CENSORSHIP ON VISUAL ARTS AND ITS POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS IN
CONTEMPORARY TURKEY:
FOUR CASE STUDIES FROM 2002 – 2009

by

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CENSORSHIP ON VISUAL ARTS AND ITS POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS IN
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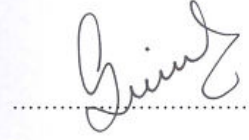FOUR CASE STUDIES FROM 2002 – 2009

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ABSTRACT

CENSORSHIP ON VISUAL ARTS AND ITS POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY TURKEY: FOUR CASE STUDIES FROM 2002 – 2009

Özden Şahin

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Debates on art censorship often have proved to offer a fertile ground for research on the issues of art, autonomy and freedom. Through an analysis of four case studies, this study aims to offer an analytical survey on censorship on visual arts in İstanbul from the recent historical context of 2002 – 2009, during the rule of recent Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi (AKP – Justice and Development Party) government. The selected cases are situated within the framework of modernization, political Islam and Kemalism and are analysed as cultural expressions of the contemporary Turkish political scene.

The cases are selected according to the variety and the possibilities offered by the censorship mechanisms as well as the positioning of the artists within the processes. Interviews with the artists discuss (a) the norms of censorship; (b) the engagements of the artists within the processes; (c) self-censorship; (d) the censors' justifications for each case.

The research suggests that although recent censorship on visual arts in Turkey always reflects a specific socio-cultural context, the general formulation of censorship has its roots in moral justifications, in both political Islam and the state nationalism, as a response directed against the representators of any kind of perceived oppositon in its political and social sense.

ÖZET

GÜNÜMÜZ TÜRKİYESİ'NDE GÖRSEL SANATLARA UYGULANAN SANSÜR VE SİYASİ GÖSTERGELERİ: İSTANBUL'DA 2002 – 2009 YILLARI ARASINDA GERÇEKLEŞEN DÖRT VAKANIN ANALİZİ

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Anahtar Sözcükler: Sansür, Görsel Sanatlar, Türkiye, Kemalizm, Siyasi İslam.

Sanat sansürü üzerine dönen tartışmalar özellikle sanat, özerklik ve özgürlük konuları üzerinde verimli araştırma alanları yarattı. Bu çalışma, yakın tarih bağlamında, mevcut Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP) hükumeti süresince, 2002 – 2009 yılları arasında İstanbul'da görsel sanatlar üzerine yapılan sansür hakkında dört vaka analizi yoluyla analitik bir inceleme sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Seçilen vakalar, modernleşme, siyasi İslam ve Kemalizm çerçevesinde konumlandırılmakta, günümüz Türk siyasi sahnesinin kültürel ifadeleri olarak ele alınmaktadır.

Vakalar sansür mekanizmalarının sunduğu çeşitlilik ve imkanların yanısıra, sansür süreçlerinde sanatçıların konumlandırılmasına göre seçilmiştir. Sanatçılarla yapılan mülakatlar (a) sansürün normlarını; (b) sanatçıların süreçlerin içindeki durumlarını; (c) oto sansürü; (d) sansürleyenlerin her vaka için sundukları gerekçelendirmeleri tartışmaktadır.

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'de yakın dönemde görsel sanatlar üzerindeki sansürün, her zaman kendi sosyo – kültürel bağlamını yansıtsa da, genel tertip bakımından köklerinin siyasi ve sosyal yönden muhalif olarak algılananın temsilcilerine yöneltilen ve hem siyasi İslam'da hem de devlet milliyetçiliğinde görülebilecek olan ahlaki gerekçelendirmelerde bulunabileceğini öne sürmektedir.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> The Delphians came in to Aesop and said, "You are to be thrown from the cliff today, for this is the way we voted to put you to death – since you have earned it as a temple thief and an abusive speaker… Prepare yourself.[1]

This thesis aims to analyse recent political and religious phenomena of censorship in the visual arts in Turkey. The research will present four case studies in a comparative analysis in order to situate censorship within the recent Turkish political framework. It will focus in particular on the relation of censorship to such key concepts as religion, political Islam, tradition, nationalism and modernization.

Although censorship may loosely be defined as the exercise of control upon ideas through their extermination as cultural products, it is evident that as a concept, censorship is much more complicated as far as its different manifestations and materializations are taken into consideration. In order to illustrate the specific circumstances under which censorship is realized, four cases are used as points of juncture to link the debates over arts, autonomy, freedom and democracy as situated within recent Turkish politics under the AKP (Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi, Justice and Development Party) government. The reason why the last ten years as a period are chosen for this study is to analyze the transformations of the recent Turkish political scene as observed in the policies of the recent AKP government on visual arts as cultural expressions.

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[1] Lloyd W. Daly, trans. and ed., *Aesop Without Morals* (New York: T. Yoseloff, 1961), 132.

1.1. Cases

The first case is the censorship on visuals which were to be shown during internationally known artist Fazıl Say's concert. On 3rd July 2003, as part of the 31st International İstanbul Music Festival, in memory of the 10th anniversary of the 1993 Sivas Massacre, Say performed an oratorio for Metin Altıok, a Turkish poet killed by religious fundamentalists during that massacre. On the request of the Minister of Culture Erkan Mumcu who contacted the artist through Şakir Eczacıbaşı, the president of İstanbul Kültür Sanat Vakfı (İKSV, İstanbul Foundation of Culture and Arts), the artist had to cancel the projection of a set of visuals from the Sivas Massacre.

In 2005, Head Council of Education and Morality, a branch of the Ministry of Education, moved Eugène Delacroix's painting *La Liberté Guidant le Peuple (Liberty Leading the People)* out of middle school 7th grade Citizenship and Human Rights Education textbooks because the breasts of the woman figure in the painting were naked. As a reaction, during the Contemporary İstanbul Art Fair in December 2006, the artist Bedri Baykam realized an art event by transforming the painting into a performance, in which human figures posed like the ones in the painting.

The third case is police interference into a poster exhibition titled *Allah Korkusu* (*The Fear of God*) which thematized fear in its religious, nationalist and global context through the figure of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The independent artist initiative Hafriyat, which organized the exhibition, demanded escort from the police after the assault of fundamentalist *Vakit* newspaper which published news against the exhibition before its opening on 10th November 2007. Because of the potential of the news to trigger fundementalist reaction to the artworks, the group demanded help from the police forces. However, police who had been called to protect the exhibition, ended up questioning three of the artists, Hakan Akçura, Murat Başol and Zeynep Özatalay, on the contents of their posters. As a result of this, Başol voluntarily pulled his work back although no legal censorial procedure took place.

The last case is an experiment carried out simultaneously with the writing process of this thesis. During the initial research on the cases, the researcher found out that in 2007, İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Sanat ve Mesleki Eğitim Kursları (İSMEK, İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality Art and Vocational Training Courses) refused to exhibit nude works by two trainees, Devrim Guney and Kadriye Sakarya, during the end of the year exhibition which is held in Feshane, Eyüp every year. Departing from this information, the researcher requested the artist Nilgun Özdemir who has been attending İSMEK courses to make a painting and see if it would get accepted to the end of the year exhibition in order to be able to see the process of censorship being operated on the painting in parallel with the development of the arguments in this thesis.

These four cases are chosen according to the possibilities they offer for the research. The mechanisms of censorship here can be traced not only through bigger networks composed of institutions such as Ministry of Culture, İstanbul Foundation of Culture and Arts, Ministry of Education, Head Council of Education and Morality and through the experiences of internationally known famous artists such as Fazıl Say and Bedri Baykam but also through the encounters of a non-professional artist who has been attending courses offered by the municipality.

The roles each artist assigns to himself/herself within the more general framework of the politics of the country and art world in general determine the way censorship is treated and defined by the artists. The cases studied in this thesis are used as a tool for uncovering the layers of different but shared experiences of censorship as well as enabling the observation of changing aspects of censorship as it is practiced in different formats in each specific case.

1.2. Methodology

As the practice of art censorship directly involves the artists conventionally defined as the oppressed in a conflict, semi-scripted topical individual interviews are conducted with the artists involved in the cases in order to see if the classical notion of the oppressed may be challenged. The artists are asked about their personal experiences

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of the censorship; the reasons, if any, given as a justification to limitations on their artworks; the chains of communication between the artists and the censoring bodies; the reactions and protests of the artists; lastly, the responses of the censors for these reactions. As well as the archives of library material, academic and non-academic on-line material, and all related data from pieces of artworks to legal correspondences are collected as materials for the study.

The legitimacy of the censor and the accounts given by governing bodies is an essential point in the affirmation of the norms of the morals regarding arts as well as the definition of the censorship. The positioning of the artists and their acts of opposition depend upon the religious, moral and political reasons given to them by the censors. As the main focus of the study is upon the experiences of the artists as actors engaged within a system in which each specific practice is comparable to each other, the narratives of the censors are not prioritized. However, the arguments related to the three components of censorship – which may be roughly categorized under three headings as censors, artists and the artworks - are balanced throughout the study in order to apply different perspectives according to the dynamics of the censorship experience.

The study seeks to answer the questions of legitimacy of the censor through contextualizing the interviews with the artist in relation to the present government's discourses of democracy and of modernization. The findings related to certain research questions proposed as a point of departure for a comparative analysis are evaluated and put in a framework that may potentially lead to commonalities within the artists' narratives, which are used to understand the dynamics of censorship within recent political context. These initial research questions, which have been extended on the basis of relevant theoretical questions, aim to offer (a) a critical evaluation of the norms of censorship; (b) the positioning of the artists during the censorship process; (c) the political perspectives the artists apply to the phenomenon; (d) the assessment of censorship by the artists from an aesthetic point of view.

1.3. Research Questions

● Is the application of censorship a direct result of the artwork's failure to comply with the standards which are set by the censor or may it be also said that the process is dependent upon the context in which the works are produced and exhibited?

● What roles do the networks within which an artist is engaged in play in the censoring process? How do the artists perceive the art scene in relation to tradition and religion in general and in relation to the case of Turkey in particular? What are the commonalities they would point to?

● Do the artists see censorship as a criterion, as a tool for testing the democratic implementations within society through an artwork or do they also wish to evidence the risks of evaluating censorship without an historical context?

● What are the effects of the artists' political engagements on their account of censorship? Do they point to commonalities regarding the censorial practices upon certain political engagements?

● Do the artists believe that censorship and self-censorship create new forms of aesthetics? If yes, how do they describe these new aesthetics?

By assessing the findings related to the themes these questions are based upon, the study examines the definitions of art censorship, the changes the concept has experienced with the development of theoretical frames, artistic self-censorship, justifications put forward by the censors, and other relevant issues found in specific cases, such as religious fundamentalism in relation to memory and remembrance of the Sivas Massacre; obscenity in relation to public education; religion, kemalism and taboo. As all of these concepts and issues have been separate research areas, the perspectives applied in their analysis are adopted in their relation to censorship on arts.

CHAPTER 2

DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF ART CENSORSHIP

2.1 Definition of Art Censorship

Censorship both as a concept and as a practice has gone through changes since its classical original use in ancient Rome. The censor was "a magistrate with the original function of registering citizens and assessing their property for taxation.... The work of a Roman censor expanded to include supervision of moral conduct, with the authority to *censure* and penalize offenders against public morality."[2]

As a practice based on economic stimuli, censorship began to be used as a domination tool of political regimes and social regulations. "The social function of censorship is to defend established morality and thereby to inhibit and frustrate this rhythm of change."[3] Censorship as an exercise, it follows, can only be justified as long as the definition of morality is standardized. Thus, following a rational line of argument, the censor either has to operate within the norms of an upper division in the hierarchical structure by reconstructing the established discourses of morality that have been

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[2] Keith Allan and Kate Burridge, *Forbidden Words: Taboo and the Censoring of the Language* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 12.

[3] Frederick M. Wirt, "To See or Not to See: The Case against Censorship," *Film Quarterly* 13, no. 1 (1959), 27.

prevalent or he/she has to deviate from the norms by providing the necessary political conceptualization to justify the specific censorship as an exercise. Art censorship, then, stands on the intersection of definitions of art through political and moral discourses.

Richard Shusterman suggests that the evolution of censorship practices parallel with how art itself was positioned in the larger political and economic frameworks of the historical periods within which censorship was executed. According to Shusterman's historical categorization whereby the conditions of art censorship are in direct relation to the status of art itself, the cathartic and didactic value of art was used as a shield that would protect the work of art from being censored.

> Art's quarrel with censorship seems as old as its ancient quarrel with philosophy; and ever since Plato's proposal to ban mimetic art for its moral and epistemological evils, the champions of art have tried to protect art's freedom and right to exist. Originally, art's apologists tried to refute or extenuate the moral and epistemological censure of art by stressing its cathartic and didactic value. But as art's status grew stronger, the claim was pressed for art's complete autonomy and for total freedom of expression, which its creative nature allegedly requires.[4]

The arguments against censorship paralleled with those of the censors in that art was defended against censorship by stressing that it complied with the norms set by the censor. Only through the rise in the status of art, Shusterman suggests, did the objections to censorship include autonomy in arts and freedom of expression. It should, however, also be noted that although the status of art in general may be an indicator of its treatment, one should also take into account the hierarchies among art forms. "Although art forms, styles, and genres are made for and adopted by different social groups, because of the dynamics of the processes, their hierarchical ordering changes somewhat as well."[5] The rise in the status of certain art forms in particular and art in general brought growing interest by the market on the arts, and, certain changes regarding the perception on art took place.

One can talk about the manifestation of the recent change in art's status in the

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[4] Richard Shusterman, "Aesthetic Censorship: Censoring Art for Art's Sake," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 43, no. 2 (1984), 171.

[5] Vera L. Zolberg, *Constructing a Sociology of the Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 142.

context of recent technological developments in the art world regarding the professional relationship of artist with the art industry and the art market.[6] Although traditional studies on censorship stressed the dictatorial nature of the process by presenting an absolute authority vis-à-vis the censored, the fact that the production and distribution process of a creative work is composed of layers affected by practices considered as censorship has engendered new discussions about the term itself.[7]

> In recent years, the nature of censorship research has changed dramatically. New approaches argued, for instance, that the State does not wield absolute power, and also that censorship institutions are run by flesh-and-blood people with their own sensitivities, norms and values. Censorship institutions do not operate in a completely autonomous or authoritarian manner, nor are they disconnected from society. This includes the existence of negotiations between the censors, the industry and film makers.[8]

With the effect of post-structuralist theory, censorship has become a research arena in which both the actors and the channels of power are reintroduced. In order to classify the contributions of recent discussions over censorship to the expansion of what the term covers, the redefinition of censorship is presented under two headings: (a)

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[6] As far as the technological developments are concerned, the film industry is a reccurent example whereby the market pressure on artists and the mechanisms of the censorship are discussed. In order to discuss and see the layers of pressure upon the creators of the visual works, censorship has also been thematized in films themselves. To give an example, director Kirby Dick's documentary *This Film Is Not Yet Rated* (2006) demonstrates how The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) in the United States seriously curtails the production process of movies. "Dick talks about "a set of industrial imperatives, which exist independently of any creative individual, and these imperatives are enforced by a commercial studio system which is in a position to impose its views on all the independent producers and everyone else." See: Peter Bradshaw, "This Film Is Not Yet Rated," *The Guardian*, September 1, 2006, http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2006/sep/01/documentary.

[7] For example Charles Lyons argues that "censorship also happens in far broader and less overt ways: movie studios' infamous 'script notes,' self-censorship, market or economic censorship, and movie ratings." See: Charles Lyons, *The New Censors: Movies and the Culture Wars* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), 183.

[8] Daniel Biltereyst, "Productive Censorship: Revisiting Recent Research on the Cultural Meanings of Film Censorship," *Politics and Culture*, no. 4 (2008), http://aspen.conncoll.edu/politicsandculture/page.cfm?key=676.

recontextualization of censorship after the postmodern theory; (b) art market as the new censor.

2.1.1. Redefining Censorship in the Postmodern Age

Art censorship in its classical sense used to represent the state power imposed upon the artistic production. Regulations and norms of certain discourses as a factor of censorship have been put forward for the proponents of a new definition conclusive of the social implications of what censorship may expand to. With the advance of post-structuralist cultural criticism, the methods of studying censorship were also altered. New perspectives stressed the fact that mythological boundaries between the censors and the censored could be restructured through the elimination of the conception of authority as an isolated entity and power as a negative force imposed upon the censored by the censor.[9] With the proliferation of discussions on censorship, the definition of the term has become a source of debate in and of itself. If "censorship now has no fixed place"[10] as Richard Burt argues, how can one draw the lines for the concept as well as the act of censorship?

According to Anette Kuhn "censorship is… produced within an array of constantly shifting discourses, practices or apparatuses. [It…] is an ongoing process

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[9] Helen Freshwater states that it was Michel Foucault who created bases for arguments both on censorship and on the study of censorship as in *Power/ Knowledge*, Foucault suggests to "base our analysis of power on the study of techniques and tactics of domination"; in *The History of Sexuality* "he uncouples the link between censorship and constraint"; in *Discipline and Punish*, he "describes the disciplinary function of enlightenment institutions such as Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon" as grounds for the study of self-censorship. See: Helen Freshwater, "Towards a Redefinition of Censorship," in Beate Muller, ed., *Censorship and Cultural Regulation in the Modern Age* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2004), 229.

[10] Richard Burt, "(Un)Censoring in Detail: The Fetish of Censorship in the Early Modern Past and Postmodern Present," in *Censorship and Silencing: Practices of Cultural Regulation,* ed. Robert Post (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1998), 32.

embodying complex and often contradictory relations of power."[11] These relations of power have been effectual in the classifications of censorship. Regulative censorship has come to refer to the classical conception of institutionalized power on the censored whereas constitutive censorship refers to the discourse regulation whereby the agents of the communication and the context within which what can be uttered are regulated. [12]

The redefinitions and classifications of censorship according to the workings of power have led to a questioning of what the term actually refers to. In an attempt to analyze the existential nature of censorship, Frederick Schauer suggests that when we think about only the ontology of censorship but not its epistemology, "the very idea of censorship collapses. We may find that there is no subset of human behaviour that we can identify solely because it restricts our communicative possibilities, since all human behavior both constitutes and restricts our communicative possibilities." [13]

One of the elements that Schauer implies, surely, is language itself as an element effective in human communication. From a structuralist point of view, it can be said that it is language that restricts and determines what one is able to say. Roland Barthes, for example, suggests clearly that it is the endoxa rather than what Althusser would have called the repressive state apparatuses that is the real instrument of censorship.

> Just as a language is better defined by what it obliges to be said (its obligatory rubrics) than by what it forbids to be said (its rhetorical rules), so social

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[11] Annette Kuhn, *Cinema, Censorship and Sexuality, 1909 – 1925* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), 127.

[12] For example see: Sophia Rosenfeld, "Writing the History of Censorship in the Age of Enlightenment," in *Postmodernism and the Enlightenment: New Perspectives in Eighteenth-Century French Intellectual History*, ed. Daniel Gordon (London and New York: Routledge, 2001).

[13] Frederick Schauer, "The Ontology of Censorship," in *Censorship and Silencing: Practices of Cultural Regulation,* ed. Robert Post (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1998), 149.

censorship is not found where speech is hindered, but where it is constrained.[14]

With the introduction of new cultural criticisms after structuralist analogies of language and social interaction, the manifestations of censorship within the systemic frameworks of everyday social relations began to be traced and discourse as a critical factor affecting what is allowed to be said began to be analyzed. For example, Pierre Bourdieu argues that censorship can also work through the social distinctions that are created by the symbolic relations of power and with an understanding of the laws of group formation.

> Among the most effective and best concealed censorships are all those which consist in excluding certain agents from communication by excluding them from the groups which speak and or the places which allow one to speak with authority. In order to explain what may or may not be said in a group, one has to take into account not only the symbolic relations of power … but also the laws of group formation themselves (e.g. the logic of conscious or unconscious exclusion) which function like a prior censorship.[15]

Bourdieu defines the formulation of censorship through everyday social interactions that are regulated by larger structural relations defined by the relations of power. In a parallel line with this argument, Judith Butler argues that "mechanism of censorship is actively engaged in the production of subjects, but it is also engaged in circumscribing the social parameters of speakable discourse."[16] The dual workings of censorship as a product of multilateral power relations produced within and by certain discourses could be understood by distinguishing between explicit and implicit censorship. Implicit censorship, according to Butler, "refers to implicit operations of power that rule out in unspoken ways what will remain unspeakable."[17] Thus, implicit

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[14] Roland Barthes, *Sade/ Fourier/ Loyola*, trans. Richard Miller (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 126.

[15] Pierre Bourdieu and John B. Thompson, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 138.

[16] Judith Butler, "Ruled Out: Vocabularies of the Censor," in *Censorship and Silencing: Practices of Cultural Regulation,* ed. Robert Post (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1998), 251.

[17] Ibid, 249.

censorship may be more effective in the sense that the vulnerability of censorship as an overtly visible tool is erased by the potential invisibility brought by implicit censorship. This dimension diminishes the tractability of what the term implies. Implicit censorship operates through a series of processes that avoid being labeled as overt censorship because of the extent of visibility it bears. Butler not only offers a new perspective through which censorship may be reevaluated but also links her arguments to challenge the predominant directions censorship operates within.

> In the conventional view, censorship appears to follow the the utterance of offensive speech: speech has already become offensive, and then some recourse to a regulatory agency is made. But in the view that suggests that censorship *produces* speech, that temporal relation is inverted. Censorship precedes the text (by which I include "speech" and other cultural expressions), and is in some sense responsible for its production.[18]

To think about censorship as a determinant of any kind of cultural expression that is produced is to reverse the conventional arguments that censorship proceeds the text; what Butler suggests is that it precedes the text. This point may take us to Michel Holquist's statements which may be useful in providing an overview about the discussions on the whole issue: "to be for or against censorship as such is to assume a freedom no one has. Censorship *is*. One can only discriminate among its more and less repressive effects."[19]

The recent shift from normative arguments over censorship to analyses that deal with how the concept may be productive and the process may give out creative potentials of power contributed, for sure, to a broader understanding of the nature of censorship. However, Beate Muller states that "widening the concept of 'censorship'… carries the risk of equating censorship with any kind of social control, thus endangering its heuristic potential."[20] The newly emerging debates run the risk of fragmenting the

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[18] Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech. A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 128.

[19] Michael Holquist, "Corrupt Originals: The Paradox of Censorship," *PMLA* 109, no. 1 (1994), 16.

[20] Beate Muller, "Censorship and Cultural Regulation: Mapping the Territory," in *Censorship and Cultural Regulation in the Modern Age*, ed. Beate Muller (Amsterdam

descriptions rooted in the epistemological boundaries that are already in constant flux. What happens if a work of art is censored when the definitions are oblique and the descriptions are fragmented? What form do these theoretical discussions take as far as the real life encounter is concerned? If to label art censorship as an exercise of power by opressor on opressed is simplification and lacks a multiplication of perspectives brought by dismantling the concept, how can any artistic and political action be taken against that very power constraining the artist as an agent? Does not the omnipresence of censorship lead to an acceptance that will eventually lead to a form of silence which is what the censors aim in the very first place?

The deconstuction of the conceptual elements are essential to figure out the practical manifestations of censorship as an exercise. May the postmodern tendencies to eliminate the dicothomy of the censor as the opressor and the censored as the oppressed, to ethically charge speaking on behalf of the censored, or to see the act of self-censorship itself as resistance possibly lead to a deviation from action against any kind of censorial subordination? A potential reply on behalf of the defendants of the fragmentations of the definition of censorship would be that no theory necessarily has to be a practical guide for a political action. However, as far as the potentials of resistances within censorship processes are concerned, the conclusive aspect of the analytical theories eventually leads to the grounds for a statement about the very act of censorship in question.

The first line of the arguments discusses how to find out the mechanisms of power which does not have a single direction coming from the censor to the censored. The second line of arguments are, however, more on the practical manifestations of legitimation of censorship through the effect of the art market.

2.1.2. Art Market as the New Censor

The proposals for a new definition of censorship is made also considering the

and New York: Rodopi, 2004), 1.

market constraints that regulate the production process of the artworks as well as their distribution. According to some of the critics that propose the term should be revisited, the new definition of censorship must include market domination upon creative arts.[21] As the politics of the image is seen as homologous with the culture of consumption, the evaluation of an artwork complying with the rules set out either by the political bodies or the market regulations under their peculiar circumstances are taken as two separate reference points which constitute the process that result in either a redefinition or a complete abandonment of the word censorship.

