

**A VISUAL-VERBAL ATTEMPT**

by

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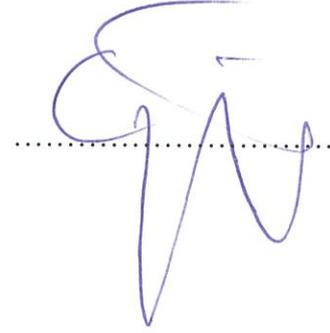
**a visual-verbal Attempt**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **A VISUAL-VERBAL ATTEMPT**

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Visual Arts and Visual Communication Design Master Thesis, June 2018

Thesis Advisor: Prof. Erdağ Aksel

**Keywords:** Deviance, indifference, communication,  
absurd, urban life

The purpose of this study is to provide a description of the preparation process and works in my master thesis exhibition 'A visual - verbal attempt'. As an artist book, the works examined in the thesis can be seen as a critique of deviance caused by changes in everyday life. Such a deviance, which focuses on the deviance in language and culture may be defined as an incidence of transformation of language and culture, which is deprived of semantic legitimacy or form in everyday urban life.

In this respect, the basic criticism in the thesis dwells on the indifference shown against the afore-mentioned deviance, which turns into a kind of disturbance. Through an examination of visual and verbal approaches, this study aims to present an experience and observation of everyday urban life, language, history, public conscience, knowledge, and their possible impacts on one another in the format of a book.

## ÖZET

### GÖRSEL-SÖZEL BİR DENEME

Fatma Eser Epözdemir

Görsel Sanatlar ve Görsel İletişim Tasarımı Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Haziran 2018

Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Erdağ Aksel

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sapma, kayıtsızlık, iletişim  
absürt, kent hayatı

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, yüksek lisans tezimi oluşturan ‘Görsel - sözel bir deneme’ başlıklı serginin hazırlık sürecini ve ne tür bir çalışma içerdiğini tasvir edebilmektir. Sanatçı kitabı serisi olarak kurgulanan çalışmaların anlatıldığı bu tez, gündelik kent yaşamının yarattığı sapmanın bir eleştirisi olarak görülebilir. Sözü edilen eleştiri, dil ve kültürdeki sapmayı ele alır. Bu sapma şöyle tanımlanabilir: Gündelik yaşamdaki değişimlerin etkisinde kalan dil ve kültür, onların anlamını oluşturan içerik ve biçimden giderek uzaklaşır, konuşulan ama iletişim fonksiyonu olmayan bir monologa döner.

Denemenin temelindeki eleştiri, bahsedilen sapmaya karşı gösterilen kayıtsızlığın ne tür bir rahatsızlık yarattığının tanımlanması ile ete kemiğe bürünür. Bu çalışma, görsel ve sözel yaklaşımların incelenmesi yoluyla gündelik kent yaşamını, tarihi, kamusal bilinci, bilgiyi ve tüm bu kavramların birbiri üzerindeki olası etkilerini gözlemliyor, inceliyor, deneyimliyor ve bir kitap formatında okurun deneyimine sunuyor.

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To those who find beauty and the life-affirming in the subtlest of deviance...

## INTRODUCTION

Everyday life has a vivid structure that is always—inevitably—in a state of flux. As an impact of this change, deviance appears. Deviance may become the new norm, and vice versa, old norms may turn into deviances. According to the Oxford Dictionary, *deviance*<sup>1</sup> is the fact or state of diverging from usual or accepted standards, especially in social or sexual behavior. The work presented in this paper does not refer to sexual meaning of deviance. It focuses only on the social aspects of deviance, specifically those encountered in the day-to-day experiences of urbanites, focusing on Istanbulites, as reflected through language and history. The term “language” here involves depictions in the form of incorrect use of words or political discourse, and history in the form of structures or ordinary objects that have lost their functions throughout the course of urban life.

When noticed, deviance immediately becomes a nuisance – a kind of disturbance that comes from the need to deal with a shifted notion positioned outside the norms. Therefore, deviance is usually addressed with criticism, hostility, or negativity. Deviance offends the consistency so often sought in human life and thus it must be cleared away as quickly as possible.

One dominant reaction against deviance is to eliminate it with speed and prejudice, most conveniently by ignoring it or pretending it is not there. If an obnoxious thing does not exist, then neither can it disturb. Ignoring deviances can be seen as the very method by which one finds constancy in the face of the constant state of transformation in urban life. After all, one simply cannot attend to every single dynamic detail. However, great creative potential also exists in those details that are ignored. What if one chooses to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/deviance> accessed: June 2018

attend to them? Familiar form and functions once ignored in the course of everyday urban life eventually evolve into the main objects of interest in the works presented here.

Indifference may be accidental or calculated, and the accidental may become systematic in time. Common unconscious choices in noticing or ignoring any kind of deviance is often based on one's will to deal with the relevant change and on one's ability to draw meaningful forms and functions from that.

While indifference leads to stability and complacency, taking the risk of being a nuisance has always seemed more promising to me as an artist. The main argument can be exemplified by not ignoring deviance and instead taking the feeling of disturbance it creates not as a threat, but as a stimulant in an absurd and constructive way by using it as artistic material. I choose *not* to ignore deviance, *but* to pay it heed, to let it do what it will to me—let it disturb me—and to make that disturbance my own, a stimulant and the ground of inspiration. Articulating this relationship to my environment led me to examine deviances that are observed everyday as the raw material for this study.

By touching upon the above-mentioned deviances, this study inevitably draws upon a personal perspective, one that is shaped by observations and experiences in everyday urban life. It seeks to depict collectively or commonly experienced deviance in visual and verbal depictions. These depictions are realized in the form of an artist book. The term “book” here refers to any kind of book, ranging from traditional books to experimental.

This study, taking personal urban experiences as “disturbed salutation” to everyday life, consists of two parts; *Rahatsızlık Kitabı* (Book of Disturbances) and *Zulmet Diyarı* (The Land of Darkness). *Rahatsızlık Kitabı* is an ongoing project of a series of books. There are currently 7 books titled as *Rahatsızlık Kitabı* presented in this exhibition. The first addresses deviances in language in the form of misspelled words. The second comprises ordinary household objects that have somehow lost their function. The third book returns to language highlighting redundant uses of words. In the fourth book, *Rahatsızlık Kitabı IV*, the focus is words frequently used despite a lack of sufficient knowledge of their actual meanings while the fifth, *Rahatsızlık Kitabı V*, amasses pools of words that engender no specific meaning, but still express a need to be understood. The sixth, *Rahatsızlık Kitabı VI*, is a collection of some seemingly meaningful sentences taken from

speeches given by various politicians. The seventh and final book focuses on historical artifacts that have been stolen from and/or returned to Turkey between 2004-2018.

As an ongoing project, *Rahatsızlık Kitabı* books focus on words and images. There are 4 additional books currently being prepared. Four additional books are currently being created. The eighth book will consider dysfunctional buildings; the ninth, stickers and flyers advertising household maintenance services; the tenth and eleventh, stickers, tags and packaging from local textile and food products.

*Zulmet Diyarı* (2018) is a *photo book* consisting of photos of fountains located across Beyoğlu. 37 photos appear in this study, each depicting the facade of a fountain that no longer functions.

## CHAPTER 1

Various disciplines and professionals often discuss everyday life. Due to its chaotic and vivid structure, creating a series of books about everyday life touches upon many different fields. Henri Lefebvre discusses everyday urban life in *The Critique of Everyday Life* and from various angles, as they are rarely discussed. To be able to create a wide and well-coordinated depiction of urban life, Lefebvre discusses topics from modernity to socialism, layers of everyday life through continuities and discontinuities focusing on 80s, my studies focuses on today's world. All notions he discusses are a part of experience of deviance, which is the focus of my books. Each *Rahatsızlık Kitabı* exists as a fragment of a multi-faceted reality of everyday urban life and the *Rahatsızlık Kitabı* series is a collection of the deviations within those fragments.

In *The Critique of Everyday Life* Lefebvre depicts commonplace city-life experiences and activities from various angles and describes everyday life as a sort of life that includes almost everything. He writes,

Everyday life is profoundly related to all activities and encompasses them with all their differences and their conflicts; it is their meeting place, their bond, and their common ground. And it is in everyday life that the sum total of relations which make the human - and every human being - a whole takes its shape and its form.” (Lefebvre: 1991: p.97)

Literature on deviance includes a wide array of work from many disciplines. In my narrow definition of deviance, I tried to focus on those deviant forms that people come across in everyday urban life, particularly those that usually go unnoticed and do not pose

a threat to our own survival and. Even in this limited frame, I found myself struggling with a plethora of potential subjects.

