Politics of Madness:

Narrativizing, Memorializing, Sacralizing Şeywuşen (1930–1995) in Dersim, Turkey

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Contents

ABSTRACT

Focusing on the memorialization, sacralization and politicization of madness through the case of the holy-madman Şeywuşen (Hüseyin Tatar, 1930–95), this dissertation explores the relationship between the political and spiritual spheres in the heavily militarized and politically contested landscape of Dersim (officially Tunceli) in eastern Turkey, the only city in Turkey where the Kurdish-Alevi population forms a majority. Tracing the life story of Şeywuşen allows reassessing the historical events that became landmarks in the collective memory of the contested landscape of Dersim: the genocidal violence experienced in 1915 and in 1938, the coup d'état of 1980 and military clashes between the Kurdish movement and the Turkish Armed Forces in the 1990s. Using historical and ethnographic material collected in Dersim, along with oral history interviews conducted with members of the Dersim diaspora living in Germany, the dissertation analyzes the ways in which the identity of Şeywuşen as a holy-madman is constructed as a metaphor for the injury caused by the racialized and secularized state violence and the source of therapeutic power to heal that injury.

Analyzing the ways in which Şeywuşen has been memorialized and sacralized, the dissertation explores the particular experience of the political in a region that has been pathologized and labelled as "irrational" by diverse political actors throughout the late Ottoman period and in modern Turkey. Through a gendered analysis of the narrated reasons for Şeywuşen's madness, it frames the formation of the holy-mad identity as the process of affliction of otherness that has been attributed to the region. Looking at rituals and practices woven around holy-mad figures, it conceptualizes holy-madness as a site where a brutally silenced past haunts the present in creative ways that allows bounded temporalities to be transcended and to construct different identity claims. The inauguration of a statue of Şeywuşen in Dersim during the 1990s enables an analysis of the limits of heroic and militarist representation in the Turkish public sphere. The dissertation proposes that tracing the political connotations of holy-madness challenges the limits of what can be articulated in the realm of politics through a special emphasis on what is not conducive to be instrumentalized by political or social movements.

Shifting attention from what state violence destroys to what it produces, this dissertation contributes not only to studies on the Middle East but also to the history and anthropology of state violence. With its focus on the sacred characteristics of madness, it offers an original contribution to the contemporary literature on politics, which is widely discussed within the secular rational framework. Bringing into conversation the literature on space, state violence, and emotions, it illustrates that space-making cannot be thought of separately from the inscription of its spatial emotional regime. The dissertation also contributes to the literature on secularism by examining the challenge that representations of holy-madness, and the devotional practices woven around it, pose to secular conceptions of politics.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Anhand der Biografie des göttlichen Wahnsinnigen (budela) Şeywuşen (Hüseyin Tatar, 1930-1995) untersucht diese Dissertation das Verhältnis von göttlichem Wahnsinn und staatlich-finanzierter Gewalt in der politisch heftig umstrittenen Region um Dersim (offiziell Tunceli) in der Ost-Türkei. Der Lebensgeschichte Şeywuşens folgend, denkt die Dissertation die politische Geschichte Dersims, der einzigen Stadt in der Türkei, in der die alevitisch-kurdische Bevölkerung in der Mehrheit ist, neu. Das Nachzeichnen der Lebensgeschichte Şeywuşens erlaubt eine Neubewertung der historischen Ereignisse, die eine zentrale Rolle im kollektiven Gedächtnis des umstrittenen Dersims spielen: die genozidale Gewalt von 1915 und 1938, der Staatsstreich von 1980 und die militärischen Auseinandersetzungen zwischen der kurdischen Bewegung und der türkischen Armee. Auf Grundlage historischer und ethnologischer Quellen aus Dersim und Oral History Interviews mit Mitgliedern der Dersimdiaspora in Deutschland analysiert die Dissertation die Rolle von staatlicher Gewalt in Narrativen und die emotionale Bindung an Figuren des göttlichen Wahnsinns.

Durch die Analyse der Formen von Memorialisierung und Sakralisierung Şeywuşens untersucht die Dissertation die besondere Erfahrung des Politischen in einer Region, die durch diverse politische Akteure seit dem späten Osmanischen Reich und in der gesamten türkischen Geschichte immer wieder pathologisiert und als „irrational" bezeichnet worden ist. Mithilfe einer Genderanalyse der vorgebrachten Gründe für Şeywuşens Wahnsinn fasst diese Studie die Entstehung einer Identität des göttlichen Wahnsinns als einen Prozess auf, der aus der Zuschreibung der Region als das „Andere" entsteht. Indem sie Rituale und Praktiken um Figuren des göttlichen Wahnsinns untersucht, konzeptualisiert die Dissertation den göttlichen Wahnsinn als einen Ort, an dem gewaltsam unterdrückte Vergangenheit und emotionale Bindungen ausgedrückt werden. Der Fokus auf die Errichtung der Statue Şeywuşens in der politischen Atmosphäre der 1990er Jahre erlaubt es, die Grenzen heroischer und militaristischer Repräsentation in der türkischen Öffentlichkeit aufzuzeigen. Die Dissertation regt an, dass die Analyse der politischen Konnotationen des göttlichen Wahnsinns die Grenzen des Sagbaren im politischen Raum in Frage stellt. Dabei achtet sie besonders auf das, was nicht durch politische oder soziale Bewegungen instrumentalisiert werden kann.

Indem sie die Aufmerksamkeit von dem, was staatliche Gewalt zerstört, auf das lenkt, was Gewalt hervorbringt, leistet diese Dissertation nicht nur einen Beitrag zu Studien des Nahen und Mittleren Ostens, sondern auch zur Geschichte und Anthropologie von staatlicher Gewalt. Durch ihren Fokus auf die göttlichen Eigenschaften von Wahnsinn trägt sie mit einem neuen Blickwinkel zur derzeitigen Literatur über das Politische bei, die größtenteils im säkular-rationalen Bereich bleibt. Indem sie die Literatur über Raum, staatliche Gewalt und Emotionen miteinander ins Gespräch bringt, zeigt die Studie, dass die Aushandlung von Raum untrennbar von den räumlichen emotionalen Ordnungen ist. Außerdem trägt die Dissertation zur Literatur des Säkularismus bei, indem sie die Herausforderung untersucht, die die Repräsentation göttlichen Wahnsinns und der damit verbundenen Andachtspraktiken an säkulare Konzepte des Politischen stellt.

Acknowledgments

INTRODUCTION

> The people of Istanbul have benevolently accepted those madmen who are not rampant, criminal, or intrusive thanks to Islam's compassionate origin. Many people even see in their state a godly ecstasy and have looked upon the confused words, strange sounds and cries they utter, as well as the strange behavior and movements with which they comport themselves, as carrying a meaning or constituting a secret sign.[1]
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> — Reşat Ekrem Koçu, *Istanbul Encyclopedia*

In his unfinished *Istanbul Encyclopedia*, the well-known writer and historian Reşat Ekrem Koçu (1905–75), states that in the early 20th century, the mad people of Istanbul were embraced by their sane neighbors. Those who had "lost their minds, had confused minds, whose minds were displaced, or were crazy" (*aklını kaybetmiş, aklını kaçırmış, aklı yerinde olmayan, çılgın*)[2] but were not dangerous, enjoyed the attention that Istanbulites paid them.

In his work on the character of the *deli* or village idiot in Turkish classical literature, Hilmi Tezgör suggests that almost every village had its *deli*. In his description, *deli*s are in movement, visible in public space. Usually they carry an object that they are obsessed with. Most of the times they do not speak or initiate communication. They break their silence to ask for cigarettes. If they disappear, their absence is soon noticed. People generally take care of them, feed and protect them. Mostly, however, people mostly ignore them noting, "no matter what a madman does, it will be appropriate (*delidir ne yapsa yeridir*)."[3]

The disregard of the presence of the *deli* in public space is not only about a lack of discrimination. It is deeply connected to the capacity attributed to mad people to reveal the "truths" that others dismiss. Kemal Tahir (1910–73), a prominent Marxist-realist novelist, describes the power to reveal the truth in his novel *Köyün Kamburu* (The Hunchback of the Village) as follows: "He is aware of all the dirty business/secrets in the village and will tell them straight to the villagers' faces, even though nobody accepts his knowledge. Generally, it is pushed aside by saying he's mad anyway, this is a madman. This avoidance is actually the result of the fact that the words of this village madman concern everyone."[4]

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[1] "*Azgın, ceniyane, tecavüzleri olmayan delileri Istanbullular, İslamiyetin şefkatli kaynağından gelen duygunun altında gayetle hoş tutmuş, hatta halkın büyük bir kısmı onların halinde ilahi bir cezbe görerek birbirini tutmaz sözlerine, çıkardıkları acaib seslere, naralara, garib tavır ve hareketlerine bir mana, bir işaret gizi diye bakmışlardır.*" Reşad Ekrem Koçu, "Deli, Deliler", *Istanbul Ansiklopedisi*, v.8, (Istanbul: Koçu Yayınları, 1996), 4353.

[2] "*Aklını kaybetmiş, aklını kaçırmış, aklı yerinde olmayan, çılgın.*" Pars Tuğlacı, *Okyanus Ansiklopedik Sözlük*, v.2, (Istanbul: Pars Yayınları, 1972), 528.

[3] Hilmi Tezgör, "Her Köyde En Az Bir Deli: Modern Türk Öyküsünde Köyün Delisi" in *Edebiyat'ın İzinde Delilik ve Edebiyat*, eds. Banu Öztürk, Didem Ardalı Büyükarman, Seval Şahin (Istanbul: Baglam Yayıncılık, 2017), 111.

[4] Kemal Tahir, *Köyün Kamburu* (Istanbul: Ithaki Yayınları, 2010), 52. Cited in Hilmi Tezgör, "Her Köyde En Az Bir Deli," 112.

Harmlessness is the bridge linking madness (*delilik*) and saintliness (*velilik*) that is expressed through a "secret sign" in Koçu's description in the epigraph. While holiness was not attributed to every person who lost his/her mind, those who were considered to have holy capacities and/or wisdom were always the harmless ones.[5] For Ibn al-'Arabî (1165–1240), one of the most prolific Sufi writers whose books became "textbooks" in Ottoman *medrese*s (schools),[6] the saintly mad are "those who possess a mind while having lost it."[7] As Michael W. Dols asserts in his extensive work on the madman in medieval Islamic societies, different categories of madness were treated differently in Ottoman societies. While those considered dangerous were confined and put into *bimarhane*s (hospitals) starting from the 1800s in Istanbul, those who were considered harmless and attributed holiness, wisdom and/or romantic characteristics[8] continued to hang around on the streets. They were not only tax-exempt like blind and maimed people[9] but also free from responsibility for their actions.

In Dols's categorization, the wise-fool was regarded as a "social critic" inspired by God, narrating social injustice by performing his intellect. The archetypal wise-fool is the character Behlül, a medieval Islamic narrative figure to whom were attributed many stories and jokes. The source of his wisdom was his stance against irreligion.[10] Another category is of the romantic fool, one who is lost in profane love. The archetype of the romantic fool is Mecnun in the popular story of Leyla and Mecnun, where he is driven crazy by his "passionate but chaste love for Leyla"[11] and ultimately sacrifices himself for love.[12] While Mecnun loses himself in his love for Leyla, the character of the holy-fool reaches *vuslat* or unification with God. Thanks to the spontaneous illumination granted to him independently from his own will, he is able to perform miracles.[13]

The saintliness of mad people in the Ottoman/Turkish context has been expressed through different concepts such as *mecnûn*, *meczûb* and *dîvâne*. *Mecnûn* literally means the one

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[5] Fatih Artvinli, *Delilik, Siyaset ve Toplum: Toptaşı Bimerhanesi (1873-1927)* (Istanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2013), 24-25.
[6] Ateş, A., "Ibn al-ʿArabî", in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition, eds. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 02 July 2019.
[7] İbnü'l-Arabi, *Fütühat-ı Mekkiye* (Istanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2006), 581.
[8] Michael W.Dols & Diana E. Immisch, *Majnūn : The Madman in Medieval Islamic Society* (Oxford : New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1992), 12-13.
[9] Ed., "Maḥalle", in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition, eds. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 02 July 2019.
[10] Dols & Immisch. *Majnūn*. 349-366.
[11] Michael W.Dols & Diana E. Immisch, *Majnūn : The Madman in Medieval Islamic Society* (Oxford : New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1992), 12.
[12] Dols & Immisch. *Majnūn*. 313-320.
[13] Dols & Immisch. *Majnūn*. 388-410

who is possessed by jinn.[14] The notion of Mecnun, possessed by his love for Leyla as representative of pure love was reworked in Turkish poetry and Mecnun also appeared as a "symbol of the mystic […] all-consuming love of God."[15] *Meczûb* means the one who "*cezbe tutulmuş*,"[16] who is outside normal behavioral patterns and turns inwards. It refers to those who "are obsessed with divine love"[17] and unwillingly achieve a level of devotional wisdom that they are not able to teach to those around them.[18] Whereas the words *meczub* and *mecnun* come from Arabic, *dîvâne* has Persian roots and literally means mad. *Dîvâne* is used by Ibn Sina (c.980–1037), a Persian writer widely known for his books on medicine and healing, to refer to types of madness (*enva-i divânelikler*) including "mania, rabies, bestial madness and lycanthropy" which were all characterized by "aggressive behavior."[19] However the meaning of aggressive behavior changed in mystical interpretations of Islam such as the *tasavvufi* context in which *dîvâne* indicates the one who is struck by divine love.[20]

This dissertation focuses on the life story of a holy-madman who brings together different characteristics of unconfined madness: wisdom, holiness and romanticism and places it within the unique history and cultural context of a specific setting. This is the story of first madman of Turkey to be memorialized with a statue: Hüseyin Tatar (1930–94) from Dersim, one of the most popular and best-known mad figures of Turkey. Through an exploration of the memorialization, sacralization and politicization of madness in the case of Şeywuşen, as he was locally known, this study explores the relationship between the political and spiritual spheres in the heavily militarized and politically contested landscape of the region of his birth, life and death: Dersim. Through the biography of Şeywuşen, it revisits the political history of Dersim (today officially known as Tunceli), the only city in Turkey where the Kurdish-Alevi population forms a majority. Tracing his life story allows us to reassess the historical events that became landmarks in the collective memory of the contested landscape of Dersim: genocidal violence in 1915 and in 1938, the coup d'état of 1980 and violent clashes between the Kurdish movement and the Turkish Armed Forces in the 1990s. Using historical and ethnographic material collected in Dersim, along with oral history interviews conducted with members of the Dersim

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[14] Welch, A.T., "Madjnūn", in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition, eds. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 02 July 2019

[15] Dols & Immisch. *Majnūn*, 12.

[16] Sevan Nişanyan, "meczub" in *Nişanyan Sözlük*: *Çağdaş Türkçe'nin Etimolojisi*, available online: https://www.nisanyansozluk.com/?k=meczub

[17] Dols & Immisch. *Majnūn*, 418.

[18] Artvinli, *Delilik, Siyaset ve Toplum*, 25.

[19] Dols & Immisch. *Majnūn*, 101.

[20] "*İlâhî aşkın etkisiyle hayrete düşen, şaşırıp kalan anlamında bir tasavvuf terimi.*" https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/divane

diaspora living in Germany, the study unpacks how the identity of Şeywuşen as holy-mad was constructed as a metaphor of the injury caused by racialized and secularized state violence. Şeywuşen's life story provides a privileged site for analyzing how subjects have been formed by Turkey's state secularism, the boundaries of which are drawn through medicalization, secularization, racialization and physical state violence in the context of an ethnically and religiously diverse landscape.

Presentation of the case

Reflecting the political tensions of the region he lived in, almost everything about Şeywuşen's life story—including his name—is contested. While his official name was Hüseyin Tatar, he was called, variously, Şeywuşen, Sewuşen, Seyusen or Seyit Hüseyin. Nurettin Aslan in his book *Madmen of Dersim* describes how Hüseyin Tatar became Sewuşen: "It is not known if it is a custom of Dersimis or it is the case because we [Dersimis] cannot accept the Turkified names but we do not call anyone with their official names. We say Fate for Fatma, Ele for Elif, Memo for Mehmet, Heso for Hasan, and Uso for Hüseyin. Uso became first Uşen then Şewuşen, and the name remained as such."[21] Aslan refers here to a broader policy of Turkifying the proper names of places and people in the Kırmancki (also known as Zazaki), Kurmanci, Greek and Armenian languages from the early republican period onwards. As a result of this process, Turkified official names have also come into everyday use. This is how different interpellations of the same person, city and geographical reference appear.

Although officially called Tunceli (Turkish, meaning "bronze hand") since 1935, the province that Şeywuşen came from is widely referred to by its historical name, Dersim. Since the incorporation of Dersim into the Turkish national landscape through genocidal violence in 1937–38, the name Tunceli is a contested one. Şeywuşen was born in 1930, between two catastrophes that fundamentally re-shaped the region: the Armenian Genocide (1915–17)[22] and the Dersim Genocide (1937–38). While the rest of the population of what became Turkey is predominantly Sunni Muslim-Turkish since the Armenian Genocide in 1915–17 and the population exchange between Greece and Turkey in 1923, Dersim remains the only city where the Kurdish-Alevi population forms a majority. The ethnic and religious characteristics of the region have been defined through difference from the majority, who comprised Ottoman subjects and, later, the Turkish nation. As is apparent from the multiple names of both Şeywuşen

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[21] Nurettin Aslan, *Dersim'in Divane Delileri* (İstanbul: İletisim Yayınları, 2015), 12.
[22] There is no concensus on the periodization of the Armenian Genocide, see "Armenian Genocide (1915-1923)," accessed September 16, 2020, https://www.armenian-genocide.org/genocide.html.

and Dersim, the region is extremely contested due to its long history of state violence. Although officially part of eastern Turkey, it occupies different national and religious imaginaries. Dersim is considered a part of western Armenia by Armenian nationalists and a part of Turkish Kurdistan by the Kurdish movement. In addition, it is the ancestral home of Alevi teachings among Kurdish-Alevis.[23]

Şeywuşen descended from the Kuresan holy lineage[24] which is believed to derive from the lineage of the prophet Muhammed and is, in socio-political terms, one of the most influential tribes of Dersim. There is no consensus on the time or reason for his "madness" among my interlocutors. His relatives put forward either his experience of mandatory military service or a troubled love relationship as the reason for Şeywuşen's "madness." However, others who knew him associated his "madness" with various incidents of state-sponsored violence. Indeed, my interlocutors narrated every incident of state violence marked in the collective memory of Dersim—the Armenian Genocide, the Dersim Genocide and the coup of 1980—as the reason for Şeywuşen's "madness."

After completing mandatory military service in the mid-1960s, Şeywuşen left his two children and wife in Beydamı village and came to Dersim city center. That was the beginning of his life as a public figure, one whom people both laughed at and took care of. In my interlocutors' memories of the 1960s and 1970s Şeywuşen mostly appears as a "fun" character who took people's food without asking permission, smoked more than one cigarette at a time and lived on the streets in the center of Dersim. In the aftermath of the 1980 coup d'état, however, a significant shift occurred in the perception of Şeywuşen. There are two narratives explaining this change. Some said that his saintliness was revealed in an encounter with police officers during the curfew following the coup. When Şeywuşen could not see anyone on the streets he approached police officers to ask them if what was going on was a replay of the Dersim Genocide in 1938. The ability to "flash" a historical moment in the present in times of crisis[25] was considered a saintly behavior, of voicing what is considered the truth at a time when

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[23] Alevis constitute roughly 15% of the population of Turkey. While two-thirds of Alevis in Turkey speak Turkish the rest speak the Kurmanci or Kirmancki dialects of the Kurdish language. Markus Dressler, "Religio-secular metamorphoses: The re-making of Turkish Alevism." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76, no. 2 (2008): 280-311, 281.

[24] Kuresan is one of the most important *seyyid* families in the region. Religious leaders from this holy lineage in Dersim have disciples in a wide area including east Dersim, Varto-Hınıs, Erzincan, Adıyaman and Erzurum. Erdal Gezik, Hüseyin Çakmak, *Raa Haqi – Riya Haqi*: *Dersim Aleviliği İnanç Terimleri Sözlüğü,* (Ankara: Kalan Yayınları, 2010), 109-111.

[25] See the interpretation of Benjamin's thesis IV in Michael Löwy. *Fire alarm: Reading Walter Benjamin's On the concept of history* (London, New York: Verso, 2005). 42-46.

opposition had been silenced through the use of brutal state violence. The second narrative proposes that the shift in the perception of Şeywuşen related to his prophecies and miracles. According to this narrative, the inhabitants of Dersim started perceiving Şeywuşen as a holy-madman when his predictions materialized and his warnings protected people from danger.

This transition, from a homeless madman into a holy-madman, happened in the aftermath of the 1980 coup d'état when a massive leftist mobilization was brutally suppressed. It was a period when "critique was a central, common and ordinary mode of relating to the state" and people of different political persuasions were "involved in criticizing various manifestations of the state in the most sophisticated manner."[26] The 1980 coup created nationwide unease by officially proclaiming Turkish and Sunni Muslim identity to be the glue keeping the nation together, and legitimizing extreme state violence to silence critical voices. After the coup, leftwing and revolutionary mobilization was violently erased in the whole country as well as in Dersim. During the 1990s, political circles critical of the established order began to be dominated by the struggle for equal rights on the part of Alevis and the armed struggle initiated by the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (PKK, Kurdistan Workers' Party)[27] in Dersim.

Around this time, Şeywuşen's photos started to be sold at the wedding ceremonies of Dersimi migrant communities in Europe and he appeared in dreams that were considered visionary or therapeutic. Several *keramet*s, marvels performed by saintly people,[28] were attributed to him in this period.

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[26] Yael Navaro-Yashin, *Faces of the state: Secularism and public life in Turkey* (Princeton University Press, 2002),4.

[27] The PKK is a radical Kurdish political organization involved in an armed struggle against the Turkish state since 1984. Its mobilization in Dersim started later than the rest of the Kurdish region of Turkey in the 1990s.

[28] Gardet, L., "Karāma", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, eds. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 10 January 2019 ; https://www.nisanyansozluk.com/?k=keramet
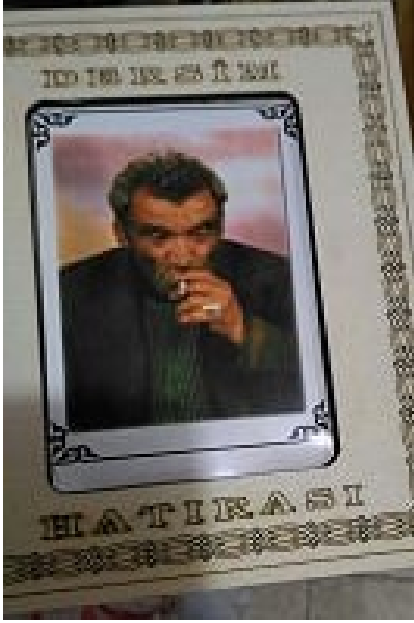
Figure 1: A souvenir from Dersim: A photo of Şeywuşen sold at Dersimi wedding ceremonies in Europe

In 1994, Şeywuşen was murdered by a high-school mathematics teacher while he was sleeping in his usual spot. The reason for the murder was narrated differently by various interlocutors. Some put forward the "mental instability" of the mathematics teacher; some said that Turkish Armed Forces were involved in the killing because Şeywuşen possessed secret knowledge. Şeywuşen's funeral was described as one of the most crowded funerals in Dersim during the 1990s. A year after his death the municipality, governed by the Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Parti[29] (SHP, Social Democratic Populist Party), erected his statue in the city center. It stood on the street parallel to where the statue of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the "founding father" of the Turkish nation, is situated. While a statue of this sort, as an aesthetic form, is widely regarded in academic literature as an instrument to fix a certain historical interpretation, the statue of Şeywuşen "fails" at forging a unitary biographical narration. Instead, it opens up ground to tell stories, ranging from that vary from loss of genocidal violence to stories about Şeywuşen's holy capacities.

This dissertation traces the genealogies of discourses and practices shaped around madness as observed in everyday life in contemporary Dersim. While Şeywuşen's photos continue to occupy public and private places both inside and outside Dersim, a number of well-

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[29] The Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP, Republican People's Party) along with other political parties was banned after the coup d'état of 1980. SHP was founded as a result of "a major split among the ranks of the social democrats after the return of the electoral competition in 1983. By receiving 24.8 % of the vote in the 1987 elections SHP became the main opposition party. In 1990 SHP became a full member of the Socialist International. In 1995 SHP unified with reformed CHP. Docherty, James C. & Peter Lamb. 2006. *Historical Dictionary of Socialism*, Oxford: Scarecrow Press, pp:289 ; Ayata, Sencer & Ayşe-Güneş Ayata. 2007. "The Center-Left Parties in Turkey", *Turkish Studies* 8/2:211-232. pp:212.

known madmen still inhabit the city today. While Kar Yağsın Ibo (Let-It-Snow Ibo)[30] is well-known for his wish it would snow, even in spring and summer, Radyo Hıdır (Radio Hıdır) hangs out with a radio in hand, and General Zeynk knocked on people's doors for political campaigns during the 2018 general elections in favor of the pro-Kurdish Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP, People's Democratic Party).[31] While such characters, somewhere between a village idiot and a wise-fool, still exist in Dersim, the stories attributed to Şeywuşen specifically are distinct by being at the crossroads of wise, holy and romantic madmen.

Bringing into conversation the literature on state violence, politics of emotions, space and secularism this dissertation conceptualizes holy-madness as a site where the brutally silenced past haunts the present in creative ways that allow bounded temporalities to be transcended and different identity claims to be constructed. It proposes that tracing the political connotations of holy-madness not only deconstructs the notion of irrationality, it also challenges the limits of what can be articulated in the realm of politics. Analyzing the ways in which Şeywuşen has been memorialized and sacralized, this dissertation explores the particular experience of the political in a region that has been pathologized and labelled as "irrational" by diverse political actors throughout the late Ottoman period and the history of modern Turkey. To do so, it proposes a process whereby Dersim becomes the constitutive other of the nation. Through a gendered analysis of the narrated reasons for Şeywuşen's madness, it frames the formation of the holy-mad identity as the process of affliction of otherness that has been attributed to the region. Looking at rituals and practices woven around holy-mad figures, it conceptualizes holy-madness as a creative site that allows open-ended morning for the illegitimate loss of Dersim. Finally, in analyzing the inauguration of the statue of Şeywuşen in the political atmosphere of the 1990s, it illustrates the limits of heroic and militarist representation in the Turkish public sphere.

By interrogating what holy-madness in Dersim entails, this dissertation aims to shift our attention from the pathologizing terminology that is instrumentally used in the politics of recognition, to de-pathologized madness which carries a different political potential. Undeniably, the language of trauma has been successfully used in the struggles for Kurdish and Alevi rights and has brought worldwide visibility to those movements. Attempting to see what is beyond the politically conducive, the focus on holy-madness helps us grasp the limits of the

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[30] Caner can, *DERSİMLİ İbo Ile Sohpet (Dersim) :)*, accessed July 10, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEIT0_y2Y0Q.
[31] Welg Medya Haber, *Dersimde General Zeng 24 Haziran Seçimlerini Değerlendiriyor*, accessed July 10, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kg_Te8nA8Y4.

existing political language, and calls for a political imagination whose borders are not drawn by secular truth regimes.

What then could a political imagination which cannot be translated into concrete demands of recognition tell us? This dissertation argues that looking at holy-madness gives us the chance to engage with the spiritual cosmology of Dersim as an inherent part of the political sphere. While the trope of madness allows the collection of life stories, fantasies about the region and truth claims in liberal ways, holiness illustrates how those narratives are sublimated into a sacred capacity that is potent in regulating everyday life. Firstly, the historical ethnography of holy-madness in Dersim puts forward the ways in which the experience of racialized and secularized state violence is inscribed in the sense of the political. Secondly, it illustrates the tangled relationship between the injury caused by state violence and strategies of political resilience. Lastly, it offers an unbounded understanding of the political which challenges the limits of what can be articulated within the realm of politics, through an emphasis on what cannot be instrumentalized by political or social movements.

Conceptual framework

Production of knowledge

To frame the epistemic violence exercised in the region as a form of state violence, I turn to the literature on the production of knowledge. Since the Marxist intervention in historiography, the process of knowledge production which was once taken for granted has become questionable. What we know and how we acquire knowledge are widely discussed questions in the context of the reproduction of existing socioeconomic systems. Marxist and Marxian scholars approach this theme through the lens of class analysis. While some prefer to work with the notion of ideology[32] to explore the reproduction of the conditions of unequal/unjust production, others hold on to the idea of hegemony.[33] Both approaches are invested in revealing the fictive representation of the world that has been produced by and serves the exploitative classes.

Shifting the focus from the relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor to the notion of power as it spreads throughout the society, Foucault proposes that "[p]ower must be analyzed as something that circulates, […] [it] is employed and exercised through a net-like

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[32] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" in *Mapping Ideology,* ed. Slavoj Zizek (London and New York: Verso, 1994), pp.100-140.
[33] Antonio Gramsci, Quintin. Hoare, and Geoffrey. Nowell-Smith. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 365.

organization."[34] In his approach, power is not uniquely restrictive. It is not stored or achieved but instead performed and negotiated. Through its performances, subjectivities are produced and reproduced.[35] Foucault analyzes this diffused notion of power through institutions. Our conceptions of knowledge (on normality and abnormality, sanity and madness and the like) are shaped and circulated by institutional structures that potently prescribe regimes of truth.[36] In other words, knowledge production as a process is embedded in power struggles and producing knowledge is also a claim to power.[37] "The subject who knows, the objects to be known and the modalities of knowledge must be regarded as so many effects of fundamental implications of power-knowledge and their historical transformations." In this sense, it is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that "produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but power-knowledge, the processes and struggles that traverse it, and of which it is made up, that determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge."[38]

In the case of Dersim, the limits of the possible domain of knowledge were drawn by colonial curiosities. "Curiosity" about the region dates back to the Tanzimat Period (1839–76) when the Ottoman government felt the need to "forcibly induct supposedly recalcitrant peripheries into an age of modernity."[39] The production of knowledge expanded as a part of statecraft and in establishing the state's monopoly on violence in the region. To cultivate the legitimate basis for the state's civilizing interventions, the central authorities of the empire and, later, the Turkish Republic appointed scientists and state officials to write reports on the fantasized "savage" and "primitive" inhabitants of Dersim. These reports have been dominated by tropes that were commonplace in the anthropological knowledge production of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when anthropology served as the handmaiden of colonialism.[40] Although the discipline has changed to a certain extent through constant self-critique, these archetypes persist in many anthropological accounts today.[41] The most incisive critique of such archetypes has come from the anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot who argues that

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[34] Michel Foucault, Colin. Gordon. *Power/knowledge : Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977.* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 98.

[35] Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (London: Routledge. 1993).

[36] Foucault, *Power/knowledge*.

[37] Foucault, *Power/knowledge*.

[38] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Harmondsworth:Penguin, 1991), 27-28.

[39] Ussama Makdisi."Rethinking Ottoman Imperialism: Modernity, Violence and the Cultural Logic of Ottoman Reform" in *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Ottoman Empire*, eds. Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp, and Stefan Weber (Beirut/Würzburg: Orient-Institut der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 2002), 30.

[40] Diane Lewis, "Anthropology and Colonialism," *Current Anthropology* 14, no. 5 (1973): 581–602.

[41] Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, "Discipline and Practice: 'The Field' as Site, Method, and Location in Anthropology," in *Anthropology Locations*, eds. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

ethnography has been working through the tropes of the "savage slot," the discursive gap that can be filled with the object of study; and "elsewhere," the geographical location of these "savages" away from "civilization."[42] Similarly, knowledge production on Dersim in the early 20th century has been built upon recurring themes: barbarism, savagery, remoteness, geographical inaccessibility, Kurdification/Zazaification of a "Turkish" population, religious deviancy and ignorance.[43]

Depicting the inhabitants of Dersim as a "backward people without history"[44] and the region as an "unruly landscape"[45] the central government of the early republican period implied that governing power in the region was inconsistent and random. Their "proven" inferiority justified the central authorities' demonstration of their superiority and modern, progressive character. In this sense, the language used by the state to make Dersim as the other[46] of the modern Turkish state was not different from the discourses of other colonial powers and justified the imposition of a supposedly civilized, rational and consistent order on the region. Through repetition in the knowledge that was produced about the region, the labels of lacking civility and authority became "sticky signs"[47] describing Dersim. In other words, uttering the name Dersim became sufficient to generate the discomfort attached to barbarism, savagery and religious deviancy. This association continues today to a certain extent, and operates by making one version of truth and history more prominent than another. The success of these associations, or the stickiness of these signs of "backwardness," is "dependent on past histories of association that often 'work' through concealment."[48]

As in other colonial contexts, Ottoman and, later, Turkish colonial practices targeting Dersim involved both "a gender and a racial dispossession."[49] The knowledge of Dersim as a place devoid of culture or history translated it, in patriarchal state narratives, into a "virgin" territory, a "void of sexual agency, passively awaiting the thrusting male insemination of

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[42] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "Anthropology and the Savage Slot: The Poetics and Politics of Otherness," in Global Transformations (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 7–28.

[43] Hasan Reşit Tankut, *Zazalar Üzerine Sosyolojik Tetkikler* (Kalan Basım Yayın Dağıtım, 2000).); Ziya Gökalp, *Kürt aşiretleri hakkında sosyolojik tetkikler* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2011).

[44] Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

[45] Trouillot, *Global Transformations*, 7–28.

[46] Özlem Göner, "A Social History of Power and Struggle in Turkey: State, Memory, Movements, and Identity of Outsiderness in Dersim", unpublished PhD thesis submitted to the Sociology Department of the University of Massachusetts, 2012.

[47] Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004).

[48] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion,* 13.

[49] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York 1995), 30.

history, language and reason."[50] To grasp the resilience of this discourse surrounding the region, the first sentence of the book published by the district governorship of Tunceli as recently as 2012 is instructive: "Tunceli is a true Anatolian treasure hidden amongst steep mountain slopes. With its splendid beauty, its myths each carrying another lesson as well as its history, Tunceli is a real secret city, undiscovered until today. It is social duty to make Tunceli—a city honest and passionate about its soil and freedom—more widely known."[51] Dersim remains today a void, awaiting discovery.

State violence, emotion and subjectivity

To elaborate on identity formation as a holy-mad figure I engage with the literature on subjectivity in relation to state violence. The classical literature tends to focus on the monopolization of violence in the establishment of nation-states and marks this historic process as the start of a gradual decrease in violence.[52] This view disregards the role of violence in the formation of modern nations and also obscures the transformation and infliction of violence in everyday life.[53] Critical literature on the state, on the other hand, goes against this argument of "gradual decline" by exposing the paradox of legitimacy claimed based on the monopoly of violence, the rule of law and atrocities against populations in the name of enduring social and national peace.[54] Feminist interventions to the literature on state and violence emphasize that what stimulates gendered violence is the definition of the state as a masculine entity[55] where the experience of violence (by dying for the nation), or giving life to the nation "becomes part of the subject's attachment to the modern state."[56]

Dying for the nation, or other militarist attachments to the state produce a gendered citizenship which directly influences subjectivities. On the one hand, because women are not allowed to do military service in Turkey, they are not able to participate in the masculinist myth of the military nation myth which enables Turkish men to take pride in being men and thus able

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[50] McClintock, *Imperial Leather,* 30.

[51] "*Tunceli sarp dağların arasına saklanmış gerçek bir Anadolu hazinesidir. Olağanüstü güzellikleri, her biri ayrı derslerle dolu efsaneleri, tarihsel geçmişiyle Tunceli, bugüne kadar keşfedilmemiş gerçek bir saklı kenttir. Özü sözü bir, toprağına ve özgürlüğüne düşkün Tunceli'nin bilinir hale gelmesi toplumsal bir görev niteliğindedir.*" Tunceli Valisi Mustafa Taşkesen, "Takdim", in *Bir Tutam Tunceli,* ed. Yüksel Isik (Ankara: Anit Matbaa, 2012) 6.

[52] Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation", in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (Oxford, 1946), 78.

[53] Fernando Coronil and Julie Skurski, eds., *States of Violence*, The Comparative Studies in Society and History Book Series (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 2.

[54] Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Stanford (CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2003).

[55] MacKinnon C. *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1991).

[56] Veena Das. "Violence, gender, and subjectivity." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 37 (2008): 283-299, 285.

to join the army.[57] Emotions such as pride are not "merely" emotions, as Sara Ahmed tells us; they line up bodies. Through circulation of emotions the subjects, bodies, groups and social relations materialize.[58] Instead of understanding emotions as residing in the subject or being "about" its object, Ahmed conceptualizes them as continuous processes, in the course of which the surface of individual and communal bodies is produced. Emotions "work to align some subjects with some others and against others."[59] While circulating "between bodies and signs,"[60] they "stick" certain signs to objects. In some cases the circulation of affects and emotions makes communities, as when taking pride in joining the army. In other cases, they work to inflict injury. The obstruction of public grief, for instance, becomes injury for Kurdish guerrillas who fight against the Turkish military, precisely because their bodies do not align. In Dersim, where the continuity of state-sponsored violence still dominates the political landscape, this form of violence cannot only be regarded as destructive. Through the creation of injuries, sticky signs and alignments, it generates subjectivities, emotions, affects and communities.

This dissertation is mostly concerned with the emotional and affective dynamics that state violence generates.[61] In other words, it focuses on what state violence produces while destroying lifeworlds. To grasp "state violence" as a reference point in making sense of everyday life in Dersim, I turn to Veena Das who argues that violence cannot be regarded as a solely destructive force interrupting ordinary life. Conceptualizing violence as a cultural and social force producing the ordinary[62] helps us to go beyond simplistic interpretations where violence is understood as "a tool wielded in the pursuit of power."[63] In doing so, I aim to complicate the idea of political violence as "the brute physical force that ruptures the flow of everyday life."[64] In the absence of an official recognition of state crimes and the continuity of state violence, the case of Dersim shows the need to revisit the notion of "violent rupture and the routine maintenance of order."[65] In a place where "rupture" is so consistent, the "ordinary" loses its place. Unhinging the dichotomy between violent rupture and the ordinary, the

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[57] Ayse Gül Altınay, *The Myth of the Military-Nation: Militarism, Gender, and Education in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).
[58] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*.
[59] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* 11.
[60] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* 117.
[61] Begona Aretxaga. *States of terror: Begona Aretxaga's Essays.* ed. Zulaika, Joseba (Nevada: University of Nevada Reno, Basque Studies Program, 2005). Yael Navaro-Yashin, *The Make-Believe Space: Affective Geography in a Postwar Polity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012). Veena Das. *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary* (Univ of California Press, 2006).
[62] Veena Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary* (Univ of California Press, 2006).
[63] Coronil and Skurski, *States of Violence*, 2.
[64] Coronil and Skurski, 2.
[65] Coronil and Skurski, *States of Violence*, 2.

experience of violence becomes constitutive of the ordinary. In that sense, a historical ethnography of Dersim can only be written against the well-established understanding of the "gradual elimination or containment of violence through the state's monopolization of the regularization and organization of civil society."[66]

The focus on the destructive power of state violence and the practice of documenting the loss of Dersim developed hand in hand with the search for justice, compensation and reconciliation.[67] What is crucial for my discussion on state violence is its power on the formation of subjectivities. In this sense, my approach is different from the tendency to reduce the state to its monopoly on violence and destroying both human and non-human actors.[68] Instead of seeing the state as a tangible social institution or a "stately persona," I aim to analyze it in "the sites of everyday life, where people attempt to produce meaning for themselves by appropriating the political."[69] I take state violence itself as transformative, and as constructing and reconstructing subjectivities.[70] This approach contributes to my analysis on the production of otherness in Dersim through knowledge production and helps me explain the process of the affliction of otherness in Dersim, where communal attachment is strongly linked to a way of making sense of state violence.

To clarify what I mean by "affliction" I turn to Judith Butler's theorization of subject formation. Expanding on Althusser's notion of interpellation which suggests that state constitutes individuals as subjects by interpellating them,[71] Butler complicates this framing by suggesting that the search for recognition is not only the result of submission out of fear but it also generates a desirous attachment towards authority. The desire to be recognized is at the core of investment in a hegemonic power structure.[72] In the Butlerian frame of subjectivation, injury plays a key role. Injury is what the subject is unavoidably attached to in order to socially

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[66] Coronil and Skurski, *States of Violence*, 2.

[67] Hüseyin Aygün, *Dersim 1938 resmiyet ve hakikat*, (Ankara: Dipnot, 2010); Hüseyin Aygün, *Dersim 1938 ve Zorunlu Iskân: Telgraflar, Dilekçeler, Mektuplar*, (Dipnot Yayınları, 2009); İsmail Beşikçi, *Tunceli Kanunu (1935) ve Dersim jenosidi*, (İstanbul: İsmail Beşikçi Vakfı Yayınları, 2013); Özgür Fındık, *Kara Vagon: Dersim-Kırım ve Sürgün*, (İstanbul: Fam, 2012); Mesut Özcan, *Darbe yıllarında Dersim*, (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2017); Cemal Taş, *Dağların kayıp anahtarı : Dersim 1938 anlatıları*, (İletişim Yayınları 2010); Bülent Bilmez, Gülay Kayacan, and Şükrü Aslan, *Belleklerdeki Dersim '38*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2015); Faik Bulut, *Dersim raporları: İnceleme*, (İstanbul: Evrensel Basım Yayın, 2005); Taha Baran, *1937-1938 Yılları Arasında Basında Dersim*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2014).

[68] Giorgio Agamben. *Homo sacer: sovereign power and bare life.* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

[69] Yael Navaro-Yashin, *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey* (Princeton, 2002), 135.

[70] Michelle Foucault, „Governmentality". In *Foucault Effect: studies in governmentality* (eds) G. Burchill, C. Gordon 8. P. Miller, 87-104. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). Stuart Hall, „Who Needs Identity" in *The Identity Reader*. Eds. Paul Du Gay, Jessica Evans &Peter Redman. (Sage, 2000).

[71] Louis Althusser. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" in *Mapping Ideology*, ed. Slavoj Zizek, (London and New York: Verso, 1994), 129.

[72] Judith Butler. *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection.* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

constitute itself. In other words, injuries mark the foundation of one's identity. What further complicates this process of subject formation is that when one opposes the injury, s/he opposes what is at the core of her/his identity:

> Called by an injurious name, I come into social being, and because I have a certain inevitable attachment to existence, because a certain narcissism takes hold of any term that confers existence, I am led to embrace the terms that injure me because they constitute me socially. As a further paradox, then, only by occupying – being occupied by – that injurious term can I resist and oppose it, recasting the power that constitutes me as the power I oppose. […] Any mobilization against subjection will take subjection as its resource, and that attachment to an injurious interpellation will, by way of a necessary alienated narcissism, become the condition under which resignifying that interpellation becomes possible.[73]

In the absence of Şeywuşen's own attachment to specific incidents of political violence, his madness becomes associated with diverse episodes of state-sponsored violence. In other words, while he was not socially performing any injury, the narratives about his madness suggest that he "lost it" during the process of being interpellated by the state with the purpose of governing the difference located in Dersim. In this case, Şeywuşen's refusal to hold on to any injury translates into the attribution of several injuries to him. This diversity in the narratives of injury transforms his madness into a metaphor for the injury of Dersim. In that sense, the embrace of Şeywuşen by Dersimi society indicates an act of holding on to a broader injury that keeps together the diverse bounded identity narratives of Armenians, Kurds, Alevis, Kurdish-Alevis, Zazas and leftists. In this way, the figure of Şeywuşen offers connectivity between different communities of loss that are attached to particular injuries which they prioritize in their own socially performed identities. Şeywuşen becoming the metaphor of the injury of Dersim is the process I frame as "affliction of otherness." In Butler's frame, there is no ultimate subjectivation: it is woven by many threads, and all of them interpellate the subject not in independent but in specific ways. In this complex process of subjectivation I focus on interpellation through epistemic and physical state violence, which presents Dersim as the "other" of the state. In that sense, state violence goes hand in hand with knowledge production on the region, and has effects going beyond the case of Şeywuşen. I analyze this creative co-constitution of the identity of Şeywuşen as affliction of the otherness produced as a part of the statecraft in the region.

Madness and politics

This dissertation draws on a two-layered analysis of madness: the medicalized and pathologized madness represented in the biography of Şeywuşen by the Elaziğ Mental Hospital, and holy-

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[73] Butler. *The Psychic Life of Power,* 104.

madness which I frame as a site where silenced past comes to hunt the present and promotes open-ended engagement with the ungrievable loss of Dersim. To elaborate on those two different cosmologies of madness, I bring together the history of psychiatry and the history of secularization. Early interest in the history of psychiatry in Turkey developed under the influence of the biomedical psychiatric model, which suggested that mental illnesses have always existed but were categorized as demonic possession, witchcraft and the like in the pre-modern period, and only thanks to the development of modern science have become recognized as mental illnesses.[74] Influenced by Durkheim's work on suicide,[75] one of the early examples of studying social norms through those who violate them, and Foucault's works on madness, social historians have appropriated the strategy of examining the abnormal to understand the social order. Erving Goffman contributed to de-medicalizing the literature on psychiatry with his work *Asylums*, where he relates mental disabilities as socially ascribed labels and not as inherent mental conditions. Focusing on the institutionalization of mental hospitals, he analyzes them as total institutions, where the confined are treated alike with like-situated individuals, and their use of time and movement is regulated in a place cut off from the outside world.[76]

With Goffman's and Foucault's works on confinement of the mentally ill,[77] mental institutions started to be seen as the paradigmatic representations of the modern state and its statecraft. Framing the asylum as the solid outcome of the victory of reason in the West, Foucault analyses madness as a site where the modern state exercises its power and authority to regulate and regularize society. He describes the birth of the asylum as the model for industrial society, where different regimes of disciplining were formulated and practiced. Influenced by Foucault, David J. Rothman who worked on the birth of the asylum in the United States[78] and Klaus Doerner in Great Britain, Germany and France, [79] put forward the asylum as the site where the bourgeoisie expresses the desire to establish control. Prioritizing the central role of professionalization in psychiatry, Andrew Scull frames the development of mental asylums in England as more related to gaining control over the treatment of mentally ill people

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[74] For an example of such a narrative see Albert Deutsch, *The Mentally Ill in America: A History of Th eir Care and Treatment fr om Colonial Times* (New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1937).

[75] Emile Durkhaim, *Le Suicide*, (Paris: Ancienne Librarie Germer Bailliere, 1897).

[76] Erving Goffman, *Asylums*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986).

[77] Michel Foucault, *History of madness*. (Routledge, 2013).

[78] David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in New Republic* (Boston: Little Brown, 1971).

[79] Klaus Doerner, *Madmen and the Bourgeoisie: A Social History of Insanity and Psychiatry* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981).

than curing them, in the context of a capitalist market economy that renders the mentally ill economically unproductive subjects.[80]

There was little interest in the history of psychiatry until the decline of its institutional legitimacy during the 1960s and 1970s and the birth of the anti-psychiatry movement which questioned the institutional power relationship in the domain of psychiatry and its methods.[81] Expanding on Scull's focus on professionalization, Thomas Szasz, one of the pioneering psychiatrists of the anti-psychiatry movement, fueled a long debate. Starting with a question asked by John Stuart Mill "was there ever any domination which did not appear natural to those who possessed it,"[82] Szasz argues that what was seen as witchcraft in the 15th century was what is seen as mental illness in the modern world. Framing this change as a result of the transformation of a religious ideology to a scientific one he sees this process as the replacement of the persecutions of heretics by the persecution of mental patients.[83] In this regard, he argues that psychiatry is as an ideology produced by a community of science and not a science that "cannot be warped by parochial loyalties."[84]

The ideology of psychiatry that is important for my arguments in this dissertation belongs to the early years of the Turkish Republic, when Turkishness and its others were both in the making. I enter this discussion through the establishment of the Elazığ Mental Hospital in 1925. Unlike in the countries cited above, in the Ottoman Empire the increase in the number of mental hospitals was not a phenomenon of the 19th century but the 20th. Only after the declaration of the second constitution in 1908 did the interest in confining the mentally ill become a priority in Ottoman lands. While some explain this growing interest in relation to deficiencies in the existing places for the increasing number of the mentally ill,[85] others interpret this change within the framework of nationalization as the Ottoman Empire was replaced by the Turkish Republic. Ayhan Çağlayan argues that psychiatry provided the Turkish Republic the invaluable gift: "idealized, homogenous, and fixed body of population in need of discovery,

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[80] Andrew Scull, *The Most Solitary of Afflictions: Madness and Society in Britain, 1700-1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993)

[81] Rothman, *The Discovery of Asylum*, 10.

[82] John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Woman* (London: Dent-Everyman's Library, 1965), 251-252 cited in Thomas Stephen Szasz. *The manufacture of madness: A comparative study of the inquisition and the mental health movement*. New York: (Harper Colophon Books, 1970), XX.

[83] Szasz, *The manufacture of madness*, 111-136.

[84] Thomas Stephen Szasz, *Ideology and insanity: Essays on the psychiatric dehumanization of man* (Syracuse University Press, 1991), 77-78.

[85] Fatih Artvinli, *Delilik, siyaset ve toplum: Toptaşı Bimarhanesi (1873-1927)* (Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2013), 18-19.

discipline and regularization."[86] Focusing on the writings of the eugenicist prime minister Sadi Irmak (in office 1974–75), Murat Ergin argues that the role of eugenics, biometrics and anthropometric claims are dismissed in the discussions on race and Turkishness. They had a key role in the making of Turkishness; they operated as a regulator of the "negotiations between Turkish identity and modernity."[87]

Elazığ was the city which served as one of the biggest former deportation hubs during the Armenian Genocide and as the military headquarter where the Dersim Genocide was managed. Between these two genocidal events, the Elazığ Mental Hospital was founded by Ahmed Şükrü Emed (1877–1940). The first director of the Elazığ Mental Hospital, Emed was professionally socialized during a time when eugenic ideas dominated the field of psychiatry in Turkey and spent a year in Germany during his education working closely with Emil Kraepelin (1856–1926), one of the foremost figures in German biological psychiatry.[88] Considering its founder's background, the establishment of the mental hospital in Elazığ cannot be considered separately from the racializing dimensions of early republican psychiatry. In that sense, as an institution it operates as a marker of the racialized medicalized discourses of the time.

While framing medicalization through the establishment of a mental hospital as a component of the state violence helps us to frame the hospital in Elazığ, classical Foucauldian and Goffmanian approaches remain insufficient in elaborating the sacralized characteristics of madness exemplified by the case of Şeywuşen. To unpack the translations of holy-madness, such as therapeutic capacities and creative engagement with loss, I turn to the discussion on how secularism shapes not only subjectivities but also regulates the sphere of health. While Foucault and Goffman remain within a secular framework for approaching madness, I analyze holy-madness as a vantage point from which to critique secularism and its regime of violence. Analyzing the entanglement of therapeutic power and the political rule, Christopher Dole argues that secularism in Turkey is not just a political doctrine but "a normative way of life" which "works to organize the forms of speech and truth that are to be granted credibility in a given set of conditions."[89] What a normative way of life refers to in this case is the organization of "sensibilities, sentiment, and possibilities" along with "institutions and processes that

[86] Ayhan Çağlayan, "In the name of Modernity, for the sake of the Nation: Madness, Psychiatry and Politics from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic (1500-1950)," unpublished MA thesis, department of Social Anthropology (Toronto: York University:2005), 199.

[87] Murat Ergin. "Biometrics and Anthropometrics: The Twins of Turkish Modernity." *Patterns of Prejudice* 42, no. 3 (2008): 281-304, 304.

[88]Fethi Erden, *Türk Hekimleri Biyografisi* (İstanbul: Çituri Biladerler Basım Evi, 1945).

[89] Christopher Dole, *Healing Secular Life: Loss and Devotion in Modern Turkey* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 8.

organize relationships between seeing and being seen, speaking and listening."[90] In other words, secularism works as a social force regulating what is sayable and hearable, the forms of speech and truth in the public space.[91]

In this framework, in which "healing is fundamentally connected to the government of life and the reproduction of governable subjects,"[92] the kind of therapeutic power and the chance of engaging with loss becomes problematic in temporal terms. What holy-madness signifies is something that is supposed to be left in the past. Taking into consideration that secular national time was inscribed onto the landscape of Dersim through genocidal violence, holy-madness becomes that which escapes despite all the regulations of the state's violent statecraft, and comes back to haunt those who live in that geography. In that sense, the holy-madness of Şeywuşen, is a site of return, "wherein unspoken histories of political-theological exchange and the forms of violence that marked secularism's origins are brought to bear on the present."[93]

Space, temporality, and emotions

Focusing on the different memory regimes forged by three different public monuments, in this dissertation I analyze how the official historiography promoted by the statue of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was challenged by the statue of Şeywuşen (inaugurated 1995) and the statue of Seyyid Riza (inaugurated 2010), the emblematic leader of resistance to the Dersim Genocide. While the statue of Şeywuşen was erected during the peak of military clashes between the Turkish Armed Forces and the PKK, the statue of Seyyid Riza was erected during the precarious peace negotiations of the 2000s. Comparing the memory regimes of those two statues I offer a co-reading of different regimes of public grief in times of conflict and temporary peace. Bringing in conversation the literature on space and emotions, I depict the shift in the emotional regimes that were inscribed in the landscape of Dersim in different time periods.

Following Henri Lefebvre's theorizing on the production of space, many social scientists have turned to the ways in which space is socially constituted by different social actors.[94] However, few have considered space as an actor that has an effect on the lifeworlds of people beyond the presence or absence of natural resources. Turning to Lefebvre allows me to

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[90] Dole, *Healing Secular Life*, 8.
[91] Dole, *Healing Secular Life*, 12.
[92] Dole, *Healing Secular Life*, 13.
[93] Dole, *Healing Secular Life*, 101.
[94] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

emphasize space as a socially produced entity without valorizing space over time but conceptualizing it in an ongoing, mutually constitutive relationship.[95] I explore the landscape of Dersim and Tunceli within the social relations they have produced through state violence and militarization. The articulations of the power relationships through spatial networks are significant for this dissertation. These networks condense broader relations of domination and resistance in their materiality as well as the capacity to challenge the emotional regime that is inscribed in the landscape.

The attention to space in exploring emotional and affective regimes is significant for my conceptual approach.[96] To understand how past atrocities continue to haunt people, spatial policies and political subjectivities, I turn to memory studies which emerged in the wake of decolonization and the social movements of the 1960s, with the aim of writing alternative and revisionist histories.[97] The clash between memory and history productively disrupted "the relative stability of the past in its pastness"[98] and at the same time acknowledged that humans participate in history "both as actors and as narrators."[99] With the help of memory, which "allows us to call on singular experiences in an effort to make sense of the present"[100] I trace how spatially inscribed pain and suffering of past atrocities haunt the present.

I engage with memory and haunting through material objects: statues and memorials. In the literature on public monuments, memorials are generally seen as attempts to fix certain forms of historical interpretation[101] that prescribe what to remember as well as what to forget,[102] and as tools to master the past from the perspective of the present.[103] The case at hand poses challenges to theorizations of public monumentalization as closure stories. I draw on the literature on the agonistic, neither dead nor alive characteristics of monuments,[104] the emotional

[95] Henri Lefebvre. *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).
[96] Margrit Pernau. "Space and emotion: building to feel." *History Compass* 12, no. 7 (2014): 541-549., Benno Gammerl., 'Emotional Styles: Concepts and Challenges', *Rethinking History*, 16 (2012): 161–75.
[97] Huyssen, Andreas. "Present pasts: Media, politics, amnesia." *Public Culture* 12, no. 1 (2000): 21-38.
[98] Andreas Huyssen, *Presents Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 1.
[99] Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. *Silencing the past: Power and the production of history*. Beacon Press, 1995, 2.
[100] Meltem Ahıska, "Arşiv Korkusu ve Karakaplı Nizami Bey: Türkiye'de Tarih, Hafıza ve İktidar." In *Türkiye'de İktidar Yeniden Düşünmek*, ed. K. Murat Güney (İstanbul: Varlık Yayınları 2009).
[101] Vincent Crapanzano, *Imaginative horizons: An Essay in Literary Philosophical Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 148-177.
[102] Michael Rowlands, "Remembering to Forget. Sublimation as Sacrifice in War Memorials." in *The Art of Forgetting*. ed. Adrian Forty and Susanne Kuechler (New York: Berg, 1999), 129-146.
[103] Huyssen, Andreas, *Presents Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).
[104] Katherine Verdery, *The political lives of dead bodies: reburial and postsocialist change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

regimes they forge,[105] along with the gendered dynamics they generate.[106] In the absence of official recognition of past state-sponsored violence and in the presence of continuous state violence, I focus on the open-ended memory regimes that memorials and statues forge in the landscape of Dersim.

The open-endedness of those memory regimes are historically situated. They are regulated through the "limits of the sayable" in the public sphere of Dersim in specific time periods. As Butler argues, the "public sphere is constituted in part by what cannot be said and what cannot be shown. The limits of the sayable, the limits of what can appear, circumscribe the domain in which political speech operates[.]"[107] In systematically silencing the memory of the Dersim Genocide for more than 70 years in the Turkish public sphere, the formation of the cityscape of Tunceli may be conceptualized as a landscape of denial. This spatially inscribed regime rendered the pain and suffering of the genocidal violence illegitimate and therefore ungrievable in the public sphere. This regime of denial could only be challenged in the 2000s through a different "distribution of public grieving"[108] which allowed certain kind of mourning practices to happen in the public space in Tunceli.

Grief and melancholia have been mainly addressed through a Freudian approach that tends towards a story of closure of the one mourning for loss. Mourning, Freud writes, "is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an ideal and so on."[109] While mourning is the stage when libido is withdrawn from the lost object and becomes gradually available to invest in new objects, melancholia is the refute of the grief and inability to detach the self from the lost object. What Freud sees as pathological has inspired social theorists to engage with cases where there is no happy ending, no closure, no reconciliation. David Eng and David Kazanjian de-pathologize melancholia, inviting us to think of it as an "ongoing and open relationship with the past—bringing its ghosts and specters, its flaring and fleeting images, into the present."[110] This invitation is not only for "a continuous engagement with loss and its remains" but to generate "sites for memory and history, for the rewriting of the past as well as

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[105] Erika Doss, *The Emotional Life of Contemporary Public Memorials: Towards a Theory of Temporary Memorials* (Amsterdam U. Press, 2008).

[106] Janet Jacobs, Memorializing the Holocaust: Gender, Genocide, and Collective Memory (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010).

[107] Judith Butler, Antigone's Claim: Kinship between Life and Death (New York 2000), xvii.

[108] Judith Butler, Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable? (London/New York 2010), 38.

[109] Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* vol. 14, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), 243.

[110] David L. Eng and David Kazanjian, eds., *Loss: The Politics of Mourning* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 1.

the reimagining of the future."[111] With Eng and Kazanjian, I take the attachment to loss as a site of creative engagement with the past that persists in the present.

Religion, secularism and culturalization

The relationship between politics and religion is a theme that runs this dissertation, through the discussions of the rituals woven around holy-madness. As a foundational component of the works of Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Simmel, the study of religion and modernization is one of the pillars of the sociological imagination.[112] The interaction between the religious and the political spheres are largely discussed within theories of secularism. Earlier literature on secularism is mostly concerned with explaining the move towards a way of life in which religion is an optional reference point. This historical process of differentiating the institutional spheres of religion and politics, or secularization, has been explained as a gradual decline of the role of religion following the emergence of nation-states and humanism, which ended the "naïve acknowledgement of the transcendent, or of goals or claims that go beyond human flourishing."[113] However, the increasing visibility of religiosity in the 1980s has required differentiating religion and politics. Following Weber's thesis of gradual decline, some started worrying about the "resurgence of religion" while others moved towards a revision of the "straightforward narrative of progress from the religious to the secular."[114]

While earlier engagements with the differentiation of religion and politics take secular norms and values as "natural and connected to freedom" of individuals, more recent approaches emphasize the constructed notion of power and control over the demarcation between religion and politics. In other words, what has been depicted as a social reality has started being deconstructed with an emphasis on state power in the recent literature.[115] In that regard, the critical approach of Talal Asad informs my elaboration of the case of Turkey. For Asad secularism is, historically and contemporarily, an expression of the state's sovereign power in defining, managing and intervening into religious life and sensibilities.[116] Differentiating between the secular as a domain of historically constructed behaviors, sensibilities and epistemologies on one hand, and secularism as a doctrine and political arrangement of the

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[111] Eng and Kazanjian, *Loss*, 2.
[112] Bryan S. Turner. *Religion in Modern Society: Citizenship, Secularization and the State* (New York: Cambridge University Press), 134.
[113] Charles Taylor. *A secular age*. (Harvard university press, 2007), 22.
[114] Talal Asad. *Formations of the secular: Christianity, Islam, modernity* (Stanford University Press, 2003), 1.
[115] Hussein Ali Agrama. *Questioning secularism: Islam, sovereignty, and the rule of law in modern Egypt* (University of Chicago Press, 2012), 26.
[116] Talal Asad, "Trying to Understand French Secularism," in *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World*, eds. Hent de Vries and Lawrence E. Sullivan (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006).

modern nation-state on the other,[117] he points towards a mutually constitutive structure of secularism and the secular.[118]

What is crucial for my discussion is the indeterminate space that is created through the reproduction of the secular and secularism in everyday life. Asad argues that the nation-state requires "clearly demarcated spaces that it can classify and regulate: religion, education, health, leisure, work, income, justice, and war." The space allocated to religion is repeatedly "redefined by the law because the reproduction of secular life within and beyond the nation-state continually affects the discursive clarity of that space."[119] The struggle "to extend individual self-creation" and "claims to knowledge" destabilizes already established boundaries.[120] This feature of the modern state is framed by Hussein Ali Agrama as a "growing regulatory capacity." For Agrama "secularism has long been, and is increasingly, fraught with an irrevocable indeterminacy."[121] Following Asad and Agrama, I argue that, in the Turkish case, this space of indeterminacy is historically grounded in the realm of culture. Culturalization has been a strategy to depoliticize the demand of recognition in the religious domain voiced by the Alevis of Turkey.

Culturalization of what is regarded as outside the religious realm is a historically situated strategy that, in Turkey, played a formational role in the making of the boundaries of the religious domain. Two years after the establishment of the Turkish Republic, parliament passed Law 5566 which closed down "[a]ll of the *tekkes* and *zaviyes* (*dervish* lodges), whether established as a *vakif* (foundation) or under the personal property right of its sheikh, or by whatever other manner." It also prohibited "[a]ll of the *tarikats* (religious orders) using titles such as sheikh, dervish, disciple, *dede*, *seyit*, *çelebi*, *baba*, *emir*, *nakib*, *halife*, fortune teller, sorcerer, *üfürükçü*, and those who write charms to help people to attain their wishes; all functions rendered according to these titles and designations; and the wearing of dervish costume."[122] Through Law 5566, mosques became the only officially recognized places of worship in the republic. In 1950, Law 5566 was revised and some of the closed-down dervish

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[117] Talal Asad. *Formations of the secular: Christianity, Islam, modernity* (Stanford University Press, 2003).
[118] Agrama. *Questioning secularism*, 2.
[119] Asad. *Formations of the secular,* 201.
[120] Asad. *Formations of the secular,* 201.
[121] Agrama. *Questioning secularism*, 26.
[122] Translated by and cited in Christopher Dole, *Healing Secular Life: Loss and Devotion in Modern Turkey*, 1st ed, Contemporary Ethnography (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 8–12.

lodges, which the state considered as belonging to "great Turks," were transformed into museums or cultural centers.[123]

In a context where the only legally recognized place of worship is the mosque, turning a selection of former religious sites turning into cultural centers involved not only a process of culturalization but the demarcation of what belongs to Turkish culture. Turk and Turkish, like any other category of identity is shaped through multiple constructions. The embrace of Turkishness as a self-defining category of identity does not have a long history. Until the end of the World War I, Turk was not a term for self-identification.[124] While Ottomans considered themselves *Rumi*, a term adopted from the Byzantines, *Turk* was used by the Europeans to classify the Ottomans. The term Turk as a self-appellation started being popular during the formation of Turkish nationalism and "came to signify cultural identity under a nationalist construction" in relationship with Europe.[125] The fact that a European construct would come to serve as self-identification for the new republic is instructive for the understanding of Turkish nationalism and modernism.

Historiography on the Turkish Republic as a narrative of Westernization[126] is usually based either on a secularist premise or on the critique of Islam promoted by the republic itself. The law certainly played a crucial role in the implementation of secular modernity which aimed to limit the social and political influence of religion and to subordinate it to the national interest.[127] Without denying the republic's radical state-imposed reforms, such as the abolition of the sultanate in 1922 and the caliphate in 1924, and the adoption of the Swiss civil code in 1926, in this dissertation I draw attention to the problem of the category of Westernization in historical analysis. Suggesting an "original distinction and incommensurability between a

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[123] "The tombs belonging to great Turks can be opened to public by the Ministry of National Education. The necessary number of state officers will be appointed to take care of those tombs. The list of tombs that will be open to public will be prepared by the Ministry of National Education and prouved by the Council of Ministers." "*Türbelerden Türk büyüklerine ait olanlar Milli Eğitim Bakanlığınca umuma açılabilir. Bunlara bakım için gerekli memur ve hizmetliler tayin edilir. Açılacak türbelerin listesi Milli Eğitim Bakanlığınca hazırlanır ve Bakanlar Kurulunca tasvip olunur.*" Resmi Gazete is available online: *www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/7448.pdf* The revision of the Law 5566 is on page 18010, translation mine.
[124] Cemal Kafadar. *Between two worlds: The construction of the Ottoman state* (Univ of California Press, 1995), 3-4.
[125] Yael Navaro-Yashin, *Faces of the state: Secularism and public life in Turkey* (Princeton University Press, 2002), 10.
[126] Bernard Lewis, *The emergence of modern Turkey*. No. 135. Oxford University Press, 1961. ; Niyazi Berkes. *The development of secularism in Turkey*. McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP, 1964. : Erik J. Zürcher *Turkey: A modern history* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2017).
[127] Markus Dressler, "The Religio-Secular Continuum: Reflections on the Religious Dimentions of Turkish Secularism" in *After Secular Life*, eds. Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, Robert A.Yelle, Mateo Taussig-Rubbo (California: Standford University Press, 2011), 221-241, 223-24.

constructed "East" and "West"[128] the notion of Westernization, as any other claim to major historical rupture, assumes "by default, that an essentially separate "culture" existed prior to the development or the shift."[129] Considering the identity claims of authenticity of the Turkish state requires also considering this process. Following the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in the early 20th century, several nations initiated a search for unitary and original "culture of circumscribed pieces of territory."[130] The founders of Turkey solved the dilemma of reconciling Europeanization with nationalism[131] by rooting their "authentic" culture in the Turkic groups of ancient Central Asia. This source of authenticity facilitated the rupture from the Ottoman Empire, performing modern qualities while simultaneously maintaining a solid cultural and ethnic reference that keeps Turkishness distinct from European identity.

