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What I Do Not Yet Recognize, Now at This Very Moment

HaFI 019

Wi did know seh it coulda appn
You know—anytime, anywhey
Far don't it appn to wi
An di Asians dem a'ready?
Linton Kwesi Johnson, "New Craas Massahkah"

If the present is imagined not as the culmination of the past but rather as its rescue, then a radical pedagogy practices this gesture in its mode of historical recuperation. History making and history writing are laboratories that constitute meaning.
Susan Buck-Morss[1]

Strange, to wander in the fog.
Each bush and stone stands alone,
No tree sees the next one,
Each is alone.
Hermann Hesse

I demand that Holländische Straße be renamed Halit Straße, or I want my son back.
Ismael Yozgat

1 Susan Buck-Morss, "Universal History Upside Down: Reflections on Hegel and Haiti," in *Nka. Journal of Contemporary Art,* no. 46, 2020, pp. 28-39, here: p. 37.

I see nothing
Kassel, May 6, 2006

The demonstration starts moving towards the city center, first down the broad Holländische Straße. At the front of the procession, people walk bearing images of nine murdered people hanging from their necks. Just behind them, a large black banner is held aloft, emblazoned with the words "No Tenth Victim," the motto of the demonstration. The procession turns into Untere Königsstraße, past the Old General Post Office, across Königsplatz, through the pedestrian zone, up to the Kassel City Hall. It is here that the demo comes to a halt; those carrying banners and images gather on the steps of the city hall. The square is filling up, and the rest of the demo is backed up far into Obere Königsstraße. All around, residents of Kassel go about their shopping; they cast the demonstration at most a brief glance, and then turn back to the shop windows and stalls. The demonstration consists almost exclusively of relatives of the victims, their friends and acquaintances, and members of the Turkish and Kurdish communities.

After a minute's silence, Ismail Yozgat, the host of the event and father of twenty-one-year-old Halit, who was murdered a month earlier on April 6, 2006, delivers a speech in Turkish. He would have liked to see this many people attend his son's wedding, he says. Instead, they are gathered here in the wake of his murder. Halit was his only son, and no one should have to lose another Halit. "From September 2000 until April 6, 2006, nine self-employed small business owners have been killed using the same murder weapon. The perpetrator—or perhaps perpetrators—are still on the loose. How many more executions will have to be carried out before the perpetrators are apprehended? Mr. Secretary of the Interior, take off your sunglasses and remove your earplugs. Try to put yourself in our shoes. If you did, I'm sure you'd be able to understand our pain and the position we are in."

There's a desperation to Ismail Yozgat's voice, which grows louder as he speaks. Around him, many people are crying. His words are then followed by the German translation of his speech, delivered by his daughter. After her, twenty-year-old Gamze Kubaşık speaks. Her father was murdered in Dortmund on April 4, 2006, two days before Halit. This is the first time that the relatives of the victims of a series of murders that has claimed nine victims in six years have come together publicly to appeal to the secretary of the

interior, the police, and the public to finally find the killers and prevent a tenth murder.

A month later, on June 11, another demonstration takes place—in Dortmund, where Mehmet Kubaşık was murdered in his kiosk. Flowers are laid at the entrance to the Kubaşık family's kiosk, candles are lit, people cry. People are now openly stating the obvious: "All the victims are migrants. So it's clear that the murders are motivated by right-wing extremism," says Cem Yılmaz from the Alevi Cultural Center in Dortmund.

With the exception of Mehmet Turgut, who helped out in a friend's store, all the murder victims were small business owners—they ran flower stores, tailoring shops, kiosks, kebab stores, or, like Halit Yozgat's family, an Internet café. They were murdered in their stores in broad daylight with the very same weapon—a Česká 83, 7.65 caliber semi-automatic pistol. There was nothing to connect the victims, except that all of them had Turkish, Kurdish, or Greek-sounding names. And there was allegedly no trace of the perpetrators despite extensive police investigations. The investigations converged at the special "Bosporus" unit in Nuremberg, which was quick to rule out any neo-Nazi perpetrator profiles. The police suspected that the perpetrators were among the families and based their investigation primarily on suspicion of drug deals, family feuds, money problems, and connections to the PKK—all without any evidence that this was actually the case. According to lawyer Carsten Ilius (who delivered one of the summations in the NSU trial in Munich), the police assumed that these were traits that were characteristic of the Turkish mentality. So the police made up for their lack of empirical knowledge with prejudices and clichés. It did not even matter that one of the victims was Greek and not Turkish.

Tip-offs and even operational case analyses that pointed to racist motives were ignored by the "Bosporus" unit. The investigations generated a gigantic guise that—through chains of coded seeing and framing, silencing, of conscious and unconscious denial—seemingly made it impossible to identify the murderers. The media, which adopted the police narrative and reported on the *Dönermorde* or "kebab murders," proliferated and popularized this racist framing. A proper investigation into the murders and those responsible for perpetrating them was superseded by epistemic ignorance. While the "kebab murders" made national headlines, the demonstrations in Kassel and Dortmund only received local media coverage. In the aftermath,

an unbearable quiet descended around the families of the victims. But the police continued to interrogate, surveil, and suspect them. In their vicinity, doubts about the families began to spread: maybe there was something to the rumors after all? The families withdrew and were left alone—with the loss of their loved ones, with the ensuing surveillance, and the anxiety that the perpetrators were still on the loose. The violence of the murders was echoed in the violence of the media coverage and police investigation.

In November 2011, five years after the demonstrations in Kassel and Dortmund, it was revealed that an underground neo-Nazi terrorist organization known as the National Socialist Underground (NSU) had been operating since 1999; it had murdered ten people, carried out three bomb attacks, and committed fifteen robberies between 2000 and 2007. Two members were found dead in a caravan, another burned down the apartment they shared in Zwickau, and confession videos were mailed to the press. In the immediate vicinity of the so-called Zwickau cell of the NSU was the so-called "Thüringer Heimatschutz" (Thuringia Home Guard, THS) with about 150 members—forty of whom worked as informants for the *Verfassungsschutz* (German domestic intelligence services), as well as the organization Blood and Honour, and its armed wing known as Combat 18. On top of this, a picture began to emerge at the federal level of an even larger network of supporters affiliated with various neo-Nazi organizations—a network that extended all the way into the state offices of the *Verfassungsschutz* and other state organs.

