collude with ongoing ruination and which are signs of

[21] I am here drawing the affective materiality that goes beyond the social construction theory. It is not socially constructed, rather deeply felt.

[22] Teressa Brennan (2004:142) discusses language psychoanalytic perspective referencing Freud Lacan, Kierkegaard, Levi-Strauss. Brennan argues that language functions by giving us a place in relation to others, as she writes "enabling us to overcome the subject-centred illusions that plague each of us, and it also gives a voice to the affective blocks and feelings that otherwise stand in the way of rejoining enough of the flow of life to survive" (2004:143).

[23] I refer to the ghostly traces as it is something like: "I see you are not there" as Avery Gordon writes in the essay of "from Her Shape and His Hand" in *The Spectralities.* (2013:114).

silence/hauntedness[24]. I consider the mountains not as empty spaces but as active agents, witnesses of the violent crossroads of the history of displacement, land expropriation, as well as colonial extraction, and mass erasure. The research is deployed with this approach to think through dissonant affects of a haunted geography where dispossession and displacement are waves through the landscape, splitting into an affectively charged zone and a layering violent zone.

1.4. METHODOLOGY

Based on my autoethnographic fieldwork in Dibekli (Dingidar/Dengdar) village in Elazığ, southeastern Turkey, my methodology combined with participant observation, unstructured interviews, informal discussions, and commented walk. The eleven interviews examined in this study were conducted in one-year interval with the villagers living in Istanbul. I also conducted fieldwork in Dibekli village from the end of August to early September of 2021. During my research period for two weeks in the village, I was able to record conversations and discussions, as well as take photos and videos of the landscape. I had a list of questions with me, but the content of questions changed during fieldwork. The possibility of taking field notes depended on the situation. Therefore, I rewrote many of those conversations and encounters after my fieldwork process. Also, I shared some of the photographs that I took during my fieldwork, which may give an alternative source of information about the atmosphere, textures, and sensations of the village, and to evoke senses and echo within a theoretical framework.

During my research process, I was also inspired by novels, memoirs, and the testimonies such as Zabel Yesayan on the Cilician massacres of 1911 in *Among the Ruins*, the memoir of Fethiye Çetin *My Grandmother*. Even as I found it difficult to read the testimonies, they made me realize that neither me nor my family had any previous information about the history of my parental home village (my parents

[24] See Sardar Saadi (2021) for an important analysis of "waiting". It is described in the way, it dominates the life of displaced people in the aftermath of conflict, where a long process of waiting people living in limbo and hope, created bonds in ruins while life was shattering in various ways embedded in everyday life.

are the first generation after the migration of the 1950s). It was similar to a form of amnesia. I also took part in such an absence of narrative – of that *amnesia.*

I travelled to the village to speak with re-settled and elderly people about their past experiences of life in the village, their migration stories in the 1950s, and recent returns to the ruined village. However, the conversations I had with the villagers enabled me to envision the sacred mountains, holy trees, water fountains and spiritual entities as they disclosed the memory of Armenian dispossession along with secrets of my family history. The limits of fragmented stories mainly lie hidden in forms of silence that extend to the 1915 Armenian exile and mass deportation (*sürgün* in Turkish) as my interlocutors generally call it.

Throughout my fieldwork experience, I listened and collected information from walks where I would discuss the past with people, having unexpected encounters from walking in alleyways, and daily conversations over teatime visits. In these daily home-visits, the conversations start with an investigation of our kinship relations, because nobody knew each other properly, except my grandmother. Her first act was always to explain to us our kinship relations. Then the conversations generally drifted to topics related to neighboring disputes, circulating rumours, contested fields and vineyards which have somehow been inherited by multiple people at the same time. All this dominated the casual conversation. On the other hand, there were also conversations that I listened to from elderly locals about the complex and layered history of the abandoned village which have deepened my understanding of the sacred relationships with nature as well as a strong sense of belonging to the village. All directed me to turn to look and visit those spiritually important places that were the local shrines, mountains, trees and ruined and sacred stone houses.

Former inhabitants of Dibekli (even my close relatives – my grandmother and my family members) have not fully exposed their past experiences, especially the origin

of our kinship relations, holding them as buried secrets. My interlocutors[25] hesitated to explain certain things, preferring to tell them implicitly. This was especially applicable when it came to the question of the "Yıkılhan Mountain" (Razed Mountain). As I asked the meaning of the mountain name, an unexpected silence hung in the air, fragmented and nervous gestures were made and the signs from their facial expression which implied reluctance and distress. This prevented me from asking more questions and the need to stay quiet hindered me by not insisting on breaking the silence. I could not ask direct questions about the 1915 displacement of Armenians. I mainly asked about the traces on the mountain and the meaning of the Yıkılhan mountain. The mountain was central to how some of my interlocutors positioned themselves and discharged themselves with a sense of self-justification in a persistent way, in which some gave automatic or self-reflexive responses, depending on the rumours and the stories that they had been told. Even though their narratives might have contained evasions or thwarted attempts at avoiding continued questioning, they also contained shared and fixed non-disputed "facts" about "what happened" consisting of "what was never experienced as such" or "it's always been that way". Such certainty over their personal and family histories marked a contrast from the otherwise contradictory and repetitive accounts that are more attuned to the official explanations of their heritage.

Throughout my ethnographic research, there are also a variety of explanations, arguments, and discussions of the events of 1915. I heard regrets about why they did not ask any questions to their grandparents about the past. At the same time elderly people also did not share with them what happened. In this context, there would always be a new story that emerged in the shape of rumour using *-miş-suffix.*[26] In addition to it, there were also other "interruptions" in conversations. For example, when my interlocutor started to speak, a person next to her/him would interrupt the conversation and change the course of speech all of a sudden. The

[25] The names of all interlocutors have been anonymized to protect their privacy, except for my grandmother who requested to use her real name.
[26] *Miş-suffix* conveys the meaning that the events that we have not witnessed or experienced in the first hand and for things we are not absolutely sure happened that is happened but heard from others.

"actually, it did not happen like that" sentence that straightaway pushed the topic to a different direction. This interruption usually occurred when speaking of the ethnic origin of the villagers as well as the deportation of Armenians in the region. In addition, "I do not know" was one of the most common answers in the field. The people I talked to commonly tried to change the topic at points or avoid the question. These evasions most often started with "I do not know" and ended with the same emphasis.

1.5. RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY

There are several complicated layers in respect to my position as a researcher. As a researcher, both being an outsider and insider (especially my familial kinship and relation) became one of the destabilizing parts of my fieldwork process. Most of my interlocutors are among my broader kin. For instance, both sharing the same identity/religion as well as having a close kinship even if I only met them or had never met them before, and at the same time being distant to their stories were all ultimately important variables of my research. On the other hand, my position helped me to reach the interlocutors relatively easier and enabled me to hear some difficult and untold stories that could never be told to anyone else. Nevertheless, it brought some restrictions and limitations that made it difficult to fully engage only with my own family history. Those aspects and feelings, that both emerge from having close and distant relations with my interlocutors, complicated the dynamic of my fieldwork as researcher but also impacted the process of writing as well.

My relation to my religion, identity, territorial belonging has long been ambiguous. My entire family, maternal and paternal grandparents,[27] comes from the same village Dibekli (Dingidar) but I was born and raised in Üsküdar, Istanbul, in a middle-class family. In public primary school, my classmates came from different ethnic backgrounds. I was not aware that the neighbourhood was multiethnic and multicultural at that time: Armenians, Jews, Rums. The ethnic and religious

[27] I generally call it my grandparents' village because I have a connection through the stories of my grandparents. When someone asks me: "Where are you from?" I reply: "My grandparents are from Elazığ, but I grew up in Istanbul."

differences largely remained unspoken in the public domain. I was also never told the religious "difference" of my parents; it was only revealed much later. I have felt this "difference" through signs and daily practices of my parents. I have become aware of the signs of our religious difference while comparing myself and my family with others. My family had strictly hidden the knowledge within the community; such an approach within the community was based on partly sensing (co-sensing) each other's religion, secretly or silently known but unspoken or unrevealed publicly. It refers in a form of what Taussig describes as *public secrecy*.[28] Although I was not raised with this Alevi identity[29] in a formal setting, I distinctly remember small signs of difference throughout my childhood. The first instance of a sign occurred within my own family during the religious fasting of Ramadan, (the sacred month for Islamic culture). One day my parents switched on the lights in the middle of the night pretending[30] to fast during Ramadan. As such, my maternal grandmother (Hanım) used to stand at the apartment door and rub her lips on the plaster of the wall before leaving the house. Thus, her lips would look dry and so pale, especially during the very hot summer months, so that it would be perceived that she did not drink water all day long and she could pretend that she was fasting. At the time, I could barely sense our religious difference, because the warnings and precautions were not conveyed verbally but always with gestures. As an aspect of my childhood years, I witnessed naturalized discriminatory behaviour and stereotypes about the Alevi community. The identification for some as a "non-Muslim community – Christians" was mainly used as derogatory terms. There were also other offensive comments specific to the Alevi community such as that their food was is inedible, they were dirty people, irreligious, they had special ceremonies (*mum söndü*[31]). These were naturalized and normalized in public

[28] Taussig's formulation of public secrecy is a form of knowing what not to know and what not to speak. Taussig argues that it was necessity for survival, that necessity was not in fixed form but adapting, changing in relation to the events, experiences, and situations.
[29] What it means to be Alevi is not bound to a single definition. My grandmother defines it by saying "you can understand by looking through the eye of a person".
[30] Some Alevis do not fast during Ramadan, instead they fast during the ten days of Muharram. Muharram refers to mourning for the pain and suffering in Karbala, 680 CE.
[31] The word *mum söndü* ("the candle went out") is considered as a hate speech directly refers to the humiliation toward the Alevi *Cem* ritual.

interactions. These make it more difficult for individuals of the Alevi community to reveal their cultural/religious identity publicly. It was also difficult for me to express that I come from an Alevi origin family. I also recall a scene of a family member who did not tell his daughter they were Alevi, because "she was too young to know it" (in her teens). After she became furious when she learned her family's religion from one of her friends. On the other hand, I still remember in a clear detail my parents' attitude towards the question of, homeland or birth of origin (*memleket* in Turkish). While the question may seem harmless at first, it is possible to argue that the question aims at attempting to learn one's ethnic or religious identity. My family became extra sensitive when this question was asked and avoided telling the exact name of the village. They generally preferred to say "centre of Elazığ" or referred to another Sunni-Muslim village around the district. Looking back, I now realize that the "nationalist" image of Elazığ protected us from being considered a minority. Another particular experience I want to recall was when I was a student at the University of Maastricht in 2014. I met a beautiful 50-year-old couple when I got them to fix my bicycle. The man asked me where I was coming from and my answer led to a dead silence that fell over the room the minute I told my country. After I asked the same question to him, he told me with a trembling voice, that he was an Armenian, and said not a single word more. I still remember how his face changed to the word "Turkey". When I look back, I now realize what the word "Turkey" meant to him and I am writing to keep those critical silent moments in my mind. While writing, I will try to give silence a place.