The everyday agenda of urban life in any region, city size, or specific locations a perfect soil for deviance to be produced and reproduced constantly. Therefore, the task of narrowing down the selection of deviances for the purposes of this study was daunting. In order to preserve the diverse nature of my subject matter, I have presented the deviances in a fragmented manner. Since I was also working on the *artist book*, deviance as chapters divided fragments.

Lefebvre describes everyday life in a large scale, by using the word “environment”. I also have the challenge of implicating almost every subject that appears in usage, ranging from politics to mundane experiences: from a careless driver who used a disabled parking space, to a word used incorrectly, to a key found in the drawer belonging to an unknown lock, or someone talking about meaningless topics for hours... Perhaps it is a politician leading a country into a state of chaos through arbitrary decisions, or another group of people destroying historical artifacts and a group’s cultural heritage. These are just a sampling of the possibilities which emerged out of my personal observations, and it is possible to multiply these examples. Lefebvre looks at environment from a highly subjective angle;

All this means that the simplified notion of reflection is inadequate as an analytic tool. Consciousness reflects and does not reflect. What it reflects is not what it seems to reflect, but something else, and that is what analysis must disclose. Precisely because the activity that produced ideologies was exceptional and specialized, they came out of social practice - of everyday life - in two senses: it produced them, and they escaped from it, thus acquiring in the process an illusory meaning other than their real content. The problem of ideologies is as follows: how can consciousness at all levels (individuals, groups, classes, peoples) be mistaken about itself and its content - its being - when it is that very content and that very being which determine it? Only by taking the formal

structure of consciousness and its content as inseparables and submitting them to a complex analysis will we be able to understand any particular form of consciousness, or any particular ideology. (Lefebvre 1991 94)

Lefebvre suggests that a complex analysis must be made in order to layout the problematic nature of indifference. Rather than a complex analysis suggested by Lefebvre suggests, I have created little keyholes that is familiar to us as artists. Thus, we may arrive at a keen awareness and a sensitivity of perception towards those forms and functions that we skip in the turmoil of daily life.

Lefebvre discusses a sort of a virtuosity of living the space. In the *Rhythmanalysis*, he mentions a city that has its own music and rhythm. Since stops and pauses are included in this rhythm, it is possible to view deviance as a pause or the shift of a note. In this case, one can possibly say that in order to be able to understand the music, deviance should be heard, as it turns into a situation which guides deviance and guiding urban life along with it. By following these deviant rhythms, is it possible to gain a consciousness of urban life?

Lefebvre argues that urban space is a great field to observe existence as “the sum total of relations which make the human - and every human being - a whole takes its shape and its form” (1991: 97) It recreates itself by each relation in complex, vital and in equable fields of experiences.

In these fields, language and communication are the major elements. Their deviance by chance and change is something I have always been interested in. Those deviances can be referred to as what Lefebvre mentions as relations and rhythm. In any kind of indifference defined as a deviance, the deviance is actually becoming the notion determining the direction of urban life and its components. For these reasons, I see deviance as a production, a playful area breaking the routine. As an artist, I can argue that I position myself as an observer of urban life through deviance. I experience deviance in my daily life, as well.

My objective in this study is to draw attention to deviances in language and culture. The amount of disturbance in these regards can vary. It can sometimes be about what is just over there, open to attention of anyone, and another time about the ones which cannot be seen at a glance, or what is there is not attached any kind of importance by most urban dwellers. These definitions may seem vague but indeed one person may possibly notice a dysfunctional fountain, that a person may otherwise never see. The details mentioned here as deviance may appear as distortion, malfunction, misuse, misleading, inattention, forgetfulness, misconception, neglect, inaccuracies, dislocation, and even semantic shift or any kind of transformation and affect ignorance as an inclusionary umbrella. In conclusion, I created a series of books, chapter by chapter focusing on urban life deviances. Each book exists individual being. In addition, each book aims to reflect critical-satirical responses and reactions to deviances within urban life. Individually, these books can also be described as fractions of a whole, as they will be read as chapters relating to each other in an urban scale.

An important matter depicted in my work is one that might appear as the act of complaint. In addition, in this study I aimed to abstain from insinuating arrogance or pointing my finger to others as if they do not know anything. That would be far from my intention. At the beginning of this text, I pretend to underline my determination to focus on deviance, transformations and affect ignorance are far away positioning me as an omniscient or an authority as well. Apart from those, my attitude as an artist here can be defined as an observer of designated deviated facts, affect ignorance and their acceptance by majority groups.

## CHAPTER 2

### The process

*'Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some are to be chewed and digested'*

~Francis Bacon, (1625)<sup>2</sup>

*Artist book* as a medium became my intervention space, a medium to reflect on the deviances I have been observing and experiencing in my own urban life. Along with deviance, in a broader scale of the urban life, one can possibly argue that everything becomes deviated, from language to information.

After my undergraduate studies, I worked in art related fields such as art magazines and the radio. As a radio broadcaster and as an assistant editor, I was able to use words and language as a material and comprehend language as a strong element of artistic production. Later, when I decided to go back to university to follow graduate studies in art, I was thinking of making installations. But in terms of production, this plan of mine did not get materialized throughout my graduate studies. My studio experiments somehow ended up in something else. I found myself gravitating towards the sphere of an artist book. Attending to experimental design and *photo book* classes as part of my education have been influential. Deviance and disturbance as cumulative issues were proper to be practiced in the form of an *artist book*. Being easy to produce and portable, an *artist book* provided me the material that I needed.

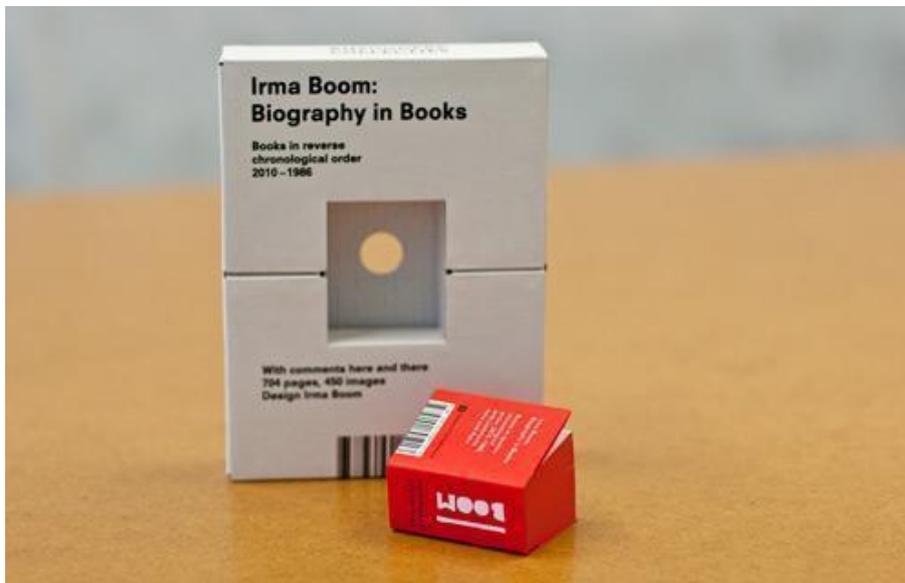
Various professional experimental designers use book as their medium. Irma Boom, widely regarded Queen of the books, is interested in designing books as objects as

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<sup>2</sup> 'Of Studies', in *Essays* by Francis Bacon

sculpturally due to her deep experimentalism and creativity. Her approach has led to innovative ways of ideas combining with book design. Rather than designing a book as an item to read, Boom “sculpts” it and recreates it. Boom says, “Sometimes I see books, and I think, ‘Well, it could have been a PDF.’ The regular book is not alive anymore. You can put it on a PDF on the Internet, or on a Kindle or iPad, and it’s the same. But my books are something else. They have to be this three-dimensional object. Somebody once said that I’m building books. I really like that expression very much.”<sup>3</sup> (Boom, 2011)

Those books that Boom designs mean much more in three-dimensional space as interaction objects. Boom is building books and considering them as experience field. “Her Library becomes where Pure Experimentalism is on the Shelf.”<sup>4</sup>



*Figure 1, Irma Boom, Biography in Books*

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<sup>3</sup> Silverberg, Michael 2011. Interview with Irma Boom, July 22, Printmag. <http://www.printmag.com/article/interview-with-irma-boom/> accessed June 2018

<sup>4</sup> Barone, Joshua, 2017, The New York Times, Irma Boom’s Library, Where Pure Experimentalism Is on the Shelf <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/16/arts/design/irma-boom-bookmaker-vermeer-prize-amsterdam-library.html> accessed: June 2018



Figure 2, Irma Boom: *Biography in Books*, detail

Boom claims that a book, as compared to photographs or paintings, is “an image is serving as a reference of time and place” and she compares them to the Internet in terms of e-books, as the Internet does not allow the viewer such a length of time. Hence a book, as printed, is a final product and unchangeable.<sup>5</sup> I tend to agree with Boom, and my interest leans more towards the usages of books, and books as fields of intervention rather than lack of changeability. Books as an “unchangeable” item may exist as a field of experimentation and it may inevitably turn into a final product.