In this context, being part of Turkish culture translates into being conducive to being instrumentalized for the performance of modernity on the one hand, and authenticity on the other. For Alevis, this poses complexities, and they were incorporated into different nationalist projects in diverse ways. As an element in the Central Asian cultural toolkit, Alevism become a part of the continuity narrative of Turkish nationalism which suggests a long-term cultural continuity between Central Asian cultures and the Turkish Republic which had been interrupted during the Ottoman Empire. In this way, Alevism became a central component of Turkish nationalism.[132] While Anatolian Alevis were more easily incorporated into the national project,[133] Kurdish-Alevis were exposed to different political discourses. Turkish nationalism was invested in proving that there are no Kurdish-Alevis but there are Kurdified Alevis who must be helped to remember their original language.[134] Kurdish nationalism participated in denying this difference by promoting the idea that "the Alevi Kurds were really Kurds and nothing else."[135] On the other hand, "based on the distinct Zaza vernacular," Zaza nationalists

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[128] Navaro-Yashin. *Faces of the state*, 11.
[129] Navaro-Yashin. *Faces of the state*, 10.
[130] Navaro-Yashin. *Faces of the state*, 11.
[131] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Identity and ist Discontents: Women and the Nation,, in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory : A Reader,* ed. Williams, Patrick, and Laura Chrisman. (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 1993), 379.
[132] Markus Dressler. *Writing Religion :the Making of Turkish Alevi Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 15.
[133]Ahmet Yaşar Ocak. *Babaîler isyanı: alevî tarihsel altyapısı yahut Anadolu'da İslâm-Türk heterodoksisinin teşekkülü* (Dergâh Yayınları, 1996).
[134] Referring to Hamdi Bey's report written in 1925. Cited in Hüseyin Yayman. *Sark Meselesinden Demokratik Acilima: Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu Hafizasi*, Ankara:SETA, 2011, 92-93.
[135] Michiel Leezenberg, "Kurdish Alevis and the Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990." in *Turkey's Alevi Enigma: A Comphrehensive Overview*, eds. J. White and Jongerden Leiden (Boston: Brill, 2003), p:204.

endorsed the idea of having an independent Zazaistan formed by "a distinct people or even a distinct nation."[136]

Incorporation into the sphere of Turkishness remains the only possibility for the inclusion of Alevis in a context where there is no legal recognition of Alevism as a religion. This incorporation operates as a solidifier of the unity of the regulated religious space based on the Hanefi interpretation of Sunni Islam. In other words, considering Alevism a part of Turkish culture displaces it from being a religious belief. The Directorate of Religious Affairs (DRA, *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*), which was integrated into the state administration in 1924 to define, organize and regulate public Islamic practices, uses the strategy of culturalization to draw the lines between what is acceptable and what is not in the public religious domain. Framing it as a threat to "notions of Islamic purity and authenticity," DRA labels what is not in its control as "cultural" and "condemns [it] as illegal innovations."[137] Based on the "particular binaries such as religious/secular and religion/culture"[138] and distinctions between "traditional cultures" of Alevism and the "common share of Islam,"[139] the DRA legitimizes mosques as the only place of worship, promoting the "true" religion and not the "cultural, the local, the contingent, in sum, the inauthentic/heterodox."[140]

Pushed towards the realm of culture, Alevi organizations are governed either by the Directorate-General of Foundations (*Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü*)—as in the case of Alevi places of worship, *cemevi*s—or by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism—as in the case of museum-lodges. In this case, the cultural sphere becomes the only place where the issue of diversity can be addressed. Culturalization has brought an unprecedented visibility to Alevism clearly divorced from its political agenda of recognition[141] via public performances of Alevi rituals such as *semah*. This visibility is an expression of "an aestheticised notion of multiculturalism that conceptualizes most minorities in Turkey as nostalgic reminders of a multi-ethnic empire"[142] and as traces of the past rather than living communities.

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[136] Michiel Leezenberg, "Kurdish Alevis and the Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990." P:201.
[137] Markus Dressler, "The Religio-Secular Continuum", 224.
[138] Markus Dressler, "Making Religion through Secularist Legal Discourse: The Case of Turkish Alevism" in *Secularism and Religion-making*. eds. Markus Dressler and Arvind Mandair (Oxford University Press, 2011), 193.
[139] Dressler, "Making Religion through Secularist Legal Discourse," 192.
[140] Dressler, "Making Religion through Secularist Legal Discourse," 193.
[141] Kabir Tambar, "The aesthetics of public visibility: Alevi Semah and the paradoxes of pluralism in Turkey." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52, no. 3, 2010: 652-679.
[142] Banu Karaca, "Europeanisation from the margins? Istanbul's cultural capital initiative and the formation of European cultural policies." In *The Cultural Politics of Europe*, pp. 169-188. Routledge, 2013, p:167.

Methodology

Dersim is a region that, on the one hand, feeds the fantasy of "discovering otherness" in an overdetermined setting and on the other resists being approached as a "bounded area"[143] of research in the classical sense. Since it operated as the constitutive "other"[144] of the Turkish state in the making of Turkishness, it is framed in the national imaginary as a place that is different than the rest of the country. However, due to continuous state violence and systematic economic disinvestment policies of the state, today Dersimis mostly live outside Dersim, in different metropoles of Turkey and Europe. In addition, since Alevi and Kurdish political mobilizations were organized in Europe more powerfully than in Turkey in times of political pressure (the 1980 coup d'état, the low-intensity war between the PKK and the Turkish Armed Forces in the 1990s), the labor invested in identity formation and rights struggle outside Turkey is undeniable.[145] In that regard, Dersim is a diasporic region. This makes it hard to research the region within the geographical boundaries of what is today Tunceli.

Along with the geographical diffusion, the thematic focus of this research is also unbounded. Researching sacralized madness in a heavily contested landscape requires making genealogies of seemingly "free-floating" references. During my fieldwork I found that collecting stories about Şeywuşen and other madmen was like assembling what Dersimis want to tell about the region, their lives, about politics and spirituality. A map of what people attributed to Şeywuşen would include a range of stories from fantasies to claims of truth. By fantasies, I refer to what "survives analysis, critique and deconstruction."[146] For instance, although people know that Şeywuşen was born after the Armenian Genocide and his village is not one which was destroyed during the Dersim Genocide, this knowledge does not prevent them from telling stories about the role of genocidal violence in Şeywuşen's madness. Instead of differentiating fantasy from "real" or truth claims my aim in this dissertation is to map the reference points that appear in stories about Şeywuşen.

To do so, my research combines ethnographic and archival research methods. While the written sources (the archive of the Elazığ Mental Hospital, local newspapers, journals or printed media which is distributed nationwide) had very little to tell about Şeywuşen, Dersimis had an

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[143]Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, "Discipline and practice:"The field" as site, method, and location in anthropology." *Anthropological locations: Boundaries and grounds of a field science* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) 1-47:5.

[144] Göner. "A Social History of Power and Struggle in Turkey".

[145] Ayşe Betül Çelik. ""I miss my village!": forced Kurdish migrants in Istanbul and their representation in associations." *New perspectives on Turkey* 32 (2005): 137-163.

[146] Navaro-Yashin. *Faces of the state*, 4.

abundance of stories belonging to different periods. Although there is little information in the institutional archives on Şeywuşen's life, this silence is illustrative with regard to the archival politics in Turkey. In his book on destroyed archives in Turkey, Rıfat Bali, an independent scholar specializing in the history of minorities in Ottoman and republican history, states that the General Hospital—which later became the Elazig Mental Hospital—that belonged to Protestant American missionaries had both an archive and a library. After its seizure by the Turkish state, it was transformed into Elazığ Mental Hospital in 1925. Both the archive, with its documents related to missionary activities, and the library, containing books of American medicine, were given to a bakery, to use the paper documentation as fuel, in return for free bread for the hospital.[147] While this story explains the absence of the General Hospital's archive, the stories I collected in the Elazığ Mental Hospital and Tunceli Municipality about their archives are illustrative of contemporary archiving practices.

In March 2015, I visited the Elazığ Mental Hospital to which Şeywuşen was committed by his family in the 1960s. My application to access the file of Hüseyin Tatar (Şeywuşen) was officially refused, citing regulations on protecting patients' right to privacy.[148] Until I received the official rejection, I spent three days in the hospital's garden where I had a chance to collect a number of different reasons for the rejection of my application related to the state of the hospital's archive. While the general secretary of the hospital blamed a flood in the 1970s, the director of the hospital described a fire in the 1980s, which, each claimed had destroyed the archive, that is why unfortunately it was not available for researchers. After drinking several glasses of tea with the archivists of the hospital, I learnt that there had been no fire affecting the archive and, after the flood, the archive was restored. The archivists unofficially looked for the file of Hüseyin Tatar and told me it was missing.

My conversation in March 2014 with Edibe Şahin, the co-mayor of Dersim belonging to the pro-Kurdish *Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi* (BDP, Peace and Democracy Party) helps

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[147] Rıfat Bali, *Bir Kıyımın, Bir Talanın Öyküsü: Hurdaya (S)atılmayan Matbu ve Yazma Eserler, Evrâk-ı Metrûkeler, Arşivler* (İstanbul: Libra Yayıncılık, 2014), 98-99.

[148] The content of the official rejection letter is as follows: *İlgi sayılı yazınız ekinde gönderilen Çiçek İLENGİZ isimli kişiye ait başvurunun incelenmesi sonucu; Hastanenizde tedavi görmüş olan Hüseyin TATAR isimli şahsın kişisel sağlık verilerinin Hasta Hakları Yönetmeliğinde belirtilen mahremiyetin korunması ilkesi kapsamında olması, bu mahremiyetin bedensel ve zihinsel mahremiyeti içermesi ve ilgili hasta Hüseyin TATAR ' ın ölümünün bu mahremiyetin bozulması hakkını vermeyeceği hususlarına binaen, hasta dosyasındaki bilgilerin bilimsel çalışma da olsa açıklanamayacağı kanaatine varılmıştır.*

As a result of the examination of the application belonging to Çiçek İLENGİZ, it is decided that the personal health data of Hüseyin TATAR, who has been treated in our hospital, is within the scope of the principle of privacy protection specified in the Patient Rights Regulation. This regulation includes physical and mental privacy and the death of the concerned patient Hüseyin TATAR will not give the right to violate this privacy, although it is asked for a scientific study. Translation mine.

Document number 37445697/640 issued by the Elazığ İli Kamu Hastaneleri Birliği Genel Sekreterliği: signed by the secretary general Uzm.Dr.Latif Üstünel.

contextualize these stories of natural disaster. When I asked about the recordings of Şeywuşen's funeral and the plans of his statue—which had been archived by Mazlum Arslan, the mayor of Tunceli (1994–99) who organized the funeral of Şeywuşen and commissioned the statue—Şahin's response was telling. With a smile on her face she said, "Haven't you had enough of flood and fire stories [in the archives], if not I can give you more"[149] and she told a story of a fire, telling me indirectly that what was archived by Arslan during his mayoralty had been lost. By referring to the Turkish state's repertoire of stories of flood and fire to explain the partial destruction of archives containing documents related to contested issues, Şahin made an implicit analogy between the practices of archiving of the Turkish state and those of the municipality.

Juxtaposing the discourse and practices on archives and archiving Meltem Ahiska conceptualizes the problem of the archiving in Turkey as a governmental policy rather than a technical deficiency. While on the one hand the Turkish state holds on to the rhetoric that "archives are essential. One who does not have a past cannot proceed into the future!", on the other hand it remains, at best, indifferent to the material conditions of archives and their continuous destruction. Destroying archives as a policy bequeaths the historical hole to the next generations. Leaving behind such holes as inheritance also mutilates memory, disabling it from answering today's questions.[150] In her historical ethnography of Dutch colonialism, Ann Stoler introduces archives not as things but archiving as a process. She frames archives as condensed sites of epistemological and political anxieties rather than as places containing skewed and biased sources.[151] The stories of flood and fire in Dersim express how the anxieties of archiving the past is not limited to state archives and diffused into different institutional archiving practices. The normalization of the destruction of archives is telling of the everyday practice of constructing historical holes in the collective memory.

While the archive of the mental hospital in Elazığ and the municipal archive in Dersim center were not accessible, local newspapers covering the period from the 1960s to the end of the 1990s offer little more than mainstream nationwide news. They contain no information about Şeywuşen, whose funeral was one of the best-attended funerals in the region and whose statue was erected in the city center. From the local newspaper *Halkın Sesi* published during the 1970s and 1980s we learn about economic hardship and unemployment in the region, the

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[149] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Edibe Şahin, March 2014.
[150] Meltem Ahıska, "Arşiv Korkusu ve Karakaplı Nizami Bey: Türkiye'de Tarih, Hafıza ve İktidar", in *Türkiye'de İktidarı Yeniden Düşünmek*, ed. K. Murat Güney (İstanbul: Varlık Yayınları, 2009).
[151] Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 20.

lives of Dersimis who went to Europe and we receive information about local shops. While issues published during the 1970s contain some critical voices, these disappear after the 1980 coup and thereafter what we have is mostly generic news about the world and Turkey.

An alternative source helping to grasp the socio-political and economic situation in the region comprises the journals of hometown associations[152] which started to spread in the metropolises of Turkey during the 1990s. Dersimis who migrated to Turkey's big cities established these associations to build solidarity with each other and to make visible the political situation in their hometown during the peak of the military clashes between the PKK and the Turkish Armed Forces.[153] Along with the news items that appeared in the mainstream newspapers, the journals of Dersim hometown associations helped me to depict the socio-political atmosphere of the region during the 1990s. Unfortunately, the Dersim hometown association in Berlin, Dersim Kulturgemainde Berlin, which welcomes visitors with Seywusen's photo on its wall, does not have an archive of journals published in Germany. But its members aged 30—85 years carry with them the knowledge of political organization in Germany. By attending the commemoration ceremonies of incidences of state violence along with cultural events organized by the Dersim Kulturgemainde I had the chance to observe how memories attached to state violence are mobilized to make political demands. Through participant observation in the Dersim Kulturgemainde I also had a better grasp of how emotional attachment to state violence incidents affects cultural production.

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[152] *Hemşeri Dernekleri* (hometown associations) refers to associations for people originating in the same city, village or town. They spread in Turkey's big cities due to internal migration. The *hemşeri* associations became important centers for urban political mobilization for Alevis starting from the 1970s and for Kurds in the 1980s and 1990s. For a detailed discussion on hometown associations of Kurdish migrants see Ayşe Betül Çelik. ""I miss my village!": forced Kurdish migrants in Istanbul and their representation in associations." *New perspectives on Turkey* 32 (2005): 137-163.

[153] [The Board of Directors], "Haydi Görev Başına", *Dersim,* (September 1995:1), 3-4.
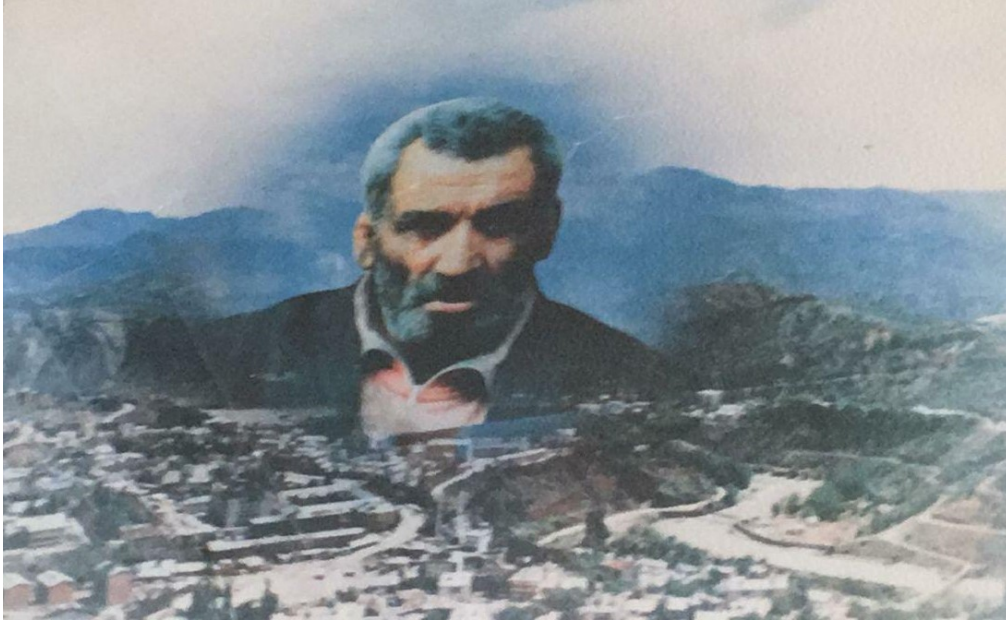
Figure 2: A photo of Şeywuşen hangs on the wall of Dersim Kulturgemainde in Berlin

As a response to the systematic destruction of institutional and state archives, private efforts to document the past and the present offer substantial resources to engage with the contested and silenced history of Turkey. In a context where available state documentation on the region is dominated by descriptions of military clashes produced from the state's perspective, private archives become sites for producing truth claims. In other words, the efforts invested in private archives are mostly motivated by revealing the truth about the silenced history and culture of the region. For instance, thanks to the oral history projects and documentaries of the incidents of 1937–38, the argument legitimating the Turkish state's intervention in the region was negated in the growing literature.[154] Those projects revealed the fact that there was no uprising that had to be suppressed as the Turkish state had claimed. This also changed public views of the 1937–38 incidents and in the absence of the official recognition of state crimes, the military campaigns of the period started to be framed as genocide[155] rather than as military campaigns against an uprising.

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[154] For the oral history works see Özgür Fındık, Kara Vagon: Dersim-kırım ve Sürgün [Black Wagon: Dersimi-cide and Exile] (İstanbul: Fam Yayinlari, 2012), Cemal Taş, Dağların kayıp anahtarı: Dersim 1938 anlatıları [The Lost Key of Mountains: The Narratives of Dersim 1938] (İstanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 2016); Bülent Bilmez, Gülay Kayacan and Şükrü Aslan, Belleklerdeki Dersim '38 [Dersim '38 in Memories] (İstanbul: Iletisim 2015.

[155] Bilgin Ayata and Serra Hakyemez, "The AKP's Engagement with Turkey's Past Crimes: An Analysis of PM Erdoğan's 'Dersim Apology,'" *Dialectical Anthropology* 37, no. 1 (March 2013): 131–43,; Bülent Bilmez, "Sözlü Tarih ve Belgesel Film Aracılığıyla Bir Kıyımla Yüzleşmek ve Hesaplaşmak," in *Kara Vagon: Dersim-Kırım ve Sürgün*, by Özgür Fındık (İstanbul: Fam, 2012), 7–46; Zeynep Türkyilmaz, "Maternal Colonialism and Turkish Woman's Burden in Dersim: Educating the 'Mountain Flowers' of Dersim," *Journal of Women's History* 28, no. 3 (2016): 162–86.

This irreconcilable historical narrative of Dersim in 1937–38, and subsequent incidences of state violence in the region, has, unsurprisingly resulted in the common view that state archives and history—that is, "the register of the official truth"[156]—are no more than a lie. In this context, history means only the official knowledge of "what happened" detached from the "knowledge of that process."[157] However, "history can only be meaningful when actively appropriated by memories in the present."[158] In contexts where history does not provide tools to critically ground specific experiences, "not only history and historicity but also the claims of truth and justice" are impaired.[159] This leads to a major obstacle. Memory is challenged by the ease with which it is depoliticized and made to lose its potential to form arguments around political justice by being pushed into the private realm of nostalgia about the past.[160] In other words, by being pushed into the private realm, memory can be easily framed as a reminder of the past, which can be brought into the present only in the form of nostalgia. The irreconcilability of memory and history leads to a conflict between collective and national time,[161] where the latter—framed as a "homogeneous empty time upon which the biography of the Turkish nation could be written"[162]—is imposed onto the silenced and erased memory of the members of the nation.

In this blurred ground of history and memory, I had the chance to spend almost a year in the private archive of Kemal Kahraman, a musician who has collected laments, folk poems, folk songs, sayings and expressions in the Kirmancki language since late 1980s. He was one of the first people to interview elderly Dersimis not only about the politically contested history of the region but also about their everyday lives, from therapeutic and devotional practices to friendship and weddings. In that sense, working in his archive was like entering the cultural, political and spiritual cosmology of Dersim from a door situated in Berlin. Kahraman's library contained most of the books published on Dersim and in the Kirmancki language while his archive included a wide range of material from recordings to newspaper clips, to personal notes to the drafts of the booklets of his albums. Placing oral history accounts and memory at the intersection of the individual and the cultural, I do not take it "as a separate realm from

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[156] Meltem Ahiska, "Occidentalism and Registers of Truth: The Politics of Archives in Turkey." *New Perspectives on Turkey* 34 (2006): 9-30, 24.
[157] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the past: Power and the production of history* (Beacon Press, 1995), 5.
[158] Ahiska, "Occidentalism and Registers of Truth", 27.
[159] Ahiska, "Occidentalism and Registers of Truth", 28.
[160] Esra Özyürek, *Nostalgia for the Modern: State Secularism and Everyday Politics in Turkey* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006)
[161] Leyla Neyzi, "Gülümser's Story: Life History Narratives, Memory And Belonging in Turkey," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, (Spring 1999):1-26, 2.
[162] Ayşe Öncü, "The Banal and the Subversive: Politics of Language on Turkish Television." European Journal of Cultural Studies (2000:3) 296–318, 299.

authorized domains of knowledge," but instead "itself constituted through historically specific cultural knowledges."[163] In that sense, in deciphering the sources and making use of them I did not use different filters for state documentation and oral history accounts. Instead, I contextualized them in their conditions of production.

While my archival research helped me to situate the story of Şeywuşen in its context, the oral history interviews I conducted helped me to create his biography. When I started my PhD I had already conducted 27 semi-structured interviews as the basis of my MA thesis. Between March 2015 and September 2018, I conducted five months of fieldwork in Dersim. In total, I have 53 oral history interviews conducted in different cities of Turkey and Germany: Dersim (25), Elazığ (3), Erzincan (3), Istanbul (4), Berlin (15) and Rüsselsheim (3). Their length varies between one and six hours. Along with these recorded interviews, I had several unrecorded conversations at different field sites such as the cemetery where the grave of Şeywuşen is situated, the surroundings of the statue of Şeywuşen, the *cemevi* of central Dersim, sacred places (*jiara*) in Dersim, and the Dersim Kulturgemainde in Berlin. These number more than 40. While only 15 of the recorded interviews I had were with female interlocutors, my fieldwork notes are dominated by unrecorded unstructured interviews with women in different field sites, especially in sacred places. This reflects the way in which sacred places in Dersim are largely frequented by female groups, while official settings and publics spaces are dominated by men.

Reading the dissertation

This dissertation follows a chronological narrative and is in five main parts. Chapter I unpacks the historical references that appear in the narratives about Şeywuşen's madness such as the Armenian Genocide (1915–17), the Elazığ Mental Hospital (established in 1925) and the Dersim Genocide (1937–38). It unfolds the history of the Elazığ Mental Hospital where Şeywuşen was hospitalized by his family in the 1960s, contextualizing it within the history of psychiatry. Analyzing the discourses surrounding the two incidents of genocidal violence and the psychiatric thinking of the time, it reveals different components of racialization. The chapter examines the making of Dersim as a problem-space and the solutions that were provided to solve this problem by the central governments of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic.

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[163] Gillian Swanson, "Memory, Subjectivity and Intimacy: the Historical Transformation of the Modern Self and the Writing of Female Autobiography." In *Memory and Methodology,* ed. Susannah Radstone (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 111-132, 112.

Chapter II illustrates the process by which Şeywuşen became a popular and well-known madman during the late 1960s, a period when Turkey witnessed mass political mobilization. Contextualizing oral history accounts depicting Dersim during the 1960s and 1970s when it became an important center of leftist mobilization, the chapter offers a background picture of the streets where Şeywuşen started to live. Putting together the narrated reasons for Şeywuşen's madness, the chapter frames those narratives as the spectrum of "plausible reasons" for going mad in Dersim. Analyzing the narrated reasons for his madness, the chapter initiates a discussion of failed masculinity and shows that narratives about Şeywuşen's madness keep together different layers of otherness that have been attributed to Dersim.

Chapter III depicts a transformation in the way Şeywuşen was perceived in the post-1980 coup period. It contextualizes this shift within changes in the socio-political atmosphere after the coup d'état. Unpacking the holiness of Şeywuşen, the chapter expands on its ambiguities. Analyzing the prophecies, miracles and dreams attributed to Şeywuşen, the chapter puts forward that the divinity attributed to Şeywuşen transgresses the existing hierarchies of Dersim Alevism. Analyzing the kind of holiness attributed to Şeywuşen, the chapter discusses how holiness generates ways of creative engagement with the ungrievable loss of Dersim.

Chapter IV depicts the memorialization of Şeywuşen in the city center following his death in 1994. It unpacks the symbolic meaning of the first statue inaugurated after the statue of Mustafa Kemal. Contextualizing the inauguration of the statue of Şeywuşen within the political atmosphere of the post-1980 coup when the military conflict between the PKK and the Turkish armed forces peaked, it analyzes the limits of the sayable in the public space of Dersim in the 1990s. It compares the memory regimes forged by the statue of Şeywuşen with the statue of Seyyid Rıza (erected in 2010 by the pro-Kurdish municipality), the symbol of resistance to the Dersim Genocide. With this comparison, it initiates a discussion about the discourses of spatially embodied trauma and healing, which was mobilized by pro-Kurdish municipalities in the 2000s and illustrate the shift in regimes of public grieving.

Chapter V focuses on the tensions between rituals and practices related to holy-madmen and the official place of worship for Alevis in Turkey, namely the *cemevi*. Starting with a short discussion of the place of the *cemevi* in the struggle for recognition of Alevism as a religion in Turkey, the chapter unpacks what has been left outside the institutional framing of Alevism. Through a co-reading of the Yeşil Evliya *ziyareti* (Green Awliya Sacred Place) a therapeutic site curing mental instabilities, and the practices that occur at the graves of holy-madmen, the

chapter unpacks different understanding of madness in the Dersim belief cosmology. Through the analysis of the therapeutic power of sacred places, the chapter initiates a discussion on the conceptualization of secularism in Turkey.

CHAPTER I. CREATION OF OTHERNESS: DIFFERENT PHASES OF STATE VIOLENCE IN THE CREATION OF DERSIMI IDENTITY

> You came to the right place to work on madness [laughing]. […] The [Munzur] River flowing next to us has witnessed all the possible atrocities that a state can commit. We all drink its water and believe that it is holy. What the holiness of the river spreads, is nothing other than witnessing [this violence]. … I don't find Seyyid Hüseyin that special, I am sorry [laughing]. […] Who can carry this burden? … Did you talk to Ibo[164] already [laughing]? He asks the Munzur [River] to make snow during summer. […] He does it every summer. All of us are waiting for something to happen … something to change. […] But all they do is build a dam across our holy river.[165]

Murat (41) was a self-identified communist working as an ambulance driver in Dersim. He interpreted Şeywuşen's life path as an ordinary one for people living in Dersim. For inhabitants of the region "who witnessed all the possible atrocities that a state could commit" what could be more normal than losing it? While Murat did not temporally locate the act of witnessing state violence, by saying "we are waiting something to happen… something to change" he underlined the unchanging position of the witness in the face of continuous state-sponsored violence. The relationship he constructed between the holiness of the Munzur River and the act of witnessing not only represents the widespread attribution of holiness to natural features in the region but also the equation of the inhabitants of Dersim with its landscape. In other words, it is not only Dersimis but also Dersim as a region that is under continuous attack by state power. This can take the form of constructing dams over the holy Munzur River or building police stations on *jiaras*, places that are locally considered holy sites. Building dams[166] and police stations without considering local beliefs have been among the practices of the state as it has sought to "bring civilization" to the region since the late Ottoman period.

This chapter aims to historicize this sense of continuous state violence by following the key reference points in Şeywuşen's life story. As briefly mentioned in the Introduction and discussed in the next chapter in detail, the two events of genocidal violence that played a formative role in the consolidations of identities in Anatolia are narrated as reasons for Şeywuşen's madness. As one who lost it, Şeywuşen was hospitalized in the Elazığ Mental

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[164] Let-It-Snow Ibo (Kar yağsın Ibo) is one of the well-known contemporary madmen of Dersim. He is known for his wish that it would snow and for asking for small amounts of money. He is taken care of by the inhabitants of Dersim. Unlike Şeywuşen he is not attributed holiness.

[165] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Murat in Dersim, April 2014.

[166] An early example is from 1861 when the marshal of Erzurum, Semih Paşa, and İsmail Hakkı Paşa planned to build repository pools along with Dersim to bring civilization to the region. Faik Bulut, *Dersim Raporları*, (İstanbul: Evrensel Basım Yayın, 2013), 85.

Hospital which was founded in 1925, between two genocidal events. Elazığ, the closest city to Dersim, was one of the biggest deportation hubs during the Armenian Genocide in 1915 and a military base during the Dersim Genocide in 1938. The chapter contextualizes the establishment of a mental hospital in Elazığ within a history of demarcation and violence.

In the following sections, I will elaborate on how difference was detected and governed by the Ottoman and Turkish states through an examination of the reports produced before each genocide. Analyzing knowledge production about the region, I aim to show that physical violence cannot be considered separately from the epistemic violence that also occurred. Tracing this epistemic violence, which has shaped not only the *idea* of Dersim but also the *identities* of Dersimis, allows us to grasp the nature of the otherness that is attributed to the region. After discussing knowledge production about the region, I will conclude the chapter by elaborating on the contribution of the Elazığ Mental Hospital to the discourses of otherness attached to Dersim.

Defining the injury of Dersim

Since the late Ottoman period, the domain of knowledge about Dersim has been strictly delineated around certain recurring themes: remoteness, primitivism, hard-to-categorize devotional practices, different ethnic characteristics from the rest of the Kurdish region, unruliness, and belonging to a different time period.[167] The geography of Dersim is a recurring theme both in state documentation and in the accounts of travelers, missionaries and anthropologists. Situated in the Kurdish region of eastern Turkey, Dersim is bordered by the Euphrates to the north and west, and the Murat River in the south. The fact of being encircled, by mountains and the Munzur, Harcik and Peri Rivers, which join the Murat River at the region's southern border, sets Dersim geographically an enclosed part of the Kurdish region in Turkey.[168] During the Ottoman period, the southern parts of Dersim, including Çemiskezek, Pertek and Mazgirt, were trade centers controlled by local representatives of the central authority. However, the area named İç Dersim (Inner Dersim) has been more difficult to reach compared to other parts. For instance, in a 1933 gendarmerie report, eastern and western Dersim are described as divided by the Munzur River preventing passage between two sides during the

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[167] Özlem Göner, "A Social History of Power and Struggle in Turkey: State, Memory, Movements, and Identity of Outsiderness in Dersim", unpublished PhD thesis submitted to the Sociology Department of the University of Massachusetts, 2012, 107.

[168] Nuri Dersimi, *Kürdistan Tarihinde Dersim* (Köln: Komkar Yayinlari, 1992), 2.

spring snowmelt.[169] The main feature of Ic Dersim is its harsh mountainous geography which complicates the establishment of central authority in that part of the region. The mountains of Ic Dersim have been notorious for hosting semi-nomadic groups which reject the central authorities.[170]

Figure 3: The Sandjak of Dersim at the beginning of the 20th century[171]

However, while for the state inaccessibility was historically the primary obstacle to establishing its power, for Dersimis the mountains are a holy refuge. In most of my interlocutors' imaginations Dersim is a place whose mountains were and still are open to the oppressed of the region. Nuri Dersimi (1893–1973), a significant figure in the emergence of Kurdish nationalism, attaches high importance to the mountains of Dersim and argues that they shape the culture of the region: he argues that the mountains shaped Dersim as a shelter and Dersimis as people who host refugees. In his book *Kürdistan Tarihinde Dersim* (Dersim in the History of Kurdistan) he elaborates on the significance of the notion of *baht*: "[In Dersim] for a house owner (*ev/konak sahibi*) giving a shelter to a refugee is a duty. Dersimis call it *baht* [fortune,

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[169] The report was originally published in 1933 by the Gendarmerie General Command (Jandarma Genel Müdürlüğü) with a stamp on it showing that it was secret [*gizli ve zata mahsustur*]. Izzetddin Çalışlar, who acquired the report from his grandfather, made the report available. The copy I referred here is edited by Çalışlar. İzzeddin Çalışlar, (ed.) *Dersim Raporu,* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 23.

[170] Ahmet Kerim Gültekin, *Tunceli'de Sünni Olmak: Tunceli Pertek'te Ulusal ve Yerel Kimlik Öğelerinin Etnolojik Tetkiki* (Istanbul: Berfin Yayınları, 2010), 37.

[171] "Maps | Vilayet of Mamuratul Aziz-Harput : Houshamadyan - a Project to Reconstruct Ottoman Armenian Town and Village Life," accessed July 20, 2019, https://www.houshamadyan.org/en/mapottomanempire/vilayetofmamuratulazizharput.html.

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destiny]. People who do not use the right of the *baht* and refuse to open the doors of their house to refugees are considered *bahtı yitik* (ill-fated)."[172]

I begin by unpacking the heavily loaded identity markers used to describe the people inhabiting Dersim. Although some of their analytical categories seem neutral (such as remote and inaccessible), they are products of a certain historical associations that has been circulating over centuries. The interest in defining and categorizing the people of Dersim goes back to 1800, when Ottoman state documentation, accounts of travelers, missionaries and anthropologists contributed to the saturation of the identity concepts applied to the region. This occurred into two somewhat distinct ways: while in western accounts the difference attached to the region was defined through similarities with the writers' own culture, it was the opposite in Ottoman state documentation.

Dersim is the only Kurdish-Alevi dominated region in Turkey today. While there is no official census count showing its ethnic and religious diversity, it is estimated that Alevis comprise between 10 to 20% of the population of Turkey.[173] There are currently three dominant languages spoken in the region: the Kirmancki dialect of Kurdish, which is also called Zazaki-Dimilki; the Kurmanci dialect of Kurdish; and Turkish. Kurdish speakers of Kirmancki are also known as Zaza, however this term has acquired some historical baggage. Dersim is home mostly to Kirmancki-speaking Alevis (Alevi-Zaza), like its neighboring cities of Bingöl, Sivas, Malatya, Maraş, Erzurum and Muş, while Diyarbakır is predominantly home to Şafi-Sunni Zazas.[174] The term Kırmanc is used as a self-descriptor by Alevi-Zaza from Dersim. Although Alevi-Zaza and Şafi-Zaza are not derogatory identity terms, political tensions between the PKK and Zaza nationalism, which arose in the 1990s and claimed to be a "distinct people or even a distinct nation" based on the "distinct Zaza vernacular,"[175] the term "Zazaki," refering to the language, has become associated with Zazaism. Moreover, since Zazaism was subtly supported by the Turkish Armed Forces during the 1990s to weaken the influence of the PKK,[176] using the term Zazaki to refer to the language, or Zaza for the ethnicity, is even more problematic. Both Turkish and Kurdish nationalists have tried to make the Dersimi identity a part of their

[172] Dersimi, *Kürdistan Tarihinde Dersim,*41.
[173] Reha Çamuroğlu, *Değişen Koşullarda Alevilik,* (İstanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2004), 98.
[174]Erdal Gezik, *Dinsel ve Etnik ve Politik Sorunlar Baglaminda Alevi Kürtler* (Ankara: Kalan Yayınları, 2000), 16.
[175]Michiel Leezenberg, "Kurdish Alevis and the Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990," in *Turkey's Alevi Enigma: A Comphrehensive Overview*, J. White and Jongerden Leiden, (Boston: Brill, 2003), 204.
[176] Leezenberg, "Kurdish Alevis and the Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990," 205. Munzur Çem, *Dersim Merkezli Kürt Alevîliği: Etnisite, Dini İnanç, Kültür ve Direniş.* (İstanbul: Vate Yayınevi, 2009), 557-58. Cuma Çiçek, *Ulus, Din, Sınıf, Türkiye'de Kürt Mutabakatının İnşası.* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015), 178.

own narratives: the Turkish state has tried to prove that the Kurdish and Zaza languages are essentially Turkish,[177] while the Kurdish movement tried "to convince the Alevi Kurds that they really were Kurds and nothing else."[178] On the other hand, the Zazaism ideology dreams of Zazaistan, which is composed of Zaza-speaking people.[179] To distance myself from these loaded terms, therefore, I use "Dersimi" to refer to people from Dersim and "Kirmancki" to refer to the language they speak.

Religious terms are equally complicated. The terms Kızılbaş, heterodox, Alevi, and pagan have been used by western travelers and anthropologists as well as Ottoman and Turkish state officials to describe the religious practices of the population. Since the early 20th century, *Alevi* has been the umbrella term for the "endogamous, socio-religious communities found mainly in Anatolia"[180] who were historically referred to as Kızılbaş. While Alevi is a self-identification, Kızılbaş has been used as a pejorative label denoting a "moral and religious deviance" of groups and individuals who are haphazardly identified.[181] There is a tendency among the Kurdish-Alevis of Dersim to embrace the negative connotations of the term, particularly the rebellious characteristics associated with it, and identify themselves as Kızılbaş.[182] Alevism in Dersim has often been defined in terms of religious syncretism, with several strata: Zoroastrian, Christian and Muslim. However, some anthropologists interpret the use of the term "syncretic" to define the devotional practices taking place in Dersim as a form of epistemic violence. For example, Dilşa Deniz states that while no one ever talks about monotheistic religions as syncretic, "the religions which are not belonging to powerful states/nations are constantly defined in this way. This makes those [monotheistic religions] defined as the original [*asli*] and the others as mixture of this and that therefore not valuable, insignificant."[183] To distance myself from the academically rooted practice of categorizing and labeling against the interlocutor's narrative, I use the term "Dersim Alevism" to refer to the devotional practices I analyze.

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[177] Martin van Bruinessen, "Aslını İnkar Eden Haramzadedir! The Debate on the Ethnic Identity of the Kurdish Alevis," in *Syncretistic Religious Communities in the Near East*, ed. K. Kehl- Bodrogi, B Kellner-Heinkele & A. Otter- Baujen (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

[178] Michiel Leezenberg, eds., "Kurdish Alevis and the Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990," in *Turkey's Alevi Enigma: A Comprehensive Overview*, J. White and Jongerden Leiden, (Boston: Brill, 2003), 204.

[179] Leezenberg, *"Kurdish Alevis and the Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990,"* 200.

[180] Markus Dressler, "Alevīs", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, THREE, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. Consulted online on 09 July 2019

[181] Dressler, "Alevīs".

[182] David Shankland, The Alevis in Turkey. The emergence of a secular Islamic tradition, London 2003 cited in Dressler, "Alevīs".

[183] Deniz, *RE/Yol Dersim İnanç* Sembolizmi, 17.

To be more precise about what I mean by epistemic violence I will use two examples where the rituals taking place in Dersim were described based on the framework of syncreticsm. Syncretic as an analytical category is used creatively in different accounts to define Alevism as practiced in Dersim. For instance, for Molyneux-Seel, a traveler who published his article in 1911, the pagan and Christian elements in Dersimi devotional practices are syncretic characteristics: "All the Seids [*seyyids*] keep with them a certain stick and a leather bag about the uses of which there is some mystery, and which are said to be employed in the performance of certain pagan rites. However, the Seids say that the stick is a portion of the rod of Moses, and the bag an imitation of that carried by St. John the Baptist."[184] This quote from Molyneux-Seel exemplifies an effort, found in the accounts of travelers, missionaries, anthropologists and state officials to categorize devotional practices not in its integrity but as a mixture of ritals belonging to different belief systems.

Another example of this effort to show the syncretic characteristics of devotional practices can be found in the work of Mark Sykes, a British anthropologist who studied Kurdish lineages and who wrote in 1908: "With the exception of *Shawak*s [a Sunni group], all the Dersim tribes are apparently Pagans, who call themselves Shias."[185] Quoting an interlocutor who said: "I do not worship God, for a part cannot worship the whole," he describes the religious belief system in Dersim as a mixture of "magic and nature worship." He notes however that Dersimis called themselves "Shia Moslems" and considered Ali the greatest prophet.[186] While the Alevis worshipped Ali, Hüseyin and Moses and celebrated Easter—together with Armenians—Sykes states that they ignored the Islamic festival of Ramadan. Alevi rituals are also said to include: "songs and dances performed secretly at night in accordance with an elaborate code." They were "turning towards the east while praying" and went on pilgrimages to Armenian monasteries. The monasteries were protected by them against all incursions.[187] Armenian travelers in the early 1900s also described how the Kızılbaş, considered infidels by the Sunni orthodoxy, were equated with Christianity at the level of governance: "because of their secret religious practices, the Kızılbaş followers were deemed *gâvurs* (infidels) like Christians."[188] Until the Armenian Genocide in 1915, Christianity was an important element of

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[184] L.Molyneux-Seel, "A Journey in Dersim." *The Geographical Journal* 44, no. 1 (1914): 49-68, 66.

[185] Mark Sykes, "The Kurdish Tribes of the Ottoman Empire," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 38 (1908): 451-486.

[186] Sykes, "The Kurdish Tribes of the Ottoman Empire," 467.

[187] Sykes, "The Kurdish Tribes of the Ottoman Empire," 421.

[188] Raymond H. Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011), 421.

religious life in Dersim, as in other parts of Anatolia. On the eve of World War I, there were 107 churches and 50 monasteries in Dersim alone.[189]

Western travelers and anthropologists described the differences they encountered on Dersim's spiritual horizon through familiarity, highlighting what they saw as similarities between Christianity, paganism and Dersim Alevism. In the Turkish officials' reports, by contrast, the terms Kızılbaş and Alevi were frequently used to describe differences in religious practices from orthodox Sunni Islam.[190] Both in state reports and in western accounts, we see efforts to distinguish Dersim Alevism from Anatolian Alevism more broadly.

There are two main components of the particular religious practices of Dersim Alevism: *ocak* (holy lineage), and the integration of natural elements into spiritual practices. Kinship relations are woven into the religious practices of the region.[191] It is believed that in the 12th century, nine Alevi holy lineages, *ocak*s, "presumably coming from Khorasan and Daylam arrived in Dersim."[192] *Ocak*s are organized into lineage and their authorities are defined based on the "sacred blood relation" and they all have a distinct *keramet* (miracle).[193] There are 100 *aşiret*s (tribes) in Dersim, most of which reside outside the city center, and their chiefs (*reis*) are regarded as religious leaders (*pir* and *seyyid*). Kuresan holy lineage that Şeywuşen is coming from is one of the most important *ocak*s in the region which claims descent from the lineage of Prophet Muhammed.

The second major axis defining the specificity of the beliefs and practices in the region is shaped around the sacred places, and is called *jiara* or *ziyaret*. The integration of natural elements into the religion becomes visible in the ritual of *jiara*, which refers to visiting a holy place such as the grave of a holy person, trees, mountains, rocks, caves, rivers, lakes or water sources.[194] *Jiara* are not only places for sacrificing animals, lighting candles and making wishes but also points for gathering and socializing. Lighting candles at sacred places is one of the most widespread ritual practices in Dersim. Thursdays are sacred in Alevi belief,[195] and on this day candles, which symbolize the light and the fire, are lit to illuminate the believer's path.[196]

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[189] Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide,* 421.

[190] Gezik, *Dinsel ve Etnik ve Politik Sorunlar Baglaminda Alevi Kürtler*, 19-20.

[191] Dilşa Deniz, *RE/Yol Dersim İnanç Sembolizmi: Antropolojik Bir Yaklaşım* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012), 15.

[192] Annika Törne , "Dedes in Dersim: Narratives of Violence and Persecution," *Iran and the Caucasus* 16 (2012): 71-95.

[193] Deniz, *RE/Yol Dersim İnanç* Sembolizmi, 44.

[194] Ahmet Kerim Gültekin, *Tunceli'de Kutsal Mekan Kültü* (Ankara: Kalan Yayınları, 2004), 63-64.

[195] Deniz, *RE/Yol Dersim İnanç Sembolizmi*, 67.

[196] Deniz, *RE/Yol Dersim İnanç Sembolizmi*, 76.

As focal points of religious practices, the *jiara* themselves, the myths shaped around them and the way Dersimis relate to them, are invaluable in accounting for an Alevi mental universe. Generally, the graves of those who are believed to have performed miracles (*keramet*) during their lifetimes are considered sacred places and this *keramet* continues after death. For instance while the grave of a *seyyid*, a descendant of the holy lineage of Prophet Muhammad, is considered sacred for his/her relatives and *tawlib/tallip* (disciples), there are also the graves of people who gained their sacredness over time through the circulation of myths. Those myths encapsulate their biographical information and provide reference points in relation to the contemporary world.[197]

The socio-political system woven around the amalgamation of religious and tribal relations largely regulated everyday life until the Dersim Genocide in 1938. In 1931 Naşit Hakkı Uluğ (1902–77), a politician who was influential in designing reforms in the Kurdish regions, describes Dersim as follows: "Dersim is a closed country (*memleket*). Although there has been 500 years since it came under the Ottoman rule, they live in the same way they did 500 years ago."[198] Kazım Karabekir (1882–1948), the commander of the eastern army of the Ottoman Empire during World War I, describes this closed system in a report dated 1918–19:

> There is much envy among different tribes (*aşiret*) and there is no certainty on the obedience of the rabble (*avam takimi*). If some tribes are more courageous, the others generally submit to them. On the contrary, they are too courageous, and cold-blooded towards helpless ones (*çaresiz*). The cases of expropriation, robbery and murder among each other are solved in the assembly they call *cemaat*, formed by those so-called *seyyids* and members. If they cannot reach an agreement, the attacks between the opponent tribes continue for long time. Yet, in case of an attempt to impose discipline [by the authorities], the opponent tribes help each other.[199]

The military officer's report draws a picture of a closed tribal system that solves its internal problems via its own assembly, and a tribal structure that comes together against state interventions but at other times has internal problems. This idea of self-governance through assemblies composed of locals also appears in Dersimi narratives as a nostalgic element of the

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[197] Gültekin, *Tunceli'de Kutsal Mekan Kültü*,

[198] Naşit Hakkı Uluğ, *Derebeyi ve Dersim*, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2009), 22.

[199] "*Muhtelif aşiretler arasında çekememezlik fazla olduğu gibi, avam takımının ağalarına itaatleri muhakkak değildir. Aşiretlerden bazıları nisbeten cesur ise de, kuvvete karşı genellikle boyun eğe,rler. Buna karşılık, çaresizlere karşı pek cesur ve hunhardırlar. Keza aralarındaki gasp, hırsızlık ve öldürme davaları "cemaat" dedikleri seyit ve üyelerden oluşan bir mecliste hallolunur. Şayet uyuşamazlarsa, hasım aşiretlerin yekdiğerine karşı olan saldırıları uzun müddet devam eder. Lakin ihtiyaç anında herhangi bir aşiretin tedibine (hizaya sokulmasına) teşebbüs olunursa, (diğer) hasım aşiretleriyle derhal aralarındaki düşmanlığı bırakarak yekdiğerinin yardımına koşarlar.*" The report of Kazim Karabekir, dated 15 Kannunuevvel 1335 (December 1918-19) cited in Bulut, *Dersim Raporları*, 224.

pre-1938 period. Some idealize that pre-genocide time as a primitive communist period of Dersim;[200] others describe it as the perfect form of the Alevi belief system.[201]

The backyard of the empire

Due to its geographical characteristics, Dersim could, to some degree, resist the central authority's implementation of taxation, conscription, census and land registration and reforms both before and after the Tanzimat period in the mid 19th century did not achieve their intended results.[202] This failure led to more inclusive reforms during the reign of Abdülhamit II (1876–1909). Since there is a strong continuity between the Ottoman and the Turkish state's approach to Dersim, I will briefly elaborate on this first thorough reform which specifically targeted Dersim. This occurred during a time marked by the development of the colonial repertoire of Ottoman governmentality. In parallel with the colonialist discourses and practices of British and French governance, the Ottoman empire developed its own colonial toolkit, imbued with a mixture of positivist values, and a drive to centralize state power based on the Hanefi school of law and sharia. However, unlike the colonial practices of the British and French empires, which targeted religiously and ethnically diverse populations outside their territorial bounds, the Ottoman empire's colonial policies targeted its own Muslim subjects,[203] while religious minorities were exposed to a different set of governing discourses. Modernization, which began with the Tanzimat period, marked the start of Ottoman colonialism, which embraced "a set of imperial practices and discourses which were premised on the need to induct forcibly supposedly recalcitrant peripheries into an age of modernity."[204] In other words, an evolutionary notion of time which denies coevalness became a part of Ottoman governance.[205] In this way, the backward, primitive and savage became constituents for the rational, scientific and civilized character of the imaginary space of the center; the source of reforms.[206]

The Dersim Reforms initiated during the reign of Abdülhamit II were concerned with such a *mission civilatrice* targeting the economic and social (*içtimai*) development of the region.

[200] From the interview I conducted with Yaşar in Ankara, January 2016.

[201] From the interview I conducted with Mahmut Dede in Berlin, December 2017.

[202] Gündoğdu and Genç, *Dersim'de Osmanlı siyaseti*, 27.

[203] Selim Deringil, *Simgeden Millete: II Abdülhamid'den Mustafa Kemal'e Devlet ve Millet* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 2007), 165-217.

[204] Ussama Makdisi, "Rethinking Ottoman Imperialism: Modernity, Violence and the Cultural Logic of Ottoman Reform," in *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp, and Stefan Weber (Beirut/Würzburg: Orient-Institut der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 2002), 30.

[205] Makdisi, "Rethinking Ottoman Imperialism, 30.

[206] Makdisi, "Rethinking Ottoman Imperialism, 32.

The main concerns of this mission were: i) preventing western powers from intervening in the internal affairs of the empire through the Armenian Question, ii) preventing rapprochement between the Armenian and Kızılbaş communities, iii) a fear of the spread of Alevism and Kızılbaşlık beliefs in the region as a threat to Abdülhamit's universal claim of caliphate, and iv) fear of Protestant missionary activity in the region.[207]

The problem of external intervention is the most prominent point to appear in reports on Dersim produced during the reign of Abdülhamit II. The idea that Anatolia was in need of reform did not emerge in the absence of external pressures.[208] In the aftermath of the Russo-Turkish War (1877–78), at the Congress of Berlin in 1878 Dersim became part of the *Vilayat-i Sitte* (Six Provinces)[209] in which the Armenian population was concentrated. The creation of a zone for Armenian subjects of the Ottoman empire envisaged reforms of the security forces (*Asakir-i zabitiye)*, the creation of new administrative units (*nahiye*), the strengthening of the judicial system, and the creation of a new system of tax collection which excluded the gendarmerie and police forces in the region.[210] The reform package also envisaged the participation of the Armenian community in institutions in which they had not previously been accepted, such as the gendarmerie, police and tax collection.[211] While trying to minimize external pressure, Abdülhamit II attempted to prevent the spread of this zone of exception to other parts of the empire. Despite the pressure of the British government, the accepted reform packet was not implemented.[212] Meanwhile, raids by Kurdish groups on Armenians in the region became a problem, as they might provide a basis for international intervention.[213] At the same time, while some groups were raiding Armenian property, other Dersimi groups were allied with the Armenians. Thus, the Ottoman government also wanted to prevent the growth of solidarity between different communities.[214] Finally, by defining religious practices in the region as archaic and the population as uneducated, the Ottoman government detected potential for deformation of orthodox Islam and the potential danger of conversion to Protestantism.[215]

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[207] Gündoğdu and Genç, *Dersim'de Osmanlı siyaseti*, 33.
[208] Koçak, *Umumi Müfettişlikler,* 25.
[209] Vilayat-i Sitte includes the following provinces: Erzurum, Sivas, Van, Bitlis, Ma'muretü'l-Aziz and Diyarbekir.
[210] Nadir Özbek, "Policing the Countryside: Gendarmes of the Late- Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire (1876-1908)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40, no.1 (2008).
[211] Nadir Özbek, "Modernite, Tarih ve Ideoloji: II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Tarihçiligi Üzerine Bir Degerlendirme," *Türkiye Arastirmalari Literatür Dergisi*, 2, no.1 (2004), 71-90.
[212] Özbek, "Modernite, Tarih ve Ideoloji, 31.
[213] Gündoğdu and Genç, *Dersim'de Osmanlı siyaseti*, 33.
[214] Gündoğdu and Genç, *Dersim'de Osmanlı siyaseti*, 31.
[215] Gündoğdu and Genç, *Dersim'de Osmanlı siyaseti*, 33.

The Inspectorate-General was founded during this period to address these concerns. This was a regional governance unit, with authority over civilian, military, and juridical institutions and aimed to establish central power in the periphery with all of its *civilatrice* force.[216] Even at the end of the reign of Abdülhamit II, however, British diplomats WJ Anderson and Molyneux Seel (1902 and 1911 respectively) noted that the presence of the central government was limited in Dersim.[217] As the reforms promised in the Treaty of Berlin were delayed by postponing strategies by the Ottoman government,[218] influenced by nationalist and socialist movements in Russia and in the Balkans, Armenians formed several movements and entered into an armed struggle[219] against the autocratic regime of Abdülhamit II.[220] For the purpose of this study, however, what is critical is not the failure of the reform initiatives but how the failures were used to define the problem of Dersim.

Dersim during the Armenian Genocide

On the eve of World War I, the province of Ma'muretü'l-Aziz had 270 towns and villages with a total Armenian population of 124,289. It was hosting 242 churches, 65 monasteries and 204 schools attended by 15,632 children.[221] In the Dersim alone there were 107 churches and 50 monasteries, showing that the region was extensively Christian.[222] Although Dersim was in the zone of influence of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), the organization had merely symbolic influence and was limited "to a few dozen

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[216] Cemil Koçak, *Umumi Müfettişlikler, 1927-1952*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2003), 26.

[217] Suat Akgül, *Amerikan ve Ingiliz Raporlari Isiginda Dersim* (Istanbul: Yaba Yayınları, 2009).

[218] Raymond Kévorkian, "The Extermination of Ottoman Armenians by the Young Turk Regime (1915-1916)," *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence,* [online], published on: 3 June, 2008, accessed *14/07/2019*, p:5.

[219] In 1885, the first Armenian political party, the Armenakan was founded in Van, a city which was part of the *Vilayat-i Sitte*, the zone of promised reforms under the Treaty of Berlin. Armenakan was followed by the foundation of the Revolutionary Hinchak Party in 1887 in Geneva and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) Dashnaksutyun in Tbilisi in 1890. The Hinchak established secret revolutionary parties engaged in armed struggle against the rule of Abdülhamid II, which was followed by massacres against Armenians in various towns. Although in 1908 *Ittihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Committee of Union and Progress, CUP) forced Abdülhamid to restore the constitution of 1876 which pledged a constitutional future to the non-Muslim subjects of the Empire, the massacres of Armenians only intensified.

[220] Hans-Lukas Kieser. *Iskalanmış barış: Doğu Vilayetleri'nde misyonerlik, etnik kimlik ve devlet 1839-1938*. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005), 199.

[221] Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide,* 381.

[222] Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide,* 421.

militants whose relationship with the Armenian peasantry was ambiguous."[223] Nevertheless, the Armenians of Dersim were mostly liquidated in 1915.[224]

From the report of Mehmed Talat Pasha,[225] one of the main perpetrators of the genocide, we learn that 97% of the Armenian population of Ma'muretü'l-Aziz in 1914 was missing by 1917. In addition, 2,203 survivors of the genocide were resettled by the government in 17 different cities of the empire.[226] According to Talat Pasha's report, the number of native Armenians in Ma'muretü'l-Aziz was 70,060 in 1914 while in 1917 this number fell to 0. The report characterizes 2,203 Armenians as native to Ma'muretü'l-Aziz but resettled to cities which far from Dersim and from each other, such as Ankara, Mosul, Konya or Aleppo.[227]

Dersim occupies a peculiar place in the experience of the Armenian Genocide. It appears in the memoirs of survivors and in state documentation as a refuge for Armenians. The Ottoman province of Ma'muretü'l-Aziz, in which Dersim was located, was in 1915 a "hub or pivot of the deportations"; almost every convoy of deportees from the regions of Trabzon, Erzurum, Sivas and the eastern part of Ankara passed through it.[228] Within the province, however, the district of Dersim became a "sanctuary for the Armenian deportees" passing through the region due to the relative lack of state control.[229] Some Kurdish families from Dersim refused to give up Armenians to the state and instead helped them to escape to the Caucasus through Erzincan, a city to the north of Dersim.[230] Nuri Dersimi, in his book *Kürdistan Tarihinde Dersim* (Dersim in the History of Kurdistan), recounts seeing 36,000 Armenians take refuge in Dersim or saved by Dersimis during 1915–16. According to him, Armenians stayed in Dersim until July 1916 when the Russian army occupied Erzincan. Armenians who did not want to join the Russian

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[223] Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide,* 59.

[224] Raymond H. Kévorkian & Paul B. Paboudjian, "*Les Arméniens dans l'Empire Ottoman à la vielle du genocide,*" ed. ARHIS (Paris, 1992), 381–2.

[225] Talat Pascha was one of the main perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide who fled to Germany in 1918 and was assassinated in Berlin by Soghomon Tehlirian as a part of Operation Nemesis. Operation Nemesis was a covert operation in the 1920s by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (AFD, Dashnaktsutyun) to assassinate the Ottoman and Azerbaijani perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide. For more information, see http://www.operationnemesis.com/

[226] Ara Sarafian, [1917] *Talaat Pasha's Report on the Armenian Genocide* (London: Gomidas Institute, 2011), 52.

[227] Sarafian, *Talaat Pasha's Report on the Armenian Genocide*, 52.

[228] Raymond Kévorkian. *The Armenian genocide: a complete history*. London, (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011), 381.

[229] Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide,* 382.

[230] Kieser, *Iskalanmış barış*, 561. H. Hayreni, "Dersimli Ermeniler: Çifte Damgalı Bir Kimliğin Yaşam Mücadelesi" *Dersiyad*, (İstanbul, 2012), 10-31, 30.

forces stayed in Dersim until the fighting ended and later moved to Istanbul, Syria or the United States. [231]

The experience of 1915 in Dersim was also different from other regions because of American missionary activities in the province of Ma'muretü'l-Aziz. The presence of these missionaries "had a direct influence on the Armenians' fate" in the province.[232] Although American interventions privileged the survival of Protestants, who comprised only a small segment of the Armenian population, the pressure pushed local governors to elaborate "a discourse justifying the violent measures" and the mass crimes that they oversaw.[233]

Although Talat Pasha's report states that no native Armenian of the province could escape resettlement, in the collective memory of today's Dersimis it is known that Armenians continued to live in significant numbers in Dersim until 1938. Thereafter, conversion to Alevism as a survival strategy began to spread among survivors of the Armenian Genocide.[234] Although remembered in oral histories, the existence of Dersim Armenians and their descendants has only recently entered public discussion in Turkey. In 2012, the Association of Armenians of Dersim was founded by Miran Pirgiç Gültekin to uncover this silenced history of Armenians who survived in Dersim through assimilation by conversion, name change or adoption.

Yet before the wound of the Armenian Genocide could begin to heal, it was followed by the Dersim Genocide in 1937–38. In the next section, I describe knowledge production prior to this second genocide.

Imagining a city and making it happen: The emergence of Tunceli from the ashes of Dersim

> Dersim is an abscess for the Republic. It must be operated on precisely and a possibility of a bitter end should be prevented. — Hamdi Bey's Report, 1926

Intense knowledge production, in the form of reports prepared for the central authority, continued after the genocidal violence and provided the basis of the Law of Tunceli issued in 1935. This law provided for a series of military operations and resettlement projects. The

[231] Dersimi, *Kürdistan Tarihinde Dersim,* 41-2.
[232] Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide,* 381.
[233] Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide,* 381.
[234] Hranouch Kharatyan, The search for identity in Dersim Part 2: the Alevized Armenians in Dersim, 2014 REPAIR, http://repairfuture.net/index.php/en/identity-standpoint-of-armenia/the-search-for-identity-in-dersim-part-2-the-alevized-armenians-in-dersim-armenian.

military operations left 13,806[235] dead according to official documents out of 60.000 to 70.000[236] of total population along with the resettelment of 12,000 Dersimis. For Dersimis, therefore, 1938 has a similar significance to 1915 for Anatolian Armenians: it represents both an end and a beginning of a new world.[237] In this section, I will briefly introduce the diverse discourses produced on Dersim before 1938.

Commissioning reports from the state officers and social scientists for the purpose of governance was a tradition that the Turkish Republic inherited from the Ottoman Empire after taking power in 1922. Of the 21 officially commissioned and published reports regarding the Kurdish regions, six deal specifically with Dersim.[238] Ziya Gökalp (1876–1924), considered the founding figure of modern sociology in Turkey, was commissioned to observe "Kurdish tribes" in eastern Anatolia in the early 1920s. Doctor Rıza Nur (1879–1942), who served as a deputy of Sinop in the first Parliament, explains why he encouraged Gökalp to conduct this research: "I already know that those who were called Kurdish today are actually Turkish. However, we have to teach them this reality."[239] In Gökalp's book, Dersim appears as a place of permenent hostility (*husumet*) because of the mountainous characteristics of the region[240] and its Kurdified Shiite Turks.[241]

Mülkiye Müfettisi (civil inspector) Hamdi Bey, who wrote his report on Dersim in 1926, emphasizes the Kurdification of Dersim as a growing problem, urgently requiring a response. He writes that the possibility of implementing reform in the region can only be illusionary and describes Dersim as an abscess which needs to be taken out from the nation's body.[242] Emphasizing the need for military operations to solve the problem of Dersim, Hamdi Bey recommends that, during the operations, officials should not believe a word coming from Dersim's inhabitants, because they were ignorant (*egitimsiz*), poor (*fakir*) and Kurdified, and therefore easily provoked by their sheiks.[243]

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[235] Prime Ministry's Republican Archives, Başbakanlık Muamelât Genel Müdürlüğü Evrakı (Directorate of Transactions of the Prime Ministry, 030.10/111.753.0, 1 November 1939.

[236] Minister of Interior Şükrü Kaya presented the numbers for total population during the discussions on the Tunceli Law in the parlement. TBMMZC, no: 2884, İ: 21, C:1, 25-12-1935, 175.

[237] Murat Yüksel, "Ulus-devletin Dersim'le Temasi" in *Herkesin Bildigi Sir: Dersim,* ed. Sükrü Aslan (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 2010).

[238] Hüseyin Yayman, *Sark Meselesinden Demokratik Açılıma: Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu Hafizasi* (Ankara: SETA, 2011).

[239] Ziya Gökalp, *Kürt Aşiretleri Hakkında Sosyolojik Tetkikler,* (Istanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2009), 6.

[240] Gökalp, *Kürt Aşiretleri Hakkında Sosyolojik Tetkikler,*52.

[241] Gökalp, *Kürt Aşiretleri Hakkında Sosyolojik Tetkikler,*133.

[242] Yayman, *Sark Meselesinden Demokratik Açılıma*, 92-93.

[243] Yayman, *Sark Meselesinden Demokratik Acilima*, 93.

Although the governor of Elazığ province, the succeed the Ottoman province of Mamuretül-aziz, Ali Cemal Bey's report was written concurrently with Hamdi Bey's, it offers different solutions for the Dersim problem. Ali Cemal Bey, who worked previously in Alevi-dominated regions such as Corum in northern Anatolia, agrees with Hamdi Bey about the need to Turkify the Kurdified inhabitants of Dersim. However he writes that unequal treatment by Sunni Ottoman governments was at the core of the problem. If the unequal treatment were brought to an end, the dissolution of sectarian tension could convince Dersimis to be loyal to the Turkish Republic. In accordance with others, he proposes resettlement as a solution.[244]

In the meantime, Eugene Pittard's classic book on physical anthropology *Les races et l'historie* (1924) found its place in the library of the founder of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.[245] In 1927, the Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası (CHF, Republican People's Party)[246] defined the Turkish nation as a group of people "speaking the same language, unified by the same cultural values."[247] This implies that being Muslim, which was the determining character for Ottoman subjects, was insufficient to be considered part of the Turkish nation. As Yunus Nadi (1879–1945), the founder of the *Cumhuriyet Gazetesi*, the official newspaper of the CHF, declared in 1930, "[b]eing Turkish is not merely carrying the identity card of the Turkish Republic anymore; it is being Turkish in culture, in ways of living, in language, in thought and, in heart." Continuing from Nadi's description, Mahmut Esad Bozkurt (1882–1943), the Minister of Justice at the time, draws a line between Turkish subjects and others as follows: "In this Turkish land, the non-Turkish has only one right: the right to become a slave to the Turkish nation."[248] The Law of Resettlement Number 2510 issued in 1934 divided the country into three zones, envisaging population movements between them, and was an important step to unify language within the nation.[249] The resettlement plans in Dersim were designed according to this law.

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[244] Faik Bulut, *Dersim Raporlari* (Istanbul: Evrensel Basim Yayim, 2007), 22.

[245] Zafer Toprak, "Atatürk, Eugene Pittard ve Afet Hanim:En Büyük Antropolojik Anket," *Toplumsal Tarih,* 205, (2011): 20-30.

[246] The People's Party was established during the Congress of Sivas in 1919 as a union of resistance groups against the occupation of the Anatolian territory of the Ottoman Empire. The party became the unique representative organ of the Turkish nation during the War of Independence (1919–23). In the congress held in 1935 the party's name was changed to the Republican People's Party.

[247] İsmail Beşikçi,.*Tunceli Kanunu (1935) ve Dersim Jenosidi*, (Istanbul: İsmail Beşikçi Vakfı Yayınları, 2013), 81.

[248] *Milliyet Gazetesi,* September 19, 1930.

[249] Bilmez, Aslan & Kayacan, *Toplumsal Bellek, Kusaklararasi Aktarim ve Algi: Dersim '38'i Hatirlamak*, 31.