1.6. THESIS OUTLINE

Based on an autoethnography in Dibekli (Dingidar) village in southeastern Turkey, this thesis particularly focuses on the ghostly traces of aftermath of mass violence through multiple dimensions within four main episodes. Throughout the thesis, I want to emphasize the multiple layers of violent crossroads in Dibekli village. I explore the means through which they are intimately bound up with their village: the ruined properties, the spiritual beings and nonhuman entities, such as sacred mountain, shrines, walnut trees, and kept stones which are attributed to the

sacredness of the village; (un)expected encounters (jinn) and lament (*ağıt* in Turkish) constitute intimate affective engagement with the village, as well as relations with the temporality and spatiality of the 1915 Armenian disaster extending to the present. I discussed these layers by intersecting them with the past atrocities and experiences of violence across time and space in the region as well as entangled in stories of leaving and re-returning to the village. The introduction section explains the research's methodology and primary points, considering them in the context of affect literature on silence, ruination, ghost, post-memory, and recent affective geography studies. In the second chapter, I examine the historical background the policies of Turkifying the region, the mass violence surrounding the area as well as multiple and layered violence experiences from the transition period of multicultural Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic. presenting an ethnographic description and mapping the region; the former and present names of towns and villages of the region. The third chapter examines the toponymic erasure, landscape and ecological interventions, displacement and resettlement as well as local experiences and witnesses of conflict and violence by surrounding villages. I focus on the past experiences of subjugation, displacement stories in the 1950's constitute a critical role on the lives of former villagers and continue to shape their lives in the present with the temporalities of the "permanent" resettlement to their home village. I also interrogate how the layered violence led to an incision in the transgenerational transmission of the narratives about the 1915 Armenian disaster, tracing the hidden narrative of my familial history. In chapter four, I examine wrecked landscapes and the haunting effects of the past processes within the conceptual framework of ruination as well as the attributions of sacred places and *ziyarets* such as Garagaven mountain and holy tree in the village. I have traced the role of sacredness invisible actors in historical critical events and hidden memories proceed to the present. Villagers used to say *ağıt, lamentations*, were used to speak for mountains, sacred places, their loved one as well as complaining the disloyalty of men, the hardship of being a woman farmer,[32] mistreatment in patriarchal life,

[32] I found out that old-aged women struggle with similar common health problems because of these hard-working conditions on farms.

and economic troubles in the village. I present lamentations: non-narrative material that proposes to consider multiple modes of existence and refers to critical events of the region as well as active longing.[33] In the last chapter, I address the interactions between humans and nonhumans which have emerged in my field site and sacred places with the connection of appearances of jinn. The chapter also explore the ghostly traces of the Armenian exile/deportation of 1915 on Yıkılhan Mountain. The episodes are woven together with references to the temporal and spatial sedimentation of history, and rupturing effects on personal, collective, and spatial memory regarding the 1915 Armenian disaster that extends to the present day.

[33] Melissa Bilal's article (2006) examines the lives of Armenians in Turkey through women's lullabies refers to musical material of hidden narratives about 1915 traumatic memory transmission.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter focuses on the historical processes of mass violence (Trouillot 1995; Butler 1993; Yashin 2020) in the region southeast of Turkey. The first emphasis is on the prolonged dispossession in the southeast where experiences and state practices of displacement of different ethnic and religious communities (predominantly non-Muslim communities) have been discussed in relation to the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the formation of Turkish nation state. The second emphasis is the subjugation of Dibekli as an Alevi settlement as experienced by its tribal order before the 1950s. I present a portrait of violent crossroads and set of overlapping processes of mass violence in the particular times and spaces in southeastern Turkey. I map the paths and the context of the past and present; history of the 1915 dispossession of Armenians, and the 1950s displacement and recent resettlement to the village. I further inquire into those of resettled people who live in such worlds that not being able to stay stabilized the past or an affirmative present condition, and those for whom the normalization of dispossession or resettlement is not a done deal relegated to the past but rather a continuous process.[34] I think in terms of the work of Ann Stoler to put it differently.

Ann Stoler's work on ruination addresses the ongoing quality of processes of decimation, displacement, and reclamation, in terms of the connection between colonial pasts and postcolonial presents. Stoler made a distinction between ruin and ruination. Stoler defines ruin "as a violent verb that unites apparently disparate moments, places and objects" but she directs her attention more toward ruination. She locates imperial ruins, as "less sites of love" than "implacable resentment, disregard, and abandonment" by referring to Faisal Devji who calls them the "scene of a crime," and also "an ungraspable moment, a vanishing point that can never come into clear view" (2013:232). In her view, ruins emphasize "re-appropriations,

[34] See Vyjayanthi Rao (2013) *The Future in Ruins: Narratives of Displacement and Formations of Development* For a different perspective on state-managed ruins and ruination.

neglect, and strategic and active positioning within the politics of present," to expose "the protracted quality of decimation in people's lives" rather than "remnants of a defunct regime," (2013:11). For Stoler, ruination is an "active process" rather than fixed or linear (2013:194). Ruination is a "political project," indicates Stoler, that "lays waste to certain peoples, relations, and things that accumulate in specific places" (2013:196). Drawing attention to the imperial formations and its ongoing destructions and durable effects on landscapes and the people's bodies and minds, the connections through leftovers between colonial histories and the present can be traced. "Ruins are made but not just by anyone, anytime, or anywhere," she asserts. "Large-scale ruin making takes resources and planning that may involve forced removal of populations and new zones of uninhabitable space, reassigning inhabitable space, and dictating how people are supposed to live in them. As such, these ruin-making endeavors are typically state projects, ones that are often strategic, nation-building, and politically charged" (Stoler 2013:202).

Moving on from Ann Stoler's ruination, I argue that ruination implies both material and immaterial loss, heritage debt and burden from the Ottoman Empire to the establishment of the Republic with unfinished and still ongoing destruction and ruination of land, property, as well as people and things. It is related to the present, even more than the past. The form and contents of administrative state practices-ideologies-policies that accompany the history of violence displacement, massacres, replacement also shape the space, leaving traces (Lefebvre 1991), and scars in the landscape (Edensor 2005), but also on objects and people. They exposed the vulnerable and unprotected as targets of disastrous cruelty, exterminations, and colonial hatred. As such, stone houses, sacred places, mulberry trees, emerge as the sites of this destruction. They are the matter through which one could confront "melancholic remnants" of the traces of the 1915 Armenian deportation in the mountains. Traces left on the mountain and the excavation of a buried church are embodiments of an Armenian presence and the heritage of permanence. Emptying space is extracted from the land through a process of colonial interventions and

politics with situated histories of massacres, land expropriation, displacement as well as resettlement that are enacted upon these assemblages. Taking up Ann Stoler's offer of ruination, I explore different temporalities of political and affective destruction and ruination of stone houses, vanished soils, dried creeks, walnut trees, abandoned properties, and muted atmosphere in the village of Dibekli.

2.1. TRANSITION PERIOD FROM OTTOMAN EMPIRE TO THE FORMATION OF TURKISH REPUBLIC

The region has been subjected to a wide range of exclusionary policies through the dissolution of multiethnic Ottoman Empire[35] and the formation of the Turkish Republic. As it is argued by various scholars, the newly established republican regime necessitated a country that would build on the official "Turkish" national identity and that eliminated every other form of ethnic and cultural elements to prefigure a homogeneous entity (Tambar 2013, 2016; Bozdoğan and Kasaba; Zürcher 2017). This continued with social engineering projects that were implemented with the aim of eliminating multiethnic and multireligious ground to create a homogenous "Turkish" nation. This homogenous entity was widely based on a dominant Sunni Turkish core and a marginalized periphery (Üngör 2011:252). However, Turkey was far from a homogenous state due to the demographic features of the late Ottoman Empire. Multiethnic eastern provinces became a target of a wide range of exclusionary policies through deportations, exterminations, and displacements, (Üngör 2011; Göcek 2014; Bedrosyan 2019) through the allocations and appropriations of non-Muslim communities' property, (Kaiser 2006; Onaran 2013; Üngör and Polatel 2013; Akçam and Kurt 2015; Parla and Özgül 2016) and restrictions on the minority citizens' cultural and legal rights (Tambar 2016; Aktar 2014; Ekmekçioğlu 2016). As argued by Zerrin Özlem Biner (2019), these engineering projects have erased the spaces, bodies, and properties of non-Turkish and non-Muslim citizens. While the practices of violence weave its way back through the Ottoman Empire, the repressive policies have shifted to a new

[35] Different "sects" (mezhep) "communities" (cemaat) "identities" (kimlik) were in the multiethnic Ottoman empire.

dimension during the transition period from the Ottoman Empire to the republican regime.[36] In 1876, Sultan Abdul Hamid II came to power. Known as the "Bloody Sultan", he ruled with extreme brutality and oppression especially toward Armenians. In July 1908, The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP or Young Turks) overthrew the sultan and renewed the Constitution of 1876 while promising to expand legal and human rights for the minorities. After a year, the reform promises of the Young Turk government had been switched to extreme nationalism and "exclusive sectarianism" (Gaunt 2013:322-23) that escalated the ethnic tension immediately in numerous cities and villages in the eastern provinces. That period was marked by massive violence and aggressiveness against non-Muslim population in the eastern provinces. In this context, policies of exclusions along with various legal action and political restrictions were implemented for both non-Turks and non-Muslims.[37] Armenian, Assyrian and Greek populations were victims of mass violence and suffered arbitrary coercion motivated by Young Turks (CUP) ideology that aimed to homogenize the population in terms of ethnicity and religion. (Gaunt 2013:317). This process became more precise with the 1915 Armenian disaster, as argued by Taner Akçam, which eradicated the Armenian presence due to massacres committed during the expulsion of Armenians from Anatolia to the Syrian deserts (2004:149). The Sasun Massacre 1894 followed by the Hamidian massacres of the mid-1890s, and the Adana massacres of 1909 mirrored the turbulent experience of Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, the 1915 Armenian disaster is not the first instance that has caused a huge damage to non-Muslim community but also other traumatic incidents throughout the history that resulted in damage that extended beyond non-Muslims communities but to all identities outside of the Muslim community.

[36] See Çağlar Keyder (1997) *Whither the Project of Modernity? Turkey in the 1990s* for further inquiry regarding the "transitional era" from the Ottoman Empire to the formation of Turkish state.
[37] See Ekmekçioğlu (2014,2016) and Tambar (2013,2016) for a further historical analysis regarding the politics of minorities in Turkey and its impact on Armenians. Also see Parla and Özgül (2016) for a critical discussion about the formation of minority and majority categories.