> While some critics have tried to keep in place a narrow modern definition (censorship as state power) in order to avoid confusing it with other, perhaps less brutal kinds of constraints (say, market censorship), others have argued that in the postmodern present, censorship has been displaced by less visible kinds of domination and control and that the word should be either redefined more broadly or abandoned.[22]

A point in the articulation of different forms of censorship discussions in the aforementioned piece must be highlighted here: the evaluation of market censorship which can be traced from the expression "perhaps less brutal kinds of constraints (say, market censorship)."

The expression "less brutal constraints" refers to a conception that the brutality of the constraints depends upon the level of visibility of the direct power as exercised through the state bodies. However, the criterion put forward by this statement leads to a conclusion that the state and any local governing institutions that are engaged within the process create constraints "perhaps" more brutal than the market censorship. So, taken as two comparable categories, state censorship is treated separately from market censorship by conveniently disregarding the fact that market regulations have strong

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[21] For example see: Lawrence Soley, *Censorship, Inc.: The Corporate Threat to Free Speech in the United States* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2002) and Jennifer A. Peter and Louis M. Crosier, eds. *The Cultural Battlefield: Art Censorship & Public Funding* (Gilsum, N.H: Avocus Publications, 1995).

[22] Richard Burt, "Introduction: The 'New' Censorship," in *Administration of Aesthetics: Censorship, Political Criticism, and the Public Sphere*, ed. Richard Burt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), xii, http://site.ebrary.com/lib/sabanunivic/Doc?id=10159351&ppg=13.

relationship with political censorship.

The first of the two critical points that need to be made about the relation between political and market censorship is the means and the formulation of the censor. The second point is that political control over the process of censorship is not independent from the market regulations as both systems need to be combined in order to understand the nature of the relationships within these practices. To give an example, each institution has its own politics of exhibiting works; it should be noted that market censorship also has ideological grounds on which art institutions also operate.

Sue Curry Jansen states in her book *Censorship: The Kont That Binds Power and Knowledge* that "Liberalism's "Good Lie" – its claim to have abolished censorship – merely replaced church and state censorships with market censorship.[23] Much as the effects of the market forces on free speech in general and on arts in particular can be traced from what has been put forward by various artists and academics as results of the pressures brought about by the market, one cannot talk about a shift which includes an absolute erasure of state censorship and an absolute market domination independent from state mechanisms. These two sides may not be fully separable from each other in certain cases. They may as well compete with each other in some other instances, in which the market needs to demonstrate an "opposition" in order to challenge pure state control over artworks. This shows the inevitability of contextualizing the process of the exhibition of an artwork and its censorship. Chon A. Noriega, for example, demonstrates the tensions between the financial side, the economic ends of the act of producing arts by comparing the emphasis placed on free speech and economic revenue very well through a use of the case:

> Indeed, when you start arguing for art on the basis of its tax revenue, your appeal, while directed at the political representation system, essentially links aesthetics to corporate liberalism. And this congruence, more than anything, explains why the arts establishment rejected the 1993 public arts work, "Art Rebate," in which David Avalos, Elizabeth Sisco, and Louis Hock refunded $10 bills to 450 undocumented workers along the border between San Diego and

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[23] Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship: The Knot That Binds Power and Knowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 4.

Tijuana.... What was unreal about this art - that is, what made it "non-art"- was that it raised issues of racism and immigration in relationship to cultural capital at precisely that moment when the art world was subordinating its advocacy of free speech to the same economic rationale used for nativist and nationalist ends.[24]

The issues of racism and immigration raised through the use of these artworks are highly dependent on the ideological structures that the state relies upon and the practical outcomes of the laws that are based upon these structures. Noriega highlights the impossibility of separating the politics of art from its aesthetics shaped by corporate liberalism. From what he proposes as a case, it can be inferred that as long as the political statements that an artwork makes clash with the general artistic scene of the time, the issues it raises gain another dimension, which affects its characteristics.

The century-old question of what art is strikes again here. Although the circumstantiality of art censorship overshadows the definition of art within the dynamics of the censorship process, it should be noted that (a) the execution of art censorship in and of itself ; (b) the way censorship is applied to the specific cases inevitably bear a definition of art although the censors do not claim to reach a conclusion about what art is, but rather, possibly, about how it *should* be. The definition of what art should be and how art should be realized is highly dependent upon the historical periods within which art is defined and it determines how censorship is implemented. What John T. Dugan proposed in 1954 can be given as an example. Dugan stated that art should not be censored because "all art that actually is art needs no censorship. To repeat, art – if it is art – must perforce accord with the moral. And the moral can not be in conflict with just and duly constituted law of any kind, or vice versa."[25]

Dugan suggested that abiding by the norms of morality is a prerequisite for the "real" artwork to deserve the quality of being art. Likewise, Stefan Morawsky who contended in 1967 that art and obscenity are mutually exclusive based his arguments on

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[24] Chon A. Noriega, "Art Official Histories," *Aztlan* 23, no. 1 (1998), 8–9.

[25] John T. Dugan, "The License of Liberty: Art, Censorship, and American Freedom," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 12, no. 3 (1954), 368.

three accounts: genetic, structural, and functional.

> Genetic, since it is not the artist's intention to arouse sexual excitement; structural, since the erotic elements of a work are never the chief or dominant values, nor even of equal weight to the aesthetic ones; functional, since the aesthetic experience proper consists precisely in the elimination of a practical, operational attitude involving us in the work of art as if it were a real person or situation.[26]

These two conceptions of art may not be proved as valid any longer as far as the comtemporary definitions and practices of what an artwork can be are taken into consideration. To be more specific, contrary to Morawsky's arguments the artist's aim may very well be to arouse sexual excitement or the erotic elements may be the chief values. These examples demonstrate how important it is to regard the elusiveness of the pregiven definitions over such dynamic phenomena as censorship.

2.1.3. Criticisms to Market Censorship

Critics of the new censorship, however, tend to situate the phenomenon in a categorical perspective whereby the censor and the censored have their own peculiarities by definition.

> Critics of the new censorship tend to assume that censorship operates ahistorically: all censors and all artists are basically the same.... Even when they are reading censorship cases within a historical narrative, cultural critics rely on ahistorical oppositions between unchanging agents and forces: criticism and censorship fight out a battle for social change over public space, setting public art against privatization, corporate sponsorship, and commodification. By defining opposing political camps in the moralistic terms of those who are for censorship and those who are against it, critics unify both camps and make them monolithic: the censors are demonic philistines, the censored ipso facto are clever, noble, and good."[27]

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[26] Stefan Morawsky, "Art and Obscenity," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 26, no. 2 (Winter, 1967), 196.

[27] Richard Burt, "Introduction: The 'New' Censorship," in *Administration of Aesthetics: Censorship, Political Criticism, and the Public Sphere*, ed. Richard Burt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), xiii, http://site.ebrary.com/lib/sabanunivic/Doc?id=10159351&ppg=14.

It is crucial to take into consideration particular characteristics of the contexts within which censorship is applied. All four of the cases which have been presented in this study are different from one another in different aspects such as the way censorship is applied and the possibilities the artists had to form a protest as a response to either censorship as a concept and a practice or the particular form of censorship manifested through the intervention into their works. Thus, it becomes even more important to assume a historical context in order to be able to adopt perspectives that are necessary to understand the dynamics, arguments, conflicts and manifestations of censorship. Such general phenomena as capitalism as well as the debates on public space and public art are in constant evolution because of the historical shifts taking place. It is precisely for this reason that evaluating censorship in relation to these shifts requires an appeal to those very changes.

The definition of censorship as a practice that has its ideological bases within the particular political frameworks and social changes is challenged and developed through an evaluation of the practical manifestations. The conceptual justification for the implementation of art censorship in general, i.e. without considering what is being censored or how it is being censored, also changes. The very basic idea that censorship should exist, regardless of the physical geographies and the institutional structures on which the states operate, has not changed much as the justifications are reshaped and reconstructed as the state and market politics evolve with the development of new governmental and economic systems. What are the very basic reasons for censorship? Regardless of the reasons that are given by the censors about the contents and the contexts of particular artworks, how is it possible that censorship both as a concept and a practical exercise born out of that concept is implemented?

2.2. The Conceptual Bases of Art Censorship

"The particular nature of the arts, their potency to intensify and clarify experience

as well as their power of representation, feeds into the paranoia of the powerful."[28] The use of the potency against the representational powers of the artists are justified through the causal link established between an abstract notion of the community and a concrete action to be taken for the benefit of this community. "The censor acts, or believes he acts, in the interest of a community. In practice he often acts out the outrage of that community, or imagines its outrage and acts it out; sometimes he imagines both the community and its outrage."[29] The very irrational nature of censorship as a political act can be interpreted as a result of the loss of meaning while translating from an abstract perception, such as moral values of a particular community, into a political action as censorship.

The process of censorship, albeit politically and economically motivated and informed, does not have to follow a rational line in order to operate. The censorship itself "admits that it is not an end in itself, that it is not something good in and for itself, that its basis therefore is the principle: 'The end justifies the means.' But an end which requires unjustified means is no justifiable end."[30] This irrational nature has its roots in the determination of the ideas and the proponents of the ideas that should be censored. "Marx maintained that censorship laws are bad because they punish thought instead of action."[31] Following Marx's argument, it is the materializion of the thought that is being censored and, thus, this leaves a space for interpretations over what is being censored. As the punishment of the action is regulated through the formation of the laws that operate within certain legal frameworks, they are less arbitrary in their very nature.

[28] Girma Negash, "Resistant Art and Censorship in Africa," *Peace Review* 15, no. 2 (2003), 138.

[29] J. M. Coetzee, *Giving Offense: Essays on Censorship* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 9.

[30] Karl Marx, "Censorship," *On Freedom of the Press and Censorship* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1842/free-press/ch05.htm.

[31] Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship: The Kont That Binds Power and Knowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 94.

Censorship, however, as a judgment on the intellectual and artistic values in their compatibility with the moral norms, is directed more towards the conceptual background on which the works stand.

> Censorship statutes are never written in objective terms, because they are aimed at attitudes and values, not actions. Since censor laws never define precisely what is prohibited, the interpretation of the administering censor fills the empty generalities of the law with morality by fiat.[32]

Stating that censorship is partly arbitrary and irrational, however, is not sufficient to grasp the direct relationship of censorship with the content of the artworks and with the dynamics affecting the artistic production processes. Much has been written as to what it is that determines the controversial nature of some artworks. These controversies are potential reasons and/or outcomes of the censorship process in that they may either set the grounds for self-censorship through the regulated norms that are accepted as controversial or they may result in a censorship in its very classical sense, i.e. through an exertion of control over the works by a governing body.

The determinants of what one sees and how the ways in which what one sees is organized by larger political structures, which bear multiple elements, such as politics of technology in relation to the agency. One can call the proliferation of the combinations which directly or indirectly affect the production process of an artwork chaotic in the sense that the determinants of the production process are not always easy to trace from the work itself. This is precisely the reason why the narratives of the artists are documents which present a shift in recent history of visual arts when technology is becoming more immanent to artistic production.

2.2.1. Producing Morality by Perfecting Commodity: Visual Arts Censorship, Social Controversy and the Recent Technological Innovations

According to Steven C. Dubin, the controversies over art are determined by

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[32] Frederick M. Wirt, "To See or Not to See: The Case against Censorship," *Film Quarterly* 13, no. 1 (1959), 27.

certain dynamics brought by social changes within a society. The specific circumstances which trigger the controversies, according to Dubin, are the fractures in the community, estrangement of the individuals as a result of the social cleavages and alienation. [33] "Thus, Dubin argued that… censorship is the product of intergroup conflict."[34] Dubin states that "public art controversies are likely to occur – at times when there is a degree of communal fragmentation and polarization, and widespread civic malaise and low communal morale. *What* becomes controversial are generally those works which address volatile, unsettled issues."[35] These criteria about what becomes controversial are also applicable to the cases in this research; more overtly to the *The Fear of God* exhibition, which consists of works which make use of the symbolic or iconic images of Kemalism and religion, juxtaposed both physically and conceptually. The intergroup conflicts Dubin mentions are directly related to each party's political stances. However, not only the actual widespread civic malaise or the communal morale creates an environment for the execution of censorship; an artificial atmosphere of civic malaise may also be created by the governing bodies in order to set the grounds for the implementation of censorship.

According to Herbert J. Gans, the controversies over art are a product of the cleavages between high culture and low culture.

> Gans (1974) noted that controversies about art and obscenity tend to arise when "high culture" works are condemned by sexual conservatives who also seek to eliminate pornography, a "low culture" product, from their communities. Gans suggested that the holders of cultural and political power in such communities use controversies about obscenity to bolster their social or political positions,

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[33] Dubin argues that "specific circumstances heighten the likelihood of conflict over art. First, art controversies are most liable to occur when prolonged public struggles have fractured the community; when distinct social cleavages have left individuals estranged from one another; as civic spirit becomes deflated by weariness and despair, and alienation replaces a sense of common cause." See: Steven C. Dubin, *Arresting Images: Impolitic Art and Uncivil Actions* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 37.

[34] Nicola Beisel, "Morals Versus Art: Censorship, The Politics of Interpretation, and the Victorian Nude," *American Sociological Review* 58, no. 2 (1993), 146.

[35] Steven C. Dubin, *Arresting Images: Impolitic Art and Uncivil Actions* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 38.

implying that struggles over obscenity in art are covert struggles over class and status.[36]

The conclusion that high culture seeks to eliminate pornography because it is deemed as belonging to low culture may be considered as an underlying basis for censorship for certain cases but it should also be noted that censored images are not only those deemed obscene. Artworks may be censored because they may be considered as a threat to public morals. Besides, they may also be censored because of their potential to shatter ideological assumptions, thus posing a threat to the current political systems. This obfuscates Gans' line of connections because class struggle may have different implications, which may, for example, be incarnated in censorship on artworks serving as a direct or indirect propaganda tool for ideological support for lower classes. However, Gans' view may in many ways be linked to political statements because culture is not a phenomenon beyond politics. As far as the adaptable fluidity of cultural products to both high and low culture is concerned, such a statement may need revision. Although pornography may be considered by high culture as a vulgar demonstration of polluted bodily pleasures, one cannot argue that pornography will never be in some respect accepted within high culture products.

Aesthetic perceptions develop in accordance with the changes within artistic currents. What Gans misses is the ephemeral nature of the controversies over new forms of stylistic elements in artistic productions and their acceptance with the art community in specific circumstances over the time. The status of the content of an artwork, albeit classified as a low culture product, may become adapted to the higher forms of culture as these two concepts do not remain static and isolated from each other.

> The acceptance of sensation under the rubric of the aesthetic opened the way for a positive revision of the place of a number of mass-cultural practices in high art, most notably the pornographic…. Within dominant aesthetic practices, the shift from a disinterested intellection, which rested on the removal of the body from the aesthetic interaction, to an aesthetic consumption, which included the body as an integral, indeed foundational, part of the interaction, not only made way for pornographic representations in works that aspired to high-art status, but equally

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[36] Nicola Beisel, "Morals Versus Art: Censorship, The Politics of Interpretation, and the Victorian Nude," *American Sociological Review* 58, no. 2 (1993), 146.

informed the way in which those works would come to be read.[37]

The dominant aesthetic practices have, in the case of pornography, developed through critical approaches by the modernist critics who have come to rationalize the pornographic function of the body as an integral part of the artistic product. However, recent turn to accept the most vulgar displays of the human body, which was formerly praised for its essence and perfection, as material for art signals the creation of a new visual culture from an appraisal of purity in high art towards more visibility of impurity in its most striking form, the pornographic.[38]

The development of visual technologies may be counted as a factor enabling the mass consumption of pornography which relies on the commodification of the body. "As society becomes saturated with pornography, what makes for sexual arousal, and the nature of sex itself in terms of place of speech in it, change. What was words and pictures becomes, through masturbation, sex itself."[39] Apart from the changes within the identification of sensual experiences with the visual, pornography as a sector has also been transformed with the ease of access to image reproduction technologies. Gans goes on to conclude in his book *Popular Culture and High Culture* that the criticisms against popular culture regarding its effects on society combine two charges: the debasement of the taste level of the society and the authoritarian manipulation of the technological devices, which paves the way to totalitarianism.[40] The debasement of the taste level of the society also has to do with the dissemination of low culture products through mass media communication devices. This raises the question of how technology is judged in

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[37] Allison Pease, *Modernism, Mass Culture and the Aesthetics of Obscenity* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 167-168.

[38] For example, with recent studies on pornography, a pornographic avant-garde is debated. For example see: Ara Osterweil, "Andy Warhol's *Blow Job*: Toward the Recognition of a Pornographic Avant-garde," in *Porn Studies*, ed. Linda Williams (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

[39] Katherine A. MacKinnon, *Only Words* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993), 25.

[40] Herbert J Gans, *Popular Culture and High Culture: an Analysis and Evaluation of Taste* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 55.

relation to censorship.

The advances in technology have been largely debated both because of the level of professionalization and complexity that have come with the very basic idea and because of the drastic social changes its practical outcomes have introduced. The fact that one talks about an art industry today brings with it a class relationship. The positioning of the artist within the relations of production is crucial here as far as the area the term covers is concerned. If one can talk about the creative arts as an industry today, this has organic connections with the development of tools for technological reproduction. The artists have turned into suppliers of labor within the art market with the accessibility of the technologies for making and reproducing art as well as the global connections that have worked to expand the art market. Sue Curry Jansen interpets Marx's critique of censorship and states that according to Marx, "if the ruling ideas of every epoch are the ideas of the ruling class, then the class which has control over the means of material production also has control over the means of mental production."[41] So, according to the Marxian line of thought, censorship is one of the aspects of the bourgeois ideologies which have their bases in economical structures of liberalism. Herbert Marcuse, when analyzing new political and social theory in relation to its dialectical relationship with liberalism states that the total-authoritarian states are born within the dynamics of liberalism itself. "With regard to the unity of this economic base, we can say it is liberalism that "produces" the total-authoritarian state out of itself, as its own consommation at a more advanced stage of development." [42]

The commodification of thought, then, may be regarded as the basis on which interference with any artistic or intellecual production by the total-authoritarian state is deemed rightful through the demarcation of what is transferrable into a product of consumption. These interferences may be visible or invisible, by open accounts based on a logic that is in line with the liberal market regulations or through inured practices

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[41] Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship: The Kont That Binds Power and Knowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 91-92.

[42] Herbert Marcuse, *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press: 1968), 19.

that are rooted in those very regulations. Jim McGuigan proposes that through a process of managerialism, the public sector of art and culture have gone through what he terms as marketisation. Defining the term he introduces, McGuigan draws the attention to the difference between the concepts of commodification and marketisation as they are not exactly identical to each other:

> State-funded cultural goods have become *marketised* to such an extent that their circulation resembles that of the non-state sector, the 'private' market of cultural commodities. Such a development constitutes a strand in the larger process of commodification, whereby all value is ultimately reduced to exchange value.[43]

McGuigan also notes that however mythological an entity it may be, the effect of the art market is still prevalent on arts and it is regulated by the state through the collection of the tax revenue. This combination of the state and the market control over arts through what McGuigan calls marketisation makes it even more complicated to distinguish where self-censorship stands. The cases in which the interference into an artistic production process is more visible, a study of artistic self-censorship is fairly easier. However, for the instances in which the interference is less visible both for the artist and for the audience, the question as to whether one can talk about an application of self-censorship becomes much more difficult to answer as the possibility that an empirical evidence may lack increases. The lines between self-censorships driven by various reasons such as by the artist's aesthetic choices, by political reasons, by commercial anxieties cannot be cleary drawn because of the fact that the conditioning of the artist may rely on a combination of these reasons that are generated by the specific conditions that are dependent upon the political atmosphere as well as the artistic trends and currents which also have their relations with the art market.

2.2.2. Internalizing Censorship through Artistic Self- Censorship

What is the difference between a self-censorship that is applied as a direct result of the dynamics within the art market manifesting itself in the form of certain aesthetic

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[43] Jim McGuigan, *Culture and the Public Sphere* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 67.

choices and the self-censorship driven by political reasons?

Self-censorship is an elusive phenomenon that is difficult, if not impossible, to analyze particularly because of the fact that the artist applying self-censorship may be either conscious or unconscious while creating an artwork that will be exposed publicly or expressing own perceptions on that artwork in particular.

Another challenge of studying self-censorship is that it gets more complicated as far as the aesthetic concerns are taken into account. The process of producing an artwork is composed of multiple elements such as conceptualization, producing the actual work and exhibiting it. The processes of conceptualization and production may be simultaneous or one may follow the other depending on the particular creative style of the artist or on the nature of the artwork in question. However, at which particular point self-censorship applies becomes more difficult to point because both creative artistic processes and the networks of connections involved in art exhibiting play crucial roles in the actualization of the artwork. In the cases in which an artist is self conscious about the production process and he/she internalizes the self-censorship by withdrawing from the resistant potentials of the artworks, the works of art are adjusted to the circumstances under which the work is displayed. In the other cases, when an artist reflects upon the work, making aesthetic choices that are conditioned by the market or state ideologies, the probabilities of transforming the path the artist follows by challenging frontiers increase. The agency of the artist as well as their conceptualization of art appears to be the determining factors in the potential resistances.

Resistance, however, may work from the reverse side through the application of self-censorship overtly expressed by the artists themselves. The new conceptualizations of authority within the framework of censorship enabled the reevaluation of potentials to reiterate resistances which are born out of the creative nature of the power. Michael Drewett, for example, gives as an example South African musicians' attempts to obscure their lyrics in order to avoid censorship. For Drewett, these "attempts to outmaneuver the censors through subtle forms of self-censorship are… a creative attempt to open spaces of resistance."[44] Likewise, during the initial personal correspondances, Murat

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[44] Michael Drewett, "Aesopian Strategies of Textual Resistance in the Struggle to

Başol, one of the artists who contributed to the exhibition *The Fear of God*, defined his act of withdrawing his work as self-censorship. Başol justified his act by stating that his work would be negatively affected by the crisis created by the assault of the newspaper on the exhibition and the reactions of the police who had been called to escort the artists and the artworks. This example helps to demonstrate how social controversies shape the artistic practices through self-censorship and how self-censorship may transform into forms of resistance in the specific context that it is applied.

Self-censorship, thus, may be regarded as a self reflexive process whereby the possibilities of resistance are enabled both because the very nature of the power relations offer a resistance and because the process of self-censorship itself may be regarded as a form of resistance. In both cases, the process is transformed into a more personalized act than censorship. Jean Graham-Jones suggests that "in cases where the presence of the internal self-censor has been acknowledged, it has been cast in an oppositional relation: external censorship at the hands of victimizing military/government forces versus the conscious or repressed self-censoring acts on the part of victimized artists."[45] Thus, on the artist's side, overt self-censorship may symbolize a heroic demonstration of protest through avoiding the harmful theme or drawing the finished work back at an earlier phase. If we are to think within the conventional frames, self-censorship may very well turn into a loss from the side of the opressed, who, as the artist, has the symbolic referentials to being an agent in a controversial state which not only bears an individual surrendering to the already existing regulations but also a collective narrative within which the battle of the artist is loaded with the values of freedom in arts.

It is these dilemmas on the artists' side that a consensus over the necessity of self-censorship is established. The artists interviewed for this research have agreed that self-

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Overcome the Censorship of Popular Music in Apartheid South Africa," in *Censorship and Cultural Regulation in the Modern Age*, ed. Beate Muller (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2004), 192.

[45] Jean Graham-Jones, "Broken Pencils and Crouching Dictators: Issues of Censorship in Contemporary Argentine Theatre," *Theatre Journal* 53, no. 4 (2001), 595–596.

censorship is unavoidable because of the sensitivities within the political atmosphere of Turkey. They justified the act of self-censorship either in order to protect the artworks themselves or in order to avoid any sensational uproars that the artworks would create. The protective intuitions of the artists directly relate to the political scene as well as the discourses related to what is allowed to be said. Thus, it is necessary to evaluate censorship in a recent historical context which bear the political dynamics in relation to censorship.