When reflecting on the book as a medium, one needs to include the remarks of Umberto Eco. At the opening of the Library of Alexandria in 2003, Eco has a speech titled “Vegetal and Mineral Memory: The Future of Books”, in which he underlined the importance of the book as a physical object and made the following description:

Books belong to those kinds of instruments that, once invented, have not been further improved because they are already all right, such as the hammer, the knife, spoon or scissors.<sup>6</sup>  
(Eco, 2003)

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid 4

<sup>6</sup> Eco, Umberto, 2003, talk delivered at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Vegetal and Mineral Memory: The Future of Books [https://www.bibalex.org/attachments/english/Vegetal and Mineral Memory.pdf](https://www.bibalex.org/attachments/english/Vegetal_and_Mineral_Memory.pdf) accessed June 2018

Eco's statement deserves thought from its reader and is similar to Boom's in terms of their approaches. Boom's states that the book becomes a "final product", as Eco defines it as "unchangeable".

Paola Antonelli<sup>7</sup> describes Boom's designs as "a product of the hyperelastic mind of one of the most inventive and perceptive designers of the world" and adds that "Boom is able to straddle space and time to produce an amazing visual synthesis of ideas."<sup>8</sup> (Antonelli)

Boom sees her books as objects. In another one of her experimental designs, Chanel no 5<sup>9</sup>, there is no ink, thus the book only works in its physical form.<sup>10</sup> Boom clearly positions herself as a designer, rather than as an artist. One may easily trace her influence on my work. It was Boom's methods of experimental production and her focus on the book as a medium that made a strong influence on my approach which encouraged me to produce the work presented in this study.



Figure 3, Irma Boom, Chanel no 5

<sup>7</sup> Author, editor and Senior Curator of Department of Architecture and Design at MoMA

<sup>8</sup> Antonelli, Paola, Aldersey-Williams Hugh, 2008, MoMA, New York, p. 169, Design and the Elastic Mind

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.dutchdesignawards.nl/en/gallery/communication/chanel-no.5/> accessed June 2018

<sup>10</sup> Ibid 7

What has deeply attracted my attention in the subject of deviance were the deviated notions. These notions could be in the form of a word, a material, a place, a law, a job, or a building. When the deviated thing continues to exist -in its new state after being shifted-, though still being accepted as functioning originally, as it has never deviated, the state of indifference appears. In one of his interviews, Yekta Kopan, a TV presenter and storyteller, talks to Nevşin Mengü, an anchorwoman on a mainstream Turkish TV channel, CNN Turk. Mengü states that if people cannot pronounce a word correctly, then that word has to be changed, giving the example of *şarj* (as the original word) transforming in to *şarz*<sup>11</sup> due to day-to-day deformed use. In this case, Mengü faces the deviance, and suggests a solution. I tend to agree on suggesting solutions, as well as accepting the deviance. However, I am not sure if I might completely agree on this particular suggestion of mispronunciation. Since one can still understand the meaning, does it mean that the verbal deviation has to be accepted as the new form? Or is it a way of dealing with it, and accepting the new word that most people use?

Language as a common yet deviated communication skill in function and form appears to be in the focus of most of my books, along with history. Accepting that language itself is a multi-layered and broad subject to discuss briefly; touching upon the significance of its variety and effects on usage, I would like to borrow Lera Boroditsky's<sup>12</sup> question "*Does the language you speak affect how you think about the world?*"<sup>13</sup> <sup>14</sup> She focuses that there are over 7000 languages all over the world including Sign Language and Morse. The definitions of number, direction, gender and color may greatly differ including the structures of sentences and chosen wordings. Even in some languages they may not even exist. Thus, this situation affects the conception and expression of almost everything.

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<sup>11</sup>Kopan, Yekta, Noktalı Virgül, May 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8XmCce7X6Ao> accessed: June 2018

<sup>12</sup>Lera Boroditsky is an Associate Professor of Cognitive Science at UCSD and Editor in Chief of *Frontiers in Cultural Psychology*. She previously served on the faculty at MIT and at Stanford. Her research is on the relationships between mind, world, and language (or how humans get so smart).

<sup>13</sup>Boroditsky, Lera, 2001/8/1, Volume , 43, Issue, 1, p 1-22, Academic Press, Does language shape thought? Mandarin and English speakers' conceptions of time, [http://logic.amu.edu.pl/images/7/7e/Socjo\\_Boroditsky.pdf](http://logic.amu.edu.pl/images/7/7e/Socjo_Boroditsky.pdf) accessed: June 2018

<sup>14</sup>Boroditsky, Lera, The Wall Street Journal, July 2010, Lost in Translation, <http://lera.ucsd.edu/papers/wsj.pdf>

Languages force us to attend to certain aspects of our experience by making them grammatically obligatory. Therefore, speakers of different languages may be biased to attend to and encode different aspects of their experience while speaking. (Boroditsky, 2010)

The statement on language and encoding are arguable yet if we accept that people were encoded by language, how can the communication be affected when the language is facing an inevitable deviance, when a word is used in a wrong place or in a wrong manner? In that case, would it be possible for people to understand each other? Sharing the same language with others may appear as a first theme and second one as not speaking the same language, by multitude reasons such as the ones caused by forced/immigration or dislocation. On one hand, the deviance of the language is valid in both situations; on the other hand, it affects the behavior in the first place.

*Avrupa-lı-laş-tı-r-abil-di-k-leri-m-iz-de-n-mi-sin-iz?*<sup>15</sup> is a work on a building in Germany, by Özlem Günyol & Mustafa Kunt dated 2007. It was indeed a question addressed in Turkish language to a passer-by in Frankfurt. By leaning its back to a multilayered history of westernization wall, this work emphasizes the playfulness of Turkish language, from development and modernism to normalization and otherification as “the transformation of senses”<sup>16</sup>: deviation of senses. This work as an artistic material verbalizes migration. It connotes the possible impacts of migration on people who migrate and the possible effects of this place on the immigrants. Thus, this work underlines the notions of language, society, place making, translocation and their possible effects.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://studios.basis-frankfurt.de/works/avrupallastrabildiklerimizdenmisiniz/>

<sup>16</sup> Ibid 13



Figure 4, Özlem Günyol & Mustafa Kunt, *Avrupa-lı-laş-tı-r-abil-di-k-leri-m-iz-de-n-mi-sin-iz?*

(Are you one of those who we were able to make become European)