2.2. TURKIFICATION POLICIES

The Turkification policies played a crucial role during the last years of the Ottoman regime and intensified after the Republic's formation and involved massacres (Suny 2011:28). As argued by Üngör, this was not about a precise geometric border, but a provisional ethnic space (2011:252). Ethnic homogenization and demographic engineering became part of a consistent pattern of a Turkish state that aimed for the elimination of Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians and for the Turkification of Anatolia (Suny 2011:28). As Tambar (2016) argued, these minorities were legally recognized as citizens and yet treated as suspect others. The category of minority, argues Tambar, was "closely related to a process of dispossession—from rights to land, from political status, and from a sense of belonging" (Tambar 2016:35). All Armenian clerks were dismissed, and the vacant functions were transferred to "trustworthy Muslims" (Üngör 2011:303). A further attempt was made to Turkifying and Islamizing the survivors.[38] Nevertheless, the extent of discriminatory policies was also extended to the "other" components of society in that area closely followed other mass violent incidents including earlier ethnic conflicts in the Balkans (Kieser, Öktem, K., & Reinkowski, M. 2020); the expulsion of Greek and Turkish citizens 1919-1922 after the Lausanne Treaty, the 1920-1921 Pontus massacres, 1925 deportations of the Kurds, the revolt of Koçgiri Dersim 1920-1921 and the 1938 massacres and deportations of Dersim. The 1915 murders and their aftermath resulted in a long period of devastation that displaced people from their homes and erased most physical evidence of their several thousand years of material, cultural and spiritual aspects. The properties of the Armenians were not only burned or plundered, but there was also seizure and dispossession through legal orders decreed by the Ottoman authorities for their properties of confiscation and destruction (Gaunt 2013; Üngör and Polatel 2011:42–43). Nationalist policies resulted in the elimination of multicultural components of the society, but also shaped the region in accordance with Turkification policies and homogeneity ideas

[38] See Sarafian 2001; Ekmekçioğlu 2016; Bedrosyan 2019 for more information about the history of Armenian survivors after the 1915 disaster.

led to the population transfers that forced expulsion and dispossession of many of those recognized as a minority. These policies were not solely target to the cultural components of non-Muslim groups, but also resulted in damage to economic activities. The newly constituted nation state necessitated a "Turkish" nation, but also needed nationalization of the economy (Üngör and Polatel 2011:65). "Turkification could now be systematized into a comprehensive empire-wide policy of harassment, organized boycotts, violent attacks, exclusions from professional associations and guilds, and mass dismissals of Armenian employees from the public service and plunder of their businesses in the private sector" (Üngör and Polatel 2011:66). As a result, this goal was fulfilled with several policies, to weaken the financial position of non-Muslims. Among these was the 1926 law, another regulation enacted in 1932, and the restriction of non-Muslims from their economic positions notably continued until the 1960s (Aktar 2014). To reach an imagined homogenous "Turkishness" (as a national myth) nationalist policies implemented in the early Turkish Republic mainly targeted the non-Muslim and non-Turkish population. Hundreds of thousands had been deported, forcibly and violently displaced from their lands during the years of establishing the Republic of Turkey (Gocek 2014). Designed efforts have never remained constant but have undergone changes, taking different forms via population exchanges, and the Turkifying of geographic place names.[39] These policies came to exclude or suppress these elements' physical and socio-cultural presence from collective memory and public spaces over more than a century. Accordingly, the national historiography has been shaped with the official narratives along with increasing nationalist tone. What Gocek considers "amnesia" in relation to the violence of the nation's birth and existence up to the present (2011:44). The policies of denial and "amnesia" were deep-rooted in the formation of the new Turkish state and continued afterwards. Accordingly, the "history" in Turkey is comprised of "silencing the

[39] After the 1936 Law for Provincial Rule, all place names were to be changed into Turkish ones. This was not different for the name of Elazığ. The name Elaziz was "felt to be too Arabic and changed into Elazığ," Üngör (2009:243).

historical presence of Armenians in the land territorialized by the Turkish nation-state" and was terminated by "state-sponsored mass violence" (Bilal 2018:2).

2.3. HARPUT (KHARPERT)

I continue with a brief ethnographic description of Harput/Kharberd[40] and Mezire/Mamuretülaziz, present-day Elazığ, in the southeast of Turkey. This is the region where Dibekli is located. The province of Harput, referred to as "Golden Plain", was a distinctive place. The city lies at the foot of a plateau overlooking a fertile plain and stands at the meeting-point of the two streams which form the famous Euphrates River. Since the earliest times, Harput has been one of the most prominent settlement hubs and became a buffer zone between competing empires notably Urartu, followed by the Persian, Roman, Byzantine, Seljuk empires, the Emirates, and the Ottomans. The Harput castle came out in the multiple histories that recounted the city's name. According to Armenian authors, the city was many feet above sea level and crowned by the ruined fortress that shared its name. This name has its origins in the Armenian words "Horeberd" and the later "Kharpert or Kharberd" with the meanings of "Khurrian Fortress" where "-berd" means "castle" (Hewsen 2002). During the Ottoman rule, the city's name was officially called Mamuret ul-Aziz and the regions of Kharpert were divided into three sanjacks (Kharpurt-Mezre, Malatia and Dersim) and three districts in Kharpurt-Mezre sanjacks: Arapkir, Eghin (Agn) and Keban Maden. The province of Harput was also located on significant trade routes leading from Erzurum (Erzerum) to Diarbekir (Diyarbakır-Amed) in the north-south and from Iran to Anatolia in the east-west (Hewsen 2002: 44-45). Both Kharpert and Mezre were the centres for merchants and the local textile industry produced wool and silk, agricultural products, and other goods under the Ottoman rule. The city was home to different

[40] The province of Harput is the present day Elazığ, also referred to as "Kharpert" Eastern Armenian and later renamed in 1880 as "Mamuret ul-Aziz" in the time of Sultan Abdul-Aziz. Harput was the name of both the city and its surrounding province. I also consulted several sources that referred to the same area as Kharput, Kharpert, Harberut, Harpoot, Harput, Carput.

religions and cultures.[41] The province of Harput had about 20,000 inhabitants in 1910. According to several resources, almost half of the city's population was non-Muslim[42] until the nineteenth century. The population was composed of Kurds, Arabs, Turks, Syriacs, Armenians, Greek, Chaldean, Nestorian, Jacobite and *Kızılbaş* (Alevi).

This region is also considered a historic Armenian homeland within Armenian collective memory (Akcam 2006). Although there is controversy over the number of Armenians that lived in the Ottoman empire,[43] it was also one of the cultural capitals of Ottoman Armenians; and one of the important hubs of the Catholic Capuchin missionaries and the American Protestant missionaries, who became highly influential in education and schooling (Mayersen 2018; Sipahi 2015; Kieser 2001). In 1910, there were over 72 parishes, 75 churches, and their communities amounted to 45,000 people (Hewsen 2002:44). The Euphrates College in Harput was arguably the most important Protestant institution of higher education in Ottoman Anatolia. Armenians and Syriacs were found in the sectors of trade, agriculture, manufacture of cotton and textile industry as well as becoming highly influential in education (Üngör and Polatel 2011:76-77; Hewsen 2002). The multi-ethnic character of the city was destroyed in the aftermath of war and destruction in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Under the Ottoman rule, the city experienced continuous tensions between different ethnic and religious groups.

[41] See Hovannisian (2002) for more information on historical demography and the way of life in Kharpert. See Hewsen, (2002:41-42) for demographic changes and population figures.

[42] See Aghjayan G. (2016, March 14). Harput Demography, in Houshamadyan. According to the information, the plain of Harput/Kharpert was contained 57553 Muslims (29617 males and 27936 females), 32522 Armenian Apostolics (17020 males and 15502 females), 756 Catholics (386 males and 370 females), 4529 Protestants (2373 males and 2156 females), 446 Latins (230 males and 216 females), 44 Foreigners (22 males and 22 females) and 36 Greeks (19 males and 17 females). However, Armenian women were consistently undercounted and to a greater degree than Muslim women, particularly in mixed villages. Thus, the total Armenian population should be considered at least 40,000 in 1894.

[43] See Kevorkian, and Paboudjian. (2012) for further information about Armenians in the Ottoman Empire before 1915, and detailed portrayal of the dispossession of the Armenian population, as they suffered at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. It also shows population statistics prepared by Armenian religious officials in the rural areas (province, sanjak, towns and villages) including historical backgrounds, schools, churches, and monasteries, their old and new names, maps, and images.

During the nineteenth century, these conflicts grew dramatically. The Ottoman state's modernization and centralization initiatives sparked deadly conflicts between Muslim and non-Muslim communities, as well as some Kurdish local tribes played a role of provoking conflicts against non-Muslim communities (Üngör and Polatel 2011:20; Özyürek 2009:402; Kieser 2001:97) and conflicts continued with the emergence of a largely monolithic Turkish nation state (Hovannisian 2017:193). Harput was considered by various scholars to be one of the most violent concentration zones during the Armenian deportations (Suny 2015:121). The massive displacement and extermination of Armenians experienced in its most severe forms. The atrocities toward non-Muslim communities were predominantly centred on Armenians and Christian Syriacs at the time and it has been described by Leslie Davis as "the slaughterhouse province". The brutality of crimes committed is documented in the memoir of Leslie A. Davis, an American Consul in Harput, who observed that there were "nearly a hundred thousand Armenians in this Vilayet a year ago, there are probably not more than four thousand left. It has been reported recently that not more than five percent of the Armenians were to be left. It is doubtful if that many remain now" (Sarafian 2004:473). Mayersen (2018) argues that Harput was devastated by the Hamidian massacres. Mayersen further asserts that the death toll highlights the severity of the violence in the region, a region impacted more heavily than most (2018:32). More than half of the Christian population in Harput were forced to leave their houses and displaced in 1915. A number of homes were destroyed and burned following the mass deportations. Only those who converted to Islam managed to survive.[44] As Mayersen writes: "The numbers of homes burned, and of those made destitute provide a glimpse of the long-term impact of the massacres upon the survivors. The reality for most Armenians after the massacres, however, was one of impoverishment, and ongoing fear and uncertainty" (2018:32).

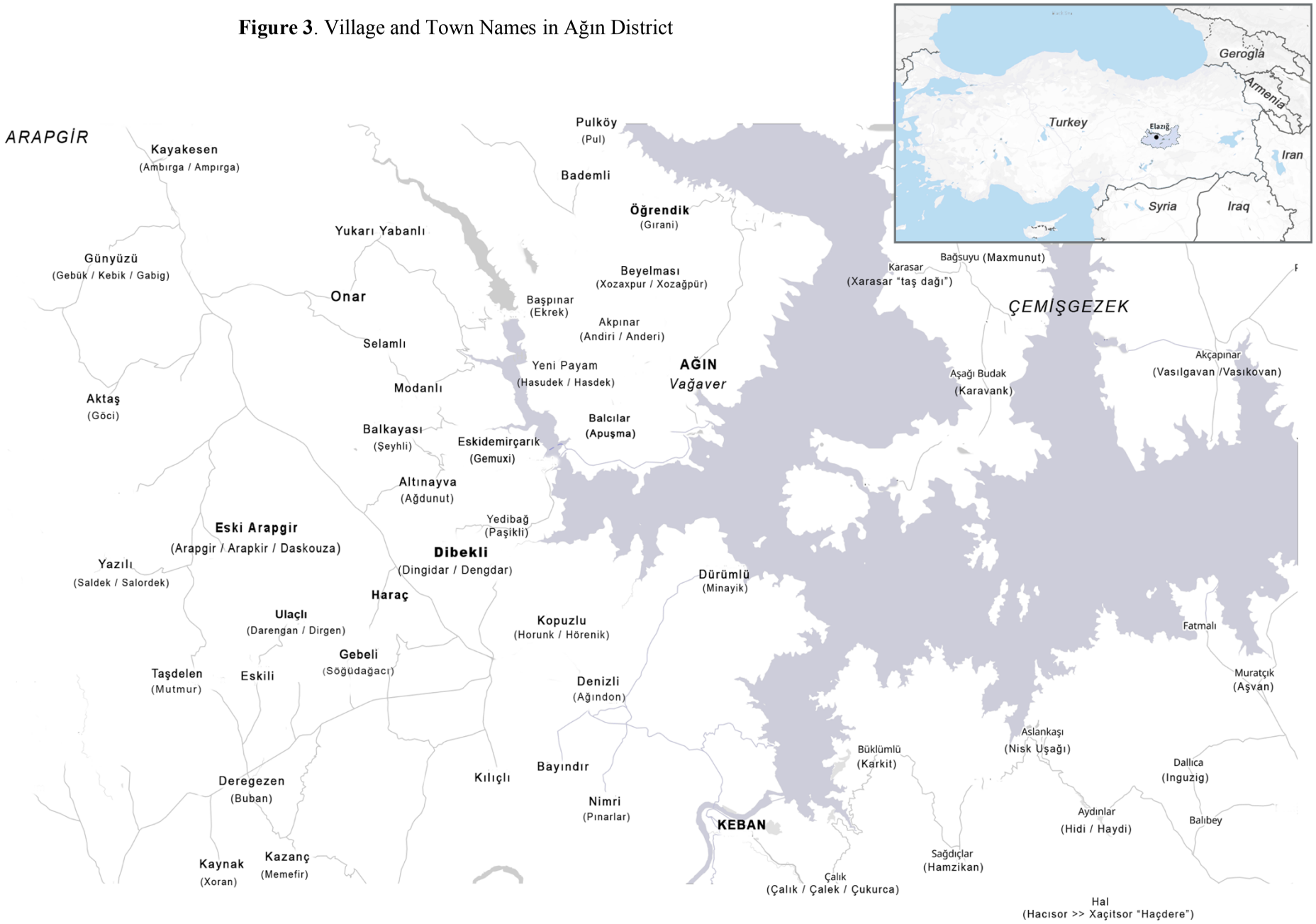
[44] Kevorkian and Paboudjian (2012:51-52) writes after the massacres of 1894-96, 200 villages in Diyarbakir, Harput and Arapkir regions experienced forced conversion to Islam and their churches were changed into mosques, according to the Danish traveler Benigsen.