In a report presented to the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 1930, General Inspector Ibrahim Tali argues for a "military operation which will eradicate the problem of Dersim."[250] He does not shy away from radical solutions and proposes burning houses and villages, and relocating Seyyids and tribal leaders to the western part of the country. The problem of Dersim was important enough to attract *Genel Kurmay Baskanı* (Chief of the Army) Fevzi Çakmak to write a report specifically on Dersim. Making detailed analyses of the villages and following Tali, he suggests burning some villages and resettling a considerable part of the population. However Halis Pasa, a commander who conducted the military operation in Pülümür in 1930, disagrees with military solutions. He proposes confiscating the guns in Dersim and reorganizing the region.[251] Şükrü Kaya, the Minister of Internal Affairs, prepared a report on Dersim in 1931 following the Chief of the Army. Stating that "the government and its institutions, security forces and courts in Dersim, are not more than an illusion"; he makes a detailed plan for "cleaning" the region, including military operations and the reforms that should follow them.[252] Kaya later played an active role in shaping the Tunceli Law issued in 1935.

Thus, the knowledge production in official reports and in sociological research shows that Dersim was made into a problem to be studied, explained and resolved. Although the tone of ethnic nationalism gained prominence in the reports, it remained ambigious, as the description of the politician Hasan Reşit Tankut (1891–1980) suggests. Tankut enlarges the frame suggested by Gökalp and shapes his arguments around ethnic stereotypes and geographic determinism in his work on the "Zaza tribes," conducted in 1932–35:

> Entirely a mountain people… They contain all the characteristics of primitivism… their eyes will not allow passage… nomads thus vagabonds… Nature created the Zaza as a mountain creature.[253]

Along with characteristics directly linked to geography, for Tankut their ethnic identity also ascribes to them certain sociocultural and biological characteristics:

> The Zaza lies a lot, cheats a lot. Timid but intruding. Accordingly they have always been detrimental and dangerous. Always spoiled, always disobedient. Although they ask for mercy often, they never show mercy. They are misers. Their men are very hairy, but not as much as Armenians.[254]

Zaza religious practices add to their backwardness in Tankut's narration:

[250] Yayman, *Sark Meselesinden Demokratik Acilima*, 99-100.
[251] Bulut, *Dersim Raporları*, 220-250.
[252] Yayman, *Sark Meselesinden Demokratik Acilima*, 111.
[253] Hasan Resit Tankut, *Zazalar Üzerine Sosyolojik Tezler (1932-1935)* (Ankara: Kalan Yayinlari, 2000), 22.
[254] Tankut, *Zazalar Üzerine Sosyolojik Tezler (1932-1935)*, 14-15.

> They do not have Sharia or rule of Allah. They tend to worship humans. As a matter of fact, they all used to worship humans. Besides humans, they worship conversation, music and alcoholic beverages. An animism of their sort….[255]

In Tankut's account Dersim is a neglected and disorderly place without roads or bridges; it is "a heaven and a hell."[256] In this house of evil, which can be grasped only to a certain extent through rational means, live what he calls "Zaza," to point out the cultural (lying too much, spoiled, disobedient, dangerous, harmful), biological (hairy) and social (backward, worshipping humans and objects) differences. Nevertheless, he argues that the Zazas are actually Turkish.[257]

Tankut's narration of Dersim and Zazas reflects the ambigious position of the official reports on the question of "how to deal with difference." On the one hand, Dersim's sociocultural difference was instrumentalized to prove the superiority of Turkishness over the Zaza, Alevi and Kurdish populations. On the other, observed difference was used as a tool to legitimize the violent interventions of the state to remind the Zaza of their Turkishness. While the actual Turkishness of Zazas is perceived as deformed by proximity to Kurds and Armenians, the reports suggest that it could be reconstructed if only the right methods are mobilized. In this sense, there are two set of discourses framing the treatment of Dersim. The first claims that Dersimis are ethnically Turkish[258] and through assimilation they could regain what they have lost over time, i.e. the renaissance of Turkishness could start in Dersim. The second one appears to be constructed against the Turkishness of Dersim inhabitants and favors radical solutions to eliminate the difference located in Dersim. Although many tend to explain the Dersim Genocide through a gradual radicalization towards ethnic nationalism,[259] in my view the seemingly contradictory nature of these discourses paved the discursive ground for genocidal violence.

While there was disputes around the "right methods" in those reports, in 1935 the Tunceli Law was issued without discussion in the parliament.[260] Law Number 2885 envisaged the establishment of the province of Tunceli by merging different districts.[261] Elazığ became the temporary center of administration until January 1, 1940, and the military campaign to implement the Tunceli Law was launched from here. It is important to note that when the

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[255] Tankut, *Zazalar Üzerine Sosyolojik Tezler (1932-1935)*, 57.
[256] Tankut, *Zazalar Üzerine Sosyolojik Tezler (1932-1935)*, 185.
[257] Tankut, *Zazalar Üzerine Sosyolojik Tezler (1932-1935)*, 24.
[258] Göner, "A Social History of Power and Struggle in Turkey", 86.
[259] İsmail Beşikçi, *Tunceli Kanunu (1935) ve Dersim Jenosidi* (Istanbul: İsmail Beşikçi Vakfı Yayınları, 2013), 81. Mehmet Bayrak, *Alevilik-Kürdoloji-Türkoloji Yazilari 1973-2009* (Ankara: Özge Yayinlari. 2009).
[260] Beşikçi, *Tunceli Kanunu (1935) ve Dersim Jenosidi*, 81.
[261] Pülümür (which belonged to the province of Erzincan) along with the districts Hozat, Nazimiye, Mazgirt, Ovacik, Pertek and Çemiskezek (which belonged to the province of Elazığ). Beşikçi, *Tunceli Kanunu (1935) ve Dersim Jenosidi*.

Tunceli Law was issued there was no city called Tunceli in the Turkish Republic. Although many other non-Turkish city names were replaced by Turkish names, only Dersim was renamed through a special law. To do so, first an imagined place called Tunceli was proposed on paper in 1935. The idea of materializing this imaginary place was approved by parliament in 1936 and the law began to be implemented in 1937 following a so-called uprising.[262] This framing, of an "uprising," legitimized a state intervention which left behind a highly disputed number of dead bodies. While the numbers provided by the state documentation is 13,806[263] the unofficial estimations are around 40,000 along with the forced resettlement of around 12,000 people of a total population of about 93,000.[264] Following military clashes, "without differentiating between child, mother, elderly, reach, poor […] a population was entirely forced to migrate."[265] Those who were forced to migrate were resettled in different Turkish villages based on the rule of one Dersimi family per village.[266] Following the decision of the Fourth General Inspectorate, the Elazığ Girls' Institute opened a special section for Dersimi girls who were, in words of the female Turkish missionary Sıdıka Avar, "wild and stubborn in nature."[267] Thus, "the opening of Tunceli to civilization" continued in the boarding schools by racializing Dersimi girls.[268] In aid of this *mission civilatrice* girls who had lost their parents during the massacres were distributed among the generals.[269] In 1937, the genocidal violence was celebrated in the newspaper *Cumhuriyet* by its chief editor Yunus Nadi: "The problem named Dersim for years is dead now and has become a part of history."[270]

Uprising or Not? The Incidents of Dersim 1937–38?

Until recently the "uprising" and the subsequent "military campaign" to suppress it comprised the generic explanation of the events of 1937–38. This narrative was not only promoted and

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[262] Beşikçi, *Tunceli Kanunu (1935) ve Dersim Jenosidi*, 42.

[263] Prime Ministry's Republican Archives, Başbakanlık Muamelât Genel Müdürlüğü Evrakı (Directorate of Transactions of the Prime Ministry, 030.10/111.753.0, 1 November 1939.

[264] Hüseyin Aygün, *Dersim 1938 ve Zorunlu Iskân: Telgraflar, Dilekçeler*, *Mektuplar*, *Fotoğraflar* (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2009), 127.

[265] Aygün, *Dersim 1938 ve Zorunlu Iskân,* 127.

[266] Sükrü Aslan, Sibel Yardimci "1930'larin Biyolojik Paradigmasi: Dil Etnisite, Iskan ve Ulusun Insaasi" *Dogu Bati* no.44 (2008): 131-150.

[267] Cited in: Türkyilmaz, Maternal Colonialism, see note 35, 167.

[268] Türkyilmaz Maternal Colonialism, see note 35, 167; Ann Laura Stoler, Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things, Durham/London 2012.

[269] Nezahat Gündogan, & Kazim Gündogan, *Dersim'in Kayip Kizlari: Tertele Ceneku (Kizlarin Kiyimi)* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 2012).

[270] "Senelerden beri adına Dersim denilen mesele tarihin ummanına katılmış ve ebediyen ölmüştür." Yunus Nadi, *Cumhuriyet Gazetesi,* November 18, 1937.

reproduced by the Turkish state but also by pro-Kurdish and leftist historiography. This official narrative preserved the perspectives described in the previous section. The success of the Turkish state over the primitive Zaza, Kurd, Kızılbaş and at the same time "essentially Turkish" Dersimi was celebrated through the suppression of a reactionary uprising. In some accounts from the Turkish Armed Forces, the 1937–38 incidents are framed as the state's success over the final Kurdish uprising.[271] This official narrative was also popularized through popular novels.[272] For instance, Barbaros Baykara presents his novel *Dersim 1937* as an explanation to a wider public that the Dersim campaign was "not against the Dersim population but against the feudal lords who were cruelly exploiting Dersim's population."[273] Mustafa Yeşilova devotes significant portions of his novel *Kopo* to proving Dersimi Turkishness using examples of Alevi practices.[274]

This narrative of a state's success against a reactionary uprising was appropriated by Turkish and international communists.[275] In the archive of the Communist International (Comintern) the massacres of 1937–38 were described as the progressive war of the Turkish state against reactionary feudal structures: "Despite the reforms carried out by the Kemalist party, feudal elements managed to take shelter in this remote part of the country up until today. [276] […] Today we are facing the hopeless resistance of feudal elements, whose power is under the threat of Kemalist government's energetic reforms."[277]

Meanwhile, the discourse of the Kurdish national movement presented the Dersim Genocide as one of many Kurdish rebellions against infringements on Kurdish autonomy. For example, in his memoir Nuri Dersimi, who escaped from Dersim during the military clashes of 1937 and found refuge in Syria, refers to 1937–38 as a "Kurdish national uprising."[278] This framing became popular among Kurdish leftist movement during the 1990s after Dersimi's memoir was published in Turkey in 1992.[279] Those defending Zazaism also appropriated the narrative, framing it as a Zaza uprising aimed at achieving an independent Zazaistan.[280] This

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[271] Reşat Hallı, Türkiye Cumhuriyetin'inde Ayaklanmalar, (Ankara: Genel Kurmay Basımevi, 1972); Harp Tarihi Başlanlığı, *Genel Kurmay Belgelerindeki Kürt İsyanları,* (Ankara: Kaynak Yayınları, 1992).
[272] Bilmez, "Sözlü Tarih ve Belgesel Film Araciligiyla Bir Kiyimla Yüzlesmek ve Hesaplasmak," 12.
[273] Barbaros Baykara, *Dersim 1937*, (İstanbul: Aykar Yayınları, 1982), 2.
[274] Mustafa Yeşilova, *Kopo*, (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1987).
[275] Bilmez, "Sözlü Tarih ve Belgesel Film Araciligiyla Bir Kiyimla Yüzlesmek ve Hesaplasmak," 11.
[276] Meric Özeller, (ed), *Komunist Enternasyonal Belgelerinde Türkiye Dizisi-2, Kürt Milli Meselesi* (Istanbul: Aydinlik Yayinlari, 1977), 86.
[277] Ibid. 428.
[278] Nuri Dersimi, *Dersim ve Kürt Milli Mücadelesine Dair Hatıratım*, (Ankara: Öz-Ge Yayınları, 1992), 174.
[279] Bilmez, "Sözlü Tarih ve Belgesel Film Araciligiyla Bir Kiyimla Yüzlesmek ve Hesaplasmak," 14.
[280] Ebubekir Pamukçu, *Dersim Zaza Ayaklanmasının Tarihi Kökenleri*, (İstanbul: Yön Yayınları, 1992).

consensus on the framing of the uprising across political and ideological groups was challenged during the 1990s in political magazines published by the Dersimi diaspora in Europe. Interviews with survivors appeared in magazines such as *Raştiye*, *Desmala Sure* and *Ware* and presented a different picture from that of an "uprising" and moved away from nationalist aspirations.[281] Books comprised of oral history interviews[282] with survivors fueled these revisionary approaches.

This discussion on whether the incidents of 1937–38 were the result of an uprising, and if so against what, remained an internal debate until November 2009, when the incidents of Dersim in 1937–38 became an instrument in the contemporary rivalry between the conservative, liberal *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (Justice and Development Party, AKP) and the founding party of the Turkish Republic, the social democrat CHP. Criticizing the AKP government's Democratic Initiative Process (also called the Unity and Fraternity Project), to improve the democratic standards of ethnic and religious minorities, a CHP deputy referred to the events in Dersim during 1937–38 as an exemplary commitment in Turkey's War against Terror and blamed AKP for not being consistent in its anti-terror policies against the Kurdish movement.[283] Fueled by this discussion a new wave of publications on what happened in Dersim during 1937–38 arose in the 2010s. One the one hand, the official discourse was reproduced without consulting new sources and simply repeated state documentation from the 1930s.[284] On the other hand, a new wave of previously inaccessible personal archives of state documentation begun to be published by several actors,[285] and literature on the military operations held in Dersim during 1937-38 from a human rights perspective appeared.[286] However, the most effective means of changing public views of Dersim was a series of documentaries. For instance, Nezahat and Kazım Gündoğan's documentary *İki Tutam Saç – Dersim'in Kayıp Kızları* (The Lost Girls of Dersim), based on the life stories of two girls who

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[281] Bilmez, "Sözlü Tarih ve Belgesel Film Araciligiyla Bir Kiyimla Yüzlesmek ve Hesaplasmak," 15.

[282] İlhami Algör, *Ma Sekerdo Kardaş Dersim 38 Tanıklıklar*, (İstanbul:Doğan Kitap, 2010); Çem Munzur, *Tanıkların Diliyle Dersim 38,* (İstanbul: Peri Yayınları, 1999); Cemal Taş, *Roe Kırmanciye*, (İstanbul: Tij Yayınları, 2007); Cemal Taş, *Dağların Kayıp Anahtarı,* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2010), Özgür Erdem, *Dersim Yalanları ve Gerçekler,* (İstanbul: İleri Yayınevi, 2012).

[283] See Chapter IV for a detailed discussion.

[284] Rıza Zeynut, *Dersim İsyanları ve Seyit Rıza Gerçeği,* (İstanbul: Kripto, 2010); Kağan Gökalp, Suat Bulut, *Dersim'in Gizlenmeye Çalışılan Gerçek İfadesi, Diyap Ağa*, (İstanbul: Kripto Yayınları, 2011).

[285] Necmettin Sahir Sılan, *Doğu Anadolu'da Toplumsal Mühendislik Dersim-Sason (1934-1947)*, İstanbul: Tarih ve Yurt Vakfı Yayınları, 2010), İzettin Çalışlar, *Dersim Raporu*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010).

[286] Hüseyin Aygün, *Dersim 1938. Resmiyet ve Hakikat,* (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2010); Aygün, *Dersim 1938 ve Zorunlu Iskân;* Cafer Demir, *Osmanlı ve Cumhuriyet Döneminde Dersim*, (İstanbul: Umut Yayınları, 2009).

lost their parents during the genocidal violence, reached a wide audience and raised the question of adopted children as a part of genocidal violence for the first time.[287]

Yet, there is still no consensus in the academic literature on what to call the incidents of 1937–38. While some scholars frame it as a massacre,[288] in the light of newly available sources, more recent literature frames it as a genocide.[289]

Confining whom? The establishment of the Elazığ Hospital

The establishment of a mental hospital ten years after the Armenian Genocide in the city that served as its biggest deportation hub may be considered an attempt to heal the wounds of a new state. However, the dominant approach to psychiatry in the early years of the Turkish Republic removes this option from the horizon of possibilities. I begin this section by contextualizing the story of Elazığ Mental Hospital. I will then depict the scientific trends in psychiatry during the early republican period.

The opening of mental hospitals in Anatolian provinces became an issue when the first regulation concerning asylums, the *Bimarhaneler Nizamnamesi*, was issued in 1876. This was strongly influenced by the French Regulation related to mentally ill people issued in 1838,[290] and made clear that no one other than the government had the right to keep the *mecnun* under control and everyone was obliged to let the government know about a *mecnun* in the family or neighborhood.[291] In other words, this *nizamname* was the first attempt to medicalize madness, making the *mecnun*, formerly an object of knowledge, administration and care and a shared subject of family and other socio-religious foundations, now one framed by the limits of medical language and governability.

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[287] "Dersim 38" directed by Çayan Demirel, "Kara Vagon" directed by Özgür Fındık are the two other widely watched examples of documentaries on the Dersim Genocide.

[288] Kieser Hans-Lukas, Dersim Massacre, 1937-1938, Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence, [online], published on: 27 July, 2011, accessed 09/04/2019, https://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/en/document/dersim-massacre-1937-1938.

[289] Bilgin Ayata and Serra Hakyemez, "The AKP's Engagement with Turkey's Past Crimes: An Analysis of PM Erdoğan's 'Dersim Apology,'" *Dialectical Anthropology* 37, no. 1 (March 2013): 131–43,; Bülent Bilmez, "Sözlü Tarih ve Belgesel Film Aracılığıyla Bir Kıyımla Yüzleşmek ve Hesaplaşmak," in *Kara Vagon: Dersim-Kırım ve Sürgün*, by Özgür Fındık, (İstanbul: Fam, 2012), 7–46; İsmail Beşikçi, *Tunceli Kanunu (1935) ve Dersim Jenosidi*, (İstanbul: İsmail Beşikçi Vakfı Yayınları, 2013). Zeynep Türkyilmaz, "Maternal Colonialism and Turkish Woman's Burden in Dersim: Educating the 'Mountain Flowers' of Dersim," *Journal of Women's History* 28, no. 3 (2016): 162–86.

[290] Fatih Artvinli, "Toptaşı Bimarhanesi Sertabibi Dr. Avram de Castro: Bir Bibliyografi," *Osmanlı Bilimi Araştırmaları*, C.XIII, Sayı:2 (2012):85-97.

[291] Fatih Artvinli, *Delilik, Siyaset ve Toplum: Toptasi Bimarhanesi (1873-1927)* (Istanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2013), 31.

The establishment of mental hospitals in Anatolia was suggested by Ahmet Şakir Paşa (1838–99), an Ottoman diplomat who is known for his reform initiatives and his active role in the formation of *Hamidiye Alayları* (Hamidian regiments)[292] in 1890–91, which later became the main actors in the Armenian massacres in the Kurdish provinces. The Anatolian Reforms suggested by Şakir Paşa included proposals to open mental hospitals in different cities.[293] Although the first steps of the institutionalization of psychiatry were taken during Abdülhamit's rule, only after the declaration of the first constitutional period (1908–18) did solid initiatives start being realized. This "delay" in the institutionalization of psychiatry provides an interesting insight into the politicization of madness during the establishment of psychiatry. Since Abdülhamit II ascended to power after his brother Murad V had been diagnosed with mental illness by Mongeri and Avram de Castro—the pioneers of modern psychiatry—he was afraid of the same happening to him. Due to this fear of being dethroned he banned public discussion or publishing on topics related to psychiatry. The belief that madness was an effective means of eliminating political opposition became widespread among political subjects in this period.[294] During the reign of Abdülhamit II, the Toptaşı Bimarhanesi*,* the mental hospital in İstanbul, began to be associated with the Bastille by his political opponents, the Young Turks. Like the Bastille, which only had six political prisoners on the eve of the French Revolution, the Toptaşı Bimarhanesi became an icon of the declaration of their first constitution in 1908, although journalists of the time wrote that there were no political prisoners housed in it. Yet the *bimarhane* was thronged by people hoping to see political prisoners.[295]

After the declaration of the first constitution in 1908 by the government of the Young Turks, who were originally founded secretly at a medical school,[296] scientific developments in psychiatry gained momentum. Mazhar Osman [Uzman], who became the "founding father of Turkish psychiatry" after the establishment of the Turkish Republic (1923), was sent by the government to Germany to study with Emil Kraepelin (1856–1926), one of the foremost figures in German biological psychiatry.[297] In this period the Young Turks, from whom the Committee

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[292] Hamidian regiments were founded by giving official status to the semi-bandit Kurdish groups during the reign of Abdülhamid II. Janet Klein. *The Margins of Empire: Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 21-34.

[293] Ali Karaca, *Anadolu Islahatı ve Ahmet Şakir Paşa (1938-1899)*, (Istanbul: Eren Yayınları, 1993).

[294] Caglayan Ayhan. 2005. "In the name of modernity, for the sake of nation: Madness, Psychiatry and Politics from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic 1500-1950)" unpublished PhD thesis submitted to York University Social Anthropology Department, 2005. 152.

[295] Fatih Artvinli, "Toptaşı Bimarhanesi Sertabibi Dr. Avram de Castro: Bir Bibliyografi," *Osmanlı Bilimi Araştırmaları*, C.XIII, Sayı:2 (2012):85-97, 91.

[296] Kemal Karpat, "The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908," *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* no. 3 (3), (1972), 243-281.

[297] Ayhan, "In the name of modernity, for the sake of nation," 202.

of Union and Progress (CUP) emerged, used the Toptasi Bimarhanesi as a propaganda tool to legitimize their policies by invoking an affinity with science and progress. In 1910, the *Bimarhaneler Komisyonu* (Commission of Asylums) recommended the establishment of two mental hospitals: one in the west, in Manisa, and one in the east, in Aleppo, in what is today Syria.[298] Two other provinces with railroad connections, Elazığ and Dıyarbakır, were mentioned as alternatives to Aleppo. Since the idea of renovating an existing hospital was less of a financial burden than constructing a new one, the committee chose to open the hospital in Aleppo.[299]

It was only in 1925 that a mental hospital was opened in Anatolia,[300] when Mazhar Osman Uzman's close friend Refik Saydam became the first minister of health of the Turkish Republic. In the meantime, however, two important political developments occurred, affecting the choice of city where this hospital would be opened. Firstly, following the Armenian Genocide, hospitals previously belonging to Protestant missionary groups were seized by the Ottoman Empire and became available for government use. Secondly, in 1918, towards the end of World War I, the Ottoman Empire lost Aleppo. That is how the General Hospital of Elazığ was transformed into the first mental hospital in Eastern Anatolia in 1925[301] with a capacity of 50 beds.[302]

The founder of the Elazığ Mental Hospital was Ahmed Şükrü Emed (1877–1940), a man whose biography clearly reflects the fluid boundaries between politics and science at the time. Emed was born in Istanbul and graduated from the Mekteb-i Tıbbiye (School of Medicine) in 1929. He worked in the Haydarpaşa Military Hospital, Şişli French Mental Hospital and Darülaceze during World War I and finished his internship at Toptaşı Bimarhanesi. As the Ottoman Empire strengthened its alliance with Germany towards the end of the 19th century, military medical students were increasingly trained in Germany and spread what they learned through lectures at the medical faculty in Istanbul. In this manner, German theories on psychiatry spread in Turkish circles.[303] Emed was one of those contributing to the spread of the German school in Turkish psychiatry. He studied for more than a year at Kraepelin's psychiatry

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[298] Artvinli, *Delilik, Siyaset ve Toplum,* 207-217.
[299] Artvinli, *Delilik, Siyaset ve Toplum,* 216.
[300] For the decision to open a mental hospital in Elazığ see the parliamentary minutes page 286. https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d02/c015/tbmm02015073.pdf
[301] I am thankful to Fatih Artvinli who helped me to reconstruct the story of Elazığ Mental Hospital. I am able to put those developments together thanks to our personal correspondence.
[302] See the yearbook of Elazığ belonging to 1925 page 291: http://ktp.isam.org.tr/pdfsal/D02467192500000000.pdf
[303] Ayhan. "In the name of modernity, for the sake of nation".

clinic in Munich with Felix Plaut (1877–1940). After returning to Turkey he founded a serology laboratory at Toptasi Bimerhanesi to diagnose General Paralysis of the Insane, today known as neurosyphillis. After taking an active part in the establishment of the Elazığ Mental Hospital and working there for several years, he was elected parliamentary deputy for Diyarbakır.[304]

When we look at the theories in the field of psychiatry in Turkey during the 1920s and 1930s, unsurprisingly we encounter a normalization of nationalist ideas through psychological theories. Although there is broad consensus on the significance of eugenic ideas in early republican psychiatry, there is a variety of arguments on its effects in practice. Looking at parliamentary debates on the enactment of eugenics laws and following the discussions within the medical community, Orhan Aybers suggests that the regulations on purification of race and society were only effective for a short period around 1930 and were thereafter abandoned.[305] In her study of laws and discussions among scientific communities and politicians concerning public hygiene and public health in the early republican period, Ayça Alemdaroğlu argues that eugenics fitted well into the "collectivist discourse" of the time and provided the ruling elite with "a justification for state's broader and deeper involvement in matters previously left to individuals," such as health and hygiene.[306] Following the discourses on eugenics in educational conferences organized by the government during 1938–41 and focusing on the writings of the eugenicist prime minister, Sadi Irmak, Murat Ergin shifts our attention to the dismissed role of eugenics, biometrics and anthropometric claims in discussions of race and Turkishness. He argues that, in fact, these operated as a regulator of the "negotiations between Turkish identity and modernity" in the making of Turkishness.[307]

From the writings of the "founding father" of Turkish psychiatry, Mazhar Osman, we see that, aligned with the biological school's approach, the field was defined as the "psychology of the brain" where a soul is "the name given to all functions of the brain," not "a creature separate from the body or a thing."[308] In this biological-psychological approach, psychopathology was considered to be the "abnormalities that interfere with the functions of the brain," and "the disease of madness is a disorder of intelligence, memory or will" depending

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[304] F. Erdem, *Türk Hekimleri Biyografisi* (İstanbul: Çituri Biladerler Basım Evi, 1945).
[305] Orhan Aybers, "Eugenics in Turkey during the 1930s" unpublished PhD dissertation, Department of History (Ankara: Middle Eastern Technical University, 2003).
[306] Ayça Alemdaroğlu, "Politics of the Body and Eugenic Discourse in Early Republican Turkey." *Body & Society* 11, no. 3 (2005): 61-76, 73.
[307] Murat Ergin. "Biometrics and Anthropometrics: The Twins of Turkish Modernity." *Patterns of Prejudice* 42, no. 3 (2008): 281-304, 304.
[308] Mazhar Uzman, *Akil Hastaliklari*, (Istanbul: Kader Matbaasi, 1935).

on the kind of dysfunction of the brain.[309] Madness was described as a "threat to social progress;" "a feeble mind and a weak will were the most important threats to civilization."[310] The "threat" could take the forms of criminality, immorality, poverty and uncontrolled sexuality.[311] In this frame, healing madness or the mad was not a primary concern; instead, "disciplining and improving the mad/madness was co-constitutive of the normative ideal of the moral/modem/superior Turkish citizen/race/society."[312] The problem was mainly how to keep "[…] the bad, unhealthy and illegitimate children of the nation" away from "mentally and racially pure and healthy" bodies.[313] The legitimization of social reform went hand in hand with the legitimization of psychiatric knowledge. The idea of the ideal Turkish citizen was constructed through a complex "interplay between the cultural, biological norm, normal and abnormal fleshed out via the mad person's deviant body." [314]

In this negotiation between constructing Turkishness within modern scientific tools, the theorization of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) played a crucial role in the formation of modern Turkishness through the use of modern scientific tools. In his analyses of the condition of Ottoman soldiers during World War I, Mazhar Osman writes that there was a "dramatic prevalence of 'hysterical symptoms' among European troops." In contrast, he asserts that these symptoms showed up only in incomparably small numbers among Turks: "The army of neurotics… does not exist in Turkey [as it does in Germany]." He explains this putative "absence" of war neuroses, especially PTSD, as follows: "This disorder is a problem of imperialist Western mercenary armies who invade the countries of others. The Turkish nation is a warrior nation. When the Turkish soldier defends his own country, he does it with pleasure."[315] In differentiating the Turkish nation from their European counterparts Osman not only attempted to nationalize psychiatry, he planted the seed of a long-term denial of war trauma in Turkey.

Looking at the lack of attention to war-related trauma in Turkish military and civil hospitals this denial should be interpreted as a historical specificity "in relation to the

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[309] Mazhar Uzman, *Akil Hastaliklari*, 10.
[310] Mazhar Uzman, "Idis ve Kisir Etme," in *Konferanslarim: Medikal, Paramedikal. Mekteplerde, kuluplerde, radyoda soylenmis"*, ed Uzman, M. O. (Istanbul: Kader Matbaasi, 1942), 183-204.
[311] Osman, "Idis ve Kisir Etme," in *Konferanslarim: Medikal, Paramedikal. Mekteplerde, kuluplerde, radyoda soylenmis,"* 191.
[312] Ayhan, "In the name of modernity, for the sake of nation," 216.
[313] Uzman Mazhar, *Sinir Hastaliklari*. (Istanbul: Kader Matbaasi, 1934).
[314] Ayhan, "In the name of modernity, for the sake of nation," 216.
[315] Yücel Yanikdag, "Healing the Nation: Prisoners of War," *Medicine and Nationalism in Turkey, 1914-1939* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 178.

particularities of specific military conflicts, welfare and medical institutional histories, and moral and political economies."[316] The denial of the fact that soldiers were affected by war and violence helped construct the "myth of the warrior nation"[317] in Turkey, and ascribed it with innate martial characteristics.[318] Since soldiers were not traumatized during the war, there was no need for special units to deal with trauma after World War I. This myth of the military nation legitimized by early republican psychiatry survived until the late 1990s.[319] The massive numbers of cases of domestic violence or *cinnet*[320] by young men in the aftermath of their obligatory military service were considered private matters and the "non-political faces of violence"[321] until the end of 1990s.[322]

In the absence of the recognition of war trauma, and with the dominance of the biological school of psychiatry, which was concerned with confining the biologically unhealthy to keep them away from the biologically pure, the establishment of the Elazığ Mental Hospital in a former Protestant hospital building may be interpreted as a form of state violence. Indeed, I argue that it strengthened the medicalized language of racialization that was mobilized during the Dersim Genocide. This use of medicalized language as a strategy of legitimizing state violence had already been mobilized during the Armenian Genocide. A doctor who served in the Ottoman army provides one of the sharpest examples of the use of medical language to legitimize violence in the earlier period:

> Either the Armenians were to eliminate the Turks, or the Turks were to eliminate the Armenians. I did not hesitate when I was confronted with this dilemma. My Turkishness prevailed over my profession. I figured, instead of wiping us out, we will wipe them out....On the question how I, as a doctor, could have murdered, I can answer as follows: the Armenians had become hazardous microbes in the body of this country. Well, isn't it a doctor's duty to kill microbes?[323]

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[316] Salih Can Açıksöz, "Ghosts Within: A Genealogy of War Trauma in Turkey," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* no.2:2, (2015), 259-280.

[317] Ayşe Gül Altınay. *The Myth of the Military Nation*: *Militarism, Gender, and Education in Turkey.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

[318] Ayhan, "In the name of modernity, for the sake of nation," 263.

[319] Aciksöz, "Ghosts Within".

[320] *Cinnet* is "a culture-bound psychiatric category that denotes a temporary and violent episode of "insanity" during which an almost exclusively male perpetrator goes on a family killing spree before committing suicide" (Aciksoz 2015:265).

[321] Nurdan Gürbilek, *The New Cultural Climate in Turkey: Living in a Shop Window* (London: Zed, 2011).

[322] Aciksöz, "Ghosts Within," 276.

[323] Salâhattin Güngör, "Bir Canlı Tarih Konuşuyor" [Living History Speaks], Resimli Tarih Mecmuası, part 3, vol.4, no. 43, July 1953, pp. 2444-45 cited in Uğur Üngör "The Armanian Genocide, 1915" in *The Holocaust and Other Genocides: An Introduction*, Boender, Barbara & Wiechert ten Have (ed). (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012).

Considering Armenians as "microbes" helped consolidate the nation as a corporeal unity working cooperatively against the enemy, enabled the Turks to prove their scientific superiority over them, and legitimized the right to kill.

Later, in the Dersim Genocide, we see the framing of Dersim as an abscess that required surgery. The Mülkiye Müfettişi (Chief of Civil Inspectors) Hamdi Bey writes in a report dated 1927: "Dersim is an abscess for the Republic. It must be operated on precisely and a possibility of a bitter end should be prevented."[324] This diagnosis circulated over time. For instance, Mustafa Kemal referred to Dersim as an abscess on the republic in his opening speech to the Turkish parliament in 1935,[325] the year the Tunceli Law was passed. The metaphor was not limited to parliamentarians. In 1937, the newspaper *Akşam* celebrated the Turkish army's attack on Dersim, stating: "Actually, this weird abscess should not live in this natural life of Turkish nation any more."[326] In the same year, Başsavcı (attorney general) Hatemi Şahamoğlu identified Dersim as the abscess of the republic during the prosecution of Seyyid Rıza who was executed for being the leader of the uprising.[327] The court report of the prosecution is rich in its use of medical metaphors. Referring to those prosecuted with Seyyid Rıza, Şahamoğlu states: "Not only for themselves but also for their entourage, they are the most dangerous in existence in the world. As one of those miserable confessed in the interrogation, those who are exposed to their cunning lose sight and are put in the lunatic asylum."[328] Thus, the characteristics of Dersimis shifted between being sick themselves and making others sick.

The metaphor of the abscess was followed by that of the wound. At the beginning of the military campaign to Dersim *Cumhuriyet*, the official newspaper of the CHP, declared that: "This wound opened up again. It stinks."[329] Following the military campaign, the newspaper *Tan* complained about an unhealed wound: "The wound of Dersim, which has renewed itself within its scab, became chronic due to the reform methods of the sultanate times. This wound, like all other abscesses, became mad in the republican times."[330] Such

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[324] The original report of Hamdi Bey dated 1926 is kept in the military archives and is currently unavailable. The version that I am referring here is only a part of his report published in Hüseyin Yaman, *Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu Hafızası*, (Ankara: SETA, 2011), 91.

[325] Göner, "A Social History of Power and Struggle in Turkey", 84.

[326] *Akşam*, June 22, 1937, 3 cited in Taha Baran, *1937-1938 Yılları Arasında Basında Dersim*, (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 107.

[327] Bulut, *Dersim Raporları*, 285.

[328] Bulut, *Dersim Raporları*, 291-292.

[329] *Cumhuriyet,* June 29, 1938. Cited in Baran, *1937-1938 Yılları Arasında Basında Dersim*, 104.

[330] *Tan,* June 17, 1938. Cited in Baran, *1937-1938 Yılları Arasında Basında Dersim*, 107.

metaphors expressed a need to heal a long-standing and intractable medical problem through methods that had not previously been exercised.

Amid the multiplicity of descriptions (Dersimis as, essentially, Turks, Kurds, Zaza, wild Turks etc.) and diverse suggestions of ways to "solve the problem of Dersim" discussed in the previous section, genocidal violence happened to be the chosen method, which targeted the inhabitants of Dersimis as a united entity, as parts of an abscess or wound. I do not suggest there was a direct causal relationship between the establishment of the Elazığ Mental Hospital and the Dersim Genocide. However, it represented an attempt to imagine the racialization and pathologization of Dersim from the city that served as the military base for its two incidents of genocidal violence.

Conclusion

This chapter historicizes the reference point for narratives of Şeywuşen's madness by describing how Dersim was put into the "savage slot," a place reserved for the constitutive other in the late Ottoman and early Republican periods. This era is not only significant in terms of contextualizing the story of Şeywuşen but because it is the time in which the terminology of defining Turkishness and its others were developed. Repeatedly describing Dersim as a place where ethnic and religious deviancy, lack of authority and timelessness was located made religious deviancy, unwanted ethnic difference and savagery the "sticky" signs[331] of Dersim. Putting Dersim in the "savage slot,"[332] where "backward people without history" live in an "unruly landscape,"[333] provided legitimate grounds for the Turkish state to prove its superiority. In this sense, knowledge production became a site of violence. Like other colonial forces, the Turkish state created its constitutive other through epistemic violence to assert itself as the law-making power. The discourse of opening Dersim into civilization through a surgical operation removing the abscess also involves a gender disposition.[334] Using epistemic violence to create Dersim as devoid of culture and history, the modern patriarchal state constituted it as "virgin" territory which was "passively awaiting the thrusting male insemination of history, language

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[331] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*.
[332] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "Anthropology and the Savage Slot: The Poetics and Politics of Otherness," in Global Transformations (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 7–28.
[333] Trouillot, 7-28.
[334] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York 1995), 30.

and reason."[335] This dichotomy of nature represented by the wild, savage land and its inhabitants and culture was epitomized by the state's legitimization of a brutal process as "opening to civilization."

However, as I have discussed in this chapter, this process of creating the savage of the Turkish state did not develop through clear-cut definitions but with blurred demarcations. Dersimis being possibly Turkish but at the same time Zaza and Kurdish is significant in two ways. Firstly, it shows that taking the decision of annihilating a group of people does not depend on defining them as inherently different. In other words, the possibility of Dersimis being essentially Turkish but "deformed" due to their proximity to Kurds and Zazas did not pose an obstacle to the exercise of genocidal violence. Secondly, the blurred boundary between the constitutive other and those belonging to the nation is significant in terms of state formation. The modern state is defined through its monopoly on power, which is characterized by the monopoly on violence. The monopoly on violence is legitimized by its use on the other. In other words, the modern nation-state is founded against the idea of the other from which the nation needs to be protected. In that sense, the possibility of Dersimis being "essentially Turks but …" destabilizes this divide between the insider and outsider, between the violable and the core constituent, which puts the demarcation of Turkishness into question.

Epistemic violence continued to play a key role in the distortion of knowledge of the genocidal violence which resulted in a regime of denial sustained for more than 70 years. Since "bringing law" into a "lawless landscape" through methods that are out-of-law would make the Turkish state's legitimacy questionable, the genocidal violence needed to be silenced. However, the policy of denial did not provide coherence either. While the media and the official historiography were silent on the atrocities committed by the Turkish army, they stressed the need to approach the problem/abscess/wound of Dersim "differently" from means used by the Ottoman government. I argue that the framing of difference and the need for a different treatment paved the way for a lawless process of bringing law. In other words, the epistemic violence normalized the exceptional use of violence and the silence that was woven around the atrocities committed by the Turkish army. In this regard, the medicalization of racial discourses operated as a strengthener in legitimizing the exceptional treatment by bringing an authoritative scientific tone to discussions on the solution to the problem of Dersim. While this chapter has focused on the creation of otherness through epistemic and physical violence, the following

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[335] McClintock, 30.

chapters will elaborate on how this difference is performed. Chapter II will depict the process of the affliction of this historically situated otherness through the story of Şeywuşen.

CHAPTER II. AFFLICTION OF OTHERNESS: BECOMING MAD IN DERSIM OF THE 1960S–70S

> Well, you can ask me why I am that crazy about our madmen (laughing). I restore myself with them. [...] Not when Ibo comes and asks for money, for sure (laughing). His brother makes him ask [for money] though. [...] Thinking about Şeywuşen, he had nothing to do with money. Someone who would not look for more than what he had makes me feel good, in general. Yes, fine he had more than five cigarettes at hand (laughing) nothing else though. [...] The naiveté I guess, innocence, or however you would like to call. Not caring about this-worldly things. Who else has this? I don't know.[336]

These are the words of Keşo, describing his love for the madmen of Dersim. Keşo, who worked at a petrol station in the center of Dersim, spoke about Şeywuşen as one of the childhood characters he grew up with. Like other interlocutors, he differentiated between Şeywuşen and other madmen of Dersim based on the former's genuine refusal of this-worldly things. For instance, Let-It-Snow Ibo, one of the best-known madman of Dersim, who was known for asking for snow during good weather in spring and summer, and for asking for money from almost everyone he talked to. By contrast, Şeywuşen was remembered for his shabby appearance, his life on the streets and his refusal of money, differentiating him from other well-known madmen in the region.

This chapter describes how Şeywuşen came into Keşo's life when the latter was a child in the late 1960s. It gives a general picture of the socio-political atmosphere at the time Şeywuşen became a part of everyday life in Dersim. Reconstructing Şeywuşen's biography through oral history interviews, it examines the components of Şeywuşen's madness and shows how this madness was narrated as related to various incidents of state violence, his military service and the betrayal of his wife. Through a gendered analysis of the narrated reasons for Şeywuşen's madness it illustrates how his identity as a popular madman was constructed upon his failed masculinity. Unpacking the relation between state-sponsored violence and madness, it conceptualizes his madness as an affliction of the otherness attributed to the region (see Chapter I). The chapter concludes by further elaborating the relationship between state violence and Şeywuşen's madness through the stories that are widely told about him. It shows that the shared sense of the continuity of state violence in the region and the madness of Şeywuşen

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[336] "*Yani şimdi sen bana sorabilirsin tabii neden delilere bu kadar deli gibi taktığımı (gülüyor). Sosyalizm gelmiş olsa başka olurdu. Ama şimdilerde... kendimi sağaltıyorum onlarla işte. [...] Ibo gelip de para istediğinde değil tabii (gülüyor). Ona da abisi sordurtuyor da. [...] Şeywuşen'i düşünsene, parayla pulla işi olmaz.Böyle elindekinden başka bişi istemeyen biri, yani bana iyi geliyor, genel olarak yani. Tamam şimdi beş sigarası olurdu elinde (gülüyor) ama başka bir şeyi de yok. Saflık herhalde, masumiyet ya da işte ne dersen de adına. Bu dünyalı işlerle ilgisiz. Başka kimde var? Ben bilmiyorum.*" Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Keşo in Dersim, July 2018.

operated as tools to transcend temporal boundaries between incidents of state violence and thus to articulate links between the injuries they caused. The chapter ends by expanding on this transgression, opening ground for a kind of connection between Dersimis based on the particular injury they prioritize in their socially performed identity.

The era of radical political imaginations and brutal state violence

The 1960s, 1970s and the 1980s: each of these three decades began with a military intervention in Turkey, and with state violence that was accompanied by resistance against it. Leaving the transformation that the 1980 coup d'état brought to Chapter III, in this chapter, I will briefly depict the general atmosphere of the 1960s and 1970s in which Şeywuşen became a well-known madman. Almost all the leftist/revolutionary groups existing in today's Turkey originated between 1974 and 1980.[337] In mainstream history writing, the period between the two military coups of 1960 and 1980 is generally referred to as the "pre-coup [1980]" period and is described as a time of violent clashes between leftist and rightist armed groups[338] and of violent conflicts between Sunnis and Alevis which resulted in Alevi massacres in Maraş (in 1978) and Çorum (in 1980). In mainstream historical narratives, the clashes that happened during the pre-coup period are instrumentalized to justify the state sponsored violence which came to the fore with the coup d'état of 1980. However, in the eyes of the revolutionaries of this period, the decade before the coup is associated with an atmosphere of emancipation, transformation, rebellion, hope and frictions.[339]

What makes the 1965–980 period special in the history of Turkey is the dominance of widespread struggles for political and economic rights, massive mobilization and the tendency to get organized in leftist and socialist groups in every walk of life.[340] Leftist mobilization spread nationwide following the military coup of May 27, 1960 which targeted the government of the Democratic Party (1946–92) which had won the first democratic elections of the Turkish Republic in 1946, ending the 27-year single-party regime of the CHP, the Republic's founding party. The 1960 military intervention was precipitated by an increase in authoritarian actions by the Democratic Party government, such as press censorship, arrests of journalists, and limitations imposed on members of other political parties. To legitimize the political

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[337] Vehbi Ersan, *1970'lerde Türkiye Solu* (Istanbul: Iletişim Yayıncılık, 2013), 3.
[338] Kerem Ünüvar, "70'ler: '80'lerin öncesi '60'ların sonrası," *Toplum ve Bilim* 127 (2013): 30-47. Işık Ergüden, "1970'li Yıllar Türkiye'sinden Bir Silahlı Propaganda Deneyimi: MLSPB", *Birikim: 274*, (2012) ,81-91.
[339] Işık Ergüden, "1970'li Yıllar Türkiye'sinden Bir Silahlı Propaganda Deneyimi"
[340] Ersan, *1970'lerde Türkiye Solu*, 4.

involvement of the military branch which organized the coup, several law professors were brought together to issue a new constitution[341] which "tolerated a wider spectrum of political activity than before, both to the left and to the right."[342] The coup of 1960 is a peculiar military intervention in the sense that its effects extended beyond the relationship between the military and politics in the following period. It transformed the hegemonic understanding of politics in Turkey by unintentionally welcoming new actors into the political scene. After the coup of 1960, groups which had traditionally been excluded started to be a part of organized politics[343] through labor unions, cooperatives and associations. This lasted until the coup d'état of September 12, 1980 (see Chapter III).[344]

The Türkiye Işçi Partisi (TIP, Workers' Party of Turkey) was founded to voice workers' concerns in parliament by a group of unionists in 1961. In the general election of 1965 TIP entered parliament with 15 deputies. With 3% of votes, TIP achieved an unprecedented success in the history of leftist parties, which was not exceeded until the 2000s. Until 1969 TIP was the only organization where socialists gathered, but in 1968–69 fractional divisions within the party on radical action by students started to become visible. The occupation of universities and clashes between leftist and rightist students became daily events towards the end of the 1960s.[345]

The 1970s witnessed the mobilization of large groups of people and the creation of labor and political organizations. Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi (THKP-C, People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey), Türkiye Kurtuluş Ordusu (THKO, People's Liberation Army of Turkey), and Türkiye Komunist Partisi Marxist-Leninist (TKP/ML, Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist) and the latter's armed wing, Türkiye İşçi Köylü Kurtuluş Ordusu (TİKKO, Liberation Army of the Workers and Peasants of Turkey) were the three biggest leftist organizations at the time. Starting from the mid-1960s, Dersim became one of the cities where the mobilization of leftist groups became dominant both in urban and rural areas. It hosted both legal and illegal leftist and revolutionary groups. Dersim's mountains were among the primary bases for TİKKO, the armed branch of TKP/ML. In my interview with Zülfikar, who spent

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[341] Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 242. Feroz Ahmad. *Turkey: The quest for identity*. (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2014), 129.
[342] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History,* 246.
[343] Ergun Aydınoğlu. *Türkiye solu, 1960-1980:" bir amneziğin anıları,"* (Istanbul: Versus Kitap, 2007), 46.
[344] Ersan, *1970'lerde Türkiye Solu*.
[345] Ersan, *1970'lerde Türkiye Solu*.

years in prison due to their affiliation with a Maoist revolutionary movement following the 1980 coup, they described the political atmosphere of the 1970s in Dersim as follows:

> Dersim was pumping blood into the revolutionary movements. Look at the founders of the big leftist organizations, you will find many Dersimis. Dersim was known for its bravery, as a center of rebellion. All those superstitions, madness, whatsoever were attached to Dersim recently.[346]

Although not comparable with the organizational structure of the 1970s, the Maoist tradition still continues its activities, both democratic and "revolutionary," in Dersim today. The face of the leader of the TKP/ML, Ibrahim Kaypakkaya (1949–73) remains one of the most frequently encountered images in the cityscape of Dersim.

Figure 4: Photo of the late TKP/ML leader Ibrahim Kaypakkaya placed on the statue of Seyyid Rıza in Dersim.

The TKP/ML as an organization and Kaypakkaya as a political leader were among the dominant political features of Dersim in the 1960s and 1970s. Most of my interlocutors who were above 50 years of age referred to Maoist organizations and to Kaypakkaya in their interviews, either through narratives of their own encounters and involvements, or their relatives'.

In the absence of the archives of local political groups, a report written by Kaypakkaya describing the atmosphere in Kürecik provides insights on the atmosphere of a particular "revolutionary spirit" that was dominant in Dersim. Kürecik is located in Malatya, an Eastern Anatolian province, and a city inhabited by the Kurdish-Alevi population. In terms of demographic and cultural characteristics it is similar to Dersim. Dersim is the center of religious

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[346] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Zülfikar and Mustafa in Dersim, April 2014.

teachings for the Kurdish-Alevis of Malatya, in common with the rest of the Kurdish-Alevi community in Turkey.[347] In that sense, there is a relationship between the two cities which extends beyond demographic and cultural similarities. Written by an ideologue of a revolutionary organization for the organization's own purposes, Kaypakkaya's report on Kürecik is illustrative in terms of visualizing the time from the perspective of revolutionaries. Given how influential TKP/ML was among the Kurdish-Alevi communities of both Dersim and Kürecik, the ethnographic report also helps to illustrate the nature of the "blood" Dersim was pumping into the revolutionary movement, as my interlocutor Zülfikar put it.

> Out of 21 villages in which we held activities, 20 of them are Kurdish. All the Alevite villages are Kurdish. But it is impossible to come across any trace of Kurdish nationalism. To the contrary, the forced Turkification policy of the hegemonic class had been quite successful and even among the Kurds it is possible to detect Turkish nationalism. Since most of the people are poor Kurdish and Alevite, for hundreds of years, they have been put under the dominion of a triple hegemony (of economy, nationalism, and religion). The tyrant state power, that is the main perpetrator of the hegemonic classes, succeeded to a certain extent to create fear among the people. This fear, which especially articulates itself among the elderly, manifests itself when it comes to armed struggle, and they extremely shy away from it. Such shying away is partly due to the suppression of the Kasimoglu and Dersim riots[348] and the violent torture applied to the people.
> […]
> The idea of armed struggle unites almost all the poor villagers and especially the poor villager youth. Among them, there are those who are ready to sacrifice all they have and join the armed struggle right away. Elementary school students, and even those who can hardly speak Turkish between the ages of 4 and 5 old their left fists saying, with their broken Turkish, "I'm a revolutionary and a socialist."
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> Young women, the brides and girls sympathize strongly with the revolutionary struggle. They long for the armed struggle. They lament for those revolutionary youth who passed, and shed tears for them. They embrace those friends who are active in the region with love and respect. Some of the young girls even reject the idea of marriage so that it wouldn't stop them from joining the prospective armed struggle that they wish to join. In this time, when the revolutionary struggle is only getting active very recently, it is possible to see hundreds of examples of how the revolutionary ideas can be located deeply among the poor people.
> […]
> The situation of the *dedes*, the feet of whom the people kissed even 20 years ago, is very sad. It is impossible to find a *dede* who says, "I'm not revolutionary." Because the people know that these *dedes* pretend to be revolutionary due to the pressures of their environment, they are considered imposters and their words are not regarded highly. At this point, we have to point this out as a negative issue: The anger of the people is somewhat appeased because of the migration of some of the villagers to Germany, and the hope of some to do so.[349]

As Kaypakkaya writes, the revolutionary mobilizations of the 1960s and 1970s mainly aimed to abolish the economic, national and religious mechanisms of oppression embedded in the

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[347]Dilşa Deniz, *RE/Yol Dersim İnanç Sembolizmi: Antropolojik Bir Yaklaşım* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012). Ahmet Kerim Gültekin, *Tunceli'de Sünni Olmak: Tunceli Pertek'te Ulusal ve Yerel Kimlik Öğelerinin Etnolojik Tetkiki*, (Istanbul: Berfin Yayınları, 2010), 45-47. Erdal Gezik, *Dinsel ve Etnik ve Politik Sorunlar Baglaminda Alevi Kürtler*, (Ankara: Kalan Yayinlari, 2010).

[348] What he refers here as the "Dersim riots" are the 1937–38 military clashes. The Dersim Genocide has been mainly narrated as a riot/rebellion by leftist groups until the oral history projects initiated in 2000s. Bülent Bilmez, "Sözlü Tarih ve Belgesel Film Aracılığıyla Bir Kıyımla Yüzleşmek ve Hesaplaşmak", in *Kara Vagon: Dersim-kırım ve Sürgün* Özgür Fındık (ed). (İstanbul: Fam Yayınları, 2012, 7–47, 10-13.

[349] İbrahim Kaypakkaya, *Kaypakkaya kitabı : seçme yazılar ve üzerine yazılar* (Ankara : Dipnot Yayınları, 2015).

capitalistic nation-state. Material conditions in Dersim during that period were as constrained as in Kürecik. The local newspapers and the publications of Tunceli Solidarity Associations point out infrastructural shortfalls such as lack of access to electricity even in the villages immediately around Dersim city center,[350] the closure of roads linking villages for half a year due to snow,[351] the suspension of education due to weather conditions, and economic concerns.[352] Due to economic hardships and the political peculiarities of the region, states Ali Baysal, the editor of *Halkın Sesi*, a local newspaper in the 1970s, Dersim was regarded as a place of exile for the rest of the country and that is why state officials would not accept placement there.[353]

Since the 1950s, with continuous securitization and disinvestment policies resulting in high unemployment, immigration to European countries had been a way to break from the vicious circle of poverty and state violence. This was also the case in Dersim. Local newspapers such as *Demokrat Tunceli* (Democratic Tunceli), the first of its kind and financed by the Democratic Party, reflected this growing interest in Europe. Considering that this was a two-page local newspaper in A2 format, the space reserved for European news is telling. In 1953 *Demokrat Tunceli* proudly announced that Fethi Ülkü from Dersim was becoming a member of a European Council (we do not know which council this refers to),[354] and Hasan Remzikulu, a deputy of Dersim was going to Europe.[355] Another group of news items concerns European politics. For example the famine in East Germany in 1953[356] and the return of Ernst Wollveber into East Germany's political scene[357] were covered. The final group of news items is about the Europe-Turkey relationship. Various local newspapers covered, for instance, the goods that would be sold to Germany under new trade agreements[358] or the training that German soldiers would receive in Turkey.[359]

Along with clues to prevalent economic hardship, in Kaypakkaya's report we have depictions of an almost total mobilization where everyone, including children and women, was

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[350] Demirdağ, Nuri. "Çıkarken..." *Dersim: Tunceli Kültür Derneği Yayın Organı*, Ankara, 1968.
[351] Örtün, Kazım. "Bir Tunceli'liden". *Tunceli Gecesi*, Istanbul, 1960, pp:5 and 11.
[352] Demir, Bedri. "Gençlerin Görevi". *Dersim: Tunceli Kültür Derneği Yayın Organı*, Ankara, 1968.
[353] Baysal, Ali. "Tunceli Sürgün Yeri Değildir", *Halkın Sesi*, 19 August 1971.
[354] *"*Fethi Ülkü Avrupa Konseyine iştirak ediyor." *Demokrat Tunceli*, July 1 1953, Elazığ: Bingöl Matbaası.
[355] "Milletvekilimiz Hasan Remzikulu Avrupa'ya gitti", *Demokrat Tunceli*, September 11, 1953, Tunceli: Tunceli Matbaası.
[356] "Doğu Almanya'da açlık sıkıntısı", *Demokrat Tunceli*, September 9, 1953, Tunceli: Tunceli Matbaası.
[357] "Doğu Almanya'yı perde arkasından idare etmiş olan Ernst Wollveber" *Demokrat Tunceli*, June 1 1953, Elazığ: Bingöl Matbaası.
[358] "Almanya'ya çeşitli mal ihraç ediyoruz", *Demokrat Tunceli*, September 24, 1953, Tunceli: Tunceli Matbaası.
[359] "200 Alman havacısı Bandırma'da eğitim görecek", *Tunceli Postası,* June 6, 1959, Tunceli: Hıdıroğlu Matbaası.

brimming with revolutionary spirit. It also gives clues about what was understood as the obliteration of religious subjugation. While acknowledging that Alevis were subjected to oppressive state policies as the other of the Sunni Turkish foundational subject, Kaypakkaya criticizes both Alevi religious figures and practices. Despite the fact that Alevis could never gain official recognition beyond being an element of "cultural diversity," in Kaypakkaya's account it is taken as an oppressive force at the local political level. While leftist organizations were getting popular among Dersim's inhabitants, the realm of religiosity, referred to as superstition or madness by my interlocutor Zülfikar, weakened during the 1970s. Younger Alevis turned to leftist ideologies in the 1960s and 1970s, and the Alevi religious authorities started to be portrayed as "charlatans exploiting ordinary people."[360]

To contextualize this image, of religious figures as charlatans, I turn to another of my interlocutors. Mahmut Dede (85), was a survivor of 1938 and a well-respected religious figure both among Dersim's inhabitants and its diaspora in Germany. He was from the Kuresan holy lineage which is believed to be a continuation of the lineage of the Prophet Muhammed. He arrived in Germany in 1962 as a part of the wave of migrant workers (*Gastarbeiter)*, and became an important figure in the Alevi diaspora. He contributed to several pieces of research on the region. While recounting his enchantment with the left and participation in local politics in the 1960s Mahmut Dede described the leftist intervention on devotional practices and religious figures as the second rupture following the state violence of 1937–38:

> Mahmut Dede: [...] The state committed the Massacre [Dersim Genocide] but could not abolish the sense of *ikrar*, *pirlik-taliplik* [master-disciple ties]. We, the leftovers, we came back and reestablished our order. But... what happened in '65? We turned out to be leftists (laughing). Here is the salvation! You know, we are always in search of salvation. This *dede* is exploiting, this *ziyaret* is superstition...
> Çiçek: Did the leftist wind also knock at your door?
> Mahmut Dede: Ah, of course! We started around 1965, when we were studying... thanks to our professors. They were teaching us manners. We destroyed *ikrar*, *ziyaret*, *pir*. We fought against each other. In the name of salvation... [...] it is heroin, this is irrational... [referring to religious beliefs and practices].[361]

Describing how survivors of the Dersim Genocide in 1938 came back when the ban on returning to Dersim's villages was lifted in 1949, Mahmut Dede points to a second rupture in the Dersim belief system. This time it was not initiated by the state but by its opponents: the leftwing opposition of Dersim. By putting together these two ruptures Mahmut Dede implies a comparability between state-sponsored destruction and leftist mobilization. This was the socio-

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[360] Markus Dressler, "Religio-Secular Metamorphoses: The Re-Making of Turkish Alevism," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76, no. 2 (2008): 280–311.
[361] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Mahmut Dede and Sami in Berlin, December 2017.

political atmosphere in which Şeywuşen became a part of everyday life, in which he left his house in Beydami village and start living on the streets of Dersim.

Discovering madness: How Şeywuşen became a popular madman

After attending the celebration of Gağan[362] at the Berlin Cemevi[363] in December 2017, Mahmut Dede took me to a coffeeshop near the Cemevi in Kreuzberg, where we were greeted with a picture of Deli Aziz. Deli Aziz (Figure 5) was a homeless Kurdish-Alevi madman, to whom were attributed prophecies. He became a well-known figure of Erzincan and died in 1994.

Figure 5: The portrait of Deli Aziz hanging on the wall of a Kreuzberg coffee shop

Entering the coffeeshop, Mahmut Dede said: "Welcome to our colorful world, which is full of madness and holiness [*delilik* ve *kutsallık*]." While choosing from a menu covered with photos of Deli Aziz, we started talking about the madmen of Dersim, and the historical configuration in which they lived.

Çiçek: Do you know Şeywuşen personally?

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[362] Gağan is a religious celebration which occurs after three days of fasting on the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday following December 21. (Erdal Gezik, Gağan, Hızır, Kara Çarşamba ve Hawtemal/Heftemal: Bir Takvimin Analizi https://www.academia.edu/32410436/Ga%C4%9Fan_H%C4%B1z%C4%B1r_Kara_%C3%87ar%C5%9Famba_ve_Hawtemal_Heftemal). *Khal* means old in Kırmançki and Gağan is the last month of the year. According to Kemal Kahraman, Gağan can be interpreted as a new year celebration. (Kemal Kahraman, Gağan:Unutulmaya Yüz Tutmuş bir Dersim Geleneği http://metinkahraman.blogcu.com/khal-gagan-unutulmaya-yuz-tutmus-bir-dersim-gelenegi/2821887)

[363] *Cemevi*, which literally means house of gathering, is the name of the Alevi worship place.

Mahmut Dede: Where do you know my relative from? (laughing) Of course I know him.

Çiçek: Who ever set foot in Dersim who doesn't know about Şeywuşen? (laughing) Do you know his life story?

Mahmut Dede: Well, he wasn't so older than me, was born in 1926–27 probably.

Çiçek: 1930.

Mahmut Dede: Ah yes, maybe. But a bit earlier I guess.

Çiçek: That is what is written on his gravestone.

Sami: Official records are not so much reliable in our region, you know it, right? ... The state official could only come after the snow melts and when he asks when the baby was born he gets answers like "it was the month of Xızır." (laughing)

[…]

Mahmut Dede: He was from the Beydamı village. He had one sister, Beser, and three brothers; Ali Haydar, Yusuf and Baki. … He was working in road construction.[364]

Yusuf Cengiz (1955–2018), the founder of Özgürlük ve Demokrasi Partisi (ÖDP, Freedom and Democracy Party), Dersim branch, and the former head of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Dersim, also knew Şeywuşen from the years he had worked in road construction in the late 1950s. "He was working as a worker of my uncle. Road construction… you cannot do it [this work] for instance (laughing), it requires strength. My uncle said several times that he was a very hard-working worker."[365] In a documentary shot by Egemen Adak and Hira Selma Kalkan about Şeywuşen, his childhood friend Hüseyin Kargın also emphasized how hard working he was: "Three people could not do what he could accomplish, he was that hard working. He was very honest."[366]

While Şeywuşen's family members say he was a construction worker, there is also a widespread story that he was a mason.[367] This is the version Nurettin Aslan recounts in his book *Dersim'in Delileri* [Madmen of Dersim] in which he collected stories about the madmen of Dersim. Nurettin Aslan writes in the introduction that, as a refugee in Germany, he could not go to Dersim and combined "his memoirs" with accounts collected from elderly Dersimis. He had not met Şeywuşen in person.[368]

Fortunately, I had the chance to conduct interviews with relatives of Şeywuşen, such as Çiçek Teyze (85), a distant cousin, whom I visited at her home. Çiçek Teyze was accompanied by her son Mustafa (50), a bus driver who described himself as a *şöförolog* (driver-log) due to his contribution to most recent research on Dersim, and Mustafa's uncle Zülfikar (55), who was currently living between Köln and Dersim. Telling Şeywuşen's life story in the Kırmancki language, Çiçek Teyze said that his wife Yamos Mavi had a girl before Şeywuşen went for his

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[364] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Mahmut Dede and Sami in Berlin, December 2017.

[365] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Yusuf Cengiz in Dersim, May 2015.

[366] From the documentary directed by Egemen Adak and Hira Selma Kalkan entitled *Insanın Deli Dediği*, shot in 2008.

[367] Nurettin Aslan, *Dersim'in Divane Delileri*, İletişim Yayınları (İstanbul: İletisim Yayınları, 2015), 12.

[368] Aslan, *Dersim'in Divane Delileri*, 8.

obligatory military service, and after he came back they had another child, a boy.[369] But, when he returned, "he was not talking much, he was behaving differently than before. He developed some kinds of obsessions. He had some fits of jealousy as well. He was jealous of his wife."[370] Mustafa stated that female relatives would create scenes that could trigger his fits of jealousy: "For instance, I heard from many Beydamlı that the wife of his older brother dressed up like a man and lay down next to Yamos Teyze [Şeywuşen's wife]."[371]

In the documentary on Şeywuşen's life called *Insanın Deli Dediği*, Hatice Tatar, a nephew, also referred to these fits of jealousy: "For example, one day he bought a bracelet for her. And the other day he came to ask who gave it to her. He bought a dress for her, and the day after he asked who brought this dress to you. He used to have those kinds of jealousy attacks."[372] While Şeywuşen's relatives mentioned jealousy, in the documentary his ex-wife Yamos Mavi accounted for their marriage and divorce as follows:

> I was 13, 14, or 15—how would a girl know? So they said, and gave me [to Şeywuşen]. Then we had two children, a girl and a boy. He didn't come home that often, wandering around. Hanging out downtown. When he came home, he disturbed us. […] He was disturbed even when he was single, he was wandering around. They didn't tell us, we didn't know. Nobody told my mother, either. We had a *rayber*,[373] they were giving prayers. They said he's a bit disturbed/sick. He called him home, said that this woman doesn't have a relationship with him, in our language. This woman is free, she shall go and marry another. If it is a sin, it belongs to the *rayber*; he is the wise one. And then I didn't go.[374]

Yamos Mavi's description of her divorce demonstrates that the *pir-talip*[375] relationship was present and efficiently regulating everyday life. Instead of getting a divorce from Şeywuşen due to his "mental illness" under the Turkish civil law, she went to her *pir* and got his approval to divorce Şeywuşen and marry someone else. Such religious practices which are woven into kinship relations and embedded in nature were re-established by genocide survivors after they returned to their villages after 1949.

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[369] Referring to the interview I conducted with Çiçek Teyze and Mustafa in Dersim, April 2014.

[370] Referring to the interview I conducted with Çiçek Teyze and Mustafa in Dersim, April 2014. Some parts of the interview was in Kirmancki and translated into Turkish by Mustafa during the interview.

[371] Referring to the interview I conducted with Çiçek Teyze and Mustafa in Dersim, April 2014.

[372] From the documentary directed by Egemen Adak and Hira Selma Kalkan entitled *Insanın Deli Dediği*, shot in 2008.

[373] *Rayber* is one of the three categories of religious dignitary in Dersim Alevism that refers to the guide, the one who shows the path.

[374] From the documentary directed by Egemen Adak and Hira Selma Kalkan entitled Insanın Deli Dediği, shot in 2008.

[375] *Pîr* is one of the three types of religious dignitary in Dersim Alevism that refers to who leads the divine justice. *Pîr*s are believed to be the descendants of the holy lineage (*ocak*) presumably coming from Khorasan and Daylam arrived in Dersim in 12th century. *Talip* is the disciple of the *pîr* whose loyalty is structured through kinship relations that are based on the holy lineage.

After Yamos Mavi left Beydamı village, Şeywuşen left home and started living on the streets of Dersim, as Zülfikar narrated:

> I remember the period when he came back from the military service. … I remember him as an aggressive person. He stabbed his wife once… and then she left the house. Mustafa's aunt raised their two kids, she organized their marriage etc. […] You know in feudal societies there are never-ending disputes over land and animals. In one of those daily clashes, Sey Uşen Amca [uncle; referring to Şeywuşen] threw a stone at İsmail Amca's head [one of the villagers, who belongs to the same *aşiret*, tribe]. The guy got half-paralyzed, he couldn't speak afterwards. Can you imagine, no one made a complaint about Sey Uşen Amca. No one would go to the gendarmerie in our village, but it also shows the value they give to human life, right? After that event, Sey Uşen Amca left the village, started living in the city-center. (April 2014 Dersim).

