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Earwitnessing
the Assembly:
Listening to
the Voice of the
People in the
Gezi Park Protests

abstract This paper investigates practices seen and heard during the 2013 Gezi Park protests in Turkey, highlighting how an assembly constituted itself through the sonification of opposition. As an alternative to representationalist

accounts of the poetics of these protests, this analysis models a practice of EARWITNESSING: attuning to the demonstrations' sonics and noise to hear the voice of THE PEOPLE. Consequently, it is argued that an ASSEMBLY was formed performatively—one that exceeded the creative class milieu that has been the focus of much recent writing. Unlike analyses that focus on the visual, this earwitnessing approaches the memory of activism to articulate an under-theorized form of critical listening. Attentive to the cultural memory in activism, earwitnessing means listening to betweenness—that relational space where bodies enact interdependency.

Introduction

In summer 2013, residents of Istanbul, whose habitat had been transforming into a collection of gated communities, found themselves resisting this gentrification together with their neighbors, culminating in the Gezi Park protests. Without a centralized organizational structure, the protesters ranged from environmentalists to the members of workers' unions, from Turkish nationalists to Kurds, from stereotypically masculine soccer fans to feminist and LGBT groups, and from Armenians to anti-capitalist Muslims. The protests raised the question of who constitutes THE PEOPLE on the streets. Working from within the framework of identity politics and political representationalism, most commentaries provided textual analyses of the mediations of the Gezi protests and the protestors' remediations of past activism. Critical readings applied Bakhtinian theory, glorifying humor and celebration as heteroglossic resistance — declaring the Gezi protests a carnival. This led sociologists to suggest it was a creative-class or a middle-class movement and permitted the dismissing of the unrest as petit bourgeois (Boratav). However, these approaches have overlooked the performativity of the ASSEMBLY of the people — an assembly that does not represent but constitutes itself against the prevalence of police violence and state imposed precarity. In “Twenty-Four Notes on the Uses of the Word People”, Alain Badiou outlines a positive sense of the word people, which this paper takes as a

starting point: the assembly formed against the official state through exclusion from a legitimised people (30). Focusing on the humorous rhetoric generated online and offline as the representative concretization of activism, these analyses fail to capture the sense in which the Gezi protests were a PEOPLE'S RESISTANCE. This resistance I define as an event of assembly that exceeded the poetics of heteroglossia and reached towards the relational constitution of a people through performative enactment: bodies acting together in relation to each other, without a presupposed unity or harmony.

In order to emphasize the Gezi Park assembly as a performative enactment, a self-constitution of the PEOPLE that does not represent a unitary identity, the study of activism could benefit from a memory studies approach. Within this field, the mediation of past events is not constituted of fixed, representative monuments, but rather understands a dynamic and continuous performance of active and present remembering. Mediation as an act of remembering, as a performative mnemonic practice accompanied with embodied mnemonic practices, disengages the representationalist approaches to cultural memory. In order to emphasize the performativity of cultural memory, this paper centralizes the nonrepresentative, embodied practice of performative memory and its function in the protests. Testing the limitations of textual analyses that focus on the politics and poetics

of representation, this paper highlights a key practice within the Gezi Park protests which is not reducible to such a framework — the banging together of pots and pans. As a limit-case for a representationalist analysis, these demonstrations exemplify how collective noise-making demands an attunement to cultural memory and its performative self-constitution. The pots and pans demonstrations were performances that enabled the people to take over the streets without actually being on the streets, thus broadening what can be understood as an assembly in the first place. The non-semantic nature of banging pots and pans always already precludes any attempt to decode it. Rather, collective noise-making is an embodied act, sonifying the assembly that makes up the people — as a broader coalition than can be explained in terms of group identity. It enables us to account for the voices of the people that have not and cannot be represented.

EARWITNESSING ACTIVISM, a critical practice of listening to protest sound, enables the study of memory in and of activism to account for this self-constituted assembly — the people's voice. In spite of my experience on site during and after the Gezi protests, this paper will primarily focus on the acoustemological analysis of Meri Kytö and E. Şirin Özgün in *Sonic Resistance: Gezi Park Protests and the Political Soundscape of Istanbul* (2016) in order to demonstrate that critical listening does not necessarily require witnessing the sounds on site. For this paper, earwitnessing will be

understood as an active and critical engagement with sound rather than a practice of decoding what sound represents. Notably, Kytö and Özgün were not on the streets themselves but did earwitness the audiovisual material (77). They did not, however, reduce the sounds to representative entities that enunciate the people's demands, but instead listened to the people and the plurality of ways in which they sonified their opposition. Ultimately, this paper takes a meta-critical approach: earwitnessing Gezi Park to mark the limitations of representationalist approaches to the memory of activism.