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTORY NOTES ON CENSORSHIP AND THE RECENT TURKISH HISTORICAL CONTEXT

3.1. 1980 Military Coup and the Political Roots of Recent Censorship in Turkey

Normalization and habituation of censorship is organically linked to the political traditions that have been predominant in a particular setting. The very basic justifications offered for the acts of censoring tend to be based either on the arguments of political necessities or on moral and traditional values. Departing from this fact, the research criteria for the case studies in this thesis are based on two stances: the relationship between (a) censorship and political Islam and (b) censorship and Kemalist nationalism as manifested in the recent Turkish political practice. The adoption of political Islam as a framework is induced by the importance of analyzing the means by which Islam is perceived both as a religion and a political action that affects the dynamics of censorship. Nationalism as the second frame will enable this study to trace how the moral values formed around tradition and a common identity contribute the formulation of censorship as an ideal basis and its practical implementation. 12th September 1980 military coup d'etat has been taken as a departing point in this study for the roots of recent censorship as the coup is essential regarding the fact that it signifies a turning point in the interactions of Islam and Turkish nationalism. Besides, after the traumatic experience of the coup which severely limited the freedom of speech and expression, the potential political consequences that the artists would face after any oppositional stances they took facilitated the exertion of control over the expressions of

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ideas.

As observed from a scan of the state archives catalogues[46], censorship was a very common practice in the early nation building process in Turkey. The instances of censorships may be categorized in accordance with the themes of perceived opposition: communist propaganda, degrading Turkishness, degrading the military, Islamic content, missionary propaganda and minority propaganda. The first central censorship board in Turkey was established in 1932. The right to censor was taken away from the city governors to this central committee. The members of the first board were representators of General Staff, National Defense and Domestic Affairs branches.[47]

Stating that obscenity began to be officially banned in Turkey around the 1960s, Mustafa Yılmaz and Yasemin Doğaner conclude that certain forms of undesirable acts were at stake at particular historical periods. Offense to high ranking state officials, to Turkishness, to republican revolutions and to the country constituted a big portion of the banned material during the rule of Atatürk and İsmet İnonü whereas these instances lessened in the 1960s.[48]

With the military regime established after the 1980 coup, all the activities of the political parties were banned. The 1961 Constitution was changed and new laws empowering the military, which was represented by the national security council, were passed. Some of the new laws were not only directed against any political action but also against the freedom of the press which could raise issues about the rule of the military. For example, according to the Article 3 of Verdict No. 52 which passed on June 2nd, 1981, it was forbidden to discuss anyhow the prohibitions and decisions of the

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[46] The archival catalogues of the official state documents till 1973 are accessible. See: Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Arşiv Katalogları, http://www.devletarsivleri.gov.tr/katalog/.

[47] "Yeşilçamda Sansürün Tarihçesi," *Bianet*, September 28, 2002, http://bianet.org/bianet/print/13528.

[48] See: Mustafa Yılmaz, Yasemin Doğaner, "1961 – 1973 Yılları Arasında Bakanlar Kurulu Kararı ile Yasaklanan Yayınlar," *Atatürk Yolu* 10, no. 37-38 (2006), 247-299, www.ait.hacettepe.edu.tr/akademik/arsiv/yasak_yayin.pdf.

Martial Law Command Headquarters about the applications of martial law.[49] This practice not only partly suspended political opposition at the time but also impeded the social conception of political activisms of future generations.

Another law that was directly against the freedom of expression was "Law on Protecting the Youth from Harmful Publications" ("Küçükleri Muzır Neşriyattan Koruma Kanunu,")[50] which was adjusted in March 1986 to be a censorship law, albeit not officially described as such, controlling the suitability for children below 18. Although the law discluded the exercise of control upon the works with intellectual, social, scientific and aesthetic attributes, the ultimate decision on whether the ban of a publication was necessary belonged to a committee which was composed of representators from National Security Council, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Domestic Affairs, Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Culture and Tourism (fine arts experts), Social Sciences scholars to be selected by Higher Education Board, Department of Religious Affairs and press members to be selected by Ankara, İstanbul and Izmir Journalists' Associations. "Journalists' Associations (İstanbul) and Journalists' Associations refused to offer a candidate, and thus, the formation of the group suffered from the very beginning."[51] The laws against freedom of speech were protested by the associations of the press. These oppositional stances against the formation of a more conservative and more authroritatian rule were stimulated by the fact that limiting the freedom of expression was the very first step in order for the governing bodies to be able to operate more freely.

After the military rule, not only the status of the army grew even stronger and political establishments of predominant official ideologies were firmly set but also the

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[49] Milli Güvenlik Konseyi Kararları, http://www.belgenet.com/12eylul/mgk52.html.

[50] See: "Küçükleri Muzır Neşriyattan Koruma Kanunu," http://www.mevzuat.adalet.gov.tr/html/438.html.

[51] (The translation is mine.) "Gazeteciler Cemiyeti (İstanbul) ve İzmir Gazeteciler Cemiyeti aday göstermeyi reddettiklerinden, kurulun oluşma şekli ta baştan zedelendi." Alpay Kabacalı, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Türkiye'de Basın Sansürü* (İstanbul: Gazeteciler Cemiyeti Yayınları, 1990), 229.

taboos of the everyday social interactions were reshaped. The abrupt legal changes brought with the new institution by the national security council defied the values of democracy after a non-democratic military involvement securing its rule by making use of Kemalism and religion. With the impact of the coup, the formation of the nationalistic identities in Turkey has been affected by the fascist nationalist and Islamic conservative aspects and thus, morality in general in the current discursive structures has been defined through the common identity of being Turk and Muslim. This fact is evidenced by Ismail Kaplan who states that with the 1982 constitution that was prepared by the consultative assembly after the coup, Kemalism was deemed the only, official ideology of the country and the military junta adjusted the definition of Kemalism: "with a thrift that at first seems surprising, but understandable when the reasons for the coup are taken into consideration, the 1982 coup constitution deviated from the classical secular Kemalism line. Or rather, it merged a distinctive 'Islamic secularism' with Kemalist secularism in political, social, cultural-educational domains."[52] After the coup, the definition of citizenship and its social implications were shaped by the very presence of the military in charge of the nation state. Moreover, with the rise of Islam in the general political conjucture of the Middle East, such as the Iranian Islamic Revolution, the political status of Islam grew stronger, which led to a more visible religious manifestation witnessed in the social as well as the political atmosphere.

The main concept that shapes the arguments about the execution of censorship is, in general, morality. As can be concluded from the political shifts, morality is defined through Islam and Turkishness in the recent Turkish historical context. The moral values that are associated with religion and nationalism are not two separate poles that operate in opposing ways. Conversely, it is usually the other way around: Although morality as based on political Islam – which is usually posed as a direct opposite of the secular nationalism – may differ from nationalistic practices of censorship, the form remains similar as far as the justifications given are concerned. Is there a possibility that a

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[52] (The translation is mine.) "İlk bakışta şaşırtıcı görünen, ancak darbenin nedenleri hatırlandığında anlaşılabilecek bir tutumla, 1982'nin darbe anayasası klasik laik Kemalizm çizgisinden saptı. Daha doğrusu, siyasal, sosyal ve kültürel-eğitsel alanlarda Kemalist laiklik ile daha farklı, kendine özgü bir 'İslami laiklik' anlayışını birleştirdi." İsmail Kaplan, *Türkiye'de Milli Eğitim İdeolojisi ve Siyasal Toplumsallaşma Üzerindeki Etkisi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1999), 306.

change can be traced in the format of control over the visual arts in Turkey? Do newly emerging discourses on Islamic tradition and national identity exclude the heritage of the coup or is each discourse used to manipulate realities by adding to, and by supporting the heritage of political discourses of the past?

3.2. Kemalist Nationalism and Modernization within the Recent Turkish Political Context

In *The Invention of Tradition*, Eric Hobsbawm identifies three overlapping types of traditions of the period since the industrial revolution: a) those that structure or symbolize social cohesion, group membership, real or invented communities; b) those that legitimize the authority status and relations; c) those that enable socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour.[53] These types of traditions, according to Hobsbawm, serve the aim of creating submission to authority as well as identification with a community, such as a nation. Censorship may be said to be working through the use of these mechanisms in that it grounds itself firmly on the basis of the establishment of tradition. In the Turkish case, the submission to authority is enabled through nationalistic and religious group membership, i.e. being a Muslim and being a Turk; through the legitimization of the bans, i.e. public morality; and through the unities brought by the frontiers against immorality. Censorial practices both shape, and are shaped by "values" of the nation.

These values are not are not always embodied in formal and legal expressions. The legal discourse partially ensures the freedom of expression and thought. The regulations about the freedom of speech in The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey of 1982, Article 26 are protected as follows:

> Everyone has the right to express and disseminate his thoughts and opinion by speech, in writing or in pictures or through other media, individually or

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[53] Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 9.

collectively. This right includes the freedom to receive and impart information and ideas without interference from official authorities.[54]

However, as with many of the rights and freedoms of this constitution prepared by the military, this right also has its exceptions:

> The exercise of these freedoms may be restricted for the purposes of protecting national security, public order and public safety, the basic characteristics of the Republic and safeguarding the indivisible integrity of the State with its territory and nation, preventing crime, punishing offenders, withholding information duly classified as a state secret, protecting the reputation and rights and private and family life of others, or protecting professional secrets as prescribed by law, or ensuring the proper functioning of the judiciary."[55]

The key values expressed in the constitution so much as to restrict the basic right of freedom of speech may be listed as the national security; indivisible integrity of the state and nation; and the basic characteristics of republic, which are specified in the irrevocable provision Article 2 as " a democratic, secular and social state governed by the rule of law; bearing in mind the concepts of public peace, national solidarity and justice; respecting human rights; loyal to the nationalism of Atatürk."[56]

Analyzing the establishment of discourses through the material and linguistic symbols of Turkish nationalism, Etienne Copeaux states that nationalism is naturalized in the Turkish context through the impact of the national education system. As Kemalism is the official ideology since the birth of the nation, "most of the Turks get very surprised when Kemalism is mentioned as an ideology."[57] According to Elisabeth

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[54] "The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey," Article 26, Provision 2, http://www.anayasa.gov.tr/images/loaded/pdf_dosyalari/THE_CONSTITUTION_OF_THE_REPUBLIC_OF_TURKEY.pdf.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid., Article 2.

[57] (The translation is mine.) "Pek çok Türk Kemalizm'den bir ideoloji gibi bahsedildiğinde çok şaşırır." Etienne Copeaux, "Türk Milliyetçiliği: Sözcükler, Tarih, İşaretler," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 4 / Milliyetçilik*, ed. Tanıl Bora (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003), 45.

Özdalga, nationalism came to be accepted as "a kind of civilian religion"[58] in the establishment of the republic. It was with the political turns in 1980s that the relationship between Turkish nationalism and Islam became more visible as "1982 Constitution calls out congregational-hierarchical Islam to help and support authoritarian statist Kemalism."[59]

With the 1980 coup, a kind of divinity was attributed to the image of Atatürk by the army as the ruler of the state. "The Kemalist ideology which almost totally depended upon military protection after 12th September 1980 coup prioratized the signs of 'Turkish - Islam synthesis' and 'being an indivisable whole with the state and citizens' against the intensifying public visibility of ethnic and religious identities at the period."[60]

Despite all these political switches, censorship cannot be seen as a political side effect of contemporary Turkey's failure to adopt modernization which is obstinately imposed as a prerequisite for confidence in the global stage.[61] Modernization is not a

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[58] Elisabeth Özdalga, *İslâmcılığın Türkiye Seyri: Sosyolojik Bir Perspektif*, trans. Gamze Türkoğlu (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006), 53.

[59] (The translation is mine.) "1982 Anayasası, cemaatçi-hiyerarşik İslamı, otoriter devletçi Kemalizme yardım etmesi ve destek vermesi için göreve çağırır." İsmail Kaplan, *Türkiye'de Milli Eğitim İdeolojisi ve Siyasal Toplumsallaşma Üzerindeki Etkisi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1999), 306.

[60] (The translation is mine.) "12 Eylül 1980 darbesinden sonra hemen bütünüyle askeri korumaya yaslanan Kemalist ideoloji, etnik ve dinî kimliklerin bu dönemde yoğunlaşan kamusal görünürlüğü karşısında 'Türk-İslam sentezi' ve "devleti ve milletiyle bölünmez bir bütün olma" şiarlarını öne çıkarmıştır." Ahmet Yıldız, "Kemalist Milliyetçilik," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 2 / Kemalizm*, ed. Ahmet İnsel (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), 233.

[61] Some Turkish authors suggest that Turkey should take the Western and in particular, American model for freedom of expression. For example, Edip Yüksel comments upon a flag burning crisis by saying that "financial resources of the American government are not spent to prosecute or imprison flag burners, and the energy of the police force has not been allocated to suppress them. Furthermore, the honor and the identity of the American flag was also rescued from being the subject of a naughty battle between the lawmakers and the militants.… Instead of buying arms from America, Turkey should take lessons from America's examples." See: Edip Yüksel "Cannibal Democracies, Theocratic Secularism: The Turkish Version," *7 Cardozo Journal of International and*

static, unidirectional linear process whereby the norms of tradition are contested. "At a period when people pronounce their social identities in cultural terms, it is natural that religion gains an increasing or restored importance. For this reason, even if the presumption that religion recedes when modernization proceeds is not totally wrong, it is highly contested and debatable."[62] Modernity, at times, can conflict with the tradition as well as discluding and revising its values. Part of the current Kemalist secularist arguments regarding the transition from a religion based Ottoman Empire to the secular republic tend to disregard the fact that no matter how abruptly a regime could change, there is always a much longer process of adaptation to the social and cultural environment which parallel with the political scene. According to Metin Çulhaoğlu the Kemalist utopia is very much rooted into a conception of pureness in modernity.

> Modernity does not inosculate with every tradition that it encounters; by definition, it has to destroy and eliminate some of the traditions. For example, modernity may very well develop and leave its mark on a society in a country ruled by the shari'a; but one cannot talk about modernity in a place where land slavery is dominant. Secondly, an aspiration of modernity that erases all kinds of tradition and all its remnants is a dream peculiar to modernization theory. If we talk about Turkey, it is a Kemalist utopia.[63]

Comparative Law, 423 (1999), http://www.yuksel.org/e/law/cannibal.htm. However, the proliferation of printed work on censorship in the United States proves the opposite. For example see: Matthew Bernstein, *Controlling Hollywood: Censorship and Regulation in the Studio Era* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000); Ted Gup, *Nation of Secrets: The Threat to Democracy and the American Way of Life* (New York: Doubleday, 2007); Susan Richmond, ed., *Potentially Harmful: The Art of American Censorship* (Atlanta: Georgia State University, 2006); David S. Silverman, *You Can't Air That: Four Cases of Controversy and Censorship in American Television Programming* (Syrcause: Syracuse University Press, 2007); Lawrence Soley, *Censorship, Inc.: The Corporate Threat to Free Speech in the United States* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2002).

[62] (The translation is mine.) "İnsanların sosyal kimliklerini kültürel terimler içinde telaffuz etmeye başladığı bir dönemde, dinin artan ya da yenilenen bir önem kazanması doğaldır. Bu yüzden, modernleşme ilerledikçe dinin aynı ölçüde gerileyeceği varsayımı tamamen yanlış olmasa bile, ciddi biçimde sorgulanmalı ve tartışmalıdır." Elisabeth Özdalga, *İslâmcılığın Türkiye Seyri: Sosyolojik Bir Perspektif*, trans. Gamze Türkoğlu (İstanbul: İletişim Yay., 2006), 61.

[63] (The translation is mine.) "Modernleşme, önünde bulduğu her tür geleneksel ile mutlaka birleşmez; kimi gelenekselikleri tanımı gereği yok etmek, ortadan kaldırmak zorundadır. Örneğin, modernleşmenin şeriatla yönetilen bir ülkede ilerlemesi ve topluma damga vurması pekâlâ mümkün olabilir; ama toprak köleliğinin başat olduğu

The erasure of the past as an ideal and a prerequisite for the establishment of a new nation is rooted in an ahistorical assumption that a new nation can be created through the new establishments which are based upon purity in its different aspects, such as the purity of the dominant race, of the nation's history used as a unifying force for the citizens, or of the morals. Censorship as a concept may also be interpreted as a quest for purity in a broader sense. The materials that are obscene, harmful, or inconvenient are eliminated in order to reach a purity that is set by the censors not as a goal that needs to be achieved but as a step towards that state of being undisturbed, i.e. without any opposition that will potentially damage the hierarchical structures.

In the Turkish case, the heritage of the nation building process which idealized a protective approach to pure Turkishness is translated into current laws. For example, according to Turkish Penal Code Article 301 any person who openly degrades Turkishness, the Republic or Turkish Grand National Assembly shall be imprisoned six months to three years; any person who degrades Turkish Republic government, the judiciary organs of the state, military or security organization shall be imprisoned six months to two years; any Turkish citizen degrades Turkishness in a foreign country is condemned to an extra one third of the standart penalty. The law also states that thought expressions that aim a criticique do not constitute a crime.[64] The boundaries of critique and crime, however, are not defined objectively by the law, which is the common characteristics of any form of censorship.

A nationalist practice of censorship may not be eliminating what a political Islamist censorship would do in stylistic terms. However, the assumptions and the motivations of the act of censoring have very much to do with the purity sought in order to establish a governmental structure either shaped by the moral values which define the

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bir yerde modernleşme olamaz. İkincisi: Gelenekselin her türünü ve kalıntısını büsbütün ortadan silen bir modernlik özlemi, modernleşme kuramına özgü bir düştür. Türkiye için konuşacak olursak, kemalist bir ütopyadır." Metin Çulhaoğlu, *Doğruda Durmanın Felsefesi* Cilt 2 (İstanbul: YGS, 2002), 524 – 525.

[64] Türk Ceza Kanunu, Üçüncü Bölüm, "Devletin Egemenlik Alametlerine ve Organlarının Saygınlığına Karşı Suçlar," http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kanunlar/k5237.html.

norms of Islam as a religion and a political force or by the tradition which creates the nation with a heroic past and an unjustified present. The accountability of the present practices are put into question through references to the past as a site of the purity of the nation and thus, as a set of common imaginary abstraction which relates itself to the formation of the present. The overlap of the quests for nationalist and religious purities lead to overlaps of functional commonalities and formal variations.

The relations between Turkish national identity, secularism and Islam in Turkish republican history have always been dynamic as are the discussions related to modernization and religion. The secularist circles in Turkey attribute the country's progress to Westernization and modernization with the image of Atatürk. Islam as the counter force is posed as a threat to the change towards Westernization. However, as Angel Rabasa and Stephen Larrabee argue, "in the Turkish Republic, secularism does not mean just the separation of state and religion, as it does in most Western societies. The Kemalist state, drawing on the Ottoman practices as well as the French model of *laicité*, insisted on the control of religion by state institutions."[65] The reason for a management model of this kind is, as explained by Nilüfer Göle, based on the fact that "Turkish secularism does not affirm the fact that religion splits from the state and becomes independent. On the contrary, it institutionally keeps religion under state control in order to take the religious discourse and education to the same line with modernist and rational ideals."[66]

Where does the AKP stand in all these arguments with regard to censorship? Does government censorship signal a loophole or a concession in the Western modernization process or does it operate independently from the formation of the government in the sense that censorship is an omnipresent phenomenon?

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[65] Angel Rabasa and F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand National Defense Research Institute, 2008), 11.

[66] (The translation is mine.) "Türk laikliği dinin devletten ayrılmasına ve bağımsız olmasına sıcak bakmaz. Tersine, dinî söylemi ve eğitimi, modernist ve akılcı ideallerle aynı çizgiye çekmek için, kurumsal olarak dini devlet kontrolüne alır." Nilüfer Göle, *İslamın Yeni Kamusal Yüzleri* (İstanbul: Metis Yay, 2000), 22.

3.3. Art Censorship, the AKP and Recent Political Islam in Turkey

Islam has always been political by its very nature as evidenced by the statements in the *Qur'an* which can be potentially used for the basis of Islamic law and by the organizational structure of Islamic societies. Thus, as Ernest Gellner concludes, in Islam, "the points of doctrine and points of law are not separated."[67] In this sense, the use of the expression "political Islam" in this study refers to any kind of political action informed by the religious stimuli although the expression itself is accepted as an orientalist concept lacking empirical evidence in the Turkish case as Islam has never been a threat to the regime in Turkey.[68]

Islam's reconciliation with modernity has been largely debated in political contexts. Although the perspectives applied regarding the possibilities of modernization in Islamic countries tend to differ according to the secular or religious political stances that the discussions are grounded upon, the discursive assumptions may signal a falsehood in the straightforward conclusions. Chetan Bhatt argues that it is methodologically incorrect to compare the political discourses of fundamentalism with a modernist discourse without considering the economic, political, ideological and cultural aspects associated with Western modernity.

> It is relatively straightforward to read religious fundamentalist political language and compare it with discourses of nationalism, the nation-state, liberation and so forth and hence deduce that fundamentalism is both modern and modernist and derives its key concepts in large part from Western political discourse.[69]

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[67] Ernest Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 6.

[68] See: Ahmet Çiğdem, "İslâmcılık ve Türkiye Üzerine Bazı Notlar," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 6 / İslamcılık,* ed. Yasin Aktay (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), 26.

[69] Chetan Bhatt, *Liberation and Purity: Race, New Religious Movements, and the Ethics of Postmodernity* (London and Bristol, Pa. : UCL Press, 1997), 81-82.

Discourse may be one of the ways to analyze the development of the ideological tools within a political setting. However, it is not enough in and of itself to explain the deviations, oppositions and contextual dependencies which can be traced only from the historical route of the political turnarounds. As Islam is posed on the opposite pole of the Western modernity both by the Islamist fundamentalists and by the some advocates of Western modernization, "many pro-Islamic discussions present preceding or contemporary Islams as finished edifices, pure formations, hermetically sealed from any contamination by the West."[70] Bhatt goes on to argue that this statement is reconstructed within the Western Islamophobic discourse. To perceive Islam similarly from two opposing points of view lead to different conclusions on each side whereby the pride of purity is visible from the Islamists' side and the phobia of the unfamiliar is visible from the Western side.

This macro frame is useful in analyzing the instances within which Islam is described as potentially compatible with democratic norms associated with Western modernization with a considation of the political translations of Islamic traditions in particular settings. To give an example, Gareth Jenkins suggests that

> The *Qur'an* does not advocate a specific political system or form of government. Provided that it is not despotic, Muslim tradition has been less concerned with whether a regime is autocratic, oligarchic or democratic than whether it protects Islamic values and allows believers to fulfill their religious obligations.[71]

Jenkins emphasizes that Muslim tradition is applicable to any kind of non-despotic regimes. Evaluating the practical use of the *Qur'an* as a tool for governing the Islamic countries or with a population consisting of Muslim majority, it can be seen that Jenkin's argument is not indeed practically observed in various Muslim traditions as far as the despotic Islamic policies and practices observed througout the implementation of Islamic regimes are concerned. This does not, however, imply that modernization always parallels with secularization at every stage. Haldun Gülalp contests the idea by

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[70] Ibid., 78-79.

[71] Gareth Jenkins, *Political Islam in Turkey: Running West, Heading East?* (New York and Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 11-12.

emphasizing the fact that "it may be said modernization is culminated with a relative secularization at its early stages but it eventually leads to a revival of religious politics later on. To interpret this situation, I contend that Islamism is born as a result of the failure of Western modernization promises and it represents a critique of modernism."[72] This critical aspect of Islamism does not only attribute an oppositional stance to the Kemalist modernization project but also evidences an ephemerality of making static identifications between religion and modernity. However, as Menderes Çınar suggests, "to problematize Islamism only on the basis of 'incompatibility with modernity' (re)produces political aspects from an essentialist Islam portratit rather than focusing on these political aspects."[73] Thus, it is essential to evaluate Islam and modernization with their political characteristics, relations and outcomes.