Zeliha Teyze (60), whom I met in Gola Çetu, a popular sacred place in the city center, recounted that after Şeywuşen left the house, he stayed in the mountains for a while.[376] According to Zülfikar, during the late 1960s, when he first came to the city center, Şeywuşen was perceived as an object of humor:

> People made him crazier in the center. The society triggered his aggression. His first degree relatives were mocking him, by calling him *piç* [bastard] they were making him angry as if they were watching cinema, they were making fun. If you behave in that way to a normal person you will drive him crazy as well.[377]

During this decade he was twice confined by his family in the Elazığ Mental Hospital. Zülfikar said:

> He was kept in the hospital for a while… where he was subjected to all kinds of tortures such as electroshock, bastinado or being beaten by nightsticks. These were the contemporary treatments applied in the mental hospitals back then... disciplining people through violence. Then, he returned to the village for a short period, I remember he was calm after all those tortures. It was as if he was coming back from prison. […] He couldn't stay long in the village and that is when he went to the center in the early 1970s.[378]

Since Şeywuşen's file in the mental hospital was lost, I do not have much information on the torture to which Zülfikar referred. When I asked him and Mustafa to elaborate, they told me the story of Kaypakkaya being exposed to torture and his assassination in Diyarbakır Prison, which was officially reported as suicide.[379] This story intermingled with their own experience of imprisonment and the general atmosphere of despair inside and outside prison. Süleyman (72) from Ovacık district of Dersim, who was from the Derviş Cemal holy lineage, and worked at the Elazığ Mental Hospital until the mid-1980s as a caretaker, said no more than that Şeywuşen did not like the medical treatment he received in hospital and fled twice. When hospitalized for

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[376] Referring to my conversation with Zeliha Teyze in Dersim, April 2014.
[377] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Zülfikar and Mustafa in Dersim, April 2014.
[378] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Zülfikar and Mustafa in Dersim, April 2014.
[379] https://bianet.org/kurdi/insan-haklari/114602-iskence-karsiti-mucadele-ve-ibrahim-kaypakkaya-dosyasi Every event organized to commemorate Kaypakkaya is still criminalized by the Turkish security forces and attacked. https://bianet.org/bianet/biamag/122347-kaypakkaya-nin-iskence-dosyasi-37-yasinda

the first time no one knew about him. However, after his first escape he became known to the hospital staff. In his subsequent hospitalization, he was known both to hospital workers and to Dersimis living in the city center, who would come to visit him occasionally.[380]

After his stay in the hospital, Şeywuşen came to the city center and started living on the streets of Dersim. Hüseyin Tatar, another distant relative, said that "people embraced him in the city. They were taking care of his clothes, this hygiene, I don't know what, Tunceli inhabitants were doing all those. They took care of him more than us.[381] Ferit Demir, a well-known journalist working for local and national press, described to me an ordinary day for Şeywuşen :

> He was waking up around Baran Pharmacy, his usual spot for sleeping, when he was feeling hungry. There were a couple of restaurant owners in the 1970s who were taking care of him. He would enter one of those [restaurants] and approach someone he liked and eat his food. Asking permission and whatsoever (laughing)—no way.[382]

Mustafa and Zülfikar said that the restaurant owners were disciples of the Kuresan holy lineage and due to their loyalty and respect for lineage, took care for Şeywuşen. Ferhat Tunç (1964–), a famous musician from Dersim, described his first encounter with Şeywuşen when he was a child and visited one of those restaurants:

> I suppose I was 8 or 9 when I first encountered Şeywuşen. A bit further down there is a small restaurant, Huzur Restaurant, I was eating there. I had ordered soup for myself. While eating my soup Sey Uşen appeared next to me. He came, hoop he took the soup bowl and put it in front of him. He started eating (laughing). And I was very young, I got afraid. … That is how I encountered my childhood hero (laughing). I got afraid, intimidated a bit but then he looked at me and told without looking at me don't be afraid, I am just hungry. … In my school years he became a part of my everyday life.[383]

Kamer (60), a bus driver on the route between Elazığ and Dersim, told me that when he first began smoking, he would buy a separate packet of cigarettes for Şeywuşen:

> I remember, in my first week as a smoker he approached me and asked for cigarettes. I felt so honored and gave him the whole packet (laughing). Cigarettes were not so expensive in those days, in the '70s (laughing). Late '70s... You know he was not approaching anyone. People were attempting to give him money, cigarette I don't know what, *raki*, if he was not liking them, he was refusing. ... He never took money from anyone. ... Then I started carrying a packet [of cigarettes] for him.[384]

When Şeywuşen moved to the city center the main places for socialization were Palavra Square (Lie Square as it is widely known, but officially named Republic Square) where the leftist

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[380] Referring to conversations I had with Süleyman in Elazığ, March 2015.
[381] From the documentary directed by Egemen Adak and Hira Selma Kalkan entitled Insanın Deli Dediği, shot in 2008.
[382] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Ferit Demir in Dersim, March 2015.
[383] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Ferhat Tunç in Dersim, March 2015.
[384] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Kamer in Dersim, May 2014.

groups congregated, and coffeeshops where people spent most of their time outside. Hıdır Demirtaş, the editor of the local newspaper *Halkın Sesi* [The Voice of People], wrote in his column in August 1971 that the most profitable business in Dersim was to run a coffeeshop because "everyone spends the whole day in a coffeeshop and no one works. There is no entertainment other than a cinema and coffeeshops."[385]

Plausible reasons for going mad in Dersim

During a period of leftist political mobilization, the lack of economic means and options other than sitting in a coffeeshop or hanging out in Palavra Square, the city center became home to Şeywuşen. With his shabby appearance, torn clothes and holding five lit cigarettes in his hand, Şeywuşen would hang out on the streets of Dersim, accruing the stories which would later make him "the most famous madman of Dersim" as Nurettin Aslan puts it in his book on Dersim's madmen.[386] When he came to the city center after his hospitalization, he was considered already "mad" by most of my interlocutors. The reasons for his madness, as narrated by my interlocutors, were numerous.

> Mahmut: Dede: […] He was working in road construction. Did not work after military service… He lost it afterwards.
> Çiçek: Do you know what happened?
> Sami: The options are endless, the state promises plenty (laughing).
> Mahmut Dede: Where would you know… But could be torture, insults…
> Sami: Sounds like the story of my uncle… who came back sick from military service, not talking, not socializing with anyone.[387]

While military service was given as the reason for "losing it" by Şeywuşen's relatives, those who knew him before he left home and became a public figure and Dersim's inhabitants who encountered him after his move to the city center associated his madness with various incidents of state violence. Zülfü Selcan, one of the first linguists to specialize in the Kirmancki language, and currently the head of the Zaza Language and Literature Department at Munzur University in Dersim, asserted that Şeywuşen's madness was an outcome of being born between two catastrophes:

> Imagine being born in 1930 in an Armenian village of Dersim… Before the wounds of the Armenian Genocide were healed, […] as a kid, you experience 1938. […] His grandparents had protected Armenians in their houses […] that was why the state intervened in such bloody ways into his village and its surrounding. What do you expect a sensitive person to become.[388]

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[385] Demirtaş Hıdır. "Ilimizde eğlence yerleri" *Halkın Sesi*. 11 August 1971.

[386] Aslan, *Dersim'in Divane Delileri*, 12.

[387] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Sami and Mahmut Dede in Berlin, December 2017.

[388] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Zülfü Selcan in Dersim, March 2015.

Ali Tuluk (74), who lived in Elazığ which has a significant population from Dersim, and who was the *dede* of the Pertek Cemevi, associated Şeywuşen's madness with the Dersim Genocide. "We can talk about violence now… It wasn't the case for so long. … so long, the Alevis suffered so much from violence… that we cannot speak of, cannot express. Şeywuşen witnessed 1938. What else is needed for going mad?"[389] For Şenay (24), who was from Hozat (a district of Dersim) and who was studying at Munzur University in May 2015, 1938 was the reason for Şeywuşen's madness but in her narration she emphasized the Kurds rather than Alevis:

> I told you before, ... I am really interested in Seyit Hüseyin's life story too. … I learned that he witnessed the loss of a close relative during the Genocide [1937–38]. ... I really wonder what needs to happen to stop our suffering!? Collective madness for all the Kurds? Do you think collectively going mad would help?[390]

What Tuluk and Şenay put forward is a form of proximity between Alevis/Kurds and Şeywuşen. Şeywuşen was one who witnessed, experienced and suffered from the violence that Alevis/Kurds were subjected to. All Alevis/Kurds had a possibility to become Şeywuşen, and to lose it, to go mad, due to their experience of state violence. In that sense, this narrative not only makes Şeywuşen "one of them," it embraces him as the embodiment of a specific history.

Şeywuşen's relatives narrated the experiences of 1915 and 1938 using a different set of references:

> Çiçek: What about the story of Şeywuşen losing a close relative during '38?
> Zülfikar: I didn't know that. (laughing) […] I learn so much from you about my relatives. (laughing) […] On our side [*bizim tarafta* of the village] not much happened… compared to the other part which is across the road. … The surrounding of Beydam was calmer.
> Mustafa: Then my family should all have gone mad (laughing) […] my two grandfathers, grandmother, my aunt and my father's uncle were burned alive in Türüşmek.
> Zülfikar: The massacre happened on the other side of the road… not much happened on our side.
> [….]
> Mustafa: But there are also stories from before '38. There was a Christian missionary school here. … Brad Pitt is my relative. Can't you see that we look similar (laughing) […] During 1915, the Christian missionary school took kids to USA; the dad of my grandfather was one of them. In Beydamı village people were in contact with those in USA until they died. … I remember letter exchanges from my childhood."[391]

Along with the genocidal violence, the 1980 coup d'état and the state violence that escalated in the aftermath of the coup in the 1990s were also mentioned as reasons for Şeywuşen's madness. Derviş (60), who was imprisoned with his father after the 1980 coup due to their involvement in the Maoist revolutionary organization MLKP, gave the following account of Şeywuşen's madness:

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[389] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Ali Tuluk in Elazığ, May 2015.
[390] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Şenay in Dersim, May 2015.
[391] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Zülfikar and Mustafa in Dersim, April 2014.

> I remember him [Şeywuşen], hanging out in Palavra Square when we [politically active people in the 1970s] were gathering there to stand against… whatever needed to be protested (laughing). […] He was not mad back then. He was homeless, yes… but… not really mad. Mad and homeless are different things, right? […] When I went out of prison five years later [in 1985] he was different. … I asked around and people told me that he was subjected to torture after the coup. […] Living on the streets of Dersim in the aftermath of the 1980 coup…. Not so easy, believe me.[392]

Along with direct associations with incidents of state violence, the madness of Şeywuşen was described in relation to his wife's betrayal. Ali (48), another bus driver on the route between Elazığ and Dersim, told a story which illustrates how it became a reference point for going mad: "Besides all that, imagine you caught your wife with your brother… It is like dying. But imagine dude [*moruk*], your wife with your brother. It is terrible."[393] In my interview with Yusuf Cengiz, an independent researcher and author of two books on the history of Dersim, he deliberately emphasized that Şeywuşen's military service experience did not leave any space for rumors. "Before doing military service he was working in road construction as my uncle's worker. He was a hard worker. But when he came back he was sick. […] Do not take seriously any other story told about him."[394] In the documentary by Egemen Adak and Hira Selma Kalkan, his childhood friend Hüseyin Kargın retold the story of Şeywuşen's sickness but avoided giving specific reasons: "Three people could not do what he could accomplish, he was that hardworking. He was very honest. Then… May God not show this to anyone … An instability occurred… for some reasons. He descended into this state. But even in that state he didn't harm anyone."[395]

> Referring to the widespread rumors about Şeywuşen catching his wife with his brother when he returned from the military service, Zülfikar stated:

> There is a lot of gossip about Şeywuşen Amca, probably you heard about it already[…]. But what would you expect from a community that does not produce anything other than gossip… Imagine that there is no television, no electricity, no proper routes for going to the city, nothing... […] He was staying at his brother's flat when he returned to his village.[396]

Interestingly, the relatives of Şeywuşen whom I refer to here were in touch with the interlocutors who narrated the story differently. Mustafa and Zülfikar would hang out in the city center, and drink tea at the Seyyid Rıza Square, named after the installation of a statue of the eponymous Alevi leader (see Chapter IV), and chat with those who associated Şeywuşen's life story with the events of 1915, 1938 or 1980 or related it to the betrayal of his wife. Although

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[392] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Derviş in Dersim, May 2015.
[393] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Ali in Dersim, May 2014.
[394] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Yusuf Cengiz in Dersim, May 2014.
[395] From the documentary directed by Egemen Adak and Hira Selma Kalkan entitled *İnsanın Deli Dediği*, shot in 2008.
[396] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Zülfikar in Dersim, April 2014.

those others knew that the family had a different account, they preserved their version of the story of Şeywuşen.

Failed masculinity: The glue keeping 1915, 1938, 1980 and betrayal together

The accounts of Şeywuşen's madness—not being able to deal with the experience and/or consequences of the state violence of 1915, 1938 and 1980, not successfully fulfilling his obligation to serve in the army, failing to "look after" or "protect" his wife, and having fits of jealousy—intersect with the gendered construction of male subjectivity in Turkey. While the accounts of betrayal were silenced by some interlocutors, those linking state violence with madness were expressed without difficulty. In that sense, in the repertoire of lunacy in Dersim, going mad after being exposed to state violence appeared to be a plausible reason for "losing it," while a betrayal was not.

Against the tendency to frame violence as an indication of "political decay" I approach state violence as an "integral part of accumulation of power by the national state apparatus."[397] Following Charles Tilly's model of state-formation[398] through war and state monopolization of violence, it is possible to say that the two genocidal events of 1915 and 1938 play a foundational role in the governing toolkit of the Turkish state. The construction of Turkey's national subject has proceeded through experiences of state power which massively mobilized its subjects through participation in, or being subject to, state violence. Consequently the experience of state violence during the formation of the Turkish state is fundamental to the construction of gendered citizenship which solidifies in the myth of the military nation (*ordu-millet* or *asker-ulus*). Failing to cope with the experiences of 1915 and 1938, and going mad in the aftermath, implies a failure in becoming a Turkish citizen.

The experience of military service is also complicated when Şeywuşen's ethnic background is taken into consideration. Wearing a uniform and taking up arms for the army responsible for the destruction of one's hometown in itself evokes emotional intensity if not an identity crisis. Since 1909, with the exception of non-Muslim citizens in the Ottoman army, every male citizen in the region has at least held a weapon if not made actual use of it or—if refusing to do so—has been exposed to humiliation in order to get a doctor's report

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[397] Youssef Cohen, Brian R. Brown and A. F. K. Organski "The Paradoxical Nature Of State Making: The Violent Creation Of Order," *The American Political Science Review* 75, no. 4 (Dec., 1981), 901-910.
[398] Charles Tilly. "Coercion, capital, and European states, AD 990–1990." In *Collective Violence, Contentious Politics, and Social Change*, pp. 140-154. (Routledge, 2017).

"diagnosing" homosexuality or physical deficiency. The male subject is expected, first, to be part of the army where he will transcend his ethnic, class and gender position in the social hierarchy in order to become a part of a larger hierarchical organization. Dersim, the "abscess" of the Ottoman Empire and later the Turkish Republic, was the location that resisted conscription for the longest time. Until military and bureaucratic institutions were established in the aftermath of the Dersim Genocide in 1938, conscription and taxation were not regulated in the region.[399]

In the historical construction of Turkish nationalism the core belief is that every Turk is born a soldier. The army stands at the center of the national constellation.[400] The myth of the military nation helps establishing the male's dominance in the family based on his experience of military service. The political-military difference produced by the state through the exclusion of women from the army is propagated as a "natural" cultural difference[401] which is transformed into the superiority of the husband based on the fact that he possesses the knowledge of the barracks, in other words, the knowledge of the nation, of arms, of machines, of the homeland.[402] Being dominated by the male partner defines the woman as an object to be protected. The state privileges the husband who carries the burden of protecting the woman and the honor of the family on the level of jurisdiction by reducing punishment in cases where he commits domestic violence because a woman cheated on him. This is how the discourse of "protecting the woman" contributes to the perpetual reproduction of the state institution's mobilization around the notion of honor. After successfully completing military service the man is acknowledged as the *reis* [leader] of his nuclear family. In this way the male subject can become a political actor in the newly established state without carrying the hierarchies of the army structure which is fundamentally based on larger family structures. [403]

What happens to those who manage the process unsuccessfully? Everyday language and practices are illustrative of this. A man who has not yet finished, or who refuses his duty of military service, is not counted as a real man.[404] The structural reflection of this is that a man

[399] Hüseyin Aygün, *Dersim 1938 ve Zorunlu İskan: Telgraflar, Dilekçeler, Mektuplar, Fotoğraflar* (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2009).

[400] Ayşe Gül Altınay, *The Myth of the Military Nation*: *Militarism, Gender, and Education in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

[401] Altınay, *The Myth of the Military Nation*,

[402] Altınay, *The Myth of the Military Nation*, 78.

[403] Nükhet Sirman, "Gender Construction and Nationalist Discourse: Dethroning the Father in the Early Turkish Novel" in *Gender and Identity Construction: Women of Central Asia, the Caucasus and Turkey*, ed. F. Acar, and A. Guneş-Ayata (Leiden:Brill, 2000). Deniz Kandiyoti, *Cariyeler, Bacilar, Yurttaslar; Kimlikler ve Toplumsal Dönüşümler* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1996).

[404] Altınay, *The Myth of the Military Nation*, 78.

should finish his national duty in order to have a regular job and/or to get married. Becoming a man requires successfully becoming a part of the military hierarchy and bearing the consequences of joining this structure. The compulsory experience of living in a military barrack for 6–18 months, being trained to kill, indoctrinated with the ideological justifications for the existence of a strong army, subjected to violence superior ranks often results in psychological problems. In the absence of recognized categories of "war trauma" or PTSD within the army (see Chapter I), those who are not able to psychologically or physically endure this cannot complete the process of becoming a "real man."

The narrated reasons for Şeywuşen going mad—his inability to cope with the experience of state violence, or inability to perform the role of the family leader—are tied to his failure to become a man; a failure which is perceived somberly. Muzaffer (45), a photographer with a studio in the city center, who started selling Şeywuşen postcards in the late 1980s said of Şeywuşen: "He was a miserable man. The military service… it was harder back then. He lost it at the army. […] It is a pity."[405] For Ulaş (55), who worked at Munzur University, was struck by one aspect of Şeywuşen's story: "As far as I remember he caught his wife with someone else on his return from military service… His existence on the streets was, in a way, touching a sensitive ground of masculinity"[406] for those witnessing his life on the streets.

Productive effects of violence: Formation of a new identity as mad

Going mad after an event that symbolized a rupture was a turning point in Şeywuşen's life. In this section I look more closely at the formation of his new subjectivity as a mad person. If failed masculinity was what was destroyed within him by violence, his transformation points to a process of creating a new identity as a mad person. In other words, subjugation to power does not only take from the individual, it forms her/him: "Power comes up with us from the field of potential. It 'informs' us, it's intrinsic to our formation, it's part of our emergence as individuals, and it emerges with us – we actualize it, as it in-forms us."[407] This production process suggests that state violence has also productive aspects. We have seen how there is a strong link between state violence and madness. Instead of concentrating on factual causality, I choose here to focus on the ways in which the experience of violence produce new identities. This choice of focus implies disagreement with the literature which argues that the state is

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[405] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Muzaffer in Dersim, May 2015.
[406] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Ulaş, in Istanbul, June 2015.
[407] Brian Massumi, "Navigating movements," in *Hope: new philosophies for change,* edi. Zournazi, Mary (New York: Routledge, 2003).

gradually weakening as an entity.[408] However, I do not argue for a view which reduces the state to its monopoly of violence destroying human and non-human actors.[409] Borrowing from Michel-Rolph Trouillot, my starting point is the assumption that "state power has no institutional fixity on either theoretical or historical grounds."[410] This brings us to a point of perceiving the state beyond its institutional and governmental sites.[411]

Although the landscape of Dersim is woven through with the experience of excessive state violence, I would like to highlight its effects on the creation and reproduction of subjectivities. In other words, I take state violence itself as a transformative practice that constructs and reconstructs subjectivities.[412] In the massive literature on political subjectivity I mostly focus on the emotional and affective dynamics of state violence.[413] In discussing the Partition of India in 1947, Veena Das argues that violence cannot be regarded as a solely destructive force interrupting ordinary life. Conceptualizing violence as a cultural and social force, she argues that it produces the ordinary.[414] Looking at violence as a productive force allows going beyond simplistic interpretations where violence is understood as "a tool wielded in the pursuit of power."[415] Instead of regarding the state as a tangible social institution or "stately persona" but rather as "the sites of everyday life, where people attempt to produce meaning for themselves by appropriating the political."[416] This approach explains the process of the affliction of otherness in Dersim, where communal attachment is strongly linked to a way of making sense of state violence. Using ethnographic data, I argue that the experience of genocidal violence seems to pave a way into the cosmology of madness that emerges in the

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[408] Ajun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1996). Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction: an ethnography of global connection* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[409] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo sacer: sovereign power and bare life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

[410] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "The anthropology of the state at the age of globalization: close encounters of the deceptive kind," *Current Anthropology* 41 (2001): 126.

[411] Trouillot, "The anthropology of the state at the age of globalization,"

[412] Michelle Foucault, "Governmentality," in *Foucault Effect: studies in governmentality* edi. G. Burchill, C. Gordon 8. P. Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 87-104; Allen Feldman, *Formations of violence: the narrative of the body and political terror In Northern Ireland* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991); Stuart. Hall, "The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity," in *Culture, Globalization and the World System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*, edi. Anthony D. King (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

[413] Begona Aretxaga, *States of terror: Begona Aretxaga's Essays* ed. Joseba Zulaika (Nevada: University of Nevada Reno, Basque Studies Program, 2005); Veena Das, "Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary". (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Yael Navaro-Yashin, *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey* (Princeton, 2002).

[414] Das, "Life and Words:".

[415] Coronil and Skurski, *States of Violence*, 2.

[416] Navaro-Yashin, *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey*, 135.

case of Şeywuşen. In other words, the ground on which the attachment to madness flourishes was prepared by waves of genocidal state-sponsored violence.

In her analysis of the riots that accompanied the Partition of India, Das emphasizes that "the body did not simply develop its own idiom and its own memory in response to violence and trauma as an act of representation; the appropriation of the body of the victim for making memory through the infliction of pain was itself an important component of the terror."[417] The reasons given for Şeywuşen's madness create a picture of one who went mad because he did not cope well with state violence or with the code of masculinity. It is notable that every significant historical reference of state violence in the history of Dersim that Şeywuşen life story covers is narrated as a reason for his madness. Based on my ethnographic research, I conceptualize the connection that my interlocutors draw between state violence and madness as the infliction of otherness that has been attached to the region more broadly.

To clarify what I mean by infliction, I turn to Butler's use of the Althusserian theorization of subject formation. Exploring the ideological state apparatus Althusser suggests that ideology "has the function of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects."[418] Ideology operates by interpellating individuals, telling them "hey, you there,"[419] in a way they recognize. This recognition, responding to the interpellation by turning back, is at the heart of creating subjects. By exemplifying this process through the encounter with police officer who hails people with "hey, you there," Althusser stresses that subjection to the law is the precondition of the creation of the subject. Judith Butler complicates the Althusserian notion of subjectivation by emphasizing the dimensions beyond compulsion into submission out of fear. In the search for recognition as a subject there is also a desirous attachment to authority that is at the core of the investment in a hegemonic power structure.[420] In this framework, subjectivation comes with an injury to which the subject is unavoidably attached.

> Called by an injurious name, I come into social being, and because I have a certain inevitable attachment to existence, because a certain narcissism takes hold of any term that confers existence, I am led to embrace the terms that injure me because they constitute me socially. As a further paradox, then, only by occupying – being occupied by – that injurious term can I resist and oppose it, recasting the power that constitutes me as the power I oppose. […] Any mobilization against subjection will take subjection as its resource, and that attachment to an injurious interpellation will,

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[417] Veena Das, *Critical events: an anthropological perspective on contemporary India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 188.

[418] Louis Althusser. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" in *Mapping Ideology*, ed. Slavoj Zizek, (London and New York: Verso, 1994), 129.

[419] Althusser. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," 131.

[420] Judith P. Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997b).

by way of a necessary alienated narcissism, become the condition under which re-signifying that interpellation becomes possible.[421]

Butler suggests that to construct a socially performed identity one needs to embrace the injury caused by interpellation. In the case of Şeywuşen we see a rejection of holding onto any injury that constitutes subjecthood. That is madness, the dissolution of one's identity. He has not performed a coherent narrative, developed attachment to an incident of state violence or invested in creating his identity around an identity-narrative. In the absence of personal performance, the injury is attributed to him. Şeywuşen appears as a mad person, one who "lost it" during the process of being interpellated by the state one way or another in the collective memory, connoting that the injuries of Dersim were projected to him. The incidents of state violence that aimed to "manage" the difference that was located in Dersim became the reason for Şeywuşen's madness: this is what I mean by the affliction of otherness. Şeywuşen appears as the performance of the injury of Dersim, which differs in different narratives according to the political standpoint of the interlocutor.

Performing the injury: Fluctuating dates, circular temporalities

Leaving the translation of madness to the following chapters (Chapters III and IV), where I discuss divinity and monumentalization, I continue here to focus on the role of state violence in the stories of Şeywuşen. One of the first stories that emerged in my interviews when I mentioned Şeywuşen's name was about him shouting at police officers, asking where were his people, and "did you bring back '38?" when he saw no one else on the streets of Dersim. Although this part of the storyline remains almost the same, the setting shows temporal and contextual variety. For instance, Mahmut Dede remembered the event as happening in 1969:

> There was the *cem*[422] of Pir Sultan.[423] The state stopped the *cem*, banned it. I was living in the center back then. Mehmet [a friend] went to the cops and explained that it is like a theatre play, it is the *cem* of Pir Sultan. If you go to the door, they shoot. But he did. It was in 1969, in the 8th month [August]. They declared the martial law… Sey Uşen was sleeping in the park. He was not informed about anything. In the park that is called Inönü Park[424] now. When he woke up he looked around and could not see anyone, everywhere was closed, restaurants, shops…Streets were empty. He did not have cigarettes. When he saw cops in from of the police station, he approached them, kicked one of the cops and shouted at them in our language [Kırmancki] "What did you do to my people? Did you repeat [19]38?". They explained the declaration of martial law, gave him cigarette. He refused. They [the cops] called the night watchman [*gece bekçisi*] who was a friend of Sey Uşen. He

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[421] Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power,* 104.

[422] *Cem* is the core Alevi ritual and literally means gathering. It includes music, singing and a particular dance called *semah*.

[423] Pir Sultan Abdal (ca. 1480–1550) was a Turkish Alevi poet whose importance in the history of Alevism comes from his participation in rebellions against the Ottoman establishment.

[424] Ismet Inönü (1884–1973) was a Turkish general and statesman. He served as the second President of Turkey (1938–50) and took an active part in the Dersim Genocide.

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explained him that everyone was ok. He [the night watchman] took Sey Uşen to eat something. Sey Uşen, the one considered mad, raided the police station and asked if they did again the same as they had done in [19]38. Because he has gone through [19]38.[425]

While Mahmut Dede associated this incident with a ban on *cem* gatherings in 1969, Ali remembered Şeywuşen's encounter with the police officers as having occurred in the 1990s:

They declared martial law, no one could go out. The experience of the [19]90… is very heavy here [in Dersim]. Sey Uşen wakes up one day and he cannot see anyone around. He gets afraid. He sees the cops on the streets and go shout at them "What did you do to my people? Did you kill everyone again, did you do [19]38 again?" The cops try to explain, he did not listen.[426]

Hüseyin Aygün, a CHP deputy from Dersim, wrote online about the same story with reference to the 1980 coup d'état:

He [Şeywyşen] was afraid of the days of census. He gets suspected that they again killed everyone [*insanları yine kırdılar*]. After the coup of 1980, in one of those days of curfew he went to the police station and asked "Where did you take my people to kill?" [*ero sıma na mılet berd koti qırr kerd*?].[427]

Several of my interlocutors associated this event with the 1980 coup d'état. Aygün wrote the text above in a popular independent online news platform in 2007, which might be one reason why this account was circulated more than others. It is important to note that in the interviews I conducted, my interlocutors referred clearly to 1938 and used figurative language such as *kırmak,* meaning causing extinction. For instance Hıdır (50s), who used to be in a Maoist organization and was now working at a university, said:

He [Şeywuşen] remembered the [19]38 during the curfew after the coup of [19]80. He shouts at the cops "Killers did you kill everyone one again?" People think that those words could not belong to a mad person. A time when no one could go out and open their mouth a mad person was far progressive than a sane one. When everyone was silenced the madman starts speaking.[428]

While such accounts illustrate that different temporal patterns of associations are in play, some events and situations make temporal references interchangeable. Core elements of the stories remain the same. For instance, Şeywuşen's association of the curfew with the experience of 1938, and his encounter with the security forces, are repeating elements. While these elements remain the same, there is a tendency to locate them in the period that seems more vulnerable, important or significant to the narrator. While Mahmut Dede, a religious figure, narrated the story of Şeywuşen's encounter with police officers in reference to the ban on *cem* rituals in 1969, Hüseyin Aygün, who was engaged in leftist mobilization in the 1970s and continued his

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[425] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Mahmut Dede in Berlin, December 2015.
[426] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Ali in Dersim, June 2016.
[427] https://m.bianet.org/bianet/toplum/101843-hacettepe-den-insanin-deli-dedigi-projesi
[428] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Hıdır in Istanbul, June 2015.

political career in the CHP (Republican People's Party, Kemalist social democratic party) retold the story in relation to the 1980 coup d'état.

The changing temporal placement of the event is illustrative in three ways. Firstly, it shows that stories of Şeywuşen provide a basis to voice the silenced experience of state violence that is woven into the landscape of Dersim. The story is shaped around an event of state-sponsored violence which the interlocutor prioritizes. In this way, the story of the madman becomes a reflection of the time period it is located in. Those who identify themselves with leftist movements put forward the 1980 coup d'état; those who identify with the Kurdish movement locate stories of madmen in the 1990s. Since Şeywuşen was in the city center from the late 1960s until the mid-1990s, his biography allows events to be placed so as to emphasize either the victimhood of those identifying as Alevis, affiliated with leftist movements, or affiliated with the Kurdish movement.

Secondly, the replicability of the temporal references is only possible through a shared sense of continuous state violence. The accounts quoted above indicate that the history of Dersim can only be written against the well-established understanding of the "gradual elimination or containment of violence through the state's monopolization of the regularization and organization of civil society."[429] What links the aftermath of the 1980 coup and the 1990s is the experience of massive arrests, assassinations and curfews. In other words, the free association of temporality is a practice that requires building upon the shared sense of the continual experience of state violence. What does it say about the historicization of particular incidents of state violence if the reference to dates becomes a matter of telling the stories the interlocutor prioritizes?

In an article published in *Dersim* (see Chapter III), Kemal Mutlu, the chairman of the İzmir branch of the Tunceli Cultural and Solidarity Association describes the state of emergency as the rule in Dersim:

> The ordinary… This is a way of being that Dersimis have been alienated from and almost forgot. After [19]38, which is regarded as a milestone in Dersimis' unconscious, Dersimis were not able to live the ordinary in a true sense. The process that is called the ordinary was interrupted for 24 years, first with the martial law declared in 1978, and afterwards with the military regime after 1980 [coup d'état] and the state of emergency. [430]

Although political violence appears as "the brute physical force that ruptures the flow of everyday life"[431] the continuity of state violence in this region illuminates the links between

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[429]Coronil and Skurski, *States of Violence*, 2.
[430]Mutlu, Kemal. 2002. "Dersim ve Olağan Hal", *Dersim*, İzmir: Etki Matbaacılık.
[431] Coronil and Skurski, *States of Violence*, 1.

"violent rupture and the routine maintenance of order."[432] In a place where "rupture" is so consistent, the "ordinary" loses its place and the difference between the fact and the law diffuses. Unhinging the dichotomy between violent rupture and the ordinary, the experience of violence becomes indeed constitutive for the ordinary.[433] In that sense, looking at Dersim, on the margins of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, gives a privileged perspective from which to understand the state, "not because it captures exotic practices, but because it suggests that such margins are a necessary entailment of the state, much as the exception is a necessary component of the rule."[434]

The role that the continuity of state violence plays in these stories suggests a different reading of the notion of trauma which goes both beyond the psychological framing "(the traces left in the psyche) and the popular usage (an open wound in the collective memory)."[435] Turning to Walter Benjamin's understanding of the historical reading of the past is illuminating. For Benjamin, "to articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it 'the way that it really was [referring to Ranke].' It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger."[436] In the stories above, Şeywuşen encounters the security forces and recalls another moment of danger. In other words, what is at the core of the repeated plot is that Şeywuşen brings into the present another moment, a similar experience, that happened in the past. Putting two "wounded memories"[437] into contact, Şeywuşen appears to suggest a creative engagement with loss; "an open relationship with the past—bringing its ghosts and specters, its flaring and fleeting images, into the present."[438] For Benjamin, this kind of relational engagement with loss is the key for altering historicism, which in his view produces only empathetic narratives with the victor.[439] Following Benjamin, Fassin and Rechtman define trauma "as the sudden emergence of memory at the moment of danger."[440] This formulation of trauma, which places the open wound in relation to former losses, challenges the bounded temporality: a beginning and an end of an event indicating a rupture of everyday life, which is inherent to the notion of

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[432] Coronil and Skurski, *States of Violence*, 2.

[433] Agamben, *Homo sacer*.

[434] Veena Das, Deborah Poole, "States and its Margins: Comparative Ethnographies," in *Anthropology in the Margins of the State* (Veena Das and Deborah Poole, eds. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press 2004).

[435] Didier Fassin & Richard Rechtman, *The empire of trauma: an inquiry into the condition of victimhood* (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 2009).

[436] Walter Benjamin, "On the: Concept of History", in *Selected Writings* (Cambridge: MA and London: Belknap Press, 1996).

[437] Fassin & Rechtman, *The empire of trauma: an inquiry into the condition of victimhood*, 28.

[438] Marc Nichanian, "Catastrophic Mourning," in *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, eds. David L. Eng, and David Kazanjian (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 99–124.

[439] Walter Benjamin, "On the: Concept of History", in *Selected Writings* (Cambridge: MA and London: Belknap Press, 1996).

[440] Fassin & Rechtman, *The empire of trauma: an inquiry into the condition of victimhood*, 28.

trauma. The tendency to perceive loss in relation to other experiences resists the closed narratives of trauma. The attempt to relate to the past in the present through loss, wounds and the experience of absence are the grounds on which a productive engagement with what is irreversibly destroyed is made possible. This possibility will be elaborated in the next chapters where I will discuss the translations of madness into divinity and monumental commemoration.

Thirdly, providing a basis to transcend the bounded temporality of the events and therefore the injury attached to them, the figure of madman offers a basis for a different kind of connectedness: one that goes beyond the experience of violence, the wound that binds different communities within Dersim. The emergence of the madman as a public figure, one who generates affective attachments that suggest a connection beyond the existing groups, can be explained through the way that the identity of the madman is produced. As Jacques Derrida famously argued, identities are constructed through a violently hierarchical difference which means that without the constitutive other, the identity cannot be formed.[441] In this frame, identities "can function as points of identification and attachment only because of their capacity to exclude, to leave out, to render 'outside', abjected."[442] In that sense, every identity has a "constructed form of closure" which forms its "margin."[443] However, although the term identity seems to suggest a "fantasy of incorporation," it is a process of "articulation, a suturing, an over-determination not a subsumption." Grounded in "fantasy, in projection and in idealization" it constantly destabilizes what is in and what is out.[444]

If the notion of identity is in itself shaky in terms of what is excluded and included, how to approach the label of mad? I argue that the kind of connectivity that Şeywuşen generates is only possible in the absence of a self-performed injury. In other words, only in the absence of personal attachment to a specific historical moment could Şeywuşen have become the embodied affliction of the otherness that has been attributed to the region. By becoming a figure who can perform the injuries of Dersim he generates a kind of connectivity that opens up a relatively free ground on which to share silenced stories of violence, pain and suffering in a way that is incommensurable, unlike alternative political narratives which are instrumentalized in the service of concrete political demands.

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[441] Jacques Derrida, *Positions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1981).
[442] Stuart Hall. "Who Needs Identity" in *The Identity Reader*. Eds. Paul Du Gay, Jessica Evans& Peter Redman, (Sage, 2000), 5.
[443] Hall "Who Needs Identity", 5.
[444] Hall "Who Needs Identity", 3.

Conclusion

> Madmen are my best friends in Dersim (laughing). I swear. Before anything else I go to visit Radyo Xıdır, Chelsea Celal at the center and Mustafa Kemal in Ovacık before I go my village. … Every time I go to Dersim center I for sure light a candle for the soul of Sey Uşen in front of his statue. … My grandmother was telling me when I was a kid that they are *evliya*s (laughing). I love our *evliya*s so much, (laughing) much more than all the other *evliya*s of the world.[445]

These are the words of Ilhan who was born in 1969 in south Germany to a *gastarbeiter* family which immigrated from Ovacık, Dersim. During his childhood and in his adult life he travelled frequently to Dersim and became involved in local politics with the Kurdish movement both in Germany and in Turkey. In addition to being a well-known face of the anti-fascist movement in Germany in the 1990s, during his graduate education he became a public figure in German and Turkish political and artistic circles. Zeki, who was born in 1968 and came to Germany after leaving prison when he was 18, also described how madmen occupy a special place in his travels to Dersim. After settling in south Germany he kept in "close contact with his hometown:"

> A considerable part of my luggage is still full of clothes that I bring to our madmen. Although I know that they will be deformed, ripped, torn in two hours I keep doing it for years. … I spend most of my time in Dersim with them, I especially love traveling with them, they make me a joyful person. … It is very sad each time I pass by Sey Uşen's statue… I am very proud that we have his statue at the center, but it also reminds… I don't know, I guess I miss hanging out with him.[446]

Zeki and Ilhan are not alone in referring to the madmen as an entrance point to Dersim or a significant reference point of their time there. Even before I asked about the madmen of Dersim, stories and memories of madmen were mentioned by several interlocutors in Germany. Those stories often contained strong emotional references, such as Zeki's words which express the joy associated with the time he spent with the madmen. At times when emotions were not expressed with clear emotional wording the laughter that accompanied the narrations became a gesture to decipher their affective charge. As with most of my interviews, my meeting with Ilhan was accompanied by laughter which was charged with diverse affects in different sentences. For instance, Ilhan's laughter as he said "Madmen are my best friends in Dersim (laughing). I swear [*vallahi bak*]" can be taken as an intensified expression of the absurdity of one's best friends being madmen in a place which is supposed to be "home" for the diasporic subject. The laughter reveals a contrast: for most people with a *gastarbeiter* background going "home" means visiting family members, but for Ilhan visiting the madmen was at the top of his list before he went to his ancestral village. Other moments of laughter in the quote above have quite different

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[445]Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Ilhan in Berlin, September 2017.
[446] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Zeki in Rüsselsheim, December 2016.

affective capacities. While mentioning that his grandmother attributed spiritual power to madmen Ilhan started laughing: "My grandmother was telling me when I was a kid that they are *evliya*s (laughing)." This time, laughter expresses a stance towards such spiritual attributes, belittling them by associating "symptomatic behavior" with feudal (and therefore backward) economic relations. However, his laughter in the following sentence connotes an atheistic preference of having an emotional attachment to that sort of saint over institutionalized, mainstream religious figures such as prophets or saints: "I love our own *evliya*s so much, (laughing) much more than all the other *evliya*s of the world."

Among many texts published during the 1960s and 1970s on the underdevelopment of Dersim, one article, published in 1968, attracts attention with its tone of embracing rather than criticizing it or prescribing a path towards progress. In *Tunceli'de Zekâ Grubu* (Tunceli's Intelligence Group), Niyazi Okaygün argues that the level of intelligence is higher in Tunceli than in other places and provides an anecdote to prove his point. While passing Elazığ on his way to Dersim, he encountered Deli Alo from Sorpiyan, a former Armenian village. Deli Alo and Deli Hıdo had an agreement on how to divide the city: the upper side of the route from the concrete bridge in the center to the bridge of Pertek would belong to Alo and the lower side to Hıdo. But since the bakery was on Hıdo's side, Alo could not find anything to eat and was starving. Thus Alo wanted to change the borders of their divided world. When Hıdo heard about this he had a smart idea to save his territory. He went to stand by the military troops near the Pertek Bridge and told Alo that if he ever wanted a war, his army was ready. The story ends with Hıdo getting afraid and Alo winning the battle even before it began. Okaygün's story illustrates that in Dersim even the one considered mad has a chance to develop his intelligence thanks to the influence of his surroundings: of being surrounded by geniuses.[447] The story of Hıdo and Alo, which could easily fit a narrative of underdevelopment, is here used to illustrate how great Dersim is. This is confirmed in the last sentence of the article: "Some wish that God created them in Europe or in the USA. But I say that God thankfully created me in Tunceli."[448]

The quotes from Ilhan and Zeki, along with Okaygün's article, illustrate that the figure of the madman is a sign embracing Dersim, a place where it is hard to survive due to political violence and poor economic conditions. I argue that such figures provide a zone of connectedness where the loss attached to cases of state violence acting as significant references

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[447] Okaygün, Niyazi. *Tunceli'de Zekâ Grubu*, Dersim: *Tunceli Kültür Derneği Yayın Organı*, Ankara, 1968.
[448] Okaygün, Niyazi. *Tunceli'de Zekâ Grubu*, , 13.

in identity formation can be transcended. It is a kind of connectedness that offers a productive engagement with loss[449] by bringing the loss to the present.

To make a genealogy of the specific kind of connectivity generated by the figure of Şeywuşen, in this chapter I first depicted the narratives about his madness and then analyzed the glue keeping different accounts together: the failure to become a "man" due to an unsuccessful engagement with state violence and/or his inability to fulfil the role of the male figure in the family. In other words, Şeywuşen's "madness" is narrated in relation to different "injuries" marked by the gendered construction of identity in Turkey. Elaborating on the role of state violence in the formation of new identities I depicted how the otherness attached to Dersim was inflicted in his story through various attributions of the experience of state violence. Looking at popularly narrated stories about Şeywuşen, I traced various translations of his madness: the ability to open a space to voice silenced experiences of state violence in the region; the possibility to relate the present through the loss of the past; the connectivity that transcends different bounded communities of loss. Focusing on the period when Şeywuşen started to be perceived as a holy-mad, a *budela*, I will now elaborate on the holy capacities attributed to him.

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[449] Eng and Kazanjian, *Loss*.

CHAPTER III. FROM A HOMELESS MADMAN TO HOLY-MAD: HOW ŞEYWUŞEN BECAME A BUDELA AFTER THE 1980 COUP

I interviewed Nadir (1950–2017), who left Dersim in the late 1970s due to political reasons and became a political refugee in Germany, in Russelsheim. He became quite surprised when I mentioned the prophecies attributed to Şeywuşen: "Prophecies? Interesting… I used to spend quite a lot of time with him but back then he was not holy at all (laughing)."[450] For those who, like Nadir, left Dersim in the 1970s and 1980s Şeywuşen was only a homeless madman whom everyone liked and took care of, to whom they brought clothes and offered cigarettes, and whom they laughed about. For those living in Dersim in the 1990s, however, Şeywuşen is also associated with a peculiar kind of divine power.

Şeywuşen's funeral was organized and his grave financed by the municipality, which was SHP-led[451] at the time. In my interview with Mazlum Arslan, then the SHP mayor, he stated that the grave became a sacred place (*jiara*) very soon after the funeral: "We build his grave at the entrance of the Municipal Cemetery. […] His funeral was one of the most crowded funerals of Dersim. We knew that that people will visit it [his grave]. They started lightening candles on the very day we buried him."[452] In a period of rapid political transition, Şeywuşen became known for prophecies and miracles which continue to be attributed to him today.

This chapter focuses on the shift in the way Şeywuşen was perceived by different actors, and the nature of the divinity attributed to him in the aftermath of the 1980 coup d'état. Starting with a brief explanation of the coup which fundamentally transformed the political landscape of Turkey, the chapter depicts its reverberations in the Kurdish region during the 1980s and 1990s. It shows how, in Dersim, state violence during the 1990s was framed as a "second 1938." Following the depiction of the socio-political atmosphere after the 1980 coup, the chapter locates the transformation of Şeywuşen from a homeless madman into someone who was holy-mad and unpacks the ambiguities in the holiness attributed to Şeywuşen. It shows what was targeted by the state during the genocidal violence of 1937–38 was recalled by the narratives

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[450] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Nadir in Russelsheim, December 2016.

[451] CHP along with other political parties was banned after the coup d'état of 1980. SHP was founded as a result of "a major split among the ranks of the social democrats after the return of the electoral competition in 1983. By receiving 24.8 % of the vote in the 1987 elections SHP became the main opposition party. In 1990 SHP became a full member of the Socialist International. In 1995 SHP unified with reformed CHP. James C. Docherty, Peter Lamb. *Historical Dictionary of Socialism*, (Oxford: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 289 ; Sencer Ayata, Ayşe-Güneş Ayata, "The Center-Left Parties in Turkey", *Turkish Studies* 8/2: (2007) 211-232, 212.

[452] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Mazlum Arslan in Dersim, May 2014.

of dreams and prophecies attributed to Şeywuşen. Contextualizing those narratives within the Dersim cosmology and the socio-political atmosphere of the time at which they emerged, the chapter argues that the holy-madness of Şeywuşen became a site where the loss of Dersim was brought into present.

The coup of 1980

The shift in the socio-political atmosphere in Turkey after the coup of 1980 helps explain the transformation of the way Şeywuşen was perceived. While the 1960–70 period is remembered for its mass leftist mobilization (see Chapter II), the picture greatly changed after the coup d'état on September 12, 1980. Between 1971 and 1980 the Turkish parliament had eleven different coalition or transitional governments. In order to settle the economic turbulence that started after the Turkish Armed Forces invaded Cyprus in 1974, governmental power swung between the self-defined social democrats, the CHP or Republican People's Party, the founding party of the Turkish Republic under the leadership of Bülent Ecevit on one hand, and the rightwing, Adalet Partisi (AP, Justice Party) under the leadership of Süleyman Demirel on the other. Following the occupation of a part of Cyprus by the Turkish Armed Forces, the United States had imposed an embargo on arm sales to the Turkish government and economic relations with major European states were frozen. With the worldwide oil crisis of 1973, the balance of payments deteriorated and the deficit jumped from 769 million dollars to 2.3 billion dollars in just a few years.[453] The government appealed for international debt servicing in the mid-1970s, yet rising interest rates blocked all the ways to further borrowing in few years. In order to prevent the expected economic collapse the AP government initiated a long-term economic restructuring program. On January 24, 1980, it announced a new economic package, known as the January 24 Measures.[454]

Interpreting them as the initiation of neoliberal economic policies, the January 24 Measures were widely protested by leftwing groups. The *Devrimci Işçi Sendikası* (DISK, Revolutionary Worker's Confederation) mobilized its members against the implementation of the January 24 Measures. Leftist mass mobilization faced increased security measures taken by the police forces, along with the threat of far-right mobs. In spite of the imposition of martial law, street clashes increased and fatalities reached 20 per day.[455] Resistance to neoliberal

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[453] Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi: 1908 - 2002*, (Ankara: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1998) 114-118.

[454] Boratav, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi,* 121-122.
[455] Henri Barkey. *The State and the Industrialization Crisis in Turkey*. (Boulder, Colo: Westview, 1990).

policies was broken by the coup d'état headed by the Chief of the General Staff, General Kenan Evren. The Turkish Armed Forces suspended the 1961 constitution, shuttered parliament and closed political parties and labor unions, declared a state of emergency, and banned exit from the country.[456]

The coup silenced members of the working and middle classes who were engaged in the political mobilization of the 1970s such as organized workers and students, politically active writers, journalists, artists and members of professional organizations. To eradicate any possibility of political opposition the military rulers sealed 23,677 civil associations, including worker unions. Officially 650,000 people were taken into custody for unknown periods; 299 of these lost their lives in custody and thousands were tortured. Around 250,000 people were put on trial for being members of illegal organizations threatening the national order and 85,000 people were put on trial for thought crimes. 517 people received the death penalty and 50 were executed. 348,000 people were banned from travelling out of Turkey. 30,000 people were expatriated and lost their Turkish citizenship. Tens of thousands escaped the country and became political refugees in European countries. 15,509 people were fired from their jobs for political reasons; 114,000 books were seized and burned; 937 films were banned; 2,729 writers, translators, journalists and actors were put on trial for expressing their opinions.[457]

This excessive use of violence not only erased the political power of revolutionary and leftist movements in Turkey, it silenced struggles for democratic rights and civil rights movements. The political rights granted by the 1961 Constitution, such as the right to strike and protest, were limited in the 1982 Constitution.[458] In the absence of political resistance, structural changes started happening in the economic sphere, such as the rapid transition from an import-substitution industry model to an export-led growth economic strategy, which resulted in the abandonment of welfare state policies.[459]

Political oppression in the Kurdish region took a different shape. Diyarbakir Prison was founded in 1980, following the coup, and was administrated by military forces. Until 1988, it remained a Martial Law Military Prison (*Sıkıyönetim Askeri Cezaevi*), which deeply marked the Kurdish experience of the coup. Testimonies, memoirs and documentaries about Dıyarbakır Prison No. 5 describe systematic torture—ranging from water and food deprivation to physical

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[456] Boratav, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi*,122.

[457]New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 85.

[458] Zülküf Aydın. *The Political Economy of Turkey.* (London: Pluto, 2005), 52-57.

[459] Kerem Ünüvar, "'70'Ler:'80'Lerin Öncesi '60'Ların Sonrası," *Toplum ve Bilim* 127 (2013): 30–47, 33.

violence and rape—which had a significant effect on the crystallization of the Kurdish identity and the start of the Kurdish armed struggle in 1984.[460] The ban on the Kurdish language and enforced participation in Turkish nationalist marches were the most visible symbolic elements of racial violence in the prison.

The ban on the use of Kurdish language was constitutionally legitimized by the Article 89 of the 1982 Constitution. By prohibiting the use of "languages other than those which are the primary official languages recognized by the Turkish state,"[461] Article 26 of Law 2932 stated that "no language prohibited by law shall be used in the expression and dissemination of thought." The Constitution of 1982 banned the Kurdish language without even mentioning it.[462] The same law, which was not annulled until 1991, also mandates that "the mother tongue of all Turkish citizens is Turkish."[463] Article 81, the Law on Political Parties (*Siyasi Partiler Kanunu*), decreed in 1983 and still in force today, stipulates that political parties cannot "claim that there exist national or religious minorities or minorities based on cultural or sectarian (*mezhep*) or racial or language differences in Turkey."[464] Following such regulations, printed and recorded material in Kurdish and/or about the Kurds began to be systematically destroyed by the security forces.[465]

The same article also prohibits political parties from "corrupting the unity of the nation by creating minorities in the country of the Turkish Republic through protecting, developing or propagating languages and cultures other than the Turkish culture and language.[466] This affected parties such as the Halkın Emek Partisi (HEP, People's Labor Party) which was formed in the 1990 by Kurdish politicians who left social democratic and leftist groups and organized around resisting the repression of the Kurds and Kurdish culture. HEP was banned by the constitutional

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[460] Ertuğrul Mavioğlu, *Asılmayıp da Beslenenler: Bir 12 Eylül Hesaplasması*, (Istanbul: Babil Yayınları, 2004); Selim Çürükkaya, *O Türküyü Söyle*, (Istanbul: Komal Yayınları, 2006); Mehdi Zana, *Prison No.5: Eleven Years in Turkish Jails*, (Watertown: Blue Crane Books, 1997); Amnesty International, *Turkey: Testimony on Torture*, (London: AI Publications, 1985).

[461] Welat Zeydanlıoğlu. "Torture and Turkification in the Diyarbakır Military Prison." In *Rights, Citizenship & Torture: Perspectives on Evil, Law and the State*, edited by Welat Zeydanlıoğlu and Jonathan Parry (Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2009), 73-92, 80.

[462] Eva-Marlene Schäfers, *Desiring Voice: Female subjectivities and affective publics in Turkish Kurdistan*, unpublished dissertation submitted to University of Cambridge, 2015, 9.

[463] Welat Zeydanlıoğlu. "Torture and Turkification in the Diyarbakır Military Prison." in *Rights, Citizenship & Torture: Perspectives on Evil, Law and the State*, (eds.) Welat Zeydanlıoğlu and Jonathan Parry, (Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2009) 73-92, 80.

[464] Paragraph 81 (a); online available at http://www.anayasa.gen.tr/2820sk.htm.

[465] Eva-Marlene Shäfers, *Desiring Voice: Female subjectivities and affective publics in Turkish Kurdistan*, unpublished dissertation submitted to University of Cambridge, 2015, 10.

[466] Paragraph 81 (b); online available at http://www.anayasa.gen.tr/2820sk.htm. For a discussion on the bans in the cultural sphere, see Eva-Marlene Shäfers, *Desiring Voice: Female subjectivities and affective publics in Turkish Kurdistan*, unpublished dissertation submitted to University of Cambridge, 2015, 10.

court in 1993. The shutting down of HEP marks the beginning of a history of Kurdish parties being subject to political violence. The Kurdish political struggle at the parliamentary level continued under several changed names.[467] The Özgürlük ve Demokrasi Partisi (ÖZDEP, Freedom and Democracy Party) was founded in 1992 by former HEP members. The systematic racial violence experienced by the Kurds led to different political groups being consolidated under the umbrella of the PKK in 1984, and starting a long-term armed struggle.

The war against the Kurds was not limited to policies targeting their language or political parties. The declaration of the Governorship of Region in State of Emergency (*Olağanüstü Hâl Bölge Valiliği*) in 1987, the establishment of new intelligence services focusing on the Kurdish region in the early 1990s,[468] and alliances between the Turkish security forces and far-right and Islamist groups such as Hizbullahî Kurdî,[469] all led to 37,000 dead in clashes between the years 1984 and 1999 in the Kurdish region of Turkey.[470] Taking into consideration internal displacement and migration to Europe by political refugees after the 1980 coup d'état and during the civil war in the 1990s, some cities of Turkish Kurdistan including Dersim seemed inhabited by more ghosts than living bodies.

Alevis, as the second-biggest religious minority group targeted by the Turkish state, started organizing through political and cultural organizations in both Turkey and the diaspora. In Turkish official history, the coup of 1980 is explained by the increase of violent political and sectarian clashes between right and left, between Sunnis and Alevis. The three major Alevi massacres happened before the coup: the Malatya Massacre in 1978, Sivas Massacre in 1978 and the Çorum Massacre in 1980.[471] In all three, Alevi and leftist politicians and intellectuals were attacked by rightwing groups. Alevi neighborhoods were plundered; social democratic and leftist organizations were violently attacked. The Alevi population was decimated with the subtle support of the security forces which helped rightwing groups plan the massacres and did not intervene during the violence.[472]

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[467] "Kürt Hareketinin Kronolojisi (1960lardan 1999'a)", *Toplum ve Kuram*, 4:(2010), 17-38; Hamit Bozarslan,

"Human Rights and the Kurdish Issue in Turkey: 1984–1999," *Human Rights Review* 3, no. 1 (March 2001): 45-54, 48.

[469] Hizbullahî Kurdî is a Sunni Islamist militant group that was active against the PKK. For more on Kurdish Hizbullah in Turkey see Mehmet Kurt, *Kurdish Hizbullah in Turkey: Islamism, Violence and the State*, (Pluto Press, 2017).

[470] Hamit Bozarslan, "Human Rights and the Kurdish Issue in Turkey: 1984–1999," *Human Rights Review* 3, no. 1 (March 2001): 45–54, 45.

[471] Mehmet Bayrak. *Bir Siyaset Tarzı Olarak Alevi Katliamları*. Ankara: Öz-Ge, 2011.

[472] Bayrak. *Bir Siyaset Tarzı Olarak Alevi Katliamları*.

The coup of 1980 legitimized violence against Alevis through new regulations. In contrast to the "traditional military hostility towards Islam," the military administration led by the General Kenan Evren choose to use religion as a potential cure to end the growing political tension between the Turkish state and Kurdish movement as well as leftist mobilization.[473] In other words, with the fusion of "Sunni Islamic ideas with national goals," the junta regime first "planned to foster a co-opted and less political Islam to confront a much-exaggerated 'leftist threat'"[474] and, second, encouraged Sunni Islam to become the glue keeping Turks and Kurds together. Appropriating the ideology of a "Turkish-Islamic synthesis" (*Türk Islam Sentezi*) overtly ended the discursive split between the state and religion which had been rhetorically promoted by Kemalist ideology. In addition, it established a unity in the military characteristics of the Turkish nation through Islamic belief. On the one hand, the military regime strictly restricted the activities of labor unions and cultural associations, banned all political parties, ended the autonomy of the universities, and imposed censorship on state-run televisions and radio. On the other hand, mandatory religious education based on the Sunni faith became a part of the school curriculum from 1982. Constructing mosques in Alevi villages against the inhabitants' will became common.[475] The timeless attributes of Islam were carved onto the Turkish essence by textbooks prepared under the junta:

> The Turks are from birth a nation of soldiers. Islam also commands one to fight for the fatherland all the time. . . Among the [pre-Islamic] settled Turks, there were those adepts of the Zoroastrian, Buddhist, Manichean, Jewish, and Christian religions. Yet it is seen that these religions did not conform to the Turks' spirit of warfare.[476]

Embracing Islamic history and leaving aside the rest, the junta discursively pointed to the Ottoman past as a reference to a glorious past, which also involved a series of massacres of the Alevi population. Unsurprisingly, "the Alevis did not subscribe to this new ideology, which presented Turkish Islam as Sunni Islam."[477]

Dersim in the post-coup period

Along with the excessive securitization of the region and attempts to establish domination through policies to drive a synthesis between Turkishness and Sunni-Islam, the period after the

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[473] M. Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Polilical Identity in Turkey,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)*,* 69-70.
[474] Yavuz, *Islamic Polilical Identity in Turkey.* 69-70.
[475] Yavuz, *Islamic Polilical Identity in Turkey.* 69-75.

[476] Cihad Tunç,, *Ortaokullar için Din Kültürü ve Ahlâk Bilgisi 3* (Istanbul: Millî Eğitim Basımevi, 1987), 115 cited in Sam Kaplan, "Din-u devlet all over again? The politics of military secularism and religious militarism in Turkey following the 1980 coup," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 34:(2002), 113-127, 120.
[477] Markus Dressler, "Religio-Secular Metamorphoses: The Re-Making of Turkish Alevism," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76, no. 2 (2008): 280–311, 286.

1980 coup witnessed increased Kurdish and Alevi mobilization. With "religion having become a major point of reference for identity formation" the Alevis, who were previously organized in leftist organizations, began "to assert Alevi identity within a universalistic human rights discourse and secularist rhetoric of religious freedom and self-determination."[478] In reaction to the embrace of Turkish-Islamic synthesis as a state policy, Alevi voluntary associations spread up all over the country.[479] A new wave of publications (re)producing a communal identity appeared in the region.[480] Dersim, which occupied a significant place in the collective memories of both the Alevi and the Kurdish movements, hosted mobilizations by both groups from the 1980s. This double mobilization in Dersim and in the diaspora started reporting systematically about the situation during a period when the press was strictly repressed.

The trajectory of the *Özgür Gündem* (Free Agenda) newspaper is a good example of the repression of the media during the 1990s. Launched in 1992 in Istanbul as the first nationwide newspaper run by Kurdish journalists, *Özgür Gündem* became a widely read media channel reporting on the Kurdish region. Starting from its establishment, however, its journalists were regularly arrested and accused of spreading PKK propaganda. The newspaper was banned several times, but continued to be published under different names until 2011. In 2016, following the end of the Kurdish-Turkish Peace Process, the newspaper was shut down and the editors of the newspaper had to face charges for "membership of a terrorist organization" [PKK] and "undermining national unity."[481]

Local newspapers experienced similar pressures. There were two local daily newspapers published in Dersim during the 1990s: *Tunceli'nin Sesi* (The Voice of Tunceli), founded in 1957 and politically close to rightwing parties (Democrat Party, Justice Party and New Turkey Party), and *Halkın Sesi*, founded in 1971, and politically close to self-defined social democratic parties (the CHP and SHP). *Tunceli'nin Sesi* did not published a single news item on the war-like conditions that dominated the city between 1995 and 1997.[482] The only trace that could be

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[478] Dressler, "Religio-Secular Metamorphoses, 286.

[479] Martin Van Bruinessen, "Kurds, Turks and the Alevi Revival in Turkey," *Middle East Report*, no. 200 (1996): 7–10, 7.

[480] Kabir Tambar, "The Aesthetics of Public Visibility: Alevi Semah and the Paradoxes of Pluralism in Turkey," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52, no. 03 (July 2010): 652–79, 655.

[481] The Documentary *Savaşın Tanıkları* [The Witnesses of the War] directed by Sami Solmaz distributed to international film festivals in 2012. Available online with English subtitles
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t34J3Xg5roc

[482] I could only access three years of issues in the National Library in Ankara, the institution responsible for keeping copies of every newspaper published within the borders of Turkey. *Tunceli'nin Sesi*, Tunceli: Tuncelinin Sesi Matbaası, 1995-1997.

expressed in the newspaper were about increasing control over the press in general,[483] and about increased restrictions on deserters imposed by the Tunceli military recruiting office.[484]

There are very few news items in these newspapers referring directly to the Turkish-Kurdish conflict, and mostly they are about the state providing housing support for those who suffered from terror attacks. For instance, one news item from 1995 covers a declaration by Ünal Erkan, the head of the Governorship of the State of Emergency Region (*Olağanüstü Hal Bölge Valilisi*) on new funding for those in need of housing due to the ongoing conflict between PKK and the Turkish Armed Forces.[485] Another informs readers about new housing projects for evacuated villages.[486] News items related to the conflict are mostly about changes to the regulations of the state of emergency. For example, they announce the easing of security measures by the Governorship of the State of Emergency Region,[487] or a shortening of time in custody.[488] While no news or opinion articles depict the socioeconomic situation in Dersim, there is a limited number of pieces on the conditions under which returns to evacuated villages are permitted to return to the evacuated villages.[489] The paper is largely limited to giving brief summaries of the new laws and regulations passed by the Governorship of the State of Emergency Region or the government.[490]

The editorial policy of *Halkın Sesi*, which published opinion articles along with news items and advertisements, seems to be based on reproducing the state discourse on terrorism. For instance, the only news item directly giving information about the local situation in 1994 is a survey by the journalist Ferit Demir before the local elections,[491] and does not mention that the election was boycotted by organized political movements such as TİKKO and PKK.[492]

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[483] "Bölücü Yayınlara RTÜK'den Takip" [Radio and Television Supreme Council chasing the seperatitst publishings], *Tunceli'nin Sesi*, Tunceli: Tuncelinin Sesi Matbaası. Monday January 2, 1995.

[484] "Tunceli Askerlik Şubesi'nin Ceza Kanununda değişiklik yapılmasına ilişkin kanunla ilgili açıklaması", *Tunceli'nin Sesi*, Tunceli: Tuncelinin Sesi Matbaası. Monday January 19, 1995.

[485] "Terörden zarar gören ailelere 100 Milyarlik konut yardımı"*Tunceli'nin Sesi,* Tunceli: Tunceli'nin Sesi Matbaasi. April 3, 1995.

[486] "Boşaltılan Köylere Lego Ev Projesi". "*Tunceli'nin Sesi,* Tunceli: Tunceli'nin Sesi Matbaası. August 27, 1996.

[487] "Olağanüstü Hal Yumuşuyor" *Tunceli'nin Sesi,* Tunceli: Tunceli'nin Sesi Matbaasi. April 19, 1995.

[488] "Gözaltı süresi kısalıyor", *Tunceli'nin Sesi,* Tunceli: Tunceli'nin Sesi Matbaasi. May 10, 1996.

[489] "Göç edenler köylerine geri dönecek". *Tunceli'nin Sesi,* Monday July 17, 1995.

[490]The only news item published between 1995–97 that offers critical input on the conditions of war in the region is the alternative report of the CHP (the founding party of the Turkish Republic) which suggests different solutions to the conflict such as ending the food embargo, reopening health institutions and abolishing the *koruculuk sistemi*, a regional securitization modal that is based on recruits and arming local people. "CHP'den alternatif Güneydoğu Raporu". *Tunceli'nin Sesi,* Monday September 17, 1997.

[491]Ferit Demir. "Tunceli'de 555 Kişi Üzerinde Yapılan Yerel Anket Sonuçları" *Halkın Sesi*, Monday Febuary 28, 1994.

[492] Referring to the interviews I conducted with Mazlum Arslan and Ferit Demir in Dersim, May 2014.

Compared to *Tunceli'nin Sesi*, *Halkın Sesi* is more informative about the governmental discourse surrounding the region than about what was going on in Dersim. Several announcements, signed by the State of the Turkish Republic (*Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devleti*), or by the Armed Forces of the State of the Turkish Republic (*Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devleti Güvenlik Kuvvetleri*), appear, calling the youth in the mountains directly, or their parents to convince their "deluded"[493] children, to surrender "to the justice and compassion" of the state.[494]

Both *Tunceli'nin Sesi* and *Halkın Sesi* mostly publish advertisements from local businesses[495] rather than reporting from the region. Both also reflect the tone of the nationwide mainstream media, in that they do not depict the situation in their region and simply publish news on governmental or security regulations. The editorial policy of using the terminology of terror and terrorism offered by the regulations, dominates in the content of the local newspapers.