## Avrupa-lı-laş-tı-r-abil-di-k-leri-m-i-z-de-n-mi-sin-iz ?

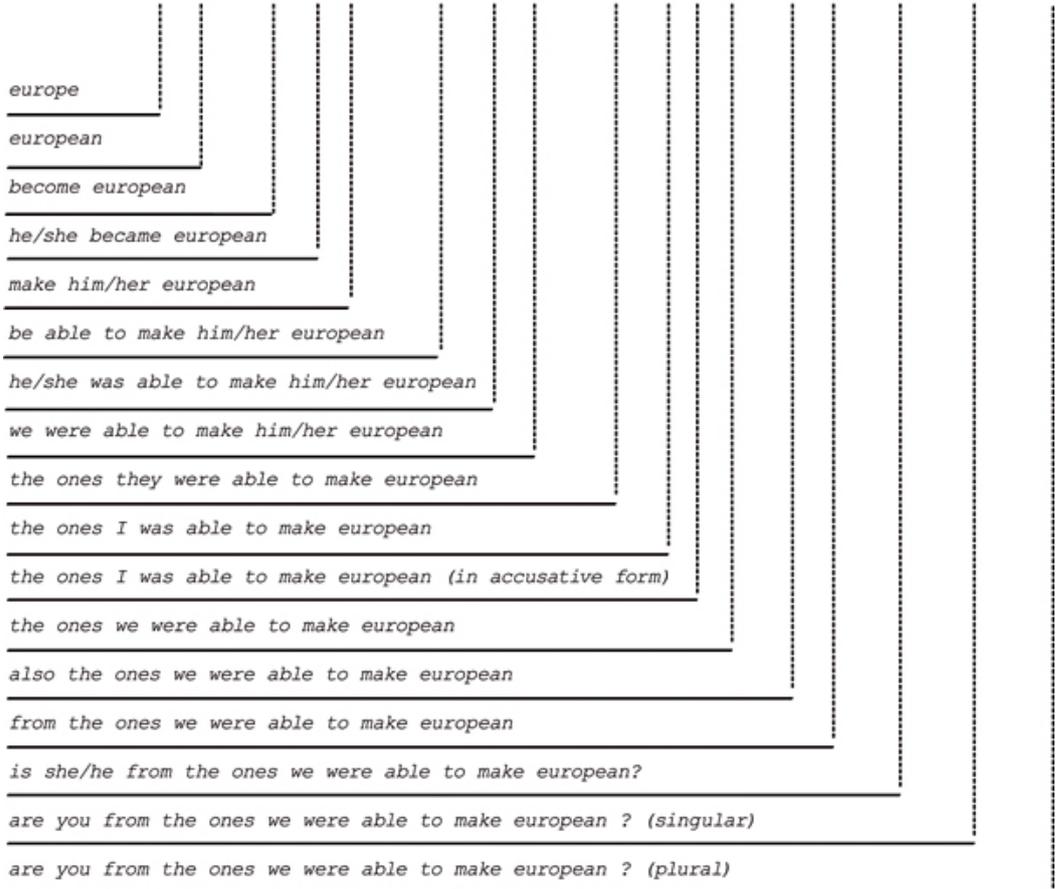


Figure 5, *Avrupa-lı-laş-tı-r-abil-di-k-leri-m-iz-de-n-mi-sin-iz?* text version

Noam Chomsky as a linguist along with his many activities as a public intellectual, is an important scientist who obviously works on language. Though his statements on language change and evolve along the years, in the beginning of the 1980s in one of his interviews Chomsky talks about the importance of language in terms of the establishment of social relations and interactions;

I think a very important aspect of language has to do with the establishment of social relations and interactions. Often, this is described as communication. But that is very misleading, I think. There is a narrow class of uses of language where you intend to communicate. Communication refers to an effort to get people to understand what one means. And that, certainly, is one use of language and a social use of it. But I don't think it is the only social use of language. Nor are social uses the only uses of language. For example, language can be used to express or clarify one's thoughts with little regard for the social context, if any.  
(Chomsky, 1984)

Artist Ayşe Erkmen's public artwork dated 1994, *On the House*, also uses text on a building in Germany. Again, she is touching the notions of Westernization, identity, migration, alienation and change. By using the final syllables of infinite past tense verbs, she is also doing a pun. The “-miş, -miş” tense, is a particular past tense unique to Turkish that is used in stories and fairytales. Erkmen addresses the in-between situations among people, whose mother tongue is Turkish and who are assumed to be German.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Erkmen, Ayşe in Conversation with Tim Ackermann, 2008, Berlin  
<http://db-artmag.de/archiv/2008/e/5/1/628.html> accessed: June 2018



structure of Turkish Language in terms of playability and uniqueness. The tense she used has no equivalent in English. She also mentions how it is difficult to explain this tense because it's a tense particular to the Turkish language. In this tense, the person does not exactly say what she or he is speaking about. It happens to be an indirect way of communication.

Almost as if in the third person, offers a lot of space for different interpretations in a very simple way. Sometimes you can use this for teasing or for regulating the tone of what you are saying. With something so special, you search for it when you are speaking in other languages. It creates a kind of softness when you are speaking, and it is very artistic, because it leaves so much room for imagination. You can lie a lot with it, because you can always blame the third person, you can gossip about it. It's a very imaginative way of speaking. So, it has a connection to art.<sup>18</sup>  
(Erkmen, 2005)

Artists often use a way to lie or to transform an idea or an issue. As a result of the artists' wish to *storytelling*, works like Erkmen's *On the House* are art pieces common in contemporary art.

With *On the House*, while Erkmen encircles identity and immigration via linguistic critiques, another artist Joseph Kosuth, forms a different relation with language from another perspective. Kosuth as many other conceptual artists is interested in language and its role & meaning in art. Starting from the early days of his career, Kosuth always worked on the linguistics. *One and Three*, dated 1965, perhaps his best-known work, consists of an assembled object, a photograph of that object, and an enlarged dictionary definition of the object. This work questions the actual constitution of a chair in a person's thinking. It is referring to, Plato's Theory of Forms as a visual expression of it. Kosuth's productions continued with various form of using linguistic approaches, such as *Definition Paintings*, dated 1966-68, as enlarged photographic dictionary depictions. Later the idea of using the "image" is something that he sort of left behind in terms of

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<sup>18</sup> Ayşe Erkmen and Andrea Schlieker in Conversation, in Goethe institute London, Monday 11th April 2005

using the image of the words; words as art pieces. It is known that he was influenced by Ludwig Wittgenstein ideas on language "...<sup>19</sup>he adopted a view of philosophy which entirely rejected the construction of theories of any sort and which viewed philosophy rather as an activity, a method of clearing up the confusions that arise through misunderstandings of language." Most of Kosuth's work is simple and efficient and his trials and interest was highly significant about structuring conceptual art.



Figure 8, Joseph Kosuth, Art as Idea as Idea, Water, 1966,

Choosing a verbal depiction for *Rahatsızlık Kitabı* may seem as a straightforward manner. In the case of Kosuth's preoccupation, instead of being simple and straightforward the nature of the issue is extremely complicated. Through the simplicity composed in *Rahatsızlık Kitabı* and its possible effect, I achieved a plain, simple and efficient impact on the reader. It is possible to read this example through the notion of advertisement that Barbara Kruger created. Barbara Kruger, as a graphic designer standing at the intersection of advertisement and arts was famous with her slogans by criticizing the consumer's culture and city life. Kruger used words, by the form a short

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<sup>19</sup> Monk, Ray, May 2018, Biography of Ludwig Wittgenstein <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ludwig-Wittgenstein> accessed: June 2018

sentence along with simple visuals. *I shop therefore I am*, is an image of the title of the work written in a red box and the sentence being hold by a hand. This work simply reflects what its criticism is. The sentence straightforwardly creates an impact of what it is about. This work is dated 1983, which can be considered as a strong work for the time, and it still is.



Figure 9, Barbara Kruger, Untitled (I shop therefore I am) 1983,

Another artist who uses word as a medium is John Baldessari. Baldessari began his career in 1970 by painting landscapes and abstract compositions. It would be right to state that Baldessari had a major turn in his artistic production in terms of conceptual material. Then he began producing works which featured texts and photographs. After this major turn his first product happens to be a print: *I will not make any boring art*. The artist chose to use language as a material, instead of using traditional methods though he performed it with traditional media such as canvas and oil painting. Baldessari's approach is directly pointed towards language; as it has made-up rules and makes people

obey these rules. Baldessari intends to underline the fact that the conventional notions of art has similarities with language in terms of being unquestioned due to rules. Hence both are open to interpretation. What if one chooses to interrogate and manipulate those rules? Baldessari, as it seems, has been disturbed by these acceptances - it can be defined as a deviance as well and seeks ways to show his response in using language along with traditional painting methods. He also described his conceptual works as forms of questioning the received wisdom via education or culture.