I see with your eyes
Kassel, August 2022

Enver Şimşek, Abdurrahim Özüdoğru, Süleyman Taşköprü, Habil Kılıç, Mehmet Turgut, İsmail Yaşar, Theodoros Boulgarides, Mehmet Kubaşık, Halit Yozgat

Unlike fifteen years ago, I can now describe the "No Tenth Victim" demonstration thanks to the existence of video recordings. But even if the video recordings had been available to me earlier, I would have overlooked their enormous importance. Even after the NSU

became known to the world, I was not immediately able to perceive them as what they signify for me today. I first had to learn to discern what it was that I was seeing.

I watch the video of the demonstration over and over again. Now that it has reached me and inscribed itself ever deeper in my mind's eye, now that it has become part of me, I try to understand why I could not recognize it before. I try to fathom what it was that prevented me from recognizing it. On the underside of the images I look for messages and tasks. I try to compile an inventory of the visibilities and invisibilities, the blindnesses and the recognitions, the ignoring and the recognizing that are sublated in these images.

The image is slightly blurry, the video resolution draws the figures out of focus, the colors look faded. Where the sun's rays hit bodies and the images carried by demonstrators, they are overexposed, contours crack. People can be seen, many people, a demonstration, a funeral march. Some are holding large black banners; others are wearing pictures mounted on cardboard around their necks. The images show portraits of different men, one large banner reads "No Tenth Victim," another says "9 VICTIMS—AND WE DON'T WANT A 10th—STOP THE MURDERERS." Some banners feature slogans in Turkish, most prominently "Yalnız Değilsin," or "You are not alone." Others pose questions in German: "Is the Secretary of the Interior asleep?" "How many more have to die before the perpetrators are caught?" "Where are the police?" Different messages for different audiences. The texts differentiate their addressees, and yet they speak collectively, with one voice. The procession moves through the city like a caesura—through lamentation it traces what has been lost, and through accusation and indictment it flags what stands to be lost. It cuts through a seemingly constant urban reality by instead marking the recurring rupture, bringing it back into reality, revealing it even as it is repeatedly rendered invisible. The procession seems to traverse this rupture as it crosses the city. The rupture that is called Halit, that is called Mehmet, that is called Enver, Abdurrahim, Süleyman, Habil, İsmail, Turgut, and Theodoros.

A five-minute version of the video is published in 2013 by the Alliance Against Racism. This version is the first one I see. In it, the speech of the Yozgat family in Kassel is intercut with other images: flowers are laid at the front door of a kiosk, and candles are lit. A woman breaks down in tears and is physically supported by others. Later I learn that her name was Elif Kubaşık and that these images are from

Dortmund. The video footage from Kassel, filmed and edited by Sefa Defterli, is twenty minutes long,[2] employs cross-fades, and is accompanied by classical Ottoman music in different *makams*. The images of the procession are annotated in Turkish. Throughout, the voice-over closely follows what the camera is showing. It describes who and what is being shown on the screen, and explains the purpose and motivation for the march. From 2014 on, still images from Defterli's video also began to appear on posters, murals, the spines of books, and in essays. Activist and educator Ayşe Güleç used the still images in her essay "Fordern, überfordern, verweigern. Bild- und Raumpolitik(en) in der Migrationsgesellschaft"[3]. The text talks about the specific image politics of the members of these societies and of migrant-situated knowledge. The act of visibly wearing large portraits of the victims in front of and close to one's own body emphasizes the continued presence of those who have been murdered and ensures they remain visible by means of the (moving, living) body. In the video, the people who bear the images thus become moving images within the image. In Ismael Yozgat's case, this action is also linked to the concrete demand that either Holländische Straße be renamed Halit Straße or that his son be returned to him. For Ayşe Güleç, the relatives of the murdered become agents of action through this form of image-bearing. Mourning becomes an active form of witnessing and of intervening in a reality that is pervaded by ignorance.

I encounter these images for the first time at a moment when masking and epistemic ignorance are partially blown apart, with a new surface emerging. The trigger for this rupture is the unmasking

2 The video footage was handed over to activists by the Alevi community in 2012 as part of an anti-fascist camp in Dortmund. The five-minute version can be seen on the NSU Watch page and is archived in the video archive padma: https://www.nsu-watch.info/2014/01/kein-10-opfer-kurzfilm-ueber-die-schweigemaersche-in-kassel-und-dortmund-im-maijuni-2006/. A thirteen-minute version without subtitles can be found here: https://www.offener-prozess.net/trauerdemonstration-kein-10-opfer. This version was shown with English subtitles as part of the Society of Friends of Halit at documenta 14. A version with English subtitles (11:32 minutes) can be found here: https://theintercept.com/2017/10/18/germany-neo-nazi-murder-trial-forensic-architecture/

3 Ayşe Güleç, "Fordern, überfordern, verweigern. Bild- und Raumpolitik(en) in der Migrationsgesellschaft," in *Gespräche über Rassismus. Perspektiven & Widerstände*, ed. by Zülfukar Çetin and Savaş Taş, Berlin: Verlag Yılmaz-Günay 2015, pp. 189–216.

of the NSU in November 2011. As I will later come to understand, the creation of this new surface was based on different movements, including one of my own. We both approached this surface in vastly different ways, the images and I. The movements are important because they play a role in the inventory of ignoring, and they record processes that I understand as recognition.

The surface created at the moment of unmasking is a membrane, a screen, perhaps a skin, because I can feel the images like a pang of physical pain. At the same time, I sense that the pain is coming from at least two different directions, affecting the membrane from both the outside and the inside, which leads to a sudden presence on this surface—a presence that might first be understood as an awareness, an awareness of the racist series of murders that spanned a period of ten years. It is at first a recognition of the violent absence of those who have been murdered. And then I become aware of my own absence. The pain deepens and changes course.

For ten years, it seemed, I had simply failed to notice the racist murders. I had not mourned with the families, had not demanded clarification, had not denounced the racism. I am still here, while nine people who could have been my brother, my father, my friend, are no longer with us. While one pain was willfully fostered by Nazis and transformed into a continuity by the media and the state, the other is created by recognizing my own ignorance. Now that this new surface has emerged, I need to understand where I was before, where the image was before, to understand why our paths did not cross sooner.

The images are witnesses, they are conduits for the absences, the pain, they hold them ready, actualize them, and give knowledge. How the images came to the surface, where we could meet, had something to do not only with the unmasking of the NSU, but also with a movement on my part. I now know that I had approached these images and that they had approached me in return. So we met for the first time in that moment and then continued to meet again and again. The images became a part of me, and I became a part of them in different ways.