In this political atmosphere, the publications of the political organizations and associations based in the metropoles of Turkey and in Europe were the only means to break silence and shed light on the situation in Dersim during the 1990s. Looking at the magazines published by Alevi, Kurdish, leftist groups and the solidarity associations reporting on Dersim in the early 1990s, one soon notices how difficult the experience of the 1990s was. The magazine *Dersim* was published by the Istanbul branch of Tunceli Solidarity Association, which was founded in 1990 "[t]o bring the past to the present, to explain what is Dersim, to insist on our values in the times of degradation."[496] *Dersim* was first published in 1995 in order "[t]o unify, to make our voice heard,"[497] with a special focus on documenting the destruction that occurred in 1994. The first issue published a report from three local governors of the districts of Ovacık, Hozat and Pertek. In the report, which was addressed to the prime minister's office, the three recounted that, starting from October 1994, there had been several operations led by the Armed Forces. They listed the houses burned in their districts, those who were taken by the Security Forces during the operations, those who were missing in custody and the animals that were killed or taken by the Security Forces. According to the report, approximately 200 villages of Dersim were forcedly evacuated and their inhabitants were either living in tents in the center of Ovacık and Hozat or had already migrated to Elazığ or Istanbul. Diseases were

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[493] Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devleti, "Değerli Ana ve Babalar" *Halkın Sesi*, Monday December 19, 1994.
[494] Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devleti, "Dağdaki Gençlerimiz" *Halkın Sesi*, Monday December 20, 1994.
[495] Atilla Girgin. *Türk Basin Tarihinde Yerel Gazetecilik*, (Istanbul: Inklap Yayinlari, 2001), 181-183.
[496] [The Board of Directors], "Haydi Görev Başına", *Dersim,* (September 1995:1), 3-4.
[497] [The Board of Directors], "Merhaba", *Dersim,* (September 1995:1), 3-4.

spreading among those who had to leave their villages, and the villagers were experiencing a food embargo.[498]

The state violence inflicted upon Dersim targeting the "sticky" signs of the region: its Kurdishness, Aleviness and mass support for leftwing politics. Kurdish mobilization, revolutionary groups and leftwing organizations which were engaged in democratic politics faced torture and imprisonment.[499] The Turkish-Islamic synthesis driven by state policy became solidified in Dersim through the closure of democratic associations, the building of mosques in several Alevi villages, and registration of massive numbers of young Dersimi Alevi girls and boys in Quran boarding schools outside Dersim.[500] The state punished the whole population in its war against separatism and terror and vacated 287 out of 417 villages in the region and condemned the population to a food embargo along with military repression.[501]

During the 1990s, several opinion pieces, interviews, personal accounts framed the experience of 1990s as the "second '38." One of these accounts, published in *Dersim* in 1995, is excerpted here to exemplify the relationship that inhabitants of Dersim were constructing with their experiences of state violence. The male interlocutor is from Ovacık district and was 15–16 years old during the Dersim Genocide in 1938. He was asked about his experience of the 1994 operation:

> I was 15–16 years old when I witness for the first time soldiers coming and burning our villages. What I mean [19]38 [the Genocide] had started. We were escaping in order not to be captured. […] [His uncle along with other relatives were taken to Yılan Mountain and were executed with gunfire. There were two people who could survive, one of them is his uncle. His mother wondered in the mountains for several days without finding anything to eat. Their village was burned.] Four years later I was conscripted. I did my military service in Edirne Uzunköprü. I was in the borders for four years. Those who burned our villages were not treating us as human. But then they put me as a guard in homeland borders. […] And now, I experienced the second pain. I was thinking such a thing could not happen again. But one day we saw that soldiers surrounded our village. They told us to leave our homes. Immediately, images of '38 came to my mind. They gathered us at the square of our village. We were looking at each other. We were all very afraid. While we were thinking that they would kill us by gunfire, our houses started being burned. I was watching my home. We were all crying.[502]

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[498]The report of three Muhtar of Ovacık, Hozat and Pertek p.22-23.

[499]Ayhan Işık et al., eds., *1990'larda Kürtler ve Kürdistan*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2015).

[500] Mesut Özcan, *Darbe yıllarında Dersim*, (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2017).

[501] Michiel Leezenberg, "Kurdish Alevis and the Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990," in *Turkey's Alevi Enigma: A Comprehensive Overview*, ed. Paul J. White and Joost Jongerden (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2003), 197-215, 207.

[502] [n.a.], *Tarihten Alacaklı olan Yaşlı Dersimlilerle Yaptığımız Konuşmayı Olduğu Gibi Yayımlıyoruz"* (September 1995:1) 17-19.

While the inhabitants of Dersim narrated their experience of state violence in 1994 in relation to their experience of 1938, the slogan of "Say no to new '38s"[503] was already finding its place in the demonstrations held in big cities of Turkey against village evacuations, burned forests, and bombed and destroyed *jiaras* in 1994 (see Chapter IV).

In the 1990s, for the first time, 1938 became something that could be discussed in the wider Turkish public sphere. The excess of state violence experienced in the aftermath of the 1980 coup, which peaked in 1994 with the rising presence of the Kurdish movement, opened up the "public secret" of what happened in Dersim in 1937–38 by evoking memories of genocidal violence. Discussions of what had happened, who was targeted by the state, and how Dersimis coped with the excessive violence occurred in each group differently. For instance, Alevi and Sunni Zazas in diaspora gathered in the late 1980s around the idea of Zaza independence based on language. While the magazines *Desmale Sure*[504] and *Ware*[505] were reshaping an Alevi Zaza identity, *Raştiye*[506] and *Pia*[507] advocated for the inclusion of Sunni Zazas in Zazaism. Groups promoting Zazaki identity emphasized the cultural and social loss of 1938 by attempting to document the Kırmanciye culture through writing in Zazaki, a language that has historically only been a spoken language. While groups such as PKK, which gathered around the identity of Kurdishness, blamed those promoting Zazaism[508] for fragmenting the

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[503] Selman Yeşilgöz. "Yeni 38'lere Hayır", *Dersim* (September 1995:1) 14-15.

[504] Desmala Sure started being published in Marne, Germany in the 1990s as the magazine of the Dersim Communist Movement. In the issues I accessed in the private archive of Kemal Kahraman (issues 2–16 published during 1992–94) discuss the ways in which a communist revolution with a perspective of democratic confederation could start from Dersim. The history and the culture of Dersim has been dealt with within that framework.

[505] *Ware* started being published in 1992 in Frankfurt, Germany with the following subtitle: *Zeitschrift für Zaza – Sprache und Kultur*. It is mainly published in Zazaki "against the dissolution of Zaza identity" due to the tendency among Zaza intellectuals to ignore their culture to become internationlists. "Çıkarken,, *Ware*, 1/1992, pp: 2-3. I could access the issues published between 1992 and 2000 via Kemal Kahraman's private archive.

[506] *Raştiye*, as a dualingual (Turkish-Zazaki) magazine, started being published in 1991 in France with the political vision of a humanist, multicultural "utopia" based on a democratic grassroots [*demokratik taban*] rather than nationalism. H. Çağlayan, "Türkçülük ve Kürt Sorunundan Zaza Sorununa", *Raştiye*, 1992:8, 17-21.

[507] *Piya* was published between 1988 and 1992 for 16 issues in Skarholmen, Sweden. Ebubekir Pamukçu, the editor, is known as the first to use the term Zazaistan and publishing a Zazaistan map in 1989. I was unable to access any issue of *Piya* magazine.

[508] R. Xeflan's response to the attacks of PKK members to the *Raştiye* Magazine shed light on the tension between Zazaizm and Kurdish movement. Xeflan writes, "Kurds seperated from Turkey's left and firstly gathered under the Revolutionary Democratic Kurdish Association (*Devrimci Demokratik Kürt Ocakları Derneği*, DDKOD). They were very much attacked by the Turks. Why getting organized separately against the enemy? Now, Kurds are reacting us in the same way. [...] We do have our own intellectuals. Ayre, Piya and

Kurdish movement, Zazaism was briefly promoted by the Turkish state in the Kurdish region precisely for this reason.[509] While different groups promoted different identity claims and backed them with their own historical narratives, the common point of these different positions was to discuss the Dersim Genocide of 1938 as a cornerstone of the Dersimi identity. Different interpretations of 1938 were shaping different approaches to the contemporary analysis of state violence.

Becoming holy-mad

In this post-1980 political atmosphere, when the engrained pain of 1938 was haunted by a new wave of excessive state violence, Şeywuşen started to be perceived as holy-mad. It was a time when Dersimi identity was reframed, restructured and consolidated under different labels such as Kurdish, Zazaki, Alevi, Kurdish-Alevi and Kurmanc by different political actors. The holiness attributed to Şeywuşen did not directly become a part of these identity narratives. In that sense, the rituals and practices woven around Şeywuşen was not explicitly instrumentalized by any of those identity claims (see Chapter IV).

My interlocutors, whose political stance varied from Alevism to the Kurdish liberation movement, communism to socialism to social democracy, narrated the shift in their perception of Şeywuşen in different ways. I group those around two major narratives, of which the first constitutes one pillar of the existing repertoire of stories told about how Şeywuşen started being perceived as a holy-mad. It is a turning point in Şeywuşen's reaction to the security forces during a curfew. After that event, which is placed at different points in the post-1980 period era in different narrations, the inhabitants of Dersim understood that he was not simply mad but a holy-mad and started respecting him. The second narrative proposes that the shift in the perception of Şeywuşen was in relation to his prophecies and miracles. In this narrative, the inhabitants of Dersim started believing in the holiness of Şeywuşen because his predictions materialized and his warnings protected people from real dangers.

Raştiye Magazines will continue to be published against all the obstacles." R. Xeflan, "Zaza Halkı Kendisi İçin Üreten Aydınlara Sahiptir", *Raştiye*, 2/6:(1992), 22-23.

[509]The declaration of the state of emergency rule's local governor of Tunceli (Olağanüstü Hal Bölge Valisi) Ünal Erkan in the 1994 was widely quoted in magazines published in the 1990s: "Zazas are not Kurdish, Zazaki language is not Kurdish language; Zazas are coming from Central Asia and they are Turks." Faik Bulut. "Dersim ve Dersimli Üstüne Notlar" *Dersim, Tunceli Kültür ve Dayanisma Dernegi Yayin Organi*, Istanbul: Dilek Matbaasi 1/1:(1995), 5-8.

I begin by expanding on the first narration. A frequently told story of Şeywuşen is from the post-1980 coup period. Although the details vary, the story is about Şeywuşen's reaction to the security forces during a curfew which was declared after the coup. Şeywuşen was living on the streets at the time, and what this meant was that he would wake up in the morning and encounter no one but soldiers and police officers. Although accounts differed, the common point of the various narrations is that Şeywuşen made an association between the 1980 coup d'état and the Dersim Genocide in 1938. This widely narrated story was written by a Dersimi public figure, Hüseyin Aygün, a lawyer and ex-CHP deputy :

> In one of those days of curfew in the times of 12 September [1980 coup], Sey Uşên, who could not see anyone on the street, went to the police station and said "What did you do to my people, where did you bring them to massacre, did you repeat the catastrophe of 1938?" [*Ero sıma oncia na mılet se kerd, berd koti gırr kerd, '38 oncia ame?*] This reveals the saintliness of Sey Uşên's madness.[510]

After the 1980 coup, when any political opposition was brutally erased and collective punishment became a mundane experience in encounters with the Turkish state, the "madman" of Dersim, a city that used to be perceived as a center of the radical leftist movements, became "the voice" of its people. In a place where the heroic narratives of resistance played a significant role in the construction of identity, Şeywuşen gained respect for his reaction to the securitization measures in the region. He had very little to do with this-worldly affairs and did not fit the codes of heroic masculinity that has been established during the Kurdish, Alevi and leftist resistance to state-sponsored violence (Chapter II). However, establishing links between state violence in the past and the present—in other words, bringing the silenced past into the present—seemed to grant a kind of respectability that transformed into a widely accepted holy power.

While the first narrative suggests that Şeywuşen gained respect after he became part of the heroic canon through his association of the 1980 coup with the Dersim Genocide, the second narrative suggests that he became famous because of his prophecies and miracles. Hasan Sönmez (45), a member of the Pilvenk tribe and a *dede* himself, recounted the process by which Şeywuşen started to be perceived as holy:

> Hasan Sönmez: I moved to the city center in 1983. He [Şeywuşen] was not at all known back then. I did my military service in 1990 and started working as an electrician. That was when our relationship started (*ilişkimiz olusmaya başladı*). I moved back to the city center again in 1993. He started to be famous at that time.
>
> Çiçek: You just said he was not famous...
>
> Hasan Sönmez: He was the same Şeywuşen, it is not related to a change that he went through.

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[510] Hüseyin Aygün, "Dersimde Bir Sey Uşen," Bianet - Bağımsız İletisim Ağı, accessed August 26, 2018, http://www.bianet.org/bianet/toplum/65850-dersimde-bir-sey-usen.

Çiçek: What it is related to then?

Hasan Sönmez: Look, for instance once a guy called Mustafa from a village nearby, who died two years ago, coming from Bava Mansur holy lineage, he is called Seyit Ali. He is a childhood friend of Şeywuşen. He run into Şeywuşen once when his brother was ill. Şeywuşen told him "Don't worry he won't die." After saying couple of words he went away. […] I have one disciple, he is still alive, who said once to Şeywuşen that he would take his ill mother to the hospital in Elazığ. Şeywuşen told him "She will die tomorrow, don't do so." And his mother died the day after. Those kind of stories started spreading and receiving attention. That is how people understood that he was not mad.

Çiçek: This is the time when you moved back to the center right? In the '90s?

Hasan Sönmez: Yes, he became a phenomenon in the '90s. [511]

Mahmut Dede (85), a respected religious figure in the diasporic communities and inhabitants of Dersim (see Chapter II), told a similar story. He said that people started respecting Şeywuşen out of fear: "Those who were making fun of him started experiencing bad things and they started respecting him out of fear. Some had car accidents, some saw him in their dreams and only after then they started believing."[512]

This respect, emerging from experience and/or fear, should be contextualized in Dersim beliefs. The widespread phrase "Miracles are performed when there is doubt. You don't perform miracles in the presence of believers"[513] refers to encounters between established religious figures and non-believers. Miracles are a part of the established rituals in Dersim Alevism. The major ritual of coming together around a religious leader on Thursday nights is called *cem* and the religious figure leading the *cem* performs a miracle: cursing unbelievers is part of the established tradition. Kemal Kahraman, a famous musician working with similar methods with ethnomusicologists, and who has recorded Kırmancki oral culture since the late 1980s, gives an account of the *cem* ritual which illustrates its atmosphere in post-coup times. During this time, *cem* rituals were still taking place in private spaces, before the establishment of *cemevi*,[514] the Alevi worship place (see Chapter V).

Kemal Kahraman: I was in high school, second year [Lise 2]. So, the year should be 1982. I went to the village where my sister was living. One of those mountain villages in Pülümür. It was the month of Xızır,[515] I mean February. […] Since it was the month of Xızır, our *pir* came to the village. […]

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[511] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Hasan Sönmez in Dersim, April 2014.

[512] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Mahmut Dede in Berlin, December 2017.

[513] "*Şüphenin olduğu yerde keramet gösterilir. Sen inanana keramet göstermezsin.*" Quotation from the interview I conducted with Kemal Kahraman, Berlin July 2016.

[514] The first *cemevi* of Dersim center funded in 1992. Until 1992 *cem* rituals happened only in private spaces in Dersim. After 1992 the *cem* ritual continued to be widely held outside of *cemevi* but I emphasize that the description of Kemal Kahraman belongs to a period when the tension between *cem* ritual organized by the *cemevi* and by a *pir* independent from *cemevi* (See Chapter V) did not exist.

[515] Xızır is one of the most important figures in the Dersim belief cosmology. He is believed to be one of the eternal prophets who rescues people in times of hardship. There is a three-day feast in his name which starts at

There were couple of youngsters [*delikanli*] in the village. Mehmet was a minibus driver. He was coming and going to Erzincan and the like. He was the modern character of the village. He had couple of friends, fervent leftists. […] They were talking all day long. "This *pir* will come to our village. All those exploiters" etc. Anyway, *pir* came and stayed in the house of my sister's father-in-law. He was the oldest of the village, the *kâmil*,[516] one that everyone respects. And their house was big enough to host the *pir*. […] They were fasting, and after the dinner they were gathering in a different person's house to have a conversation. […] Mehmet's friends, those who were gossiping about the *pir* were also a part of that community. […] Anyway, on the evening that links Thursday to Friday, there would be *cem*. On the third day of fasting. […] I heard at some point *pir* saying: "put the fire on" with a nervous voice. Some elderly of the village got it and told the *pir* not to take the youngsters serious. We got that *pir* would perform a prophecy (*keramet*).

Çicek: So did he perform prophecy to give them a lesson?

Kemal Kahraman: You perform prophecy where there is doubt. You don't do it in front of believers. Anyway, people were coming after breaking fast… We gathered. […] The young ones, I mean us, we were sitting closer to towards the door. There was a hierarchical seat plan. […] *Pir* started singing. He prayed, singed. […] And at some point, he took one of the burning logs and started dancing with it… The fire of the wood died down. It started being very smoky. *Pir* was continuing to dance with the wood… I didn't get what was really happening. And I was sitting right next to Mehmet and his friends. […] All of a sudden, he [*pir*] turned at some point to his back and took something out of his mouth and put it first in Mehmet's mouth and then to he others. And he went away. He left the room… We all stood up. Mehmet's and his friends' faces were all black… He put the fire out in his mouth and put it in Mehmet's mouth after that (laughing). […] He disappeared for 10 minutes, calmed down and then came back…

Çicek: And what happened to those boys?

Kemal: Nothing much (laughing). They were cursed [*lanetlenmiş oldular, kara çalındı onlara*]. It was a moment of tension, and that's what *pir* used to do in moment like those.

In Kemal Kahraman's narrative, the prophecy operates as a proof of the holiness of established religious figures. To re-establish hierarchy and the social order, they demonstrate their divine capacities in the presence of non-believers. Framing Şeywuşen as gaining respect through performing miracles and prophecies is thus an attempt to frame his holy capacity within established Dersim Alevi beliefs. In other words, Şeywuşen became a respected figure by making the unbeliever afraid of him, suggesting that an existing religious repertoire was applied for him. It proposes that he became part of the spiritual world by re-appropriating the roles of religious figures belonging to the religious establishment.

I argue that those two narratives do not exclude each other but suggest different turns in the biography of Şeywuşen. The first privileges his heroic characteristics, the second emphasizes the importance of the Dersimi belief system and identity while putting forward his holy capacities. Narrating what makes Şeywuşen a well-known and respected figure is closely

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the end of January. Erdal Gezik and Hüseyin Çakmak, *Raa Haqi, Riya Haqi: Dersim Aleviliği Inanç Terimleri Sözlüğü* (Kalan Yayınları, 2010), 207.

[516] The one who reached the idealized/desired level of maturity and virtuousness. Gezik and Çakmak, *Raa Haqi, Riya Haqi,* 99.

related to what the narrator prioritizes about the Dersimi identity. Those who defined Dersimi identity emphasized the history of state violence against revolutionary, leftist and Kurdish movements, and tended to highlight Şeywuşen's ability to perceive and voice a narrative of continuity in state violence. Those who were inclined to define Dersimi identity through prioritizing Alevi beliefs framed the shift in his life based on an acknowledgement of Şeywuşen's divine power.

What brings the two narratives together is that both belong to the period after the 1980 coup. As I argued in Chapter II, with the establishment of martial law and the imposition of the coercive power of the Turkish Armed Forces, the leftist mobilization was, so to speak, castrated, and the dominant masculinity codes changed. Thus, the emergence of Şeywuşen as a respected, even holy figure, were made possible. That is to say, after the coup, his own failed masculinity could transform both into a kind of heroism, and a manifestation of the divine. While tensions exist between institutionalized Alevism and the rituals and practices woven around Şeywuşen (see Chapter V), in the next section I will unpack the capacity of divinity attributed to Şeywuşen.

Unpacking the divinity attributed to Şeywuşen

The holiness attributed to Şeywuşen manifested in various ways, for instance, his appearance in dreams to actualize the wishes of the dreamer, and his capacity to see the future and to go beyond the outer and inner spiritual dimensions (*zahir*/*botîn*). *Botîn* (*batın* in Turkish) is one of the three layers of *A Dina*, the other world/elsewhere. In order to manage this-worldly affair *Haq* [God] created this layer and gave its access to holy people such as Munzur, Xızır and Duzgı. Needless to say, attributing prophecies and miracles to Şeywuşen is a way of including him into the existing repertoire of the Dersim belief system. However, the frame of this inclusion is not clear-cut.

The ambiguity starts from the terms used to define Şeywuşen's holiness. The terms *seyyid*, *pîr*, *budela*, *evliya*, *saf* and *bôme* refer to different statuses in Dersim Alevism and were used by my interlocutors almost interchangeably to describe the kind of divinity attributed to Şeywuşen. Some preferred to call Şeywuşen an *evliya* which is the abbreviation of *evliyatullah,* the friend of Allah.[517] It is used in Ottoman and modern Turkish to refer those who are capable of performing miracles and making prophecies. Others referred to him as a *seyyid*, a term used to describe the holy lineage of the Twelve Imams. Since they are believed to come from the

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[517] https://www.nisanyansozluk.com/?k=evliya&lnk=1

lineage of prophets, they are considered sinless/innocent and are granted the ability to perform *keramet*, prophecies and miracles. The *seyyid* families are divided into three categories, with different functions and places in the hierarchical constellation of Dersim belief. These categories are *raywer*,[518] *pîr* and *mursid*.[519] *Pîr*, another label given to Şeywuşen, refers to someone who is responsible for the inner peace of his disciples. He guides his disciples in their everyday life and in their belief-path by shedding light on what makes one closer to *Haq* and the good. A *pîr* visits all disciples once a year, resolves conflicts between them and punishes those who are not following the right path. His visits conclude with the *cem* ritual he leads.[520] The *pîr* is one of the four fundamental religious figures of Dersim Alevism. He is hierarchically placed between the *mursid* and *raywer*.

While the three labels above refer to established statuses in Dersim belief system *saf*, *bôme* and *budela* do not occupy clear hierarchical positions. *Saf,* which means pure, refers to a general characteristic of spiritual goodness. In this cosmology, being a naïve and pure person means not to be attached to the material world and instead preoccupied with the inner self.[521] While *bôme* literally means mad in Zazaki, its spiritual load is debatable. If a *bôme* comes from a *seyyid* family, he or she can be considered holy-mad. Otherwise, it is also used for village idiots.

The term *budela* was the term used most widely to describe Şeywuşen. It was defined by several of my interlocutors as a pure, naïve person who has inherited divine power through his lineage. For instance, Hasan Sönmez defined it as follows:

> Çiçek: Am I getting it correct, you mean that *budelalık* has a long history within Dersim belief cosmology?
> Hasan: Yes, it is an old tradition. *budela* in Dersim is those naïve and pure people who carry a spiritual [*manevi*] value. We have them in every tribe. In some there are more, in some there are less.[522]

Mahmut Dede had a similar definition. In the interview, he corrected me when I used the word *deli*, mad, instead of *budela* to refer to a figure known as Mad Ali. After correcting me Mahmut Dede explained the meaning of *budela*:

> Çiçek: Who is this *deli* [mad] Aziz?

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[518] *Raywer/rayber*, is a person coming from a holy lineage and functions as a spiritual guide who shows the path.
[519] *Murşid* functions as the *pir* of the *pir*s. He is the one who is addressed to solve the problems in times of conflicts between *pir* and *tawlib* or *pir* and *pir*.
[520] Gezik and Çakmak, *Raa Haqi, Riya Haqi: Dersim Aleviliği İnanç Terimleri Sözlüğü*, 145–46.
[521] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Mahmut Dede in Berlin, December 2017.

[522] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Hasan Sönmez in Dersim, April 2014.

Mahmut Dede: He lived in Erzincan, one of the holy people there, whom we call *budela*. Maybe *budela* comes from Buddha—I mean holy person.

Çiçek: Buddha as in Buddhism?

Mahmut Dede: Maybe it is similar to Buddhism (laughing). We call these very pure, clean people *budela*, not mad. We do not insult them.

Çiçek: What is his story? Is he coming from a holy lineage?

Mahmut Dede: Not necessarily. He must be one of the ordinary people. One of Erzincan *budela*s. Locals do not insult *budela*s; instead, they feed them, protect them, would not get in their way. These are our mad people. [523]

Different from Hasan Sönmez, Mahmut Dede said that *budela* do not necessarily have to come from a *pîr*, *rayber* or *mürşid* family. They could also be a *tawlib* (disciple). However, those who do not belong to the broader *pîr-tawlib* system are not considered *budela* but mad. Mahmut Dede expanded on the characteristics of *budela*s:

Çiçek: What makes *budela*s special? Why are they embraced by locals this much?

Mahmut Dede: On the one hand, that person (*budela*) is unaware of evil. He does not think of evil, do evil. They do not attack people; on the contrary, especially kids attack to them. We also protect *budela*s. They would be annoyed by children but would not beat them up. A hermit… who does not bother with life.

Çiçek: How do you mean?

Mahmut Dede: I mean they do not bother with anything but their own lives. Unaware of worldly things like politics, religion, or commerce.[524]

According to Mahmut Dede and Hasan Sönmez, the importance of the tribe they come from has a significant effect on the holy capacity attributed to *budela*s:

Çiçek: Does the holiness of Şeywuşen and Bava Bertal have anything to do with the fact that they are from the Kuresan holy lineage?

Mahmut Dede: In general, I can say yes. For instance, Mad Ali… […] his tomb is also a *jiara*. […] As you enter Tunceli, it is at Peri, in the village. The difference is, although Ali also shows miracles, people do not attribute that much holiness to him. He's not from the Kuresan tribe, for instance.[525]

Çiçek: So am I getting right, the other *budela*s are not known at all?

Hasan Sönmez: *Budelalık* is not specific to the Kuresan holy lineage. Agucans, Prianlis, Baba Mansurs, they also have them. Also in Ovacık, there is an area we call the Yesil Evliya.[526] But these are not well known in the center, where there are more people from Kuresans. [527]

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[523] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Mahmut Dede in Berlin, December 2017.

[524] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Mahmut Dede in Berlin, December 2017.

[525] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Mahmut Dede in Berlin, December 2017.

[526] Yeşil Evliya is the name of a *jiara* that is situated in Ovacık district of Dersim. It is a holy place that is believed to cure the mentally instable people. It is also called *deli [bôme] ziyareti*, the sacred place for mad people. I will give a detailed account of Yeşil Evliya in Chapter V.

[527] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Hasan Sönmez in Dersim, April 2014.

Kadir Bulut, a *dede* who headed the Alevism Research and Implementation Center at the Munzur University [*Munzur Üniversitesi Alevilik Araştşrma ve Uygulama Merkezi Müdürü*], dubbed the prophecies and miracles attributed to Şeywuşen as superstition (see Chapter V) and explained that *budela* is not a religious but a cultural term:

> Kadir *dede*: Şeywuşen is a *budela*, yes. But the things you just mentioned, like appearing in dreams, healing by touch, you would not believe those, nor would we. These are people's beliefs, I mean, superstition.
>
> Çiçek: Can you talk more on *budela*s then?
>
> Kadir *dede*: Of course! Look, here in our culture, it is considered a shame to put mad people in hospitals, we take care of them. Şeywuşen and Bava Bertal used to come to our *cemevi*. And Ibo still comes. We feed them. Neither do we insult them, nor despise them. [...] This has nothing to do with them being holy, we welcome everyone, including *budela*s.[528]

I will unpack the tension between institutionalized Alevism and what Kadir *dede* called "people's beliefs" (culturalization of belief) and *hurafe* superstition in Chapter V. Here, it is sufficient to note that two ways exist of approaching the term *budela*. The first refers to how the term exists in the Dersim belief system and indicates someone who possesses divine powers thanks to his belonging to the Kurdish-Alevi kinship structure (either coming from a family of a *pir* or a *tawlib*). He is considered naïve due to his unstable mental state and his indifference to the material world, and holy due to his miracles and prophecies. He is known for wearing tattered clothes, which are taken as a sign he is not preoccupied by this-worldly concerns. Since *budela*s usually perform outside of the normative frames of everyday life (they are homeless, living on what people offer to them) they are considered "deformed" versions of *dewrês (derviş* in Turkish), who possesses the divine power to perform prophecies and travel among those who are part of the belief system.[529] A *dewrês* has a connection with the other world/elsewhere even when alive, which makes him able to bring news from the future via dreams, reading the salt and/or water or by falling into a trance during the *cem* ceremony.[530] A *dewrês* who performs as the leader of the *cem* ritual performs miracles like the *pîr* and *dede,* such as putting their hands into boiling water, walking on fire. The *dewrês* tradition is not transmitted from father to son so everyone can become one. However, most of the *dewrês* come from the Kureşan holy lineage[531] which is also the case for *budela*.[532] The approach of institutionalized Alevism

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[528] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Kadir Bulut in Dersim Merkez Cemevi, March 2015.

[529] Dilşa Deniz, *Yol / Rê: Dersim Inanç Sembolizmi: Antropolojik Bir Yaklaşım*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2012), 253-254.

[530] Gezik and Çakmak, *Raa Haqi, Riya Haqi*, 67–68.

[531] Gezik and Çakmak, *Raa Haqi, Riya Haqi*, 67–68.

[532] In their dictionary of the *Terms of Dersim Alevi Belief System* Gezik and Çakmak do not go into details about the fact that most *dewrês* come from Kuresan holy lineage. I believe that this fact could be deepened by taking into consideration the possibility of *dewrês* coming from Kuresan holy lineage being commonly remembered due to the Kuresan family's presence at the city center and their religious and socio-political power. The case of

towards *budela* takes into account the characteristics of the mentally unstable and their indifference towards this-worldly elements of life but rejects their holy capacity. However, both approaches offer respect and care for *budela*.

I interpret the diversity of the terms used to describe Şeywuşen in relation to the time that he became a phenomenon. The Kurmanc social system, which was based on a tribal system mixed with the hierarchies within holy lineages, was destroyed by the Turkish state during the Dersim Genocide in 1938. This year started to be discussed as a reference point for Dersimi identity after the 1980 coup. Engagement with the past became a part of the craft of making sense of the contemporary in that period. Looking at the magazines published in that period, one soon notice that almost every issue allocates several pages to the question of "who we are," and engages with the intangible past.[533] In the absence of written sources in the Zazaki language, those who are involved in putting together the traces of history started turning to elderly Dersimis to "learn about their culture."[534] However, since genocide is not only the destruction of a group of people but also of the capacity to portray and voice what is lost,[535] attempts to re-discover the "authentic" Dersimi belief system, culture and language are still on the agenda of contemporary political organizations.

Şeywuşen became famous in a period when Dersimi identity had started to be debated by different groups and, as a result, Dersim Alevism was differentiating itself from other Alevi traditions in Turkey. It was a time of categorizing what was in and what was out. On the other hand, it also was a period when what was or was not part of the Dersim belief system was not strictly differentiated. While coming from the most significant holy lineage, the Kuresan, inherently made Şeywuşen part of the Dersim cosmology, his unconventional life and his unwillingness and indifference towards religious hierarchy made it difficult to label him. By performing what he inherited from the holy lineage, which was the basis of the Kurmanc social

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budela is similar to the case of *dewrês*. While the *budela*s coming from Kuresan holy lineage have more public visibility and attributed more/diverse divine capacity in comparison to *budela*s from other holy lineages. In the light of my interviews I argue that we know more about the *dewrês* and *budela* coming from Kuresan lineage due to their religious and socio-political importance.

[533] For instance, every issue of *Desmala Sure* allocates at least two columns to discussing the characteristics of Kirmanciye system Seyfi Cengiz, "Kırmanclar, Kırmanciye" *Desmala Sure*, 2/1992 pp:16; Zilfi Selcan, "Zaza Milli Meselesi Hakkında (Dili, Tarihi, Siyasi, Dini ve Kültürel Yönleriyle" *Desmala Sure*, 9/1993 pp:25-33; Faruk Yakup, "Zazaca, Kürtçe ve Türkçe dilleri arasındaki fark" *Desmala Sure*, 16/1996 pp:17-25.

[534] Most of the compilers including musicians started recording the elderly Dersimis in the late 1980s and mostly in 1990s. Metin and Kemal Kahraman are early examples of those who developed a curiosity about Dersim culture in the late 1980s and released their first album in 1991 based on the repertoire they created through recordings of elderly Dersimis.

[535] Marc Nichanian. "Catastrophic Mourning." In *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, (eds.) David L. Eng, and David Kazanjian, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 99–124.

system before 1938, Şeywuşen brought to the present that which had been lost. However, unlike *cem* rituals and *keramet*s that were performed by religious figures he did not perform his holiness within an established religious hierarchy. I argue that his presence was like a distorted ghost of the past that had no clear place even in the Kurmanciye system of which reconstruction was attempted after the 1980 coup. In the search for an authentic Dersim culture, his presence was an uncategorizable trace belonging to the past. In the next part, I will analyze different manifestations of the divinity attributed to Şeywuşen. This will make the difficulty in categorizing his divinity more concrete.

Prophecies and miracles

The divinity attributed to Şeywuşen and to other *budela*s manifests in dreams, prophecies, miracles and marvels. The word that I translated here as both prophecies and miracles is *keramet* and was widely used to prove Şeywuşen's holy capacity, which navigated within a broad spectrum from madness to divinity. *Keramet,* a marvel performed by an *evliya*,[536] is defined in the Islamic tradition through its proximity to *muʿdjiza* (Arabic) / *mucize* (Turkish). *Karāma* (Arabic) / *keramet* (Turkish) and *mucize* both involve a "breaking of the natural order of things" (*khāriḳ li'l-ʿāda*), in other words, "an extraordinary happening which breaks this "divine custom" (*sunnat Allah*) which is the normal course of events."[537] Although both are usually translated into English as "miracle," while *mucize* is the miracle of a prophet, *keramet* is the marvel of a saint. *Mucize* is performed publicly "preceded by a "proclamation" (*daʿwa*) and a "challenge" (*taḥaddī*) by means of which the prophet demonstrates incontrovertibly the "impotence" (*ʿadjz*) of his hearers to reproduce likewise the miracle thus brought about."[538] On the contrary, the *keramet* of an *evliya* needs to be kept secret.[539]

The *keramet* attributed to *evliya* have long been questioned in the Islamic literature. In the Sufi *tasavvuf* tradition, which constitutes one of the layers of Dersim belief (see Chapter I), the miracles attributed to *evliya* are commonly accepted. The tension of *evliya* to keep the marvel as a secret or performing it publicly occupies a significant place in the *tasavvuf* literature. For instance, Al-Ḥallādj/ Hallac-ı Mansur, an Arabic-speaking mystic and theologian

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[536] https://www.nisanyansozluk.com/?k=keramet
[537] L. Gardet, "Karama", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* (eds) P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 10 January 2019
[538] Gardet, "Karama"
[539] Gardet, L., "Karama"

(244–309 AH/ 857–922) famous for his teachings on finding God within one's own heart[540] was accused of the "divulging of marvels" (*ifshāʾ al-karāmāt*) which scandalized the Sufis. After declaring *ana 'l-ḥaḳḳ*" "I am [God] the Truth," proclaiming that he had no other "I" than God"[541] he was arrested, imprisoned and finally executed.

Hallac-ı Mansur was one of the reference points mentioned by two of my interlocutors when speaking of the *keramets* of Şeywuşen. When I asked about their definition of *keramet* I had diverse responses. For instance, Mahmut Dede explained *keramet* as follows:

> Mahmut Dede: I mean that is a power within humans. That divine, holy power, or whatever [*insandaki ilahi tılsım, güç veya her neyse*]. Of course, it's beyond reason. We call them miracles, or whatever. We haven't figured out the divine picture within humans, there are more secrets within us. Every person is a verse from the holy book, you can't finish reading it all.
>
> Çiçek: So this divine power [*ilahi tılsım*] is actualized because Şeywuşen and Bava Bertal were not into this-worldly things?
>
> Mahmut Dede: This divinity is in their soul. They inherited it. They didn't do themselves. They already had this way of being, this vision [*o hal, o bakış*]. Believe me they don't know themselves. They are not aware of what they are.
>
> Cicek: What kind of a way of being is this?
>
> Mahmut Dede: It is an intermingled existence. They removed the curtain in between *zahir* and *batin*. It is like becoming *vahdet-i vucud*. Being a part of it. Actually better being not aware of oneself (laughing). You know they are executed once they became aware of themselves. The end of Hallac is well known.[542]

While Mahmut Dede emphasized the divine power [*ilahi tılsım*] inherited by those who performed *keramat*, Hasan Sönmez puts forward the ability to see the future:

> We can call it foresight – but I do not use it in the sense of predicting the future. When you examine Hallac-i Mansur, he says one day you'll look from *Magrup* and see people in *Masrup*. It means looking from where the sun rises and seeing where the sun sets. They also called Hallac mad and decapitated him in 920 as far as I know. Nobody could touch his corpse for days, until Harun Resit comes and resolves the issue. […] Nobody could speak of Hallac's name, they are scared. But suddenly tides turn. Ali's supporters, Imam Hussein's supporters, Imam Cafer's supporters—the side which likes Hallac-i Mansur gets stronger. After that Hallac recently started to be known again. [….] Nobody can defend Hallac now, except for a couple of leftists. Nobody from the right wing or the Sunnis can defend him. Neither their knowledge, nor their power would suffice. It's still not easy to defend Hallac, nor is it easy to defend Pir Sultan. […] Şeywuşen is located within this spirituality [*maneviyat*]. That's how we're supposed to read miracles.[543]

Hallac-i Mansur appears in both narratives as a reference point to contextualize Dersim Alevism in the religious realm and to explain the nature of the divinity attached to Şeywuşen. In other words, Hallac-i Mansur situates the *keramet* attributed to Şeywuşen within a specific Sufi

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[540] L. Massignon and L. Gardet, "Al-Ḥallādj", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 11 January 2019

[541] Massignon, L. and Gardet, L., "Al-Ḥallādj", in: Encyclopaedia of Islam.

[542] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Mahmut Dede in Berlin, December 2017.

[543] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Hasan Sönmez in Dersim, April 2014.

tasavvufi context that is regarded as heretical within the dominant Hanefi/Sunni interpretation of Islam.[544] As we will see in the example of Mızur/Munzur in the first *keramet*-narrative below, the tension of keeping the divine capacity to perform miracles as a secret, which marks Hallac-i Mansur's biography, is a recurring theme in the mythological narratives of Dersim Alevism.

Keramet-narrative I: Protecting the lineage

The first *keramet*-narrative unpacks the amalgamation of different layers of Dersim belief system through the theme of protection. Zekiye (60), whom I encountered in Gola Çetu, one of the most significant *jiara*, sacred place and located at the center of Dersim, narrated a *keramet* of Şeywuşen as follows:

> Once, the fiancée of the daughter of his brother brought his fiancée a gold necklace. When uncle Şeywuşen saw this, he immediately told her [the daughter of his brother] that the necklace was stolen. Şeywuşen asked her to bring a glass of water and spill it to his hands. When she poured water to the hands of Şeywuşen Amca [uncle], the necklace smashed. She was shocked when she saw the pieces of the necklace fall down and attempted to collect them. Uncle Şeywuşen did not let her touch the pieces of the necklace. Right after that, the pieces of the necklace merged back again. Uncle Şeywuşen told the girl to throw the necklace into the Munzur River after tying it with a *çaput*.[545] And she did what uncle Şeywuşen told her to do. Days after her fiancée came to see her with the necklace in his hand. When he asked the reason why she threw away the necklace, she said that the necklace was stolen and she broke off the engagement.[546]

The ability to feel injustices is one of the recurrent attributes to Şeywuşen. There is a repertoire of miracles and prophecies in which Şeywuşen appears as the one with the knowledge of people who are engaged in "immoral" activities such as stealing, committing violence and cheating.

In Zekiye's account of Şeywuşen's prophecy, we see the intermingling of different elements of Dersimi beliefs. The role of water deserves attention in that narration. Water (*auwe/uwe/aw*) is considered the main source of life along with the soil, and both are described as *sır*, the secret divine force.[547] There are several rituals attached to water: praying to water against *nazar* (evil eye), or against jinn, *pîrs* dipping their hands into boiling water to perform prophecy, putting a knife in water during a marriage ceremony and the like.[548] Several water sources are considered holy and the Munzur River, named after a young *evliya* who became *sır*

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[544] Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Osmanlı Imparatorluğu'nda Marjinal Sufilik: Kalenderîler XIV-XVII. Yüzyıllar*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999, pp:11.
[545] *Çaput* refers to a shapeless piece of fabric torn from a larger piece and tied to a tree in order to make a wish.
[546] Excerpt from the conversation I had with Zekiye in Dersim, March 2015.

[547] Gezik and Çakmak, *Raa Haqi, Riya Haqi: Dersim Aleviliği Inanç Terimleri Sözlüğü*, 22–23.
[548] Gezik and Çakmak, 22–23.

while escaping after his prophecy became known by others,[549] is considered to be the most significant source of holy water in the region.[550]

Although there are several versions of the myth of Mızur (Munzur in Turkish) the skeleton of the plot is as follows: the master of the young shepherd Mızur went on pilgrimage or to Kerbela. One day Mızur went to his master's wife and told her that the master wanted to eat halva and he would take it to him if she prepared it. Knowing the impossibility of taking food to the pilgrimage site or Kerbela, the wife prepared the halva and gave it to Mızur, thinking that the impoverished young man wanted it for himself. Mızur took the halva and disappeared. When the master returned to the village, he said that the Mızur had brought him halva and was therefore the one with prophetic powers, not him. When the villagers moved towards Mızur to show their respect he became shy and ran away with a bucket of milk he had intended to bring to his master. While escaping from the villagers he fell and became sır [secret divine force] in the mountain that is now named after him. The spilled milk formed the 40 Springs of the Mızur/Munzur River, which have since been considered sacred along with the Mızur/Munzur Mountains where he became sır.[551]

The story of Mızur reflects significant points for unpacking Şeywuşen's prophecy: the symbolism of milk and the Munzur River. In the myth Mızur appears to be a young man possessing a secret power who protects the most important economic activity of the region: animal husbandry and milk. The protection of the milk, which can only be produced by females, connotes not only control over a vital product but also over fertility.[552] In the story Zekiye told, in order to protect the lineage Şeywuşen revealed the fact that the engagement ring was acquired in an immoral way and so prevented a marriage with a thief. In other words, by preventing the woman from going through with the marriage Şeywuşen acted as a protector of the lineage. He used water for the immoral activity to manifest itself and for the purified end, the breaking of the engagement, to be achieved.

In this keramet, Şeywuşen, whose holiness cannot be easily labelled, brings together different elements of Dersim Alevism. The story of Muzır is a mythical story which depicts

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[549] Gezik and Çakmak, 131–32.

[550] Gezik and Çakmak, 23.

[551] Deniz, *Yol / Rê*, 266–67. For different interpretations of the Myth of Mızur check Gürdal Aksoy, *Dersim: Alevilik, Ermenilik, Kürtlük* (İletişim Yayınları, 2017). ; Gezik and Çakmak, *Raa Haqi, Riya Haqi: Dersim Aleviliği İnanç Terimleri Sözlüğü*.; Deniz, *Yol / Rê*.; Ahmet Kerim Gültekin, *Tunceli'de Kutsal Mekân Kültü*, (Kızılay, Ankara: Kalan Yayınları, 2004).

[552] Deniz, *Yol / Rê*, 269–70.

three historical layers of Dersim belief cosmology that are strongly amalgamated. While Muzır is a holy character in Dersim mythology, the motif of disappearing after one's *keramet* becomes known belongs to the *tasavvufi* tradition that started spreading in Anatolia from the 13th century onwards through dervishes.[553] The figure of the master in the story symbolizes the *seyyid* in Shia belief, which spread among Kurdish tribes starting from the 16th century.[554] The myth of Muzır can thus be interpreted as depicting the encounter of old local mythical beliefs (Muzır) with the Shia belief system (master) and results with Muzır accepting the authority of his master and respecting its place within Shia belief cosmology by ending his life.[555] Şeywuşen appears in this *keramet* narrative as someone who could mobilize different divine powers attributed to different characters belonging to Dersim belief cosmology and, by doing so, could sense an immoral activity and protect the holy lineage. While this *keramet* brings together different layers of Dersim belief cosmology, the next three *keramet*-narratives reflect *tasavvufi* characteristics.

Keramet-narrative II: Warning about an upcoming danger

Another widely told story about Şeywuşen regards his ability to foresee an upcoming danger and warning people in order to protect them. I collected different versions of the story, in which Şeywuşen warned people about an accident and people who did not take him seriously suffered as a result.

> Çiçek: [...] you mentioned in our previous conversation once you saw him [Şeywuşen] telling someone not to take a ride, warning them.
>
> Zeki: Yes, right. […] We were sitting, drinking tea [at the coffee place at the city center] and Şeywuşen was wondering around. I remember him approaching a car, […] saying things to the driver. The woman sitting next [to the driver] got off the car. I thought he said something that made the driver angry (laughing). You never knew what he could tell. […] [When I approached the car] I got that he [Şeywuşen] was warning them. He said something like "don't go by car, you'll have an accident." The woman got afraid and she wanted to go by bus. The driver did not take it serious at all. But he was annoyed by things he said. […] Anyway, they continued by car. […] We heard in the evening that they had an accident […] and they survived just by chance. The woman came back from Elazığ to find Şeywuşen in the following days. She gave him *çıralık*.[556] Şeywuşen did not take the money. He was not take money from anyone. And no one was taking money from him. Good deal, no (laughing)?[557]

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[553] Erdal Gezik, *Geçmiş ve Tarih Arasında Alevi Hafızasını Tanımlamak*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2016), 143.

[554] Gezik, *Geçmiş ve Tarih Arasında Alevi Hafızasını Tanımlamak,* 144.

[555] Gezik, *Geçmiş ve Tarih Arasında Alevi Hafızasını Tanımlamak*, 149–51.

[556] *Iralıx/çıralık* is a small amount of money, food, clothes, or valuable that is given to religious figures in response to their religious service. Erdal Gezik."Çıralık (Hakullah): Hak, Pir ve Talip adına bir katkı sistemine dair" in *Dört dağa sığmayan kent: Dersim üzerine ekonomi-politik yazılar*, (eds.) Gürçağ Tuna and Gözde Orhan, (Istanbul: Patika Kitap, 2013).

[557] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Zeki in Rüsselsheim, December 2016.

Keramet-narrative III: Şeywuşen travelling faster than a car

Şeywuşen moving faster than a car is another widely circulating *keramet*-narrative. I collected five different variations of the story which also appears in Nurettin Aslan's collection of stories about Dersim's madmen.[558]

I use Devrim's narrative to exemplify the story. Devrim (60) was a former bus driver who plied the route between Dersim and Elazığ in the 1990s. He was a self-claimed communist who used to take part in organized movements in the 1970s and 1980s.

> Çiçek: Do you remember any of your encounter with Şeywuşen?
>
> Devrim: So many of them, I remember. [...] But let me tell you the most puzzling one. [...] I was going back and forth between Elazığ and Dersim. [...] I guess it was 1991 or 1990. I don't know exactly. I got to know him in an early age, high school years. We were throwing stones when we were kids (laughing). He was swearing at us and that was making us laugh (laughing). Quite bad, yes. But he used to like us too (laughing). [...] Anyway, I was coming back from Kovancilar[559] and saw Şeywuşen on the road. [...] I stopped to take him. People on the bus also wanted to take him in. You know, no one takes money from them. [...] I stopped by him. We went out of the car. Tried to take him to the bus. 10 people or so (laughing). We couldn't. He swear at us, he said he would go faster by foot. I gave him my bottle of water and we continued. [...] When we came to Dersim, [...] while parking the car I saw him smoking on the street. With couple of people we went to ask him with whom he came. He said he came by foot. People on the bus told me he does it all the time. [...] I also saw him two or three times after that. [...] I still don't know what to think about this. I asked other people who could take him to their car, no one did. I cannot figure out how he moved faster. [...] I also heard of many stories of him, not being injured by thousands of bullets or seeing future (laughing). I don't know, [...] he used to be the madman of our neighborhood (laughing). [560]

Keramet-narrative IV: Immunity against harm

The story of "not being injured by thousands of bullets" is a miracle story that Şeywuşen shares with Bava Bertal. Bava Bertal, who also belonged to the Kureysan holy lineage, died in 2011 and was a notable figure during his lifetime. He is also regarded as a *budela,* but in contrast to Şeywuşen, who is remembered for prophecies, miracles and dreams, Bava Bertal is mostly remembered for his funny performances, playing the drums and his beard. His grave also became a *jiara* and his photos were hung in public places, including religious sites. For example, his portrait hung in the *cemevi* of Kureys village.

The "thousands of bullets" story is set during a time of curfew. Curfews are a traditional securitization practice of the Turkish state in Turkish Kurdistan, using "the curfew times" alone as a reference point does not help the narrator locate their memory temporally (see Chapter II

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[558] Nurettin Aslan, *Dersim'in Divane Delileri* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayınları, 2015) p:9-12.

[559] Kovancilar is a district of Elazig province that links Tunceli to Elazig.

[560] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Devrim in Dersim, March 2015.

for a discussion of temporal references). When Şeywuşen appears as the main character, the story is set during the curfews after the 1980 coup. For Bava Bertal, the story may be set in the 1980s or 1990s. I will depict this story through the narrative of Mahmud Dede who talked to Bava Bertal about the event:

> Mahmut Dede: After the '80s… the era of martial law. As Bertal was passing by, the soldiers told him to stop but instead Bertal starts running away. In response, the soldiers start shooting with machine guns. Even without shoes, Bertal manages to run away. Then the soldiers call the next police station saying that a terrorist is approaching them, and they block the road with a panzer. When Bertal sees the lights, he goes and swears at them in Zazaki and says that they tried to shoot him. He runs away from the soldiers and takes refuge in the panzer (laughing). When they see that it's Bertal, they say that there's a madman, a *budela* here, it must be him and not a terrorist. They ask him what's happening, and he swears. They ask him if any bullets touched him and he says no. They ask him where he's going, and he says he's going to sleep. Where, they ask. He says he's going to Davut's place. And they take him to Davut's place.
> Çiçek: So everyone knows Bertal.
> Mahmut Dede: Yes, everyone knows him. Like Şeywuşen, everyone knew Şeywuşen too. Bertal doesn't speak with everyone though, but he speaks with me. After 2-3 years, I asked him if he was afraid when the soldiers tried to shoot him. He says he was afraid. How afraid, I asked. He said he wasn't wearing shoes so he was scared the bullets would touch his feet. As if they don't go though clothes (laughing). Would a sound minded man say this (laughing)? The next day they opened fire at Davut's house. After that he was scared to go there. He was saying he was getting berated for going there.[561]

In the version in which Şeywuşen escapes from the bullets, the plot remains the same except for the only locational reference, the house of Davut. Şeywuşen, also survived the attack of thousands of bullet without even a small injury, and returned to his sleeping place after soldiers recognized him and realized that they were targeting not a terrorist, but Şeywuşen.[562]

The theme of not being affected by the external factors is diverse and not restricted to bullets. The ambulance driver Murat (41), who several times took Şeywuşen to the hospital on cold winter nights, said that Şeywuşen was not actually affected by cold at all:

> Murat: You can call him mad if you don't know stories of him in details.
>
> Çiçek: What kind of details?
>
> Murat: Do you know any madmen on whom the snow doesn't fall?
>
> Çiçek: What happens to Ibo during winter? Does it snow on him?
>
> Murat: He is called Let-It-Snow Ibo (laughing).[563]
>
> Çiçek: I know.

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[561] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Mahmut Dede in Berlin, December 2017.

[562] Referring to the interviews I conducted with Kamer in Dersim, March 2015, and with Ali in Dersim, March 2015.

[563] Let-it-snow Ibo is one of the contemporary *bôme*s of Dersim. He was given this name because he sits in Seyyid Rıza Square and says, "Let it snow [*Kar yağsın*]" even in good weather. Ibo asks for money from people. He is not attributed any *keramet* or any other kind of divine power.

Murat: He disappears during winter, he doesn't spend much time outside. […] The weather is very nice now, come again during winter (laughing). […] I used to work as an ambulance driver. In the cold days, I used to take Şeywuşen to the hospital, for him not to get cold and for me not to get bored whole night (laughing). He was a good company. […]

Çiçek: So he used to freeze.

Murat: That's what I am saying, he wasn't. I was taking him anyways. […] He was alone on the streets with the dogs and I didn't want him to be sick, but actually there were no snow around where he used to sleep.

Çiçek: How?

Murat: I didn't believe it until I saw it either. […] I don't know how but it was not snowing on him. […] I know, yes it is weird. [564]

The ability to sense an upcoming danger (*keramet*-narrative II), being in different places at the same time (*keramet*-narrative III) and/or not being affected by harm or pain (*keramet*-narrative IV) are not widely attributed capacities to established religious figures in the Dersim belief system. While *pir*s and *rayber*s are expected to give advice to their *tawlib*s about their spiritual path or even mundane matters of everyday life, they are not expected to see the future. *Pir*s and *rayber*s use public transportation or their own cars and are expected to pay their travel costs. The capacity to see the future, travel faster than an ordinary person, being exempt from money exchange and being immune against pain can be contextualized within the *tasavvufi* elements put forward by my interlocutors.

Explaining the holiness attributed to Şeywuşen, Mahmut Dede stated that he was in "an intermingled position. He removed the curtain between *zahir* and *batin*. He is a part of *Vahdet-i Vucud*."[565] In Şeywuşen's case, being a part of *Vahdet-i Vucud* indicates a presence that reflects *haq* in the material world. Carrying the "truth" by being a part of the God-Universe-Human triangle, Şeywuşen performed god-like characteristics. For instance, flying is a recurring theme and is attributed to Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, one of the key figures of *tasavvufi* belief.[566] Traveling or moving independently from the spatial and temporal constraints can be contextualized within the same tradition. As observed in the last three *keramet*s attributed to Şeywuşen, being a carrier of *tasavvufi* "truth" translates into a temporary ability to see the future, being exempt from material conditions and not sensing pain.

The broad themes of the prophecies and miracles attributed to Şeywuşen are similar to the themes of dreams in which he appears. In both, he often appears to save people from possible

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[564] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Murat in Dersim, March 2015.

[565] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Mahmut Dede in Berlin, December 2017.

[566] Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Alevi ve Bektaşi İnançlarının İslam Öncesi Temelleri*, (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003), 236.

harm and to help them to achieve a morally better life. The main difference is that supernatural elements come to the fore in miracles and prophecies compared to dreams.

Dreams of Şeywuşen

Şeywuşen plays a leading role in many dream narratives. Interlocutors who recalled the late 1980s and the early 1990s said that he became an internationally well-known figure during that period and even appeared in dreams of Dersimis in the diaspora. Hasan Sönmez who was selling Şeywuşen's photographs in the 1990s states that: "Seyit Hüseyin was already a phenomenon before he was assassinated. I remember Dersimis living in Germany, Switzerland, and Sweden were coming to see him. There was a lady who came from Zurich to see Seyit Hüseyin because she saw him in her dream."[567]

Like prophecies and miracles, the significance of dreams in Dersim belief cosmology needs to be contextualized within Islamic and especially within Sufi tradition. Dream interpretation is not necessarily considered a heterodox practice in Islamic thought; on the contrary it has been part of the orthodox discipline starting from the medieval Muslim literature.[568] Classical and contemporary Islamic dream manuals generally categorize dreams as such: "dreams that are inspired by the devil or evil spirits (*hulm*), dreams that mirror the dreamer's wishes and worries (*hadīth nafsī*); and divinely inspired dreams or visions (*ru´ya*)."[569] However, in Ottoman and modern Turkish spiritually endorsed dreams are not differentiated and the word *ru´ya*/*rüya* refers to dreams in general.

An important political role was attributed to dreams in the Ottoman Empire. The very formation of the empire was said to be motivated by a dream attributed to either its founder Osman Gazi or his father Ertugrul Gazi.[570] Fatih Sultan Mehmed first saw in his dream the conquest of Constantinople and then realized it. Murad III wrote to Sucra Dede to interpret his dreams from the time he was a *sehzade*, prince, in Manisa.[571] However, dreams were not important only when they were dreamt by sultans. Dream interpretation played a special role in Sufi belief and was widespread among Ottoman subjects.[572] Like many other practitioners of

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[567] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Hasan Sönmez in Dersim, March 2015.
[568] Amira Mittermaier, *Dreams That Matter: Egyptian Landscapes of the Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 6. Cemal Kafadar, *Kim var imiş biz burada yoğ iken: dört Osmanlı: yeniçeri, tüccar, derviş ve hatun* (İstanbul: Metis, 2009), 139.
[569] Mittermaier, *Dreams That Matter*, 6.
[570] Finkel, Caroline. 2005. *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1923*. New York: Basic Books.
[571] Kafadar. *Kim var imiş biz burada yoğ iken,* 144.
[572] Kafadar, *Kim var imiş biz burada yoğ iken,* 138-139.

Sufism, Ottoman sheiks, especially those belonging to the Halveti and Bayrami orders, used dreams in training their disciples. The best-known example is of the Halveti sheikh Sinan Efendi (d.1529) who wanted his disciples to report to their sheiks all their dreams, and listened all to monitor their spiritual states.[573] While believing in dreams is part of being *seriat ehli*, a follower of Islamic rules, disregarding dreams can be a reason for being considered a *düşkün*, an excommunicated.[574] Few in number, there are also some Islamic traditions where dreams are tagged as superstition and thus disregarded. The Iktibas Magazine circle is an example of a refusal of dream interpretation, labeling it as superstition (*hurafe*) or degeneration (*yozlaşma*).[575]

Similar to the Sufi *tassavufi* tradition, spiritually endorsed dreams are taken seriously in Dersim belief cosmology. Erdal Gezik, a prominent anthropologist studying Dersim's belief system, categorizes divinely-inspired dreams as follows: Dreams that warn the dreamer about an upcoming good or bad situation; dreams reminding the dreamer of a religious duty that she or he is yet to fulfill; dreams in which holy places and figures appear as a sign of something good that will happen in the near future.[576] I will use three examples of dream-narratives that represent different ways that Şeywuşen became a part of an existing repertoire of dreams.

Granting pregnancy

I collected the first dream, which depicts how Şeywuşen appeared in Gola Çetu, one of the most visited *jiara*s in the city center, from Zekiye (60), a distant relative of Şeywuşen:

> After I got married I couldn't get pregnant for long time. It made me very unhappy…. I really wanted kids, but you know that is *kısmet*.[577] One night I saw Uncle Sewuşen in my dream. He appeared to me behind a transparent curtain. I couldn't see his face precisely but I recognized his voice. He told me to wash my *yemeni*[578] when I would wake up and then what I want will come true. That is the only thing I could understand from what he was telling me. Then, when I woke up, I washed my *yemeni* and two months later I realized that I was pregnant.[579]

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[573] Aslı Niyazioğlu, *Dreams and lives in Ottoman Istanbul : a seventeenth century biographer's perspective*. (London ; New York : Routledge, 2017).

[574] Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı. *Melâmîlik ve melâmîler*. (Istanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1931).

[575] Ruşen Çakır. *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye'de İslami Oluşumlar*. (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1994).

[576] Gezik, *Geçmiş ve Tarih Arasında Alevi Hafızasını Tanımlamak,* 207-210.

[577] *Kısmet* refers to the situation of somebody which is determined by a spiritual power such as God.

[578] *Yemeni* is a colored cotton kerchief that women use to cover their head.

[579] Excerpt from the conversation I had with Zekiye in Dersim, Gola Çetu, March 2015.

The desire to conceive is an established motivational theme in the widespread practice of visiting *jiara*, sacred places. Expressing the wish to have a child by crying loudly in a place considered holy, touching holy rocks, leaving a piece of tissue or hair, tying a piece of rope, drawing the image of a cradle or (a more recent custom) leaving a rope cradle in the holy place, are some of the rituals woven around the hope for pregnancy.[580] I encountered Zekiye in Gola Çetu (see Chapter V) among a group mostly comprising women who were chatting about dreams they had had in which holy figures appeared. When I took part in the conversation I was advised to visit Şeywuşen's grave and take some soil from it so I would find a *hayırlı kısmet*, a fortunate/benevolent partner.

It is mostly women who visit the graves of holy people when they hope to conceive.[581] Indeed, when I visited the grave of Şeywuşen one afternoon in March 2015, I encountered a largely female crowd gathered around it, praying and crying, lighting candles and taking away soil to actualize their desire to become pregnant, find a partner, or heal the illness of their child or themselves. The appearance of Şeywuşen in Zekiye's dream is a part of a wider tradition of wishing for female fertility. Her deep sadness at not conceiving at the beginning of her marriage may be understood through the emphasis on women's fertility in Dersim's culture. The terms used for infertile women illustrate the sense of devaluation: *hışk/kevir,* meaning solidified, and *ter nebiye,* meaning dry, lifeless and faded, are commonly applied to such women.[582] Thus, the sadness of Zekiye about not having a child may be situated between a personal wish and her position in a patriarchal social system which prioritizes the female function of sustaining the holy lineage.

In this economy of wishes, dreams play a significant role. The appearance of holy figures is a way to communicate with those to whom dreamers are trying to make their wishes heard. In a way, a dream manifestation is a sign that the wish of the dreamer has been acknowledged.[583] In Zekiye's case, the sadness of not having had a child, and her wish to become pregnant, were heard by Şeywuşen, a *budela* from the Kureysan holy lineage. The acknowledgement was followed by an instruction: the dream Şeywuşen told her to wash her *yemeni* when she woke up. *Yemeni* and the transparent curtain are interesting details in the dream. While the transparent curtain between Zekiye and Şeywuşen is a sort of barrier

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[580] Deniz, *Yol / Rê*, 171–72.
[581] Gültekin, *Tunceli'de Kutsal Mekân Kültü*, 64–65; Deniz, *Yol / Rê*, 152.

[582] Deniz, *Yol / Rê*, 171.

[583] Deniz, *Yol / Rê*,183–85.

desexualizing the dream, the need to wash the *yemeni* at the end of the unconscious encounter connotes transgression.

Covering the head with a thin, transparent scarf is primarily practiced in Dersim when encountering outsiders and after marriage.[584] Dilşa Deniz, in her extensive work on symbolism in the Dersim belief system, interprets this practice as following: "Covering the head works in two ways. First, it shows that she is reserved to reproduce another man's lineage and second it carries the characteristic of limiting the facial expressions while contacting to opposite sex and his appreciation. In both cases it functions as a border, a barrier."[585] It seems possible to say that the need to wash the *yemeni* at the end of the dream implies a transgression has occurred in relation to possession. In other words the *yemeni,* which operates as a border indicating that Zekiye is reserved to reproduce the lineage of her husband, needs to be cleaned at the end of the unconscious encounter: the border must be restored. As instructed, Zekiye washed the *yemeni* when she woke up, and two months later realized that she was pregnant.

Saving the dreamer

While the first dream noted above was collected at a *jiara* the second was collected at Şeywuşen's grave. Interestingly, the words *mezar* (grave) and *ziyaret(gah)* (sacred place) share the same Arabic root. As with most figures attributed holiness in the region, Şeywuşen's grave became a *jiara* immediately after his death.[586] While other sacred places have a tradition of dreams seen at the sites themselves, this does not exist at Şeywuşen's grave which is in the municipal cemetery and is not a separate site at which people can stay overnight.[587]

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[584] Doğan Munzuroğlu, *Toplumsal yapı ve inanç bağlamında Dersim Aleviliği*, (İstanbul: Fam Yayınları, 2012), 140–51.

[585] Deniz, *Yol / Rê*, 114.

[586] Referring to the interview I conducted with Mazlum Arslan in Dersim, May 2014, and Mahmut Dede in Berlin.

[587] Sleeping over in a *jiara* in order to have a dream that is related to the wish that lead the dreamer to that particular *jiara* is a practice that usually happens in significant sacred places of the region such as Düzgün Bava. In other words, there is an established practice of worshipping (sacrifice an animal, light a candle, distribute *niyaz*) in Düzgün Bava and Munzur Bava *jiaras* and stay overnight for a dream that will illuminate the path towards the wish of the dreamer (Deniz, *Yol / Rê*. 183-185). There is a hierarchy between different sacred spaces and Düzgün and Munzur Bava are considered the most important ones in the region. There are also some other smaller *jiaras* where people stay overnight to have a dream. Yesil Evliya and graves of *budela*s such as Şeywuşen and Deli Ali are examples of these. Among those sacred places that are related to madness/holy-madness, only in Yeşil Evliya *ziyaret* do people stay overnight after worship to have a dream. From my conversations in Yeşil Evliya and at the grave of Deli Ali, July 2018.

Nevertheless, the grave is one of the spots where people exchange stories about their spiritually endorsed dreams.

Figure 6: The grave of Şeywuşen in the municipal graveyard

Figure 7: The gravestone of Şeywuşen

On my second visit to Şeywuşen's grave in March 2015, I met Güliz and Zelis. They had come to the cemetery to visit their cousin's grave, a former TİKKO guerrilla who lost her life in 2011, and stopped by Şeywuşen's grave to light a candle. They were not the only ones: his gravestone had been so darkened by the smoke of the candles lit around it, the municipality had put a candleholder next to it. When I asked if they knew Şeywuşen personally they said yes, but they had only started lighting candles at his grave after Şeywuşen appeared in Güliz's dream. From Şeywuşen grave to that of Zelis and Guliz's cousin is a series of revolutionary graves including Sakine Cansız's.[588] People do not light candles only at holy people's graves but also at the

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[588] Sakine Cansız (1958–2013) was one of the co-founder of PKK. She was shot dead in Paris in 2013 with two other female Kurdish militants.

graves of political figures. Among the explicitly politicized graves, where guerrillas' or revolutionaries' bodies were buried, Şeywuşen's grave occupied a little corner at the entrance of the municipal cemetery where people stopped to light candles, chat about their dreams and give *çıralık* to those sitting around the grave.

Şeywuşen appeared in Güliz's dream to save her from a robbery that was happening in her apartment as she slept:

> It was a shocking experience... I was shocked. Totally. I am not a believer at all, I mean I believe in some things (laughing). But this was… I don't know. […] It was a very hot night, summer of 2014, I guess. Şeywuşen appeared in my dream to tell me to close the window. I remember vaguely I was thinking why should I close the window now, it is too hot. Then he shook me and said loudly to close the window. I woke up at that moment and approached to the window. I wasn't really thinking what I was actually doing. But … then, I saw someone climbing towards the window. I shouted. […] He run jumped and run away. I still feel [*bi değisik*] weird thinking back to that dream.[589]

The shock that Güliz described is a repeated emotional expression about the experience of being enchanted for people who are self-defined atheists or who are, in Güliz's words, "not a believer at all." Murat (*keramet*-narrative IV), a self-defined atheist, also described his unease with his inability to explain the fact that it was not snowing on Şeywuşen. Such *keramet*-narratives— snow not falling on Şeywuşen, or Şeywuşen travelling faster than a car—are widely narrated as moments of enchantment by non-believers to express their confusion in how to frame their experience. The tension between their attachment to positivist values and their experience of everyday magic emerges in expressions such as "I was shocked." On the other hand, the *keramet*-narrative of a non-believer also serves as proof of the kind of holiness attributed to Şeywuşen. In other words, the non-believer's account is stronger evidence than a believer's *keramet*-narrative. That is why Murat and Güliz, and many others, emphasized that they were not believers. "Believing" in Şeywuşen's divine capacity offers non-believers the means to become a part of a community that exchanges dreams and *keramet*-narratives without following the structure of a belief system.

Bringing good news

The third dream-narrative operates within the framework of the existing dream repertoire. Hasan Sönmez, a *dede*, dreamt of Şeywuşen as a sign of something good to happen. The appearance of a holy person is a widespread theme of spiritually endorsed dreams.[590] What I find interesting about Hasan Sönmez's dream is that although Sönmez was a religious figure

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[589] Excerpt from the conversation I had with Güliz in Dersim, March 2015.