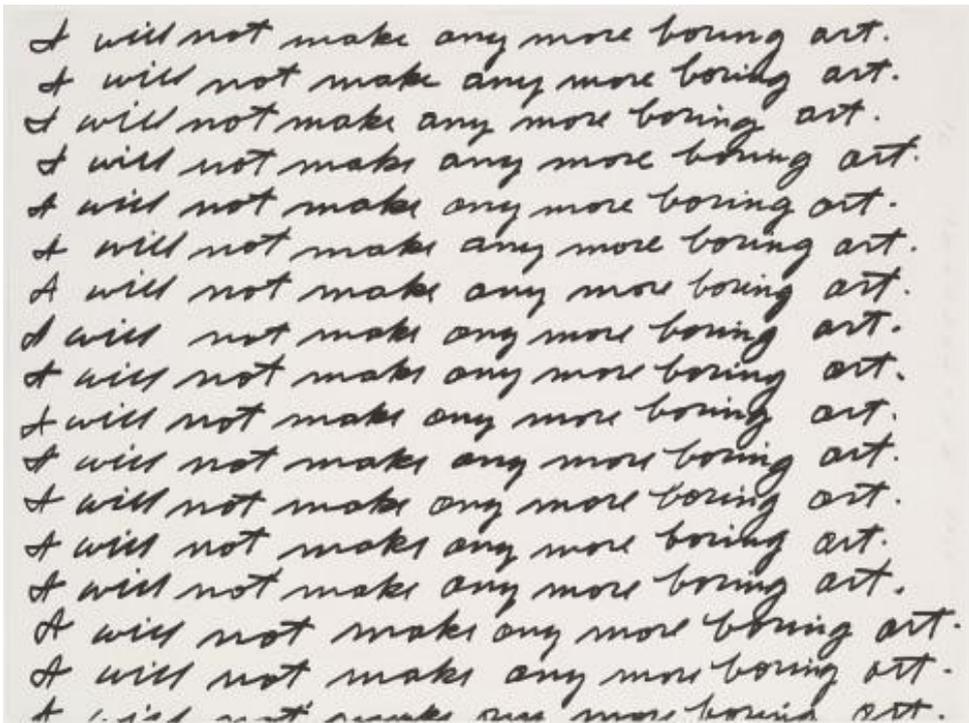


Figure 10, John Baldessari, I will not make any boring art, 1971

Moreover, *I will not make any boring art*, is a print made with Baldessari's constructions, not by his hand. It is an installation created at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. Baldessari tells the reader the story of this production: he was not able to travel to Nova Scotia, because he was penniless, he proposed the students voluntarily like a punishment, writing the sentence on the walls of the gallery space. So, with this act, he contributed to another interrogation field of conceptual art, by reminding the question: Does the artist is the one who actually should implement art, or is it acceptable if he/she is the one who has the idea?

## CHAPTER 3

### WORKS

*Zulmet Diyarı* and *Rahatsızlık Kitabı* are the two main works that constitutes the basis of this study. These books are about deviance and indifference. The books include a notion of “play” on the conventional notions of language via words and images. Some books include only words; some include both images and words. As an artist who prefers infused steps, most of my works need a relatively long time to reach a displayable point. Steps can overlap or might stop or pause but at the end of the day, each step has a value even if it is not directly presented. A work even when it is finished may need some extra time to infuse, or to settle. In this sense, *Rahatsızlık Kitabı* is an example of my working process. It is about the deviated “things” of everyday urban life, with its focus on communication and other instruments of language. In *Rahatsızlık Kitabı*, objects take place in the book as in their transformed state, such as a word used incorrectly, *catachrestically*;<sup>20</sup> or a word structured by excessive use of prefixes, suffixes and words as dysfunctional elements, those that do not literally convey their intended meanings anymore in daily usage. In addition, outdated words are also included along with various word puns.

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/catachresis> accessed: June 2018

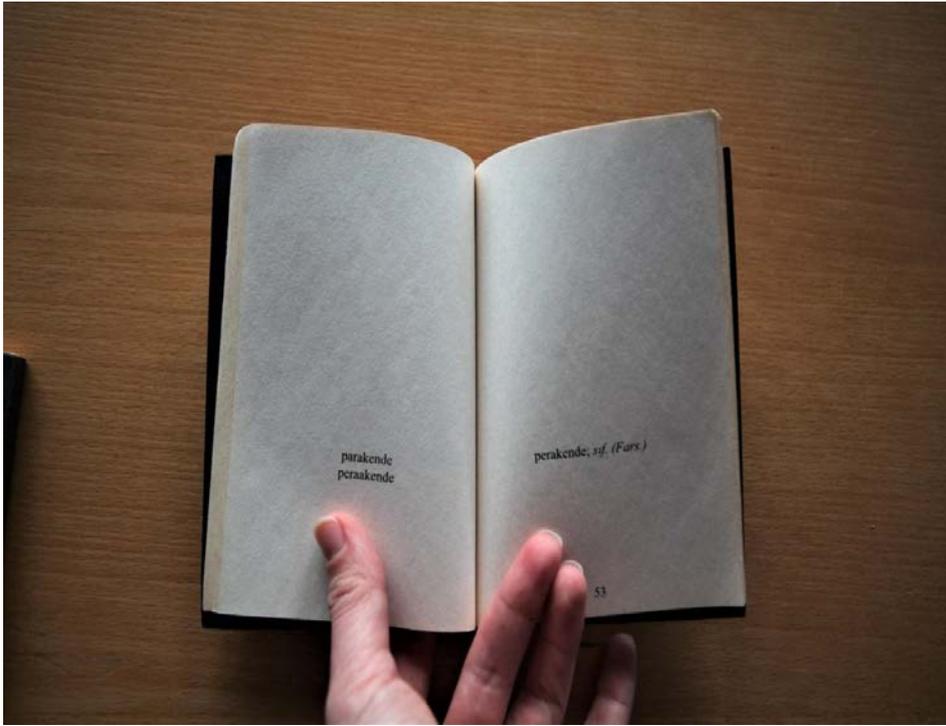


Figure 11, Rahatsızlık Kitabı I, Dil Sürçmesi, 2011 edition

Most of the disturbances expressed here have roots in indifference, carelessness, indirectly working their ways towards ignorance. In this paper, I will refrain from negative connotations of ignorance such as stupidity, lack of awareness, or being uninformed. As Stuart Feinstein<sup>21</sup> says, *even though we are science oriented, a kind of ignorance that comes from a/the communal gap in our knowledge*, which I would like to refer to as indifference. I strongly agree with Feinstein and take it a further step by objecting to the acceptance and legitimization of this indifference. What attracts my attention what is not known or unknown in terms of information and our potential to talk about it. Here I prefer to use ignorance-based disturbances in a positive way, as my artistic material, and as material to be processed in satirical, critical and constructive aspects in each book. The above-mentioned concepts of indifference and deviance have served as tremendous resources for each book in this study. The subject matter may be un-functioning, malfunctioning or dys-functioning, which are all referred to as deviances in the series. Indifference towards deviance can be said to be the backbone of this thesis project.

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<sup>21</sup>Stuart Feinstein is a professor of neurobiology in Columbia University. He taught a class titled *SCNC W3920y Ignorance in science* in 2010. [https://www.college.columbia.edu/cct/archive/winter12/columbia\\_forum](https://www.college.columbia.edu/cct/archive/winter12/columbia_forum) accessed: June 2018

In the *Rahatsızlık Kitabı* series, a narrator in the first-person singular does not exist: it is narrated as if the book itself is the narrator. Instead of using “me”, using the book itself as an author was an intention to leave the reader and the book together alone as an illocutionary act, as if the book speaks by itself.

Furthermore, a traditional book is a product whose features the author does not or mostly cannot determine, having to let the publishers and graphic designers do this job. *Artist book* as standing at the exact opposite of this notion, provides a large area of freedom to the artist in the sense that the artist can make each decision in every detail of production, from the size and quality of paper and cover to typeface. Though the definitions of *artist book* may vary, the ones that I hereby present may still not fit completely into those descriptions. Yet it is arguable whether there should be limitations or obligations to adhere to in the definition of an artist’s product as a book.

### **3.1. Rahatsızlık Kitabı (Book of Disturbances)**

*Rahatsızlık Kitabı* was originally planned to consist of 3 books, though later I changed my mind and decided to extend the series. The first book of the series, *Dil Sürçmesi*, was produced in 2011. I prepared and printed the second book, *Günlük sıkıntıların nadir olmayan kabinesi*, in 2014 and put the books at rest until my graduate studies. Later on, I changed my mind about making a trilogy. The subject matter of my works being the everyday urban life, I discovered that there is unlimited space for any kind of *Rahatsızlık Kitabı*. The works had to define their own boundaries along the way. As a conclusion, the series is an ongoing work in progress.