In order to be able to see the images, I had to learn to ignore other images—images that always stood in the way, images that conform with perceptual habits, images with better algorithms, images with dazzling effects, images of perpetrators. I had to learn to ignore their gravitational force, to consciously fade them out, to clear them away, to cast them out of sight.

After November 2011, images of the three official members of the NSU were plastered everywhere, their names were omnipresent, because the disclosure of a neo-Nazi terror cell in Germany had caused a shock wave to ripple through the public. In anti-racist circles, people had long been aware of the continuation of fascist circles in Germany post-1945, the existence of neo-Nazi organizations, of Nazis in the police service, in the *Verfassungsschutz*, in politics. As lawyer Wolfgang Kaleck notes in his foreword to *Kein Schlusswort*, a collection of pleas delivered in the NSU trial, "Didn't we know all that, wasn't it all logical?"[4] Nevertheless, the shock wave also gripped the German anti-fascist left in particular, because, as Kaleck goes on to explain, no one on the left had it on their radar either that the "Česká murder series" might have been committed by right-wing radicals.

The shock caused by the existence of a murderous Nazi underground in Germany did not escape me. As if following the laws of gravitational pull, I initially turned my attention to the perpetrators. The perpetrators' stories had a tremendous pull that I had not yet learned to resist. I listened, utterly spellbound, to the research conducted by Nazi hunters—mostly white, German, male anti-fascists, experts on the neo-Nazi complex in Germany, Europe, and beyond. Their expertise far exceeded that of the intelligence services and the police. I was mesmerized by the immense detail of the visualizations they produced of Nazi networks, informants, and the involvement of public organs. They had penetrated deep into the complex in order to attack it by uncovering, naming, and shaming. This seemed like a credible and effective tactic. But why had this otherwise compelling research work managed to overlook the "Česká murder series" for decades? Why had these murders remained invisible to anti-fascists? Something was amiss, and it was not just an issue of gender.

Learning to ignore the gravity of public discourse and of German anti-fascists—forgetting the names of the perpetrators and remembering the names of the victims—was akin to an act of undoing, of dismantling my own seemingly well accomplished integration into German society. By actively ignoring the dominant liberal perspective, I learned

4 Wolfgang Kaleck, "Vom Schock zum Aufbruch zum Scheitern?" in: *Kein Schlusswort. Nazi-Terror – Sicherheitsbehörden – Unterstützernetzwerk. Plädoyers im NSU-Prozess*, ed. by Antonia von der Behrens, Hamburg: VSA 2018, p.8.

to recognize the repressed knowledge that is rooted in migrant communities. This conscious ignoring in fact constituted a movement on my part. A movement against gravity, against the numbing effect of integration. I moved out of German society, towards the surface where I would encounter the images of the demonstration.

When Ayşe Güleç first showed me stills from the video recordings, I was not yet able to see what it was that set the images of the demonstrations in Kassel apart from the others. Ayşe already knew how important these recordings were; I, on the other hand, could only sense it from how she reacted to them. Among other things, by looking at them together, by observing what she could see and I could not—that is, by observing a blind spot in my vision—, I learned to recognize the images. Ayşe summarized the blind spot at the time as follows: "Now that the NSU has been exposed, everyone is asking: where was I on May 6, 2006, why wasn't I at the demo? The families and friends of the victims already knew back then that the murders must have been racially motivated. We need a change of perspective. We need to finally place the knowledge of migrant communities at the center." The fact that I had participated in a process of rendering the images invisible by not having learned to recognize them beforehand is what I now call structural racism. Learning to see the images meant learning to recognize what structural racism is and how it operates. Other parts of my memory became accessible and recognizable as a result. I can now see how experiences had slipped past my numbed perceptual apparatus, how I had learned not to notice, even to mute my own experiences of racism.

In the meantime, criminal proceedings against five members and supporters of the NSU had begun in Munich in May 2013. The architecture of the trial room reflected the dominant regimes of visibility: the Nazis and their lawyers were prominently placed for all to see and hear, while the victims' families and their lawyers remained out of sight beneath the spectators' gallery. The judge upheld the theory that the NSU was an isolated trio and allowed this narrow framework to determine the trial. In the wake of a police investigation that had focused solely on the victims' families and thus engendered a racist screen that worked to shield the true perpetrators, the criminal proceedings were now built on the expanded "single-perpetrator theory." This actively masked the structural racism that had both enabled the acts to occur and determined the course of the investigations. The

dimensions of the Nazi organization and its network, the NSU complex, were systematically rendered invisible and absolute. The trial, in its continued attempts to actively ignore and silence the voices of the victims' families, the motions of the joint plaintiff, the evidence of the extent of the Nazi structures, was itself an extension of the NSU complex. Watching it racked me with a raging pain marked by this repeated refusal to recognize, acknowledge, and listen—by the continuity of a racist structure. In the concatenation of masks and promises that forced themselves into the field of vision, that desperately wanted to be seen, thereby making it impossible to truly see, the gaze constantly sought to slip downwards, towards the ramified rabbit holes of the old and new right, the underbelly of mainstream society, of the *Mehrheitsgesellschaft*. The force field of the visual masks that were produced in the process was enormous, and consciously ignoring these masks required an effort akin to defying gravity—in this case the gravity of agnotology: the method of deliberate ignorance. The images of the "No Tenth Victim" demonstration acted as a counterweight here. They generated a force field of their own. Looking at them again and again helped to recalibrate my attention and where it was directed.

From 2011 onwards, initiatives were founded in almost all cities where attacks had been conducted by the NSU, as a measure against the agnotological gravity of the "single perpetrator theory." In August 2015, Ayşe invited me to a first meeting of all the initiatives, the nationwide action alliance "NSU-Komplex auflösen" (Unraveling the NSU Complex)[5], and for the next few years I was actively involved in helping to prepare a people's tribunal. The action alliance—the largest anti-fascist and anti-racist alliance seen in recent decades—had been founded in reaction to the trial and the anticipated insufficient verdict, and planned to hold a people's tribunal in Cologne after Day X, the day on which the verdict of the NSU trial in Munich was to be announced. The tribunal called for the complete dissolution of the NSU complex and sought to amplify the voices that had until that point been systematically muted—including in the courtroom in Munich. The tribunal sought to create a site for shared mourning, as well as for a comprehensive indictment and counter-narrative, where

5 Unraveling the NSU Complex, https://www.nsu-tribunal.de

counter-investigations and evidence were to be presented.[6] The content captured in the video of the "No Tenth Victim" demo was of central importance here. It acted like a signpost of sorts, becoming a reference for developing a new perspective. Accordingly, to speak of the NSU as a complex meant to consciously ignore the official theory about the trio acting in isolation, and to address and listen to those present who had been rendered invisible. The development of new image forms, speech formats, and spatial arrangements that break with our learned and habitual modes of viewing resulted from the mission with which the demonstration "No Tenth Victim" tasked the survivors. A radical shift was required—both in terms of how we see and how we hear. The historical tribunals, for example, had not achieved this kind of re-perspectivization.[7] Consulting documents from the 1966 Russell Tribunal revealed a frightening proximity to show trials in which victims were paraded around like objects. In this way, racist and colonialist hegemonies of viewing were reproduced in the name of justice. There was no inspiration here for developing a different way of seeing.