Memory and Activism: The Centrality of Mediated Memory and the Politics of Representation

The transcultural phenomenon of contemporary protest movements calls for memory studies approaches that recognize the role of social remembering in activism, approaches that capture hope in collective memory by analyzing the constitution of a people. However, many such attempts have done so primarily by studying mediations and remediations of these protests by the creative class. Framed by a Bakhtinian celebration of humor, most research describes the aesthetic dimension of imagining communities via studying artistic representations of activism. In other words, current studies of memory of activism frame the creative class as the eyewitness, describing practices in a space of representation.⁽¹⁾ However, such approaches neglect

het Hof argues, the mediation of activism is a “rhetorical weapon” that “serve[s] to hearten the protesters to stay” in the streets and attracts others (36). It serves as a “common reference system” that creates a sense of unity among people who do not share a common identity (44).

Conversely, works such as *The Political Aesthetics of Global Protest: The Arab Spring and Beyond*, by Werbner et al., focus on the representation of social movements in the twenty-first century. Stopping short at those events’ carnivalesque nature, these observations isolate the mediated memories produced by the creative class, thereby ignoring the fact that social movements are often marked by violence and resistance, rather than fun and humor. Humorous mediations of and in these protest movements do not represent all the embodied experiences of activism but are instead created by the activists as a strategy for resistance.

Analyses of protest movements through the resistance of the creative class are ultimately reductive and exclude activists who do not operate within that discourse. Osman Orsal’s iconic photograph “Lady in Red”, for example, does not capture the initial working-class component of the Gezi assembly for whom Gezi was the extension of International Workers’ Day protests. By understanding such a photo instead as a rhetorical weapon inviting the middle class to the streets, one must also recognize the conjointly fictional and tactical dimensions of mediated memory

in activism. In “The Dynamics of Remembrance: Texts Between Monumentality and Morphing”, Ann Rigney explains that the amorphous character of fiction assures flexibility to create a “good story,” which renders it enjoyable for audiences “without a prior interest in the topic” and therefore endows memory with a “cultural staying power” (347). In this light, literature and other arts serve as tools for “oppositional memory ... a counter-memorial and critical force” (348). When understood in terms of activist memory, Rigney’s statement that “[a]rtistic works are not just artifacts, but also agents” gains additional significance (349). Memory of activism that consequently serves as an agent in activism is performative — a good story to mobilize people. In “Social Movements and Memory”, Ron Eyerman elaborates on this agential dynamic between activism and cultural memory: “[e]ssential to any social movement is the formation of a collective identity, a means of constituting a we and informing the world what that represents” (79). This constitution of a we — in other words, imagining a community — necessarily functions through historical reflection; it requires a “meaningful reference to the past” (79). Reminding us how both collective action and social movements are “empowered through historical reference” (79), Eyerman gives some examples of the strategic use of historical symbolism and founding narratives, such as the figure of Harvey Milk for the gay rights movement

or Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King Jr. for the civil rights movement, within the framework of “memory as social remembering” (Misztal qtd. in Eyerman 83). This aspect of collective memory as a reference system that constitutes a people refers to the function of memory in activism, and it can also account for the self-constitution of the assembly without central leadership. “Social movements make strategic use of the past and they are important social forces in carrying the past into the future” (83), yet the tactical use of memory and mediation in activism by the creative class cannot fully account for the memory of the assembly that is constituted by real bodies with embodied social remembrance.

Moreover, many accounts neglect the sonic aspects of such demonstrations. Against the dominant focus on representation via images and narratives in memory studies, an emphasis on sound that captures both the representational aspects of music and the performative aspects of noise can offer a fresh way to approach collective memory and also the grounds to compare mediated and performative memory. As Eyerman notes, social movements “employ protest repertoires inherited from past movements,” including singing, as constitutive of social solidarity: “[t]hey march, chant, sing songs and bear placards” (80). Sound-making embodies mediated memory, since it serves as oral literature in (traditional) music or chanting, and as performative memory insofar as it reaches the point

of non-representational sound-making. It not only mobilizes people but also implies a performance of social harmony within a movement. It is individually somatic but also enables collective, rhythmic action inasmuch as it recalls past struggles in solidarity. Analyzing the difference between representational and non-representational modes of sound-making — their different functions as, respectively, the common reference system and the sonification of the self-constitution of an assembly — offers the potential to bring out the voice of the people.