2.4. VIOLENT CROSSROADS

Markus Dressler argues that historically the nationalist fixation on ethnic and religious homogeneity worked accordingly toward other religions and they were discriminated against under the auspices of national unity (2015:23). During the transition period from ethno-religious millets to national millets, the non-Muslim were considered to be religious minorities during the late Ottoman Empire to the early Republic of Turkey. The Republic of Turkey gave some protected minority status only to Greek Orthodox Christians, Armenians and Jews, although those communities had been the most prominent millets in the late Ottoman state (Dressler 2015:16). Dressler further asserts that the restriction of minority rights to non-Muslims also included the disadvantaged Muslim subgroups, such as the Alevis (2015:20). As Dressler writes: "Turkification of the non-Turkish Muslim (the Kurds), and the Sunnification of the non-Sunni Muslim population (the Alevis), respectively (2015:24). Therefore, Alevis had fears about being excluded from the nation (Dressler 2015:20). Similarly, Kieser argues that the war deeply alienated the Eastern Alevis from the state; the reason was that the Alevis had witnessed the extermination of the Armenians.[45] Therefore, they identified themselves with their neighbors and feared they might suffer the same fate (2001:104). Kieser writes: "The First World War deeply alienated the Alevis from the regime. Notably those of the Dersim region, the Alevis' heartland between Sivas and Elazığ identified with their Armenian neighbors on their road to extermination" (2001:109). Kieser writes: "With the diplomatic re-emergence of the unsettled Armenian question and the establishment of a dictatorial Unionist government during the Balkan war in 1913, government suspicion against the Alevis, especially the eastern, Zaza, Kurmanji and Turkish speaking Alevis, increased rapidly. Indeed, for a single-party regime, ready to establish national unity at all costs, the scenario appeared catastrophic" (2001:100).

[45] See Hans-Lukas Kieser (2001) for the relations between protestant missionaries and Alevis in the 19th and early 20th centuries. See also Esra Özyürek (2009) and Karakaya-Stump (2020).

Figure 3. Village and Town Names in Ağın District



Dibekli (Dingidar/Dengdar) village is close to the towns of Ağın (Vağaver) and Arapgir (Arapkir) located more than 80 kilometers northwest of Harput. According to several sources, Arapgir and Ağın was one of the oldest Armenian settlements. Almost the entire population was Armenian in the area of Arapgir and surrounding villages until 1840. At the end of the 19th century, more than half of the non-Muslim Christian population[46] was forcefully disappeared and were forced to leave their houses and properties in villages, towns, neighborhoods of Arabkir and Ağın, following the mass deportations of the 1895-1896 Hamidian massacres.[47] Before this, Dibekli (Dingidar) village was one of the settlements of Arapgir district (Genç 2013:392). Dibekli was located upper the Keban Dam, which is a part of Turkey's largest dam system now known as the only Alevi village of the Ağın district. This village that is more than five-hundred-year-old village had a similar faith with its surrounding towns and villages. There are now a few stable and unravaged houses remain in the village, while others were long gone and surrounded by walnut trees and yellow dead grass. The empty houses lay derelict for years, with no ability to withstand crumbling against the weather and the frames standing alone for years were now the living place of bats and songbirds.

[46] See Genç (2013:239) for further information about Muslim and non-Muslim populations in Arapgir before the 1900s. According to Genç, the population was constituted of 11,000 Muslim and 9,000 Armenians in Arapgir at the end of the 19th century (2013:241).
[47] See also Hewsen (2002) Kieser (2005), Kevorkian, and Paboudjian (2012) for the details of population analysis before 1915 in the region.

Figure 4. The remains of old stone-mud houses



For more photographs: https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjzFLgd

CHAPTER 3: TOPONYMIC ERASURE

Various scholars argue that place names reveal clues about varied history of society, cultural heritage as well as the common assets of the land. The history of atrocious events, the dispossession and displacement of the several communities in the region following the national policies and measures such as population exchanges and *turkifying* the region escalated by the Turkish republican regime. These techniques continued in a similar way in the afterwards of modern Turkey and is still very much exist after almost a century passed. Although the certain names vanished from the official records with a state policy, the old names are still used by the locals not allowing them to forget what had happened. The villages, sacred mountains, and dried creeks which are now turned to natural sources for mining companies, they all can tell stories about toponymic erasure.



Figure 5. The village name comes from "dink" and "ding" which means a large mortar. The mortar placed at the center of the village. Now it is ruin.

Dibekli's name was officially changed three times by the state authorities. The village name was first known as Dengdar[48] in 1643, later renamed Dingidar and then changed with Dibekli. The villagers, however, are still calling it by its old name Dingidar. I have recently heard the *muhtar*, village head, saying that the state officials want to change it to "Yeşil Köy" ("Green Village") because the village appears greener than the surrounding area.

One of the first days in the field, we were on the road going to Arapgir. My uncle was driving the car and my grandmother was sitting in the front seat. The conversation held my attention. It was a talk about the former names of Alevi, Sunni and Armenian villages that had been changed to Turkish over the years. Which villages' names have been changed, I asked. My uncle said "Many village names have changed. I can tell all the changed names". He showed the village we were passing by. "Look, this is Denizli (Ağındon)". He continued speaking in a whisper, lowering the tone of his voice, although nobody else could hear us in the car. "It's a mixed place, too. It's half Alevi, half Sunni. They lived together. It is a mottled village." He continued: "But there are more places like this in the area. If one of the villages is converted, the others are probably converted as well." A lot of villages and towns were covered up by their official names, but the way people continue to refer to them reveal a different past. The word "converted" (*dönme,* in Turkish) is used to express those non-Muslim and Alevi communities secretly converted to Islam or pretended to have. Some of the villages are also called "mottled" (*alacalı*, in Turkish) to show that the place hosts (or used to host) together different religious communities, convert or semi-convert groups.

3.1. DISPLACEMENT AND RESETTLEMENT

In this section, I explore how the past experiences of subjugation, migration-displacement stories in the 1950s constitute a critical role on the lives of former villagers and continue to shape their lives in the present with the ongoing re-

[48] Nişanyan, Sevan. "Index-Anatolicus: Turkey settlements inventory". nisanyanmap.org. Access date: 05.05.2022

settlement to their home village. I also interrogate how the layered violence led to an incision in the transgenerational transmission of the narratives about the 1915 Armenian disaster, tracing the hidden narrative of my familial history.

With a specific attention to the internally displaced villagers in the late 1950s to the 1970s, one of the dominant reasons of this displacement to Istanbul[49] has been expressed by the following socio-economic, political, and ecological destruction.[50] The village had been abandoned slowly after the 1950s related to the gradual ecological degradation caused by mega dam projects, the scarcity of water, the loss local economic activities and income. The intersection of these processes constituted further uneasiness and insecurity in the region.

The region lies in a wide plateau of rolling hills and mountains, with a few stray trees and dried plants burned by the sun, with a color that is a mix between yellows and browns. The soils, fields, vineyards, and orchards have dried from the lack of water. The mud-stone houses have lost half of their surfaces, the belongings inside have decayed, windows are gone, only doors were left without its walls over the years. But the sacred trees are still alive. "The area used to be green," said my grandmother, "after the *Keban Dam*, all began to dry". I looked toward the other side of the plain, a mining operation company digging the surface of a hill, upside of the vanished creek called *Kanlıdere* ("Bloody Creek"). The private ownership of territorial commons appears as "coded blocks"[51] or territorial commons under "blockage"[52] across the surface of and beneath the landscape. Landscape interventions in connection with developmental economics and later neoliberalism such as mega dam projects, mining operations seek control over resources, and operate in similar ways to military activities. All mark scars on the landscape. These are symbolic and material markings at the topology and represent claims of

[49] Dibekli villagers moved to Istanbul, at first mainly settling in the Kuzguncuk in Üsküdar and Edirnekapı and Beşyüzevler neighbourhoods of Fatih district of Istanbul.
[50] There could be various co-existent reasons informing their displacement. This should be analysed as the subject of a further research question, but I could not discuss it in detail here.
[51] See Gregg Lambert (2012) What the Earth Thinks, in *Deleuze and Space* pp. 220-237
[52] See Umut Yıldırım (2022) Resistance Roots: Occupied Ecologies on the shores of Tigris River. Jadaliyya. pp.1-14. https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/43956 (last access: 10.05.2022).

territorial sovereignty of Turkey. I also saw on my way a huge flag of Turkey painted over what was probably a military zone on the slopes of the mountain overlooking the highway.



Figure 6. The flag of Turkish Republic on the slope of the mountain overlooking the highway. Elazığ - Malatya Road.

The migration of families started first in the 1950s and accelerated in the 1970s, as the search began for better prospects in Istanbul. In the years before 2017, I was told that nobody has been living in the village except for the old-aged *muhtar* with his wife. But this has changed since the 2000s. Permanent returns and resettlement to the village have increased, recently. The reasons for the displacement in the first place seem to overlap with the reasons for recent resettlement to the home village, and uncertainty of the situation seems also a common condition[53] blurring the boundaries between the "permanent" and the "temporary" is particularly salient when the precarity of the displaced is taken into consideration. As Butler writes, precarity is the "politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially

[53] See Gregg Lambert (2012) What the Earth Thinks, in *Deleuze and Space* pp. 220-237
[53] See Umut Yıldırım (2022) *Mulberry Affects* for details. The current situation is not stable and permanent resettlement may turn into a temporary situation again for the villagers.

exposed to injury, violence, and death" (2009:25). In this sense, precariousness generates another level of domination of lives of those villagers who lived through the experience of displacement and resettlement confronting the structural inequalities and uncertainties even after four generations.