I only see the things I recognize
Los Angeles, 1991

How can I recognize something if I have no knowledge of it? And how can I acquire knowledge of something if I cannot see it? The dominant reality functions like an epistemic loop from which there seems to be no escape. The loop is also transferred to the Internet, where it is further reproduced. Based on algorithms and a selective supply of information, our filter bubbles entirely obey agnotological laws.

6 One form of counter-narrative was the investigation we commissioned into the presence of *Verfassungsschutz* employee Andreas Temme during the murder of Halit Yozgat in 2006 at the Internet café in Kassel, carried out by Forensic Architecture and presented during the tribunal, as well as at documenta 14: https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/the-murder-of-halit-yozgat

7 Through the close collaboration of artists, filmmakers, and activists, new forms and languages of bringing-into-sight were developed, such as film spots that ran as part of the cinema's supporting program: http://tribunal-spots.net/en/spots/21/#intro.

In the process, we as users point to images we have learned to recognize, we treat them as tools of knowledge, as fetish, as evidence, as a means of communication, as a collective memory. Drawn by the gravity of algorithms, we fall deeper into this nebulous field that reinforces existing (in)visibility and (non)knowledge. The sensory alienation engendered by numbing, overstimulation, and shock lends itself especially well to right-wing projects. It underlies the aestheticization of the political enacted by fascism, as analyzed by Walter Benjamin. Susan Buck-Morss shows how the Greek term "aesthetics," which originally meant perception through the senses, was sublimated and anesthetized by the philosophers of German idealism. The autonomous, autotelic subject, the White Male Creator, was forced to anesthetize his senses in order to find ideal beauty in the controllable designs of the mind and of technology. In this way, as Benjamin has shown with the Futurists, war can be perceived as the ultimate aesthetic pleasure.[8] An anti-fascist project therefore requires a restoration of the bodily sensorium in its instinctive striving for survival. It requires a sensory and sensitive cognition that frees the sensory complex from its aesthetic/anesthetic appropriation.

For Benjamin, this kind of restoration of the sensory complex would not eschew technology, but rather pass through it. The technical image itself functions like a nebulous field, for although it has long since become operative, it remains at the center of cognition. Video images weigh more heavily than, for example, eyewitness accounts. The case of the murder of George Floyd illustrates this. The video footage taken on May 26, 2020 of a police officer kneeling on George Floyd's neck for nine minutes and twenty-nine seconds sparked global protests and was also submitted as a crucial piece of evidence in the trial of the officer in question. But ever since March 1991, when camcorder footage was shared around the world depicting Los Angeles Police Department officers beating up Black motorist Rodney King as he lay on the ground, we have also been aware that seeing and perceiving continue to exist in an incongruous relationship with one another—even if the forensic turn has already been established in the visual sciences.

8 Susan Buck-Morss, "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered," in *October,* Vol. 62, Fall 1992, pp. 3–41.

While those who had already experienced the police as a racist institution clearly recognized police violence in the images, the defense in court saw the threat not in the officers but in Rodney King's Black body and tried to prove this point with still images from the video. The predominantly white jury initially acquitted the officers. The fundamentally different way in which the different parties perceived the very same piece of footage not only led to riots in Los Angeles in 1992, but also exposes the epistemic fog surrounding the images, which cannot be dispelled by the mere act of showing. Over a long period of time and under different conditions, people learned to see the "image." But in the melee of narratives, a series of utterly incongruent ways of seeing were revealed. The jury members wanted to follow the image analysis put forward by the defense, because their perspective was one that reinforced the notion of the police as a protective authority and thus supported their familiar public image. This desire to perceive the perspective proposed by the defense at the same time constitutes an active desire not to perceive that which would pose a threat to one's own perception of the world and the self. For this perception in turn acts as a protective shield for one's own privileges and securities. White jurors, as part of a racist status quo, had a positive interest in perpetuating an ignorant mode of seeing. Their ignorant mode of seeing was historical, learned, and did not seek to ultimately fill in the gaps of knowledge in order to learn to see better. It learned to see enough to realize that it was more advantageous to stop seeing. This form of anesthetized not-seeing is so powerful that it not only reinterprets images, but can render events altogether unseen. This is the logic of that collective, strategic pact of ignorance that declares cluelessness—even if it is willful—innocent and cannot see its own racist constitution.

Following the biosemiotician Jakob von Uexküll, the interplay of needs and living conditions leads to different forms of environmental knowledge and to a different development of the sense organs in different living beings.[9] Just as tools are instruments for effecting a purpose, von Uexküll takes as his starting point instruments of perception. For von Uexküll, the interplay of what he calls effector tools, perceptual tools, and external prompts determines the activities of

9 Jakob von Uexküll and Georg Kriszat, *Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Tieren und Menschen: Ein Bilderbuch unsichtbarer Welten*, Hamburg: Rowohlt 1956.

the organism-subject. Everything that the organism notices becomes its perceptual world (*Merkwelt*), and together with the effector world (*Wirkwelt*), comprising all its acts, this forms the organism's environment (*Umwelt*). According to von Uexküll, every living being exists in a kind of bubble of its own perception, which it conceives as its environment. The same landscape seen by a human being, a snail, or a housefly will share only a handful of similarities in each organism's perception of it. The living creature builds up its perceptual tools in such a way that it can recognize what is important for its own orientation, for its own survival. Von Uexküll began to develop this environmental theory in 1909 as part of a structural conservatism, in which every organism has its ancestral and orderly place that it perceives as natural. It is no coincidence that he expected National Socialism to solve the problem of parasitic displacement and homelessness, which would lead to an unplanned mixing of environments and thus endanger the natural order in its entirety. In so doing, he highlighted the political dimension of his environmental doctrine, whose argumentation lends itself perfectly to the identitarian and eco-fascist projects of the New Right.