Gezi Park Language: Representation and its Extras

When one tries to listen to the voice of the people, to listen to the streets, what come to mind are slogans — written words — on placards, posters, or on the walls. However, one must ask if written words are truly representative — whether they capture the cacophony of the assembly. The assembly does not represent the people; it appears as the people without a shared language. Mediating a message through language functions through the exclusion of other messages, as well as other languages, in decentered assemblies like Gezi. When you focus on communication strategies that belong to a certain group identity, such as the creative class in isolation, you cannot hear the voice of the people.

“Kahrolsun bağızı şeyler,” which can be translated as “down with some of the things” (Yalçıntaş 11), or “god damn some-things” — written with an intentional

their appearance explicitly” (qtd. in Aydınlı 2) — Aydınlı argues that this apolitical language is a communication strategy that *enables* opposing groups to appear together on the streets (6). This kind of semantic representation reveals a poetics of humor, irony and satire in the Gezi Park protests.

However, this is not a new rhetoric but rather inherent in Turkish cultures of opposition. In “Political Potential of Sarcasm: Cynicism in Civil Resentment”, van het Hof explains this specific oppositional culture as follows: “not taking any sides, not directly opposing the ruler, but surviving by means of a cunning mockery and by finding the most absurd gaps in the ruling logic” (31). This trend of opposition does not participate in the power struggle directly but is a coping mechanism manifest in creative narratives. Van het Hof traces the culture of political humor and satire in Turkish and Ottoman culture back to the seventeenth century, arguing that “the element of humour in the Gezi events must be evaluated through continuities in Turkish political culture” (33). Following Altuğ Yalçıntaş, the editor of *Creativity and Humour in Occupy Movements: Intellectual Disobedience in Turkey and Beyond*, van het Hof acknowledges — as mentioned above — that the Gezi Park protests were led by “the creative class,” which used humor as “a rhetorical weapon” (36), “a common reference system” that operated as the regulator of the activist community (44). “The moment you get a joke,” she argues, “you are in the community of the activists” (35).

Not everyone in the streets was a satirist, but it was the creative class that instrumentalized humor as a way to imagine a community. Humor in this case does not capture the politics of activism but rather a trend in the poetics of the assembly that functioned as a mobilizing strategy: “intellectual activists [were] concerned about the aesthetics of the protests instead of about gaining political power when they hit the streets” (Van het Hof 23). Humor in Gezi Park emerged from the cultural memory of Turkey but only captured a limited section of the people rather than the memory of activism as the self-constituted power struggle of an assembly.

Although I strongly agree with Yalçıntaş and Van het Hof’s analyses of the creative class as the driving force of the Gezi mobilization for the middle-class, I find it equally important to find a way to understand the Gezi assembly which also includes others. What about the people who wouldn’t get the bilingual jokes referring to *Game of Thrones* or *Star Wars*? What about those who didn’t have access to Twitter or Facebook? Moreover, how can such an account acknowledge the corporeal relationality of the assembly — that which exceeds the camera frame and the boundaries of language? As I proposed earlier, a non-representationalist approach to the voice of the people can provide a better sense of this broader assembly. A supplementary approach to performative memory can account for the assembly as a performed

unity—without a presupposed identity that supposedly represents the people. This move is not to dismiss the performativity of mediation. Rather, it should be understood as a strategic move against textual analyses that attempt to fix the protests by extracting from them a unitary message.

Central to such a counter-analysis is the concept of PERFORMATIVE MEMORY. By this, I refer to the cultural coding of the body and how it behaves. Performative memory situates bodies as the containers and makers of meaning. In the introduction to “Performance, Embodiment and Cultural Memory”, Colin Counsell reminds us that “[b]y the mid twentieth century there was already a theorised understanding of the body as a vehicle for extant cultural meaning, its forms and actions a mnemonics of what had gone before”(1). By situating the material body as both the subject of remembering and the embodiment of cultural memory, Counsell argues for understanding performing bodies as “somatic forms that function as mnemonics of cultural memory” (9). Thus, a shift of focus from mediated to performative memory emphasizes the social writing of bodies over what those bodies have written.