Besides the content, the presentation of each book was itself an issue. Some questions kept appearing in my mind: what kind of a design process was necessary for each volume? Should each book have a different design according to its theme? If they should, then how could I create a connection between books? Or was such a connection necessary if the plan was to create a trilogy? Or how about a longer one? The connections that are mentioned here could be achieved via integrity of the design, content, or both, via

neither design nor content. So how about using any other element as a connector? Or, if they were going to be individually existing books, was an exact connection necessary, especially in the case where each book had different designs?

Although each book can stand individually, *Rahatsızlık Kitabı* is a series of books following one another, and at the end of the day it became important to express the connection between them both via design and content. Since they all stand under the single umbrella concept of *deviated everyday urban experiences and the indifference towards them*, I decided to produce all the books in the same format. Each book of the *Rahatsızlık Kitabı* series is 14x10 cm in size and printed on regular book paper. For the cover I used black pressband, as it allows long-term usage due to its material strength. By these choices the books have also become easy to produce, portable, attainable and affordable, a vital feature for the democratization of the *artist book*.

### **3.1.1. Dil Sürçmesi (Slip of the Tongue)**

The first book of the series, *Dil Sürçmesi*, is about catachrestically misused-words. It is a critique on language and the language revolution in Turkey, as it was one of the fundamental changes during the transition process from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey.

Words are used in everyday life as they are heard and/or learned. Generating a criticism on how they should be pronounced is actually not on people's agenda; one person can possibly, easily and freely use a word without interrogating its origin. Yet the issue of localization and the nationalization of words in the Turkish language has become a current topic of discussion. Tanıl Bora's last book, *Zamanın Kelimeleri, Yeni Türkiye'nin Siyasi Dili* (The Words of Time, The Political Language of the New Turkey), focuses on the transformation and usage of language in recent years. Bora reflects on his observations on the words that are used by the political powers, and the ruling party in particular. Furthermore, he interrogates the impact of those words and the usage of the language of the opposition party, society and vice versa. In the beginning of the book Bora borrows from Heidegger's *What is called Thinking* (Bora 2018:8):

Words are not like buckets or kegs from which we scoop a content that is there. Instead, words are wellsprings that must be found and dug up in the telling, wellsprings that must be found dug up again and again, that easily cave in, but that at times also well up when least expected.<sup>22</sup>

When dealing with the nationalization arguments, there is an important issue that is often subject to indifference; that the Turkish language is a derivative of many languages, with influences from various cultures. It consists of borrowed words from Arabic, French, Persian and many more. In this case it would not be wrong to say that this language happens to be a compilation to start with. Thus, when we have such a multi-national language at hand, efforts of localization and pronunciation correction may become meaningless, as there is not one specific usage of words or phrases but a rich variety of options. This sentence may legitimate, similar to the aforementioned statements of the anchorwoman Mengü. I would rather like to emphasize that creating a discussion platform might be a better option for the discussion of these related topics.

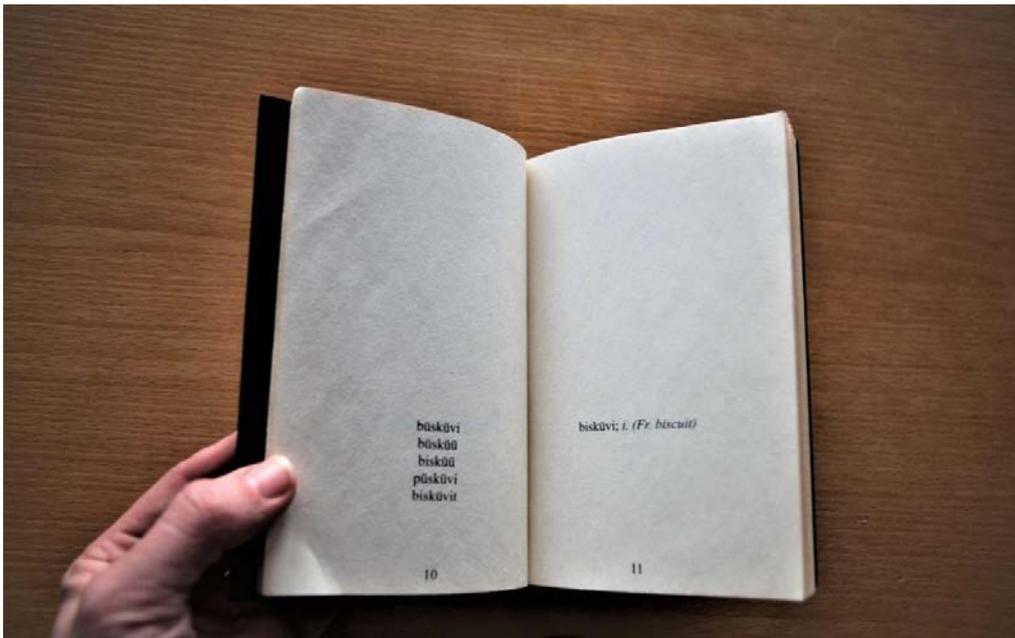


Figure 12, *Dil Sürçmesi*, 2011 edition

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<sup>22</sup> Was Heiss Denken? Martin heidegger, Max Nieneyer Verlag, Tübinden, 1954 p:89

I needed to make additional notes to the *Rahatsızlık Kitabı* series when I was reprinting the first book for my thesis exhibition project. Throughout the period of 7 years, words evolved, and imagination and creativity in everyday usages did not fall behind. As mentioned above, the example of *şarj*,<sup>23</sup> or as seen in Figure 12, the *bisküvi* example, it is possible to create new versions all the time.

### **3.1.2. Günlük Sıkıntıların Nadir Olmayan Kabinesi, G.s.n.o.k. (Not-So-Curious Cabinet of Everyday Troubles, N.s.c.c.e.t)**

Throughout the second book, the misused, vestigial objects of everyday life are brought to attention with their brief stories. I would like to expand one of the stories covered in this book in order to depict the general style of the book. Imagine you are given a present by an old friend. A present that is far from appealing to your taste. You accept the present –happily – and you somehow cannot or do not express your feelings, and you actually feel that you will never ever enjoy using it. It is an object of your least favorite color, for instance. With this bad taste in your mouth, for years and years you keep the present, hence making sure you will never ever use it; yet, you also abstain from throwing it away. Also, you feel bored, after keeping it for a good *10 years*, let's say: one day during spring cleaning you finally find the courage in yourself to throw it away. You will not preserve that object anymore, it is useless. No doubt that you are thankful to your friend, for thinking of you and going into the trouble of buying it for you and bringing it to you. Yet, obviously, that friend still does not know you well *enough* not to give you a present in a color that you'd find repulsive.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid 11

### **3.1.3. Fazlası Var, Eksiği Yok (Nothing Less, All in Excess)**

The third book of the series *Rahatsızlık Kitabı* refers to the incorrect usage of language. *Rahatsızlık Kitabı III* focuses on misapplied, overused sentences and deformed syntax. Whereas a single word is enough to express a situation, a common mistake is to use that word together with another word with the same meaning. One can always add a word in order to emphasize or dramatize a specific aspect. However, using two words with the same meaning causes a deformation in the phrase instead of strengthening the meaning. In the third book each page includes a sentence or a prepositional phrase in states of deformation.

### **3.1.4. Kimi Mürekkep Kimi Merkep (Some Are Ink, Others Are Donkey) \* <sup>24</sup>**

In *Rahatsızlık Kitabı IV*, if a word or expression that is commonly known and if it is *really* known by its true meaning is questioned. It focuses on words that are used without their users knowing the exact meaning.