However, it is precisely because of his interweaving of biological and political arguments that von Uexküll's theory of the sense bubble and its circular structure of perception and behavior is so interesting and provides us with clues as to how the dominant reality is constructed. According to von Uexküll, the subject's ability to know enough in order to know that it is favorable not to know more constitutes a sense bubble that in turn constitutes the environment. The process is perceived on a somatic level as natural, since the environmental bubble seems to correspond entirely to perception, and vice versa. This biological definition of innocent not-knowing is superimposed onto the political dimension of the process. After all, I cannot know what I cannot perceive, and as such cannot be held responsible. Access to privilege thus seems like an entirely natural phenomenon, and the racist status quo becomes a law of nature, rendered virtually invisible. The fact that this form of ignorance nevertheless constitutes a political action is not discernible to the acting subject; it is obscured by the biologically coded constitution of its perception. The Caribbean philosopher Sylvia Wynter shows that conceptions of the world and of what it is to be human are constructed according to these kinds

of autopoetic fictions, only to be socially coded and reproduced in normative patterns of behavior.[10]

To abandon the naturalized anesthetized order of the White Ignorance Contract[11] in order to be able to recognize racism, for example, thus necessitates strategies that are not only based on seeing or visualizing and proving within this existing bubble. One must extricate oneself from the bubble. But is that even possible? To withdraw from the dominating epistemes means to learn to ignore them, that is: to consciously employ forms of strategic ignorance oneself. Such strategic unknowing actively aims to unlearn the status quo and to seek out, imagine, re-see/reinvent another reality, and its necessity is often directly related to survival. This kind of ignorant mode of seeing actually attacks ignorance—using counter-images, narratives, and ways of seeing that it seemingly has to conjure out of nowhere. The counter-images may be drawn in part from lived experience and extended sensing and tuning, or they may draw on a history of their own, but at the same time they inevitably speculate on yet-to-be-developed capacities in order to make another reality imaginable and perceptible. This ignorant mode of seeing not only has to struggle against the gravity of the status quo, but must also grapple with its own uncertainty and vulnerability, initially generated by a destabilized perception that is in the process of recalibrating itself. In making contact with that which is unshown, unseen, and unspoken, the required sensory systems and strategies must first be learned and sustained.

It is precisely in this newly sensitized place that I first encountered the images of the demo from Kassel. A tenuous place, a delicate and permeable place, where the sudden sensitization is first and foremost perceived as pain. When the surface first appears, it is saturated with loss, with the unlived and the unarticulated, and at first it can only absorb the images of the victims. But it is the membrane encasing

10 Sylvia Wynter, "The Ceremony Found: Towards the Autopoetic Turn/Overturn, its Autonomy of Human Agency and Extraterritoriality of (Self-)Cognition," in *Black Knowledges/Black Struggles: Essays in Critical Epistemology*, ed. by Jason R. Ambroise and Sabine Broeck, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press 2017, pp. 184–245.

11 Melissa Steyn, "The Ignorance Contract: Recollections of Apartheid Childhoods and the Construction of Epistemologies of Ignorance," in *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power,* vol. 19, no. 1, 2012, pp. 8–25.

the knowledge that is nestled in migrant communities, to the shift in perspective, to the other reality. Without once again lapsing into the logic of the bubble: it would seem that it takes several generations of the lived embodiment of this kind of cognition to be able to perceive the site beyond this surface and to develop images for it. "In time, we will demand the impossible in order to wrest from it that which is possible," we are told in *Handsworth Songs*, the 1986 documentary film by the Black Audio Film Collective, and it seems like an alchemical formula for an argument[12], a counter-image that—collaged from the most disparate layers—directly invokes what is not yet seen and heard.

Now that I can see you, my eyes hurt
New Cross, 1981

The funeral for the victims begins with a series of images that remind us of Kassel, with photographs of the dead, and with large banners that bear their names emblazoned on red fabric, accompanied by their dates of birth and death.

In January 1981, in the London neighborhood of New Cross, a sudden fire broke out at a birthday party, killing thirteen people. Amza Ruddock, the mother of Yvonne and Paul, who both died in the fire, talks about how happy her daughter was on her birthday. The song "13 Dead (Nothing Said)" by Johnny Osbourne is played as limousines carrying the coffins are seen driving down the street. The images of the funeral transition into images of protest. "After the racist killings by fire of thirteen young Black people, there could be no going back for the Black community. The rage of this march was to be a final warning. For near-bankrupt capitalist Britain, 1981 was to be a year of blood and burning." Thus begins the film *Blood Ah Go Run* (1981) by filmmaker Menelik Shabazz, who passed away in 2021. Named

12 Trevor Mathison, the composer of *Handsworth Songs*, describes the process of layering sound in film using multiple tape recorders as an alchemical process. See: "At Home: Artists in Conversation. John Akomfrah and Trevor Mathison," Yale Center for British Art, https://britishart.yale.edu/videos/home-artists-conversation-john-akomfrah-and-trevor-mathison (min. 25), June 25, 2021.

after Dennis Matumbi's 1977 reggae song of the same name, the film documents the impressive protest march that was held in the wake of the fire and that brought together 15,000 people. *Blood Ah Go Run* tells the counterstory that was otherwise obscured by politicians and the media. While the Black community assumed the fire to be the result of a firebomb attack, the media, adopting the police narrative, reported that it was an accident caused by the birthday party guests themselves and that there was no evidence of any kind of racial motivations. Various Black initiatives and individuals (among them poet and musician Linton Kwesi Johnson and activist Darcus Howe) formed the New Cross Action Committee to set up a relief fund for the victims' families (£19,000 was raised) and to establish a fact-finding committee.