Moreover, this shift requires attention to noise. This performative self-constitution is the act of an assembly that cohabits a space and marks it with resistance by appearing together. Performative memory accounts for how this wider people marks each individual

body and the bodies of others when they are allied on the streets. Therefore, to listen to the voice of the people as more than a representationalist identity, one should also listen to the NOISE of the assembly. Noise, in Sean Cubitt's account, is the excluded element in every form of representation and, as such, critiques the supposed harmony of assembly by accounting for those who it excludes. It also demonstrates the performed unity that does not depend on harmonious words or sounds but rather on the very material reality of acting together, in relation and in response to each other, without exclusion. If noise is a manifestation of corporeal relationality and an orchestration of somatic resistance, then earwitnessing that noise can attune to more than identity. Ultimately, an earwitnessing account can make apparent the difference between collective memory's different functions in relation to activism — both its politics of appearance *and* politics of representation. In other words, a limit-case study of sonic resistance during the Gezi Park protests can draw attention to the different functions of mediated and performative memories, especially the differences in what they capture. By positioning sound as an epistemological tool, earwitnessing can break the routine of representationalist textual analysis. It can account for the differences in sound-making on the part of the creative class and the people.

Acoustemology and the Soundscape of Gezi: Noise over Speech

The double meaning inherent in representationalism also highlights the political stakes inherent in listening to activist sonics. In other words, a representationalist take on the voice of the people parallels blind confidence in representative democracy. Such an emphasis on the importance of freedom of speech runs through the dominant political discourse of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. But logocentric tendencies also underlie the synthesis of egalitarianism and liberalism — particularly in the American definition of democracy — situating speech as the core agent of democratic politics.

However, as Judith Butler explains in *Notes toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, democracy as a political form and popular sovereignty as a principle — taken for granted as the result of democracy — are not necessarily the same thing (2). Butler draws attention to the fact that democracy can easily turn into “a strategic discursive term” that regulates what governments approve or disapprove of through soft power, rather than referring to the performance of self-constitution (2). This means that an “orchestrated collective of the people” can easily be called “antidemocratic, even terrorist” (2-3). Therefore, Butler proposes to redirect our attention from the tricky realm of words and the politics of representation to the performative aspect of the politics of appearance.

Instead of the speech act, Butler proposes to focus on the BODIES THAT SPEAK, “which means that when the body speaks politically, it is not only in vocal or written language” (83). By situating the body as the primary political agent rather than through its representations or speech, she theorizes bodily performance and the politics of appearance as the core principle of street politics. In other words, she focuses not on politicians and their words but instead on the politics of the people: bodies that are “exposed” to the unequal economy of precarity (148). The people do not share an identity but are situated within the corporeal relationality inherent in inhabiting a body and cohabiting a space. Butler reconfigures Arendt’s space of appearance as the space between bodies; THE BETWEEN is “a spatial figure for a relation that both binds and differentiates” (77). Arendt’s space of *appearance*, Butler argues, is preconditioned by an “intersubjective facing off” that exceeds images (76):

We are not simply visual phenomena for each other — our voices must be registered, and so we must be heard; rather, who we are bodily, is already being “for” the other, appearing in ways that we can neither see nor hear; that is, we are made available, bodily, for another whose perspective we can neither fully anticipate nor control. (6)

Earwitnessing the assembly, listening to the voice of the people, means earwitnessing BETWEENNESS, the relationality that depends on supporting and being supported by the appearance of another body enacting interdependency.

It is for these reasons that I will shortly turn to the pots and pans demonstrations during the Gezi Park protests, which correspondingly provide a testimony for bodies sonifying the between. An epistemological shift to earwitnessing—listening critically—can help us hear the between that conditions the politics of appearance.

Meri Kytö and E. Şirin Özgün’s acoustemological study of sonic resistance in Gezi Park serves as an important analysis that can inform this conception of the politics of appearance. Taking cues from Steven Feld’s definition of ACOUSTEMOLOGY as “[t]he sonic way of knowing and being in the world” (Kytö and Özgün 77), Kytö and Özgün emphasize the centrality of sonic performance in political actions:

The acoustemological approach, besides focusing on sound itself, also focuses on the places where sounds are produced and received. The meanings of the sounds and the performance through which the sounds are produced provide places with new layers of social meaning, thus turning places into social spaces. The sounds create a sense of place. (79)

Informed by Eric Hobsbawm’s argument that “even revolutionary movements backed their innovations by reference to a people’s past — to traditions of revolution and to its own heroes and martyrs” (qtd. in Kytö and Özgün 83), Kytö and Özgün focus on the collective memories of sonic rituals in Turkey to analyze three cases of SONIC RESISTANCE. These include the pots and pans demonstrations (to which I return below), the chanting (tezahürat) of the soccer fan group Çarşı, and the collective silence inspired by “Duran Adam” [Standing Man] — a performance by Erdem Gündüz, who stood motionless in Taksim square for six hours.