With secularization, the process in which the modernization attempts were most profoundly felt in the establishment of the Republic,[74] the impact of Islam in the political and social life of the republic was lessened. The roots of the organization of the political Islam in Turkey goes back to the 1960s Islamist sphere against the communist movements which were regarded as the ultimate representator of the Western contamination. As the constitution of 1961 had more space for the freedom of expression and thus facilitated the leftist political maneuvers, the counter reaction to these leftist movements came with the rise of "National Outlook" (Millî Görüş) which was the manifestation of the shifts in the ideological conceptions of Islam. "The

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[72] (The translation is mine.) "Modernleşmenin ilk evrelerinin görece laikleşmeyle sonuçlandığı, ama sonraki evrelerinin dinsel siyasetin canlanmasına yol açtığı söylenebilir. Bu durumu yorumlamak için, İslamcılığın Batıcı modernleşme vaatlerinin boşa çıkmasıyla ortaya çıktığını ve modernizmin bir eleştirisini temsil ettiğini öne sürüyorum." Haldun Gülalp, "Türkiye'de Modernleşme Politikaları ve İslamcı Siyaset," in *Türkiye'de Modernleşme ve Ulusal Kimlik*, eds. Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998), 45.

[73] (The translation is mine.) "İslâmcılığın sadece 'moderniteye uyumsuzluk' temelinde sorunsallaştırılması, onun siyasal yönleri üzerine odaklanmaktan çok bu siyasal yönleri özcü (essentialist) bir İslâm portresinden (t)üretir." Menderes Çınar, *Siyasal Bir Sorun Olarak İslâmcılık* (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2005), 17.

[74] See: Murat Tazegül, *Modernleşme Sürecinde Türkiye* (İstanbul: Babil Yayınları, 2005), 179.

conservative sections of the right wing parties claimed Islam particularly because they saw it as a shield against the dissemination of communism. As they saw secularism an obstacle against the use of this shield, they were easily able to make a concession about this issue."[75] The national outlook was visible within the politics of MNP (Milli Nizam Partisi – National Order Party) between 1970-1971; MSP (Milli Selamet Partisi, The National Salvation Party) between 1972 - 1980 and RP (Refah Partisi, Welfare Party) between 1983-1997. With the MNP, the leader Necmettin Erbakan "projected an image of his party as a militant puritanical Islamic formation determined to bring an end the corruption of morals, which, he stated, was the distinguishing characteristic of modern Turkey."[76] This overt fundamental Islamist politics went on with the MSP and the RP. Ahmet Cigdem suggests, as the development of 1980s Islamism was completed in the authoritarian atmosphere of the 12th September coup,

> "the democracy perception of the movement solidified mainly around the participation into public utterance. The attempts to surpass the traditional tension with the Republic and Kemalism were made through a notion of democracy with an ambigious content and in response, the establisment of democratic values and principles was attempted neither by the political organization of the Islamist movement nor by its construction of congregation."[77]

After the overthrow of the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi, RP) by the military in 1997,

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[75] (The translation is mine.) "Sağ partilerin içinde yer alan, liberaller dışındaki muhafazakâr kesimler, İslâm'ı komünizmin yayılmasına karşı bir kalkan olarak gördükleri için dine özellikle sahip çıkmışlardır. Lâikliği de bu kalkanın kullanılmasının bir engeli olarak düşündükleri için, bu konuda kolayca ödün verebilmişlerdir." Üzeyir Tekin, *Ak Parti'nin Muhafazakâr Demokrat Kimliği* (Ankara: Orient Yayınları, 2004), 59.

[76] Şerif Mardin, *Religion, Society and Modernity in Turkey* (Syrcause: Syrcause University Press, 2006), 238.

[77] (The translation is mine.) "Hareketin demokrasi algısı, esas olarak kamusal söze dahil olabilmek etrafında pekişmiştir. Cumhuriyet ve Kemalizmle yaşanan geleneksel gerginlik, muhtevası genellikle belirsiz bir demokrasi nosyonu üzerinden yürütülen tartışmalarla aşılmaya çalışılmış, buna karşılık, İslâmcı hareketin ne siyasî örgütlenmesinde ne de cemaat kurgusunda demokratik değer ve ilkelerin yerleşmesi bir çaba konusu olabilmiştir." Ahmet Çiğdem, "İslamcılık ve Türkiye Üzerine Bazı Notlar," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 6 / İslamcılık*, ed. Yasin Aktay (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), 30.

there began a change in the direction of the practices of political Islam, particularly in relation to the European Union integration process. The core establishing body of the current AKP government had been operating within the RP group before they formed a new party by altering RP's discourses of democracy.[78] After the AKP came to power in 2002, the debates around the Westernization process in Turkey vis-a-vis the religious image of the party increased. The AKP has used this potential to define itself as a conservative party rather than a radical Islamist party. Although the AKP comes from the tradition of radical Islamist RP, it has discursively created a hybrid model of state politics whereby the image of Islam would be recuperated through the use of democratization as a tool. Exactly for this reason the radical secularist wing rejects the credibility of any step the AKP takes towards modernization and democratization.

> For secularist protesters in Turkey, however, moderate Islam seems to be more dangerous than radical Islam. The protesters include staunch secularists sceptical of religion altogether. But they also include Muslims, pious and non-pious, who are comfortable with the basic principles, if not all the practice of, Turkish secularism.[79]

Much as the danger of moderate Islam anticipated by the secular circles in Turkey can be paralleled with the AKP's discursive shifts, the extent of this moderation can be contested with the censorship instances under the rule of the recent government. With the four cases to be presented in the next chapter, the ideological tools adopted to regulate the art practices will be analyzed in order to be able to contextualise separate instances to discover the dynamics of censorship.

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[78] Recently, however, Turkey's Vice President Bülent Arınç said that he does not think it is a drawback to have been involved in the national outlook sphere before and that his political identity changed and he now became a conservative democrat. See: "Muhafazakar Demokratım Türkiye İçin Ben de Dönüştüm," *Vatan*, May 7, 2009, http://w9.gazetevatan.com/haberdetay.asp?detay=Muhafazakar_demokratim_Turkiye_ic in_ben_de_donustum&tarih=29.06.2009&Newsid=237243&Categoryid=9.

[79] Murat Somer, "Moderate Islam and Secularist Opposition in Turkey: Implications for the World, Muslims and Secular Democracy," *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 7 (2007), 1276.

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDIES

4.1. Case Study 1: Documentary Footage of the Sivas Massacre

4.1.1 Case Overview

As part of the 31st International İstanbul Music Festival, on the July 3rd 2003, the tenth anniversary of the Sivas Massacre, the pianist Fazıl Say performed an oratorio for Metin Altiok, a Turkish poet who was one of the 37 intellectuals in the Madımak Hotel set on fire by the religious fundementalists in Sivas. Metin Altıok Oratorio consisted of poems selected to represent the life story of Altıok. The last part of the music piece was about the death of the poet. Say got an edited short film, lasting for 3 minutes 20 seconds, from Can Dündar, the director of a documentary about Sivas Massacre in order to provide a short visual documentation of what had happened from the beginning of the day of the massacre till the end.

The festival organizers in the İKSV (İstanbul Kültür ve Sanat Vakfı – İstanbul Association of Culture and Arts) stated the reservations of the ministry about the projection of the film about ten days before the performance. On the day of the concert, the president of İKSV Şakir Eczacıbaşı warned the artist that they may not be able to project the visuals because of their violent content. When the artist objected to this decision, the ministry threatened to take away the orchestra, State Polyphonic Choir,

which was supposed to perform the music with the artist. As the choir was an essential part of the performance and the artist thought that it was the only orchestra that would be able to produce the work with the standards he wanted, he ultimately agreed to cancel the projection.

The ban was imposed upon the visuals of the Sivas Massacre during which the fundamentalists killed the intellectuals who went to Sivas to celebrate Pir Sultan[80] Festival, in which the symbols of the Alawite rituals were used. As the followers of orthodox religious practice in Turkey, Sunni Islam fundamentalists provoked a rebellion against the festival particularly through the assaults on the personality of one of the intellectuals in the hotel, the author Aziz Nesin as an atheist and communist. The printed material that the core organizing group of protesters prepared included references to Salman Rushdie's cases.

According to the artist, the interference into the event by the state was made possible through the financial support that the ministry of culture gave to the project. The Minister of Culture of the time Erkan Mumcu, stating that he supported the project even though he had been concerned about the reactions from his fellows in the AKP, said "I objected when a film that is not originally a part of the project was insisted to be brought to agenda at the last minute in such a way as to revive the agonies in the society. Those who do things with the opportunities of the state should be respectful to its law. Otherwise, it is cheap heroism."[81]

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[80] Pir Sultan is an Anatolian minstrel of the 16th century. He is known for his poems against the repressive measurements of the Ottoman Empire on the Alawite community, which is the Anatolian practice of the Shi'ite sect of Islam. As Turkish literary critic Asım Bezirci points, Pir Sultan was condemned to death penalty by Deli Hızır Paşa, the grand seignior of Sivas during the rule of Sultan Murad III (1574 – 1595) for writing poems in praise of the Shi'ite Iranian Shah İsmail at a period when mentioning his name was forbidden. Although "Shah" in Pir Sultan's poems mostly means Caliph Ali of the Shi'ite sect, he has been known to deliberately mean Iranian Shah in his latest poems both because his name was forbidden and because Pir Sultan saw him as a savior of the Alawite community. Pir Sultan has come to signify an anonymous persona of rebellion against opressive authority due to the fact that he ventured execution rather than giving in. See: Asım Bezirci, *Pir Sultan* (İstanbul: Evrensel Basım Yayın, 1995).

[81] (The translation is mine.) "Projede olmayan bir film son anda bir dayatmayla ve toplumda acıları yeniden canlandıracak şekilde gündeme getirilince itiraz ettim. Devletin imkânlarıyla bir şey yapanlar, onun hukukuna saygılı olmalı. Aksi, ucuz

Censorship is not a process whereby singular works get banned or somehow impeded. It is rather, an ideological tool that contributes to the discourses of various organs that are somehow involved in it. When asked about the justifications the censors provided, Say points to two points that demonstrate how censorship is formulated differently by different bodies that it operates through.

> Their justification actually is not to commemorate Sivas events, the justification of the AKP. They are against its permenance in the form of an artwork. İKSV preferred to provide artistic justifications in order not to fight with it [the AKP]. For example, they said the video was harsh but it was not. I mean we got them from the television; actually they are the visuals everyone knows.[82]

As can be seen from the artist's own experience and perception, the ministry displayed a more open form of government power whereas the festival organizers put forward justifications related to the aesthetics and the content of the work. Censorship, as a result is used as a tool by the government to demonstrate the amount of power and the sorts of impediment that it can exercise upon the artists but the festival organizers drew attention to the work itself, thus avoiding to harm its image as an organization. As a practice that shows the irresistable nature of the state hegemony, censorship may be used to strengthen the limits of sovereignity on each party's side; as a practice that is "backward" and against freedom of expression in theory, however, it can be exercised covertly, by being presented as a test for the work itself.

The organization of the bourgeois state as an operational tool for the flow of capital is, in itself, an indicator of the analogies between the workings of market censorship and state censorship. As can be observed, Sue Curry-Jansen's conclusion about a shift from state censorship to market censorship proves to be mistaken. Market

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kahramanlıktır." Can Dündar, "Sansür..!", *Milliyet*, 5 July 2003, http://www.candundar.com.tr/index.php?Did=1778; Also see: Fazıl Say, *Metin Altıok Ağıtı* (İstanbul: Evrensel Basım Yayın, 2008), 16.

[82] (The translation is mine.) "Gerekçeleri aslında Sivas olaylarını anmamak, AKP'nin gerekçesi. Herhangi bir sanat eserine yansıyıp kalıcı kalmasına karşı durmak. İKSV de onla kavga etmemek uğruna sanatsal gerekçeler göstermeyi tercih etti. Mesela işte görüntüler fazla sert dedi, halbuki değil. Yani bizim televizyondan aldığımız şeyler, herkesin bildiği aslında görüntüler."

domination does not have the role of being an alternative to state authority.[83] Through the state colloborations with the prominent agents in the market, the mutual relationship has become even more complicated than before where the social state had its own role for nourishing artistic practices through state funding. With the relationships developed between the state and the market however, the fact that the capitalist state is the facilitator of the free market regulations manifests itself in the form of a censorship whereby both the operation of state censorship is similar to the market censorship and the state censorship is made with market institutions as intermediaries. These networks of relations show that it is not possible to fully isolate state censorship and market censorship from each other in a case whereby the state has its say within the market through funding and logistic support are provided by the state.

The artist states that neither the ministry nor the festival organisers mentioned a possibility of legal action against the artist because of the work or because of the opposition to censorship. On the contrary the artist felt entitled to sue the censors in order to have the victory of a legal battle on art's side.

> I called Erkan Mumcu 'the man after little gains' because of what he had done. He told me that he would sue me but he did not. He did not have a chance to win. On the contrary, I could have sued the ministry and the İKSV for what they had done and I could have got my legal rights back, I could have won the trial.[84]

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[83] For example, according to Legislation Regarding the Support of Cinema Films, which was published on the Official Gazzette no. 25642 on 13 November 2004, the directors who get financial support from The Ministry of Culture and Tourism should pay back the loans according to the Law on the Procedure for the Collection of the Public Receivables (Law No: 6183). This credit system, it is argued, impeded many film projects from being realized. The state censorship also contains the ban on the distribution of films which are not able to be provided with banderoles by the state. According to the Article 9 of Legislation of Method and Bases for the Evaluation and Classification Cinema Films, the films which are found inappropriate cannot circulate commercially. The criteria of evaluation and classification is defined in Article 11 as complying with "public order, general morality, protection of mental and physical health of the children and youngsters, human honour and the other principles foreseen in the Constitution." See: "Sinema Filmlerinin Değerlendirilmesi Ve Sınıflandırılmasına İlişkin Usul Ve Esaslar Hakkında Yönetmelik," http://www.mevzuat.adalet.gov.tr/html/23104.html.

[84] (The translation is mine.) "Ben Erkan Mumcu için küçük hesapların adamı demiştim bu yaptığı dolayısıyla. O da beni mahkemeye vereceğini söylemişti ama vermedi, veremedi daha sonra. Hiçbir kazanma şansı yoktu. Tam tersi, ben sansür yapıldığı için

When asked about the reasons why he did not take a legal step towards suing the minister or the İKSV, the artist stated that the hardships regarding the slowness of the progress of the legal cases had been a factor which discouraged him from going through a time consuming formal process. Another concern of the artist was that, winning a case against a government had its "future implications."

This point that the artist makes raises the question of self-censorship. Should self-censorship be rejected totally for pure freedom in arts, if there exists such a freedom? The artist's ideas are grounded upon a conception of society in which certain things cannot be said publicly. According to Say, self-censorship may be applied whenever necessary if the current historical conditions do not allow the freedom to express certain ideas.

> Stones and sticks may be thrown to you when you give a concert, you see? It may be necessary to step back in order for them not to be thrown…. This is mathematical calculations, like maybe supressing some things a bit and then taking them out fifteen years later. Temporary self – censorships… I don't know, this may not be possible in 2010 but may be commonly possible in 2110, etc.[85]

The essential point is the formation of what is deemed dangerous within the society at a given period. The artists' statements about the risk of suing the government representatives are combined with a conception of society within which the ideas that cannot be openly expressed are determined by the members of that society. It is visible that what is dangerous is usually publicly detected by commonsense. However, the essence of censorship is the justifications provided by any kind of authority that has been accepted as eligible to make remarks about the nature of controversies, such as the ruling bodies of the state. The formation of the dynamics within the society parallel the

İKSV'yi ve bakanlığı mahkemeye verebilirdim ve yasal haklarımı geri alabilirdim, kazanabilirdim davayı."

[85] (The translation is mine.) "Konser verirken kafana taş sopa fırlatılır yani, anlatabiliyor muyum? Onun fırlatılmaması için belki bir adım daha geri gitmek gerekir…. Belki bazı şeyleri birazcık bastırarak belki on beş yıl sonra onu tekrar çıkarmak, gibi matematiksel hesaplardan geçiyor. Zamansal otosansürler… Bilmiyorum, 2010'da henüz olmayabilir, 2110'da fevkalade olabilir gibi şeyler."

manifestations of the acceptance of these justifications within different segments of the community.

Annette Kuhn's statements that censorship is produced within an array of constantly shifting discourses, practices or apparatuses are very relevant to the discussions around the memorialization of the Sivas Massacre. Kuhn points out censorship as an ongoing process embodies complex and often contradictory relations of power.

> When [journalist] Melih Aşık asks why the attempts of right wing and left wing to make a collective memorialization ceremony, he gets this answer from the Republican People's Party Sivas provincial chairman Adnan Çelik:
> - "In the final analysis we saw that the main aim of the right wing is to be forgiven through an alliance with us. Otherwise, they do not really bother to protest. Their main problem is to eliminate their commercial losses caused by this event." [86]

Although the memorialization of the massacre is not confined to censorship on Say's performance, this explanation demonstrates the elusiveness of positionality for or against censorship – if we are to assume a freedom that Michael Holquist states no one has. Censorship is a product of discourses and, as did the debates on memorialization, it can create discourses around it as well.

To turn back to the reactions against the explicit censorship, the fact that Say published a book with Altıok's poems used in the oratorio and the articles written on the process of censorship should be considered as an attempt to secure the rememberance of the unpleasant experience of the artist through the printed documentation. This process could be seen as being very much similar to the artist's emphasis on the documentation of the experience of the Massacre. [87]

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[86] (The translation is mine.) "M. Aşık sağ sol bütün kuruluşların ortak bir anma yapma girişimlerinin neden başarısızlıkla sonuçlandığı sorusunu sorduğu o günün CHP Sivas İl Başkanı Adnan Çelik 'ten bakın ne yanıt alıyor:
'- Son tahlilde gördük ki, sağın asıl amacı bizi kullanarak bizim üzerimizden kendilerini affettirmek. Yoksa olayı gerçekten protesto etmek gibi bir dertleri yok. Asıl dertleri, bu olay nedeniyle uğradıkları ticari kayıpları ortadan kaldırmak.'" Ali Sirmen, "Sivas'ı Unutma!" in Fazıl Say, *Metin Altıok Ağıtı* (İstanbul: Evrensel Basım Yayın, 2008), 26.

[87] Although newspaper columnists Doğan Hızlan argues that the censorship issue is overrated and that Altıok's poems and Say's music are more important than censorship

The justifications by the censors about the prevention of the display of a moment of atrocity in the past does not only evidence the manipulations of presentations of protective measurements but also attempt to prevent remembering the past through artistic media, which is one of the strongest tools that could potentially create opposition. The fact that the documentary visuals are embedded within musical expressiveness would not only heighten the dramatic aspects of the footage but also make a statement about the necessity to remember the moments of agony as visual is regarded as the most connected medium to rememberance.

4.1.2. On Memory and Visual Documentation

The last part of the concert, which was about the death of the poet, ended with 37 metronomes that symbolized the 37 people who had been killed during the massacre. In this sense, the memory of a past event was documented through a visual demonstration as well as a musical symbolization. The aesthetics of the visuals are determined by their documentary attributes and as their sounds are not used in the performance, the sound and the image are separated from each other and the presence of the music piece provides a different context to the perception of the visuals.

Say's music has turned into a symbolic documentation which was going to be juxtaposed with the news footage from the massacre. This opened the way to a new aesthetics that has been created by the use of different media at their different levels of narration, which would possibly evoke unpleasant memories on the audience's part, thus giving the music piece a stronger attribute. It might have been this double effect of narration that was thwarted.

"because they, rather than the censorship case, will be remembered tomorrow." Hızlan also tends to obfuscate the fact of implementation censorship by proposing that projection of visuals that accompany the musical piece restricts the audience's imagination. See: Doğan Hızlan, "Nerede Metin Altıok nerede Fazıl Say," *Hürriyet*, July 9, 2003, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?viewid=288636.

Another aesthetic attribute regarding the usages of sounds and the visuals that makes the work vulnerable to being foreseen as dangerous by the censors may be regarding the sense of control on the censors' side. As Michel Chion observed, "it can be said that *there is no sound frame for the sounds*. Possibly, sounds are only framed by the image which grounds them."[88] Visual demonstration as a way to frame, display, or possibly even to concretize the stories narrated through the music may have been averted because the space that needs the control is better defined in the case of display of the filmic medium.

One of the reasons for sensitivities over visual material is the association of the visual material with memory. The past is usually remembered through a distorted vision in which the fictionality is reconstructed via imagery. The connections of a past moment with visual material prove to be stronger than with any other medium. Like in individual memory, "public memory is always contingent and always contested, so that ultimately neither permanent nor stable collective identities exist. Especially through the collective rememberings shown in mass media, public memory can be contested and undermined with countermemories."[89] The control and the manipulation over the framed visual image becomes a direct sign to acclaim the authoritarian rule over the artistic production.

It can be said that the practices of censorship have been adapted to the changes within the demonstration of the visual material. To propose an example, old forms of destroying the film strips has become virtually impossible with the advent of the digital which enables easy reproduction of any visual imagery. The materiality of the visual coincides with the materiality of forgetting.

> Remembering is therefore a form of work and is inseparable from the motive to memorialize. To the same degree that building memorials and monuments are part of the material culture of remembering, drying, chopping,

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[88] Patricia Kruth and Henry Stobart, eds., *Sound* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 204.

[89] Olaf Hoerschelmann, "'Memoria Dextera Est': Film and Public Memory in Postwar Germany," *Cinema Journal* 40, no. 2 (Winter, 2001), 78.

cutting and burning are all acts of forgetting.[90]

The protesters' attempt to bring down the monument[91] of Pir Sultan during the massacre is a translation of the acts of forgetting from the abstract to the concrete, symbolic form of destruction.[92] As the filming media are not confined to the film strips any more, censorship over the visual imagery in Say's case has turned out to be a temporary impediment of the demonstration of visuals which can be easliy be found on other digital platforms.

The justifications upon the ban on the particular visuals in question partly derived from the assumed violent content and from the rememberance of the unpleasant events through documentary demonstration. "Documentary cinema, whose reality is necessarily from a past, may embody different, more "historical" expectations than those possible in a newcast."[93] This general conception may have been an outcome of

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[90] Michael Rowlands, "The Role of Memory in the Transmission of Culture," *World Archaeology* 25, no. 2 (October 1993), 144.

[91] The protesters' instantaneous attacks on sculptures proved to be similar to a common official practice for municipalities in Turkey. Two of the most recent examples of removal of sculptures are those in Kars and in Antalya. On April 2, 2009 the mayor Mustafa Gül from the MHP (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, Nationalist Movement Party) moved the sculpture *Aşk Yağmuru* (*The Rain of Love*) by sculptor Zafer Sarı, from Çınarlı Kavşağı in Kemer, Antalya because the work did not "comply with our national culture," and was "improper and obscene." See: "MHP'li Başkan 'Aşk Yağmuru'na Dayanamadı," *CNN Türk*, April 3, 2009, http://www.cnnturk.com/2009/turkiye/04/03/mhpli.baskan.ask.yagmuruna.dayanamadi/520757.0/. On June 18, 2009, Nevzat Bozkuş, the mayor of Kars moved two sculptures of female figures in the entrance of the municipality and three female nude sculptures from Şehit Hulusi Aytekin Caddesi before the AKP Kars City Congress which Prime Minister Erdoğan participated. See: Deniz Eren, "Sanat ve Heykel Düşmanı Bir Başkan Daha," *Evrensel*, 18.06.2009, http://www.evrensel.net/haber.php?haber_id=52810.

[92] The destruction of the material visual symbols has been a common imagery on the news footages of any victory over the political acts of a figure accepted as the representative of those acts. The change of the context of how destruction is represented, however, provides a different kind of visual experience. For example, in Fernando Solanas' fiction film *El Viaje* (1992), the collapse of the giant portraits of the Latin American dictators has become an aestheticized form of a familiar visual imagery that is usually identified with violence.

[93] Philip Rosen, "Document and Documentary: On the Persistence of Historical

the potential characteristics of cinematographic documentary work as a visual tool that differs from the daily news coverage which is by its very own nature more consumable. The close connection attributed to objective reality and documentary film turns out to cause a perception of documentary film as a permanent documentation of the objective truth. However, "like the constructed realities of fiction, this [documentary] reality, too, must be scrutinized and debated as part of the domain of signification and ideology. The notion of any privileged access to a reality that exists "out there," beyond us, is an ideological effect."[94]

4.1.3. On Agony and Visual Demonstration

As the censored visuals were archival footages and they had a documentary aspect, their censorsing opens up new discussions regarding the politics of visuality. "The historical documentary not only tells us about the past, but asks us to do something about it as well."[95] Is the elimination of the visual representation of the massacre an attempt to erase the memories of atrocity that has an historical significance because of their potential for being a source of political opposition? Through the photographic media and documentary footage, which have conventionally been attributed the inclusiveness of direct representation of reality through undisturbed immediacy, the censors argued that the memories of a past event would cause disturbances within the public.[96]

Concepts," in *Theorizing Documentary*, ed. Michael Renov (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), 60.