There was a backstory to the New Cross fire that for those affected by the blaze had now reached a new inconceivable low. Shabazz speaks of the National Front, which was also active in the New Cross district and committed twenty-two racist murders between 1976 and 1978. "It is important to understand what had happened before and the context and not only whether there is proof of a fire bomb or not," says Shabazz, as he shows me scenes from the 1976 Notting Hill Carnival, where thousands of Metropolitan Police officers attempted to control this huge manifestation of Caribbean culture by systematically employing methods of intimidation. These images are then followed by further images of police officers fleeing the scene of another confrontation that took place in Bristol in 1980. Black resistance to racist attacks and police violence in England evolved over the years from individual small-scale confrontations to full-blown battles involving hundreds, sometimes thousands of young people, but it also manifested itself in music: in reggae, dub, dancehall, ska, lovers' rock, in the big sound systems that made the streets tremble with the reverberation of the bass. A constant stream of music pervades the film *Blood Ah Go Run,* punctuated only by Shabazz's voice commenting on the images, and by those directly impacted and involved in the demonstrations. The film frames Black and diasporic life in Britain as a resistant visitation of empire, in which the living march through London side by side with the dead. It is thus akin to Sefa Defterli's video of the "No Tenth Victim" demonstration and at the same time a harbinger or even precursor of *Handsworth Songs*' alchemical invocation.

The following people died at the birthday party in New Cross on January 18, 1981: Humphrey Geoffrey Brown (18), Patricia Johnson (15), Lloyd Hall (20), Andrew Gooding (14), Yvonne Ruddock (16, the birthday girl), Patrick Cummings (16), Rosaline Henry (16), Peter Campbell (18), Owen Thompson (16), Glenton Powell (16), Steve Collins (17), Gerry Paul Francis (17), Paul Ruddock (22); Yvonne's brother, Anthony Berbeck, took his own life two years later.

I recognize you with my eyes closed
New Cross, 2020

Nothing ever truly disappears: seen or unseen, perceived or forgotten, noticed or ignored. That which has been made absent, repressed, erased continues to exist as a vibration. To be able to perceive it requires a refocusing, a different tuning; it requires other membranes, those with a capacity to resonate.

The chorus of "Silly Games," Janet Kay's 1979 lovers' rock superhit, is sung acapella in the kitchen during party preparations: "Cause every time we meet, we play hide and seek, I'm wondering what I should do. Should I come up to you and say how do you do? Would you turn me away? You're as much to blame, cause I know you feel the same. I can see it in your eyes. But I've got no time to live this lie, no I've got no time to play your silly games." Steve McQueen's film *Lovers Rock,* from his five-part anthology film series *Small Axe* (2020), depicts a birthday party, from the initial preparations and chopping of ingredients for snacks to the arrival of the first guests, the evolution of the dance floor as the party progresses, and the stealing away of individual flirting couples. The camera's gaze barely leaves the house; the outside world only appears in sketches. Like a party, the film revolves around the dance floor and its dynamics, around music and what it can do to bodies. I follow this dynamic while at the same time registering a strange artificiality, an alienation or an absence, which is most perceptible on the level of sound. There is always something missing from the soundtrack, at times there is no ambience at all, sometimes there are no noises or voices. Sometimes the music stops and only acapella singing can be heard; without the sound of footsteps, and towards the end also without sounds

of the people's clothing. During the film, these voids, these fragmentations give rise to a peculiar sense of unease that I initially found difficult to pinpoint.

The playlist for the evening:
"Robin Hood" by Cry Tuff & The Originals (1979)
"How Long Will It Take" by Pat Kelly (1968)
"Darling Ooh" by Errol Dunkley (1972)
"He's the Greatest Dancer" by Sister Sledge (1979)
"Kung Fu Fighting" by Carl Douglas (1974)
"Things In Life" by Dennis Brown (1986)
"After Tonight" by Junior English (1978)
"Lonely Girl" by Barry Biggs (1976)
"Baby My Love" by The In Crowd (1978)
"Silly Games" by Janet Kay (1979)
"Keep It Like It Is" by Louisa Mark (1977)
"Minstral Pablo" by Augustus Pablo (1980)
"Kunta Kinta Dub" by The Revolutionaries (1976)
"Dreadlocks In Moonlight" by Lee "Scratch" Perry (1977)
"Have a Little Faith" by Nicky Thomas (1970)

A friend of mine who grew up in the UK told me that he immediately associated the film with the New Cross fire. The realization of this missing component, which immediately explained the strange absences in the film, hit me like a jolt that took my breath away for a moment. This new connection was like an invitation to look at everything again, to read into the absences—all those people with whom I had partied as a viewer had been murdered or left forever traumatized. Who were they?

Those who don't know about the fire won't learn about it in the film. Except for instances of racist vulgarity on the street at night in front of the house, it is simply a normal party in the early 1980s with all its immortality, in which the space of loss exists at most in the reverb and in the gaze of the lover. What the film recovers, is life before extinction; sheer pleasure and boundless joy. But the film stands on the shoulders of *Blood Ah Go Run,* knowing the alchemical formula of *Handsworth Songs* and the importance of this moment for Black resistance in 1980s Britain. Raised on the dub poetry of

Linton Kwesi Johnson and nurtured by its sonic language[13], Steve McQueen's *Lovers Rock* is able to take another crucial step. The film recaptures the images of what had been erased by the disaster and the racist concealment that followed in the fire's wake. It deliberately ignores the catastrophe in order to reclaim life. But the presence of life never entirely forgets its absence. The recognition of absence happens somatically and sensually through the palpable incompleteness in the film's aesthetics. What is initially perceived as a kind of numbness, a blocking of comprehensive sensory experience, is actually a jarring of preformed sensory perceptions, of their cognitive settings. There is something strange about this unsaturated experience. Even without being familiar with the concrete events on which the film is based, the body perceives a loss. This is dancefloor law, cinematically applied. If you turn down the bass, you'll be able to sense it all the more afterwards. The film thereby defies the erasure caused by racist violence. It says: we are still here, and we have something to celebrate. The party, with all its corporeality, its sensory perception enhanced by substances and music, its interplay of hearing, seeing, and moving, its exchanges of glances, words, touches, its spending time together and growing—these aspects of a party, which the film simultaneously approximates and keeps at a distance by not offering completeness, constitute the sheer surging of life. Life, unconditionally and almost demonstratively claimed and celebrated. This is no anti-racist educational work that intends to enable the ignorant white gaze to learn to see. Nor is it a persistence at the membrane of one's own awareness. In the belly of this knowledge the realization grows that post-migrant life is possible both in spite of and precisely because of this; that it cannot be erased. *Lovers Rock* conveys radical sensing, a sensibilization of presence—interspersed with absences, before and after the shock, a sensibilization in and with migrant life without explaining it to the ignorant, and of course without ever forgetting. This has already reached beyond invocation, constituting a place outside of the bubble to be lived and experienced.