Both Gündüz, a performance artist, and the left-leaning anarchist group Çarşı — known by their motto ‘Çarşı, her şeye karşı’ (Çarşı is against everything) — employ the tactics of the creative class. Kytö and Özgün’s analysis enables us to realize the different and contrasting ways these two actors sonify resistance. Gündüz inspired collective silence in the spirit of minute-of-silence commemorations, while Çarşı transformed the streets into a masculine football stadium by chanting and through other sonic rituals such as the call-and-response demonstrations they adapted for the Gezi Park protests. These contrasting methods of sonifying resistance, performed by different social identities, were included in the collective repertoire of Gezi — also attracting others to participate in both performances. Nevertheless, not everybody in the assembly could participate in these ways. The

contributions of the creative class are initially marked by a creator-audience dichotomy: the audiences of Gündüz and Çarşı, in the space of appearance, chose to respond to and support these acts of resistance in solidarity, but, ultimately, these two contradicting sounds of resistance do not necessarily capture the relationality that is implied by interdependency, by the between. The collective silence led by Gündüz and the masculine chanting led by Çarşı and other football supporter groups can imply certain identities when approached within an isolated, representationalist framework. Both Gündüz's and Çarşı's performances can be marked by certain messages — Gündüz's left-Kemalist view of Gezi and Çarşı's anarchic masculinity — that do not speak to everyone on the streets. In order to hear the between that “both binds and differentiates,” a more inclusive listening practice is required that does not exclude noise (Butler 77).

A prime example of such noise can be found in Gezi Park's pots and pans demonstrations. The practice of clashing and rattling kitchen utensils inside houses and through windows more directly sonified the between in an assembly, as it filled that between with mere noise rather than messages. The act sonifies pure opposition, a nonverbal enactment of solidarity with protestors and against the precarity imposed by the state. Even though pots and pans were banged mostly in houses rather than in the streets, pots and pans demonstrations were the quintessential Gezi

Park performances marked by transgressive sonic resistance. It is hard to tell when the pots and pans demonstrations began and ended during the Gezi Park protests, but according to a witness who talked to the BBC's World Service on 1 June at “[a]bout half past one the entire city started to reverberate. People were banging on pots, pans, blowing whistles” (Greenwood). From then on, every day at 21:00, people started to bang pots and pans inside their houses until their neighbors stopped. Occasionally, an individual would spontaneously start a demonstration and their neighbors would respond. People would also start banging pots and pans whenever the police entered their neighborhood. Some banged pans for a minute or so; some performed all night long. The demonstrations were unregulated, self-organized, and based on the relational performativity of responding to one’s neighbor. Although many of these demonstrators didn’t leave their houses due to age or physical impediments, their act of sonic solidarity nevertheless marked the core motivation of Gezi Park protests, which was to support the fundamental right to appear in the streets.

As Kytö and Özgün point out, this singular aspect of the pots and pans demonstrations rendered them a feminine domestic space — the opposite of the masculine space of the football stadium. They operated as tools of mothers and grandmothers: “[c]ompared to the youthful and masculine way Çarşı members operated in the streets, this method of sonifying one’s

resistance was also accessible to the elderly and to people who did not take part in the street demonstrations” (Kytö and Özgün 88). “[N]oise as pure noise” transgressed the domestic sphere and “was introduced to the street politics” (Kytö and Özgün 89). As Kytö and Özgün’s account makes clear, the secure nature of the protest, which enabled women to contribute to the soundscape of the streets without leaving their homes, also made it a popular one.