Refractions or deviations from the truth - the truth being reliable knowledge or an accurate reading –is one of the most radical changes that can happen. Add to this the effect of indifference towards this change. The long-lasting impacts of change can be seen in culture, politics, education, and public opinion and, as always, most substantially in language. As one can possibly say that this is the age of information overload and conspiracy theories, everyone faces various types of informative chaos. In 2016, the Word of the Year chosen by Oxford Dictionaries <sup>25</sup> was; post-truth<sup>26</sup>, and in 2017 by

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<sup>24</sup>\*In the Turkish Language, *mürekkep* means 'ink', and *merkep* means 'donkey'. Despite their similarity in pronunciation and spelling, the two words are completely different in terms of their meaning. Confusion between the two words can be found in a word-play taking place in a Turkish traditional shadow theater act, Hacivat and Karagöz

<sup>25</sup> <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/word-of-the-year> accessed June 2018

<sup>26</sup>The term post-truth was first used in a 1992 essay by the late Serbian-American playwright; Tesich, Steve in *The Nation* (founded in 1865). <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/post-truth> accessed June 2018

Collins Dictionary, it was fake news<sup>27</sup>. The Economist identified countries that live in “the lie of the land” as the post-truth world, and Turkey was included in the list.<sup>28</sup> Thinking of deformation/refraction of knowledge, it would be right to search its impacts via indifference of the informative deformation. Thus, one can possibly conclude that rather than what we know, the emphasis is on how much and how well we know about it. As Bacon suggests, knowledge is power “Scientia potentia est.”<sup>29</sup>( Bacon, 1597). It is possessed especially by whoever controls the flow of information. Here, rather than the control of the information, what interests me is how a piece of information is known and how another cannot be known and the relevance of these differences to my main concern, those being refractions and deviations. Just as petrol was the source of power after the industrial revolution, information is today’s source of power again, as Bacon stated back in the 16th century. Information and knowledge are taking the same side and are becoming the petroleum of our age.<sup>30</sup>

We must also take a moment to discuss agnotology<sup>31</sup> at this point. To talk about *Rahatsızlık Kitabı IV*, I would like to give examples on Agnotology: The Cultural Production of Ignorance.<sup>32</sup> Agnotology as the study of culturally-induced ignorance or doubt is a term coined by scientist Robert N. Proctor.<sup>33</sup> It has later been used in almost every field as “the study of willful acts to spread confusion and deceit, usually to sell a product or win favour”. Along with agnotology, the Dunning- Kruger Effect<sup>34</sup> was one of

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<sup>27</sup>Flood, Allison, 2 November 2017, The Guardian, Fake news is 'very real' word of the year for 2017 <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/nov/02/fake-news-is-very-real-word-of-the-year-for-2017> accessed June 2018

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21706498-dishonesty-politics-nothing-new-manner-which-some-politicians-now-lie-and> accessed June 2018

<sup>29</sup>García, José María Rodríguez, January 2001, Neohelicon, Volume 28, Issue 1, p 109-121, *Knowledge is Power*

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2017/05/06/the-worlds-most-valuable-resource-is-no-longer-oil-but-data> accessed June 2018

<sup>31</sup>Agnotology is the study of culturally-induced ignorance or doubt. <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20160105-the-man-who-studies-the-spread-of-ignorance> accessed: June 2018

<sup>32</sup> *Agnotology ;Cultural production of ignorance*, was the first workshop with the same title at the [Pennsylvania State University](https://web.stanford.edu/dept/HPST/AgnotologyConference.html) in 2003 <https://web.stanford.edu/dept/HPST/AgnotologyConference.html> accessed: June 2018

<sup>33</sup>Robert N. Proctor, ( b. 1954) is a Professor of History of Science. Proctor specializes in 20th century science, technology, and medicine, especially the history of controversy in those fields and projects on scientific rhetoric, the cultural production of ignorance (agnotology), and the history of expert witnessing. <https://web.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/proctor.html> accessed: June 2018

<sup>34</sup>The effect is described as a cognitive bias whereby people who are incompetent at something are unable to recognize their own incompetence. M. Wheeler, who robs banks with his face covered just with lemon juice, he believes that would make him invisible to the surveillance cameras. His belief was based on his misunderstanding of the chemical properties of lemon juice would work as an invisible ink, when he was picked easily by police officers, Wheeler was

my points of departure for this thesis study. It is a term coined in 1999 by social psychologists David Dunning<sup>35</sup> and Justin Kruger<sup>36</sup> upon examining the criminal case of McArthur Wheeler. The Wheeler case is another important phenomenon, which I would like to describe as making up the ‘passionate incompetent’ ingredient of *Rahatsızlık Kitabı IV*.

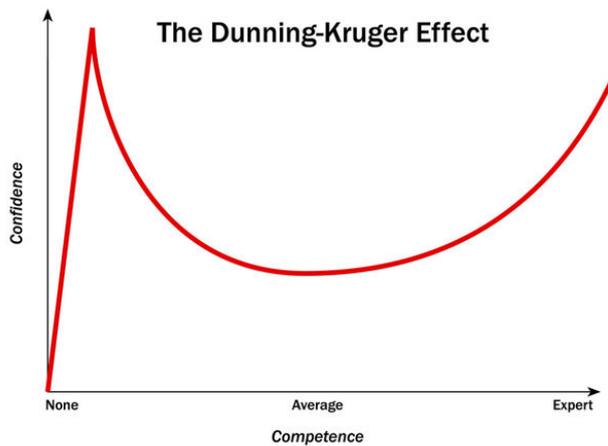


Figure 13, The table of The Dunning-Kruger Effect

I would like to add an example from a text I found in an ordinary web page. There is an article in Wikipedia discussing ignorance which states that there are various types of and reasons for ignorance; namely; negative, positive, neutral and guerilla.<sup>37</sup> Naturally, this statement is subject to criticism when its source is considered. It may be a form of ignorance to cite from a semi-reliable source like Wikipedia, but still I wanted to make clear that ignorance as a concept may be defined in various ways.

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truly insisting that it was impossible the cameras to catch him. Dunning- Kruger Effect appears as a human condition, not a pathological one. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/head-in-the-cloud/201701/the-dunning-kruger-president> accessed: June 2018

<sup>35</sup> David Dunning, a retired Professor of Psychology at Cornell University, “focused primarily on the accuracy with which people view themselves and their peers. In his most widely-cited work, he showed that people tend to hold flattering opinions of themselves and their decisions that cannot be justified from objective evidence—a phenomenon that carries many implications for health, education, the workplace, and economic exchange. Dunning’s other research focuses on decision-making in various settings. In work on economic games, he examined the extent to which choices that seem economic actually hinge more on psychological factors, such as social norms and emotion.” <http://socialsciences.cornell.edu/david-dunning/> accessed: June 2018

<sup>36</sup> Justin Kruger, teaches in New York University Stern School of Business as an associate professor of marketing since 2005. “Professor Kruger’s research focuses on everyday judgment and decision making, with a specific emphasis on positive illusions, myopia, egocentrism, taste, and heuristics.” <http://www.stern.nyu.edu/faculty/bio/justin-kruger> accessed: June 2018

<sup>37</sup> [https://www.explorejournal.com/article/S1550-8307\(14\)00162-1/fulltext](https://www.explorejournal.com/article/S1550-8307(14)00162-1/fulltext) accessed: June 2018

### 3.1.5. Cümle Harcı ve Mananın Seviyeli İlişkisi

#### (Elite Relationship Between Meaning and ‘Mortar’ of a Sentence)

In the 5th book, a persona is speaking along a single line in the absence of any particular meaning. There exists a sentence in the book that I will define as ‘the sentence’. It extends along the physical limits of each page till the edge and also throughout the whole book. *The sentence* includes a multitude of words. *Rahatsızlık Kitabı V* is a critique of the “plaza language” that I will define here as the language use of a subculture, the upper middle class white-collar population. This subcultural structure in the Turkish language consists of many words freshly borrowed from foreign languages, and the speakers do not hesitate to use these words without any Turkish explanation, as if everyone can understand them. These words do not exist in the Turkish Language, as they have been mostly borrowed from English, French or Arabic. Criticizing the use of foreign words is like walking on thin ice; nationalistic messages can easily be drawn from any comment. However, the point of discussion has nothing to do with the nationalization of language or romanticizing a time when everybody spoke with a perfect Istanbul dialect. The emphasis of the critique is on the assumption of the speaker, the persona that the listener knows what they are talking about. Of secondary importance, another criticism is that the persona should actually be able to choose the words of one’s mother language to express oneself in the first place. Even if most often the word choices pointed out here may happen to be associated with thinking, writing and editing with a high pace in another language, the question remains whether everyone has to understand them remains.

In *Rahatsızlık Kitabı V* words are chosen from conjunctions and the repetitions of conjunctions. Therefore, *the sentence* is composed solely of conjunctions and redundant words. Some words carry a meaning on their own, though together they do not refer to any meaningful expression. *The sentence* appeals to “the one” who possibly also speaks in such manner and furthermore expects to be understood. The persona obviously wants to communicate and as we see in the very end of the book, he or she has the need to be understood. But how can this wish come true by way of such a narrative? At some point, any message will need to be structured in a meaningful way, in order to be comprehensible.