13 McQueen quotes Linton Kwesi Johnson's monumental dub poem "New Crass Massahkah" (1983) in *Alex Wheatle*, another episode of *Small Axe*. But *Lovers Rock* seems to carry and internalize the text of "New Crass Massahkah" as a hidden code. "New Crass Massahkah": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUMYAqAIAXA

Casting the gaze back
Almanya, after 1955

In a 2004 interview with the *Hamburger Abendblatt,* former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt muses in retrospect: "It was a mistake to bring guest workers from foreign cultures into the country at the beginning of the 1960s."[14] Migrants were not considered legally equal to German citizens, and most Germans did not deem it necessary to acquire any knowledge of their ways of life, languages, and cultures—indeed, it was even considered an impossible task due to supposedly fixed cultural differences that divided majority white German society and migrant communities. Differences were merely registered and regulated, but not understood. Instead of knowledge, stigmas took hold, and prejudices were formed against the so-called parallel society of migrants. Over time, these stigmas and prejudices came to be perceived by German society as knowledge. They became part of the white German epistemic bubble, which caused them to view their fellow migrant citizens through the eyes of a housefly.[15]

The newcomers were expected to reflect this housefly perspective back to themselves and to internalize it—that is, to become something that the Germans could perceive and recognize. This process was called "integration." Integration meant learning and internalizing the law-like episteme of the housefly to the effect that it felt natural. It was claimed that this adaptation was necessary if one was to survive in mainstream society. But this promise turned out to be a lie. It masked the needs of the *Mehrheitsgesellschaft* as the needs of the society as a whole. That people continued to be racially attacked and even murdered was inevitable as they had not adapted, their integration had failed, they could not shed the law-like characteristics of their supposed lack of civilization, their savagery. The dead were thus—according to the perception of the housefly—entirely attributed to these characteristics because their potential was by definition incompatible with the characteristics of the *Mehrheitsgesellschaft*. Integration meant that people in Germany who were read as migrants

14 "Schmidt: Multikulti ist kaum möglich," in *Hamburger Abendblatt*, November 24, 2004.

15 See Mark Terkessidis on the concept of "racist knowledge": *Psychologie des Rassismus*, Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften 1998.

were only permitted to develop rudimentary perceptual and effector tools for their own experience of racism, since even naming racism would inevitably be viewed as a sign of relapse into foreignness. According to the logic of the housefly, there was no racism in the *Mehrheitsgesellschaft*. Any purported "racism" could therefore only stem from a false, inherently parasitic and homeless migrant perception. The consequence of this logic for people in Germany who were read as migrants was that their own perception of their environment was seen as flawed, as an emotionally based disorder, as a fundamental lack of selfhood. Moreover, the experience of racism was clouded by self-demonization, self-doubt, self-contempt. We tried to get over this disturbance by learning to suppress the perception of racist structures. This in turn made it difficult to develop a commonality, a conversation about the experience of racism. Languages that were developed to articulate one's own perception, literature, songs—at most they had street credibility in Germany, if they were registered at all. As foreigners, everyone was on their own inside the epistemic bubble of integration. Any form of gathering and assembly was considered a sign of failed integration.

Much could be said about my attempts to integrate into German society, but perhaps an early episode will suffice as an example of how I learned to set my priorities when faced with divergent prompts. While my father, glued to the radio, witnessed live the 1979 takeover of the state television and radio station *Seda o Sima* by revolutionary groups in Tehran, I explained to my classmates at school that my parents had renamed me Sabine. I had already understood as a child that integration was a special kind of initiation, a form of incorporation, in which I tried to appropriate a mimetically adapted image, there-by making myself unrecognizable and invulnerable. I learned to keep the reality of my parental home out of the reality of the German *Mehrheitsgesellschaft*. The fact that I experienced this self-limiting process, which I now call a survival technique, as the fulfillment of my own desire was part of the integration process. The violence thus came from within, was carried along and co-produced by me, and was thus concealed and camouflaged once again, becoming more difficult to recognize.

My inability to recognize the images of the "No Tenth Victim" demonstration was related to this requisite dismantling of my own perception. My environment was a kind of shrunken world—mimicking German politicization—due to the integration efforts of my youth in

the Germany of the 1970s and 1980s. I was only able to vaguely discern migrant struggles. The process of making oneself irretrievable to integration was a step into vulnerability, a sensitization to one's own vulnerability, within which migrant knowledge was constituted (and constituted itself). The experience of this process—as personal as it is—is one I share with others. It forms part of the broader history of migration. In this sense, tracing the personal example is not a question of identitarianism, but rather constitutes a necessary procedure for the seismographic recording of social and historical processesv. My de-integration formed part of broader social de- and recalibrations.[16]

Gökhan Gültekin, Sedat Gürbüz, Said Nesar Hashemi, Mercedes Kierpacz, Hamza Kurtovi, Vili-Viorel Păun, Fatih Saraçoğlu, Ferhat Unvar, Kaloyan Velkov, Gabriele Rathjen

The year is 2002 in Almanya, and the fairy tale begins with a letter from the commissioner for integration. The letter demands that the recipient provide proof of integration, a request with which she complies after overcoming her initial frustration. She has been asked to demonstrate that she is proficient in the use of the German language: that she can converse, do her shopping, drink, read the newspaper, and crack racist jokes. Each of her accomplishments will also need to be certified by a *biodeutsch*[17] person. In the end, however, the toilet paper is missing and the assiduously performed integration work ends up in the toilet. The short film *The Fairy Tale of Integration* by Kanak TV[18]employs the crude, lowbrow humor of a soap opera to create a counter-image. "We no longer allow the gaze to be directed at us—we direct the gaze. Kanak TV is migrant self-empowerment."[19]

16 Just as the anti-racist network Kanak Attak (see the following section) was not formed until the late 1990s—that is, *after* Mölln, Solingen, Hoyerswerda, and Rostock-Lichtenhagen—and Migrantifa was only formed in the wake of the racist murders committed in Hanau in 2020 (thus revealing an essential absence in German Antifa and making it more tangible).