[94] Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 107.

[95] Paula Rabinowitz, *They Must Be Represented: The Politics of Documentary* (London and New York: Verso, 1994), 26.

[96] Although this perception was challenged with the modernist avant-garde documentary filmmakers. As Bill Nichols argues "modernist techniques of fragmentation and juxtaposition lent an artistic aura to documentary that helped distinguish it from the cruder form of early *actualités* or newsreels." See: Bill Nichols, "Documentary Film and the Modernist Avant-Garde," *Critical Inquiry* 27, no. 4 (Summer, 2001), 582.

The question then becomes the neutralization of the images that supposedly represent what occurs in violent settings in an age when digital technologies have facilitated access to such images. According to John Berger, an exposure to a moment of agony has many different dimensions to it regarding the fact that the hostilities towards other people may be very well displayed by the oppressors publicly.

> Confrontation with a photographed moment of agony can mask a far more extensive and urgent confrontation. Usually the wars which we are shown are being fought directly or indirectly in "our" name. What we are shown horrifies us. The next step should be for us to confront our own lack of political freedom. In the political systems as they exist, we have no legal opportunity of effectively influencing the conduct of wars waged in our name. To realise this and to act accordingly is the only effective way of responding to what the photograph shows. Yet the double violence of the photographed moment actually works against this realization. This is why they can be published with impunity. [97]

The confrontation Berger mentions is an essential point in the exploration of the politics of visual perception. By interpreting the display of a moment of agony in a way that alters the presumed direct conclusions, Berger shows how complicated it is to determine the reasons why certain images are censored while others are not although they may all seem to serve the same purpose of manipulating the discourse. To decide at which point censorship works, then, depends on the contextual background of the display of images.

Adopting Berger's approach may possibly point to a conclusion that in Say's case, it is not the visual representation of a moment of atrocity or agony *per se* that is being censored; it is the display of a footage that is expected to be put in a predetermined context of memorializing an event in the recent history. The attempt to recontextualize the visuals within a music concert and thus, to enable the spectators to have a different experience of the visuals in a different setting have been prevented because they both contributed to a combination of the poetic, sonic, and visual for an artistic, but not sentimental[98], narration and to the politicization of the life story of the poet.

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[97] John Berger, *About Looking* (New York: Vintage International, 1991), 44.

[98] The proliferation and dissemination of visual representations are at times problematized by cultural critics for a variety of reasons, among which is the abuse of

In Say's case, the fact that use of images were not aimed to create a sentimentality that would result in a passive positioning, an emotional aporia, or even a certain extent of habituation to the image may also have been the reason why they had been thought of as effectual on creating a political statement as the artist certainly claimed a political statement that such incidents should not happen again. The images simply signified an end – an end to a poetic creation process. As the content of the poems were not utilized to combine the images, the visuals may have happened to be more salient.

4.1.4. Conclusions

Labeling an artwork as disruptive of morals does not necessarily constitute a process of evaluating the conceptual background and narrative and narrational characteristics that the artworks bear. An artwork can be censored simply because it touches upon belief, ideology or a real political practice.

> Italian director Pier Paolo Pasolini's film *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* was banned because the vice principal of a censorship commission insisted that it was "making Christian propaganda." The artist, who was facing an unbelievable contradiction complained that "The church banned the film in Italy because it was "against Christianity". Here, it is banned because it is making Christian propaganda. This is unbelievable." [99]

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the visual in order to create a consumable sentimentality. For example see: Lauren Berlant, "The Subject of True Feeling: Pain, Privacy, and Politics," in *Transformations: Thinking Through Feminism*, eds. Sara Ahmed, Jane Kilby, Celia Lury, Maureen McNeil, and Beverly Skeggs (London: Routledge, 2000); Michalinos Zembylas, "Making Sense of Traumatic Events: toward a Politics of Aporetic Mourning in Educational Theory and Pedagogy," *Educational Theory* 59, no. 1, (2009): 85 – 104.

[99] (The translation is mine.) "İtalyan yönetmen Pier Paolo Pasolini'nin "Matta'ya Göre İncil" filmi bir sansür komisyonu başkan yardımcısının ısrarıyla "hıristiyanlık propagandası yapıyor" gerekçesiyle yasaklanmıştı. İnanılmaz bir çelişki ile karşı karşıya kalan sanatçı, 'Filmimi İtalya'da kilise, "hıristiyanlığa aykırıdır" diye yasakladı. Burada ise hıristiyanlık propagandası yaptığı için yasaklanıyor. Olacak iş değil' diye yakınıyordu." Agâh Özgüç, *Türk Sinemasında Sansür* (Ankara: Kitle Yayıncılık, 2000), 64-65.

In the Turkish case, the film is banned because it was considered as posing a threat to the dominant religious belief system in the country by disseminating the values of another religion whereas in the original context the work was labeled as shattering the established religious belief system. The aims of the censors in both instances in carrying out the act of censoring, whether it be the preservation or the defense against the corruption of belief, clearly demonstrate that the conclusions reached by the censors generally serve the aim of establishing dominant discourses.

The lack of objective measurements in the implementation of censorship leads to a selective, but also arbitrary choice of what is going to be banned. "If the censorship is *honest* in its intention, it would like to prevent arbitrariness, but it makes arbitrariness into a law."[100] A short video consisting of original footage of Sivas Massacre was not shown during Say's musical performance. However, the original footage of the Massacre is shown in various other settings, including the Internet, national television channels and documentary theatre plays.

To give a recent example, the documentary by Nurdan Arca used in the documentary play *Sivas 93* (Dir. Genco Erkal) of Dostlar Tiyatrosu (Theatre of Companions) are not censored. *Sivas 93* narrates the stories of the people who were burnt alive by the religious fundamentalists during the Pir Sultan Festival in 1993. Constituting a significant part of the performance, these visuals are central to the script of the play. Although the premier of the play was done with police escort because of a fake bomb alert,[101] no attempt towards any legislative regulations has been made in order to prevent the use of documentary footages. However, as Selim Esen narrates, "After 12th March 1971 [coup] Dostlar Tiyatrosu in İstanbul and Ankara Sanat Tiyatrosu (Ankara Art Theatre) in Ankara were two collectives that were constantly banned from television. It was forbidden even to announce the names of the plays that

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[100] Karl Marx, "Censorship," *On Freedom of the Press and Censorship* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1842/free-press/ch05.htm.

[101] See: Abdullah Malkoç, "Sivas '93'e Polis Korumalı Gala," *Milliyet*, January 13, 2008, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2008/01/13/magazin/axmag01.html.

these theatre collectives performed." [102] The point by Richard Shusterman about the status of art as a factor affecting censorship may be applied to this instance as particular changes that took place both within the historical dynamics of the post-coup era became influential in the judgement of what should be censored. Another factor in the change of the statu of the theatre could be the domination of the market dynamics within the art world. According to Say, the footage in the play is not censored because,

> Genco Erkal has got a private theatre. That means he does not have to do anything with the state. … We had to work with the institutions of the state because of the issue of the choir."[103]

This conclusion derived by the artist demonstrates how the display of a visual art product depends upon the status of various factors such as art and artwork itself, state organs, military and art market. In 1970s, when the effect of the military coup was poignant especially after the increasing politicization of the student and workers' movements, a theatre collective oppositional to the conservative politics was not broadcast from the state television channel.

The fact that similar artistic materials may be treated differently in terms of censorship leads to two separate but interconnected conclusions: (a) the lack of objective norms in the enforcement of censorship opens space for arbitrariness and (b) the execution of censorship is not only about the visual representations themselves but also about the context within which these artworks are placed as "censorship, in other words, is a particular kind of context, and it foregrounds the always present tension between text and context."[104] These two points about the arbitrariness and the context

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[102] (The translation is mine.) "12 Mart 1971'den sonra İstanbul'daki Dostlar Tiyatrosu ve Ankara'daki Ankara Sanat Tiyatrosu (AST), televizyonda sürekli yasaklanan iki topluluktu. Bu tiyatro topluluklarının sahnelediği oyunların adlarının duyurulması bile yasaktı." Selim Esen, "TRT Televizyonunda İlk Yasaklamalar," *Evrensel Kültür* 207 (Mart 2009), 61.

[103] (The translation is mine.) "Genco Erkal'ın özel tiyatrosu var. Yani devletle hiçbir şey yapmak zorunda değil. …Bizim koro durumu dolayısıyla devletin kurumlarıyla çalışma durumumuz vardı."

[104] Michael Holquist, "Corrupt Originals: The Paradox of Censorship," *PMLA* 109, no. 1 (1994), 14.

may be said to preclude each other. However, the arbitrariness implied here does not come to mean a total arbitrariness of what is censored. It is, rather, the differences in the way that one work is treated by the ruling bodies according to the context that the work is placed in as well as the institutions that are responsible for the display of the work.

The roles of the institutions that are involved within the process of censorship is also changeable in that their expressed intention may be belligerent, neutralizing and protective in terms of the role they assume for the display of the work. Censorship in Say's case operated through an overt protest by the ministry which could be described as more aggressive whereas the İKSV adopted a more protective approach in the sense that as a market intermediary, its position is conditioned by the potential reactions of the target audience as well as the concerns about future relations with the ministry.

4.2. Case Study 2: *Liberty Leading the People*

4.2.1. Case Overview

In 2005, Eugène Delacroix's painting *Liberty Leading the People* was moved out of middle school 7th grade Citizenship and Human Rights Education textbooks by the Head Council of Education and Morality, a branch of the Ministry of Education. The painting had been present in the books since until the publishing house, İnkılap Kitabevi applied to council for approval of the textbook written by Oktay Uygun because the 5 years of permission period for the book was due. The painting, which had been on page 65 of the textbook was removed in order to get the permission of publishing.

The textbook case is different from the other cases discussed in this study in that there is not a direct intervention of an artist who intends to exhibit a work; it is, instead, an attempt to prevent students from being exposed to an artwork which already has its place in the art history. The grounds for moving the painting from the books because of the partial nudity of the breasts of the lady figure implies the conception of an ideology

of education, which has strong connections with socialization.

The very fundamental question for all the debates on education and censorship is: "Who determines what is to be taught in the public schools and how? Who takes charge of necessary balancing between education and socialization, between the communication of diverse ideas and the inculcation of common values?"[105] Thus, the case will be discussed through the debates on the role of Turkish national education on the formation of citizens. The case will be discussed within a contemporary framework through the artist Bedri Baykam's artwork as protest, which has created a form of resistance within which an older artwork is cited with a new interpretation.

4.2.2. Citizenship and Human Rights Education within Turkish National Education System

The nationalist characteristics of the Turkish national education is presented as one of the most important aspect of education in the Main Law of National Education (Milli Eğitim Temel Kanunu), according to which the main aim of the Turkish education system is:

> To educate citizens being loyal to the Atatürk reforms and the Turkish nationalism that is expressed in the general principles of the Constitution; embracing, protecting and developing the national, moral, humane, inner and cultural values of the Turkish nation; loving, and always trying to glorify their family, country, and nation; knowing the duties and responsibilities for Turkish Republic which is a national, democratic, secular and social state of law based on the main principles of the Constitution, and turning these duties and responsibilities into actions.[106]

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[105] Henry Reichman, *Censorship and Selection: Issues and Answers for Schools* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1988), 5.

[106] (The translation is mine.) "Atatürk inkılaplarına ve Anayasanın başlangıcında ifadesini bulan Türk milliyetçiliğine bağlı; Türk Milletinin milli, ahlaki, insani, manevi ve kültürel değerlerini benimseyen, koruyan ve geliştiren; ailesini, vatanını, milletini seven ve daima yüceltmeye çalışan; insan haklarına ve Anayasanın başlangıcındaki temel ilkelere dayanan milli, demokratik, laik ve sosyal bir hukuk Devleti olan Türkiye Cumhuriyetine karşı görev ve sorumluluklarını bilen ve bunları davranış haline getirmiş yurttaşlar olarak yetiştirmek." See: "Türk Milli Eğitim Sistemini Düzenleyen Genel Esaslar, Birinci Bölüm, Türk Milli Eğitiminin Amaçları, Genel Amaçlar," Article 2,

The emphasis on the compliance with Turkish nationalism along with the ambiguous standards of morality and cultural values create a possibility for the institutional bodies to impose non-standardized power on the oppositional expressions raised against the values of the Turkish national education. Atatürk as a concrete iconic figure and the morality and the traditions as abstract values molds the motives of the Turkish educational system. "Importance is given on protection, development and teaching of national morality and national culture of our own form in the universal culture, without being destroyed and deteriorated."[107]

This nationalistic characteristic of the Turkish national education system becomes even more apparent and militaristic as far as the organization of the National Security Education course, which is the secondary school equivalent of Citizenship and Human Rights Education course, is concerned. "National Security Education classes differ from the other classes in many aspects. First of all, it is not offered by teachers appointed by the Ministry of National Education; it is offered by regular or retired/resigned officer appointed by the closest garrison commander."[108] The textbooks are written by a council not within the Ministry of National Education but within the General Staff.[109] "After

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http://www.basarmevzuat.com/dustur/kanun/5/1739/a/1739sk.htm#23.

[107] (The translation is mine.) "Milli ahlak ve milli kültürün bozulup yozlaşmadan kendimize has şekli ile evrensel kültür içinde korunup geliştirilmesine ve öğretilmesine önem verilir." See: "Milli Eğitim Temel Kanunu," Article 10, http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/88.html.

[108] (The translation is mine.) "Milli Güvenlik Bilgisi dersi pek çok açıdan diğer derslerden farklıdır. Birincisi, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'nın görevlendirdiği öğretmenler tarafından değil, en yakın garnizonun komutanı tarafından atanan bir muvazzaf veya emekli/müstafi subay tarafından verilir." Ayşe Gül Altınay, "Militarizm, İnsan Hakları ve M. Güvenlik Dersi," *Bianet*, December 27, 2003, http://bianet.org/bianet/egitim/28006-militarizm-insan-haklari-ve-m-guvenlik-dersi.

[109] The Legislation of National Security Education (Milli Güvenlik Bilgisi Öğretimi Yönetmeliği) states that according to the programs published by the Head of National Security after being prepared through the suggestions and views of Ministry of National Defense and Ministry of National Education, the course books are written by a special commitee at the General Staff and are approved by the Ministry of National Education. See: "Milli Güvenlik Bilgisi Öğretimi Yönetmeliği," Article 4, http://www.mevzuat.adalet.gov.tr/html/20360.html.

examining and coordinating the National Security lesson plans in the district, command headquarters and chief administratorships provide the supporting course material (explanatory schemes, portable armament and equipment, military education films, etc.) and enable their subordination to the course teacher at the intended place and time."[110] The supplementary educational material including the propaganda films and the actual weapons are provided by the army officials to familiarize the students with the uses of military material. Moreover, the militarist nationalist motivation is not only provided inside the national security education classes but also during other classes and social activities.

> In middle schools: In official and private middle schools and corresponding schools and classes, the students are given information that develops National Security consciousness during physical education, music classes and scouting exercises by their own teachers. The students, in accordance with the facilities of the district, participate as audiences in military ceremonies (regimental days, oath-taking ceremonies, etc.) and maneuvers; their interest in military is improved with visits to barracks, military airports and war ships. The necessary means for this goal is made by garrison headquarters when possible.[111]

As the class environment is already endowed with nationalistic impulses overtly exercised through the regulations of the ministry of the national education and the national security presidency, the fact that obscenity has become a factor for censorship opens the debates as to whether nationalist and Islamist ideologies of national education in Turkey clash in order to create the ideal citizen.

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[110] (The translation is mine.) "Komutanlık ve kurum amirlikleri, bölgede bulunan okulların Milli Güvenlik Dersi planlarını inceleyip koordine ettikten sonra yardımcı ders araçlarını (açıklayıcı şemalar, taşınabilir silah, araç ve gereçler, askeri eğitim filmleri v.b. gibi) tedarik ederek program gereğince istenilen yer ve zamanda öğretmenlerin emrine verilmesini sağlarlar." Ibid., Article 6, http://www.mevzuat.adalet.gov.tr/html/20360.html.

[111] (The translation is mine.) "Ortaokullarda: Resmi ve özel ortaokullarla bunlara denk okul ve sınıflarda öğrencilere kendi öğretmenlerince beden eğitimi, müzik dersleri ile izcilik çalışmalarında ve diğer ilgili derslerde, Milli Güvenlik bilincini geliştirici bilgiler verilir. Öğrenciler, bulunulan bölgenin olanakları oranında askeri törenlere (Alay günleri, yemin törenleri vb.) tatbikatlara seyirci olarak katılırlar; kışlalara, askeri havaalanlarına harp gemilerine ziyaretler yapılarak askerlikle ilgileri geliştirilir. Bu amaç için gerekli araç tahsisi, mümkün olan hallerde garnizon komutanlığı tarafından yapılır." Ibid., Article 5, http://www.mevzuat.adalet.gov.tr/html/20360.html.

4.2.3. Turkish National Education and Obscenity

Visuality has been one of the fields of study in which the issue of obscenity as manifested in various forms of artistic production has been debated and has gained particular importance especially as far as the new social changes brought about by the development of new visual technologies emerge are taken into consideration. Not only obscenity in visual arts but also obscenity in everyday visual manifestations has been evaluated and criticized especially with an attempt to specify its boundaries.

> The obscene has often been used synonymously with the pornographic and in close alignment with indecency. Yet, crucially, there are significant differences between obscenity and pornography. 'Obscenity' covers a far broader area than sexually explicit and alluring representations seeking to gratify the desires of the flesh that come under the term of pornography.[112]

The broader meaning of obscenity is informed by its connotations of violence. Richard Serra raises a relevant, but misconceived question about the standards of obscenity. "The decision about whether something is obscene is to be made by a local jury, applying community standards. Does this mean that the material in question can be tolerated by one community and another community will criminalize its author?"[113] Censorship is not only a state practice; it is embedded into everyday interactions and is immanent in the societal life through numerous silencing practices. However, the conceptions of a community upon the obscenity of a material are stimulated by the political dynamics that the community is engaged with. Censorship may manifest itself in different forms at different historical periods. The form of these manifestations, however, is determined by the preconceived roles that the parties have. That is why there is no land free of censorship that all those in favor of freedom of expression may migrate to. Another point relevant to the questions Serra poses is that, the fact that the painting is banned from the textbooks does not mean, by any means, that the

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[112] Kerstin Mey, *Art and Obscenity* (London: I. B. Tauris & Company, Limited, 2006), 5, http://site.ebrary.com/lib/sabanunivic/Doc?id=10178014&ppg=15.

[113] Richard Serra, "Art and Censorship," *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 3 (1991), 579.

community does not tolerate it. It, rather, is an indicator of the current educational practices that are inherited from particular socio-political traditions.

Obscenity is one of the most justified reasons for executing censorship as it is perceived as something to be eliminated due to the protective measurements. The point that should be problematized is the translation of this broad conception into the practices of different censorships. What are the discourses behind the censoring of what is deemed obscene by the authorities? What are its socio-cultural implications? What are the possible ways in which political authorities frame their own views of obscene? How is the consent within the communities are provided as far as the conceptualization of morality is concerned?

The definitions of the moral in the Ottoman Empire have been altered with the establishment of the Turkish republic. As with most of the changes, this process was neither smooth nor abrupt. With the Kemalist modernization project, the emphasis was placed on Turkish nationalism rather than the Muslim identity of the citizens. To give an example of this change as presented in a visual product, the artist Zeki Faik İzer's adaptation of the painting *Liberty Leading the People* to a Turkish context may be given. Using the compositional scheme of Delacroix's work, İzer's painting *İnkılap Yolunda* (*On the Path to Revolution, 1933*) depicted a lady carrying the Turkish flag and Atatürk pointing the direction that she leans towards. Displaying the modern Western outfit revolutionized with the republic, Liberty is symbolized in İzler's painting by a female figure with covered breasts.

An aspect of the content that differs from Delacroix's work is the image of Atatürk inserted into the picture as a guide and the leader of the national struggle. This attaches a different dimension to the perception of the personification of liberty. The abstract meaning of the ideals of liberty is transformed into a concrete depiction of a particular national struggle through the female figure that is juxtaposed with a real historical figure. The display of personification and the real person invests the painting with a meaning beyond a symbol of any national struggle. With the depiction of heroes of the national struggle, the painting subsumes a Kemalist nationalism both establishing and moving beyond of the morality defined in the process of nation building. The painting was received by the moderate Islamist side as a copy of Delacroix's work in the

sense that it falls into the trap of evaluating the French Revolution and the Turkish national struggle as the same.[114] For some others, the painting is merely "an internalized expression of a controlled modernization adventure."[115]

Obscenity is also legally prohibited by the national education legislations. In primary and secondary schools campus journals, among the prohibited textual and visual material are writings which will harm the national goals, traditions, family bonds, moralities and holy conceptions; the writings which will create harmful and negative effects; writings that may arouse sympathy for other regimes; political writings; the products of a backward mentality or superstitions; scientifically wrong writings; writings that will affect the mental health negatively; obscene writings, etc.[116] The ambiguity arising because of a lack of standards in the definitions of, for example, "the writings which will create harmful and negative effects" is the main source of the expansion of freedom to censor the material.

During the ceremony organized for the students who were financially supported by the state to have graduate education outside the country, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the leader of the AKP and the prime minister of the Turkish Republic stated that "We did not get the science and art of the West. Unfortunately, we got the immoralities that contradict with our values."[117] The speech of Erdoğan bears the heritage of the historical attributes of Turkish modernization. The unclarity of what "our values" and what the "immoralities" are leaves space for open interpretation about the selection of everyday

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[114] Hilmi Yavuz, "Zeki Faik İzer'in 'İnkılap Yolunda'sı ve Bir 'Görsel İdeoloji' Okuması," *Zaman*, February 11, 2004, http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=13248.

[115] Ahu Antmen, "Bir Ressamdan Siyah-Beyaz İzler," *Radikal*, January 26, 2005, http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=141381.

[116] İlköğretim, Lise ve Dengi Okullar Eğitici Çalışmalar Yönetmeliği, Article 142, http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/26_0.html.

[117] (The translation is mine.) Biz Batı'nın ilmini, sanatını almadık. Maalesef, değerlerimize ters düşen ahlaksızlıklarını aldık. See: "Erdoğan: Batı'nın ilmini değil, ahlaksızlığını aldık," *Milliyet*, January 25, 2008, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2008/01/25/siyaset/axsiy02.html.

practices that *should* be adopted from the West. This discourse that Erdoğan uses brings to mind the republican period thinker Ziya Gökalp's remarks about how Turkey should relate itself to Western values:

> We will, of course, not get a national morality from the West because our public has the morality. However, we do not know the research methods for the science of morality. Then, we will not get morality, but the science of morality. … We will not, moreover, get their findings of positive sciences; we will get only the methods in order to find the scientific truths in ourselves – moreover we will not get the products of the technical sciences, we will get the techniques themselves.[118]

Gökalp's ideas point to the necessity to learn the methodology of the Western sciences in order to create a national identity that is based on preserved morals. However, Gökalp as a Western modernist Turkist, rejected some of the Ottoman cultural inheritance and suggested to replace them with the Anatolian traditions, which were regarded as being in a pure, uncontaminated state. In Gökalp's views, Islam is treated as a part of the national identity rather than a central element of republican politics.