My grandmother's husband had left the village to work in Istanbul after his marriage. He was earning money by selling carpets by walking in the streets of Istanbul. At first, he did not have a plan to live permanently in Istanbul, but this changed afterwards. Buying an apartment in Istanbul became the most important thing for them. My grandmother, after giving birth to her first child, moved to Istanbul in the 1960s.[54]

My grandmother generally tends to share happy things about her time in the village and withholds the negatives. During my fieldwork in the village for two weeks, I had a chance to perceive her feelings of the village and what migration means to her. All her words, stories, narratives, jokes are directed toward her time in the village, but she has not much to say about Istanbul. All her memories were made in her village. She was in a state of psychic exile. Sounds, smells, words were shaped for her there. She is full of the village. She was stuck in the village. She seems like she has never left it. She has lulled feelings about Istanbul, and her older memories shaped her present, following her. And they had followed me, as well. This "following" process has a connection with as what Sarah Ahmed (2006) defines *migration* that can act as a texture on the surface of the skin, as a "process of disorientation and reorientation: as bodies "move away" as well as "arrive", they reinhabit spaces: "Migration might allow us that spaces are not exterior to bodies; instead, spaces are like a second skin that unfolds in the folds of the body" (2006:23). Migration might be described as a never-ending process.

"Oo…it's a long story" said my grandmother, daunted at the prospect of explaining the time of her migration. She said, "One day I got a letter. My son was four months

[54] They first settled in Kuzguncuk, Üsküdar. The residents of Kuzguncuk at that time consisted of Armenian, Jewish and Greek Rums.

from my womb, and my husband had left the village. He left the village to work in Istanbul. He was selling blankets and carpets by walking from Üsküdar to Beykoz. At the time, I was also working like an animal in the village." She goes on: "At the beginning, we were staying in the village from November until March. We were going back and forth without getting used to the city (Istanbul). It went like this for four years. Who suffered more than me? When I was working to harvest [in the village], nobody cared for my child. We did not return to the village again after Kriz Ali died.[55]"

During my fieldwork, I have been told many stories about the histories of suppression and discrimination toward Alevi identity in Dibekli village, especially nearby Kurdish-Sunni tribes. The memory of the atrocities was still very much alive but what had remained in silence and not told for the duration of their lives in Istanbul. I was told that the chieftain, *Ağa*, both in Konak and Haraç villages were powerful in the surrounding territories over many long years. The chieftains generally forced villages to pay taxes. They would often attempt to take by force, the annual production of their livelihood[56] as well as coming to kidnap women of the village. My grandmother became irritated remembering those days of scarcity and pressure when we were together in the village house making food, *kömme*[57] to offer to the *Kırk Erkan Shrine*. She plaintively said, "Our people and other villages forced to be as *maraba* (slave) for the *Ağa* of Haraç and Konak. When they came to the village, they took whatever they want." The villagers were also obliged to show their respect and loyalties to the *Ağa*'s rules for their survival, otherwise, "the consequences would be much worse," my grandmother said. Later she spoke of the cruelty of the *Ağa* around the 1940s. My grandmother's mother Senem would blend the wheat into the sand to hide it from the men from Konak village for them not to

[55] The disconnection with the village and leaving permanently dates back to when no one of their relatives lived there anymore.
[56] The only officially recorded dispute between the tribal leader of the Atma village and Dibekli (Dingidar) village occurred in 1809. The spring water coming from the nearby Atma territory was cut off by Yusuf Agha, the animals of the Dibekli villagers perished, and their vineyards and gardens were devastated because of the water cut (Genç, 2013:392).
[57] *Katmer* is a traditional pastry and valuable food that is prepared only for special days, and it takes long hours to make it.

confiscate their wheat, my grandmother said “otherwise, they would let you starve, they would take all your food.” She further said, “All day long, my mother had tried to sift the wheat from the sand from evening to morning. Ahh, there was a lot of suffering, trouble all those years.”

3.2. A WALK

Walking through ancestral lands, shrines, and sacred mountains together with my interlocutors enabled me to get a better grasp of their geographical thinking. Upon arriving at the village, my distant relatives (I had not met them before) showed me around. We walked through lanes of ruined houses; both my maternal and paternal family houses, the ruined primary school (the first school in the area), sacred places and shrines, the water fountains, dried vineyards, uncared fields, ancestors’ graveyard through the way to the Mount Garagaven. Except for a few buildings, the rest of the houses were ruined/destroyed. The mud walls were cracked, and windows broken. All were in ruins.

I first met Rüzgar during the days of my ethnographic fieldwork in the village. Rüzgar’s father has a close-kinship relation with my father's family, but we have never met before. Rüzgar was 21 years old at the time we met. He spent his whole life in Istanbul until his family had to re-settle permanently to the village three years ago as a result of the difficulties of maintaining a livelihood in Istanbul. I also talked to Gül (Rüzgar’s mother, 55-year-old). Gül said that they had decided to return to her home village together with her husband and her son, who had been struggling living in Istanbul. Although Rüzgar’s family is the second generation after migration in the 1950s, the family had been living through the effects of the urgent conditions of resettlement for more than a decade.

The family lives in the “old health centre” located near the entrance of the village. This was the only solid place, which was built years ago, originally for state officials, nurses, and doctors. This place had remained empty for years and was never used before. Rüzgar’s mother had first asked for help from the mayor in order to rebuild a new house in the village, because their ancestral house was totally

gone/decayed. The mayor refused to help to restore their old ancestral house or to build a new house into the village. The mayor only allows them to stay in the old health centre. The place became a new "temporary" home for the family and their "permanent" settlement. After our first encounter, I visited Rüzgar's family in the house, the old health centre. We had a talk and some tea in the backyard. Rüzgar told me a number of idioms that specifically belong to the Dibekli village. Before he could even finish saying the idioms consecutively, people around started laughing and telling him that he had become more *Dibeklian* than the old villagers were. This young man seemed happy to call himself a villager. Then, he showed me the house. I saw a room with a few household items, personal belongings, and clothes lying on the floor around plastic boxes: grape molasses, dried mulberry, pulse vegetables kept in large plastic battles ready to be sold. They produced them during the year to earn money from food such as *pekmez*, molasses, honey, and walnuts. They sell them in Istanbul but also use them for their own consumption throughout the year. Rüzgar helps his mother with daily chores, repairing, and selling homemade products. "Working in the village needs hard work," he said and added "But in certain ways, the life here is much easier than Istanbul". Rüzgar grew up in Beşyüzevler district which is known as a mostly poor and conservative neighborhood in Istanbul. He said that his close relatives and friends were anxious about his future because he left school and stopped preparing for his university entrance exam, but he has no regrets, saying "If I stayed in Istanbul, then I would have no future". As we walked around the ruined stone houses, all the years of destruction showed me how some houses had managed to survive while others did not. The destruction is not only physical but can be carried inside of people's bodies and minds, never that far away from us. It is right here, it still exists, struggling/haunting without. An unstable livelihood was the burning issue that dominated the lives of Rüzgar and his family. The conditions of resettlement perpetuate further injury to those who live in unstable worlds, not being able to stabilise the present, not being allowed to establish a permanent life, neither in Istanbul nor in the village.

Rüzgar and his family have now lived in the village for more than three years. They reside in the village "permanently" and no longer return to Istanbul. Although they have their daily struggles and hardships, they claim that living in the village is better than Istanbul, where they used to live. I ask what kind of precarity was created within the resettlement in the Dibekli village that followed the earlier displacement. The idea was to return to their homeland with changing expectations and hope, and that idea included the first generation who left the village in the 1960s and 1970s as well as Rüzgar, representing the third generation who had grown up in Istanbul. In this context, both generations (Rüzgar and his family) were subjected to colonial, postcolonial or neoliberal policies of precarity enacted through displacement and resettlement. I argue that the precarity conditions are behind but rather usher and prolong the circle by reproducing itself in different forms between past, present and future. I found connection with what Cathrine Brun (2015) calls a "prolonged period of displacement" that can be reconfigured in regard to the experience of "the permanence of temporariness" of resettlement. Rüzgar and his family define their returning to the homeland as something voluntary and that was chosen. This coincides with what Butler and Athanasiou describes as peculiar to neoliberalism: "In the present conditions of neoliberal restructuring, wider and wider social strata are experiencing material and affective vulnerability and unpredictability, there are also those who have long been forced to accept precarity as the condition of their being and belonging" (2013:164-5). The "permanent" resettlement can also be seen as the prolonged displacement of the vulnerable, and a sign of their precarity in the present.

3.3. A LAMENT

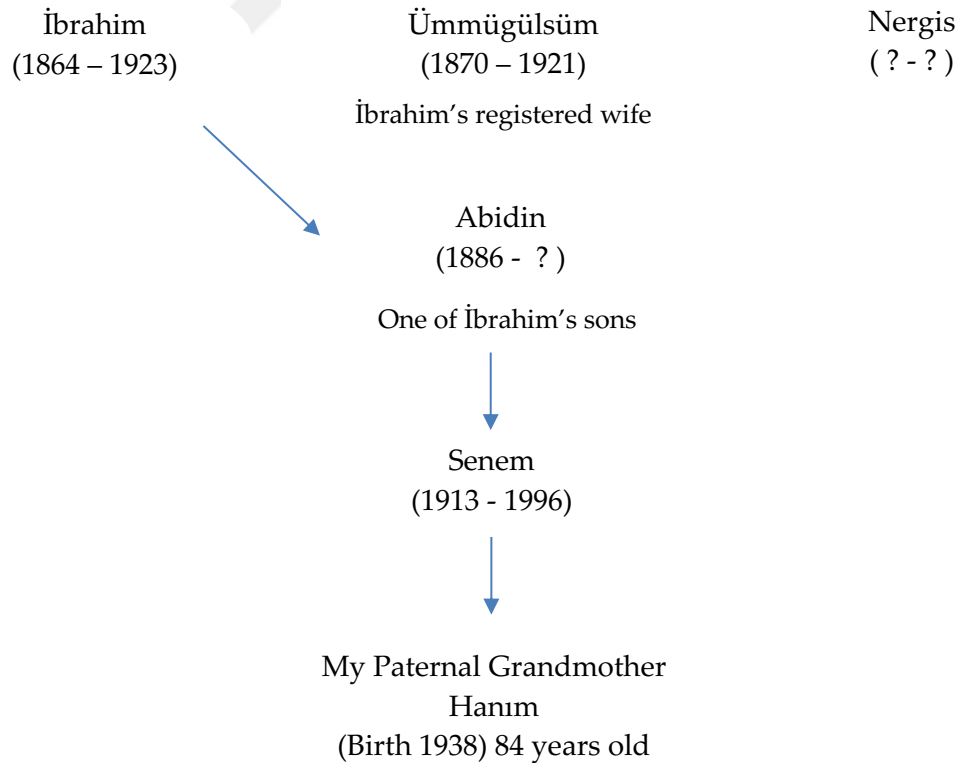
In the early days of my fieldwork, I tried to follow my grandmother's personal history and her experience in the village that was the partial and fragmented parts of family history. When we were at the roof of the village house, "do you want to see the basement?" my grandmother asked. When we entered the gate's rusty door of the basement. The many bats hiding against the ceiling suddenly flapped their wings. "This happens in any house around here, don't be afraid," she was very calm and walked me into the rooms of the basement that had been used as a cellar as well as a barn for sheep, lambs, and cows in past times. "We were living in the basement with the sheep and cows, then we moved upstairs," she said and showed me an old dusty wooden box, *sandık,* which was once full of copper plates few of which are now left. The colourful dusty box reminded me of a lament that was told to me by my grandmother. The lament was also connected to the secrecy, the fragmented accounts of my family history.