17 Biodeutsch is a reappropriation used satiricically for white ethnic Germans.

18 Kanak TV, *Das Märchen von der Integration*, 2002, video, 15:53 min., https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJtmdzRJjU

19 Kanak Attak Cologne, "Kanak TV – Migrantische Selbstermächtigung oder Warum Kanak TV politisch ist," https://www.kanak-attak.de/ka/kanaktv.html

The film is only one of the media products released by Kanak Attak, a group of activists, mostly second generation, who understood that the only way another reality could be created[20] was through epistemic disobedience[21]. By appropriating the pejorative word "Kanake," which is used to describe people with roots in the Balkans and is inspired by Cem Karaca's 1984 album *Die Kanaken*, and establishing a militant anti-national, anti-racist perspective on the concept of the *Mehrheitsgesellschaft*, Kanak Attak changed the rules of the game. Kanak Attak not only coined the term "biodeutsch," thereby exposing the racist blind spots of integration, but simply refused to accept victimhood completely. The tactic of reverting and thus exposing the racist structure of the concept of integration not only tore off the mask of structural racism, but also produced images and sounds that until that point had been unfamiliar to most people because they were simply not seen: children of foreigners who did not try to fit in and not stand out, and who were nevertheless neither ashamed nor apologetic. This was new—both as an expression of migrant life in Almanya and as strategic ignorance in action.

In the decades that followed, racism in Germany shifted gears, becoming more complex, and seemingly rendering the Kanak Attak tactic obsolete. But when artist Moshtari Hilal and author Sinthujan Varatharajah introduced the term "people with a Nazi background" via Instagram during the COVID lockdown in February 2021 (echoing Kanak Attak's reversal tactic),[22] this mirroring shift in perspective was in fact so effective that the bourgeois media immediately pounced on it.[23] As Moshtari Hilal puts it, "We're basically throwing back a question that we keep getting asked. The question is 'Where are you from?' But it's no longer about geography or a perceived ethnicity, it's about historical and economic context."[24] Hilal and Varatharajah's performative spin exposed the stigmatizing nature of the term "people with a migration background," and the ensuing outrage exposed the bubble of the *biodeutsche Mehrheitsgesellschaft* along with its continuing claim to the hegemonic power to define.

20 Kanak Attak, website (with 1998 manifesto as PDF), https://www.kanak-attak.de/ka/about.html

21 Literary scholar Walter Mignolo places the concept of "epistemic disobedience" at the center of his theory of decoloniality.

22 Moshtari Hilal and Sinthujan Varatharajah, "Nazierbe" (conversation), Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/p/CLU2dZiqvMG/?utm_source=ig_embed&ig_rid=7218fdfb-6d49-429d-a086-84e400bc2915, February 15, 2021.

23 See, for example Jan Küveler, "Wo jeder Biodeutsche gleich zum 'Menschen mit Nazihintergrund' wird," in *Welt*, March 5, 2021, and Sonja Zekri, "Das Erbe," in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, March 1, 2021.

24 Saskia Trebing, "Künstlerin Moshtari Hilal: 'Kritik ist das Gegenteil von Gleichgültigkeit'", in *Monopol*, May 7, 2021.

Seeing in the dark

Now, at this juncture, the epistemic twist of mirroring back the dominant reality no longer suffices for me. It challenges the bubble of the housefly and the definitional wrangling caught up within it, but it is no good for tuning my perception towards the things I am not yet able to recognize, or for developing a radical mode of sensing in and with migrant life. In recent years, the Black Radical Tradition in particular has been able to formulate a language for what I am not yet able to see. Like a time machine, it has been able to address that which waits beyond the realm of the imagination: both the erased and the possible; the past and the future. It has rendered itself impervious to servitude and subservience;[25] it is preoccupied with the ongoing development of a collective consciousness that is aware of historical struggles; it is motivated by the shared preservation of collective being and ontological totality.[26] The knowledge formed through lived experience, by "sitting in a room with history" (Dionne Brand), stands in a historical relationship whose constituent catastrophe of colonialism and slavery can only in part be related to the migratory movements of the twenty-first century. And yet the alchemical formula of wresting the possible from the impossible that this knowledge carries with it is a companion to emancipated cognition—a language that is not to be translated, but rather spelled out through and with one's own lived experience. In the sense of a multidirectional seeing and remembering, contact zones emerge, not only between the various constituent catastrophes, but in the recognition of migrant reality itself—a recognition that cannot return to its ancestral home, as Jakob von Uexküll would have wished.

25 Toni Cade Bambara, quoted in Avery F. Gordon, *Keeping Good Time: Reflections on Knowledge, Power and People,* New York: Routledge 2004, p. 203.

26 Paraphrased from Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism* [1983], Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press 2000, p. 171.

With every wave of migration, homelessness accumulates in a new place—one outside of bubbles and scheduled localizations. And although the spaces where migration "sits with history" are not alike, there is this shared new site of bubble-lessness. A new incarnation of the collective experience of being on the outside, which has already been seen in the maroon communities of the seventeenth century, for example—the palenques, the quilombos, the pirates—which united a wide range of refugees and fugitives and produced systems of knowledge that extended beyond and defied the bubble model. The perceptual and effector tools for navigating the "outside" are more complex and multidirectional, enriched by the diverse forms of knowledge that congregate in the outside space, but also more uncertain and precarious due to constant threat and change. The families who walked through Untere Königsstraße in Kassel on May 6 to mourn their murdered relatives and who demanded that there be "No Tenth Victim" also existed in something of an outside realm. In this outside realm, they were united by a collective knowledge, without which they would likely never have come together.

I long to be back on the dance floor with Linton Kwesi Johnson, and for the language I don't yet have, the images yet to be created, the bass line, the *riddims,* the grooves, coming back from the future, picking me up, lifting me into a party at which everyone is present—Patrick, Andrew, Peter, Gerry, Steve, Patricia, Rosaline, Lloyd, Humphrey, Owen, Yvonne, Halit, Mehmet, Theodoros, İsmail, Habil, Süleyman, Abdurrahim, Turgut, Enver, Ferhat, Mercedes, Vili-Viorel, Sedat, Gökhan, Said Nesar, Hamza, Fatih, Kaloyan, the dead as well as the living—and we party until the roof comes down. It's somebody's birthday and we're having blue shisha to celebrate. But the blue is not that of the eyes of the murderers; it's a melancholic blue. Like the smoke on that fatal Sunday morning, when we gazed together with Amza into nothingness—a nothingness peaked with a red, fiery glow. Not the cruel red of the killers, but the red fury rising from the flames. And from melancholic blue and rageful red we then rebuild the surface of the dance floor. I look forward to the films we will shoot there, the moves we make there, with arms and legs already reaching out into another morning. It is from here that we will make history—a history that has yet to be written because it has yet to be recognized. One of its guidelines is that it registers even the most subtle deflection on the level meter.

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