4.2.4. "*Liberty* is beautiful. The lady's naked breasts are even more so": The artist Bedri Baykam's Protest against Textbook Censorship

During the art fair *Contemporary İstanbul*, the artist Bedri Baykam realized an art event in December 2006. *Liberty Leading the People* was transformed into a performance, human figures posing like the ones in the painting for one hour and a half. Baykam's artwork as an immediate reaction took place although it had not been on the agenda of the art fair. The lady figure representing Liberty in Delacroix's painting was depicted with naked breasts and with costumes reminding the spectators of Ottoman

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[118] (The translation is mine.) "Şüphesiz Avrupa'dan millî bir ahlak da almayacağız. Zira halkımız arasında millî ahlakımız da var. Fakat ahlakîyat ilmine dair taharri usullerini bilmiyoruz. O halde ondan ahlak değil, ahlakîyat ilmini alacağız…. Biz Avrupa'dan hatta müsbet ilimlerin oralardaki neticelerini bile almayacağız. İlmi hakikatleri kendimizde bulmak üzere yalnız ilimlerin usullerini alacağız, hatta tekniklerin fenlerin mahsullerini değil, kendilerini alacağız." Ziya Gökalp, *Makaleler IX* (Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları: İstanbul,1980), 41 - 42.

heritage of the country.

As a secular Kemalist, Baykam argues that as the Islamist conservative circles are aware of the fact that sexuality is a means of control over the values of society, the established discourses on the evils of immorality has certain references to sexuality as the evil within the society.

> I mean the society… "Oh I should not defend sexuality otherwise they will call me pervert," um… "I should not defend alchohol, either, otherwise they will call me drunkard. Just in case, let me not get involved with these"… As the retrogrades know this, they attack on these two sensitive points…. Free art may be practiced in its every sense only in a free, secular state of law – in a secular, democratic state of law.[119]

Baykam also adds that in his art gallery Piramid Sanat Galerisi, he exhibits the works of such artists' works as Bozkaya Aldaş ve Barış Cihanoğlu, who were rejected from other art galleries because of their use of body in their works. This statement of the artist marks how market censorship works in the contemporary art scene at the very early stages of exhibiting the work.

In this case, the mutual target of the state and market censorships is the body. The control over the body may turn into a means of control over society. Bodies are created and formatted according to the norms that are accepted. Baykam's response to this conception is through attributing agency to the members of the public. Baykam notes, "every adult individual in the society – believe me – know themselves as well as at least you or me so as to determine the limits and the standards of their morality."[120] The artist also regards redefining what is morally acceptable as a step to change the censorship practices. "For me, even 'pornography' is neither a disgraceful nor frightening

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[119] (The translation is mine.) "Yani toplum 'aman ben cinselliği savunmayayım bana sapık derler,' ee şeyi de savunmayayım, adı nedir, 'alkolü de savunmayayım bana ayyaş derler; ne olur ne olmaz, bu işlere bulaşmayayım.' Bunu gericiler bildikleri için bu iki yumuşak karın üzerinden saldırıyorlar…. Özgür sanat ancak gerçek anlamda özgür, laik bir hukuk devletinde, laik demokrat bir hukuk devletinde yaşanabilir."

[120] (The translation is mine.) "toplumun her yetişkin bireyi – inanın - en az sizin ya da benim kadar kendi ahlakının limitlerini ve standartlarını saptayacak kadar kendini tanır." Bedri Baykam, *Binyıl Kırılması* (İstanbul: Piramid Yayınları, 2001), 353 – 354.

phenomenon; it is as natural as cloud and forest views, as necessary as daily newspapers."[121] This perception stimulates an attempt to change the visual symbolic language of everyday interactions. For example, the religious symbols visible in the public sphere such as universities are indicators of the establishment of the visual language that is born as a result of the wish to express religious identity in the 90s Turkey. As with most languages, this visual coding is also arbitrary in that even the presence of headscarf in the *Qur'an* is heavily debated by the more radical Islamist experts and more moderate, modernist and secularist Islamist experts.

Regardless of the fact that the symbols are contested in terms of content, religious symbols in Turkey's particular case have become a ground for debate over democracy. The ban of the headscarf in schools and state offices raises controversies over democracy and freedom. When asked about the limits of freedom in art, the artist clarified that censorship and self-censorship are means to regulate the artist's own power that has the potential to create conflicts, given the particular conditions of the present political atmosphere of the country.

> If I wanted, I could create such a visual product of this size that tomorrow there happens a civil war in Turkey…. Is this something good? This becomes abuse of power…. I mean, it has doses. These doses change according to every subject, every place, every artist, in every way…. As self-censorship does, censorship also has a meeting point with real life. I am not a person that says everything should be free and there should not be any censorship, etc…. The question is, are that dose and limit being used for protecting human rights and democracy, or to protect a dicta regime against freedom?[122]

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[121] (The translation is mine.) "'Pornografi' bile benim için ne ayıp, ne de korkunç bir olgu: Bulut ve orman manzaraları kadar doğal, günlük gazeteler kadar gerekli. Ibid, 354.

[122] (The translation is mine.) "Ben mesela işte istesem öyle bir görsel sonuç yapabilirim ki şu boyda, yarın Türkiye'de iç harp çıkar…. İyi bir şey mi? O gücü yanlış kullanmak…. Yani bunun bir dozları var. Bu dozlar her konuda, her yerde, her sanatçıda, her şekilde değişir…. Oto sansürün bir şeyi olduğu gibi, sansürün de bir gerçek hayatla buluşma noktası vardır yani. Ben hiçbir şey olmasın, hiçbir şey sansür olmasın, her şey serbest olsun filan diyen bir insan değilim. … O doz ve limit insan hakları veya demokrasiyi korumak için mi kullanılıyor, yoksa özgürlüğe karşı bir dikta rejimini korumak için mi kullanılıyor?"

Considering the particular characteristics of the given situations whereby censorship in one of its forms is applied, the artist emphasizes that the operational characteristics of censorship are based on the agency that the artist has. If the artist himself/herself agrees to censor some of the material that is deemed harmful in certain contexts, then censorship, according to Baykam, may be acceptable. This perception shows that the subjective dependencies of the practice of censorship are applicable from the reverse side – from the artist rather than the censors. Other questions related to the conditionings of the artist in accordance with the political stances that he/she is engaged within as well as the ideological outlooks that he/she assumes may be raised departing from the justifiability of censorship and self- censorship.

4.2.5. Conclusions

According to Bedri Baykam, this case of particular censorship, rather than a means of definition of the national morals, is the result of a backward, religious Islamic practice that has grown stronger with the current government. Karl Marx defined religion as a source of illusory happiness which is based upon an alienation that should be abolished, along with the social mechanisms creating it, in order to reach to a real happiness. Marx suggested that "religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the *expression* of real suffering and a *protest* against real suffering."[123] In this sense, religion provides the grounds for an attempt to shift the dynamics of oppression. Taking Marx's point to a different dimension, to a reading of cultural expressions of religious practices, one can conclude that if what is deemed obscene by religion is what gives sensual pleasure, then it may be the fact that it is turned into a taboo, for it is seen dangerous because of its potential to replace the real suffering, thus leaving no space to religious suffering. As a factor that possibly affects the transformation of the body to a site of taboo, sensual desire and pleasure is condemned by putting forward obscenity as a justification.

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[123] Karl Marx, "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/intro.htm.

One of the other possible factors regarding religious treatment of body as taboo may be its proximity to the sacred and the polluted. "The notion of taboo is extremely widespread in human cultures and religious systems including the "higher" or world religions, where it is often associated with ideas of sacredness or holiness as well as with ideas of profanity and pollution."[124] Thus, the positionality of body is dual here: it may be the fact that censors may be assigned the duty to protect the visualization of the sacred body as obscene, or, contrarily, it may very well be that body itself is treated as polluted, i.e. with secretion, and the demonstration of its polluted state, or any sexual implication to its polluted state, is accepted as obscene by the censors. What gives taboo its power is its fluent dialogue with both ends of the spectrum. If "holiness and impurity are at opposite poles,"[125] and body may be situated in either of them, it is the adaptable nature of body that allows obscenity as a means for its transformation into a taboo.

To say that body is transformed into taboo through the use of obscenity as a condemned state, however, by no means should lead to a conclusion that the discourses over body are static. When thought of in relation to science, as well as religion and obscenity, body becomes an integral part of debates that take shape according to the political atmosphere of regional, and even world politics. As can also be traced from the change in the discourses against evolution, conservative politics seeks to reach a compromise between a more "scientific" religion and a more religious science – the emergence neo-creationism may be an evidence to this fact. More particularly in Turkey, recent religious education textbooks may be given as an example for the attempts to bring together religion and science. On page 28 of the 2006 edition of the 11th grade religious education books published by the ministry of national education, it was stated that "thanks to the water used for ablution, blood circulation accelerates, red blood cells increase, aspiration fastens. The amount of incoming oxygen increases. Nerves calm down, pressure on heart decreases and blood pressure is normalized. The amount of carbon dioxide emitted increases."[126] The passage, the ministry declared, was

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[124] Malcolm B. Hamilton, *Sociology of Religion: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 123.

[125] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concept of Pollution and Taboo* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 9.

[126] Burcum Devrez, "Ortaöğretimde Hurafeli Din Eğitimi," *Milliyet*, Septermber, 22, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2006/09/22/guncel/axgun02.html.

taken from *Die Kneippkur* (*The Kneipp Cure*) a book on hydrotherapy by Dr. Albert Schalle. After the reactions from media and scientists, prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated that everything in the Turkish version was present in the original text to prove the scientific authenticity of the text.[127] As can be seen from the case, religious education seeks a way to base its arguments upon scientific facts. Sacred, or polluted, body is moved by religion to a common point with the hygenic approach of science whereas obscene stands on the opposite edge.

Other instances of censorship over Delacroix's work from both Islamic and non-Islamic states created an agenda through another work made as a protest against the limitations of freedom of expression. French Photographer Gérard Rancinan reinterpreted *Liberty Leading the People* and made an artwork named *Liberté Dévoilée* (*Liberty Unveiled*) in 2008 as part of his series of reproductions called *Les Métamorphoses* (*The Metamorphoses*). The lady figure in Grancinan's work is in black chador and most of the body is covered. The artist depicted the figure in this way because the image had been censored in other countries such as Gulf States and Japan.[128] The weekly magazine *Paris Match* made an interview with French Minister of Human Rights Rama Yade about Rancinan's work. Stating that Turkey recently withdrew the table of Delacroix of its textbooks, *Paris Match* asked if freedom of expression regressed. Not treating the particular censorship in Turkey as an exceptional cese, Yade stated that "of all the rights, it is disputed the most…. The right to expression is universally threatened, even in our societies. The targets are always the same: women,

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[127] Comparing German original version and the Turkish translation of *The Kneipp Cure*, which is not necessarily a scientific book, translation studies scholar Muharrem Tosun clarified that the word Waschung, which the author used to mean water, is translated into Turkish as *abdest suyu* (ablution water). Tosun states that the word may be used when translation "ablution water" from Turkish into German; however, it cannot be the other way around because there is no practice of ablution in German culture. See: Muharrem Tosun, "'Abdest Suyu'nu Çevirmen mi Kullandı?" November 22, 2006, http://ceviribilim.com/?p=389.

[128] Sabetay Varol, "Özgürlük Tablosu Çarşafa Büründü," *Milliyet*, December 12, 2008, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/Yasam/HaberDetay.aspx?aType=HaberDetay&Kategori=yasam&KategoriID=&ArticleID=1027126&Date=12.12.2008&b=Ozgurluk%20carsafa%20burundu.

journalists, lawyers, homosexual, ONG, bloggers. Delacroix did not choose, by chance, a woman to incarnate freedom."[129] Although Yade's remarks imply a categorical distinction between the targets of censorship, they point to a universality of censorship that translate differently in diverse contexts.

It is not only the religious sphere that seeks to eliminate the obscene. In Fethiye, Muğla, a mosaic and painting exhibition by artist Süha Öner, her colleagues, and her students was closed down a week before the usual closing time by Fethiye Municipality Cultural Center in 2006 because of the fact that there were nude paintings and wine was sold in the exhibition during the Ramadan, fasting period of Muslims.[130] The Fethiye municipal of the period, Behçet Saatcı, was not a member of one of the religious parties, however. Saatcı was a member of the nationalist party, MHP (Nationalist Movement Party). This fact can be read from two sides: a) in much of the nationalist sphere in Turkey, being a Turk, albeit with varying emphases, is identified with being a Muslim; and b) the sanctity or pollution of body is not solely controlled by religion; manipulation of body is linked to larger cultural practices (i.e. a culture of attributing the elimination obscenity to "our culture.") that develop over a period of time.

The Turkish education system has been contributing to the establishment of the nationalist, militarist, antidemocratic[131] and moral – religious standards that are defined

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[129] (The translation is mine.) "De tous les droits, c'est celui qui est le plus contesté…. Le droit à l'expression est universellement menacé, même dans nos sociétés. Les cibles sont toujours les mêmes: femmes, journalistes, avocats, homosexuels, ONG, blogueurs. Delacroix n'a pas choisi, par hasard, une femme pour incarner la liberté. Elles sont à la fois les premières victimes des sociétés en crise, comme les premières actrices de la reconstruction." Caroline Gaudriault, "La Liberté selon Rama Yade," *Paris Match*, January 14, 2009, http://www.parismatch.com/People-Match/Politique/Actu/La-liberte-selon-Rama-Yade-70648/.

[130] Erdoğan Cankuş, "Nü Resimler ve Şarap Satışı Sergi Kapattırdı," *Sabah*, October 9, 2006, http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2006/10/09/gnd101.html.

[131] For example, analyzing the human rights in Citizenship and Human Rights Education textbooks, Fatma Gök states that "individual rights are only acknowledged in connection with topics, areas and frameworks recognized by the state authority, and are described as if they were an award or a handout given by the power." See Fatma Gök, "Citizenship and Human Rights Education Textbooks," in *Human Rights Issues in Textbooks: The Turkish Case*, eds. Deniz Tarba Ceylan and Gürol Irzık (İstanbul: The History Foundation of Turkey, 2004), 111.

through "culture" as an all-encompassing term that symbolizes loyalty. The conception of culture as a unified, unchanging body, very much perceived as classical anthropology did, enables the viability of the term to be the root of all justifications for censorship imposed upon obscenity.

4.3. Case Study 3: *The Fear of God*

4.3.1. Theme of the Exhibition, Conceptual Background of the Artworks

Hafriyat artist initiative defines itself as an attempt "to graze from the boundaries of strict, sterile, conservative, commercial and academic art which consists of the gallery, artist, collector and audience." The main concern of the group is to trace "the tragic and ironic manifestations of the modernization project in Turkey, and in Istanbul."[132] If one thinks about the positionality of modernization in contemporary arts, this problematization comes out as an important thematic approach since the neoliberal turn in the 1980s because "the time period that we have been living in since the 1980s made us deeply feel the ambiguous contradictions and essential causes and effects of modernization.… It is possible to feel the tension and discontent that the overt and covert signals of these effects create in the artworks that we encounter in the 1980s and that display an innovative tendency."[133] The changes within the Turkish contemporary arts of the 1990s witnessed a critique of not only Western modernization but also the

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[132] "Hafriyat kimdir?.." http://www.hafriyatkarakoy.com.

[133] (The translation is mine.) "1980'lerden bu yana yaşadığımız zaman dilimi bize modernleşmenin ucu açık çelişkilerini, olmazsa olmaz neden ve sonuçlarını derinden hissettirdi.… 1980'lerde karşımıza çıkan yenilikçi eğilim sergileyen pek çok sanat yapıtında da bu etkilerin açık ve gizli işaretlerinin yarattığı gerilimi ve hoşnutsuzluğu hissetmek mümkün." Levent Çalıkoğlu, "90'lı Yıllarda Çağdaş sanat: Kırılma – Gerilim – Çoğulculuk," in *Çağdaş Sanat Konuşmaları 3: 90'lı Yıllarda Türkiye'de Çağdaş Sanat* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2008), 9.

republican Turkish modernization. With the artworks problematizing identites, the art scene provided more critical outlook on the presumed values of the nation and the country.

Hafriyat's exhibition is also a part of the attempt to question the modernization process in the recent historical context of the country. On the 10th November 2007, the anniversary of Atatürk's death, the group opened a poster exhibition. In the call for artworks for the exhibition, it has been indicated that the concept of "Fear of God" may be perceived from four different directions:

> 1. Individually, the fear of God meaning the voice of conscience. That comes to mean the first meaning: the fear of the man from the Creator.
> 2. Socially, the fear of God in Turkey which is rapidly becoming more and more conservative, more Islamic and which is stranded due to nationalism….
> 3. Fear of being without Atatürk over fear of God.…
> 4. Fear of God in a world that is becoming small and in a global economy. On Earth, wealth and intellect, poverty and fear are firmly related.… What are the benefits of wealthy countries from this state of world?[134]

Thematizing the fear of God, the group wanted to demonstrate the manifestations of the uses of fear by different authorities. Politically and religiously apprehended figures are highlighted and juxtaposed throughout the exhibition, which raised different concerns from the perspectives of both Kemalist and religious side.

Hakan Akçura with his poster *Kemalizm Bir İbadet Biçimidir* (*Kemalism is a Form of Worship*) in which there is an Atatürk portrait with an erased face, criticized the iconization of the figure of Atatürk. Akçura claims that "I think of my poster as an imgery of rebellion to a given taboo regarding Kemalism."[135] *Kemalism is a Form of*

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[134] (The translation is mine.) Sergi için sanatçılara yapılan çağrı metninde "Allah Korkusu" kavramına dört değişik yönden bakılabileceği belirtiliyor: 1. Bireysel olarak, vicdanın sesi anlamında Allah korkusu. Yani ilk anlamıyla, inanç sistemi içinde kulun Yaradan'dan korkusu. 2. Toplumsal olarak, hızla muhafazakarlaşan, İslamileşen ve daha milliyetçi bir köşeye sıkışan Türkiye'de Allah korkusu. (…) 3. Allah korkusu üzerine Atatürksüzlük korkusu (…) 4. Küçülen dünya ve global ekonomi içinde Allah korkusu. Yerkürede zenginlik ile akıl, fakirlik ile korku birbirine sıkı sıkıya bağlı.(…) Zengin ülkelerin bu dünya halinden ne tür çıkarları var? "Allah Korkusu," http://open-flux.blogspot.com/search?q=allah+korkusu.

[135] (The translation is mine.) "Ben afişimin Kemalizm'e dair verili bir tabuya, imgesel

Worship has intertextual references to the Prophet Muhammed's sacred image, which is not allowed to be depicted according to Islamic traditions.[136] In this sense, the exhibition may be said to be at the intersection of the definition of religious morals and secular morals. Akçura stated in the testimony he prepared to give to the Attorney General in response to a potential denunciation that:

> The official ideology of the Turkish Republic is Kemalism and paradoxically Atatürk is mentioned as a prophet during the opposition of the state, the army and and the followers of this official ideology to the political Islam. My poster is just the expression of this contradiction.... With this belief, with this kind of worshipping, Mustafa Kemal came to acquire another identity other than the commander in chief of the War of Independence and the founder of the Turkish Republic and agressive, war defenders, anti-democratic sanctions, and even the possibility of a new coup d'etat have become defendable in the name of "Atatürkism."[137]

With his work *Namaz Hocası* (*The Tutor of Prayers*), in which Atatürk figures are drawn as depicting how to do Muslim prayers, Murat Başol problematizes the conditions and determinants of what visual materials are publicized and what others are concealed in order to create a common imagery of iconic figures in the society. For the secularists, an image of Atatürk praying turned out to be a disturbing combination of the icon of secularism engaged in a religious act. The same may also apply to the radical

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bir başkaldırı olduğunu düşünüyorum."

[136] The ban of images is not solely confined to Islamic practices, though. In 815, "the iconoclastic Council of St. Sophia rejected artistic representations of Christ and the saints." See: Jane Clapp, *Art Censorship: a Chronology of Proscribed and Prescribed Art* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1972), 38. For an account of monotheistic religions and image see: Köksal Çiftçi, *Tektanrılı Dinlerde Resim ve Heykel Sorunu* (İstanbul: Bulut Yayınevi, 2008).

[137] (The translation is mine.) "Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin resmi ideolojisi Kemalizm'dir ve paradoksal olarak devletin, ordunun ve bu resmi ideolojinin takipçisi olan insanların siyasal islama karşı çıkışlarında Atatürk bir peygamber gibi anılmaktadır. Afişim, tam da bu çelişkinin dışavurumudur.… Bu inançla, bu ibadet biçimiyle, Mustafa Kemal, ulusal kurtuluş savaşının başkomutanı ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kurucusu olmaktan çok farklı bir kimliğe bürünebilmiş, saldırgan, savaş yanlısı adımlar, anti-demokratik yaptırımlar, hatta yeni bir askeri darbe ihtimali "Atatürkçülük" adına savunulabilir hale getirilmiştir." from the artist Hakan Akçura's testimony prepared for the Attorney General in response to a probable denunciation. "Open Flux: November 2007," http://open-flux.blogspot.com/2007_11_01_archive.html.

Islamists in the sense that the condemned symbol of laicism becomes normalized in Islamic norms.[138]

Zeynep Özatalay states in her declaration she prepared to give to the Attorney General in response to the denunciation that her aim with her work is to comment upon the taboos that secularism and Islam as two opposite poles create in Turkey.

> My work is about the confusion that arises from general lack of knowledge and confusion of concepts. Some of the popular images that I use are only some of the ideological symbols that are emptied or marketing wonders that globalization brought to our lives.[139]

This confusion, according to Özatalay, is created by the interventions made by Islam, secularism and globalization into the everyday life. These concepts which are constructed as direct opposites to each other or, on some occasions, as comparable to each other have been symbolized in Özatalay's work as a visual demonstration of how they can be commodified in very much the same ways although they differ in their contents. The contradictions in the works are not created by the concepts that the target audience observe. Rather, the same visual representations, which are grounded upon the global capitalist use of the symbols in order to offer "choices" as the construction of everyday responses to the political actualizations are questioned. The selection of the fonts and colors connotes a representation of kitsch ads. The lines used for framing the poster as well as those used in as the margins for the set of images make references to Islamic fetish objects such as a book of prayers and to Islamic architecture. The general sense that the poster gives at first glance follows a shock effect which is done through

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[138] One of the best known radical Islamists Ahmet Mahmut Ünlü, known as Cübbeli Ahmet, hang a poster of Atatürk on the walls of the office of their journal, Kasr-ı Arifan. this attracted negative reactions from the other sects of the İsmailağa Cemaati. See: "Cübbeliydi Kemalist Oldu!" *Milliyet*, June 24, 2009, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/Yasam/SonDakika.aspx?aType=SonDakika&KategoriID=15&ArticleID=1110199&Date=24.06.2009&b=Cubbeliydi%20Kemalist%20oldu.

[139] (The translation is mine.) "Benim çalışmam günümüz Türkiye'sinde genel bilgisizlikten ve kavram kargaşasından meydana gelen kafa karışıklığı üzerinedir. Kullandığım popüler imgelerin bazıları ya içleri boşaltılmaya çalışılan ideolojik semboller, ya da küreselleşmenin hayatımıza soktuğu pazarlama harikalarının sadece birkaçı..."

the use of such popular images as Ernesto Che Guevara, Atatürk, Hello Kitty and playboy logo.

4.3.2 Censorship Processes

Before the exhibition was opened, the fundamentalist newspaper *Vakit* made a news about the exhibition and about the works, condemning the works for blasphemy. After the news of *Vakit*, the core organizing group of Hafriyat took the decision to demand police escort and private security. During the exhibition, the posters made by artists Hakan Akçura, Murat Başol and Zeynep Özatalay were considered by the police officers of Beyoğlu District Police Office Security Bureau (Beyoğlu İlçe Emniyet Müdürlüğü Güvenlik Büro Amirliği) as a potential threat to the image of Atatürk. The artist Murat Başol had withdrawn his work from the exhibition before any legal step was taken by the Attorney General although none of the artists were forced to take their works out of the exhibition.[140] After the artists were called to the Attorney General, the content and the meaning of the works were questioned. Başol and Özatalay gave an account of which messages they wanted to convey through the artworks they put in the exhibition.[141] The information provided by the artists consisted of the conceptualization of the artworks and the theoretical and historical background that the artists put them in.[142] This enabled the officers to come to a conclusion about whether these works should be considered as an offense to the image of Atatürk.

As most of the works reached the exhibition space just a couple of days before the exhibition, the exhibition organizers themselves saw some of the works just before the

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[140] The artist Murat Başol says he did not want his work to be exhibited not because of the fact that he would get punished; he states that what he wanted to tell by his artwork would be manipulated by both Islamist and the secular sphere.

