Non-Conceptual Negativity: Damaged Reflections on Turkey

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Published by Punctum Books

Aracagök, Zafer and Franco Berardi.
Non-Conceptual Negativity: Damaged Reflections on Turkey.

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Whenever the name of Ulus Baker is mentioned with regard to Deleuze studies in Turkey, we are faced with some vexing problems about his reception. The first of these is that Ulus was the type of a person who would always stand against iconization or canonization. Without doubt, it was unavoidable that around his name would gather a hippie cult — just as in the case of Brian Massumi — when there were too many people attached to him, pushing him into a position of a guru. Yet Ulus never became a guru and, therefore, he never became a Žižek-esque clown of thought. The second, considering especially the possibilities of becoming of the body in Deleuzian thought, is that Ulus’s way of being resembled the ways in which the progression of psychoanalysis — as is well-explained by Abraham and Torok² — would be possible only by going bankrupt. If the body was a god-given form and what we had to do in order to get rid of this organization of body à la Artaud was to shake metaphysics, how was one supposed make a body without a body? Seen from this perspective, it is impossible not to be reminded of this chapter from Deleuze and Guattari’s A Thousand Plateaus³: “How Do

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1 Ulus Baker (1960–2007) was an intellectual figure who introduced Deleuzian philosophy to Turkish academia and influenced a generation of young people with his extensive number of publications on sociology, politics, and philosophy.


You Make Yourself A Body Without Organs?” There are dangers and there are choices: it all wavers between being lifeless and not preferring life. Not everyone can be so brave so as to decide to return to pre-individual singularities. Actually Ulus did not achieve this either, and herein lies the mythology. What we are left with today are his works of genius; shining, bright; instead of nostalgic and narcissus-like repetitions, we must go on, GO ON!