### **3.1.6. Halk Plajlara Akın Etti, Vatandaş Denize Giremiyor (Beaches Are Flooded with People, Citizens Cannot Swim)**

*Rahatsızlık Kitabı VI* is a collection of some seemingly meaningful sentences taken from speeches given by various politicians. It includes sentences from current and also former politicians. The focus is on the current ones. The dates of the speeches are given as well, in order to provide a frame of reference for the reader. The images in the book are placed to serve as icons, reminding the reader of historical moments.

### **3.1.7. Kaynağından Uzakta Bulunan Obsidyen (Obsidian Found Far From Its Source)**

*Rahatsızlık Kitabı VII* is about the illegal trafficking and destruction of historical artifacts. The title of the work implies displacement. The word “obsidian” according to The Oxford Dictionary, is “A hard, dark, glass-like volcanic rock formed by the rapid solidification of lava without crystallization.”<sup>38</sup> Due to its nature an obsidian should be around its source.

Artist Michael Rakowitz is one example of an artist working on looted artifacts. *The invisible enemy should not exist*<sup>39</sup> is an example of an artistic reaction to cultural transformation, followed by destruction. It is a series of ongoing works, which focuses on artifacts that originally belonged to the National Museum of Iraq in Baghdad but were stolen, looted or destroyed. These acts mostly took place during the US invasion in April 2003. Rakowitz’s project was sort of a chain reaction to this incident. Rakowitz’s above mentioned work is an ongoing series of around 7000 sculptures which attempt to reproduce looted archaeological artifacts. The artist says, “As the artifacts disappeared, I was waiting for the loss to translate into outrage and grief for lost lives, but it didn’t happen. So, I had the idea of these lost artifacts coming back as ghosts to haunt us.”<sup>40</sup>(Rakowitz, 2018)

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<sup>38</sup> <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/obsidian> accessed: June 2018

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.michaelrakowitz.com/the-invisible-enemy-should-not-exist/> accessed: June 2018

<sup>40</sup> Armitstead, Claire, 26 March, 2018, The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/mar/26/michael-rakowitz-invisible-enemy-should-not-exist-fourth-plinth-winged-bull-date-syrup-cans-defying-isis> accessed June 2018

Rakowitz adds that his aim was to “replicate the looted objects but to make them cheaply from papier mache or plaster and cover them with food packaging or Arabic newsprint to reflect their relationship with day-to-day life.”<sup>41</sup> (Rakowitz, 2018)



*Figure 14, Human-headed winged bull, Lamassu.*<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid

<sup>42</sup> From a recreation of part of the interior of a palace courtyard of King Sargon II of Assyria, ca. 721–705 BC.



Figure 15, Michael Rakowitz, *The invisible enemy should not exist*, 2018, London.

Although Rakowitz points out the significance of what is obviously *not* there; in *Rahatsızlık Kitabı VII*, the focus is not actually on deliberate destruction, but on destruction often caused by carelessness. *Rahatsızlık Kitabı VII* illustrates those artifacts that were smuggled out of Turkey and brought back later between 2004 and 2018.

### 3.2. Zulmet Diyarı (The Land of Darkness)

*Zulmet Diyarı* is a *photo-book*, consisting of 37 postcards of unfunctioning fountains around the Beyoğlu neighborhood. The first postcard: The Maksem of Taksim, is located at the Taksim Square. Taksim was named due to its function of the main water distribution and storage point of the north water lines to serve the rest of the city. The photos are taken from facades of each fountain centering the ‘non-taps’, since most of the taps have been stolen, looted or do not exist in their original location anymore due to various reasons. To highlight this absence, at the center of the cards there is a hole in the

paper. The postcards are presented in a black box that also has a hole on the top center. The hole in the box corresponds to a brass piece that I designed and produced for this book. It holds the cards together by the holes. The reason I chose to use brass is that the taps had been made of brass. There is a map accompanying the book, which allows the readers to become participants to the project.



Figure 17, *Zulmet Diyarı*, detail, 2017

According to some sources *The Land of Darkness (Zulmet Diyarı)* is a mythical land supposedly submersed in never-ending blackness. It is the land in which the Fountain of Youth<sup>43</sup>, and The Water of Life is located. *The Land of Darkness* used to be a popular text in fictional medieval travel literature such as the ‘Alexander Romance’ and the ‘Travels of Sir John Mandeville’.<sup>44</sup> I used the title *Zulmet Diyarı* to highlight the contradiction of the content of the book and the story of *The Land of Darkness*. Under normal circumstances a fountain should be running. As the fountains mentioned here are not running, there must be a discrepancy between the story of *The Land of Darkness* and the *Fountain of Youth*.

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<sup>43</sup> Mandeville, John, Sir., British Library. Manuscript. Cotton Titus C.16., (from Chapter XXVIII) Mandeville's travels: translated from the French of Jean d'Outremeuse / ed. from Ms. Cotton Titus C.XVI in the British Museum by P. Hamelius. (Hamelius, Paul, 1868-1922., ed. London: Published for the Early English text society by K. Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co, 1919, 1923)

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.romanization.com/books/mandeville/chap28.html> accessed: June 2018



Figure 16, Anonymous, from Safavi period, dated around 1575-1590 <sup>45</sup>

What I focus on in this project includes the sense of community, public consciousness, power and ownership of city rights. The fountain is a tangible part of everyday life in the city. On one hand, it can physically be there, and can be perceived with our five senses. On the other hand, it often does not function. In many instances they serve as garbage containers. Repeatedly taps do not function or the water is blocked from the source. The absence of water as a multi-layered condition is open to discussion in various fields such as, economics, urban planning, architecture and sociology. In this particular case, discussions may also happen with a sense of nostalgia following feelings and emotions.

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<sup>45</sup>Iskandar Meets the Angel Israfil and Khizr Finds the Water of Life (painting, recto; text, verso), folio from a manuscript of the Shahnama by Firdawsi ( Credit line; Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, The Norma Jean Calderwood Collection of Islamic Art, Asian and Mediterranean Art Section ) <https://www.harvardartmuseums.org/art/143030> accessed: June 2018

My critical approach is far from nostalgic. Urban change may be a necessity. The levels of sidewalks and roads may change. The question in mind is whether are such destruction and carelessness acceptable under the name of reconstruction? Who is the city to serve? Why do the valuable artifacts of the city Istanbul, often face destruction?

In Istanbul plumbing began to be available in the mid-1850s. Fountain may not occupy a critical space today as it used to. It used to serve a purpose, before pipes were built inside homes. Before that date, the fountain and public fountains used to serve all urbanites for free.

Throughout the history and our current time, water is a vital field of struggle, a field of property. It has always been a power symbol indicating political power and possession.<sup>46</sup> The non-functioning fountains with missing taps are just the tip of the iceberg, a symbol of deviated cultural heritage, history, urban planning and power relations.

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<sup>46</sup> Thirst; Water & Power in the Ancient World by Steven Mithen, Water and Possession p:27-29, Koç University Press, 2017

## CONCLUSION

Everyday urban life is a place wherein discrete elements interact with structure, and restructure, transform one another, which I believe to be a phenomenon of note, especially in this “integrative” and “multidisciplinary” century. Once these transformations are noticed, the deviations that are formed are what make urban life dynamic, a continually evolving flow of verbal and semiotic interplay. The deviation of this flow is an efficient notion with which we may reflect on these phenomena. In this study, I have tried to share the questions that I ask myself and with which I interrogate my environment about deviance in urban life, as an artist living and working in Istanbul. Using the artist book as a medium, I created a series of books, each of which attempts to bring light to these questions by focusing on different topics within the same concept of deviations in urban life. This issue is obviously multi-layered and needs a relatively long time for experience and observation. Even for an artist who pays special attention to the process, understanding and articulating the processes, techniques and strategies employed in dealing with these issues have been a difficult but worthwhile undertaking. After all, process at times has the potential to be more significant than the result it produces. Recognizing everyday urban life as something that can be experienced both as a whole and as a swirling of innumerable atomic components, I continue to explore how we experience it through my work. As everyday urban life is a whole with all its ingredients feeding on one another, my works are continuous research projects, all related to one another. What I problematize is the state of deviance and the potential of urbanites to recognize it, instead of staying indifferent against it. Thus, my exhibition *A visual - verbal attempt* was an attempt to create an experience for the viewer to perceive the city as a syncopated polyrhythm of interacting deviances. As it is the rhythm that creates the daily flow of everyday urban life, noticing the on, off, and pause of it via deviance is my personal interest and research area.

With greetings to all those who revel in the deviances that encompass us and transform the environments wherein we make our lives—and our art.

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