[142] Başol states that in the first place the prosecutor even did not know that it was a poster exhibition; he thought Başol made and reproduced posters for propaganda. Once the artist explained that it was an artwork, the artist reports, the prosecutor's dispositions changed positively.

exhibition took place.[143] However, the news in the fundamentalist newspaper Vakit had an influence on the exhibition and the gallery itself had to censor some of the works that would supposedly raise social controversies that would potentially cause any harm to the exhibition. The artist Özatalay says "after the threats that had been made before the exhibition, Hafriyat already decided not to take some of the works with religious themes because the group believed they were 'too hard.' That is to say, the exhibition was censored before the opening."[144] After the incidents, Deniz Erbaş, the curator of the exhibition declared that some of the works had not been accepted by the gallery because of the conflicts that they would cause.

> Together with a group of 10 members of the Hafriyat group, we decided "not to exhibit some posters" for the sake of the security of the visitors and the artists that made the posters, after *Vakit* articles which had almost threatened us, had pointed at the opening hour and place, and had aimed to frighten and intimidate us. When I think today, I understand that our decision not to exhibit seven or eight of the works along with the two or three that would cause provoking, was a wrong one taken because of the frightening atmosphere of that day. I apologise for myself and in the name of all the other people in Hafriyat Karaköy to all designers and artists whose works were not exhibited and who had been censored by us.[145]

Galleries can be an intermediary during the operation of market censorship in that market censorship may also manifest itself in the form of self-censorship where the artist may avoid producing artworks with certain forms or with certain contents because of the pressure by the gallery, which can be revealed either through the anxieties about

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[143] All three informants Akçura, Başol and Özatalay confirmed this in the interviews.

[144] (The translation is mine.) "Sergiden önce gelen tehditlerin sonucunda Hafriyat, din temalı 'çok sert' diye nitelendirdikleri bazı işleri zaten sergiye almamıştı. Yani sergi sansürlü açıldı aslında."

[145] (The translation is mine.) "Vakit gazetesinin tehdite varan, açılış saati ve adres belirten, korkutmaya ve sindirmeye yönelik yazılarından sonra sergiye geleceklerin ve afişleri yapan sanatçıların güvenlikleri için, yaklaşık 10 kişilik bir Hafriyatçı grubuyla beraber "bazı afişleri sergilememe" kararı almıştık. Bugün düşündüğümde, ciddi bir provokasyona yol açacak iki ya da üç afiş dışında diğer yedi ya da sekiz afişi sergilememe kararımızın o günkü korku ortamının etkisiyle alınmış yanlış bir karar olduğunu anlıyorum. Burdan hem kendim hem Hafriyat Karaköy'deki herkes adına afişleri sergilenmemiş, bizim tarafımızdan sansüre uğramış tüm tasarımcılardan ve sanatçılardan özür dilerim." Mailed by Akçura during personal correspondances.

the purchase of the works or about their display in certain exhibition and spaces. However, in the case with Hafriyat, as this exhibition is placed in a gallery which states that they protest the commercialization of art in the first place, it is not the commercial agency of the gallery that censorship operates within. Back in 2005, the representators from the group expressed how the initiative had been formed: "One of the reasons for the formation of our group is this: We had been thinking that we were a bit discriminated in the exhibitions that flourished in Turkey during the past 10 - 15 years - the exhibitions which are fully sponsored and with Western connections; and we did not do what they had done."[146] The specific position of the gallery may be said to be manipulated more by the vulnerability of the thematic expressions of the exhibition to a social agitation rather than by a commercial anxiety. The agitation, although initiated by an Islamic propaganda, has been heightened with the reactionary psychological and legal responses from the Kemalist side.

4.3.3 Kemalist Taboo and Controversies on *The Fear of God*

The reason why the news about the exhibition was so provocative could be that the two concepts that are frequently used with each other in the sense that God is mentioned in the *Qur'an* as some supreme entity that one should be afraid of are recontextualized through the use of artistic material. As an artistic practice, the fact that this fear is alienated, if not challenged, through the juxtaposition of the words "Allah" and "fear" in order to create a title for a contemporary poster exhibition apparently outside of the Islamic contexts may have created a recognition among the conservative circles that it was a blasphemous act towards the unquestionable Islamic judgment over the fear of God, as expressing any visual material in order to play with the idea of religious fear could lead to a way of challenging the supreme identity of God through a deconstruction of Islamic discourses.

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[146] (The translation is mine). "Bizim ortaya çıkış nedenlerimizden bir tanesi de şu: Özellikle son 10 – 15 yıldır Türkiye'de gelişen Batı bağlantılı, tamamiyle sponsorlu sergilerde biraz ayrımcılığa uğradığımızı düşünüyorduk ve onların yaptığı ayrımcılığı biz yapmadık." Levent Çalıkoğlu, *Çağdaş Sanat Konuşmaları 2: Çağdaş Sanatta Sivil Oluşumlar ve İnisiyatifler* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2007), 23.

When the censors are those assigned the duty to preserve the artworks, the process becomes even more complicated as the frames of censorships from political Islam and Kemalist side become intertwined. The bases of the controversies was a suspicion over the artworks the themes of which are taboo ideas. This may be the very reason that a fundamentalist newspaper could overtly make propaganda against an exhibition which had not yet been made then. As the newspaper expected, the exhibition turned to be a ground for debates over the convenience of opening such an exhibition. Hafriyat artist initiative wanted to question some concepts that are peculiar to Turkish republican history in combination with the Islamic collocations. The sensitivities anticipated as a part of the departing point of the exhibition proved to be a testing ground for the practical side of the controversies themselves.

For *The Fear of God*, which was an attempt to problematize by alienating the audience from accepted norms of divinity and fear, the least expected form of censorship, however, may be said to be the one which was imposed by the Kemalist side. Protected by law, the memory of Atatürk has become one of the challenges regarding the content of the artworks. According to Article No. 1 of the Law Regarding the Crimes Against Atatürk, which passed in 1951, any person who offends Atatürk's memory shall be condemned to one to three years; any person who destroys, breaks, damages or pollutes the statues, busts and monuments that represent Atatürk shall be condemned to one to five years of imprisonment.[147] The legal limitations do not only work as a direct force that creates a danger zone for the artists and impedes the content of the artworks but also eventually leads to an establishment of a tradition of acceptance of iconization.

Süleyman Seyfi Öğün contends that there are two dominant mythical approaches to Kemalism: first, operating through an intense depersonalization of Atatürk and stating that the only choice Turkey had during the War of Independence was to choose

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[147] Madde 1 - Atatürk'ün hatırasına alenen hakaret eden veya söven kimse bir yıldan üç yıla kadar hapis cezası ile cezalandırılır. Atatürk'ü temsil eden heykel, büst ve abideleri veyahut Atatürk'ün kabrini tahrip eden, kıran, bozan veya kirleten kimseye bir yıldan beş yıla kadar ağır hapis cezası verilir. "Atatürk Aleyhine İşlenen Suçlar Hakkında Kanun," http://www.mevzuat.adalet.gov.tr/html/956.html.

the strategy offered by Atatürk; and second operating through an extreme personal heroicism that is attributed to the persona of Mustafa Kemal as the person writing the history.[148] The depersonalization of Atatürk suggests an historical dependency whereas the extreme personalization leads to a process of iconization which can lead to the adoption of measures against any challenge to the taboo image.

The characteristics of the theme of taboo, which has in itself turned out to be sufficient to provoke debates, was not only realized by the practicioners of arts, but also by the law experts. Murat Başol narrates that:

> I knew that I would be punished. I also asked about this to the lawyers at the beginning, I mean the technical side. They told me, they said, with a probability of 51-52%, I would be punished. You can be questioned by a very good prosecutor, I mean an intelligent prosecutor with a broader perspective, then he looks at you and does not… But they said, you may not come across a good prosecutor.[149]

The statements of the lawyers who are themselves operating within the legal system illustrates that censorship is not confined to the boundaries of law; the agents within the censorial systems also play a significant role in the processes, which signifies a sharp contradiction between the standardized justifications and peremptory but, at the same time, changeful practices. The roots of the possibility of changes within the censorial responses may stem from the fact that although secularism is valued and guaranteed by the state which identifies it with the image of Atatürk, this particular form of censorship attempt proves that the room for interpretation increases when the secular values are limited to Atatürk's imagery. The fact that the artworks were not censored may have stemmed from the fact that Atatürk's imagery is not mortified by an Islamic assault.

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[148] Süleyman Seyfi Öğün, *Modernleşme, Milliyetçilik ve Türkiye* (İstanbul: Bağlam Yayıncılık, 1995), 88 – 89.

[149] (The translation is mine.) "Biliyordum ben hani ceza alacağımı. Ben bunu hukukçulara da danıştım, onu söylüyorum baştan teknik olarak. Bana söylediler, %51-52 alırsın dediler. Çok iyi bir savcıya denk gelirsin de hani, akıllı bir savcıya denk gelirsin, biraz daha hani perspektifi geniş bir savcıya denk gelirsin de o bakar sana, şey yapmaz hani. Ama gelmeyedebilirsin dediler."

4.3.4. Conclusions

Sue Curry Jansen and Brian Martin suggests that in secular societies official censorship or regulation of morals is limited.[150] However, as problematized in *The Fear of God* exhibition, secular societies may create their own iconic figures which may then come to have a moral attribute to them so much so that one can even talk about secular morals.[151] The artist Hakan Akçura states that "The history of the [Turkish] Republic, for me, is the history of censorship and the battle with censorship by the very essence of democtaric revolution that it did not aim, did not complete or it prevented."[152] *The Fear of God* exhibition shows how the layers of ideological tools are piled on top of each other in a process whereby the artistic freedom of expression is limited in diverse ways. The assault by the Islamic side led to a censorship by the gallery itself and to another censorship attempt by the state officers. The sequences of the events that came to predominate the course of the exhibition evidence the particularities of the circumstances within which the artists and the galleries assume a specific stance. These stances are dependent upon, but not confined to, the political positionings and the reactionary responses of the galleries. The lack of confinement comes from the increase in the variables that make up an art exhibition in its practical sense. In Hafriyat's case, the political positioning of the group lent itself to a more cautious rather than a more resistant one in the sense that the group had had to leave out some of the artworks. This

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[150] Sue Curry Jansen and Brian Martin, "Exposing and Opposing Censorship: Backfire Dynamics in Freedom-of-Speech Struggles," *Pacific Journalism Review* 10, no. 1 (April 2004): 29-45, http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/bmartin/pubs/04pjr.html.

[151] For example, as stated in the Preamble, the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey embodies "The recognition that no protection shall be accorded to an activity contrary to Turkish national interests, the principle of the indivisibility of the existence of Turkey with its state and territory, Turkish historical and moral values or the nationalism, principles, reforms and modernism of Atatürk." "The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey,"
http://www.anayasa.gov.tr/images/loaded/pdf_dosyalari/THE_CONSTITUTION_OF_T HE_REPUBLIC_OF_TURKEY.pdf.

[152] (The translation is mine.) "Cumhuriyet tarihi, hedeflemediği, tamamlamadığı veya engel olduğu demokratik devrimiyle özü gereği sansürün ve sansürle savaşın her türünün tarihidir bana göre."

proves how the censorial acts keep working through the manipulation of context-dependent factors.

The Fear of God, albeit an unpleasant experience on the artists' side, enabled a widespread press discussion over the freedom of speech and expression in both artistic and political sense. The exhibition turned out to become a stimulus for debating over the Islamist and Kemalist pressures. While some of the debates within the national press signalled a reaction to censorial acts, while some others criticized Hafriyat for letting the police forces in to an autonomous public art space. The debates over the exhibition have also differed in the sense that some critiques described it as a challenge to the existing social and cultural system while some others found the group's approach to the theme as "superficial," "unrefined," and "crude."[153]

The news platforms have been a digital ground on which the readers express their ideas. The comments of the readers of the *Milliyet*, one of the biggest mainstream newspapers in Turkey, upon the exhibition prove to be almost the translation of the cultural and political layers which are compounded within the censorship case into the representation of everyday interactions. Analyzing the 47 comments[154] that were made on the news about the exhibition, it could be observed that the proponents of censorship, who actually never used the word censorship – a) initially questioned what art is in order to show their dislike; b) stated that the erasure of Atatürk's face in Akçura's work was offensive and called for an overtly Kemalist police and prosecutor action. The fact that the exhibition was not a part of a certain form of Islamic propaganda created a hole for the conventional secular versus Islamist debates. This, in response, led to a lack of condemnation of the Islamic propaganda through the work. The negative comments

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[153] "Denize Düşen Sanatçı Polise Sarıldı," *Sabah*, 18.11.2007, http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2007/11/18/pz/haber,A157DE91EA3F4F5FBCD8555477D0FCBF.html.

[154] İsmail Saymaz, "Yağmurdan Kaçarken," *Radikal*, November 14, 2007, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2007/11/14/son/sonsiy04.asp. Reader comments on the news database of *Milliyet*: "Yağmurdan Kaçarken," http://yorum.milliyet.com.tr/yorumlar.aspx?KID=2&Path=421728&HtmlName=/2007/11/14/son/sonsiy04.asp&HBaslik=Ya[g]murdan_ka[c]arken_&HID=b1aaa4542d30b52c4bf4ea2511d37652&SiteIci=1#Yorumlar.

seemed to have been cut halfway through as the praise of Atatürk was not completed with a prediction of backward, Islamist image of the society. This lack is observable because of the fact that "laicism and the concern of sharia is the main criterion of the ideological formation of the Republic."[155]

4.4. Case Study 4: *The Dancer*

4.4.1. Case Overview

In 2007, Devrim Güney and Kadriye Sakarya, two trainees from İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Sanat ve Mesleki Eğitim Kursları (İSMEK, İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality Art and Vocational Training Courses), stated that their nude drawings were censored by the institution and were not displayed at the end of year exhibition because of their erotic content.[156] In response to this argument, İSMEK explained that the works had already been exibited in a local exhibition 13 days before the end of the year exhibition and that the works were not censored because of their content; it was a stylistic choice by the professional decorators.[157]

Nilgun Özdemir, a non-professional artist attending the courses offered by İSMEK Sarıgazi Branch was requested by the researcher to produce a painting with a certain extent of nudity in it in order to trace if the work would be censored and, if so,

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[155] (The translation is mine.) "Laisizm ve şeriat endişesi Cumhuriyet'in kendi ideolojik formasyonunun ana ölçütüdür." Hasan Bülent Kahraman, *Türk Sağı ve AKP* (İstanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, 2007), 27.

[156] Pervin Metin, "Feshane'de Erotik Resimlere Sansür," *Sabah*, June 13, 2007**,** http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2007/06/13/haber,6A79D9AF9486495C9709E561149CCFA7.html.

[157] "İSMEK'ten Erotik Eser Açıklaması," *Haberalemi*, June 13, 2007, http://www.haberalemi.net/haber_detay.php?haber_id=28554 (acessed May 10, 2009).

how. This enabled the researcher to establish parallels between the writing process of the thesis and the censorship process of the exhibition. The painting depicts a dancer whose skirt is ventilated because of the particular move that she makes. The researcher did not demand a fully naked artwork in order to see the limits of what will be considered as unsuitable to be selected for exhibition.

As the research for this study developed, the painting was being made and the trainer in the courses was deliberately asked to give feedback to the painting. As the artist raised the issue of her intentions to display the painting at the end of the year public exhibition at Feshane, the trainer started to express her concerns about the selection process although she said she appreciated the aesthetics and the technical aspects of the painting. When the guides, who are the officers responsible for the selection of the works to the exhibition, did not approve the display of the painting at the end of the year exhibition, the painting was prevented from being exhibited.

4.4.2. Reason for This Experiment

All three cases that have been presented up until this chapter have included professional artists working in artistic environments that have connections within both national and international scene. The aim of this experiment has been to discover and display a censorship practice that is different from the others analyzed in this study in the sense that the networks the artist is engaged in is different and to see how censorship develops in a vocational training institution. The presumptions based on the initial research and on the evaluations of other cases were revisited and developed with the progress of the work and the relevant discussions within the institution. By communicating the artist that gets regular feedback from the course trainers, the researcher was able to get physically closer to the process of censorship. Moreover, the institutional image of İSMEK was compared with the singular educational practices.

İSMEK defines itself as an institution motivating individuals to be active producers rather than passive consumers, to contribute to their cultural, civic and social development and to supply them with the information regarding the urban culture and

living in a metropolis. The target audiences are the city dwellers without formal, vocational education above the age of 16 or the educated who want to develop their abilities on the areas they are already interested in. The groups with an adaptation problem to the city or those who are in need of support because of civic involvement reasons are also within the scope of the courses. As an organization under İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality Human Resources and Education Department, Principality of Education, it provides free education to about 200,000 people anually in 123 different branches at 218 course centers.[158] As a vocational training institution that has reached masses and enabled them to be trained in various branches that the applicants are interested within, İSMEK is one of the most sucessful municipality organizations due to the fact that it offers widespread technical education.

The aim of the courses according to Halis Yunus Ersöz, who prepared a brochure for the courses is "the necessity of a conscioussness of urban life and belonging to urban life through urban integration. Because, besides the fact that there is a direct proportion between migration and crime, the factor of violence is observed in the manner and behviour of the ones who could not adapt to the city."[159] One of the perils of this perception may be the fact that it creates a categorization that may bring about a discrimination to the immigrants who are categorized as the potential roots of the evils within the new urban sphere.

İSMEK does not only provide its students with classes offered for vocational education; it also organizes seminars, talks or excursions around certain themes that are relevant to the trainees' daily lives as one of the aims of the institution is to provide help for the integration of immigrants into the city. For example, Özdemir states that certain problems, such as domestic violence, are introduced in the seminars that the courses organize. However, Özdemir concludes that the ideological tools that work to

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[158] İSMEK, "Kurumsal," http://İSMEK.ibb.gov.tr/portal/kurumsal.asp.

[159] (The translation is mine.) "kentsel entegrasyon ile kentlilik bilinci ve kente aidiyet oluşturma gerekliliğidir. Çünkü, göç ve suç arasında doğru orantılı bir ilişki olduğu gibi, kente adapte olamayanların tutum ve davranışlarında şiddet unsuru gözlemlenmektedir." Halis Yunus Ersöz, "Türkiye'de Belediyelerin Meslek ve Beceri Edindirme Kursları ve İstihdam," http://İSMEK.ibb.gov.tr/portal/yayinlarimiz.asp?RegID=30.

disseminate a certain perspective about the themes gain importance.

The art education that is provided by the municipality is, thus, different than say, the art education of universities and academies in that arts, at times, come to mean the handicrafts. As it has already been pointed out that there is a direct relationship between the definition of art and the implementation of censorship, one can see İSMEK case also has its own particularities in the sense that the artworks created within İSMEK are aesthetically and different in content from the artworks created within academia or by professional and independent artists.

4.4.3. Censorship Process

Lynda Nead states that "obscenity is that which, at any given moment, a particular dominant group does not wish to see in the hands of a less dominant group."[160] This may be the initial perspective that marks the general boundaries of the reasons for judging a work as obscene. However, the operational outcomes develop and establish a causal link which proves that obscenity cannot work through the domination by the more effective group unless its necessity is internalized by the less dominant groups. The scope of the obscenity as a product of the tension between the dominant and less dominant extends to their mutual relationships established through immanent practices. An unexpected but interesting outcome of this experiment was that it was not only the authorities that censored the work. The very first reactions came from the trainees of the Arabic language courses that were taking place in the same classroom. The trainees complained about the fact that the painting was hung on the walls of the classroom. The visibility of any work perceived as disruptive of morals was detected as alienating by the students themselves before any action was taken by the administrative side.

It should also be noted that it is not only the statements made by the institution that mark the works of art as obscene. When the artist asked the security guards to leave

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[160] Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 92.

the work in the studios that İSMEK provides as it was taken off from the walls, the guards stated that they could not make sure the works would not get damaged by the residents of the neighborhood.

As for the censorship from the administrative side, İSMEK has some regulations over the artworks that will be exhibited under the name of the institution. These regulations are executed through the trainers that guide the trainess during the courses and through the "guides" that control the works before the exhibition. The artists are free to paint what they like during the courses. However, the display of the works is dependent upon what the representatives of the institution judge as convenient. If a work is exhibited at the end of the year exhibition at Feshane and then is deemed unsuitable by the municipality officers, the trainer gets a warning. Once the number of the warnings increases to two, the trainer's job is terminated by the couse administrators and then under no circumstances can the trainer get employed within İSMEK again. There are a number of issues raised through this example. There is a direct censorship implemented through the governing bodies on the artist. This form of censorship, however, does not work through the censors' direct contact with the artists. The trainers are forced to execute the censorship on the trainees because of the reasons of employment.

This course of the events signifies a covert form of censorship. The artistic productions of the individuals are shaped through the use of public education as a tool in order to create an environment in which there is overt and covert supreme control over the products. The justifications by the censors are not given to the students; as Özdemir narrates, the paintings are discussed over between the guides and the trainers behind closed doors. The ultimate decision is easily imposed upon the students because of the identification of education with assessment. This enables the censorial mechanism to operate in a hidden way so as to prevent any perceived opposition to censorship or any news that would damage the fame of the institution.

Özdemir suggests that the reason for the ban on the painting was not only the obscenity or the partial nudity; it was, rather, the depiction of an empowered, modern independent woman. She evidences her arguments by giving an example from her

previous experiences with the institution. Stating that her painting of a lady figure playing cello was not also eligible to the end of the year exhibition, the artist argues the institution creates a woman model which is loyal, giving and traditional as opposed to empowered, sociable and modern. It can also be observed that the institution's practices of what is publicly displayed also creates a form of visual tradition that is shaped by many elements such as the perspectives provided by the institution through social activities, everyday interactions, overt and covert limitations on arts.

4.4.4. A Comparative Analysis of Censorship on Professional and Amateur Art

Analyzing censorship strictly as a matter of class, Harry White suggests:

In the final analysis it is not the expression which poses the perceived threat, but its audience, and censors can live with uncertainty regarding the defining characteristics of things like obscenity or profanity because censorship functions to define characteristics we ought to be wary of when we find them, not in expression, but in people. *Censorship functions to define people rather than expression.*[161]

The fact the target attendants of the İSMEK are mostly composed of housewives, immigrants and people with no formal education brings with it the issue of class. Censorship constructs people while it constructs itself. The discourses of the censors, thus parallel with the definition of the characteristics of the individuals that both gets censored and internalize censorship. To give an example, for each issue of *El Sanatları*, the journal of İSMEK, İstanbul metropolitan mayor of the AKP, Kadir Topbaş notes down introductions regarding the arts and the social services of the municipality. In Topbaş's messages, the position of technology in relation to arts recurrently appears. According to Topbaş, developing technology destroyed the naïve texture of the traditional, but "recently, the desire of humanity for a change" enabled a re-exploration of tradition and, thus, "maybe the tradition that has become free of bonds will create a

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[161] Harry White, *Anatomy of Censorship* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1997), 23-24.

new future."[162] And although "the madness of technology seems to do away with fine arts, the effort of humans to externalize the beauty which comes with their creation will continue to eternity."[163] The mayor expresses that they "aim to prevent the technological and metallic taste of our contemporary age by absorbing the values coming from our essence and our culture through the education they provide."[164] The ambiguity in the discourses outbursting conservative perceptions on arts parallels with the ambiguity of the definitions of obscene as White points to and of the justifications of censorship. In Topbaş's messages aesthetically, beauty is posed as the total opposite of the technology which eradicates the essence of our traditions and our cultures. The abstractions that are created to drag the conversations over an aesthetic product to a more social problematization whereby the blur of the definitions over culture, traditions and values leave a more open space for the execution of opposition to arts.

As can be traced from the mayor's remarks, the paradigms of morality is overtly visible in İSMEK as an institution of vocational education. What about the universities in which contemporary evolutions within the arts scene is traced more closely? Hakan Akçura states that:

> Years ago, during a workshop presentation at MSÜ [Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi] Faculty of Fine Arts, when I presented a work that also included a text in which a moment a man touches another man was described, my professor Adnan Çoker, made a warning about my future that he meant to be well-intentioned: "Hakan, it will be good for you to keep away two things from your creations that you will exhibit in this country: politics and homosexuality." I think that this kind of warnings are still being made to students in the institutions that offer art education.[165]

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[162] Kadir Topbaş, "Başkan'dan…" *El Sanatları* 2 (2006), http://İSMEK.ibb.gov.tr/İSMEK-el-sanatlari-kurslari/webedition/File/ekitap/el_sanatlari2/dergi2_1bl.pdf.