Bir belası var da kalası metin
Kalanın kapısını açması çetin
Kilidinin otuz iki dili var



Figure 7. The wooden dowry chest which was carved inlaid and studded, in the basement.

My question about our family history resulted in interruptions by my family members. I was faced with repeated stories, none of them coherent or stable. The dialogues always started with a certain remark on the absence of "Armenian blood" in our familial history because we were merely Turks who came from the historical region, Khorasan[58] (*Horasan,* in Turkish), without any doubt. I knew that four branches of my paternal family were ethnically Turkish, but I had also learned recently that my maternal grandmother's origin was suspect. This lack of knowledge resulted in a growing curiosity about my family history. I asked several questions about our family's account, but my grandmother initially hesitated to respond to further questions saying that she did not know or remember. A few days later, after several conversations, a particular hidden story was revealed while speaking to my grandmother. She said her great-grandfather (İbrahim) had married an Armenian woman around the 1900s.



[58] The region of Khorasan has ambiguous and imaginary geographic definitions. It is often portrayed as a large historical region. They are believed to have migrated to Anatolia from Khorasan.

My grandmother recalled with sorrow this "Nergis Ana", this Armenian woman. She spoke of how Nergis lost one of her babies on the road while escaping death during the time her family fled. She had been able to escape from the killing and had walked by foot across mountains caring for her two young sons, one of them was a baby on her back. On the road she encountered a military troop. My grandmother continued: "She had left one of her sons in the grass and walked across the mountains and rivers. She couldn't carry on with the two of them. She only saved one of her sons by holding his hand." She continued: "Hacı Osman *Ağa* (from Konak village) told İbrahim 'let's save one of the (*gavur*) women's lives. *Ağa* took one of them as a second wife. He is Yezid." At that moment, my grandmother seemed irritated when talking about *Ağa*, the tribal leader of Konak village[59] and called him "*Yezid*" ("a reference to a bad person"). My grandmother continued: "İbrahim was a respected person in the village. Whoever came to the village, would pull their horse in front of his house. İbrahim's wife was already dead and one of his sons died in a military expedition, he was taking care of his grandchildren by himself." She continued: "He (İbrahim) also had a glimpse of this woman. She was a very beautiful woman, an Armenian girl, her eyes were so bright. So, he had married an Armenian woman to help her and the child during her escape from Armenian exile."

My grandmother emphasized Nergis was being concealed as an Alevi, being camouflaged, and she was given the name of Nergis. "They hid her from the military soldiers when they came to their village," she said. Suddenly my grandmother talked about a quilt, (*yorgan*, in Turkish) and pointed out that Nergis had a quilt carried on her back all the way. "The quilt was covered with fleas and lice." She continued "Nergis had two children from my grandfather. Both died. They could not live long because they both got measles". After the story, my aunt said angrily, pointing at my grandmother, "Why you had never said anything about

[59] Konak village is one of the Sunni-Kurdish villages nearby Dibekli. It is known to have a subversive attitude towards Dibekli village. Some of the villagers referred to the Konak village *Ağa* as a nuisance (başbelası in Turkish).

Nergis?" No one in the family had mentioned Nergis until this time. This hidden narrative is not included both within the official records and within the family and the village. There are very few official records of surviving Armenians because of the forced conversion of Armenian women and children into Islam during the 1915 mass deportation. There were women who survived by marrying, changed their names and remained a "Muslim" for the rest of their life, their stories became untold and remained in silent (Altınay and Çetin 2009). There are no official records about Nergis. What was Nergis' real name? Which village she was from, her family and children? Why isn't anyone talking about it? Why is it not registered in the official records? No one in the village knows her real Armenian name.

CHAPTER 4

THE SACRED MOUNTAIN

The mountains have the attributes of intense beings. They are marked through the fragmented and conflicted narratives that connect back and forth weaving between past and present. Mountains tell stories both as witnesses and reminders of a disturbed past, of dispossessions and mass violence in the place of those who do not speak, of that which is unspeakable. I explore the material and spiritual connections in which the remnants from earlier dispossessions, collide with the ruination of "left behind" village belongings, through the ancestral graveyard, dried soils and vineyards, sacred trees, and above them, the mountains.

Locals are not foreign to the earlier trail of 1915 disaster, at the same time, the state violence and local atrocities against their minoritized Alevi identity as a mode of governance. However, the violent past resists articulation. It is not easily narrativized, but it presents itself in the form of nonverbal gestures, silent moments, local rumors, uncertainties, and conflicted narratives, which I encounter as I investigate the ghostly traces on the mountain and presences of jinn. Tim Edensor, in *Industrial Ruins* argues that "the objects, spaces and traces in ruins highlight the radical undecidability of the past, its misery, but they simultaneously invoke a need to tell stories about it" (2005 164). Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995) argues how power functions to suppress some voices and silencing the historical narrative. Trouillot shows us that history is not constituted of facts or events, but multiple layers, secrets, narratives, remnants and traces. "What happened leaves traces, some of which are quite concrete - buildings, dead bodies, censuses, monuments, diaries, political boundaries - that limit the range and significance of any historical narrative. This is one of the many reasons why not any fiction can pass for history: the materiality of the socio-historical process sets the stage for future historical narratives" (1995: 829). In this ethnography, history emerges as a consolation of sensory knowledge, flashbacks, intertwined memories and images about the catastrophic event(s) in the ruined environment of the village. These show up

abruptly in fragments and ghostly traces through the mountain and the appearances of jinn in the basement of a stone house.

I propose to consider mountains as an ethnographic matter to explore the role of "sacredness" at a site where the mountains emerge as abundance, blessings as well as a frontier to the experiences of violence woven into the landscape. With respect to the mountains, the two central questions, "What is sacred?" and "How does sacredness at a site invoke and resonate and operate through the local memories of the unspoken history of violence and the knowledge about landscape?". This discussion goes beyond the general dichotomy between nature and culture, material and spiritual, human and nonhuman that have been frequently discussed in spatial and critical landscape studies. (Navaro, Biner, Bieberstein, Altuğ 2021; Mayanthi 2018; Myers 2017; De la Cadena 2015; Tsing 2013). Accordingly, it raises questions about how sacredness is further carved, both historically and politically, from the mass violence enacted in sacred visitation sites; these sites include mountains, stones, trees, ruined houses and spiritual beings (jinn).

The mountains present themselves with their "shared" sacredness, protector spirits as well as bearing the "ghostly traces" of mass violence and the history of destruction. I think of mountains as a frontier component of material, affective and historical threads. These are not only natural-historical sites but also affective memorial sites. I conceptualize the village's "sacred" mountains as a haunted presence that is the result of multiple layers of history. In this chapter, I examine both narrative (geo-narrative) and non-narrative components focusing on the mountains (Garagaven, Yıkılhan and Sayboynu) as being sacred sites, their spiritual figures, and ghostly traces — factors that are particularly relevant in realms of affective geographies.

Dibekli village is surrounded by mystic mountains and holy trees. The village and its vicinity are full of sacred visitation sites and shrines. They are called *ziyarets* in

Turkish. There are more than ten *ziyarets*,[60] in the village, even more in other towns and villages surrounding the area. These sacred sites are locally identified as the public meeting points, which are mostly found in nature; they include trees, mountains, and hills overlooking the village. Also, these sites can often be sources of water; a river; a fountain on the road and stones[61] from the mountain which are kept safe in houses but also in the backyards of houses. Even the houses themselves can be called shrines or *ziyarets*. These sacred places, mostly believed to have symbolic values and spiritual figures, also have been associated with mystical events and extraordinary stories.

For Dibekli, sacredness is identified with historical sites through association with extraordinary stories and spiritual figures. Although not always identified with the tomb of a saint or a holy person, a common distinction of the *ziyarets* is that their narratives are sometimes connected with spiritual figures. For example, these spiritual figures distinctively represent and offer protective promises after each visitation at the *ziyarets* and guardians to the peoples living in the village. They are considered protectors from fears of being hunted and other sources of trouble. They are themselves; significant actors can appear in someone's dream or a place to help with someone's trouble and pain. I have been told that these spiritual figures appear as different shapes and forms, human and non-human bodies, but their appearances are not foreign to the locals, and not always viewed as an uninvited body.

Mountains constitute strong spiritual and material bonds to the landscape, along with other communities in the region. They are also constituting shared features, common stories and laments connected to other sacred places not only for Alevi communities but also other local communities in the region. For example, Abdul

[60] The names of sacred visitation sites in the village indicated according to local Suna: Kırk Erkan, Dede Hüseyin, Karapivat, Celal Abbas, Sarı Kız, Hasteki Selman, Ulupahar, Garagaven, Ulu Ağaç, Arduşlu. And other important places: Kanlıdere, Öteyüz, Say (Sayboynu), Çatalgedik Düldül Ayağı, Deve Boynu, Komdukomu, Harmanaltı, Ağalık çayırı, Ulupahar, Deli Hasan'nın Kavaklığı, Komardın, Eski Köy, Mavuşun Çeşmesi, Pirebağı, , Üçyol, Kömürocağı (Kasımbaşı).

[61] It is important to note that these sacred objects in the village belong to specific dwellings or families but sometimes they pass into other families as well. The families have a responsibility to protect them and keep them safe. It is also necessary to keep them in the place where it belongs to, and it is forbidden to move them for any reason.

Vahap Mountain (also known as *Muşar Dağı* and *Kilise Dağı*) and other certain places have long been the subject of many songs, laments, folk poems. Local stories and rumors hold the landscape together as this also symbolizes a sacredness for the region.[62] Jessica Madison (2018) explores the landscape in relation with humans, non-humans, spirits, material, and immaterial objects in the "magical ecologies" at the centre of the holy mountains; at the same time, she discusses the ruination and damage of mining operations in the case of internally displaced people in Mongolia. In her ethnography, Madison argues that poetry, stone heaps, and music hold the landscape together (2018:48). This is also the case for the sacred places in the southeast of Turkey.

4.1. GARAGAVEN MOUNTAIN

Garagaven mountain[63] is the imagined heart of the village. It represents a source of life. The mountain is locally identified as one of the sacred visitation sites and meeting places for inhabitants who seek blessings, and they pray, supplicate, and make offerings (*lokma*, in Turkish). They are ritualistic places where Alevi cultural ceremonies took place such as *cem*. The ritual of visitation begins from the Holy Tree called *Ulu Ağaç*, on the path of the mountain and later ends at Garagaven's peak. The mountain emerges as a spiritual figure[64], a guardian spirit that is believed to protect the people living in the village. This sacred mountain is a testament to a continued spiritual guidance and ongoing protection for the people living in the village. Common phrases used by the villagers include "Garagaven finds remedy!" and "Garagaven be with you and protect you!" ("*Garagaven Yetişe!")* and *("Garagaven yanında olsun*!"). On the other hand, the stones kept on the mountain are believed to have a spiritually protective and healing quality for the community.

[62] Related research regarding the sacred places for Alevis, see, Navaro-Yashin (2021).
[63] Mount Garagaven has a local saying. It is said that its original name comes from a tree called Karakaven. It is not the tallest mountain around; but when you get to the top of it, you can see the entire village.
[64] The spiritual figure is also similar to pre-historical figure "Hızır" in Alevi culture. See Navaro Yashin (2021) *Violence and Spirituality: Khidr Cosmography at the Turkish/Syrian Territorial Interface*. pp. 117-143.