[590] Erdal Gezik, *Geçmiş ve Tarih Arasında Alevi Hafızasını Tanımlamak*, 207.

himself, an active *pîr* with his own *tawlibs*, one who believed he shared a spiritual cosmology with Şeywuşen,[591] Şeywuşen appeared in his dream to give him rather mundane good news:

> Hasan: I was waiting to hear from my cousin. A news about a land issue we had. It took longer than expected and I was getting nervous. [...] One night Şeywuşen appeared in my dream. [...] He didn't say much, or even anything. But I woke up knowing that I will have good news soon.
>
> Çiçek: Did you indeed?
>
> Hasan: Yes, a day later my cousin called me to say that the issue was resolved.

Thus, although many saintly figures appear in dreams to show the right path, bringing a spiritual message in the cosmology of the Dersim belief system Şeywuşen also appeared in dreams to help people with ordinary issues belonging to the material world.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I contextualized the shift in the perception of Şeywuşen within the socio-political atmosphere following the 1980 coup d'état. Using ethnographic data I also depicted the divinity attributed to him. Based on this data, I argue that the uncategorizable spiritual affiliation of Şeywuşen appeared in the political atmosphere after the 1980 coup as a fragmented, inconsistent trace of what was lost in 1938: the semi-autonomous religious and political system of Dersim which had its own judicial institutions and social structure regulating everyday life (See Chapter I). The holiness attributed to Şeywuşen operates as a regulatory of the ordinary without respecting institutional and structural frameworks. Prophecies, miracles, and dreams reveal the interwoven characteristics of local mythology, *tasavvufi* and Shia elements in the Dersim belief cosmology. The dreams and *keramet*-narratives operate as regulators of the moral sphere, protecting people from danger, protecting the holy lineage from degeneration, and helping the pure to reproduce and continue the lineage. The kind of holiness attributed to Şeywuşen is a celebration of ordinary for which the miraculous and engagement with the "elsewhere" is needed, even for non-believers.

I argue that manifestations of divinity are calls for a creative space operating in the interrelated spheres not only of the real and imaginary, but also the self and the other, along with self and sense of community and personal and political. Being enchanted by *keramet* and dream narratives suggest an ethic that goes beyond the assumptions of rational liberal subjects who consider themselves independent of immaterial circumstances. In situations where the

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[591] "The difference between us [Şeywuşen and him] is that I talk to everyone, otherwise we are sharing the same spirituality [*yoksa aynı maneviyatın içindeyiz*]." Referring to the interview I conducted with Hasan Sönmez in Dersim, March 2015.

agency of *keramet* or dream comes to the forefront, interlocutors like Murat and Güliz find themselves questioning the constitution of the "real" while religious interlocutors, like Mahmud Dede and Hasan Sönmez, contextualize those moments within their narrative about their belief. Both cases suggest a possible ethic beyond the self-contained subject.[592]

The community that is created while exchanging those narratives of dream and *keramet* is not a community of believers as is the case with the *keramet* or dream-narratives of *pîr*s. It is a community in which those engaged in leftwing politics and harsh criticism of the religious structuring of everyday life (see Chapter II) could find a place after the 1980 coup d'état. In the atmosphere of "rediscovering" what was destroyed in 1938, the meaning of Kurdish-Alevis and being a Dersimi, the divinity attributed to Şeywuşen offered an alternative way to engage with a past that had been lost or destroyed. At a time when the Turkish state was exercising its coercive power to excess, reminding the survivors of their experience of the Dersim Genocide, the holy-madness of Şeywuşen creatively brought the loss of Dersim into the present. I argue that, by bringing back the elements of the Dersim Genocide and engraving them into the present, Şeywuşen indirectly made the pain of 1938 voiceable and hearable.

In contrast to the political organizations that formed around particular identity narratives from the early 1980s, Şeywuşen did not target authenticity. He made no claim of representing the pre-1938 period. By not operating within established categories, the divinity attributed to him could enchant people with different approaches to the Dersim belief system through everyday marvels. By not demanding anything in return for his *keramet*s Şeywuşen operated outside of the frame of asking for acknowledgement. In other words, without asking for *çıralık* in return for his "service," and not carrying any identity claim, he refused to operate within the frame of identity politics. In Chapters IV and V, I will deepen this analysis on the creative ground that holy-madness offers to engage with the losses of Dersim by bringing them into the present. First, in the next chapter, I will unfold the political connotations of memorializing holy-madness in the landscape of Dersim under the state of emergency rule during the 1990s.

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[592] Mittermaier, *Dreams That Matter*, 5.

CHAPTER IV. TRANSGRESSING THE INTERDICTION OF MOURNING IN NATIONAL PUBLIC SPACE THROUGH MEMORIALIZATION OF MADNESS

Upon entering the city of Dersim, set spectacularly on steep hillsides above the Munzur River, one is greeted—as in any other city of Turkey—by a statue of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the "founding father" of the Turkish Republic. Walking down to Republic Square (Cumhuriyet Meydanı), informally known as Lie Square (Palavra Meydanı) where the statue is situated, one encounters another statue, of a young woman holding a pigeon on her left hand. Although this representation is officially called the Statue of Human Rights (inaugurated in 1996), it is associated with Zilan (Zeynep Kınacı 1972–96), the first female suicide bomber of the PKK, who blew herself up in Palavra Square in 1996. Proceeding from Palavra Square, and passing by the abandoned military barracks built after the Dersim Genocide, one sees in the center of the city a statue, inaugurated in 2010, of Seyyid Rıza (1863–1938), a significant religious leader of the resistance against the genocide. Walking a few lanes further down from the main square, one encounters a different sight: again a statue, but this time of a man holding a cigarette in his hand and who seems lost in contemplation. This statue is of Seyyid Hüseyin, Şeywuşen (1930–95), and was inaugurated after his assassination on the street where he used to sleep. It is considered the first statue of a madman in Turkey although Dersimis prefer to refer to him as holy-mad rather than mad in the pathological sense. A little further on is the last memorial in the city center: the Wall of Dersim 1938, where photos documenting the events of 1937–38 are exhibited.

In addition to these sites in the center, there were other two major sites of memorialization which were recently destroyed. Named after two PKK guerrillas who fought in Dersim, the Dr Baran and ÜŞ Beşe guerrilla martyrs' cemetery opened in October 2014. It was located in Alacık village, about 40 minutes from the center, in the district of Pülümür. The martyrdom complex included a museum where photos of the martyrs of the PKK and TİKKO guerrillas were exhibited. In October 2015, the Turkish Armed Forces bombed the cemetery.[593] On the centennial of the Armenian Genocide in April 26, 2015, a mausoleum in the memory of Armenak Bakırcıyan (1953–80) was unveiled in Xarik village in the Nazımiye district of

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[593] [The „PKK martyrdom" in Dersim was Bombed] "Dersim'deki 'PKK Şehitliği' Bombalandı" | Dersim News, Dersim Haber Sitesi accessed July 11, 2019, http://dersimnews.com/haberler/2015-10-17/dersimdeki-pkk-sehitligi-bombalandi.

Dersim. This leading member of TİKKO, of Armenian origin, was commemorated with slogans such as: "We condemn the Armenian Genocide, we commemorate Armenak Bakırcıyan" and "From Hrant[594] to Sevag;[595] the Armenian Genocide continues in its 100th year."[596] This mausoleum was also destroyed upon the order of the governor of the province (*valilik*) in December 2016.[597]

A third memorial site lingers between presence and absence. This is the Memorial for the Dersim Massacre in Mazgirt district. The memorial was left in ruination after the district governor (*kaymakam*) decided to disallow it in 2012, soon after construction began.[598] Along with these two destroyed sites and one half-built memorial, the statue of Cemal Süreya (1931–90), a famous poet, was inaugurated in 2013 in the center of his home district, Pülümür. Inscribed on the pedestal is the Poem of Exile 1938 (*1938 Sürgün Şiiri*), the only poem he wrote which refers explicitly to the Dersim Genocide.[599]

The center of Dersim is quite small: walking from one end to the other takes approximately 20 minutes, and it is one of the least populated provincial centers of Turkey with 38,504 inhabitants.[600] One might say Dersim is a ghost city, or an open-air museum commemorating state violence rather than an actual city for living in. Through a conversation between the three statues, this chapter aims at examining the relationship between the highly engineered landscape of Dersim and the commemoration practices that take place in the city. To do so, I first unpack the memory regime that the statue of Atatürk engenders. Taking his statue as the marker of the incorporation of Dersim into the national time and space, I turn to the invention of the cityscape of Tunceli through genocidal violence with an emphasis on military masculinity. After arguing that the conceptual and physical space of Tunceli is inseparable from the genocidal violence, I will demonstrate how the memory regimes woven

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[594] Hrant Dink (1954–2007) was a journalist, editor-in-chief of the bilingual Turkish-Armenian newspaper *Agos* and a prominent member of the Armenian community in Turkey advocating peace and reconciliation. He was assassinated in 2007 in Istanbul by a 17 year-old radical nationalist.

[595] Sevag Şahin Balıkçı (1986–2011) was a man of Armenian descent who was shot to death during his compulsory military service on April 24, the remembrance day of the Armenian Genocide.

[596] "Armenak Bakırcıyan mausoleum unveiled in Dersim", 04.28.2015. *Agos*, available online: http://www.agos.com.tr/en/article/11422/armenak-bakirciyan-mausoleum-unveiled-in-dersim access date 15.03.2016.

[597] [The mausoleum of Armenak Bakırcıyan in Dersim was destroyed] "Dersim'deki Armenak Bakırcıyan anıtı yıkıldı," https://www.demokrathaber.org/, accessed July 11, 2019, https://www.demokrathaber.org/guncel/dersim-deki-armenak-bakirciyan-aniti-yikildi-h77363.html.

[598] [The Obstacle of District Governor for the Dersim Memorial] "Dersim Anıtı'na kaymakamlık engeli," Agos, accessed April 22, 2019, http://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/2989/dersim-anitina-kaymakamlik-engeli.

[599] For a detailed analysis of the statue of Cemal Süreya see Ozan Doğan, "Caz'a Kaval'dan Gökyüzü Taşıyan Pülümürlü Sürgün Şair: Cemal Süreya", (ed.) Şükrü Aslan, *Pülümür*, (Ankara: Ütopya Yainlari, 2016), 266–282.

[600] 88.198 including counties. https://www.nufusu.com/il/tunceli-nufusu

around different monuments engage with national time and space. Starting with a description of Dersim in the 1990s, I will examine the memory regime of the statue of Şeywuşen, the first statue inaugurated in the city after the statue of Mustafa Kemal. Discussions during the 1990s, a period when military clashes between the PKK and Turkish military forces intensified, will be followed by an analysis of the memorials inaugurated during the Kurdish-Turkish Peace Process in the 2000s.[601] Pointing out the shift in the political discourses on loss and pain and analyzing the use of the medical terminology (pathology and healing) of suffering in the political rhetoric during these periods, I will examine the limits of monumentalization in the making of counter-hegemonic politics.

Invention of the city of denial: The making of Tunceli through the Dersim Genocide (1937–38)

Through the story of the invention of Tunceli, I aim to elucidate the relation between the national space of Tunceli and the attempts at memorializing the loss of Dersim in that space in later periods. Critical approaches in nationalism studies[602] have shown that the nation and national space are not entities to take for granted but the outcomes of craft. In the process of crafting, it is not surprising that the newly emerged state would attempt to make its space legible[603] for governance purposes. Being crafted is not only a metaphor for Tunceli. Although the Turkification of Armenian, Greek and Kurdish names of places was a common practice, Tunceli is the only city of Turkey created under a special law issued in 1935.

With the Tunceli Law, not only were the borders of today's Tunceli drawn on paper, the Dersim Genocide was designed as a way of implementing what was planned. The Tunceli Law prescribes the division of the Dersim region (450–500 km^2) into administrative sections and names the center "Tunceli," which literally means "bronze hand."[604] In order to "rescue Dersim from ignorance"[605] and with the passion of "serving the citizens"[606] of the nascent Turkish Republic, the Law of 1935 aims to establish state apparatuses in Dersim, thereby encompassing what had hitherto remained beyond the reach of the state. As I showed in Chapter I, in the state

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[601]The Solution/Peace Process evolved from the Democratic Initiative Unity and the Fraternity Project, which aimed at improving the socio-political conditions of ethnic and religious minorities in Turkey. It was initiated by the AKP government in 2005. The Solution/Peace Process targeting to resolve the Kurdish-Turkish conflict (from 1978 up to present) officially started in 2013.

[602] Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991); M. Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage Publications, 1995).

[603] James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (Yale University Press, 1998).

[604] İsmail Beşikçi, *Tunceli Kanunu (1935) ve Dersim Jenosidi* (İsmail Beşikçi Vakfı Yayınları, 2013).

[605] Beşikçi, *Tunceli Kanunu (1935) ve Dersim Jenosidi*, 19.

[606] Beşikçi, *Tunceli Kanunu (1935) ve Dersim Jenosidi*, 19.

documentation, the making of the 1935 Tunceli Law was legitimized through the absence of consistent politics of governance and the inadequacy of Ottoman military interventions. The law aspired to carry out a census along with the establishment of a land registration office. It also envisaged a judicial system replacing local judges with centrally appointed ones.[607] The institutionalization of the education system was mostly referred to in the context of teaching the Turkish language. While planning the reconfiguration of Dersim, the administrators also determined measures to be taken in case of resistance.[608] The General Inspectorate, that is, "the special administrative units equipped with high ranked military powers, set up in 1927 to bring Kurdish regions under control,"[609] constituted the core elements of the repressive state apparatus during the Dersim Genocide.

Designing Tunceli as a city fully governed by the state at the center meant not only making the city legible, but also utilizing the institutions of governance as the infrastructure of the genocide. A decree issued in 1935 by then-Prime Minister, Ismet Inönü, helps illustrate how the Law of Tunceli was implemented:

> The disarmament and, if necessary, the resettlement will materialize in 3 years. No officer will be local except for district officers. A corps commander on active duty will become the governor; and officers with uniforms on active duty will become district governors (*kaymakam*). Local officers will be appointed. Law enforcement, including capital punishment, will be provided by the governorship. The judiciary of the governorship will be basic, specific, and final. The governorship will be constituted like a military quarter but fit to the purpose. It will have branches such as public order/security, road, finance, economy, judiciary, culture, health.[610]

Starting from the early stages of imagining Tunceli, the officials, who were in civilian clothing in other cities, were here conceived to be in uniform. The economic, social, cultural, educational and medical spheres of life were to be unified and controlled by the corps commander who was licensed even to take decisions of giving the death penalty. This illustrates that Tunceli was imagined as a city in a constant and normalized state of emergency. The two highest ranking bureaucrats of the city; the provincial governor and the district governor were soldiers, which demonstrates that Tunceli was imagined as a big military barrack. In his decree, Ismet Inönü continues detailing the "reclamation" of Tunceli, calculating that the construction of roads would be finalized during 1935–36 and the order for secret/undercover work (*mürettep iş*)

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[607] Beşikçi, *Tunceli Kanunu (1935) ve Dersim Jenosidi*, 33.

[608] For instance while the fine for small-scale resistance such as refusing land registration was heavy (the equivalent of 3,000 kg of wheat), local administrators in charge of the "mission" were endowed with the authority to decree the death penalty. Beşikçi, *Tunceli Kanunu (1935) ve Dersim Jenosidi*, 33-37.

[609] Ceren Belge, "State Building and the Limits of Legibility: Kinship Networks and Kurdish Resistance in Turkey," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43: (2011) 95-114, 99.

[610] *BCA* 030.10.00.00.111.743.11

would be given by the army under the control of the district governor (*2. F. Kuvvet Ilbaylığı*) in the spring of 1937. Only the chief of general staff, provincial governor, general inspectors and the commander of the 3rd Army Corps would know about the secret operation. Only after the secret work, the genocide, would the making of Tunceli be complete.

The state documentation preceding the military operations of 1937–38 mostly relate to military needs. Although the documentation produced by the General Inspector's Office dated 1936 state that there was no problem of banditry or security in general, a document dated March 1936 addressed to the prime minister clarifies the imagined need for soldiers for the campaign: "in order to show strength to ignorant people and to be prepared to possible abrupt situations in the administrative work."[611] In other words, the ignorance of the inhabitants of Dersim legitimized the need for soldiers in every corner of the province.

As planned, in 1936, state officials seized the monopoly on violence[612] and started confiscating the weapons of Dersim's inhabitants in an attempt to end the relative autonomy Dersimis had enjoyed during the Ottoman period.[613] Yet the spatial transformation of Dersim into Tunceli was anything but smooth. While official historiography frames the military clashes of 1937–38 as legitimate self-defense of the state against an uprising, in traditional Dersimi narrations the incident that sparked the clashes is said to be the rape of a Dersimi girl by a Turkish soldier in Pah village.[614] In response to this sexual violence, the villagers burned the bridge and destroyed the Turkish soldiers' only access to the village. By referring to the burning of the newly constructed Darboğaz Bridge between Kahmut and Pah, and the cutting of the telephone lines as an uprising, the central government justified the implementation of the already designed reconfiguration plan.[615] The military conflict that erupted in response left 13,100 dead and led to the forced resettlement of around 12,000 inhabitants out of a total population of about 93,000.[616]

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[611] "*...idari çalışmalarda cahil olan bu halka kuvvetli gorunmekliğimiz ve ani olarak karşılasılması muhtemel halleri muvaffakiyetle karşılayabilmemiz mühim gerekir.*" For this specific reason the six troops mentioned in the recent reports would not be enough. The number of troops demanded from Prime Minister Ismet İnönü was based on the principle of at least one unit of soldiers per district. *BCA* 030.10.00.00.111.743.11

[612] Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation", *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (Oxford 1946), 78.

[613] According to official reports, the numbers of guns collected in 1936 was 7880. Ömer Kemal Ağar, *Tunceli-Dersim Coğrafyasi* (İstanbul: Türkiye Basimevi, 1940), 33.

[614] Zeynep Türkyılmaz, Maternal Colonialism and Turkish Woman's Burden in Dersim: Educating the "Mountain Flowers" of Dersim, in: *Journal of Women's History*, 28, 3, (2016), 162–186.

[615] Genel Kurmay Başkanlığı, Genel Kurmay Belgelerinde Kürt Isyanlari III [Kurdish Rebellions in the Documents of General Staff], İstanbul 1992, 83.

[616] Cf. Hüseyin Aygün, Dersim 1938 ve Zorunlu Iskân: Telgraflar, Dilekçeler [Dersim 1938 and Forced Settlement: Telegrams, Petitions, Letters], Ankara 2009.

The Dersim Genocide of 1937–38 can be regarded as driven by the desire to transform Dersim into a "centrally recorded and monitored" entity.[617] As Watts has argued in her study of resistance to the use of state violence, Turkish authorities sought "to integrate [Dersim's] physical and human landscape into the imagined nation-state via whatever means necessary."[618] What differentiates the Dersim Genocide from previous interventions is the attempt towards "rationalization and the standardization of the social hieroglyph"[619] which makes the landscape administratively convenient. In other words, unlike previous efforts to suppress uprisings or dissent, the genocide aimed to transform social relations into a format which would allow the state to collect taxes, conscript young people, implement standardized public health measures, impose Turkish as the only language, and levy its own legal discourse.[620] James Scott calls this "transformative state simplification" process the "administrative ordering of nature and society."[621]

Along with the disastrous characteristics of the state's coercive power, another significant outcome of the 1937–38 operations lies in the rupture in perceptions of Dersim both in the eyes of the state and of its inhabitants. Although Dersim was subjected to several state interventions during the Ottoman Empire, the self-perception[622] of Dersimis was based on the common saying, "there can only be expeditions to Dersim, but no victories," or "they come like Ottomans and leave during winter."[623] Both sayings refer to an understanding of the temporary presence of state power which exposes itself through military expeditions and disappears in the aftermath. These sayings also convey an image of Dersim as a place which successfully resists central authority. However, this self-perception shifted with the genocidal violence of 1937–38. For the state, the operation was an unprecedented triumph and closed the long-open file of Dersim. As Prime Minister Ismet İnönü said, "there is no spot where the law-making army could not set food; no brook no hill left unclimbed."[624] The Turkish state dispossessed the idea of relatively autonomous spaces within national boundaries by transforming it into Tunceli and thereby incorporating the landscape of Dersim into national time and space.

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[617] Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 2.
[618] Nicole Watts. "Relocating Dersim: Turkish state-building and Kurdish resistance, 1931-1938." *New Perspectives on Turkey* 23 (2000): 5-30, 8.
[619] Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 3.
[620] *BCA* 030.01.00.00.40.238.6.1
[621] Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 3.
[622] "Dersimin Öfkesi" *Dersim,* 1995, 4:31.
[623] Cafer Solgun, *Dersim... Dersim...: Yüzleşmezsek Hiçbir Şey Geçmiş Olmuyor* (İstanbul: Tamaş Yayınları, 2001).
[624] "*Kanun götüren ordu, jandarma neferlerinin ve Ordudan bir neferin ayak basmadığı yer, inmedigi dere, çıkmadığı tepe yoktur*" 'Başvekil İnönü'nün Meclis'teki Hitabı', *Kurun Gazetesi*, 19.09.1937.
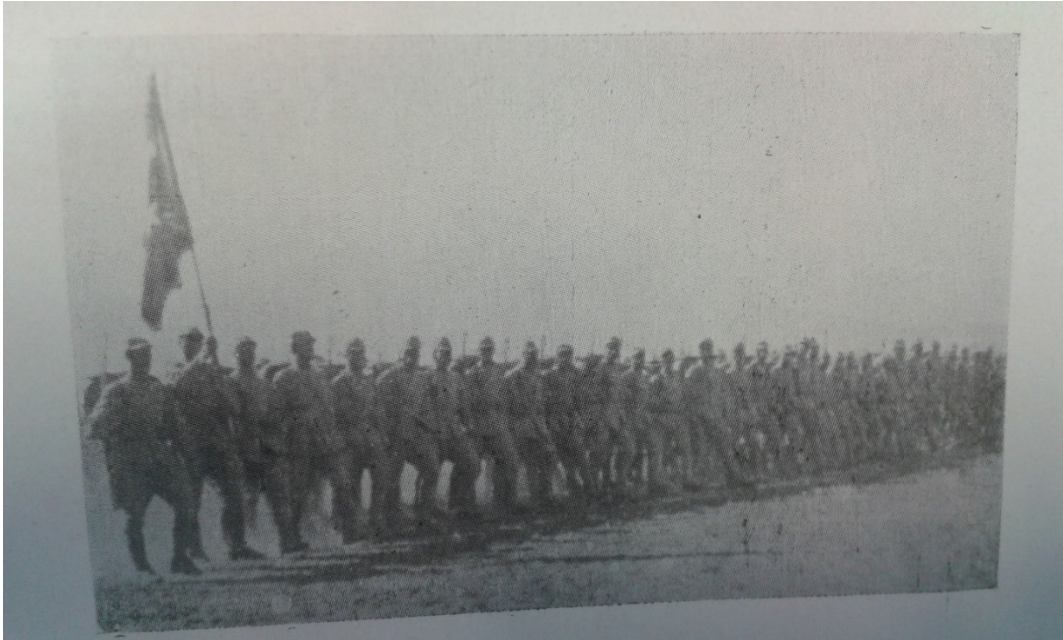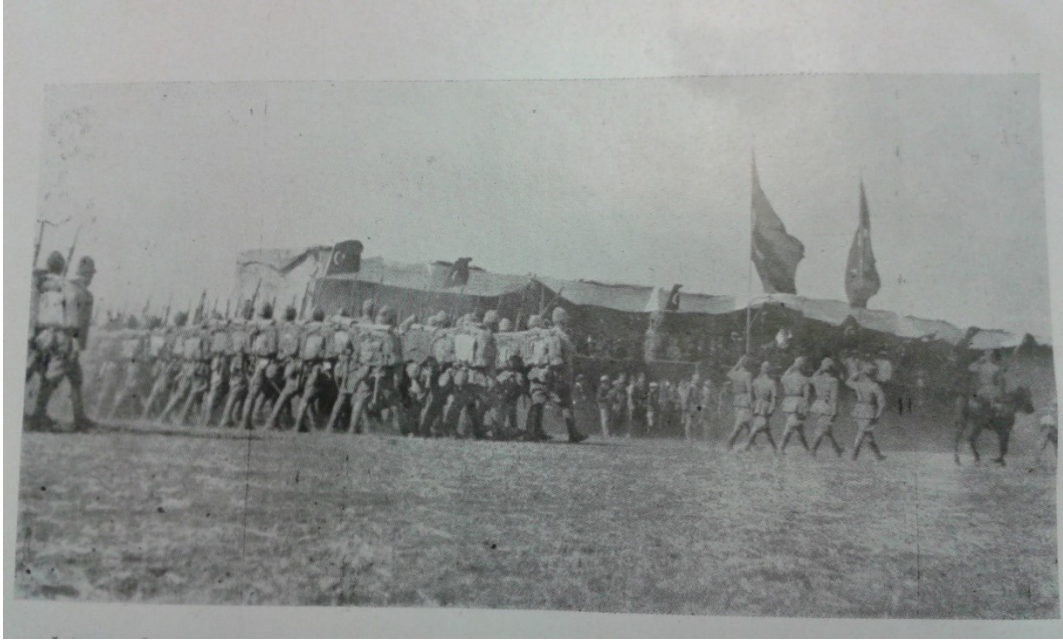
Figures 9–10: Photos from the Elazig Province's Yearbook (1923–38). The caption to the images reads: "Two valuable impressions of our army's magnificent parade in Elazığ on August 31, 1938, after their return from the Tunceli operation."[625]

The law-making army and its long march necessitated the building of roads and railroads connecting town centers to one another to enable it to access and control the region as a whole, and to inscribe Tunceli as a defined administrative unit. The Turkish state's fantasy of "filling-out" a "tabula rasa" without history was best expressed in the state documentation through the obsession with construction. For instance, the state proudly announced that in the three years following the foundation of Tunceli, fifteen small and two long concrete bridges, referred to as

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[625] *Elazığ Vilayeti: XV: 1923-1938*, Elazığ: [y.y.]

the "eternal and supreme pieces of the Turkish Republic,"[626] were built. The construction of roads connecting city centers and townships and those connecting Tunceli center with neighboring cities, as well as the construction of railways, telephone lines, army barracks, police stations, government offices, schools and accommodation for civil servants (*memur*), [627] were framed as "the opening of Tunceli to civilization."[628]

There were also other plans to "modernize" the cityscape which were less specific to Tunceli. The generic small town in the Kemalist aspiration constituted a main street bearing the name of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk or his brothers-in-arms, leading to a "Republican Square with a statue of Atatürk in the middle emphasizing his centrality in the new social order."[629] In villages, the People's Houses (*Halk Evleri*) and community centers of the CHP served both as administrative headquarters and community schools "for the dissemination of the ideals of Kemalist revolution."[630] This easily reproducible generic format has been actualized in almost every city and town of Turkey. The countryside was of particular interest to the Kemalist ideology, which aimed to transform peasants into Turks[631] "for the engineering of a Turkish culture and consolidation of the nation-state."[632] With explicit parallels drawn between Turkish "village missionaries" (*köy misyonerleri*) and American missionaries "bringing civilization" to colonies in Africa, the countryside became an ideological, cultural and educational object of the "civilizing mission of Kemalism."[633]

The civilizing mission of Kemalism found a home all around the country through People's Houses. These were established in 1932 "at the height of the [CHP]'s systematic program to disseminate a nationalist consciousness following the foundation of two other major republican organizations, Turkish Historical Society in 1931 and the Turkish Language Society

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[626] Prime Ministry's Republican Archives (BCA) 030.01.00.00.40.238.6.3
[627] The complete list of buildings in Ağar's account: <u>Building constructions:</u> 9 Army barracks in Pülümür, Nazimiye, Mameki, Sin and Ovacik. <u>5 government offices</u> (hükümet konağı) in Nazimiye, Mameki, Hozat, Ovacik and Pertek. <u>6 police stations</u> in Dantik, Hakis, Seyithan, Tüllük, Karaoglan and Amutka. <u>8 school building i</u>n Nazimiye, Mazgirt, Sahsik, Türüsmek, Derviscemal, Incik, Türktanir and Ovacik. <u>Bridges:</u> 10 concrete bridges, 3 wooden bridges. <u>Routes:</u> Elazığ-Mameki 100 km route. Routes linking Nazimiye to Mameki, Mameki to Sin, Sin to Ovacik, Sin to Hozat were completed and Pertek to Çemşkezek was under construction. Ömer Kemal Ağar, *Tunceli-Dersim Coğrafyası* (Istanbul: Türkiye Basimevi, 1940).
[628] Naşit Uluğ Hakkı, *Tunceli Medeniyete Açılıyor*.
[629] Joost Jongerden, "Crafting Space, Making People: The Spatial Design of Nation in Modern Turkey," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 10, (2009). (online journal).
[630] Joost Jongerden, "Crafting Space, Making People, 9.
[631] Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building: The architectural culture in the early republic* (Seattle, London: University of Washington Press, 2001).
[632] Joost Jongerden. "Crafting Space, Making People: The Spatial Design of Nation in Modern Turkey." *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 10 (2009) (online journal).
[633] Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building*, 97.

in 1923."[634] Modelled after the Dopo Lavaro cultural organization and the Fascist youth clubs of Italy,[635] People's Houses were important centers for assembly and socializing, where "ethnically, linguistically, and civilizationally diverse groups living in [the] country" were transformed into a "unified social body" through mass training.[636] Each People's House was supposed to organize training on at least three of nine themes: language and literature, history and museums, library and publication, public lectures and courses, fine arts, representation, sport, social work and village work.[637]

In January 1937 the Fourth General Inspector Lieutenant (*Umum Müfettisi Korgeneral*) Hüseyin Abdullah Alpdoğan demanded the foundation of People's Houses in three districts of Tunceli: Pertek, Hozat and Ergani. The first People's House was founded on February 12, 1937 at Pertek, immediately before the genocide.[638] The opening ceremony started with the Turkish national anthem and a moment of silence in front of the statue of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, followed by the presentation of a chart about the birth of the Turkish Republic by Hüseyin Abdullah Alpdoğan, the military governor of the province. Sport, village work, and fine arts were the selected themes for training at this branch.[639]

The creation of Tunceli is the story of the emergence of a city through genocidal violence in a time when the idea of an army-nation also connotes the creation of new national subjects conscripted to the nation. Designing the city as a big military barracks built upon the leftovers of the genocidal violence, namely the survivors who had not been forced to resettle, with appointed non-local bureaucrats and military garrisons points at an immense process of spatial militarization. Militarization is both a social institution and ideology, but beyond that, it is a process[640] "by which a person or a thing gradually comes to be controlled by the military or comes to depend for its well-being, on militaristic ideas."[641] During the creation of the national space in Tunceli, spatial militarization played a central role; it normalized the presence of military forces at the center of the story of modernity.

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[634] Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building: The architectural culture in the early republic* (Seattle, London: University of Washington Press, 2001).
[635] Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building,* 93.
[636] H.Zübeyir, "Halk Terbiyesi [Popular Training], *Ülkü*, 1933, 1:2, pp:152.
[637] Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building,* 94.
[638]*BCA* 490.01.962.724.1
[639] *BCA* 490.01.962.724.1.
[640] Cynthia Enloe, *The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). Ayşe Gül Altınay, *The Myth of the Military Nation*: *Militarism, Gender, and Education in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).
[641] Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives* (University of California Press, 2000), 3

The creation of the national space through militarization resulted not only in a more legible and therefore more governable landscape but also the formation of a space of denial. The story of the creation of Tunceli remained a matter of community knowledge and was debated at most in community publications for more than 50 years since official documents on the genocide were kept secret. The survivors who were allowed to stay in Tunceli continued to live in the space of the catastrophe, among spatial reminders such as open mass graves, or near the mountains where family members were shot, tortured and raped.[642] For those forced to resettle elsewhere in Turkey, there was not much chance to speak about the reasons for their migration as they were not welcomed in the host cities.

Seydali Akbayir was a survivor who was first sent to Elazığ where his hair was shaved off, then to İzmir. He reports that, in İzmir, there was a crowd waiting to see the new arrivals from Dersim in front of the government office (*Hükümet Konagi*). Someone approached him to ask whether he spoke Turkish and was shocked when he said yes. Akbayir said: "You know why they watch you from the roof? For two months there were telegrams sent, they said the ones coming from Dersim have different eyes, different ears. These people are so curious about you, that's why they are here."[643] The emphasis on the monstrous difference of Dersim inhabitants contributed to the legitimization of the excessive violence during the creation of Tunceli. The enduring effect of the creation of this difference was to aggravate the difficulty for Dersimis to develop forms of contact with the inhabitants of the host city that went beyond Dersimis being considered exotic curiosities. The accounts of survivors show that they even hesitated to answer ordinary questions which might have led them into trouble.[644] Voicing what they had gone through or the reason behind their resettlement was out of question.

As mentioned in Chapter I, the silence on the way Tunceli became a part of national space was broken during the 1990s when the city's inhabitants were again subjected to a high degree of militarization in everyday life. As systematic displacement and human rights violations became a part of the everyday during the clashes between PKK and Turkish Armed Forces in the 1990s, the experiences of 1937–38 became a reference point for describing contemporary pain and suffering. The next section deals with the different ways in which the

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[642] Hüseyin Aygün, *Dersim 1938 Resmiyet ve Hakikat* (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2010), 162.

[643] "*Onların evi yansın, size çatıdan neden seyrediyorlar biliyor musun? Iki aydir telegraf çekiliyor, Dersim'den gelenlerin gözleri başka, kulakları başka diyorlar, bu millet size çok merak etmiş, buraya toplanmış.*" Aygün, *Dersim 1938 Resmiyet ve Hakikat,* 222.

[644] Aygün, *Dersim 1938 Resmiyet ve Hakikat,* 222. Munzur Çem, *Tanıkların Diliyle Dersim '38* (Istanbul: Pêrî Yayınları, 1999). Cemal Taş, *Dağların Kayıp Anahtarı: Dersim 1938 Anlatıları* (Istanbul: Iletişim Yayınevi, 2010).

phantoms of 1937–38 continued to affect attempts at memorialization in the public spaces of Tunceli.

A city of unrest in the 1990s and the statue of a madman

In 1995, the journalist Kenan Tümer, working for *Milliyet*, an established mainstream daily newspaper distributed nationwide, described Tunceli as a "city of unrest" (*olay kent*) due to its appearance in the media associated with terror and military operations.[645] In the *Milliyet* archives, Tunceli appears 2,000 times between 1990 and 1999, and 1,575 of these mentions are related to military operations and death.[646] The number of bodies either symbolizes the success of the Turkish state, if these are the dead bodies of guerrillas affiliated with revolutionary leftist movements or the PKK—or the need to intensify the operations against terrorism, if they represent soldiers "martyred" in clashes with terrorists. The discussions of going to provide humanitarian aid either to Bosnia or Tunceli are illustrative of the meaning of Tümer's term, "city of unrest." When the Balkan War started to attract media attention in the early 1990s, the Turkish parliament began to discuss why the country should help Bosnia and not Tunceli.[647] The basis of this association had to do with the warlike conditions and crimes against humanity in both places. Dersim in the 1990s has already been discussed in the previous section, and my focus here is on the spatial politics of the Turkish state in its war against terror.

While the repression of Kurdish culture and organizations had a long history in Turkey, Amnesty International marks the beginning of "a full scale dirty war" against the PKK in 1991.[648] This occurred when the Turkish Armed Forces changed its war strategy against the PKK. Leaving behind its former approach, to "detect, destroy and return to headquarters," the Turkish Armed Forces decided to apply a new strategy: "clean the region and keep it clean."[649] In practice, this strategy change meant the criminalization of the inhabitants of rural where PKK started getting organized. Through this change in the military strategy people who were living in the zone of influence of the PKK became a possible target of the Turkish Armed Forces. In the absence of accurate data, international human rights associations estimate that 3,000 villages in the Kurdish region of Turkey were vacated, 1–3 million people were forced to migrate, and 35,000 lost their lives.[650]

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[645] Tümer, Kenan. "Tunceli'nin Öteki Yüzü", *Milliyet Gazetesi*, 04.08.1995.
[646] The online archive of *Milliyet* Newspaper: http://gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr/
[647] Güreli, Nail. "Gitmek mi zor, kalmak mi", *Milliyet Gazetesi*, 04.08.1995
[648] Amnesty International. *No Security without Human Rights*. (London: Amnesty International, 1996), 50.
[649] Umit Özdag. *The PKK and Low Intensity Conflict in Turkey*. (Ankara: Frank Cass, 2003).
[650] Amnesty International, 1996.

The spatial characteristics of the military strategies in Dersim included forest burning, clearing villages, forced migration, food embargos, and curfews.[651] To keep the region "clean," in 1994, when military clashes reached their peak, 110 of 399 villages were vacated in Dersim and 64 of them were burned down.[652] As a part of war strategy, PKK also cleared some villages that were "strategically important" for the guerrilla campaign in 1994. Although some witness accounts exists, not even approximate data is available from Dersim.[653] It is known that while the total population of the region in 1990 was 133,585 of whom 82,785 (62%) were rural dwellers, in 2000 the population had fallen to 93,584 with 39,108 rural dwellers. The 53% decrease in the rural population was accompanied by a drastic decline in agricultural production.[654] A 51% decrease was documented in animal husbandry, the second most important source of income in the region, during the peak of the military clashes in the first half of the 1990s.[655] Although resettlement plans were prepared, they did not receive funding and the only realized project was the '94 Konutları (1994 Houses) in Ovacık, which was constructed out of 80 containers.[656] To prevent guerrillas from hiding in the forests, the Turkish Armed Forces burned the woodlands including some that were under UNESCO protection in the Munzur Valley National Park.[657]

A 1996 report of the Peace Working Group, (*Barış için bir araya çalışma grubu*), which included members from several human right organizations (TKDD, Human Rights Association [IHD], Mazlum-Der) is illustrative of the urgency of the situation in Dersim at the time:

> Thousands of people have been struggling to survive in some counties or city centers. […] Among those who immigrated to Elazığ the ratio of unemployment is very high. … Children of those who migrated to Elazığ cannot go to school due to poverty. […] Even the simplest health problems [for those living in Elazığ] cannot be solved because they don't have insurance or money to go to the doctor. [...] Entering the city is another problem… Since the 17 km road between Tunceli and Pülümür is regarded as "dangerous" […] for the 17 km road they go [take a detour of] over 700 km. […] Due to the food embargo even the engagement and wedding dinners cannot be organized [in

[651] Jacob von Etten, Joost Jongerden at all. "Türkiye Kürdistan'ında Kontragerilla Stratejisi Olarak Çevre Tahribatı" *Toplum Kuram* 1:(2009), 71-95.

[652] Stichting Nederland-Koerdistan. *Forced Evictions and Destruction of Villages in Dersim (Tunceli) and the Western part of Bingöl, Turkish-Kurdistan, September–November 1994*. (Amsterdam: Stichting Nederland-Koerdistan, 1995), 63.
personal/publications/Forced_evacuations.pdf.

[653] For an example of an evacuated village in Pülümür by the PKK see Murat Kahraman, *Bitmeyen Veda,* (Istanbul: Sancı Yayınları, 2019).

[654] The platform of unions of Tunceli (Tunceli Sendikalar Platformu) documents the decrease in cereal plantation between 1990 and 1995 as 25% and the decrease in plantation of fruits as 23%.Tunceli Sendikalar Platformu."Tunceli Sendikalar Platformun Raporu, Ilimizin sorunları: Dersim", *Tunceli Kültür ve Dayanışma Derneği Yayın Organı*, 2 (4): 17–26.

[655] Tunceli Sendikalar Platformu."Tunceli Sendikalar Platformun Raporu"

[656] The documentary called *Bindokuzyüzdoksandört* [1994] directed by Devrim Tekinoğlu in 2017 has a section about the '94 Housing composed of witness accounts. This is the only documentation existing on the housing projects of the time.

[657] Etten, Jongerden at all. "Türkiye Kürdistan'ında Kontragerilla Stratejisi Olarak Çevre Tahribatı" 79.

Tunceli]. […] Everyone needs a ration card to get foods and gendarmerie decides who needs what. […] There is a constant wave of arrests in the city center; no one gets out of the holding cell without being beaten […] Tunceli is transformed into a big prison […] The operations in Tunceli are double or triple as intense and special than the other places in the war zone [referring to the rest of the Kurdish region of Turkey].[658]

Dersim as a "big prison" is a common way of describing the experience of the 1990s. The founder of the Ankara branch of TKDD used that phrase more than once during our conversation:

We opened the Association after the waves of immigration in 1994… It [the city] was like a prison, but an exclusive one, they [security forces] were not letting everyone to stay (laughing). The first events we organized were all demonstrations. Such an association, right (laughing)? That was like the reenactment of 1938. We [people from Dersim] were again everywhere but not in Dersim.[659]

"Being everywhere but in Dersim," in other words, the experience of exile and forced migration, is the ground of associating two different state violence incidents. Dünya Ana, a survivor of 1938 who took part in various documentary projects on the Dersim Genocide describes her experience of the 1990s in reference to 1938: "These years are worse than 1938. When they forced out people back then, they indicated houses and land to go and settle. Now, they say 'leave your house we will burn it,' and we don't have anywhere to go."[660]

The pain of forced migration in the 1990s was also expressed in laments. The lament of *Gideriz/As We Go*, the only lament composed in the post-1938 period which is included in the compilations of this form, links the experience of state violence in different periods through the experience of exile:

As we go… Only earth and sky
In villages, alas, no one is left.
Cruel beings, whose fate be cursed, have yet again extinguished the fire of humanity
The birds lament, words are meaningless
Oh, old Xızır, may your house be ruined, where are you?[661]

The association between 1938 and the 1990s is more than an attempt to make sense of what was happening by putting it into context. It was also an attempt to re-write history from the contemporary standpoint. This association frequently appears in the publications of Dersim solidarity associations: "'38 as a rupture?",[662] "What changed in Dersim on the 60th anniversary

[658] "Tunceli Raporu" 1996, *Dersim*, İstanbul: Dilek Matbaası, 4:3-8pp.
[659] Interview I conducted with Ahmet at the Dersim Solidarity Association in Ankara, January 15, 2017.
[660] Quoted in the booklet of Metin Kemal Kahraman's last album which compiles laments. Kemal Kahraman, Metin Kahraman. *The Political Laments of Dersim*, (İstanbul:Lizge Müzik, 2019) 108.
[661] Metin Kemal Kahraman, *The Political Laments of Dersim*, 106.
[662] Sait Çiza. 1997, "Palavra Meydanı" *Dersim,* İstanbul: Dilek Matbaası, 5:7-9.

of 1938?"[663] and "Since 1938… Dersimis know their civilization very well"[664] are some of the striking headlines that appear in the journal *Dersim*, the monthly publication of the Dersim Solidarity Association in İstanbul. This proximity of the experiences belonging to different time periods fueled a new way of understanding the past and the present through the continuity of state violence.

As the lament *As We Go* suggests, those who left Dersim encountered different socio-political hardships in the places where they took refuge. Those who stayed were living in a city where what to eat and which medicine to take was decided by the Turkish Armed Forces and the only place selling newspapers was the police station.[665] It was during this period, when heavy state pressure manifested through acts of excessive violence which reminded the Dersimis of what they had gone through during 1937–38 or what they had heard about that time, that the city's second public memorial was inaugurated in an official ceremony. The first public monument, as in every other city of Turkey, was the statue of Mustafa Kemal which was inaugurated in the mid-1930s.[666] On the street parallel to that statue was erected the statue of a homeless madman in 1995. A year after Şeywuşen's assassination, the mayor Mazlum Arslan (1994–99) took the initiative to inaugurate this monument.

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[663] Selman Yeşilgöz. 1997, "What Changed in Dersim" *Dersim,* İstanbul: Dilek Matbaası, 6:12-14.
[664] Ayrılmaz, H. 1998, "Bizim için Göç Ne Demektir?" *Dersim,* İstanbul: Dilek Matbaası, 7: 12-14pp.
[665] Çetin, Celalettin."Sorunlar Yumağı Tunceli", *Milliyet*, 08.03.
[666] Although I could not find the exact date of inauguration of the statue of Mustafa Kemal in the city center, from the information that the one in Pertek, a district of Dersim, was erected in 1935, I assume that the one in the center would have been inaugurated around the same time.

Figure 11: The statue of Şeywuşen, Seyit Hüseyin

Figure 12: The statue of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

Arslan was a member of the SHP and became mayor of Tunceli after an election which was boycotted both by the PKK and the revolutionary leftist movements in the region. Zülfikar, a member of TİKKO, remembered the local election of 1994 as follows: "There was a dirty war going on. Our comrades were massacred. As an indication of social solidarity, we boycotted an election that we could easily win."[667] Boycotting, in Zülfikar's account, refers to the withdrawal of Ali Tacar, the candidate supported by the revolutionary leftists in the 1990s, who was also regarded by the mainstream media as most likely to be elected.[668] Not surprisingly, Arslan's account of this period is quite different: "The political atmosphere was totally polarized. Despite all those threats coming from different groups, I insisted on democracy. […] The people also showed that they wanted democracy."[669] He was elected with 38.45% of votes. In total 6,448 people voted for him. [670]

The inauguration of the statue of Şeywuşen was reported by the mainstream media as follows: "Turkish parliamentary deputy chairman [Kamer Genç] paid 150,000 Turkish Liras in order to erect a statue of a mentally sick person at the center of Tunceli."[671] When I asked Arslan about the description used in the news he remarked: "Şeywuşen was not a madman … he was a public figure. And we were the municipality of the people. We wanted to honor what people valued."[672] The statue was inaugurated with a state ceremony at which the governor and the chief of police were also present during a period when, in Arslan's words, "every day a number of guerrilla corpses were brought into the city."[673]

Arslan's understanding of "what people valued" was based on his experience of Şeywuşen's funeral. In the documentary on Seywusen's life his niece described her shock when she saw the crowd gathered at that event: "Dersimis loved him so much. Although we were from the same family, they were far closer to him. I felt like a stranger during the funeral."[674] The massive participation of Dersimis in the funeral and the heavy air of lament was why Mazlum Arslan commissioned the statue: "It was the most crowded funeral of Tunceli. When

[667] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Zülfikar bey at his house in Tunceli center, April 21, 2014.
[668] Çetin, Celalettin."Sorunlar Yumağı Tunceli", *Milliyet*, 08.03.1994
[669] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Mazlum Arslan, in his real estate office at the center of Tunceli and while walking together in the city, April 19, 2014.
[670] Yerel Seçim: http://www.yerelsecim.com/Detays.asp?ID=62&SY=1994 accessed in 30.05.2017.
[671] Video excerpt from Kanal D TV channel that I acquired from the personal archive of Ferit Demir, the first journalist of Tunceli who covered the inauguration.
[672] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Mazlum Arslan, in his real estate office at the center of Tunceli and while walking together in the city, April 19, 2014.
[673] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Mazlum Arslan, April 19, 2014.
[674] Excerpt from the documentary "İnsanın Deli Dediği" (2008) directed by Egemen Adak and Hira Selma Kalkan

it was heard that Şeywuşen was murdered, people got so upset, it was so tragic... I thought that Şeywuşen shouldn't be forgotten. I wanted to let new generations know about his life."[675]

The presence of the governor and the chief of police at the inauguration ceremony[676] of a statue of a "madman" not only indicates the high level of militarization, it connotes that erecting a statue in the public space of Turkey requires a special ritual. Although the Ottoman landscape hosted diverse cultural production from different religious and ethnic backgrounds, the very form of sculpture is associated in the modern Turkish vernacular imagination with the statue of Mustafa Kemal.[677] Since the statue of Mustafa Kemal became the first nationwide, officially inaugurated monument in Turkey's public sphere, the category of "statue," as well as its sociocultural value, is formed through the example of his statue.

Statues of Atatürk started to appear across Turkey during his lifetime in the 1920s, and were the first concrete expression of the newly emerging nation-state.[678] To propagate the new regime's ideals, the spread of the statues was legitimized with reference to progress and civilization.[679] Along with the growing cult of Atatürk, his depiction as a "semi-god" figure "contributed to his monuments being regarded as equally sacred."[680] In other words, the symbol of the Turkish Republic was a statue of Atatürk in every city center of Turkey and, while becoming the symbol of a modern, secular Turkey, it continued to play with sacredness. The statue stimulated both reason, by propagating national history, and affect, through the representation of a god-like figure, thereby creating a regime of representation.[681] By simultaneously using a modernist form of expression and playing with the "religious overtones" of nationalism the statue produced an aesthetic form where "[t]he state poses itself as an artifact."[682] In other words, the statue of Atatürk became "a marker of Turkish statehood" and "fetishizing the statue" became an expression of "loyalty to the project of the Turkish state."[683]

Atatürk's statue has forged a solid memory regime which is backed by state institutions. His life story is taught from the very first days of primary school and is repeated incessantly,

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[675] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Mazlum Arslan, dated April 19, 2014.
[676] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Ferit Demir at the Siyah Beyaz Cafe, dated April 11, 2015
[677] Meltem Ahıska, "Monsters that Remember. Tracing the Story of the Workers' Monument in Tophane, Istanbul", *Red Thread* 3 (2011). available online at http://www.red-thread.org/en/article.asp?a=46.
[678] Aylin Tekiner. *Atatürk Heykelleri*. (Iletişim Yayınları: 2010).
[679] Ahıska, "Monsters that Remember," 11-12.
[680] Ahıska, "Monsters that Remember,"13.
[681] Ahıska, "Monsters that Remember,"12.
[682] Ahıska, "Monsters that Remember," 12.
[683] Yael Navaro-Yashin, *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2002), 198.

and his life story is narrated as a metaphor of the "birth of a state."[684] In other words, his biography was turned into "mythology" and taken as a "representation of the Turkish state."[685] For the authorities, the motivation behind erecting such statues is "to corral memory into a monument; they wish to memorialize and monumentalize in some way or other."[686] Similar to other heroic representations in different contexts, Atatürk's statue represents the timeless ideal citizen who wishes "to sacrifice his life for this country."[687] Its spatial configuration is also telling; it is situated in the most prominent place—either Republic Square or Atatürk Square in every city—where the heroic national tradition is spatially inscribed. While connoting the eternity of the Turkish Republic, the statue of Atatürk puts retroactive imposition on the past in order to create the common history of the nation. Considering that forgetting is an essential part of creating a nation,[688] the memory regime that the statues of Atatürk forge suggests a strict narrative of what to remember and what to forget in the national space. In Dersim, the statue of Atatürk is situated prominently in Republic/Lie Square (Cumhuriyet/Palavra Meydanı), and was constructed after 1938 as a part of eradication of the legacy of Dersim and the creation of Tunceli. In this specific case, while evoking the successful establishment of "national modernity" in the landscape of Tunceli, the statue of Mustafa Kemal silences the way Tunceli was invented. In this way it contributes to forging the national time[689] in the national space.

The inauguration of the statue of Şeywuşen: Non-instrumental engagement with loss

As only the second statue in a city dominated by Kurdish-Alevi inhabitants and inaugurated during the peak of the clashes between the PKK, revolutionary leftist organizations and the Turkish military forces, the statue of Şeywuşen was attached with a special importance. Situated on a parallel street to the statue of Atatürk, it evokes a rupture in national time as an alternative representation of the ideal citizen who devotes his life to the country. While his representation violates the silent consensus on who is representable in the highly militarized public space of Tunceli and the nation, it also indirectly challenges the gendered logic of heroic representation. After all, as discussed in Chapter II, the story of Şeywuşen is hardly one of successful military masculinity. On the contrary, his life is full stories of failure when it comes to the triangle of

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[684] Navaro-Yashin, *Faces of the State*. 198.
[685] Navaro-Yashin, *Faces of the State*. 198.
[686] Stephen Pender. "An Interview with David Harvey," *Studies in Social Justice* 1, (2007): 14-22, 21.
[687] Adam J. Lerner, "The Nineteenth-Century Monument and the Embodiment of National Time," in *Reimagining the Nation*, ed. Marjorie Ringrose, Adam J. Lerner (Open University Press, 1993), 176-196.
[688] Ernest Renan, "What is a Nation?" in *Becoming National: A Reader*, ed. Geoff Eley, and Suny, Ronald Grigor (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
[689] Lerner, "The Nineteenth-Century Monument and the Embodiment of National Time,"

military/nation/manhood. Most importantly, his monument does not fix a historical narrative as is the case for other officially-backed monuments; furthermore, it calls for another cosmology and temporality that is at odds with the eternal and secular time of the nation.

As described in the previous section, when Mazlum Arslan commissioned his statue, it was with the motivation of preserving the memory of Şeywuşen for future generations. Although in the literature concerning public monuments, statues are generally seen as attempts to fix a certain historical interpretation[690] and a tool to master the past from the perspective of the present,[691] the statue of Şeywuşen could not fulfill this raison d'être of an attempt at monumentalization. My interlocutors' narratives of Şeywuşen's life have few features in common other than his shabby appearance and his habit of smoking more than one cigarette at a time. Şeywuşen's year of birth, the Armenian Genocide of 1915, the Dersim Genocide of 1938, his madness, holiness and his assassination are all open to becoming parts of very different narratives. Let us have a close look at the narratives of his murder.

Mazlum Arslan worked in the administration of Cumhuriyet High School before becoming the mayor of Tunceli in 1994. He personally knew the schizophrenic teacher who assassinated Şeywuşen. He describes the murderer as follows:

> He was coming to my room from time to time when I was the director of Cumhuriyet High School, asking for permission to leave early or being absent. Whenever I asked for the reason he was telling me things like I should fight against the Russians or I have secret meetings etc. (laughing) … I wrote several petitions to Ministry of National Education for his removal from his duty but they never responded.[692]

According to Arslan, Şeywuşen was killed by the mathematics teacher because of jealousy. He was jealous of the fact that people loved Şeywuşen that much. Özgür (30), a member of a revolutionary leftist organization, narrated Şeywuşen's death as the result of a "fascist attack." Emphasizing twice that the murderer was from Konya, a city which is commonly associated with Sunni Islam conservativism, he pointed out that no one other than the state would be powerful enough to aspire to kill Şeywuşen in the center of his city: "No way! You don't know how people loved him. Who could think of killing him? No one could take this risk except the deep state whose premise is to kill everything belonging to this culture."[693] Ali (38), a minibus driver affiliated with the pro-Kurdish party HDP, claimed that Şeywuşen was killed by the

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[690] Vincent Crapanzano, "Remembrance." in his *Imaginative horizons: an Essay in Literary Philosophical Anthropology*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 148-177.
[691] Ahıska, "Monsters that Remember. Tracing the Story of the Workers' Monument in Tophane, Istanbul", 12.
[692] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Mazlum Arslan, dated April 19, 2014.
[693] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Özgür and Ilker at the Union of Education (Eğitim-Sen), April 10, 2014.

police because he had knowledge of a secret. When I asked what the secret might be, he said, referring to the continuous state of emergency governing the region: "You never know what becomes dangerous when in this geography [referring to the Kurdish region]."[694] As seen in the examples above, the statue of Şeywuşen does not even forge a solid narrative of his assassination. In this sense, the monument "fails" to secure a historical narrative, which is the raison d'être of monuments in the first place. Instead, by giving the possibilities to tell open-ended stories, the statue evokes stories that do not belong to the public sphere of ideal citizens. Bringing the deep state, state violence and the Sunni-Alevi conflict onto the table, the statue of Şeywuşen opens ground for narrations which go against the mainstream national history of Turkey.

Other details in Şeywuşen's monument further complicates the secular logic of monumentalization in the Turkish Republic. The statue is accompanied by a poem written by Diren Solmaz, who won a competition for high school students. The poem starts: "Death is not where the world ends/ I understood that with you."[695] This rejection of Şeywuşen's death is ornamented with references to Munzur River, the mountains and the sun, all of which are attributed holiness in the region:

> And you stand at the top of the mountains
> Wondering where the sun is rising
> Surrendered by the broken statues of gods
> You are the only one standing up
> Sleeping like an innocent child
> And Munzur is flowing next to your feet
> You are touching the water and drawing things on it
> Who knows what you are thinking?[696]

The references to natural sources that are considered holy in the region and valuing Şeywuşen above the gods reflects the amalgamation of different layers of devotional practices taken place in the region.[697] Not only does the poem call for a different cosmology, it calls for a different temporality (see Chapter III). This temporality is also eternal, as is the case for national monuments, but this eternity has nothing to do with the nation. This is a religious temporality, which contradicts the secular time of the regime of monumentalization in nation-states.

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[694] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Ali in his minibus while commuting between Elazığ and Tunceli, June 10, 2015.
[695] *Değil, ölüm dünyanın bittiği yer/ Sende anladım bunu, sende çözdüm.*
[696] *Ve sen karşımda, dağlarımın yücesinde/ Güneşin doğduğu yerde öyle bakmaktasın/ Etrafında yıkık Tanrı heykelleri/ Aralarında bir tek sen ayaktasın/ Uyumaktasın günahsız bir çocuk gibi/ Ve Munzur akmakta ayaklarının önünde/ Ellerinle suya dokunup bir şeyler çiziyorsun/ Kim bilir Seyit Hüseyin neleri düşünüyorsun?*
[697] These characteristics of Dersim Alevism are discussed extensively in Chapter V.

What does the statue of Şeywuşen do other than challenge the nationalist, militarist and secularist characteristics of Tunceli's public sphere? Erecting this statue, which cannot ossify any narrative about the person it represents but instead produces non-coherent, unsure, open-ended and unfixed stories about his life and even his death, points at how the SHP, the party governing Tunceli at the time, differentiated itself in Dersim from the repertoire of monumentalization promoted by CHP which governed the Turkish Republic as a one-party state from its inception until 1946. In other words the SHP, which emerged as the social democratic wing of the CHP, intentionally or unintentionally established a new mode of expressing the presence of local government in the public sphere of Dersim. The decision to build a monument to somebody whose assassination was not directly related to the clashes between the PKK and the Turkish military forces can be regarded as a municipal strategy of differentiating the "good" dead from the rest. In other words, erecting the statue of somebody who was assassinated means accepting his dead body as a grievable one, because as Arthur Danto puts it, monuments can only commemorate the memorable[698] and, we might add, the permissible or the officially recognized. When doing so in a city where Kurdish guerrillas' dead bodies cannot be buried in public funerals for security reasons,[699] the organization of Şeywuşen's funeral by the municipality and the inauguration of his statue as a public event with the participation of local governors promoted him as "good dead." In an atmosphere where mourning for dead guerrillas was officially banned, Şeywuşen becoming grievable opened a space for mourning the "good dead." The erection of the statue underlined the illegitimacy of the Kurdish movement in the eyes of the state, which left behind only non-grievable death.[700] While obscuring the public recognition of guerrillas' dead bodies, the statue of Şeywuşen opened a space for people to tell stories which went against the constitutive taboos of the Turkish state while simultaneously avoiding a coherent alternative narration.

The statue of Şeywuşen was thus erected at a time when the memory of 1938 was voiced in relation to contemporary state violence in community journals. This not only opened a space to recognize the pain of Şeywuşen's assassination but for the "persistence of a present past or

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[698] Arthur C. Danto, "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial," (The Nation, 1985) available online http://hettingern.people.cofc.edu/Aesthetics_Fall_2010/Danto_Vietnam_Veteran%27s_Memorial.pdf.
[699] Interview I conducted with Ferit Demir at the Siyah Beyaz Cafe, April 11, 2015. For a detailed analysis of the criminalization of the dead bodies of PKK guerrillas and the state interventions to the funerals see Hisyar Özsoy. *"Between Gift and Taboo: Death and the Negotiation of National Identity and Sovereignty in the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey"* (Unpublished PhD diss., University of Texas, 2010).
[700] Özsoy. *"Between Gift and Taboo,"* 85-91.

the return of the dead which the worldwide work of mourning cannot get rid of."[701] Considering the aggressive official rejection of any attempt to recognize either the Armenian or the Dersim Genocide, one might argue that the sovereignty of the Turkish state is constituted through the prohibition of mourning. While strengthening the ungrievability of the PKK guerrillas, the statue of Şeywuşen opened a ground to challenge this "interdiction of mourning"[702] by evoking the pain of the past in the absence of instrumental frames of remembering. Simultaneously, it contributed to the cultivation of hope by evoking narratives of giving and preserving life in a different language from the nationalist, modernist, militarist, masculine one, and without establishing a causal/direct relation between remembering, mourning and healing. In Benjaminian fashion, the statue of Şeywuşen opened a ground for activating the past "within the cultural work of mourning" which allows redeeming historical loss.[703] It forged a "historical consciousness that simultaneously seeks to ignite the past and open a path departing from it" without evoking, submitting, fulfilling or taming the story.[704] The possibility of an open-ended engagement with history, as will be seen in the next section, remained marginal among the memorialization attempts in the recently reinvented Dersim. While trauma became a very potent signifier in memorialization processes, the possibility of an open-ended engagement with the past was replaced with strict prescriptions for healing.

Healing through memory: Dersim becoming an open-air museum in the 2000s

In this section I will illustrate the ways in which Dersim became a hot topic in mainstream politics in Turkey, and the subsequent attempts at memorialization in the cityscape of Dersim. During a period of relative democratization in the 2000s, many memorials appeared in Dersim's public spaces, turning it into an open-air museum. These included the statue of Seyyid Rıza, a leading figure in the resistance against the central government and the Wall of Dersim 1938, dedicated to the memory of the people who lost their lives during the genocide. Both were erected by the municipality under the pro-Kurdish BDP/HDP, and were accompanied by a discourse of healing through memorializing the genocidal events. For this chapter, I will focus on the statue of Seyyid Rıza and the discourses that surround it.

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[701] Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 101.

[702] Marc Nichanian, "Catastrophic Mourning," ,in *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, eds. David L. Eng, and David (Kazanjian Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 99–124.

[703] Michael P. Steinberg, ed., *Walter Benjamin and the Demands of History* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996), 15.

[704] Wendy Brown, *Politics Out of History* (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 2001), 182.

The transformation of Dersim from a name successfully erased from the Turkish official history into the specter of the Turkish contemporary political arena happened during the Democratic Initiative Process initiated by the AKP government in 2009 for the improvement of the standards of democracy with regards to the conditions of ethnic and religious communities.[705] The initiative comprised different projects targeting Kurds, Greeks, Armenians and Alevis. Although the process did not include a specific "Dersim initiative," it benefited from the Tunceli-related policies and discourses of the CHP. On November 10, 2009, the 71st death anniversary of Atatürk, Onur Öymen, a CHP deputy blamed the AKP government for not being consistent in the fight against terror, and compromising the effort with its softer discourses such as "do not let mothers cry anymore." This discourse was the rhetorical basis of the AKP's politics of mercy[706] towards ethnic and religious minorities which especially targeted the armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish Armed Forces. By stating in the parliament, "didn't the mothers of Dersim, of Cyprus, of Gallipoli cry? No one said back then, let's not make mothers cry"[707] Öymen opened the Pandora's box of the knowledge of the Dersim Genocide (1938), which had until then been officially silenced.

Öymen's mention of Dersim paved the way for extended discussions in the Turkish political arena and led Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to acknowledge the crime of the Turkish state in November 2011:

> If there is need for an apology on behalf of the state, if there is such a literature in the books, I would apologize and I do (…) Dersim is the most tragic event in our recent history. It is a disaster that should now be questioned with courage. …[708]

Before and after these words of acknowledgement, Erdoğan pointed out that the CHP and its party leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, a Kurdish-Alevi from Dersim, is the right addressee in need of apologizing for the crimes committed by the state under the CHP during one-party rule (1923–46). As the quote suggests, instead of apologizing, Erdoğan said that he would apologize if there is such a thing as apology in the literature. For progressive intellectuals, even this pseudo-apology was a breakthrough in Turkish politics in terms of acknowledging the state's

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[705] *Sorularla ve Cevaplarıyla Demokratik Açılım Süreci: Milli Birlik ve Kardeşlik Projesi,* (Ankara: AK Parti Tanıtım ve Medya Başkanlığı, 2010).

[706] Gözde Orhan. "Analarin Merhameti: Analar Aglamasin" *Evrensel Gazetesi*, 11.05.2013. available online, https://www.evrensel.net/haber/56498/iktidarin-merhameti-analar-aglamasin accessed on 04.06.2017.

[707] Onur Öymen's declaration at the Parliament on 10.11.2009. https://youtu.be/yLDOjbr0TcU

[708] Erdoğan declaration at the Parliament https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9iZoWOmI0K0

past crimes. The embrace of recognition, one of the key characteristics in the governance of minorities in a liberal state,[709] was largely appreciated in the international media as well.[710]

However, Erdoğan's apology provoked more anxiety than joy among the people of Dersim. The instrumental mobilization of the memory of Dersim opened a ground where political discussions were initiated in a way that shifted the victim-perpetrator dialectic.[711] For instance the head of the CHP, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, who inherited the memory of the survivors, was blamed by Erdoğan for not recognizing CHP's responsibility for the 1937–38 massacres. By shifting the power relations on behalf of his government, Erdoğan was able to create the conditions in which he could put all the responsibility on the shoulders of the son of a survivor.

Alongside this, the AKP started to pathologize the inhabitants of Dersim, stating they had a form of Stockholm Syndrome due to their considerable support for the CHP in comparison to other Kurdish areas. The pro-Kurdish party (BDP/HDP)[712] also joined the AKP in this pathologization campaign. In a public speech in Tunceli, Ahmet Türk, a member of BDP/HDP went so far as to openly diagnose its people as being in love with their aggressor, as demonstrated, he said, by their support for the CHP in 2013.[713] As the pain of 1937–38 became knowable, the people of Tunceli were made more vulnerable than before.[714]

The cultural and intellectual discussions around the question of "what really happened in 1937–38" triggered a "memory boom," with elements of most of the foundational problems of the Turkish Republic: the Armenian Genocide, Alevism, Kurdishness and revolutionary leftist organizations. Several TV shows, newspaper columns, and journal issues were dedicated

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[709] Elizabeth Povinelli, *The cunning of recognition: Indigenous alterities and the making of Australian multiculturalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

[710] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-15857429; http://www.voanews.com/content/turkey-issuesfirst-official-apology-for-1930s-mass-killing-of-kurds–134404153/148632.html. http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2011/11/201111245211148456.html; http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/150058#.UN6lNULzLBI.

[711] Bilgin Ayata and Serra Hakyemez, "The AKP's agreement with Turkey's past crimes: an analysis of PM Erdogan's "Dersim Apology," *Dialectical Anthropology*, 37, no.1 (2013): 131-43.