[163] Kadir Topbaş, "Başkan'dan…" *El Sanatları* 3 (2007), http://İSMEK.ibb.gov.tr/İSMEK-el-sanatlari-kurslari/webedition/File/ekitap/el_sanatlari/dergi3.pdf.

[164] Kadir Topbaş, "Başkan'dan…" *El Sanatları* 5 (2008), http://İSMEK.ibb.gov.tr/İSMEK-el-sanatlari-kurslari/webedition/File/ekitap/el_sanatlari/dergi5.pdf.

[165] (The translation is mine.) "Yıllar önce MSÜ Güzel sanatlar Fakültesi'nde, içinde bir

The education of art, it seems, comes with a formulation of education of censorship and the limits of creation could easily be internalized by the students through the informal policies of the art education institutions. This aspect brings to light the partially mythical aspect of censorship. Censorship is a very solid and visible form of authoritarian practice. The room for interpretation in its application feeds to a paranoia about the lines of what could be said regardless of the fact that these lines may be existent or non-existent. From no single practice of censorship can one conclude that the relationship between the artists and the censors show that there is a lack of democracy within a particular setting. Censorship is omnipresent and fluid: It can be adapted to anything for seemingly irrational reasons – may it be in a popular vocational training institution or in a more professionalized setting such as a gallery or a festival.

It may be observed that there are differences between the procedures of censorship regarding the level of professionalism of the artists. The fact that censorship over the works of less known artists does not raise as much media and public opposition causes a certain disposition of feeling isolated. This kind of isolation usually prevents a form of protest for which the artists do not feel competent.[166]

The differences observed regarding the processes of censorships on an amateur artist in the first place stems from the fact that censorship operates within the art education rather than a directly exhibited art practice. So, the fact that the process of production of art is closely related to the processes of censorship is evident insofar as

erkeğin diğer erkeğe dokunduğu anın tasvir edildiği bir metnin de yeraldığı bir atölye iş sunumumda hocam Adnan Çoker benim geleceğime ilişkin kendince iyiniyetli bir uyarıda bulunmuştu: 'Hakan, iki şeyi bu ülkede sergileyeceğin yaratımından uzak tutman senin için iyi olur: Politika ve eşcinsellik…' Bu ve benzeri uyarıların birçok sanat eğitimi veren kurumda dün de bugün de öğrencilere yapıldığını düşünüyorum."

[166] For example, Fazıl Say states that after the censorship instance he does work much with the İKSV, which ruined its fame, as he did before. Eugène Delacroix's work raised protests not only from Turkey through the work of Baykam but also from abroad such as through the work of Rancinan. *The Fear of God* exhibition is taking place in Germany in the summer of 2009. Akçura will be displaying his poster along with Turkish laws which limit the freedom of speech and expression. All these are forms of protests that the artists found appropriate in order to raise a voice against censorship.

evaluation becomes a tool for suppressing any form of perceived opposition.

Regarding the forms of protests against art censorship in İSMEK, the researcher did not direct the artist regarding a particular form of opposition as this could easily be turned into an ethical debate over the influence of the analysis. As this experimental approach has been designed to be a subjective account of the usual course of events, the researcher did not foresee a political action taken by the artist because of the sensitivities the study developed. As the study progressed, the artist herself came up with an idea that she could possibly offer a form of protest because of the fact that the artist turned out to be more attentive to censorship and its formalization.

4.4.5. Conclusions

When Özdemir offered to cover the parts that are regarded as obscene with a piece of cloth as this has become a common way of avoiding art censorship,[167] the trainer agreed in order to be able to get the work exhibited. When Özdemir noted that she would do it for purposes of protest, the trainers appeared to be more cautious because of the systematic course that the education is directed to.[168] The course trainers' positive answer shows how self-censorship is normalized through a series of adopted strategies that work to create new norms. It is through the pressure on the trainers, censorship is internalized in the institution. A tacit consent over what can be exhibited is created among the trainees as well as the instructors so that the pregiven rules are applied without any disapproval.

Apart from the visible side of the censorship practices that lead to a silence or

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[167] For example, Ayşegül Yarar, a painter, put clothes on the nude paintings in her solo exhibition in Gaziantep in 2007. See: Ahmet Kaya, "Resim Sergisinde Kadın Figürlerine Çaputla Sansür," *Hürriyet*, November 23, 2007, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=7747823&tarih=2007-11-23.

[168] The artists' conception of protest regarding this particular case did not include self-censorship that is also accepted as a form of resistance. Her perception and attitude may be described as more contradictionary, overtly visible and reactionary.

silencing, another aspect is the creation of new forms of aesthetics. Besides the content of the works that are affected by the norms of morality, their formal attributes are also parts of a renewal in the traditions of arts. When, for example, a piece of cloth, which is originally exterior to the work of art, becomes part of a sculpture, its visual language and narrative is also transformed. This merged new form differs from an installation in which the artist ideally makes use of the materials according to the creative compulsions despite the fact that the material may be determined by the extraneous financial, physical and psychological conditions that are bound with an artwork, such as the suitability of the material in regard to its cost, its physical hazards on the audience or its psychological associations. So, if one assumes that the artistic creativity in its ideal setting is the strongest factor regarding the production of an artwork, the subsequent interventions on an artwork after the its formal completion, no matter what the motives and processes of merging have been, comes to be a part of it. When the materials that are used for the original artworks differ from the ones that are merged with it later on, the aesthetic aspect of this hybridized form makes itself more visible. If this tradition of avoiding censorship practically continues, the visual tradition of this merged forms and the reception of hybridized works will change accordingly. Depending on the social context within which the artworks are produced, the normalization and alienation practices will most probably determine how this merging born out of self-censorship will be aesthetically justified and used.

The aesthetics of the hybridized, merged forms is more of an internal part of the censorship process than it seems in the first place because of the fact that the form of art also turns out to be an element of censorship. For example, Özdemir also points to the fact that different censorship practices within İSMEK are directly affected by the kinds of arts that are in question as the agenda of the courses change according to the general profile of the students. In painting classes offered by İSMEK, the trainees cannot be radical Islamists. The fact that humans and animals are not depicted in any form of art in the radical conservative circles leads to a presumption that there would be no participation into painting classes. Özdemir points out to the fact that in embroidery classes, most of the trainees are conservative and thus, the trainers' communication with the students involve more of a religious aspect to them. A social service provided by the municipality does not only limit itself to the education; from the publications of the institution to the content of the artworks, it is evident that the visual language created by

the aesthetics and the written language of the journals signify an emphasis on the moral values, which can easily be transformed into conservative practices. The institution does not limit itself to the conservative or religious side of the society, nor does it expect the trainees to behave within conservative codes. However, the textual discourse of the publications of the institutions demonstrate how they are used as ideological state apparatuses which are visible in the choice of old Ottoman words, Islamic visual motiffs or in Topbaş's recurrent image that becomes identified with his party after the visual experiences of election propaganda as well as the iconography identified with him as the figure behind the metropolitan development.

As visual representation may be placed at the intersection of politics and visual culture, the conditions of visibility and the circumstances under which the visible is cınstructed and transformed are rendered as a statement in itself. The portrayal of the iconographic figure may be influenced by transient and transparent processes. However, depending on the circumstances, the operation is more incessent and cloudy.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION: *INDE DEUS ABEST*[169]

Censorship in contemporary political and social registers of Turkey carries that inheritance of a nationalistic and a military tradition as well as an Islamic tradition. The justifications that are socially accepted – albeit not always directly expressed by the censors – tend to be based on "culture" as a melting pot. Culture as a signifier of what has been appropriate for the community is identified and standardized in a more enclosed manner in order to avoid an open discussion whereby the political implications of the censorship could be contested. To place art, both as a practice that is censored in the name of culture and as a byproduct of culture, within the context of censorship has its own challenges especially because of the fact that singular practices of art censorship do not always indicate the characteristics of the political stances that are adopted by the state. The practices of censorship are mostly arbitrary and context-dependent, in that the same image may be censored in one setting whereas it may survive in another. This does not, however, mean that all the practices of censorship are free of any political norms. The artist Hakan Akçura gives a concise but highly relevant account of what is allowed and what bears the risk of being prohibited in Turkey:

> To question all the concepts that the Islamic religion sanctifies, to accept that there is a problem of, especially Kurdish, national identity, to take place and position outside and against the concepts and information that official ideology and official history impose – for example, about actually what happened during 1915 or during all Kurdish rebellions or during the dirty war that has been going on for decades; to question the given position and function of the Genereal Staff

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[169] "Where God Does Not Exist" - inscribed by the Saint Jean Chevaliers on the walls of what is Today Bodrum Archaeological Museum 500 years ago. The Head Directorate of Museums wanted the writing to be removed in 2006. The director of the museum removed only the Turkish and English translations.

and the army; to produce work that is grounded upon a comunist and anarchist conceptual background; to stand against the police organization and all the institutions that the state establishes for imposing power; to produce work from within a trans, gay or lesbian nature or on the side of the right of free existence…"[170]

The formation of what arouses controversies within the society and what needs to be abstained from are explained with the conflicting political values of the national and antinational plus secular and religious agendas. Much of self-censorship that is motivated by the reactions of state forces to a particular artwork has been born as a result of these two groups of issues that are regarded to be risky to touch upon.

This consent about the risks of raising debates about these issues feed to their transformation as a taboo. This process adds another layer to both the discussions on these taboos and to the practice of art that becomes more complicated as censorship and self-censorship becomes a more internal aspect of creating an artwork. The artists tend to accept the risks of doing controversial work for a number of reasons related to potential controversies that may damage the artists themselves, the artwoks that aim at narrating a particular concept, or the societal structures.

Censorship implies a process rather than an act in itself. As the experiences of the artists demonstrate, the production of an artwork has been directly linked to art market's dynamics as well as national and international political conjunctures. The determinants of what can be seen in what context create a set of conditions that both alter, and are altered by artistic networks. Censorship is a process, rather than a byproduct of an authoritarial practice. Censorship creates new forms, new ways of artistic expressions and contents that create a certain form of artistic tradition. Resistance against censorship

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[170] (The translation is mine.) "İslam dininin kutsallaştırdığı tüm kavramları sorgulamak, Türkiye'de özellikle kürt ulusal kimlikli bir sorununun varolduğunu veri kabul etmek, resmi ideoloji ve resmi tarihin dayattığı kavram ve –örneğin 1915'de ya da tüm kürt isyanlarında ya da on yıllardır süren kirli savaşta aslında neler olduğu hakkındaki bilgilendirmelerinin dışında, karşısında saf tutup, yeralmak, Genelkurmay'ın ve ordunun verili konum ve işlevini sorgulamak, komünizan ya da anarşizan bir düşünsel arka plandan güç alarak üretmek, polis örgütlenmesini, devletin zor uygulamak için oluşturulmuş tüm açık ve gizli kurumlarını karşıya almak, trans, gay ve lezbiyen bir doğanın içinden ya da özgür varoluş hakkından yana üretmek…"

is another factor that affects the establishment of this tradition. Thus, singular cases of censorship are not isolated instances that prove either positive or negative for the artist. Rather, it is the invisible dialogue of censorship practices and the reactions that affect the aesthetics and the contents of future works.

All of the singular cases of censorship have a short term result of banning the work as well as a long term result of creating the myth of censorship, thus facilitating its pervasiveness and creating paranoia for artistic freedom. The agency of the artist is the key point to be adressed. When the artist engages with the structural dependencies for an artwork as a product of a highly personal creative process, the resulting experience turns into a clash between the structural political and social outcomes and emotive expressiveness.

Censorship in Turkish case is disguised under "the cultural" by the censor and is accepted by the artist through "the political." After the analysis of the four cases, it can be concluded that the reasons for justifying censorship by the censors are hidden under the mask of "the cultural" whereas some of the artists' reservations about articulating certain ideas were underpinned by the everyday manifestations of the political atmosphere of the country. The artistic tradition of the country heavily supports the oppositional stances against any form of repressive authority. However, the fact that some of the artists find grounds that may somehow turn into justifications show that the censorious acts are not only about repression; they are also about censorship's revitalization through the evolutions within the discourses.

The creation of a tacit consent stems from the fact that the democratic participation of the citizens within the political practices are limited for a number of historical reasons and political conditionings that have worked to damage the culture of democracy within various sects of Turkish society. This argument could easily lead to a categorical conclusion such that Sue Curry Jansen and Brian Martin argues censorship creates a "backfire" process[171] whereby the censored works are given more attention

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[171] This idea had been expressed by others such as Antoon de Baets who stated that censorship "may not suppress alternative views but rather generate them, and, by doing so, undermine its own aims." See: Antoon de Baets, *Censorship of Historical Thought: A World Guide, 1945-2000* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2002), 23. and Karl Marx: "If

and support by the audience. According to Jansen and Martin "backfire is most likely to occur in societies that place a high value on freedom of expression."[172] This statement creates a distinction between societies as separate isolated entities, each having a certain amount of value on the freedom of expression. Moreover, neither are the criteria of valuing freedom of expression stated by Jansen and Martin, nor the characteristics of diverse censorships are taken into consideration to reach to a conlusion of this kind. At the other extreme of the spectrum lies the fact that censorship may even dissolve in liberal democracies. For example, Irving Kristol, one of the forerunners of neoconservatism argues "today, in the United States and other democracies, censorship has to all intents and purposes ceased to exist." [173] In this sense, the presence of censorship does not directly signify an absolute absence of democracy whereas the presumed absence of censorship is an indicator of democracy in every sense of the word. However, as can be concluded from the case studies, some of the artists, who protest censorship may not totally be against it as far as its practical infiltration into the perils of everyday visual demonstrations, may them be arising from the relationship with the censor or from the violence of the material, are concerned.

Departing from the theoretical discussions that have been presented in this work, maybe one of the most fundamental, yet challenging question is related to where censorship begins and where it ends. If censorship's ontological account whereby restriction from communicative possibilities is omnipresent suggests that it is virtually impossible to solidify it without its epistemological roots, then the complex

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the censorship law wants to *prevent freedom* as something objectionable, the result is precisely the opposite. In a country of censorship, every forbidden piece of printed matter, i.e., printed without being censored, is an event. It is considered a martyr, and there is no martyr without a halo and without believers." See: Karl Marx, "Censorship," *On Freedom of the Press and Censorship"* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1842/free-press/ch05.htm.

[172] Sue Curry Jansen and Brian Martin, "Exposing and Opposing Censorship: Backfire Dynamics in Freedom-of-Speech Struggles," *Pacific Journalism Review* 10, no. 1 (April 2004): 29-45, http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/bmartin/pubs/04pjr.html.

[173] Irving Kristol, "Pornography, Obscenity and the Case for Censorship," in *Sex, Morality and the Law*, eds. Lori Gruen and George E. Panichas (New York: Routledge, 1997), 174.

relationships between the what is conceived as censorship and what each case socially signifies constitute a large part of the question as to how to categorize social control, linguistic possibilities and exclusion from communication in accordance with censorship. One of the challenges of applying the debates on censorship to particular cases has been the fact that the access to debates has been determined by what is defined and displayed as censorship. In this sense, to add a self – reflexive dimension to the study, I have to clarify that the factor that enabled the study of the cases here is their public appearance. So, if the norms and operations of censorship is expanded, then the literature on censorship has to be revised in the sense that what is analyzed as censorship is in realiy what is presented as censorship.

As artists' involvement in each process suggests, the basic locale for the execution of censorship is the artists' self. The justifications of the censors that rule out the word censorship and swap it with "protection of public morale." The oppositional rhetoric of the artists suggests the act is censorship. Public morale is defined more through an institutionalized form whereas censorship is the term used by the artists' self. It is not the state interest that is being protected anymore; it is the violation of public morals that constitutes the justifying rhetoric on censorship.

The public rhetoric of the media coverage upon censorship, perhaps not surprisingly, usually assumes a stance against it. Particularly state censorship which is usually implemented through ministries and municipalities is condemned by the media as a source of totalitarian imposition of morals. What reconstructs the epistemology of censorship is, however, what one is exposed to when the subject matter is not necessarily an overt censorship. The values and moral standards that aggregate to form an unconscious whole sets the grounds for justifications that are usually directed towards public morality. This is also solidified in the artists' attempt to define the borders of censorship. To provide a conclusion to the analyses of the case studies that have been presented in this study, I shall refer to the general theoretical discussions on censorship and the cases' relationship to them.

Explicit and implicit censorships that Judith Butler formulates may be exemplified in Say's case through articulation by the artist of the ambiguity of censorial acts. Although Butler's remarks about implicit censorship refer more to the unspoken ways

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of establishing a discourse around censorship, the artist's expressions also signify elements that are inherent in the production and reception of artworks. Censorship comes to precede text, as Butler suggests. This, in turn, leads to a mythical quality that it gains after the circles and sequences of common, even ritualistic, censorship practices. Say's struggle against censorship on the visuals, by making the instance hit the news and publishing a book of commentaries written on the particular censorship issue, was directed more towards explicit censorship. The implicit forms of censorship, both due to their hidden nature and due to their dependency on dispersed changing variables, are considered more immanent to everyday interactions, thus, encounter less of a direct reactionary response. It follows, then, that recognition of the cases as censorship and the backfire against censorship is in direct relationship with the established norms of art. The ban on *Liberty Leading the People* is somewhat different than the other three cases because of the quality of work as a classic. The public echoes on Fazıl Say's performance, the *Fear of God* exhibition, or İSMEK trainees' experiences have been shaped by the attributes of recent works that are more open to criticism in content. The fact that Delacroix's painting is deemed a classical work, however, has led to changes in the rhetoric upon the censorship case. The transnational characteristics of the reactions against censorship has led to a safe ground upon which the discussions on media would be placed in order to display the regulative aspect of the censorship. Among the others, The *Fear of God* exhibition is possibly the case where regulative censorship was most overtly exercised. The resulting experience displays an ongoing interaction between the censorious side, backfire and the reformulation of censorship with the backfire processes. Also in the case of The Fear of God, backfire bears more transnational characteristics as censorship made the news to European artist networks. In the public arena, the formulation of censorship differed as some works carry an aura because of the risk of being censored. These examples demonstrate that the fluidity of the shifting discourses on censorship are also subsumed in the characteristics of backfire processes. Pierre Bourdieu's remarks about how censorship works by excluding agents from the communication and by creating spaces that only certain agents are allowed to speak with authority can be exemplified by Özdemir's case. The network of communication established through a hierarchical structure that is composed of the directors in the municipality, gallery managers, exhibition guides and trainees, creates a form of symbolic power that restricts trainers' as well as trainees' artistic productions within the institution. This symbolic power is not confined to elimination of overtly obscene, or

what is regarded as obscene by the institution; it rather, is an implicit form of discourse regulation.

As can be seen, censorship creates discourses in diverse ways. Firstly, its presence or "abolishment" is transformed into a symbol for testing democracy. Secondly, the presence or absence of the accounts given by the censors to the artist regarding the necessity to ban the works makes a statement about the construction of the bases for censorship. The presence of the justifications generally leaves fairly more space for opposition as the censors' justifications always bear a risk of being nullified. The absence of justifications, however, builds up an image of the censor as a visible product of an unvisible authoritarian rule. Thirdly, censorship may easily be politically manipulated once it is perceived as a testing tool of democracy. For example, when the mayor Mustafa Gül from the MHP (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, Nationalist Movement Party) moved the sculpture *Aşk Yağmuru* (*The Rain of Love*) from Çınarlı Kavşağı in Kemer, Antalya because of its erotic content, the mayor of Kadıköy from the CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, Republican People's Party) demanded the sculpture in order to place it in Kadıköy, İstanbul. Moreover, the Minister of Culture and Tourism Ertuğrul Günay from the AKP also asked Mayor Mustafa Gül if he thought of putting it back and wanted the press members to follow the mayor. In turn, Gül promised to place the sculpture back in the town.[174] This demonstrates how the identity of the censor is versatile as is its operation.

The changing concepts and ideas on censorship have contributed much to the literature by demonstrating that censorship is not a unidirectional force imposed upon the artists by the censors, who are the representatives of the absolute authority. However, the expansion of the concept opens up new questions regarding the risks of labeling every single act that hinders the flow of communication between the producers of art and the audience. This, in turn, would create the grounds for the impossibility of an explicit backfire against it, as one would not be able to be positioned "against" it. This contradicts with the public appearance of censorship that is usually presented as the ultimate evil. What the cases suggest, however, is that some of the artists who are,

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[174] See: "Bakan Günay'dan 'Aşk Yağmuru Heykeli' Sorusu," *Hürriyet*, April 18, 2009, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/11462093.asp.

by categorical definitions, against censorship also draw the lines between a necessity that is either created by the socio-historical conditions or one that is about the threats to the public good. As an act proving to be a ground for "hot" debates, censorship remains to create and recreate itself in parallel with the specific conditions of each case.

APPENDIX A

Eugene Delacroix, *La Liberté Guidant Le Peuple*

APPENDIX B

Zeki Faik İzer, *İnkılap Yolunda*

İnkılap Yolunda / Zeki Faik İzer

APPENDIX C

Bedri Baykam, still from *Hürriyet Halka Yol Gösteriyor*

APPENDIX D
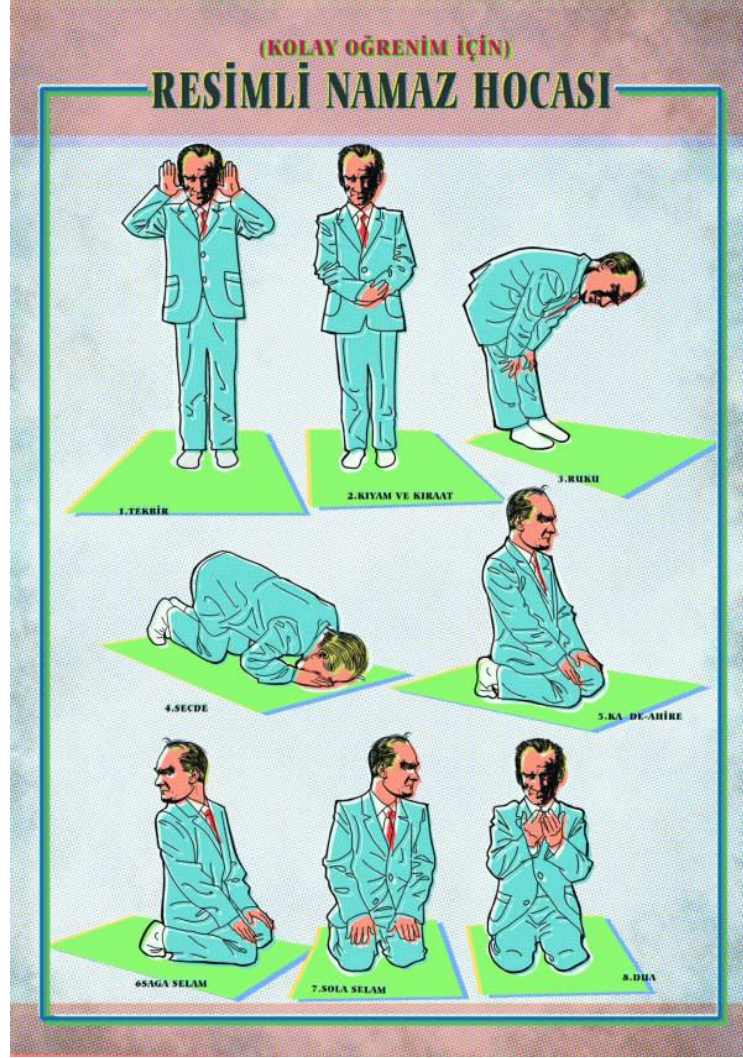
Gérard Rancinan, *Liberté Dévoliée*

APPENDIX E

Hakan Akçura, *Kemalizm Bir İbadet Biçimidir*

Murat Başol, *Namaz Hocası*

Zeynep Özatalay, poster for the *Fear of God* exhibition

APPENDIX H

Nilgün Özdemir, *Dansçı*

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