There is a belief that these stones[65] absorb pain, give strength, take away *nazar* (evil), avoid misfortune, and guard the place. Therefore, people take stones from the mountain and keep them safe in their houses.

There is a belief that the stones that are taken from the mountain will always return to the mountain. "No one can attempt to cut a tree or take it away from the mountain, the stones taken from the mountain always return to its place" said Filiz, one of the first migrated families from the village. Filiz continued "These stones cannot be thrown away randomly. We also have the stone in our house. We delivered it to Karacaahmet cemetery." The sacred stones materialize the spiritual guidance and material bonds with landscape, between themselves and their ancestors, threads of life, past, present and future. Like a sacred stone, a lament is "gathering together the threads of life" (Ingold 2014: 222). An outcry for a remedy to ease pain, a lament was spoken of by my grandmother, who called the mountain both Mount Garagaven and Abdulvahap Mountain.

Garagaven Lament

They call me Abdulvahap, at a mountain top
Garagaven sits before my eyes, healing and curing;
Mornings you are in my mind,
Nights you are in my dreams
o wife, o girls, I still miss my mother
I didn't slash the throat (of the enemy)

Garagaven Çığrısı

Abdulvahap derler bir dağ başında
Garagaven oturur karşımda, verir derman;
Gündüz hayalimdesin,
Gece düşümde
Eşim kızlar ben anama doymadım,
Süngü vurup yakasını oymadım

[65] These small stones are called *koç taşı,* ram stone consists of clay.



Figure 8. My grandmother and my uncle walking to the graveyard on the Garagaven Mountain

The villagers had first settled along the mountainside of Garagaven; however, they were obliged to leave from the mountainside at an unknown time (before the 1900s) because of landslides and floods. As explained by the local Filiz: “From what I've heard, I don't know much either, but our village was in Garagaven before. There was probably a flood or landslide in Garagaven, so they moved this way.” Now, the only remains from the first settlement in the mountainside is an old ancestral graveyard and ancient holy tree.

My grandmother was insisting on visiting her ancestors’ graveyard from the beginning of our stay in the village. There is no road to reach the mountain, so we had to walk through the woods up to the hill for an hour. When we finally reached the foothills of the mountain, my grandmother, at first, could not remember the exact location of the graveyard. We were also looking around. She felt confused and sorrowful when she saw the diminished remains of the graves. There were only a few traces remaining from the graveyard. There were broken tombstones and rubble on the ground. Waiting and vanishing. My grandmother was whispering a lament while crying with grief about the disappearing and vanishing of her

belongings.[66] On the way back from the graveyard area, my grandmother led us to the ancient tree. The tree, ancient and sacred, with an uncanny look, continues living in a lonely and quiet, placid place away from the graveyard. It is locally known as *Ulu Ağaç*, Holy Tree. This sacred tree, my grandmother told me, has a spirit that embodies the spiritual connection with nature and healing and protective power for people "when summoned for help or blessing it always comes true," my grandmother emphasized. "What kind of a tree is it?" I asked. "It is unknown. It is a gift from God," my grandmother said and warned us about its sacredness. "If one takes a branch of the tree and gives it even a single break or burn, they commit a sin". We all had a rest, as we lay beneath the tree. My grandmother became sad again while talking about the misery of the tree. "It was not like that before, there were several of these three but now all are destroyed…demolished. This is the only one left," my grandmother said while we made offerings: a cup of water and candies for both the animals and other visitors.

[66] The belongings here I refer to the experiences of living in between past-present-future (See, Ann Game (2001) in Timespace, edited by Jon May, Nigel Thrift, p.226)

Figure 9. The broken tombs of the graveyard in Garagaven



That graveyard, the holy tree could be seen as a "passage" to a troubling past; a past that was about to vanish, about to be erased from the cultural memory, but still remembered through them. In this ethnography, these sites are still conjuring up a painful lived experience that can be found in a common "tone" and silent gestures that I experienced in many ways, from many villagers. Additionally, these sites are not only historical sites, but are also affective memorial sites that represent a historical injury and atrocity towards minorities and excluded others as part of an unfinished nation project. As Yıldırım (2022) argues, "mulberry affects" can be considered as "resistant roots" and "evidentiary ecologies". As she puts it, "these centenarians materialize ecological roots as a genocidal affect that exposes sedimented sites of mass violence in the midst of ongoing colonial destruction and siege". "Mulberry affects," she writes, "prompts us to consider the possibility that we have trespassed on an unrecognized massacre site." (Yıldırım 2022:9).

4.2. YIKILHAN, SAYBOYNU, KANLIDERE

Yıkılhan is in the north outside of the village, it is also on the back of the Garagaven mountain and Sayboynu hill. There is an creek over the Sayboynu called as Kanlıdere (Bloddy Creek). This makes them seem as if Yıkılhan, Sayboynu, Kanlıdere and Garagaven are hiding behind each other's backs. I focus on the affective materiality of absent "others" on the Yıkılhan mountain, Sayboynu hill and dried Kanlıdere creek, and at the same time the unexpected appearances of spiritual beings (jinn) in the basement of sacred houses. I focus on the ways in which locals such as Ahmet, Gül and Filiz present themselves through the story of Yıkılhan, woven into the narrative of that 1915 Armenian displacement and dispossession. I use the term reverberations to describe the practices that haunt the region. I also use the term in reference to the people who excavated the area, by digging to find a church that belonged to these absent communities, in particular the Armenian communities, who were subjected to dispossession.

Villagers generally refused to talk about Yıkılhan, or they prefer to change the topic. A few times in small conversations with other villagers, I asked why the mountain's name is Yıkılhan. No one had a clear answer, only implicit and contradictory stories. One of the main explanations was that a landslide or flood in the mountain meant that people had to leave this place, so that it was re-named Yıkılhan, which means ruined and razed place.

4.2.3. "There is Nothing to See in There"

One of the stories was told by Ahmet. He has been living in the village for three years with his wife and son. We went to the Arduşlu fountain, just outside the village. He showed me the mountains around the village. Then, I asked about the Yıkılhan mountain, and I wanted to go to the mountain. "We don't go there much, there is nothing to see in there" he said and described the meaning of Yıkılhan as

having become a mystery, but then he mentioned the ruined houses, and the cave and the church in Sayboynu, nearby Yıkılhan. He never gave me the full story behind the razed houses on the mountain, but he told me a story about excavation activities on the mountain.

"Years ago, some people from the village excavated the area to find a church. It has been believed that there was an old church above the caves. However, it is not possible to dig there with a simple shovel. You need a tractor. But they only found a large slab of marble". "What happened to that marble?" I asked. "They could not carry it because it was too heavy, but they tried to dig to find a church, but I do not know what happened after that.'' He also said that my family has fields over the excavated area. "You have fields in Sayboynu and Yıkılhan." This would not be the end of the talk, but I got distracted. The "excavation" for an absent-present church has come so deep and unbearable to me that it still haunts me. We turned back to the village. Ahmet's wife Gül and my aunt were going for a walk. I joined them. I asked them the same question as to why the mountain is called Yıkılhan. The question hung in the air for a while before Gül turned toward me, lowering her voice: "Former villagers years ago had lived there, but because of the landslide they had to move to the place and settled the village where it is now." She also mentioned something about an "inn''[67] that was there years ago, but she was not sure of the time, she had only heard it from elderly people in the village. She did not say anything further and changed the topic.

Later, Filiz told me a disastrous story about Yıkılhan mountain. I had a conversation with Filiz (early 70s) in their newly built house in the backyard of the ancestral (heritage) house. I informed them of my research topic regarding the history of the village and asked my usual questions about Yıkılhan. She was more willing to talk rather than her husband. She did not hesitate to talk about Yıkılhan, in a way that was contrary to the other villagers. We first started to talk about the time of their migration process from the village to Istanbul. The old stone house inherited from

[67] Inn means a stopover destination for people or travellers passing by. It is called *han* in Turkish.

her husband's father was built by a master from Gebük (Günyüzü),[68] a nearby village of Arapgir. They told me that the master from the nearby village also had come to build several houses in Dibekli in the early 1950s. They told me that the construction date of the house was carved on the wall. He said: "This is my father's old house, built in 1956. It's written on the wall. The master was from Gebük". I asked if the master was an Armenian, "No, not Armenian," he replied.

When I questioned them about Yıkılhan, Filiz's husband was not interested and tried to change the subject, but Filiz continued without hesitation. "Oh! You should have seen this place (Yıkılhan) before," Filiz said. She told me that her father (Ali Dede) went to Yıkılhan for harvesting, climbing to the top of the mountain. He was supposed to pull up a tree branch, but he found that it was a person's bones. Filiz continued regardless of several interruptions from her husband.

"Yıkılhan was once inhabited by Armenians. A massacre happened against Armenians, they were killed, and they were all buried there. Your deceased great-grandfather, eAli, was climbing down the side of the mountain. He was supposed to grab grass while going down (from Yıkılhan), but it turned out that it was an Armenian grave, and he pulled up a bone within the grass. He brought it to us. We went and looked. There was an Armenian grave". They also put a cover on it. There was no coffin. There were only bones. She continued: "It was an Armenian cemetery before. They had lived there. But we also have many fields there. It was covered with stones and rocky places. You cannot walk easily. They used to say that the place had been destroyed. There were houses. Ruined. It's a ruin now. We don't know." This was the first time I heard a villager make an explicit reference to the 1915 Armenian massacres in the region. The former locals have neither witnessed the mass killings, nor have been told about it openly. But it was possible to track the ghostly traces through the affective materiality of ruined environments, especially in the mountains.

[68] Gebük/Kebik, Gabig in Armenian, now the village name has been changed to Günyüzü in Turkish, according to Nisanyan Map. https://nisanyanmap.com/?yer=22833&haritasi=günyüzü

The mountain tells the story of those condemned to be forgetten. The “excavation” to find a church shows how the Christian past still haunts the present in different forms. In the context of affective materiality, the ghostly traces are the sign of the occupation and dispossession and displacement of the communities in the region that no longer exist but hovers on the mountain. The mountains are affective memorial sites of colonial debris that bear witness to a forgotten past in ruin, yet before it was a place for living, a place for farming and harvesting fields of different religions and cultures that has been wiped out during the nation-building process. Anne Cheng, in reference to Christopher Lasch, states that “to forget the past and transform it into something manageable all the way down to the very denial of the fact that what happened was what has been forgotten or frozen, is a ghostly matter. (. . .) the past is not dead; it is not even past. Rather than prescribing how we as a nation might go about "getting over" that history, it is useful to ask what it means, for social, political, and subjective beings to grieve” (Cheng, 2000: 7). As Yael Navaro (2009) discusses in the case of Cyprus, the evocation of the past in the present, in what she offers as “melancholic objects”, can posit reverberations of violence. Taking inspiration from Yael Navaro, I consider the “remnants” as melancholic objects that linger in between past and present, as markings of memory below the surface, signifying the presence of the shadow past, and inviting us to see the still haunting force of the present.

4.3. JINN IN THE VILLAGE

In the last days of the village, my aunt and uncle were returning to their home at midnight after a short visit to one of our distant relatives’ houses; Esra and her husband Davut[69] had been living for four years in the village, in the house adjacent to ours. When my aunt and uncle arrived home, I was sitting on the roof and drinking tea with my grandmother. They looked frightened in a way, but they did not want to talk about what happened on their way home. In the morning, in the middle of casual conversations, they started whispering about the uncertainty they

[69] Davut is the brother of Suat. He was around 50 years old.

felt around an event of the previous night. This moment had something uncanny about it.