[712] Partiya Civaka Demokratîk (or Demokratik Toplum Partisi, DTP; the Democratic Society Party) was the Kurdish Movement's parliamentary branch during 2005–09. It was a self-proclaimed social democratic party and had observer status in the Socialist International. In 2009 DTP was banned by the Constitutional Court of Turkey for being against the indivisible unity of the country. DTP was succeeded by Partiya Aştî û Demokrasiyê (or Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi, BDP, Peace and Democracy Party). Partiya Demokratîk Gelan (or HDP) was formed in 2012 as a result of a partial unification of leftist parties and the parliamentary branch of the Kurdish Movement.

[713] Demir, Ferit (04.03.2013). "Ahmet Türk'ten Tunceliliere Şok Sözler" CNNTURK available online http://www.cnnturk.com/2013/guncel/05/04/ahmet.turkten.tuncelilere.sok.sozler/706646.0/index.html accessed (05.23.2017).

[714] Bilgin Ayata, "Dersim 1938 – "From Communal Knowledge to Common Knowledge" presented at the conference entitled Governmentalizing minorities in the Middle East: from the late Ottoman period to the present day September 13 2013 at Newnham College, Cambridge.

to the question of Dersim in the mainstream media; special issues of history journals, oral history workshops were organized by the Dersim diasporas in Berlin and Istanbul, and books with oral history interviews[715] appeared in the aftermath of Öymen's declaration and Erdoğan's apology. A series of documentaries by Dersimi filmmakers on 1937–38[716] and the Armenian Genocide in Dersim[717] also increased public awareness.

Taking into account the efforts to fix the memory of the pain of 1938 in particular, and collective memory of state violence in Dersim in general, it is appropriate to name the 2000s as a period of a clash between history—the means "to guarantee the relative stability of the past in its pastness,"[718]—and memory, which belongs to contemporary temporality. As a result of this clash, the fixed associations regarding the legitimacy of the nation and the state established upon "invented traditions"[719] were weakened. In other words, as a result of this process the established support to the CHP in Tunceli became questionable and one of the taboos of the Turkish state became disputable in the public sphere.

While Dersim became a popular topic in political, cultural and intellectual arenas, the cityscape of Tunceli started to receive a special sort of attention. The transformation of Dersim "from a secret into a trump card"[720] was reflected in the transformation of the city from the landscape of denial into an open-air museum. Following Erdoğan's Dersim apology, a campaign to change the name of Tunceli back to Dersim was initiated, and to this end the BDP/HDP applied for a legislative proposal in 2009.[721] The reason for the proposal was justified in the petition as follows:

> Changing a name which is not in opposition to the historical, cultural, religious, moral values and the like of the society is not an action that a constitutional state (*hukuk devleti*) would take today. … Tunceli is the name of a project of assimilation and the profound trauma of the disciplining and resettlement that happened in 1937–38 after this name was given and that still lives on amongst the people of Dersim. Giving back the name of Dersim, as an act of facing history, will be a means to heal the trauma caused by the suffering experienced in the region.[722]

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[715] Bülent Bilmez, Şükrü Aslan, Gülay Kayacan (eds.) *Belleklerdeki Dersim 1938*. (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2015). Aygün, *Dersim 1938 Resmiyet ve Hakikat*. Celal Yıldız, *Dersim Dile Geldi: 1938'in Çocukları Konuştu* (Ankara: Nika Yayın, 2013). Taş, *Dağların Kayıp Anahtarı*. Solgun, *Dersim... Dersim...,*

[716] 'Kara Vagon' directed by Özgür Fındık. '38' directed by Çayan Demirel (Prohibited in 2009). 'Iki Tutam Saç: Dersim'in Kayıp Kızları' directed by Nezahat Gündoğan 2010.

[717] Vank'ın Çocukları directed by Nezahat Gündoğan, 2017.

[718] Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and The Politics of Memory* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003), 1.

[719] Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds). *The Invention of Tradition*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[720] Ayata, "Governmentalizing minorities in the Middle East,

[721] https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/tasari_teklif_sd.onerge_bilgileri?kanunlar_sira_no=72951

[722] *"Adların ve kültürlerin kendi tarihi orjinalleri üzerinde yaşatılması, kültüre ve kültür sahiplerine verilen bir değer ve dolayısıyla demokrasinin bir gereği olacaktır. Adlarının değiştirilmesinin, o ad sahiplerinin rızası alınmadan yapılması bir asimilasyonu içerir. Günümüzde kabulu olanaklı bir durum olamaz. Tunceli bir*

Although the legislation did not officially change, the unofficial use of the name Dersim became widespread, not only among Tunceli's inhabitants but within Turkish and Kurdish geographies more broadly. The "taking the name back" campaign was not limited to parliamentary politics. Different political groups[723] collected signatures in the city center following the legislative application. Four years later, in December 2013 a ceremony was held by municipal officials to change the official signboard of the municipality following a press release in which the co-president of the city's BDP branch, Ergin Doğru, stated:

> Those who present themselves now as the apostles of democracy and freedom did not object to the oppression inflicted upon the people of Dersim. Those apostles stated they would change the name of Tunceli and replace it with Dersim but their courage did not suffice to do so. … Today we are taking an action here and dedicating a reality that is in fact accepted by everybody also symbolically, through this signboard, to our people.[724] … We slowly started a campaign to call every place with its own historical identity and its name in its mother-language.[725]

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asimilasyonun adı olduğu gibi, bu adın verilmesinden sonra 1937-38 yıllarında bölgede yaşanan Tedip ve Tenkil in, Dersim insanında olusturdugu derin travma hala devam etmektedir. Dersim adının geri verilmesi, tarihi bir yüzleşme olarak, bu bölgede yaşanan acıların bırakmış olduğu travmanın giderilmesine de neden olacaktır." http://www2.tbmm.gov.tr/d23/2/2-0404.pdf

[723] Almost every political group, whether self-defined as communist/socialist or pro-Kurdish, had their own political campaign for the official recognition of Dersim as the name of the city.

[724] Dayanışm Komitesi, "Tunceli Belediye Binasına 'Dersim Belediyesi' tabelası asıldı.," *BDP Dersim Belediye Başkanlık Seçimleri Dayanışma Komitesi /Berlin* (blog), December 29, 2013, https://dersimsecimleri.wordpress.com/2013/12/29/tunceli-belediye-binasina-dersim-belediyesi-tabelasi-asildi/.

[725] *Yavaş yavaş Dersim'deki her yeri kendi tarihsel kimliği ve anadilindeki adıyla anılması noktasında kampanya başlattık.* https://www.evrensel.net/haber/74468/ateskes-ve-koalisyon-arayisi-sureci

While diagnosing the people of Dersim with trauma, the deputy and co-mayor of the pro-Kurdish municipality also proposed concrete treatments to heal it. In a way, they attributed the landscape with the power to affect people's mental state (see Chapter V). What in his speech Doğru referred to as the "slow" campaign of changing names of places, actually brought rapid change in the cityscape. The main square, which had been named Barracks Square (Kışla Meydanı), during the formation of Tunceli due to the barracks built there after the genocide, was renamed Seyyid Rıza Square, after the leader of the resistance to the Dersim Genocide, in July 2010.[727]

The return of the graveless: The statue of Seyyid Rıza

When the statue of Seyyid Rıza was inaugurated in 2010 as a special event on the first day of the 10th Munzur Culture and Nature Festival, the speaker shouted: "Seyyid Rıza, welcome to your homeland!" Then, assuming the voice of Seyyid Rıza, he continued: "I can deal with your lies and tricks now. I came back, and stand upright, in Barracks Square, where the decision of my execution was taken."[728]

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[726] Photo taken from this website. Komitesi, "Tunceli Belediye Binasına 'Dersim Belediyesi' tabelası asıldı."
[727] Demir, Ferit."Seyit Rıza'nın Heykeli Açıldı" 30.07.2010. *Radikal Gazetesi* available online at http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/seyit-riza-heykeli-acildi-1010790/, access date 19.06.2017.
[728] "Seyit Riza, hosgeldin memleketine." "Ben sizin hilelerinizle basedebiliyorum artik. Geldim, ölüm emrimin verildigi kışla meydanında dimdik duruyorum." For the video of the opening ceremony cf. Dersim info, Dêrsim de Heykelyê Seyîd Rızayî / Dêrsim de Seyyid Rıza Heykeli [The Statue of Seyyid Rıza in Dersim], 2010, at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BU0MtHKCdMM, access: 8 September 2018.

Figure 14: The statue of Seyyid Rıza with the photo of Berkin Elvan in its lap.[,729]

The popular story on which this incident at the inauguration ceremony was based plays an important role in the collective memory of Dersimis. In 1937, Seyyid Rıza, who was the spiritual guide *(raywer)* of the Şixhesenu tribe, laid his arms down and agreed to meet Turkish state officials. When leaving the meeting place, he allegedly said to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk the legendary words: "I could not deal with your lies and your tricks. Let that be my problem. But I did not kneel in front of you, let that be your problem."[730] This quote became a widely used reference point in the narratives about Seyyid Rıza as an icon of resistance against the genocidal violence of the Turkish state. Despite the fact that he had respected the disarmament order intended at establishing the state's monopoly of violence over the region, he was arrested during the meeting and executed soon afterwards.[731] The executioner remembers the execution thus:

> We brought Seyit Rıza to the square. It was cold and there were no one around. But Seyit Rıza addressed to the silence and emptiness as if the square was full of people. He said "it is a mistake, shame, cruelty, murder.[732]

The words of the speaker at the installation of Seyyid Rıza's statue directly refer to two instances: the leader's response to Mustafa Kemal and his execution. When the speaker at the

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[729] Berkin Elvan (1999–2014), known as the youngest "Gezi martyr," was hit on the head by a teargas canister fired by a police officer while he was going to buy bread in Istanbul during the Gezi Protests in June 2013.

[730] Tanju Cılızoğlu, *Kader Bizi Una Değil Üne Itti: Çağlayangil'in Anıları, Çağlayangil'le Anılar* [The Faith Pushed Us to Fame, not to Flour: Çağlayangil's Memories, Memories with Çağlayangil], İstanbul 2000, 70.

[731] Muhammet Nuri Dersimi, *Dersim Tarihi* [The History of Dersim] (İstanbul, 1979), 220–222.

[732] "*Seyit Rıza'yı meydana çıkardık. Hava soğuktu ve etrafta kimseler yoktu. Ama Seyit Rıza, meydan insan doluymuş gibi sessizliğe ve boşluğa hitap etti: -Evladı Kerbelayime, bê gunayime, Ayıvo zulimo, Cinayeto, (Evladı Kerbelayıh. Bi hatayıh. Ayıptır. Zulümdür. Cinayettir)*". Tanju Cılızoğlu, *Kader Bizi Una Değil Üne Itti: Çağlayangil'in Anıları, Çağlayangil'le Anılar [The Faith Pushed Us to Fame, not to Flour: Çağlayangil's Memories, Memories with Çağlayangil]* (İstanbul, 2000), 37-38

ceremony assumed Seyyid Rıza's voice to announce, "I can deal with your tricks now, I came back," he was effectively performing the resurrection of a dead man.

The actual location of Seyyid Rıza's grave is unknown. A political campaign to locate it was initiated by his grandchild Rüstem Polat but had not succeeded at the time this study was completed. During our discussions, Polat emphasized several times that there is no way for the state to respond the campaign or the court case in a "sane" way: "They won't give the bones back, because Turkey is sitting on massacres. If they would give one's bones what would the families of the others would do? … It goes back to the Armenian, Yezidi, Assyrian massacres."[733]

By transforming Seyyid Rıza's absence, as an unburied dead body, into a solid presence via memorialization, the statue was intended to "heal" the wounds of the Dersim Genocide by filling the void of the massacres, deportations and subsequent suppression. Yet as a part of the policies that aimed to undo the violence inflicted on the landscape of Dersim, the statue also demonstrates the impossibility of compensating for the loss of 1938 in Dersim[734] while, at the same time, rendering it grievable. Put another way, erecting the statue of somebody who was executed and whose grave does not exist means reinforcing a different "distribution of public grieving."[735] An officially recognized monument in the context of the nation-state is a triumphalist medium which only allows for the commemoration of the memorable and, hence, the permissible. In this regard, the statue of Seyyid Rıza does not only turn a previously ungrievable dead body into a mournable one, the triumphalist aesthetic form of the statue transforms him into an object of pride.

Soon after the installation of the statue, Seyyid Rıza Square became one of the liveliest places in the city center, serving as a space for gatherings, meetings and demonstrations. The rapid and successful integration of the statue and the square into the daily life of the urban space is strongly tied to the aesthetic regime which it propagates. When I interviewed Edibe Şahin, the former BDP co-mayor (2009–14), she emphasized the difference in the "aesthetic vision of the [BDP] municipality" and the CHP municipality which had built the cityscape of denial. Comparing the statue of Seyyid Rıza with the statue of Atatürk, she said: "We did not want a statue standing on a pedestal. For me, that represents the mentality of the CHP. We wanted the

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[733] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Rüstem Polat in his house in Rüsselsheim, December 14, 2016.
[734] Marc Nichanian, "Catastrophic Mourning," in*: Loss: The Politics of Mourning,* eds. David L. Eng and David Kazanjian (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 99–124.
[735] Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (London/New York, 2010), 38.

children to be close to their grandfather, their grandfather to hug them. […] We wanted an embrace to happen, and the children to be hugged by their grandfather [referring to Seyyid Rıza]."[736] It is not a coincidence that Edibe Şahin chose the statue of Atatürk as her reference point. As discussed earlier, since the aesthetic form of the statue is intertwined with the public image of Atatürk, every new statue that appears in the Turkish public sphere has to engage in a conversation with the statue of Atatürk, and thereby automatically enters into a dialogue with official Turkish historiography.[737]

However, this process did not happen without engendering its own ambiguities. Due to their durable material construction, public monuments as aesthetic forms are regarded as attempts to anchor a certain form of historical interpretation[738] and master the past from the perspective of the present.[739] In view of the risk it might be removed, the statue of Seyyid Rıza was made of thick plastic instead of bronze. Former co-mayor Edibe Şahin showed awareness of the discrepancy between the impermanence of the material and the motivation of permanently "establishing the right historical consciousness."[740] The plan to recast the statue in bronze is an aspiration which has not yet materialized. Although its plastic nature contradicts the aspiration for permanency, the statue of Seyyid Rıza nevertheless expresses a memory regime that challenges the one forged by the bronze statues of Atatürk. The challenge it poses lies in the very presence of Seyyid Rıza. The return of a "rebel," who was executed and whose grave is missing, challenges the factual success of the Turkish Republic in Dersim.

How can we explain the persistent presence of the Seyyid Rıza statue when several other attempts in Dersim and in the rest of the Kurdish region to memorialize different incidences of state violence were removed and/or destroyed? In her analysis of female representation in the documentaries and memorials of the Dersim Genocide, Ozlem Goner suggests that women can only be visible when they are reduced to a silent victimhood. While male leaders such as Seyyid Rıza have been commemorated with quotes from his trial, women appear merely "as objects of (sexual) violence, symbols of what is considered to be most dramatic, the unspeakable."[741] The gendered imaginary in the Dersim memorials assigns women the role of silent, nameless victims

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[736] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Edibe Şahin in Dersim, May 2014.

[737] Ahıska, "*Monsters that Remember. Tracing the Story of the Workers' Monument in Tophane, Istanbul*"

[738] Vincent Crapanzano, *Imaginative Horizons: An Essay in Literary-Philosophical Anthropology* (Chicago, 2004).

[739] Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: The Harriman Lectures, 1999).

[740] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Edibe Şahin in Dersim, May 2014.

[741] Ozlem Goner, "A collective memory in production: gender politics of 1938 in Turkey," *Dialectical Anthropology*, 43, no.1 (2019): 1–25, 19.

and does not acknowledge their agency before, during or after the genocide.[742] Looking closely at the statue of Seyyid Rıza reveals that the role assigned to male representations is not so clear-cut and complicates Goner's analyses by unfolding the limitations of gendered male representation in the production of public memorials.

The fact that Seyyid Rıza's statue was able to successfully replace what used to be Barracks Square is strongly connected to the gendered aesthetic regime that his statue promotes. As Edibe Şahin's quote above expresses, the statue was designed as an approachable, grandfatherly figure who is there to embrace his grandchildren. This makes it very different from most other public monuments in Turkey, which are often situated at a distance from onlookers, with national war heroes standing on top of high pedestals which grant them a supposedly eternal omnipresence. In contrast, the figure of Seyyid Rıza, made of thick plastic, sits on a low pedestal in a rather approachable position. It is an exception in the repertoire of public monuments.

This exception translates into the different symbolic practices attached to the statue. For instance, while Berkin Elvan (1999–2014) was in a coma for 269 days after being hit on the head by a teargas canister fired by a police officer during the Gezi Protests in Istanbul in June 2013, somebody placed a photo of him in the hands of Seyyid Rıza (see Figure 14). In Edibe Şahin's words: "Berkin was carried by his grandfather when he was struggling between life and death."[743] The figure of a grandfather who embraces children, the wounded and the vulnerable is an unusual choice in the repertoire of monumentalization in Turkey. Thanks to the aesthetic framing of the statue, Seyyid Rıza Square replaced Barracks Square, without competing with the military masculinity promoted by the Atatürk statue. His statue represented a kind-hearted grandfather whose presence did not contest the dominant triumphalist masculine ideal by evoking an alternative success story.

At the same time, however, the depiction of the emasculated and aged grandfather figure subverted the aesthetic regime of the triumphalist monumentalization in Turkey. I argue that it is this dual negotiation which allowed the statue to remain within the precarious "limits of the sayable." As Judith Butler argues "[t]he public sphere is constituted in part by what cannot be said and what cannot be shown. The limits of the sayable, the limits of what can appear, circumscribe the domain in which political speech operates […]."[744] Following Butler, Banu

[742] Goner, *A collective memory*, 24.
[743] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Edibe Şahin in Dersim, May 2014.
[744] Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship between Life and Death* (New York, 2000), xvii.

Karaca's analysis of censorship of contemporary art in Turkey asserts that "the limits of the tolerable are […] reached when aesthetic (along with scholarly and political) approaches that counter official narratives are construed as threats to the country's 'territorial integrity', which over the past three decades have been equated with terrorism."[745] Presenting Seyyid Rıza as a grandfather waiting to hug "the vulnerable," his statue circumvents the possibility of being a threat to territorial integrity and thus secures its place within the realm of the sayable.

While its gendered aesthetic regime subverts the militarist regime of denial, it transforms the image of Seyyid Rıza into a mournable[746] dead instead of a rebel. In this particular case, the limits of the grievable are drawn by acknowledging the loss and suffering without transforming it into a political statement that promotes an alternative future. By bringing the pain and loss of the past to the present, the statue of Seyyid Rıza opens a space to generate proximity between different forms of victimhood of state violence as we see in the case of Berkin Elvan. Although it is potent to engender solidarity between the loss belonging to past and present, the statue of Seyyid Rıza could still find its place in the precarious public space by not offering any future prospects.

Conclusion

The journey leading us to the political terminology of trauma and healing is relatively long in Dersim. As seen in the first section of this chapter, since the genocidal violence was inflicted on the physical landscape of Tunceli, any attempt at memorialization must negotiate with national time and space. What we have seen throughout the chapter is that although many attempts at creating memorials deal with the genocidal past, the ways in which they engage with it are different. In the 1990s, when there was no possibility for grieving for the losses of 1915–17 or 1937–38 in the public sphere, the statue of Şeywuşen opened up a ground to cultivate a non-instrumental memory regime which embraced the loss of genocidal violence while simultaneously silencing the contemporary state violence targeting the Kurdish movement. In the 2000s, when public grieving for the losses of the Dersim Genocide became acceptable within strict frames set by government policies, the language of trauma became the main available terminology to express loss and suffering in the public sphere of Dersim/Tunceli. I will conclude this chapter with an analysis of the terminology of trauma in the specific context

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[745] Banu Karaca, "Images Delegitimized and Discouraged: Explicitly Political Art and the Arbitrariness of the Unspeakable", in: *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 45 (2011), 155–183, 178.
[746] Hişyar Özsoy, *Between Gift and Taboo: Death and the Negotiation of National Identity and Sovereignty in the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey* (Austin, 2010).

of Derim/Tunceli. To do so, I will first briefly engage with the history of the notion of trauma, then contextualize its importance in the history of Turkish psychiatry. Lastly, I will put forward the possibilities and limitations that embracing the medical language of trauma brings to memorialization.

The invention of the psychological category of trauma goes back to the 19th century. While initially the term referred to the physical and psychic consequences of train accidents and shellshock during World War I,[747] its meaning grew beyond this to designate the psychological suffering of soldiers more broadly. In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, the American Psychiatric Association recognized the category of PTSD and, thereafter, war veterans, and victims of sexual abuse and natural disasters gained "rights to medical care and financial reparations. In fact, they became the psychic signature of a new status: that of the victim."[748] In other words, the medicalization of the language through which loss, suffering and pain are expressed became connected to a recognition of victimhood. Since then, gaining the statue of victim, namely the traumatized, has entitled the subject to certain rights. [749]

This process had two major effects on the narration of pain/psychological injury: Firstly trauma became "the product of a new relationship to time and memory, to mourning and obligations, to misfortune and the misfortunate."[750] While revisiting shared traumatic past events, trauma studies established a unique way of relating history: a traumatic one, where "the past in which the group identifies itself as a victim through its recognition of a shared experience of violence."[751] As occurred with the Dersim Genocide, the documentation of collective trauma—done through oral history work—established the ground for the demand not only to rewrite history to recognize long-silenced pain and suffering, but also to compensate for past injustices.[752] The ones who are demanding justice for past injustice today are not the survivors

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[747] Didier Fassin, & Richard Rechtman. *The empire of trauma: An inquiry into the condition of victimhood.* (Princeton University Press, 2009).

[748] Didier Fassin, "A contribution to the critique of moral reason," *Anthropological Theory* 11, no.4 (2011):481-49, 486-487.

[749] Fassin and Rechtman, *The Empire of Trauma*.

[750] Fassin and Rechtman, *The Empire of Trauma,* 278.

[751] Fassin and Rechtman, *The Empire of Trauma,* 16.

[752] Fueled by the discussions on the recognition of the Armenian Genocide in Germany in 2019, the Dersim diaspora in Europe made several attempts to make the Dersim Genocide visible at the parliamentary level. For the first time in England and in Germany there have been official commemorations in European parliaments (in North Rhine-Westphalia Federal Parliament and in the British Parliament in London). [The Dersim Commemoration in the German Parliament] "Alman meclisinde Dersim anması," accessed July 11, 2019, https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/gundem/2019/05/06/alman-parlamentosunda-dersim-anmasi/; Alevi Haber Ajansi- PİRHA, "İngiltere Parlamentosu'nda ilk defa Dersim Tertelesi konuşuldu," *Alevi Haber Ajansi – PİRHA* (blog), accessed July 11, 2019, https://www.pirha.net/ingiltere-parlamentosunda-ilk-defa-dersim-tertelesi-konusuldu-170505.html/02/05/2019/.

of the Dersim Genocide, but those who collected, listened and grew up with the accounts of the genocidal violence and were born into its consequences. In that sense, the trauma that is in need of recognition, the experience of the Dersim Genocide, circumscribes the relation with the past, history and memory. Trauma became a constitutive reference point in the past which formulates the present disposition of a subject, both clinical and metaphorical. While it allows the pain and suffering of the victim to be heard and recognized, the "moral economy of trauma,"[753] which is the "production and dissemination and consumption of sensibilities,"[754] also diminishes the story before and after the event and the peculiarity and complexity of the experience.[755] In the aftermath of this process, the victim, whose right to be psychologically treated depends on her/his trauma, can be reduced as an individual to that trauma. This whole process, the moral economy of trauma prescribes the way of relating to history and the past.

Secondly gaining rights based on the recognition of trauma puts the victim into a box of the traumatized, ignoring the fact that subjects are not passive receivers of what are considered traumatizing events.[756] The practice of making pain and suffering heard through the terminology of trauma has paved the way for a moral economy which is fueled by the NGO-ization of conflict zones.[757] For instance, in recent decades, the representation of victims' suffering and pain through traumatized subjectivity has rapidly led the representation of the victims of oppressive structures being overshadowed in relation to the discourses of humanitarian organizations. More importantly "equivalence of victims on the basis of the equivalence of their suffering" abolishes "any possible political distinction"[758] between victim and perpetrator. As the argument goes, the perpetrator also suffers, which leads to the dissolution of political accountability.

While Fassin and Rechtman's analysis of the mobilization of the language of trauma reflects most Turkish and international NGOs operating in the Kurdish region of Turkey, when it comes to pro-Kurdish political actors, we encounter a different political outcome. This fact should be dealt with within the specific historical context of Turkish psychiatry. The denial of PTSD, as discussed in Chapter I, was one of the main pillars of the discipline in Turkey. Similar to other national contexts, early Turkish psychiatry, which developed under the influence of the

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[753] Fassin and Rechtman, *The Empire of Trauma,* 290.
[754] Fassin and Rechtman, *The Empire of Trauma,* 487.
[755] Fassin and Rechtman, *The Empire of Trauma,* 290-92.
[756] Fassin and Rechtman, *The Empire of Trauma,* xi-xii.
[757] For a critical discussion of NGOization in the Kurdish region of Turkey in the 2000s see Umut Yıldırım, "Space, Loss and Resistance: A Haunted Pool-Map in South-Eastern Turkey", *Anthropological Theory*, (2019):43.
[758] Fassin and Rechtman, *The Empire of Trauma,* 487.

German biological school, played a key role in the "negotiations between Turkish identity and modernity."[759] The claim that Turkish soldiers did not experience PTSD in World War I and making this a marker of difference from their European counterparts, was used to define the Turkish nation as a warrior nation: unlike European soldiers, they did not get psychologically ill because they were defending their own country.[760] In the atmosphere of the 1930s, this approach may not seem extreme or even interesting. However, the persistence of the Turkish denial of trauma related to military conflict until the late 1990s complicates Fassin and Rechtman's analysis of the moral economy of trauma. The denial of PTSD at an institutional level solidifies in the absence of psychological services for soldiers who took part in military conflict. [761] Without a categorical recognition of PTSD in the field of psychiatry, there is no gain in performing the victim.

Then, how to approach to the mobilization of a language of trauma by BDP/HDP-governed municipalities in a context where being traumatized would not grant one entry into the category of entitled victim? Through two memorialization attempts at the center of Tunceli, the statue of Seyyid Rıza and the Wall of 1938, BDP/HDP municipalities targeted the mechanism of "institutionalized forgetting"[762] and denial, and tried to transform the traumatic into something generative.[763] This motivation becomes visible in the statements of the municipal actors about the memorials. By transforming emotional attachment to an event signifying loss, pain and suffering into something tangible,[764] the memorials contributed to the circulation of emotions which sharpened the boundaries of the community of loss. By providing sites for "emotionally charged set of symbolic practices called upon to mediate relations among individuals" the memorials "provided socially meaningful subject positions."[765]

What strengthens the bonds within the community of loss is a new truth regime, where lived experience and witnessing replace the truth that is documented or produced by the state.[766] In order to compete with the historical truth written from the perspective of the state, the new

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[759] Murat Ergin. "Biometrics and Anthropometrics: The Twins of Turkish Modernity." *Patterns of Prejudice* 42, no. 3 (2008): 281-304, 304.

[760] Yücel Yanıkdağ, *Healing the Nation: Prisoners of War, Medicine and Nationalism in Turkey, 1914-1939*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 178.

[761] Salih Can Aciksöz, "Ghosts Within: A Genealogy of War Trauma in Turkey," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* no.2:2, (2015), 259-280, 259.

[762] Esra Özyürek, *The Politics of Public Memory in Turkey* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006).

[763] Serguei Oushakine, *The Patriotism of Despair: Nation, War, and Loss in Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell U. Press, 2009), 207.

[764] Oushakine, *The Patriotism of Despair*, 235.

[765] Oushakine, *The Patriotism of Despair*, 5.

[766] Louise Spence and Aslı Kotaman Avcı, "The talking witness documentary: remembrance and the politics of truth," *Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice* 17, no.3 (2013): 295-311. 297.

truth regime adopts the characteristics of a coherent narrative. This is a process which turns memory into history and shared memory into truth, which provides the ground for moral claims.[767] In the words of Edibe Şahin, the BDP co-mayor (2009–14), working "for the establishment of the right consciousness of history"[768] requires a rewriting of history through collective memory. However, the "intimate" register of truth, which is known by everyone but rarely talked about, and the official truth,[769] which is "static and falsified and not able to accommodate the diversity of lived experience," are in dialogical relations of dependency and therefore cannot be reconciled.[770] In other words, the intimate register of truth cannot become official history until it starts adopting the characteristics of official truth. The multiplicity and diversity that memory contains should be made singular in order to establish a new truth regime to replace the official truth. This is reflected in my interview with Edibe Şahin:

> Çiçek: I heard people complaining about the statue of Seyyid Rıza due to its resemblance to a Sunni leader.
> Edibe Şahin: Oh really (laughing)? People in Dersim are critical of everything. Three people from the same household would have conflicting opinions about a thing, which is good, it reminds us that we are not living in a dictatorship. But the statue of Seyyid Rıza tells one story of resistance that the people of Dersim already know. It also aims to tell that story to those who do not know and do not want to hear.[771]

In Şahin's explanation, then, the statue has a function: it consolidates different accounts about Seyyid Rıza into one coherent narrative. In that sense, what the statue of Seyyid Rıza should tell is designed beforehand, depending on its instrumentalization by the politics of the BDP/HDP.

The only memorial in the city which resists the mechanisms of instrumental remembering is the statue of Şeywuşen which is unable to fix even biographic information about the person it represents. By transforming lack of masculinity into an object of pride through the form of a statue, which in the context of Turkey is deeply connected to the representation of military masculinity, the statue of Şeywuşen transgresses "the limits of thinkable and sayable"[772] within the aesthetic form of the statue. Belonging to the time of war

[767] Spence and Kotaman Avcı, "The talking witness documentary, 300.
[768] "Seyit Rıza'nın Heykeli Suç Unsuru Oluşturmuyor" 26.11.2013 *Cumhuriyet Gazetesi* available online http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/video/video_haber/13237/Seyit_Riza_nin_heykeli_suc_unsuru_olusturmuyor.html accessed in 19.06.2017.
[769] Meltem Ahıska, "Occidentalism and Registers of Truth: The Politics of Archives in Turkey", *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 34 (2006): 9–29, 12.
[770] Ahıska, "Occidentalism and Registers of Truth, 24.
[771] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Edibe Şahin in her office at the municipality building, April 25 2014.
[772] Jacques Ranciere, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (Continuum, 2004).

instead of temporary peace frees the statue of Şeywuşen from the language of trauma. While the statue of Seyyid Rıza strengthens the circulation of trauma narratives in the service of resistance, that of Şeywuşen contributes to the affliction of otherness that is inscribed onto the city throughout its history. This is an otherness which is filled with a different sense of belonging; as the other of the Turks, of the Sunni Kurds, of Alevis, and of the Turkish left. It combines the expression of otherness with a kind of hope that crosses the divide between what is considered modern and the so-called premodern.

CHAPTER V. THE TENSION BETWEEN SECULAR POLITICS AND RITUALS WOVEN AROUND MADNESS

> I don't call Tunceli Dersim but I call it the land of mad people. Do you know any other place in the world known for the statue of its madman? […] You erect the statue of someone who has saved a country, or who conducted a great scientific research, who established a university in your city… I mean someone important for the history of the world. Why don't you erect a statue of a professor, a doctor, someone who did useful stuff for the local community but a madman? I understand and appreciate the statues of Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk], Pir Sultan,[773] Hacı Bektaş,[774] but I don't understand the statue of Seyit Hüseyin [Şeywuşen] […] Why not idolize a *dede*,[775] but accept [Şeywuşen] someone living on the street, not conscious of his behavior, by granting him holiness and erecting his statue? […] People visit his [Şeywuşen's] grave and take a piece of soil from his grave. I tell them that it's not healthy but they don't listen. […] I don't understand what people want to say through this statue, it seems so absurd to me… it makes people think negatively of us.[776]

These are the words of Ali Tuluk (74) a Kurdish-Alevi religious leader or *pir* in Dersim. Tuluk was not alone in his complaints about "the internal obstacles" encountered in the struggle for recognition of Alevism as a religion in Turkey. Similar to others involved in institutionalizing Alevism (e.g. through the establishment of *cemevis* as worship places for Alevis, preparation of educational books on Alevi belief and practices for children etc.), Tuluk framed the holiness attributed to mad people along with natural sources such as rivers, rocks and mountains in Dersim as "unhealthy," "superstitious" practices that need to come to an end. This attitude was widely shared among different political groups, from the Kurdish movement to the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist organizations active in Dersim. While religious arguments against such "superstitious" practices uphold the hierarchy between religious leaders and disciples, leftist/revolutionary arguments negate the attribution of holiness to people and

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[773]Pir Sultan Abdal (ca. 1480–1550) a Turkish Alevi poet who is an influential figure both in the folkloric poetry tradition and in the Alevi collective memory on the resistance to state violence.

[774] Hacı Bektaş Veli (d.1270/71) is a legendary patron of the Bektaşi dervish order in Turkey, originally from Khorasan in today's Iran. R Tschudi, "Bektāshiyya", in: Encyclopedia of Islam, eds. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 09 July 2019.

[775]As a consequence of internal displacement and migration, Kurdish Alevis of Dersim, who were previously living in relatively closed circles, came into contact with Turkish Alevis. The encounters and exchanges in urban settings where Turkish Alevis were in the majority played a role in the appropriation of Turkish terminology into Dersim Alevism. In other words, the Kırmancki and Kurmanci terminology of the Dersim belief system got assimilated into the terminology of Turkish Alevism. The use of *dede* and *pîr* are good examples of that process. *Pîr* refers to the religious leader coming from the holy lineage (*ocak*) of the Prophet Ali, who visits his disciples (*taliw/talib* tribes who are not part of the holy lineage*)* once a year based on the information he receives from his *raywer* (*rayber,* is the person coming from a holy lineage and functions as a spiritual guide who shows the path) and organizes a *cem* ritual. In Turkish Alevism the term *dede* refers to the religious leaders who organize the *cem* ritual. However, being a part of a holy lineage is not a necessity for performing as a *dede*. Since kinship relations are among the pillars of Kurdish Alevism the difference between *dede* and *pîr* is significant. However, the interchangeable use of *dede* and *pîr* became quite widespread among Dersimis.

[776] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Ali Tuluk in Elazığ, April 2016.

particularly to natural resources, seeing it as a "backward element" mystifying power relations and/or processes of commodification and the exploitation of natural resources.[777]

Unpacking what has been labelled as "unhealthy" and "backward," this chapter focuses on one of the practices that is widely considered outside the realm of institutionalized religion, visiting holy places. By juxtaposing the practice of going to *cemevi*, Alevi places of worship, and the practice of visiting sacred spaces, it firstly depicts the discussions on institutionalization of Alevism to focus on *cemevi* in Turkey and specifically in Dersim. It unpacks the strategy of culturalization in order to draw the limits of religion in Turkey, showing that the process of culturalization of Alevism, from the early republican period onwards was a means for the Turkish state to push the faith out of the religious realm.

The second part of the chapter elaborates on the practice of visiting sacred spaces, known as *jiara*s in Kırmancki and *ziyaret*s in Turkish. To understand the therapeutic power attributed to these spaces, I unfold the role of state violence in the stories attributed to them, arguing that the parallelism the Turkish state constructs between the landscape of Dersim and its inhabitants has had a "productive" effect on the conception of *jiaras* as healing places. I continue by contextualizing three *jiara*s as part of the practice of visiting holy places. By analyzing Yesil Evliya *ziyaret* along with the graves of two *budela*s, Şeywuşen and Pir Ali, I explore two different conceptions of madness: one medical, and the other non-pathological. The therapeutic power of *jiaras* pose an obstacle in the secular framing of health, which is connected to the government of life under the control of the state. While secularism operates as the managing power distributing credibility and authority in the domain of health, it renders what is not under its control an "unhealthy" or "backward." Discussing the role of culturalization in this therapeutic context I will illustrate how culture plays a role in the politicization of what is left out of the religious realm drawn by Turkish secularism.

Making the site for devotional practice: *Cemevi* and *jiara*

The *cemevi* in the center of Dersim was founded in 1992 and is situated directly above the Gola Çetu (Gola Xızıri) *jiara*. Gola Çetu is the point where the Munzur River meets the Pülümür brook. The history of Gola Çetu is illustrative of the intertwined relationship of devotional practices and state violence. The place is considered holy because it is situated at the meeting

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[777]This attitude dominated the protests against dam projects in the region. Banners referring to the holiness of the Munzur River, on which the dam projects were planned to be built, were rejected by the organization committee of the protests for overshadowing the process of exploitation. Referring to the interview I conducted with Özay in Berlin, November 2018, and with Zeynep in Dersim, March 2015.

point of two water sources that are important for the region. The mythical story of the Munzur River (detailed in Chapter III), tells how Munzur or Muzır, a shepherd who was capable of actualizing marvels, was transformed into a secret force, *sır*. Becoming *sır*, meaning turning into an element of nature such as a mountain or a river, renders holy people eternal. In this myth, Muzır became the Munzur River.

Belief in the holiness of water sources, especially of the Munzur River, is described in many sources from the pre-genocide period. The Ottoman general Ziya Yergök writes in his memoir of his life between 1890 and 1914 that since the Munzur river was considered holy, Dersimi inhabitants would not commit a crime near it: "Nobody sins near Munzur River's spring; no blood is spilled. When people are to swear about an important issue, they bathe in its water beforehand; the sinners and liars pay for their crimes."[778] Nuri Dersimi (1893–1973), a Kurdish nationalist from Dersim, relates that the source of the Munzur River was a place of reconciliation: "Here, before the grandiosity of nature, tribes forget about their conflicts and their dead. […] Relatives kiss, hug, smile, and eat and drink together."[779]

Since water sources and other natural resources are considered holy, the resistance against state interventions into the landscape of the region has also been spiritually grounded. A dam project initiated in 1960 envisaged six dams and eight hydroelectric power plants to be built on the Munzur River.[780] The construction of Uzunçayır Dam, which started in 1994, put Gola Çetu in danger of being inundated. To prevent the destruction of the *jiara*, in 2011 the pro-Kurdish municipality constructed a park above the place where Gola Cetu was located and named it Jara Gola Cetu ve Parkı.

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[778] Sami Önal, *Sarıkamış'tan Esarete – Tuğgeneral Ziya Yergök'ün Anıları*, Istanbul:Remzi Kitapevi, 2005, p:165. "*Munzur Suyu'nun kaynağı civarında günah işlenmez, kan dökülmez. Önemli bir iş hakkında yemin edecekler önce bu suya girer yemin ederler, günah işleyenler ve yalan söyleyenler cezasını görürler.*"
[779] Nuri Dersimi, *Kurdistan Tarihinde Dersim*, (Diyarbakır: Dilan Yayınları, 1992), 9. "*Burada, tabiatın ilahi haşmeti önünde, aşiretler aralarındaki muhaseme ve munayahaları unuturlar, nazarları hep kardeş nazarları olur. [...] Hasımlar öpüşür, kucaklaşır, güler, beraberce yer ve içerler.*"
[780] Dilşa Deniz, "Dersim'de Su Kutsiyeti, Mizur/Munzur Nehri İlişkisi, Anlamı ve Kapsamı ile Baraj/Hes Projeleri", in *Sudan Sebepler: Türkiye'de Neoliberal Su-Enerji Politikaları ve Direnişler*, eds: Cemil Akarsu, Sinan Erensü, Erdem Evren, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2016), 177-197, 178.

Figure 15: Gola Çetu jiara, located in Jara Gola Cetu ve Parkı.

While the park, one of the region's rare examples of an aestheticized sacred place, is popular amongst Dersimi visitors, the *cemevi* situated right above it only occasionally receives attention. The proximity of the *cemevi* and the *jiara* makes apparent the rivalry between the rituals of visiting a holy place and going to an institution for devotional practices. Every Thursday a group, mostly comprising women, gathers in Gola Çetu *jiara* to sacrifice animals, distribute *niyaz*[781] and light candles. The *cemevi* is operational almost exclusively for funerals. In that regard, the response of a *dede* I interviewed at the *cemevi* is telling: "You come here to see a *cem* [ceremony] but as you see our people [Dersimis] are not as interested as you are. […] they do not come up [to the *cemevi*] from Gola Çetu."[782]

The *cemevi* above Gola Cetu is the first in Dersim. Until its foundation, there were no institution to regulate Alevi rituals in the region and the *cem* rituals were only held in private spaces. However, to date, the *cemevi* in Dersim city center has not been very successful in its aim of "gathering Dersimis [people belonging to different holy lineages] under one roof […]

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[781] *Niyaz/Niaz* is a Persian concept coming from *niyâyişn* referring to praying. In daily language it refers to the bread cooked only with butter, flour and milk that is distributed in *jiara*s. Erdal Gezik, & Hüseyin Çakmak. *Raa haqi,Riya Haqi: Dersim Aleviliği Inanç Terimleri Sözlüğü*. Kalan Yayınları, 2010, p:136.
[782] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Ahmet *dede* in Dersim, June 2015.

and end the unhealthy […] superstitious [devotional] practices."[783] Dersimis have insisted on going to *jiara*s, exchanging *keramet* and dream narratives, attributing holiness to natural elements and gather in private spaces for *cem* rituals. This does not mean that the opening of *cemevi*s, which are legally recognized as cultural associations rather than places of worship, did not affect existing rituals. The institutionalization of Alevism and what was considered unhealthy and superstitious by institutional Alevism has played an important role in the reproduction of devotional rituals in Dersim.

I begin by unpacking the process of institutionalizing Alevism in Turkey. The identity concepts of Alevi and Kızılbaş became denominations of political opposition in the making of the orthodoxy of the Hanefi *mezheb* of Sunni Islam during the late Ottoman times. Starting from late Ottoman period, Alevism was seen as heretical and/or heterodox, and Alevis as internal enemies who were potential allies of external enemies (Chapter I). Alevis faced persecution and systematic Islamization and Turkification policies.[784] Educating Kızılbaş Alevis became a motif in the empire's civilizing mission and war against heresy during the rule of Abdülhamit II. Known as "red heads" (*kızılbaş*) for covering their head with red veils and considered a "problematic" branch of the Shi'i faith, Kızılbaş Alevis started being considered "simple village folk who were to be 'shown the high path of enlightenment' by instructing them in the Hanefi *mezheb*."[785]

Although the literature on Alevis has focused on their support to republicanism,[786] in fact Alevis have faced considerable obstacles in expressing their religious identity in the public sphere from the early republican period. The Turkish Republic abolished the sultanate in 1922 and the caliphate in 1924; institutions which had claimed to act as protectors of the entire Muslim world since the 16th century. These were followed by the abolishment of religious courts and the breaking of the link between *sharia* and criminal law, replacing it with an adaptation of Swiss Civil Code in 1926. The law played a foundational role in the implementation of secularism, which aimed at restraining the sociopolitical influence of

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[783] Referring to the interview I conducted with one of the *dede*s working in the *cemevi* in Dersim, May 2015.

[784] Hamit Bozarslan. "Alevism and the Myths of Research: The Need for a New Research Agenda." In Turkey's Alevi Enigma: A Comprehensive Overview, edited by Paul J. White and Joost Jongerden, 3–16. (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2003).

[785] Selim Deringil. The well-protected domains: ideology and the legitimation of power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909. (Tauris Academic Studies, 1999), 50.

[786] Hamit Bozarslan. "Alevism and the Myths of Research: The Need for a New Research Agenda." In Turkey's Alevi Enigma: A Comprehensive Overview, edited by Paul J. White and Joost Jongerden, 3–16. (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2003), 3-4.

religion and making it conducive to be instrumentalized in the service of the national interest.[787] These legislative developments were celebrated as big steps towards secularization.[788] In this narrative of secularization, the role of the DRA, to regulate the religious affairs of the republic remains blurred. Discursively leaning on the premise of impartiality, the DRA operates based on the Hanefi Sunni interpretation of Islam.[789] It embarked on the reorganization of the religious space that was inherited from the empire through the education of *imam*s, their appointment to mosques and the construction of mosques.

Article I of Law No. 677 was an important step in making mosques the only available places of worship for the Muslims in the country. In 1925, two years after its foundation, the newly established republic decided to close down all religious education centers, shrines and *tekke*s and *zaviye*s (lodges),[790] and subsequently transformed these centers into cultural centers.[791] From a modernist perspective, the ban on *tekke*s and *zaviye*s is largely discussed as proof of the secularization narrative,[792] which led to a gradual decline in the significance of religion in governmental affairs during the early years of the Turkish Republic.[793] However, a particular shift in Law No. 5566 implies a process of culturalization of religious sites regarded as standing outside the hegemonic understanding of Islam. With the transformation of these religious places into cultural centers the Turkish state ignored the plurality within Muslim communities. The DRA recognized mosques as the only legally recognized place of worship

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[787] Markus Dressler, "The Religio-Secular Continuum: Reflections on the Religious Dimentions of Turkish Secularism" in *After Secular Life*, eds. Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, Robert A.Yelle, Mateo Taussig-Rubbo (California: Standford University Press, 2011), 221-241, 223-24.

[788] Serif Mardin. "Religion and secularism in Turkey." *Atatürk: founder of a modern state*, ed. Ali Kazancigil and Ergun Özbudun, London: C.Hurst&Company, 1981: 191-219.

[789] Gözaydın, İştar. *Diyanet, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Dinin Tanzimi*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009. Ceren Lord. *Religious Politics in Turkey: From the Birth of the Republic to the AKP.* Cambridge University Press, 2018.

[790] Law 677, Article I: "All of the *tekkes* and *zaviyes* (*dervis* lodges) within the Republic of Turkey, whether established as a *vakif* (pious foundation) or under the personal property right of its sheikh, or by whatever other manner, are fully closed. […] All of the *tarikats* (religious orders) using titles such as sheikh, dervish, disciple, *dede*, *seyit, çelebi, baba, emir, nakib, halife,* fortune teller, sorcerer, *üfürükçü,* those who write charms to help people to attain their wishes; all functions rendered according to these titles and designations; and the wearing of dervish costume, are prohibited. The tombs of the sultans and the tombs of the *tarikat*s are closed, and the profession of tomb-keeping is abolished." Translated by and cited in Christopher Dole, *Healing Secular Life: Loss and Devotion in Modern Turkey*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 36.

[791] On 1.03.1950 a new article was added to the Law 5566 on the closure of dervish lodges. With this revision, a number of dervish lodges that were considered as belonging to "great Turks" selected by the Ministry of National Education turned into museums. „*Türbelerden Türk büyüklerine ait olanlar Milli Eğitim Bakanlığınca umuma açılabilir. Bunlara bakım için gerekli memur ve hizmetliler tayin edilir. Açılacak türbelerin listesi Milli Eğitim Bakanlığınca hazırlanır ve Bakanlar Kurulunca tasvip olunur.*" Resmi Gazete is available online: www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/7448.pdf The revision of the Law 5566 is on page 18010.

[792] Berkes, Niyazi. *The development of secularism in Turkey*. McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP, 1964.

[793] Lewis, Bernard. *The emergence of modern Turkey*. Oxford University Press, 1961.

for Muslims and pushed Alevism into the realm of culture, governed either by the Directorate General of Foundations (*Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü*) in the case of Alevi associations, or by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the case of museum-lodges. The tomb of Hacı Bektaş Veli, the founder of the Bektaşi *tarikat,* situated in Nevsehir, is a telling example of the culturalization of religious sites. The tomb had been visited by Alevis from Turkey but other post-Ottoman geographies as a *jiara.* While it is still considered a sacred place by visitors, it is framed as a part of the cultural heritage of the Turkish state[794] and regulated by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.[795]

The widespread leftist mobilization among Alevis starting from the mid-1960s added another layer to the culturalization of Alevism which is particularly important for understanding narratives of Seywuşen's holy capacity. Being exposed to the discriminatory policies of the Turkish Republic put Kurds and Alevis in the box of "natural allies" in the eyes of the leftwing movements of the 1960s and 1970s.[796] This period witnessed mass political participation of Alevis in leftwing politics, ranging from social democracy to revolutionary politics.[797] Alevi political participation in leftwing politics during this period was seen as a tacit/latent (*örtük*) politicization in the literature on Alevi politicization in Turkey.[798] But, in the aftermath of the coup d'état of 1980, Alevis, who used to take part in leftwing mobilization started to form their own organizations centering on Alevi identity.[799]

This shift from leftist movements to Alevi mobilization cannot solely be explained by the successful erasure of leftist mass mobilization by the Turkish state. The transformation of political Islam into mainstream governmentality, which expressed itself in the Turkish- Islamic synthesis[800] and the three Alevi massacres that took place between 1978 and 1980, in which

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[794] It is notable that Haci Bektaş Veli is presented as a thinker in the official site of the Culture and Tourism Ministry: http://www.kulturvarliklari.gov.tr/TR-45345/haci-bektas-veli-turbesi-nevsehir.html

[795] For a detailed analyses of the folklorization of Hacı Bektaş see Elise Massicard "Alevism as a *Productive Misunderstanding* :the Hacıbektaş festival" in P. J. White, J. Jongerden (eds.) *Turkey's Alevi Enigma*. (Leiden: Brill, 2003),125-140.

[796] Hamit Bozarslan, *La Question Kurde: Etas et minorites au Moyen-Orient,* Paris: Press de Science Po, 1997, 180.

[797] Elise Massicard. *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya Alevi Hareketinin Siyasallaşması,* (Istanbul:Iletişim Yayınları, 2007), 59-62.

[798] Mehmet Ertan. *Aleviliğin Politikleşme Süreci: Kimlik Siyasetinin Kısıtlılıkları ve İmkanları*, (Istanbul: Iletişim Yayınları), 2017, 34.

[799] Ertan, *Aleviliğin Politikleşme Süreci,* 231-236.

[800] Turkish Islam Synthesis is a phrase that is widely used in analyzing the governmentality of the period following the 1980 coup. It refers to the embrace of ideological amalgamation of Sunni Islamic values with Turkish nationalism as a solution to growing ethnic and religious tension in Turkey. M. Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Polilical Identity in Turkey. (Religion and Global Politics)* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003)*,* 69-70. For examples of policies driven by Turkish Islamic Synthesis see Chapter III.

Alevis and their neighborhoods were specifically targeted by Islamist and rightwing mobs, had a significant effect on the consolidation of Alevi identity.[801]

Migration is one of the main pillars of the institutionalization of Alevism.[802] While urban dwellers made up 25% of Turkey's population until the 1950s, their share rapidly jumped to 38% at the end of the 1960s and reached 44% towards the end of the 1970s.[803] In parallel with internal migration, starting from the 1960s there were massive waves of immigration to European countries where Turkish migrants were exposed to different criteria of religious pluralism.[804] As a result of internal migration, Alevis from remote rural districts started sharing urban spaces with Sunnis. The Alevi-Sunni encounter and the change in the organization of daily life led to the transformation of traditional relations between religious leaders and their disciples and the reorganization of funerals and devotional practices. In urban spaces with high Alevi concentrations in Europe and in Turkey, *cemevi*s appeared as places to organize funerals, rituals such as *cem*, sacrificing animals, distributing alms and for cultural activities such as music and dance classes.[805] In other words, the *cemevi* appeared as the urban alternative to the big room of the *dede*'s house in the village where people used to gather for *cem* ceremonies.

It is notable that there were only three *cemevi*s in Istanbul before 1993 and by mid-1994 there were around twenty.[806] At the beginning of the 1990s *cemevi*s became landmarks in Alevi mobilization,[807] which focused on demanding the recognition of Alevism as a separate religious identity and equal citizenship rights that would end discrimination in public employment and schooling.[808] In this time, Alevis had a degree of visibility in the urban space as never before. While the *cemevi*s hosted grassroots Alevi organizations in the 1990s, during the 2000s they became sites for the struggle between the AKP government and Alevi organizations. Starting

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[801] Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya Alevi Hareketinin Siyasallaşması,* 62-65.
[802] Besim Can Zırh. "Becoming Visible Through Migration: Understanding The Relationships Between the Alevi Revival, Migration and Funerary Practices Through Europe and Turkey." PhD diss., University College London, 2012.

[803] Ahmet İçduygu. *The labour dimensions of irregular migration in Turkey*. 2006. Ayse Gedik. "Internal migration in Turkey, 1965–1985: Test of conflicting findings in the literature." *Review of urban & regional development studies* 9, no. 2 (1997): 170-179.
[804] Markus Dressler. "Religio-secular metamorphoses: The re-making of Turkish Alevism." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76, no. 2 (2008): 280-311. Martin Sökefeld, *Struggling for recognition: The Alevi movement in Germany and in transnational space*. (Berghahn Books, 2008).
[805] Murat Es. "Alevis in cemevis: religion and secularism in Turkey" in *Topographies of faith: Religion in urban spaces,* eds. Irene Becci, Marian Burchardt, and José Casanova, (Brill, 2013) 25-43, 28.
[806] Günter Seufert. "Between Religion and Ethnicity: A Kurdish Alevi Tribe in Globalizing Istanbul" in Ayşe Öncü and Petra Wezland (eds.), *Space, Culture and Power: New Identities in Globalizing Cities*, (London and Atlantic Highlands: Zed Books, 1997).
[807] Murat Es. "Alevis in cemevis," 28-29.
[808] M. Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 103-133.

from 2007, the status of *cemevi*s became a flashpoint in debates around the so-called Alevi Opening which was initiated by the AKP government in the late 1990s, as part of institutional reforms related around minority rights in order to acquire EU candidacy status. As a part of this process, the AKP government initiated the Alevi Opening (*Alevi Açılımı*) which consisted of seven workshops with representatives of Alevi organizations, the Directorate of Religious Affairs, and AKP representatives. While the government engaged with the Alevi question through these workshops and some Alevi organizations' demands gained visibility in the public space,[809] *cemevi*s remained culture houses. However, following a European Court of Human Rights decision on discrimination of Alevis by the Turkish state in 2014, the Supreme Court (*Yargıtay*) accepted the *cemevi* as a place of worship for Alevis in 2018.[810] As a result of this decision, the country's 937 *cemevi*s became eligible for certain fiscal exemptions that mosques already enjoyed. However, since the necessary legal regulations for the recognition of *cemevi*s as places of worship are still pending, it is up to local municipalities (*belediye*) to grant exemptions from electricity and water expenses.[811] With the decision of the Supreme Court and in the absence of necessary regulations, discussions on the status of *cemevi*s continue.

Another significant contribution of the Alevi Opening to the debate on the institutionalization of Alevism were the notions of "state/AKP *dede*"[812] and "assimilated Alevism."[813] Discussions on providing *dede*s working in *cemevi*s with a salary and appointment by the state, as is the case for imams at mosques, were seen as assimilatory interventions of the government which has been overtly promoting Sunni Islam to various Alevi organizations.[814] There were two major responses to these developments among Alevis. The first, represented by the Cem Vakfı, an Alevi foundation established in 1995 which was taken as the major interlocutor during the Alevi Opening by the AKP government, promotes the inclusion of Alevis within the existing religious framework upheld by the state. This approach manifests in

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[809] Murat Borovalı & C. Boyraz, "Türkiye'de Cemevleri Sorunu: Haklar ve Özgürlükler Bağlamında Eleştirel Bir Yaklaşım", *Mülkiye Dergisi*, 40 (3:2016), 55-85, p:61.
[810] The decision of the Supreme Court dated 25.10.2018 is attached to the newsclip: "Yargıtay: Cemevleri ibadethanedir," accessed June 29, 2019, https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/gundem/2018/11/27/yargitay-cemevleri-ibadethanedir-faturalarini-devlet-karsilamali/.
[811] For instance the local government of Didim accepted the Alevi Bektaşi Kültür Merkezi ve Cemevi at Didim center as a worship place with reference to the European Court of Human Rights: "Didim'de cemevine ibadethane statüsü," *Milliyet*, accessed June 29, 2019, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/gundem/didim-de-cemevine-ibadethane-statusu-1996831.
[812] Yeni Şafak, "Yasin Aktay: Maaş alınca 'devletin dedesi' olur mu?," Text, Yeni Şafak, December 1, 2008, https://www.yenisafak.com//yazarlar/yasinaktay/maa-alinca-devletin-dedesi-olur-mu-14115. ; "800 Alevi dedesi bugün Ankara'da buluştu," CNN Türk, accessed May 12, 2019, https://www.cnnturk.com/2008/turkiye/11/29/800.alevi.dedesi.bugun.ankarada.bulustu/502646.0/index.html.
[813] Besim Can Zırh, "Aleviler Nerede?", *Birikim*, 267: (2011), 64-72.
[814] Besim Can Zırh, "Aleviler Nerede?", *Birikim*, 267: (2011), 64-72.

demands such as the inclusion of Alevism into the obligatory religion classes[815] in every high school, and Alevi representation in the DRA.[816] Distancing itself from Cem Vakfi, Pir Sultan Abdal Derneği, an Alevi association founded in 1988, argues for the abolition of the Directorate of Religious Affairs and of mandatory religion classes. The association argues that, in a secular state, no space should be allocated to the propagation of a specific religious perspective, in this case Hanefi Sunni Islam.[817] On the one hand, the Cem Vakfi seeks to standardize Alevi practices and places of worship and to establish a hierarchy amongst religious leaders with fixed functions.[818] For the Cem Vakfi, what is at stake is the standardization of Alevi practices so as to render Alevism a clearly demarcated object conducive to state recognition. In this way, different framings of Alevism, intermingled with Kemalist, socialist and religious views, are mobilized to relate to Turkish nationalism and secularism in diverse ways and to systematically reconstruct Alevi tradition while seeking recognition.[819]

Institutionalization of Alevism in Dersim

Let us consider the specific case of Dersim within broader discussions of the institutionalization of Alevism in Turkey. Devotional practices in Dersim differ from those in most Alevi communities in Turkey. While, like in other Alevi communities, the *cem* ceremony occupies a significant place, there are certain devotional practices specific to the region, such as attributing holiness to mythical characters who are believed to have become natural sources or elements such as rivers, mountains, rocks; believing in the holy capacities of *jiara*s in the name of those mythic characters; and a selective Sufi terminology. Additionally, unlike most Alevi communities in today's Turkey, tribal relations are constitutive of the religious hierarchy in Dersim Alevism (see Introduction). While in other parts of Turkey Alevis were exposed to the effects of internal and external migration from the 1950s, the survivors of the Dersim Genocide were forcibly displaced to different parts of the country starting from 1938. It was only from 1949 onwards that survivors were able to return to their villages and try to reestablish the *ikrar,*

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[815] Mandatory religion classes were removed from the school curriculum in 1928 and made optional in 1956 in the high-school curriculum. Following the coup of 1980, religion classes, based on Hanefi Sunni Islam, became mandatory again in high schools. Buket Türkmen. "A transformed Kemalist Islam or a new Islamic civic morality? A study of "religious culture and morality" textbooks in the Turkish high school curricula." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 29, no. 3, 2009: 381-397.

[816] İzzettin Doğan. *Cem Vakfı çalışmaları ve Vakıf Genel Başkanı Prof. Dr. İzzettin Doğan'ın Görüş Ve Düşünceleri*. (İstanbul: Cem Vakfı Yayinlari, 1998), 184-186 .

[817] "*Görüşlerimiz*", *Pir Sultan Abdal*, 25:1996, 13.

[818] Mehmet Ertan, *Aleviliğin Politikleşme Süreci: Kimlik Siyasetinin Kısıtlılıkları ve İmkanları*, (Istanbul: Iletişim Yayınları, 2017), 201-206.

[819] Markus Dressler. "Religio-secular metamorphoses: The re-making of Turkish Alevism." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76, no. 2 (2008): 280-311, 304.

the belief system based on holy lineages which had been destroyed through genocidal violence.[820]

While the years between 1949 and the 1960s were described by my interlocutors as a period of restoring and re-cultivating everyday life and Alevi institutions (see Chapter II),[821] the mid-1960s onwards were distinguished by leftist mobilization (see Chapter II). Following the 1980 coup d'état, mass revolutionary mobilization was channeled into struggles for equal rights and recognition of Alevis and Kurds, as elsewhere in the country. Kemal Kahraman, who was born in the Pülümür district of Dersim in the 1960s and was a well-established musician who "collected" and "archived" Kurmancki oral culture (laments, fables, oral history accounts describing pre-1938 Dersim and the like) narrated the shift from leftist movements to the Alevi rights struggle as follows:

> What lay at the basis of our internationalism in Dersim is not to defend yourself. I mean it constitutes the basis of the self-refusal, the refusal of the identity. Internationalism has been the theoretical cover of refusing the cultural references. […] It got debatable in the 90s. We [leftwing internationalists] started questioning ourselves, "why should the Zazaki language be left to disappear, why could it [i.e. not being interested in Zazaki] be counted as a criteria in being progressive. […] we can and we should criticize the Kurdish movement but this needs to be said: the dogmas of the [Turkish] republic for 70 years, its definitions of identity became questionable with the Kurdish movement. […] I mean, the paradigm has collapsed with the emergence of the Kurdish movement. The questions of "who am I" came to the front. Everyone asked themselves this question. [822]

In Kahraman's account, leftist/revolutionary movements appear as internationalist movements which are undifferentiated from Kemalist progressivism on the issue of religious and ethnic identity. The internationalism of the leftist movements and the aspiration of the developmentalist Kemalist regime were both built upon the transcending existing self and culture, and the ethnic and religious identity one is born into, to reach a state of subjectivity where one shares the meta values of that particular ideology. The coup d'état of 1980 marked the starting point of the period when the meta-narratives of revolution, development, and change became questionable in Turkey and in Dersim. While the revolutionary and radical leftist movements continued their legal and illegal activities at a far smaller scale compared to

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[820] Referring to the interview I conducted with Mahmut Dede in Berlin, December 2017.
[821] Referring to the interview I conducted with Mahmut Dede in Berlin, December 2017.
[822] *Dersim'deki enternasyonalizmimizin temelinde kendini savunmama yatar. yani kendini reddetmenin temeli olmuştur, kendi aidiyetini, kendi kültürel referanslarını reddetmenin teorik kılıfı olmuştur enternasyonalizm. [...] süreç aslında 90'larda şüpheci bi duruma düştü. yeniden biz kendi kendimizi sorgulamaya başladık. yani "bu gidişat doğru mudur? niye öyleymiş? zazaca niye yaşamayacakmış? bu niye ilerici olmanın bi kriteri olabilirmiş?" [...] bence çok ciddi eleştirilebilir kürt mücadelesi, kürt örgütlü süreci. çok ciddi eleştirilmeli de. ama şu söylenebilir. kürt mücadelesiyle birlikte aslında yetmiş yıllık cumhuriyet dogmaları, yani aidiyete ilişkin tariflerin hepsi yeniden sorgulanır oldu. [...] yani aslında paradigma çöktü kürt mücadelesiyle birlikte. yine "ben kimim?" sorusu öne çıktı. herkes kendine yeniden onu sordu.* Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Kemal Kahraman in Berlin, July 17, 2016.

the pre-coup period, the political landscape after the coup was dominated by the Kurdish and Alevi rights struggles, fueled mostly by those who had previously engaged in radical leftist movements in Dersim.[823]

While the struggle of the Kurdish movement inspired leftwing Alevis to question their internationalist worldviews, it also initiated a political rivalry as Alevi and Kurdish organizations grew in competition. Zeki (1968), who was convicted for his participation in Halkin Kurtulusu, a revolutionary leftist organization, and who helped found two Alevi associations in Germany, described this rivalry as follows:

> When I came here I was about to turn 18. When I got out of prison, there was two months to my 18th birthday. So there were only two months left to go to Germany using my permit as a "child of worker" so I came in a rush. I didn't have a conception of private property when I came here. I hang around in associations. I put my pack of cigarettes in the middle for everyone, but nobody shares their own with me. Nobody cares for one another. Something weird happened to everyone. We didn't see anything like it until then. Relatives are weird, the organizations are different [...] There was nothing left for leftists to take advantage of, it was like that after the coup. You are either a Kurdist (*Kürtçü*) or an Alevi. Think about it, for years you told other people what is right and how the revolution would happen (laughter). You have experience in organizing, and you don't have much else (laughter). What are you going to do? So I started going to Alevi associations. There was no revolution, we fell apart, our families fell apart. Being Alevi worked/was trendy then, so we took advantage of those associations. We said, "Kizilbaslik is communism, what Marx meant by primitive communism is Dersim" (laughter). Saying Marx is our *kivra*[824] we suddenly became Alevi. So we became Alevi since we were not Kurdists.[825]

While Alevi associations and *cemevi*s started to spread both in Europe and Turkey during the post-coup period, this process also fueled the debates on the institutionalization of Alevism. For those who did not migrate and stayed in Dersim, having a *cemevi* was not essential for the survival of devotional or cultural practices. The *cemevi* in Dersim's city center, the only urban center where Alevis are in the majority, became a site where Alevis sought legal recognition. Not surprisingly, there have been different approaches to the institutionalization of Alevism in Dersim. Some have propagated that the "modernization of Alevism" is inescapable while others

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[823] Referring to the interviews I conducted with Nadir in Rüsselsheim, December 2016, Rüstem Polat in Rüsselsheim, December 2016 and Zeki in Rüsselsheim, December 2016.

[824] *Kiwra/Kirve* originally refers to someone who economically solidarizes with the family of a boy having *sünnet* circumcision. In everyday language it is used to indicate closeness and its use is close to brother/bro.

[825] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Zeki in Rüsselsheim, December 2016. "*Yani, ben geldigimde buraya zaten 18 yasina giriyordum. Hapisten ciktigimda 18 yaima girmeme 2 ay vardi, isci cocugu statusunde Almanyaya giris iznim 2 ay sonra bitecekti, apar topar geldim. Geldigimde özel mülkiyet algim yok. Gelmisim derneklere girip cikiyorum. Sigara paketini ortaya koyuyorum, benim sigaram bitince kimse bana sigara uzatmiyor. Kimse kimseye sahip cikmiyor. Herkese bi haller olmus. Biz böyle sey görmedik o zamana kadar. Akrabalar bi degisik, örgütler bi farkli. [...] solcularin baska nemalanacaklari bir sey kalmamiş artık, 80 sonrası öyle bir zaman. Ya Kürtçü olacaksın ya Alevi. Düşünsene sen şimdi yıllarca ona buna neyin doğru olduğunu, devrimin nasıl olacağını anlatmışsın. Bir örgütlenme deneyimin var. Başka da bir şeyin pek yok (gülüyor). Naapıcaksın? Alevi derneklerine dadandık işte biz de. Devrim olmadi, hepimiz dagildik, ailelerimiz dagildi. Naapicaz işte alevilik tutuyor o zaman hop o dernekleri sömürdük. Kızılbaslık komunizmdir, Marx ilkel komunizm derken Dersim'den bahseder (gülüyor) Marx bizim kivradır derken olduk mu hepimiz Alevi. Biz Kürtçü olmadığımız için Alevici olduk yani anlayacağın.*"

embraced the idea of "going back to the roots" and initiated their search for authentic Alevi practices. It is notable that the institutionalization of Alevism offered a suitable ground for the post-1980 converts from leftist organizations to maintain their progressivist standpoint. The camp in favor of "going back to the roots" tended to reject institutionalization based on the idea that there have historically not been any centrally controlled and organized spaces such as the *cemevi* in the "authentic" belief cosmology of Dersim. The milestone for the Dersimi version of "going back to the roots" was the Dersim Genocide. The intellectual interest in the pre-genocide period was tightly interlinked with the discovery of authentic Dersimi Alevism which was considered pure in the sense of not being affected by the control of central authorities.