Nevertheless, this was not the main motivation behind the resurrection of this form of sonic resistance during the Gezi Park protests. Rather, people were once again protesting against state corruption. The phenomenon of pots and pans demonstrations is commonly known to have originated in 1971 in Chile, the choice of implements also referring to the emptiness of pots and pans due to food shortages during the Allende administration. Turkish collective memory, however, associates this mode of sonic resistance to events in 1996, when a car crash in Susurluk — whose victims included a member of parliament, a senior police chief and counter-guerilla hitman — revealed the level of state corruption in Turkey (Kytö and Özgün 88). On 1 February 1997, a mass protest started with the call of an organization called Sürekli Aydınlik için Yurттаş Girişimi [The Citizens’ Initiative for Permanent Enlightenment]. The initial plan for the demonstration was to turn the lights off at 21:00 for one minute:

At first people only turned off the lights, but they then started to turn them off and on, flickering the lights as if winking to their neighbours. Then gradually women added the noise factor to the action. Mothers and grandmothers took their casseroles and pots and started to beat them each evening for one minute in the light of blinking windows ... The protest lasted approximately one month. (89)

While initially improvised, during the later Gezi Park demonstrations the memory of the Susurluk protests against corruption inevitably emerged from the people's collective memory. Kytö and Özgün note that the political instrumentalization of cacophony was also a dependable call for organization, mobilization and solidarity during the Gezi Park protests: “never did a single sound of pots and pans remain unanswered during all those days” (90). Thus, this sonic strategy returned seamlessly to the resistance repertoire of Turkey. Even after the questionable constitutional referendum in 2017 — held under a state of emergency declared after the coup attempt in July 2016 — people did not hesitate to answer their neighbors' call, although few returned to the streets.

The pots and pans demonstrations during the Gezi protests made it possible to mark even the most vulnerable bodies with resistance. Interacting with

noisy domestic objects, each body could become an agent blurring the borders of the domestic sphere and the political sphere reclaimed as the streets. In addition to bridging the gap between the streets and surrounding houses, the pots and pans demonstrations transcended the continuum of past and present political struggles, yet without linguistic reference. Understood in terms of performative memory, the visceral loudness of this cacophony stood voiced the people — embodying remembering as pure noise-making. This enabled the masses to transgress group identities and class borders and become the people: relational bodies resisting the unfair distribution of precarity. The performative enactment of interdependency — responding in solidarity to your neighbors’ clamoring call — sonifies the between that constitutes an assembly.

Conclusion

A focus on mediated memories helps us to explore the constitution of an assembly. Nevertheless, the politics and poetics of representation are not the only tools we use to imagine communities — and do not account for the fundamental plurality of the people. An emphasis on this plurality accounts for the self-constitution of the people without presupposing a harmonious unity, establishing political authority through the performative enactment of assembling bodies. Transcending identity formations, peoples’ uprisings necessitate a supra-representational approach. In Butler’s words: “resistance

has to be plural and it has to be embodied” (217). Thus, analysis of resistance requires us to focus on the very materiality of the bodies involved. When it comes to memory studies, an emphasis on performative memory helps to situate bodies as the initial agents of activism, thus reminding us that cultural memory is always already performative. An overemphasis on the travelling images and globalized aesthetics linking social movements worldwide — what Werbner et al. term “citational intertextuality” — fails to emphasize the fact that it is *the people* that take to the streets, and not the texts and images that might be claimed to represent them (16).

In this paper I have aimed to underline the fact that the poetics of activism are only “a common reference system” and do not capture the relationality of the people exposed to and resisting precarity (Yalçıntaş 44). Rather than reproducing the celebratory Bakhtinianism often associated with the representative memory of the Gezi protests, I examined the pots and pans demonstrations to emphasize bodies as agents and noise as the sound of the between. The orchestration of somatic resistance emerges from sonified relationality via intentional collective noise that does not belong to the realm of mediation and representation but rather to an unregulated repertoire of mnemonic performance. The noise doesn’t deliver the identities of the performers, nor their demands, but instead constitutes the soundscape of the assembly and marks the realization

and performance of relationality and solidarity. Transgressing the borders of class, ideology, age, gender, ethnicity, and language — as well as the constructed dichotomies of the domestic and the political spheres — pure noise captures the relationality within the assembly. Bakhtinian accounts emphasizing polyvocality ultimately fall short of defining this people's voice, given that the core demand of Gezi was not simply being heard in a representational sense, but rather *recognized* via the politics of appearance. Its different and sometimes conflicting political demands were secondary to that supra-representational recognition. Acknowledging relationality beyond identity formations helps us to resist condemning occupy movements like Gezi as merely petit bourgeois or middle-class and enables us to position the politics of appearance as an act against precarity.

One cannot listen to all the demands of the peoples on the street, but we can earwitness the cacophonous plurality within an assembly. By doing so, it is possible to hear the performative harmony that legitimates the political authority of the people.

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