"Thwack, thwack, thwack…they are dragging the grass", my aunt said hesitatingly. It was the noises of unwanted visitors (jinn) coming from the basement of a stone house every night. "We didn't tell you that night so you wouldn't be afraid," my uncle said repeatedly when I asked them to explain the event to me. They were not merely naming it, but they referred to the presence of unwanted visitors which were appearing every night in the basement of Suat's house. Suat told them he wakes up every night and cannot get back to sleep again because of the voices. Suat explained those voices as like "someone digging the ground". Suat told them that he would make tea and smoke cigarettes until the morning. The house in question was merely ruined, located near ours and inherited by Suat from his family. The house was also believed to be a shrine. My uncle said: "Davut told me that he and his wife decided to stay a few days in Suat's house whether those voices real or not […] Davut and Esra are not so afraid because of the shrine in the house, an *ermiş,* holy person lies in there, not the jinn." However, my grandmother believed that this shrine underneath the house would not allow the owner of the house (Suat) to sleep. She explained this to us with a calm attitude while walking around the room: "There is a shrine underneath their house, near the walnut trees. They[70] are digging ground, reaping, or mowing grass until morning. We do not know whether they (holy person) are doing it or the jinn is doing it? […] They get up to finish their work." My grandmother's repeated emphasis on the sacredness of Suat's house invites us to consider what is meant by this unfinished-continual work: Is it a voice call for the fulfilment of a promise in the now? She then continued, "There is no such a thing in our house. Thank God, I can fall asleep immediately", being certain that our property was not a "haunted place".

I asked my grandmother whether she had ever heard these kinds of voices in the past. My grandmother said that her parents used to say so. After a short moment,

[70] My grandmother calls the uninvited beings as "they" ("onlar") which refers to gender virant figures.

she told a story about the scary place named Körpahar, the path leading to Yıkılhan. “Back in those days, as one goes down and up Körpahar, beware! Jinn and fairies would stop people and eat them right on the path. They would turn you inside out. I swear. It all happened, there are ones chirping in 72 languages at that place,” my grandmother said. This was not the only story I have listened to in this vein. I also recall hearing similar stories from several villagers in the field. One of them is a local story/rumour believed to have happened very long ago. The story takes place in Sayboynu (Öteyüz), the other side of Garagaven, around Yıkılhan. My grandmother told me this local story that she said happened when she was a child.

“We were sitting at home, and shortly after a noise was heard. A loud flourish of trumpets arose in the distance of Garagaven; but it was dark. It was around 9 at night. We were about to go to bed. We were going to get up at 5 in the morning. We saw them (spiritual beings) burning the lightwood, they came out of Çatalgedik, and there were a lot of jinn having a wedding. We all have seen it, do not believe me if you want! The elderly people said, what do we do if they spread around the village? Have you seen the cursed ones (jinn)? Everyone started praying. They [the spiritual beings] descended from there to the Öteyüz. We call Sayboynu as "Öteyüz". They came out of the Çatalgedik as if they were coming out from the back of the place, they were coming through the village. We saw it with our own eyes, they are moving through the kindling wood (“cangudu cungudu”). Crafty Devils!! You wouldn't believe it! They just crossed Arduşlu, and their voices stopped. They could not come close to us […] All the villagers heard that noise.”

4.4. THE UNSETTLED PRESENT

4.4.1. Digging/Knocking/Voicing the Nonhuman Narratives

How do we interpret the presence of jinn living in these sacred places and ruined houses? What kind of knowledge are they transmitting? What is the meaning of spiritual beings, whether (un)expectedly appearing in the middle of the night or digging the ground for unfinished works to be done? Maybe the jinn have something to tell us? Jinn or visitors have multiple presences. They can choose to

live in a human body, inside of an animal, in the basement of a sacred house, a tunnel or a cave. For villagers, jinn or visitors are not always accepted as unusual beings. These are not necessarily dangerous, but their presence can be a disturbing or uncanny but or may also refer to the protective guardians of ruined places. The narratives of jinn are associated with either protection or possession. Either way, I suggest that the jinn can be seen not only as an unconscious reminder of the past in the place of an unspoken subject or silent memories, but also as a haunting force of the present. Material traces of past violence(s), and spiritual entities create forms of knowledge that resist. The jinn remind people of their presence by digging and clattering from the present to the past and by generating gaps that (in themselves) hold the fractured speech, the unspeakable moment. Also, they manifest nonlinear temporalities reaching out to the present.

Several scholars describe spiritual beings such as the jinn, spirits or ghosts as actors multiplying histories (Mittermaier 2012), a language of loss (Taneja 2017), with their transformative recognition of acts of haunting (Gordon 1997) and alternative modes of storytelling (Biner 2020) that cannot be fully grasped within the secular understandings of history. In these lines of thought, scholars explore how spiritual beings provide an analysis for multiple junctions of memory, subjectivity, violence, injustice, dispossession, dehumanization in political and historical contexts (Navaro, Biner, Bieberstein, Altuğ 2021; Bubandt, et al. 2018).

Avery Gordon (1997) conveys a discussion about the relationship between "what we only see" and "what we actually know". Gordon offers a new way of knowing, closer to listening of what has already been lost, but still present in the form of flashing signs, murmurs, mumbling, reverberations. She considers these absence-presence as "ghostly matters". She argues that they haunt us at each time, as she puts it, "to be haunted" is to be "tied to historical and social effects" (1997:190). Haunting that keeps the event alive and present as "something to be done". She writes, "the ghost is not simply a dead or missing person, but a social figure, and investigating it can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life" (1997: 8). In her work on jinn narratives in the city of Mardin, Zerrin Özlem

Biner (2020) explores how people situate the historical in between the material and the spiritual and human and nonhuman. In her ethnography, the jinn emerge at the scene digging up of stone houses which allows to consider complicated layers, particularly related to the 1915 disaster and its aftermath. As Biner suggests that jinn stories "offer an alternative mode of storytelling" and "open up an experiential and discursive space that provides for encounters between those who have left and those who remained" (2020:85).

The new scholarly focus on nonhuman presences is an invitation to think with them and to recognize their political agency of nonhumans, an attempt to destabilize the human centred approach and shift the proximity of thinking. Isabelle Stengers (2012), Anna Tsing (Tsing et al. 2017), and Marisol de la Cadena (2015) invite us to think across the division between nature and culture and offer different possibilities of thinking in relation to spiritual beings, supernatural entities, nonhuman actors in their inquiries. Building on these insights, I argue that we can learn from nonhuman actors; the ruined graveyard, the sacred mountain, the shrines, and the jinn, who can provide us with new ways of knowing, telling, and listening beyond the narratives of the (taken for granted) speaking subjects. In Dibekli, ghostly traces on the Yıkılhan mountain, the ongoing ruination of the landscape, and other spiritual entities (including the appearances of jinn) come to appear as parts of an unfinished work involving the histories of destruction. In Dibekli, the graveyard, the mountains, trees, and ruined houses are sacred sites, but also, they are affective memorial sites. The reference to their "unfinished work" reveals a promise extending to the present. As my grandmother explained, the jinn pass through the landscape; mountains, hills, paths, and they spread all around the village. They become involved in a crime scene as a witness. Therefore, it cannot just be seen as a reminder of the past but also as a haunting force in the present.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Through this autoethnographic study, I have tried to embrace an affective materiality approach to rethink the multiple layers of ongoing mass violence in the southeast of Turkey and to articulate how a "left behind" place tells us about the affective histories of the present and the continuity of mass violence in the now. My approach is to contextualize the Dibekli village as a place of violent crossroads with connected yet different temporalities. These temporalities have been generated in and through the dispossession, liquidation, displacement, and unequal processes created by the repressive measures of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish republic. The "left behind" village, the ghostly traces of the 1915 Armenian disaster, the ruined houses, the remains of dusty household items and belongings, spiritual beings underneath sacred sites, and a mountain that would tell stories: These are material evidence(s) of the past, pointing to different forms of violence affectively bonding objects, landscape and relations.

This autoethnography draws a portrait of what the "left behind" tells us about "historical injury" and layers of mass violence in Dibekli. The emphasis is on "incommensurable" but "entangled" historical injuries, such as the earlier traces of dispossessed Armenians and the experiences of displaced Alevi villagers. Historical injury manifests in multiple significations: silent gestures, ruination of landscape, melancholic remnants, colonial and postcolonial present(s). The silence here occurs as a moment of significance, demanding attention to the disturbing gestures and the absence of narrative; it creates a crack/rupture/gap in the transgenerational transmission of historical narratives. I argue that the affective transmission of this "crack" or "rupture" can be traced as tristesse in the form of transgenerational haunting. Referring to Abraham and Torok's articulation of transgenerational haunting there is some indication that "the forgetting trauma is passed down through familial generation". Ranjana Khanna (2003) also notes that the "wounded historical past [is] passed down through familial generation but also transmitted

through collective and nation-state context". Zerubavel (2006) argues that there is "a double wall of silence" referring to both survivors who cannot speak and the descendants who do not ask questions in "various forms of forced blindness, deafness and muteness." (2006:51). This form of secrecy (which Michel-Rolph Trouillot refers to "public secrecy") produces historical memory of violence and these untold stories tried to be traced in silence gestures. The villagers would heave a sigh, "ah," that signified so much about that the troubling, unsayable, unnarativized story of personal and collective suffering, but also about the times of abundance, the blessings of the mountains and the walnut trees.

This builds on the discussions around post-humanism and affective geographies, as well as furthering them with critical studies of recent anthropological works on affect, materiality, and mass violence. After considering what might be offered as "ethnographic sensibility," I have tried to bring this approach to study the relationships between the human and the nonhuman in line with the historical, political, and affective bonds with the past. The "ghostly traces" on the mountains tells a history of violence rooted in the landscape/region. These are "melancholic remnants" of earlier destructions in Dibekli. I describe the village as "left behind" both as a historical structure of feeling and in a way that is inspired by Navaro-Yashin's term "melancholic objects". Here I have attempted to move beyond the discussion of identity, ethnicity, and religion which mainly dominates regional studies. Rather I pursued the relations between human and non-human entities. From this line of thought, I thus analysed non-human spiritual entities as signs and afterimages of a complex and layered history of violence. Absences, erasures, ghostly traces, fragments, ruins, remnants, silences, gaps, cracks and the non-transmission of knowledge are at the centre of my query to carry ethnographic research far beyond the common evidence of knowledge production. I bring their testimonies together as a kind of violent crossroad that works toward a more prominent addressing of the dispossession of Armenians and Alevis in the region.

During my writing process, I was very much confronted with the plurality of hidden narratives in the conversations I had with my friends. These grew as the knots of a

web (Verges 2001:15), in which one's own injury and wound was tied up to the wound of another. A friend told me a story about his father's childhood experience during the 1915 Armenian deportation. Another friend mentioned the treasure hunting in their village, and another told me how shocked she was when she learned that her grandmother was Armenian. With those stories in mind, I wrote for Nergis whose real name remain unknown, for my paternal grandmother's unrealized last wish (to be buried in her village), for my maternal grandmother's unrealized last wish (to visit her ancestors' graveyard), and for my parents' ongoing amnesia, for the mountains and for myself. I wrote to open up the possibility of healing, of undoing the "knots of the web".

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ETHICS BOARD APPROVAL

Ethics Board Approval is available in the printed version of this dissertation.