I will depict the pro-institutionalization approach in Dersim through my interview with Ali Tuluk, who collaborated several times with Cem Vakfi and was one of the founders of the *cemevi* in Pertek district. Ali Tuluk had an interesting political journey. He was organized in the legal branch of Halkın Kurtuluşu[826] in the mid-1960s.[827] In his own words, he "turned to" his "roots" and started performing as a *dede* in the 1990s, as his father used to do. At that time, he started engaging with Alevi politics and became the founder of the Pertek *cemevi*. In the 2000s, he became the founding member of Genc Parti[828] branch in Pertek. Our interview had an abundant number of political references varying from revolutionary left- to rightwing populism. He promoted the unification of Alevi practices as the only way for Alevis to exist as a religious group. What became apparent in our discussion about the institutionalization of Alevism was his belief in the necessity of achieving consensus on a religious calendar among different Alevi communities. For him, similar to many other defenders of centralization of *cemevi*s, the diversity in practices among different Alevi groups hindered the unification of Alevis. He suggested overcoming the existing problems of Alevis in Turkey through institutionalization:

> Ali Tuluk: When it comes to the family of Muhammed (*Ehlibeyt*) it needs to be one head, one religion, one mentality. You cannot make something out of it once it gets divided. I mean, when a sheep goes astray, it gets caught by the wolf. Now if you fast for Xızır at another time, it loses its meaning. We came from the same category, same way, same offspring, and same holy lineage of the 12 Imams. Why do we change our way now as if we are different?
> Çiçek: How to find common ground then?
> Ali Tuluk: There needs to be a history. History is very important. History and dates are very important. If it's March 21, it's March 21. If it's June 10, it's June 10. Everything needs to have a date. There are

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[826] Halkın Kurtuluşu [People's Salvation] was a revolutionary faction inspired by the Albanian and Chinese communist movements founded in 1976 and was closed down in the aftermath of the 1980 coup d'état.
[827] Referring to the interview I conducted with Ali Tuluk in Elazığ, December 2015.
[828] GENCPARTI was a populist, liberal political party founded in 2002 by Cem Uzan, a businessman whose financial involvements were concentrated on media and banking sectors. The party became a phenomenal example in the history of political parties in Turkey, and got 7.5% of votes in the first election in 2002.

different *cemevis* with different preferences, which I don't approve. […] Because their calendars don't match. The dates are very important. […] There is no need to divide it into forty. […]
Çiçek: But there are also different communities among Sunni Muslims…
Ali Tuluk: There are differences but their Ramadan is common. There's only one Ramadan, like there's only one Alevi tradition… We need to open an Alevi religious affairs administration, Alevi schools, and *cemevis*. Whatever the religious affairs administration says becomes institutional. Still Alevism is pirate in Turkey. What I mean is that it's not institutionalized. It needs to be institutionalized my child. Otherwise nothing works; me being dervish or saint is just a story.[829]

In Tuluk's telling, diversity appeared as a problem after Alevism became an established denomination like Sunni Islam. What was primarily needed was to have a common devotional calendar regulating when to practice Alevi rituals. Having a common calendar would involve processes of inclusion and exclusion of devotional practices that might or might not take place. In his long-term political vision, creating harmony amongst Alevi groups by standardizing devotional practices was the first step to achieving a tangible, refined and standardized Alevism. This, he envisaged, would be promoted by a to-be-established Directorate of Alevi Affairs (Alevi *Diyaneti*),[830] Alevi schools and the *cemevi*s. This desire for a standardized and unified Alevism, which was shared by many others as a political strategy to avoid being assimilated into Sunni Islam was expressed as follows: "We cannot change the religion's course as long as Alevism remains pirate [meaning, unrecognized]. We would also degenerate…. Religion courses became Arabized and turned into courses on Quran… It brainwashes you, that's where the assimilation starts… That is why they opened these religion courses; they give you the Arabic culture."[831]

In this view, unification among Alevi groups is necessary not only to resist the assimilatory policies of the Turkish state but also the danger of degeneration. The standardization

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[829] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Ali Tuluk in Elazığ, December 2015. "*Ali Tuluk: Ehli-beyit deyince tek baş tek din tek kafa olacak, parça parçaya bölündü mü sen bundan bir şey çıkaramazsın. Yani sürüden ayrılan kuzuyu kurt kapar. […] Şimdi sen Hızır orucunu başka zaman tutunca anlamı kalmaz. Aynı kategoriden, aynı yoldan, aynı evlattan aynı 12 İmam ocağından, ayni Ali'den geldik. Niye yolumuzu değiştiriyoruz ki sen ayrı ben ayrı?*
Çiçek: Nasıl ortaklaşmak lazım peki?
AT: Belli bir tarih olacak. Tarih cok önemli. Gün ve tarih cok önemli canım. Eğer 21 Martsa 21 Mart, 10 Haziansa 10 Haziran. Her şeyin belli bir tarihi olması lazım. […]. Herkes kendisine gore bir dem almış gidiyor, ben bunları yanlış görüyorum. […] Çünkü tarihler birbirini tutmuyor. tarih cok önemlidir. […] 40 parcaya bolmenin bi anlami var mi? […]
Ç: Sunnilerde de bir sürü farklı cemaat var?
AT: Onlar ayrıdır ama gene de Ramazanı takip ederler, tek ramazan var tek Alevi var. […] Bir tek alevi gelenegi vardır. […] Alevi diyaneti, alevi okullari, cemevleri açılması lazım. Diyanet deyince ne oluyor, kurumsallaşıyor. Türkiye'de hala Alevilik korsandır. Ne demek istiyorum, yani kurum haline gelmemistir. Kurum haline gelicek kızım. Gelmeyince olmuyor. Ben ermişim, ben dervişim bunlar hikayedir."

[830] Alevi *diyaneti* is a phrase connoting that the existing Directorate of Religious Affairs is propagating Sunni Islam, therefore there is a need for an Alevi Religious Affairs that will be in charge of standardization and protection of Alevi belief.

[831] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Ali Tuluk in Elazığ, December 2015. "*culture [Alevilik] korsan kaldikca din derslerini degistiremeyiz. Biz de yozlasir gideriz. […] din dersleri arapcalasti kurana donustu, […] senin kafani yikiyor. iste bu asimilasyon burdan basliyor guzelim. bosuna asimilasyon demiyor. […] bu din derslerinin acilmasinin nedenlerinden biri budur [asimilasyon] sana arap kulturunu veriyor.*"

that Tuluk proposed would initiate a complicated process of "rationalization." By using the phrase "me being dervish or saint is just a story" he dismissed the practice of attributing holiness to people who are "not deserving" and insists on the "objective parameters" of a belief system. In this line of argumentation, if there were to be no institution to show the right path, people would develop attachments to those claiming to have miraculous powers. While the degeneration represented by believing in dervishes or saints would cause the destruction of religious hierarchy, the corruption attached to visiting holy places was explained through health concerns. "It's not healthy to believe in such things. These are idolatry, wrong. I don't approve of them. Having a piece of soil in the pocket, it's meaningless, we shouldn't believe in these things. 'Let's plant a tree on the grave of a person with cancer.' What's going to happen if you catch a sickness from the fruits of the tree with a man with cancer under it?"[832]

Tuluk's views on "what needs to be done," "what is degenerate," and "what is a good practice" align with the suggestions of the *dede* of Tunceli Cemevi at the city center. They are also in line with the views of Alevi associations that are politically close to the government such as the Cem Vakfi. In this narrative, the path leading to recognition is paved with rationalization, standardization and unification. If Alevis continue to fail to institutionalize, the Alevi belief will remain classified under as culture. Constructing Alevi mainstream practices, as Tuluk suggested, through a "proper" hierarchy based on acknowledged religious leaders, leaves what remains outside the bounds of standardization in the realm of the cultural. In other words, to seek recognition within the secular framework of the Turkish state Tuluk, like the representatives of the Cem Vakfi, believed that a line should be drawn between what belongs to Alevism (in the religious sphere) and what does not.

However, given the history of culturalization in Turkey, the question of how to label what is left outside organized religion gets complicated. Talal Asad puts forward that the "space that religion may properly occupy" in nation-states "has to be continually redefined by law because the reproduction of secular life within and beyond the nation-state continually affects the discursive clarity of that space."[833] Following Asad, Hussein Ali Agrama states that "as a feature of modern state's growing regulatory capacity, secularism has long been, and is

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[832] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Ali Tuluk in Elazığ, December 2015. "*saglikli degildir bunlara inanmak. [...] bunlar putperestliktir yanlistir. dogru gormuyorum. topragi alip da cebine koymak, anlamsiz bunlara inanmamak lazim. simdi kanserli birinin mezarinin ustune agac dikelim, o topragin altinda kanserli adam oldu. onun meyvelerinden hastalik kaparsan noolacak?*"

[833] Talal Asad. *Formations of the secular: Christianity, Islam, modernity*. Stanford University Press, 2003, p:201.

increasingly, fraught with an irrevocable indeterminacy."[834] Looking at the specific case of Alevis in Turkey, I argue that the space of intervention that the state forms while distinguishing the political from the religious is the sphere of culture. In other words, culture remains a zone of negotiation and intervention in the struggle for the recognition of Alevis.

Visiting holy places is one of the practices that is pushed into the realm of culture by those in favor of forming an orthodoxy of Alevism. While Tuluk considered it not a devotional practice but unhealthy behavior, the practice is embraced by those who visit *jiara*s as a therapeutic, devotional or cultural practice.

The therapeutic power of *jiara*

> We all carry scars. Some of us have deeper wounds, and some of us carry them deeper. […] A friend of mine recently asked if I see a therapist. I stared at his/her face vacantly and said no. Which therapist would understand me? […] We can be healed by turning to ourselves, by going to our *ziyarets*, facing the sun in the mornings, and greeting it. Only the stone and the soil of Dersim would understand us, cover our wounds, and heal us.[835]

These are the words of Murat Kahraman, spoken at his book launch at the Dersim Kulturgemeinde in Berlin on April 28, 2019. His book, which drew on his personal experiences to discuss the violence enacted between different political groups in the 1990s, opened up discussions on layered historical trauma and ways to overcome it. Neither his approach to the "mental state of Dersimis" nor his suggestions on how it can be made better are unique. In personal conversations and/or public talks Dersimis often referred to themselves as traumatized and made similar generalizations about people from Dersim. For this generation, Dersimis were referred as suffering subjects due either to the actual trauma of 1938 or its intergenerational transmission. The experiences of later state violence incidents, such as the 1980 coup d'état and the low-intensity war that started in the 1990s between the PKK and the Turkish Armed Forces, are additions to the traumatic experience of 1938.

During the discussion, Kahraman's framing of the wounds and *jiara*s received several comments from the audience. Not surprisingly, there was a consensus that Dersimis carry a historically rooted trauma. Interestingly, there was an acceptance of the therapeutic power of *jiara*s within the diasporic community formed by people who lived most of their lives in

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[834]Hussein Ali Agrama. *Questioning Secularism :Islam, Sovereignty, and the Rule of Law in Modern Egypt*. Chicago Studies in Practices of Meaning. Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press, 2012, p:26.

[835] Excerpt from the book-talk of Murat Kahraman April, 28, 2019. "*Hepimiz izler tasiyoruz. Kimimizinki daha derin kimimizinki daha derinde. […] Gecen bir arkadasim terapiye gidiyor musun diye sordu. Bos bos baktim suratina. Yok dedim. Beni hangi psikolog anlayacak. […] Biz kendimize dönerek iyilesebiliriz. Ziyaretlerimize gidip, sabahlari günese yüzümüzü dönerek, onu selamlayarak. Anca Dersim'in tasi topragi anlar bizi. yaralarimizi sarar, iyilestirir.*"

Germany and only visited Dersim on holiday. In this framing, visiting *jiara*s situated in Dersim is an alternative to modern psychological methods. The preference for sacred places instead of psychological treatment, is, as Kahraman puts it, based on the question: How could a psychologist, who did not suffer from a similar pain, touch such a deep wound of another?

In this framing, the *jiara*s of Dersim are taken as actors with the power to touch the pain of Dersimis and to help overcome it. *Jiaras* are sites where two worlds, the *batin* (the invisible world) and *zahir* (the visible world) meet. In that sense, they are openings to "elsewhere" and the reflection of the "elsewhere" in the materially accessible world. They are the main spatial constituent of Dersim: *Jiyar u Diyar or Ziyaret Diyari* (the land of sacred places)*,* and have been the holy landscape of Kurdish-Alevis for centuries. They are places which people visit to sacrifice animals, make wishes, cure illnesses and have visionary dreams. Some *jiara*s are natural forces, usually water, to which mythical stories are attributed. Along with natural resources, the graves of people who were considered holy also turn into *jiara*.

The conception of *jiara* can be understood only by considering the history of state violence that targeted the devotional practices in the region. As detailed in Chapter I, starting from the late Ottoman times primitivity and savagery have been sticky signs describing the landscape of Dersim and its inhabitants. Kazım Karabekır, the commander of the eastern army of the Ottoman Empire during World War I, in his report prepared in 1918–19, was not alone in equating the landscape and its inhabitants with barbarism and lack of proper civilization:

> Dersim is an extremely rocky, steep, hard to pass through, wild place and its arable areas are limited. This savagery of the landscape had influenced the character of people and made them into wild savages who are deprived of humanity and merit. […] They totally believed in *seyyid*'s nonsense religious teachings/indoctrination. They take oath with Prophet Ali's wand or in *ziyaretgâh*.[836]

While *jiara*s were depicted as the nonsensical religious teachings of *seyyids*, their role in popularly narrated stories of genocidal violence help illustrate the spatial encounter between state intervention and holy places. In that regard, the story of Hêniyo Pil *jiara* or Büyük Çeşme *ziyareti* (Holy Place of the Grand Fountain) opens up elements that are commonly found in the stories attributed to holy places in the region. I turn first to the contemporary epistemic violence executed by the local governorship (*valilik*) on this particular *jiara*, which is illustrative of how holy places in the region were made part of national history. Then I will expand on the story of

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[836] "*Dersim son derece kayalık, sarp ve geçilmesi zor vahşi yerler olup tarıma elverişli alanları azdır. Arazinin bu vahşeti Dersim ahalisinin mizacını etkileyerek hepsini vahşi ve hunhar (kan dökücü), insaniyet ve erdemden mahrum bir hale koymuştur. Seyitlerin içi boş dini telkinlerine tastamam iman ve inançları vardır. Yemin etme ve ahdetme, Hazreti Ali'nin değneği ve ziyaretgahları üzerine yapılır.*" Faik Bulut, *Dersim Raporları*, (İstanbul: Evrensel Basım Yayın, 2013), 222-223.

how Hêniyo Pil *jiara* was not burned, even while its surroundings were attacked by the state, due to its holiness.

Figure 16: The fountain of Hêniyo Pil jiara

Hêniyo Pil *jiara* is in the Pülümür district of Dersim. The spring is situated at the center of the sacred place and it opens up towards a small forest. There are two recently constructed buildings in the *jiara:* a kitchen to organize the sacrifice of animals and the distribution of food, and a *türbe*, a word referring to the tomb of a saintly person in Sunni Islam but which is not widely used in the Alevi context. While *jiara* is the term that is locally used to describe the grave of a saintly person, in this case we see a differentiation between *jiara*, which refers to the place that includes the *türbe*, the fountain and the forest, and the *türbe* specifically referring to the tomb.

Figure 17: The built structures within Hêniyo Pil jiara

This is one of the *jiaras* that are "cared for" by both locals and the provincial government (*valilik*). For instance, the construction of the kitchen was financed through individual initiatives. The *valilik* prepared several plaques giving information on the "history" of the place and Quranic references "explaining" the practices taking place there. Figure 18 shows the inscriptions at the entrance. The first states that this place is attributed to Ahmed-i Zemci, a friend of the general Abu Muslim al-Khorasani, a significant figure in Abbasid military history who came from the holy lineage of Imam Hasan.[837] It is indicated on the plaque that he became known among Alevi communities after Khorasan Alevis immigrated to Anatolia and Mesopotamia. The plaque suggests a differentiation between story/myth (*rivayet*) and information/history/reality. While most of the information about the *jiara* is written in an assertive tone, in the present tense, emphasizing the validity of the information, a specific part is framed as *rivayet*, story/myth. This relates that Ahmed-i Zemci was "a slender saintly person," "fighting during the day and disappearing during the night." Although he is said to be approximately 300 years old, he looked young.

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[837] Al-Hasan ibn Ali (624-670 CE), commonly known Imam Hasan, is the eldest son of Muhammad's daughter Fatimah and Ali. He is particularly important for being the grandson of Prophet Muhammad and is considered the second Imam in Shia Islam.
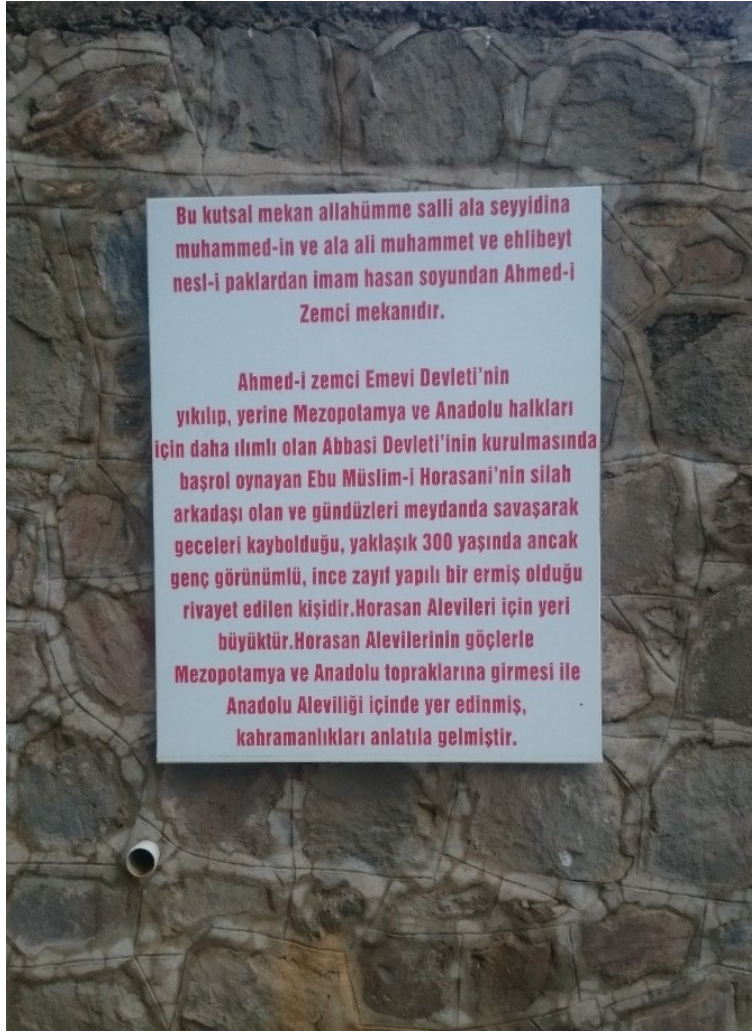
Figure 18: A plaque recounting the history of Hêniyo Pil jiara

Not surprisingly, orally transmitted stories change when they are written down. The open-ended features of those stories become stable; the story becomes more concise and/or coherent. However, in placing plaques at many popular *jiaras* the Tunceli governorship went beyond simply putting an oral culture into writing. These plaques turn characters that are attributed generic Sufi and supernatural features, such as being able to disappear or living for centuries, into solid characters within the history of Islam. By doing so, they draw a line between the sacred and the profane based on Islamic references. Put differently, and contextualizing the *jiara* within the history of Islam, the plaques locate the source of holiness as the orthodox Islamic framework.[838] In this frame, holiness is inherited through a holy lineage. This excludes the expanded understanding of holiness in the region which has been based on an amalgamation of animistic and Sufi elements and tribal relations that are believed to be the continuations of

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[838] Ahmet Kerim Gültekin, "Alevi Kurds and the Transformation of Sacred Space" lecture hosted by the Multiple-Secularities research project at the Leipzig University, January 15, 2019.

holy lineages. More importantly. this neglects the importance of the actual place which is considered holy.

The second inscription (Figure 19) in the *jiara* "explains" the reasoning behind lighting candles with references to two Quranic verses: Nebe 12–13 and Nur 35–36. These verses explain that people light candles during Islamic holy nights, namely *kandils*, which refer to important days in the prophet Muhammed's life. Independent from how/when people light candles, the plaque employs the Sunni interpretation of Islam as a tool to govern this semantic world. The motivations for lighting candles as Dersimis understand them—including to "lighten the paths of those who passed away,"[839] as "a sign showing the attempt to make contact with dead,"[840] or "a call for the dead to enlighten"[841] the path of the living—are erased by this Quranic "explanation." This is a clear example of the epistemic violence that the region experiences.

Figure 19: The plaque referencing Quranic verses on lighting candles on ziyarets at Hêniyo Pil jiara

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[839] Referring to the interview I conducted with Zeliha in Dersim, March 2014.
[840] Referring to the interview I conducted with Gülizar in Dersim, March 2015.
[841] Referring to the interview I conducted with Gülcan in Dersim, July 2018.

Figure 20: The spot in Hêniyo Pil jiara where candles are lit

A popular story of this *jiara* is about an encounter between Turkish soldiers and the landscape of Dersim. A high-ranked Turkish general decided to build a route over Hêniyo Pil *jiara* and to do so, had the trees surrounding it cut down. However, a day before construction started, a fire broke out near the *jiara* due to the military clashes. While the fire burned the area close to the *jiara* it stopped where the *jiara* itself starts. Following this incident, the Turkish general came and apologized to the *jiara* and the *pir* who had tried to stop him.[842] This story is placed in different time periods. While some place it during the Dersim Genocide in 1937–38, other narrate nearly the same story in the context of village burnings and evacuations during the 1990s which were called the second '38.[843]

The genocidal violence of 1937–38, which is a landmark in the identity formation of Dersimis (see Chapter I), targeted the region's landscape as well as its inhabitants. The story of historical and contemporary state interventions depicts how the landscape itself becomes a target of the state either for civilizing reasons—such as building roads to connect different parts of Dersim and make it available for the "civilizing force"—or to assimilate it within the hegemonic Sunni frame of belief to end "deviant" practices. *Jiara*s and the rituals woven around

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[842] I heard this story from four different interlocutors. While the plot is the same, the dates change. Referring to my encounter with Ali and Gürol during my visit to the *jiara* in July, 2018, and the interviews I conducted with Ercan in Ankara, July 2018, and with Ekber in Ankara, December 2016.

[843] The documentary directed by Devrim Tekinoğlu on 1994 village evacuations in Dersim called "Bitmeyen Tertele" [Unfinished Genocide] is a good illustration of how the 1994 state intervention is framed as a continuation of the genocidal violence.

them are considered a form of religious deviancy and targeted by the state. I argue that the parallelism constructed between the people and the landscape by the central government has played a role in the making of the idea of a therapeutic Dersim landscape that is capable of healing the wounds of Dersimis. In a sense, Dersimis construct a sense of likeness with the landscape, based on sharing the same injury. While the abilities of *jiara*s to "protect themselves" from state violence is framed as a consequence of holy power, their therapeutic power is related to their witnessing of violence and the suffering attached to it. Holiness, in the case of *jiaras,* operates as the power to transcend suffering and turn into a capacity for healing. What is striking is that this belief, which remains outside both the Turkish state's attempts to "secularize" it and attempts to institutionalize Alevism as an organized religion, has roots in the modern violence that marked Dersim and made Tunceli.

The *jiaras* attributed to *budelas*

The *jiara*s attributed to the theme of madness and the holy-mad make up a small part of the tradition of visiting holy places. *Jiara*s attributed to *budela* or those believed to have the therapeutic power to cure mentally unstable people are only a particular example reflecting the larger tension between practices taking place at *jiara*s and institutionalized Alevism. Due to the ambiguous place of holy-mads who do not take part in the hierarchies of Dersim's belief cosmology, the *jiara*s attributed to holy-madmen are sites where the tension between *jiaras* and institutional Alevism crystalize. To unpack this conflict, I will first elaborate on the Yesil Evliya *ziyareti* in Ovacik district where people bring their relatives and acquaintances suffering from "mental ilness" to find a cure. I will then elaborate on practices at *budela* graves that are turned into *jiara*.

Yesil Evliya *ziyareti*

Yeşil Evliya is situated in the Ovacik district, which is also known for being the site of one of the most important *jiara*s of Dersim: the Munzur Gözeleri. While Munzur Gözeleri is a popular *jiara*, Yesil Evliya *ziyareti* (the Green Awliya), which is far smaller, attracts far fewer visitors. It is located above the Hanusaga Kilise Köy (Hanusaga Church Village), a former Armenian village. The village was nearly empty when I visited during the summer of 2018, which was not at all unusual, I was told. Ali, a 12-year-old boy, and Haydar, a 55-year-old man, showed me the way to the Yesil Evliya *ziyareti*. While walking up towards the site Ali and Haydar told me its story:

Haydar: This is a very ancient *jiara*.[844] Not new.

Ali: It was in the same place before '38 too. […] People come here sick and go back cured. I swear (*Vallahi*).

Haydar: Yes, it was here before '38, our elders say. [...] Since then people bring here those who are not stable. Mentally I mean. […] It belongs to the three sisters.

Ali: They lived here a long time ago.

Haydar: Long before '38. That is how I heard it. These three sisters were living here, in this village. But one of them was too nice. To everyone. No matter who they were and what they did. She was accepting everyone to her place. Killer, robber, you name it. The other two sisters left her because of this. They said enough is enough (laughing). Since she was too approachable and believed in the good in everyone, including to those seem hopeless. […]

Ali: This place turned into a *jiara* after her death.

Çiçek: Where is her grave?

Ali: We don't know. The other two sisters also died here but we don't know where exactly their graves are.[845]

Figure 21: Yesil Evliya ziyareti, photo taken by Martin Greve

An old wishing tree next to a small pond welcomed us when we reached the top of the hill. Taking a handful of water from the pond, Haydar said "drink from the pond, it is *şifalı*, therapeutic." Passing by the old tree and following the small path Haydar showed us, we

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[844]The main temporal reference point to indicate that a place belongs to the time of old times is the Dersim Genocide. What is considered authentic in Dersim belief system, that is not manipulated through state's control/intervention, belongs to the idealized pre-genocide time.
[845] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Ali and Haydar in Ovacık, Dersim, July 2018.

reached another tree right behind the pond. "This is the tree to which people tie their mentally unstable relatives," Ali said. Haydar further explained that "sometimes their ties unfasten while people [those who brought them] are worshipping and they all return together. And sometimes they [people with illnesses] stay tied the whole night." On the right side of the old tree, there was a little stone pile to light candles and another tree where people sacrificed animals. What Haydar refers to by worshipping is the sacrifice of animals, lighting candles and praying at the site.

Figure 22: The place in Yesil Evliya ziyareti where animals are sacrificed, photo taken by Martin Greve

Figure 23: The stone mound in Yesil Evliya ziyareti where candles are lit, photo taken by Martin Greve

The usual way of "finding a cure" in Yesil Evliya *ziyareti* for those suffering from "mental instabilities" is the following: the person with mental instability is tied to the tree behind the pond. Relatives or friends sacrifice an animal and distribute its meat to those who gathered there or living nearby, light candles and pray. The animal sacrificed in the site is dedicated to the healing of the patient. If the ropes become untied by themselves, it is a sign showing that the one seeking cure will find it. This can happen while the relatives/friends are still worshipping. If not, the patient should be left there for the night. Usually the ropes untie themselves after a couple of hours and they all return from the site together.

Although it is often referred as a holy place for mad people (*deli ziyareti*), people residing close by who suffer from other diseases and/or want to make wishes also visit Yesil Evliya. It is their local *ziyaret* as Haydar put it during our interview. Ali and Haydar recounted how one person died while tied up at Yeşil Evliya several years ago. Since then people have stopped leaving patients tied at the site. This story also circulates among Dersimis living in different districts.[846] While there are several stories of people who brought their relatives to this

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[846] Referring to interviews I conducted with Ekber, in Ankara, December 2016, and with Haydar Ali in Dersim, July 2018.

site,[847] I did not encounter stories of well-known madmen, whether considered holy (Şeywuşen, Bava Bertal) or not (Let-It-Snow Ibo, Radio Hıdır, Chelsea Celal), being brought to Yeşil Evliya. In that sense, one can argue that Dersimis do not want to "heal" these popular figures not only because of their holy capacities, but also because of their power of connecting people through their popularity as discussed in Chapter II.

Şeywuşen's and Pir Ali's jiaras

While Yesil Evliya is the only *jiara* specifically dedicated to mental instability, the graves of *budela*s and other saintly people are considered sacred places that people visit for various reasons. Şeywuşen's grave became a holy place immediately after it was built in the Municipality Cemetery. Mazlum Arslan, the mayor at the time, decided to put the grave at the entrance to the cemetery, predicting that it would quickly become a popular *jiara*: "We built his grave at the entrance of the Municipal Cemetery. […] His funeral was one of the most crowded funerals of Dersim. We knew that that people would visit it [his grave]. They started lighting candles on the very first day we buried him."[848] The Municipality Cemetery in Dersim is situated in Cumhuriyet Mahallesi, at 45-minute walk from the center. From graves of guerrillas belonging to all movements engaged in the armed struggle in Turkey (TİKKO/MKP,[849] DHKP-C[850] and PKK[851]) to the "martyrs" of Turkish Armed Forces to important *pir*s who used to live in central Dersim, the cemetery gives hints about the ways in which political tensions are reproduced and reshaped through afterlives. Poems are written onto the gravestones, photos are attached, there are specific places to light candles next to the graves, and nearby trees are turned into wish-trees by tying pieces of cloth to the branches; these are unique practices that would not take place in Sunni-dominated non-politicized cemeteries.

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[847] For instance, Haydar's aunt was tied to that tree for having hallucinations and was cured after her visit to Yesil Evliya. The uncle of Ekber, was brought to Yesil Evliya for having unexplained headaches that were said to be psychological by the doctors and his headache got better after his visit. Referring to the interview I conducted with Ekber in December 2016, Ankara.

[848] Referring to the interview I conducted with Mazlum Arslan in Dersim, May 2014.

[849] *Türkiye Komünist Partisi Marxist/Leninist*, Communist Party of Turkey Marxist/ Leninist was founded in 1972 and has been widely organized in Dersim.

[850] *Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi*, Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front which is a Marxist-Leninist party was founded in 1978 and involved in armed struggle since the 1980s.

[851] Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê, The Kurdistan Workers' Party is a Kurdish radical political organization involved in the armed struggle since 1984.

Figure 24: The grave of Şeywuşen

Şeywuşen's grave has turned almost black from the smoke of candles that were alight on each part of the grave. Engraved on the gravestone are three lines from a poem by Diren Yılmaz entitled "You Have Not Died, Seyit Hüseyin" [*Sen Ölmedin Seyit Hüseyin*]: "You are smiling at our callused heart and frozen face/ Tell us Seyit Hüseyin, why this rush/ Are you going to that unknown city?"[852] The full poem is written out on the pedestal of his statue in the city center (see Chapter IV). I find this poem particularly interesting considering the relationship that people continue to have with Şeywuşen after his decease. As discussed in Chapter IV, the poem rejects his death and is embellished with references to the Munzur River, the mountains and the sun, all of which are attributed holiness in the region.[853] The references to holy natural sites and placing Şeywuşen above the gods expresses the amalgamation of devotional references that forms Şeywuşen's holiness. Unlike Munzur whose secret power which could only be known by others after he became *sır*, the secret power, Seywuşen's holiness started to widely be known during his life and continues to realize itself in his grave and in dreams during his afterlife.

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[852] *Nasırlaşmış yüreğimize, buz tutmuş yüzümüze bakıp gülümsüyorsun/ söyle Seyit Hüseyin bu acele niye?/ Yoksa bilmediğimiz o şehre mi gidiyorsun?*

[853] "Death is not where the world ends/ I understood that with you/And you stand at the top of the mountains/ Wondering where the Sun is rising/ Surrounded by broken statues of Gods/ You are the only one standing up/ Sleeping like an innocent child/ And Munzur is flowing next to your feet/ You are touching the water and drawing things on it/ Who knows what you are thinking?" "*Değil, ölüm dünyanın bittiği yer/Sende anladım bunu, sende çözdüm/Ve sen karşımda, dağlarımın yücesinde /Güneşin doğduğu yerde öyle bakmaktasın/ Etrafında yıkık Tanrı heykelleri/Aralarında bir tek sen ayaktasın/Uyumaktasın günahsız bir çocuk gibi/Ve Munzur akmakta ayaklarının önünde/Ellerinle suya dokunup bir şeyler çiziyorsun/Kim bilir Seyit Hüseyin neleri düşünüyorsun?*"

People gather at his grave especially when wishing to become pregnant. While chatting about Şeywuşen's life, I was advised several times to light a candle and take a bit of soil from the grave so I would find a *hayırlı kısmet*, a benevolent partner and a child.[854] When I visited his grave one afternoon in March 2015, I encountered a predominantly female crowd gathered around the grave, praying and crying, lighting candles and taking bits of soil so their wishes would be granted: to conceive a child, for their daughters to find partners, to heal a child's illness. A middle-aged woman brought her daughter to find a cure for her eczema; another one came to find healing for the pain in her legs. While people often visit Şeywuşen's grave, I have not encountered a single story of someone seeking a cure for mental instability.

Şeywuşen's grave is not the only *jiara* attributed to *budela*s; there are others. Among these is the Pir Ali *jiara*. Those who want a son visit the grave of Pir Ali who, like Şeywuşen, is considered a holy-mad person from a holy lineage. While searching for the Pir Ali *jiara* which is located in Çiftlik Köyü village in Kovancilar/Elazığ, on the border of Dersim, I heard the story of Deli Ali from those I asked for directions. Rewcan, who was born in 1956 in Çiftlik Köyü, remembered Ali from his visits to Çiftlik Köyü during her childhood. According to Rewcan and others, Ali was from Sorpiyan (Yolkonak) village and came to Çiftlik Köyü to visit his relatives. "I used to be afraid of him when I was a child. I knew that he wouldn't harm me... But he was different,"[855] Rewcan said, describing her encounter with Ali when she was 6–7 years old. Rewcan is not alone in labelling *budela*s "harmless." A sense of difference accompanied by fear, and the simultaneous feeling that this different person is harmless, was a recurrent way of describing encounters with *budela*s.

While fear is an emotion commonly attached to childhood memories, the harmless/pure nature of holy-madmen also appears in the poem written for Şeywuşen. In the narratives about holy-madmen, there is a need to distinguish the fear of the child from the fear from danger. This is where the difference between a mentally unstable person and a holy-madman lies. In my interview with Hasan Sönmez (45), a *pir*, the place of harmlessness becomes clear in defining the holy-madman in opposition to the ordinary mad:

> He [Şeywuşen] is someone who never resorted to violence. Madness has a definition, mad people attack others, insult, have unconscious actions. Delirium,[856] as said in Turkish, has a definition. He [Şeywuşen]

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[854] Referring to conversations I had with a predominantly female group visiting Gola Cetu in Dersim, May 2014 and March 2015.
[855] Referring to the conversation I had with Rewcan in Dersim, July 2018.
[856] In Turkish going mad is *delirmek* and mad is *deli*. *Delirium* and *delirmek* sound similar but there is no etymological link between them. While *deli* comes from Uyghur Turkish, *delirium* has a Latin root.

doesn't fit that explanation of madness. He was completely at peace with society. He was a naïve and completely harmless person. He was not meddling with anyone's concerns.[857]

Naïveté and harmlessness, along with certain holy capacities, differentiate a holy-madmen from an ordinary one. In the case of Pir Ali, the holy capacity was expressed in his lifetime when he "appeared" in the Korean War. Some Dersimis doing their obligatory military service in the 1950s were sent to the Korean War to fight on the side of the United States forces for Turkey's eventual entry to NATO.[858] Although Pir Ali was not one of them, those who survived the Korean War said that Pir Ali appeared on top of the mountains to show them the way to follow and then fight against the "enemy" on the frontline.[859] In addition to his ability to be in two places at the same time, his holy capacities were also demonstrated when he predicted his own moment of death. On the night before he died, he went to Çiftlik Köyü and told his relatives that he would die that night. He requested to be buried in that village. He also added that those who wanted to have a son could visit his grave.[860]

While directing me to the Pir Ali *jiara*, Rewcan told me not to worry, "no one returned destitute from Ali's grave,"[861] thinking that I was visiting the grave to ask for a son. Hasan (55), who lives in Çiftlik Köyü not far from the Pir Ali *jiara*, accompanied me to the cemetery where the grave was situated.

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[857] "*Hayatında hiç şiddete başvurmamış bir insan. Deliliğin tanımı var, deli saldırır, bilinçsiz hareketlerde bulunur. Delirmek, delirium diye Turkçe'de söylenir. Deliriyumun belirli tanımları var. […] Şeywuşen ona uymuyor. […] Son derece barışık, toplumu seven, kimseye karışmyan biriydi*." Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Hasan Sönmez in Dersim, April 2014.

[858] There are two laments about approximately 250 Dersimis who participated in the Korean War, *Zegeriye* and *Xıdıré*. Both narrate the loss of loved ones in the Korean War. From the personal archive of Kemal Kahraman. For further information about the Turkish participation to the Korean War see: Lippe, John M. Vander. "Forgotten brigade of the forgotten war: Turkey's participation in the Korean War." *Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no. 1 (2000): 92-102. Brockett, Gavin D. "The Legend of 'The Turk'in Korea: Popular Perceptions of the Korean War and Their Importance to a Turkish National Identity." *War & Society* 22, no. 2 (2004): 109-142.

[859] Referring to the interview I conducted with Mahmud Dede in Berlin, July 2016, and with Hasan who accompanied me during my visit of Pir Ali's grave in Dersim, July 2018.

[860] Referring to the interview I conducted with Mahmud Dede in July 2016, Berlin and with Hasan who accompanied me during my visit of Pir Ali's grave in Dersim, July 2018 and my conversation with Rewcan in Dersim, July 2018.

[861] Referring to the conversation I had with Rewcan in Dersim, July 2018.

Figure 25: The gravestone of Pir Ali

Figure 26: The grave of Pir Ali

The tree in whose shade Pir Ali's grave lies had been turned into a wish tree and people had tied pieces of cloth to it. While telling me the history of the small cemetery, Hasan said that one of the other graves was "a sort of *ziyaret*" for the Armenians of the village. Armenians used to visit, light candles and make wishes, "but in the last 10 years I haven't seen or heard anyone

visiting this grave […] I clean it up when I come to the cemetery; if not, it would have disappeared [in the weeds]."[862]

There is no inscription on the gravestone of the "Armenian *ziyaret*," and no one that I talked to knew whose grave it is. On the other site of the cemetery lies Ali's grave. The stone of Pir Ali's grave, which seems relatively new, announces that Ali was born in 1930 and the relatives who prepared the gravestone claimed that they were from the holy lineage of Sah Ismail.[863] Pir Ali's recognition as holy-mad is explained in the inscription on his gravestone:

> I was born in 1930
> I made myself loved by the universe
> No one knew I was a *dervish*
> Everyone took me as a mad person
> They mocked me
> They saw me upon the Korean mountains
> Only then they knew I was a *dervish*
> Only then they knew I was Pelül.[864]

Pir Ali's appearance in the Korean War marked the shift from being someone who was mocked for riding sticks as if he was riding horses to someone who was recognized and respected as a *budela*. Similar to Şeywuşen's case, the words *pir, dervish* and *budela* were used interchangeably to refer his holy capacity (for a discussion of the use of different labels to refer to the *budela*'s holy capacity see Chapter III)

On my way back to Çiftlik Köyü, Hasan told me about people who had recently been cured at Pir Ali *ziyaret*. Several months ago a young couple who wanted to have a boy visited the site. Hasan accompanied them during their visit.

> They came from the center, like you [Dersim center]. […] They were told to have little chance for having a child. […] I told them that no one left here disappointed. They did not take it so seriously (*kulak asmadilar pek*). They lit their candles, ate pieces of soil from the [Pir Ali's] grave and left. Last month they came back again with a sheep. I heard the story when I saw them. The girl was pregnant […] they wanted to sacrifice an *adak*. […] We sacrificed the animal and distributed to the villagers around. […] They left very happy.[865]

Although people mainly visited the *jiara* to have a son, people living around Çiftlik Köyü visited Pir Ali's grave for various reasons. A woman in her 60s told me that she came regularly

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[862] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Hasan in Dersim, July 2018.
[863] The inscription on the back side of his gravestone (photograph on the right side): *Şah İsmail Oğlu Seyyit Ali Ruhuna Fatiha* / Rest in Peace [al-fatiha for the soul] the Son of Shah Ismail [(1487-1524), the founder of the Safavid dynasty].
[864] I think *Pelül* refers here to the character of wise-mad *Behlül*, but I have been unable to confirm this. The inscription on the front of his gravestone (photograph on the left side) reads: *Tarih 1930'da geldim/Cihana kendimi sevdirdim cümle aleme / derviş olduğumu kimse bilmedi/ Devri alem delidi dediler/ Deli deyip bana güldüler/ Kore dağlarında beni gördüler/ Derviş olduğumu şimdi bildiler / Pelül olduğumu şimdi bildiler*.
[865] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Hasan during my visit to Pir Ali's grave in Dersim, July 2018.

for an eye problem. "I visited the *ziyaret*, I guess 3 or 4 times and after a month or less my eyes started seeing again, they recovered."[866]

Conclusion

These three cases show us how *jiaras* which are attributed therapeutic powers to heal madness and those that are attributed to *budela*s help us draw the lines between madness and holy-madness. In that regard, the contrast between Yesil Evliya and *budela jiaras* is noteworthy. The story of Yesil Evliya is of a woman who is "annoyingly" tolerant of any evil including dishonesty, robbery and the like. It is this very tolerance which made the two other sisters leave their house and turned this place into a sacred place for the mentally unstable. In other words, in this narrative, tolerance of that which is not easily tolerable translates into the power to heal mentally unstable people.

Yesil Evliya is not unique in the healing powers attributed to the *jiara* belonging to a female figure. There are several *jiara* in the region that are believed to belong to women before they become *sır*, the secret divine force, and transform into a mountain, a river and the like. The most significant examples of such cases are the Mountain Jele and Jiara Ana Fatma. Jele is one of the sisters of Duzgı, one of the most important mythical characters and the son of either Seyit Kures or Bava Mansur.[867] She symbolizes beauty, naïveté and purity.[868] Ana Fatma, who is one of the most significant female *evliya* in the region, is the wife of prophet Ali and the mother of Hasan and Hüseyin. She is known for her healing powers and her *jiara* is located at Kamere Duzgı Mountain.[869]

The interesting contrast between Yesil Evliya and *budela jiara*s relates to the following: while mental instability requires healing at the grave of an extremely tolerant woman, the *budela* graves are mainly sites for fertility. Put otherwise, these two cases offer two different cosmologies of madness. Yesil Evliya *jiara* offers a cure to this-worldly madness while not engaging with other-worldly madness. By contrast, madness in the case of *budela jiara* appears as a power to help cultivate the next generation, to continue the holy lineage. Yesil Evliya *jiara* is in alliance with secular medicine in its approach to mental instability as something requiring

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[866] "*Ben gittim geldim ziyarete, 3 4 keredir herhalde, bir ay geçti geçmedi yine görebilmeye başladı gözler düzeldi.*" Referring to my conversation with Safiye teyze whom I encountered in Çiftlik Köyü on my way back.
[867] Erdal Gezik, & Hüseyin Çakmak. *Raa haqi,Riya Haqi: Dersim Aleviliği İnanç Terimleri Sözlüğü*. Kalan Yayınları, 2010, p: 70.
[868] Erdal Gezik, & Hüseyin Çakmak. *Raa haqi,Riya Haqi*, p:97.
[869] Erdal Gezik, & Hüseyin Çakmak. *Raa haqi,Riya Haqi*, p:18.

a cure. The two *budela jiara*s pose a challenge to this conceptualization of madness by simply refusing to pathologize it.

How to consider the challenge posed by the *budela jiara*s in a context where Alevism is not recognized as a religion at all, but is governed through state institutions managing associations or cultural sites? If one assumes that the alleged "failure" of secularization in Turkey offers an explanatory framework for the "failure" of recognizing Alevi religious institutions, it may also account for the insistence on seeking cures at holy places attributed to *budela*s. However, this reproduces the notion that devotional practices are problematic in the secular frame, and simultaneously reproduces an understanding of Eurocentric modernity. To unpack what I mean by Eurocentric modernity I will turn to Hussein Agrama's questioning of the line between the political and the religious in Egypt. Agrama asks why modernity in Egypt is often regarded as incomplete due to the religious conflicts within the country. Egypt is said to be "incompletely secular, which is why it has religious conflict and Egypt has secular-religious conflict, which is evidence of its being incompletely secular."[870] While incompleteness is never an issue in analyzing religious conflicts in South Africa and Israel, in their neighboring countries there is not much of an escape space from the frameworks of the incomplete, failed or belated secularization process.[871]

Instead, Agrama suggests approaching secularism "as a process of defining, managing, and intervening into religious life and sensibility." In that regard, "secularism is historically and remains today an expression of state's sovereign power."[872] Highlighting the constant negotiation between the realm of religion and state intervention, this approach helps us avoid the Eurocentric framework of analysis implied in expressions such as "lacking secularism" (*eksik sekülerizm*)[873] or "belated modernity." What complicates the negotiation between the religious and the political spheres in the case of the Alevis of Turkey is the place of the cultural sphere as a zone of state intervention. As explained above, major points of struggle for Alevis in Turkey are, first, the recognition of Alevism as a religion and, second, recognizing *cemevi*s, which are currently registered as cultural places as places of worship.

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[870] Hussein Ali Agrama,. *Questioning secularism: Islam, sovereignty, and the rule of law in modern Egypt*. University of Chicago Press, 2012, 5.
[871] Hussein Ali Agrama,. *Questioning secularism*, p:6-7.
[872] Hussein Ali Agrama,. *Questioning secularism*, p:26.
[873] Ayşe Buğra and Osman Savaşkan. *New capitalism in Turkey: The relationship between politics, religion and business*. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2014, 41.

My findings further complicate this discussion by adding another layer, namely culturalization from below. While those who are engaged in the institutionalization of Alevism demarcate culture to divide devotional from illegitimate practices, some interlocutors use culture to describe practices that are regarded as superstitious and, in this way, render them legitimate. To exemplify the culturalization of what is disregarded as superstitious behavior I turn to Ahmet *dede* of Tunceli Cemevi who emphasized the switch between devotional and cultural practices:

> Çiçek: People also visit [Şeywuşen's] his grave to take a piece of soil right?
>
> Ahmet *dede*: Yes, but, well now we are talking about culture, the culture of our people. You cannot name them religion or religious practices. It is dangerous. It is a zone of conflation. One needs to be careful about that.[874]

For Ahmet *dede*, one needs to be careful not to conflate the religious and the cultural in order not to contaminate Alevi religiosity. In this case, culture indicates what is outside religion; however, in other cases it is used to point to the value of what is considered superstitious. Several interlocutors framed their practices of visiting *jiara*s or telling *keramet* and dream narratives as cultural instead of devotional or religious practices. For instance, Güliz narrated her dream in which Şeywuşen appeared and saved her from robbery (see Chapter III) with reference to the idea of "local culture:" "Well, I wonder if there are such cultural practices, such as lighting candle in graves and make wishes in other places too."[875] The interview with Mustafa (65), a distant relative of Şeywuşen, is illustrative of the use of culture to attach value to such practices:

> I was six years old or so. You know the notion of Newroz. We celebrate Newroz on May 21 by visiting our *ziyaret*. You go to Munzur River, take some of its water and use it for fermenting. The kids of the village we were accompanying the women of the village. I don't know if it is a psychological thing or what but that day, I saw what everyone was describing; an old guy who has a long and snowy beard sitting on a tree with his wand at his hand. I saw him. When I attempted to tell this to my friends, he warned me and said that they won't see him. And they didn't actually. In the next years, I decided that it was something I dreamt of as a kid based on what I have heard after seeing people who have the capacity to perform miracles (*keramet-sahibi*).
>
> Another time it happened at home. He told me again to not tell it to people since they won't see him. They again didn't see him. We, *fukara*[876] Marxists… I don't know how close we are with Marx and Engels as relatives, but I never marginalized this social perception, never arrogantly looked down on it. I didn't see it as superstition. That's our culture. These are society's common values. If we cannot

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[874] Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Ahmet *dede* in Dersim, June 2015.
[875] Excerpt from the conversation I had with Güliz in Dersim, March 2015.
[876] *Fukara* is the plural of *fakir* which is derived from *faqr* (Arabic: فقر, "poverty") which belongs to Sufi Muslim terminology refers to the ascetic who takes vows of poverty and worship by renouncing relations with material world and possessions.

replace them with others we have to accept it. For instance, whenever we want to have a meeting with Marx, he doesn't appear but our *dede*s are always already here. That sort of a perception…[877]

This use of culture—embracing practices that are disregarded within a developmentalist frame of analysis—does not challenge the culturalized framework of the Turkish state. Analyzing the popularization of *semah*, one of the main components of the *cem* ceremony, as a folkloric dance performance, anthropologist Kabir Tambar examines how the culturalization and popularization of Alevism go hand in hand. Through the popularization of the *semah* from the 1970s as a folkloric dance performed by youth groups at festivals and cultural events, Alevi identity became visible in public space. However, this public visibility contributed to the codification of *semah* as a non-religious performance. Excluded from its religious context, this Alevi ritual became part of the national folkloric repertoire without posing a threat to state-promoted nationalism.[878] Rather than opening a space to express different communities' contributions to the cultural sphere, this decontextualization leads to no more than "touristic curiosity,"[879] a theatrical frame in which cultural productions—Alevi rituals, Armenian music, the "Greek house" and the like—are reduced to consumable products.[880]

Analyzing how culture is instrumentalized by the state as a strategy of decontextualization and depoliticization, Banu Karaca suggests that state institutions "prefer a tamed version of diversity, one that is clearly divorced from political claims. The state of on the ground politics notwithstanding, art has become the preferred platform on which to address issues of diversity."[881] In a framework in which "an aestheticised notion of multiculturalism

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[877] "*Ben 6 yaslarındaydım. Newroz algısı bilirsin, 21 Mart'ta kutlarız biz, ziyaretlerimize gideriz. Munzur'dan su getirir maya olarak kullanılır felan. Biz de çocuktuk o zaman köyün yetişkin kadınlarına eşlik ederdik. Artık psikolojik bi durum mu ne bilmiyorum. Ben gayet güzel o gun herkesin tarif ettiği sakallı bembeyaz giyinmiş, asası olan ayakları çıplak, beyaz giyinmiş bi adam ağacın üzerinde oturuyordu. Gördüm yani onu. Arkadaşlarıma söylediğimde bırak onları onlar beni görmez dedi. Görmediler de. Daha sonraki yıllarda bir çocukluk aklıyla anlatılanlardan yola çıkarak hayal ettiğim bir şey olduğuna karar verdim. Keramet sahib insanların resimlerini gördükten sonra orda burda. Bir kere de evde oldu, boşuna ev halkıyla paylaşma göremezler beni dedi. Biz fukara Marxistler Marxla Engelsle ne kadar tanıştık bilmiyorum, ama çok ciddi bi akrabalığımız olmasa da ben bu noktada bu toplumsal algıyı ötekileştirmedim, ona karşı küstahça küçümseyerek bakmadım. Bos, batil inanç gibi bakmadım. Bizim kültürümüz bu. Toplumun ortak değerleri bunlar, bunun yerine bir şey koyamıyorsak bunu kabullenmek zorundayız. Ben öyle bakıyorum. Marxla toplantı alıyorsun, o gelmiyor. Ama bu adamlar her zaman geliyorlar. Öyle bi algı...*" Excerpt from the interview I conducted with Mustafa in Dersim, April 2014.

[878] Kabir Tambar. "The aesthetics of public visibility: Alevi Semah and the paradoxes of pluralism in Turkey." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52, no. 3, 2010: 652-679.

[879] Melissa Bilal. "Türkiyeli Ermenileri Hatırlamak." in *Bir Zamanlar Ermeniler Vardı*, eds. Abdullah Onay, (Istanbul: Birikim Yayınları, 2008), 237-246, 243.

[880] Bilal. "Türkiyeli Ermenileri Hatırlamak.", 242.

[881] Banu Karaca. "Europeanisation from the margins? Istanbul's cultural capital initiative and the formation of European cultural policies." In *The Cultural Politics of Europe*, pp. 169-188. (Routledge, 2013), 167.

that conceptualizes most minorities in Turkey as nostalgic reminders of a multi-ethnic empire,"[882] culturalization has become one of the effective tools of governing the diversity. Alevis have been pushed into the realm of culture to avoid the question of religious diversity. Ambiguous devotional practices that are not categorized within the Sunni Hanefi interpretation of Islam as determined by the DRA in Turkey are automatically culturalized. Operating within the binaries of "religious/secular and religion/culture,"[883] and making distinctions between "traditional cultures" of Alevism and the "common share of Islam,"[884] the DRA legitimizes mosques as the only place of worship promoting "true" religion and not the "cultural, the local, the contingent, in sum, the inauthentic/heterodox."[885] Taking into consideration that the imposition of the secular framing of the everyday was experienced through genocidal violence in Dersim, it becomes clear that the therapeutic power attributed to *jiara*s is intertwined with the history of state secularism, the boundaries of which are drawn through genocidal violence and racism in the context of an ethnically and religiously diverse landscape.

In the Turkish context, secularism is not just a political doctrine but "a normative way of life" which "works to organize the forms of speech and truth that are to be granted credibility in a given set of conditions."[886] In the secularist framework, in which "healing is fundamentally connected to the government of life and the reproduction of governable subjects,"[887] the *jiaras*' power to heal or to grant a child are automatically regarded as elements of a past that should be kept distanced from the present. Exchanging stories of everyday magic in a public space governed under the secularist regime that strictly regulates "capacities for speaking and being heard,"[888] almost inevitably rendered those practices "out of place" or "irrational" like other uncategorized, ambiguous forms of spiritual practice. Conceptualizing what is regarded as obstacles in modernization and secularization "as sites of return wherein unspoken histories of political-theological exchange and the forms of violence that marked secularism's origins are brought to bear on the present"[889] allows us to consider the possibility of another political imagination, one which is not grounded in a secular notion of truth that is granted credibility.

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[882] Karaca, "Europeanisation from the margins?" 167.

[883] Markus Dressler, "Making Religion through Secularist Legal Discourse: The Case of Turkish Alevism" in *Secularism and Religion-making*. eds. Markus Dressler and Arvind Mandair, (Oxford University Press, 2011) ,193.

[884] Markus Dressler, "Making Religion through Secularist Legal Discourse," 192.

[885] Dressler, "Making Religion through Secularist Legal Discourse," 193.

[886] Dole, *Healing Secular Life*, 8–12.

[887] Dole, Healing Secular Life, 13.

[888] Dole, Healing Secular Life, 24.

[889] Dole, Healing Secular Life, 101.

CONCLUSION

In July 2018, on the very last day of my fieldwork in Dersim, I finally had the chance to interview Keşo during his nightshift at the gas station where he was an employee. I had heard about him several times from people who did not otherwise have much in common. In the very first months of my research, in 2014, several people told me that I should have come a couple of months earlier to have a chance to talk to Keşo, who had been sentenced to four years of imprisonment earlier in 2014. Keşo was born in 1979 and grew up with Şeywuşen and Bava Bertal, the two most popular *budelas* of Dersim during the 1990s. He had numerous stories to tell about them and other *budela*s. However, the richness of the stories that he told me was not what gave the interview with Keşo its particularity. Now, as I conclude this dissertation, I am better able to grasp the implications of our conversation, and to understand that he could expound on the political ramifications of holy-madness much more thoroughly than I could. I return now to the part of our interview where he described the funeral of Bava Bertal:

> Keşo: I was recording the narratives of the elderly. I asked them why they all come to the funeral of Bava Bertal. I recorded the stories they told. You should watch the video, it is on our website.
>
> Çiçek: What website?
>
> Keşo: Our organization's website.
>
> Çiçek: Did you put Bava Bertal's funeral recording on the organization's website?
>
> Keşo: Shouldn't I?
>
> Çiçek: I am just—
>
> Keşo: People [other members] disagreed but I insisted. If you do politics here, you need to understand these things. […] Anyway, what you will not find in the video is the best part [of the funeral] actually. A friend [Ceymaz], […] was talking to people [those who were not there] about the funeral. […] you know our people, especially the elderly they were showing their faith [*itikat gösteriyorlar*] to Bava Bertal [at the funeral]. People asked Ceymaz how he carried the coffin […] You know Bertal was gigantic [*heybetli*] Ceymaz told everyone that Bava Bertal entered his grave by himself. He opened his coffin and entered to his grave by himself. [laughing]
>
> Yes you can say that he is lying, it is funny and that's all. But it is not. If you stop for a moment and look at it differently […] the picture is different. If someone else than me would be next to Ceymaz he could say that he was lying. But I didn't. Because I knew that this story would spread. And of course it did. I look at it as the hope of our people. Probably because I cannot put anything else instead. If socialism had come, I might not be busy with them [*budela*s]. But now, in this age, in this period [*bu çağda, bu dönemde*] they are our hope. They motivate us. […] they heal us [*sağaltıyorlar*]. For example, the guy does not have a child, he goes to Dızgi [Düzgün Bava] then he has a boy. Coincidentally or not. After that he goes there every year to sacrifice animals. It means that it affects his psychology. He feels being in alignment with his body, his mind [*zihniyle bedeniyle uyum içinde hissediyor*]. […]
>
> Another reason why our people love *budela*s, they tell everything directly, in your face. They don't know all those tricks. If they love someone, they go and tell. […] How do I swear at the politician coming to our town? I cannot, but they can. Is there a way of inaugurating the statue of someone else than Şeywuşen in the 1990s, in Dersim, no! How do I go to take youngsters out of cops' hands? Bertal did, several times. […] People who were just watching [when the youngsters were taken into custody] cannot stand there and watch when cops intervene in Bertal's case. […] Xıdo [Radio Hıdır], still listens the songs which were banned. He used to annoy the cops so much during the curfew with his songs.

This lengthy extract brings together the different components of holy-madness that I have explored in this dissertation. Let me begin with Keşo's explanation of his insistence on putting the videos related to *budela*s on the website of a political organization. By stating "if you do politics here, you need to understand these things," Keşo put forward the specificities of Dersim which need to be taken into consideration in doing politics. If not, as in the story of Ceymaz, one might just listen and laugh about peculiarities without understanding what lies behind. Since he had little patience for people who were not keen to look beyond the visible, he cut me off when I asked about the views of his comrades. This was the only time I was cut off during the three-hour interview, and I understand this to be a reaction against the familiar tendency of researchers to analyze devotional practices in the region. Keşo's words at the very end of our interview strengthen this interpretation: "Sorry for responding late, I heard that you are a scientist from İzmir and asking around about *budela*s, I thought I don't need that for now (laughing). Then, lucky you, I heard more (laughing). Anyway you got me, I hope." Coming from İzmir, a Turkish city that is associated with Kemalist modernism, did not help in my efforts when I started to reach out to interlocutors. I believe this cannot be interpreted separately from the history of knowledge production in the form of epistemic violence which I elaborated in Chapter I.

The ambivalence between irritation at being seen as the other, and pride in not being like the rest of the world, is captured in the beginning of the extract above. Right after stopping me from asking about others' responses to the videos of Bava Bertal's funeral, Keşo stressed the need to understand this region. Comprehending its particularities by understanding *budela*s and holy-madness is illustrative of the performativity of otherness. The dual process of identity performance is at the core of the embrace of *budela*s in Dersim. I illustrated this process in Chapter II by analyzing the reasons given for Şeywuşen's madness. Şeywuşen started to live on the streets of Dersim center and became a well-known madman in the late 1960s. The attribution of various experiences of state-sponsored violence to Şeywuşen created a public identity, which transgressed the bounded communities of loss attached to particular injuries. In other words, becoming mad due to the state violence incident that the interlocutor prioritizes generates a kind of madness that connects different political groups that are formed around specific injuries.

The ease of the transition that Keşo made from the most significant *jiara*s to *budela*s gives clues about the place of holy-madness within Dersim Alevism. What Keşo names "hope" may be framed as an exit, a rupture from the homogeneous, empty time that is temporarily made accessible in encounters with the *budela*s. The holiness that was used to draw the borders of Dersim before the 1935 Tunceli Law is the cosmology that *budela*s are bringing back to the present, but in distorted and incoherent ways. By bringing the history of violence to the present and transforming it into an everyday marvel through *keramet*s and dreams, Şeywuşen and other *budela*s offer breathing spaces "in this age, in this period." I historicized this narrative through Şeywuşen's life story in Chapter III and unfolded the process by which he came to be perceived as a holy-madman in the political atmosphere after the 1980 coup. I argue that Keşo's narrative, along with other contemporary narratives on *budela*s started to be shaped in the aftermath of the 1980 coup when identity narratives in the region were reconstructed. In other words, holy capacities started being widely attributed to madmen in a political atmosphere dominated by Kurdish, Alevi and Zaza mobilizations in the aftermath of the brutal erasure of mass leftwing mobilization. Taking his power from the past, from his holy lineage, Şeywuşen started offering ways of dealing with this-worldly problems in the 1990s. In this sense, *keramet*s and dreams became powerful ways to distort the homogeneous time of the nation-state that was inscribed on the landscape of Dersim through genocidal violence.

While listing the reasons why they are embraced in Dersim, Keşo mentioned that *budela*s "do not know tricks" and therefore they express themselves very directly. This direct expression is possible due to their political immunity. Since no one intervenes in their actions and speeches, including police officers and politicians, they become the voice of the voiceless, of the silenced. The statue of Şeywuşen is one of the examples he gave to illustrate the exemption from penalty of *budelas*. By According to Keşo, erecting the statue of a homeless madman during the state of emergency in a city where the only statue was that of Mustafa Kemal, was a direct expression of political discontent. I analyzed the limits of what the statue of Şeywuşen could express in the heavily militarized atmosphere of the 1990s in Chapter IV. I argued that Şeywuşen contributed to the ungrievability of the guerrilla dead by operating as a grievable/good dead in the public space. Comparing the memory regimes of the statue of Şeywuşen and Seyyid Rıza, in Chapter IV I further argued that Şeywuşen opened a space for mourning that could not be instrumentalized by a political movement. This open-ended memory regime dissolved with the initiation of the terminology of trauma and healing in local politics during the 2000s, and was replaced by the memory regimes of bounded communities of loss.

Keşo put the therapeutic power of *budela*s and *jiara*s together in his narrative, without feeling the need to differentiate between their places in the belief system. This is the usual manner in which my interlocutors referred to *budela*s. I interpret this fluidity as a sign showing that *budela*s are just a part of this belief cosmology where the boundaries of holiness are not clearly drawn. The verb Keşo uses, *sağaltmak* meaning healing, is an old word used by elderly people in therapeutic contexts. In Chapter V, I analyzed the place of madness in the context of the therapeutic power attributed to *jiara*s and, by juxtaposing Yeşil Evliya *ziyareti* with the graves of Şeywuşen and Pir Ali, showed how holy-madness operates as a source of therapeutic power, different from madness that is in need of therapeutic treatment. Challenging the secular frame of healing, the cosmology of holy-madness operates as a site where the silenced past is brought to the present and transformed into a therapeutic power regulating everyday life thanks to the holy capacities rooted in a holy lineage. In that sense, holy-madness, distinct from pathologized madness, offers an alternative setting where the parameters of credibility are drawn differently from those of secular truth regimes. It is the ground where the past, the present and the future comes together. I interpret Keşo's replacement of socialism with *budela*s in the present in relation to that temporal move: the power of bringing another political imagination to the present which is historically and geographically situated.

Following this political imagination, I aimed to shift attention towards what state violence produces instead of what it destroys. In other words, this political imagination was traced under the shadow of the productive force of epistemic and physical violence. I depicted political change through the biography of a holy-madman in a landscape where the sense of continuity in state violence shapes the understanding of the political. This focus, on holiness in madness, is related to an interest in exposing the limits of the secular notion of the political. In that regard, the curiosity that motivated this research is not understanding the resistance to the state violence but, instead, comprehending the limits of resistance within the given political setting. Looking at holy-madness, which is widely regarded as apolitical (with a few exceptions like Keşo), offered the chance to analyze the political potential of the irrational and superstitious in a heavily secularized and militarized political landscape.

Following the thread of this research has led me into directions that were not part of my initial motivation. My research focus was on holy-madness, a subject that had not previously been studied in relation to state violence, and as such, I could not elaborate as much as I intended on the history of psychiatry. I aim to elaborate further on the relationship between the pathological and sacred madness when turning this dissertation into a book project. Secondly,

I plan to invest more in a recently discovered point of curiosity. In the last phase of my fieldwork, I developed an interest in creating a mental map of Dersim whose borders change according to the inclusion and exclusion of sacred spaces into the Dersim belief cosmology. Unfortunately, I lack sufficient data to pursue this path of inquiry.

Another aspect I could not assess in the dissertation relates to the changes in the political situation that occurred during the different phases of my research. I started my research during the peace process in 2014 and ended it under emergency conditions in 2019. Some people with whom I conducted interviews during the first phase of my research, during my MA left the city when the military clashes begun; some were arrested, others took refuge in European countries. Although this change in the political situation fundamentally affected my research sites, my interlocutors turned this shift into a part of their narrative of the continuity of state violence. In other words, the peace process, which marked the beginning of my research, was the anomaly for my interlocutors, not the re-establishment of a war setting. Since I did not have not specific references in my interviews regarding the state violence that our interviews were surrounded with, I could not make this political shift an organic part of my narrative. Despite its shortcomings, however, I hope this dissertation opens up paths of inquiry worth following and contributes to the growing literature on the intersections between state violence and the politics of emotions.

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