MASTERARBEIT | MASTER'S THESIS

Titel | Title

Performing Identity? Hagop Ayvaz's "I Love You" and its Contribution to the Armeno-Turkish Theatrical Landscape

verfasst von | submitted by

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angestrebter akademischer Grad | in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (MA)

Wien | Vienna, 2025

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt | Degree programme code as it appears on the student record sheet:	UA 066 675
Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt | Degree programme as it appears on the student record sheet:	Masterstudium Turkologie
Betreut von | Supervisor:	Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Yavuz Köse

“Korkulacak bir şey yok, her şey geçer.”[1]

– Hagop Ayvaz’s first line on stage in *The Miller’s Daughter* (1929)

[1] “There is nothing to be afraid of. Everything passes.” from the interview with Boğos Çalgıcıoğlu, conducted on February 19, 2025. Recording in possession of the author.

Acknowledgements

My first encounter with Hagop Ayvaz's Armeno-Turkish monologue *Սիqի Սէվիյորում* [Sizi Seviyorum], which translates to *I Love You*, took place in January 2024, when I began volunteering with the cultural heritage project "KarDes" at the Hrant Dink Foundation. Alongside my responsibilities there, I had the opportunity to explore the Foundation's archive of Armeno-Turkish manuscripts and books. Many of them were theatre plays, some handwritten, others printed. I did not know where to begin, so I started slowly working my way through the collection. One title immediately caught my attention: *Sizi Seviyorum* by Hagop Ayvaz. I knew Ayvaz as the person who had preserved this extraordinary archive and who, shortly before his death, entrusted it to the newspaper *Agos*, or more precisely, to what is now the Hrant Dink Foundation. According to the Foundation, this text was a monologue written in 1932, which piqued my curiosity even more. Whom does he love? And why is it written in Turkish using the Armenian script, especially just four years after the language reform? I had many questions. Determined to find answers, I carefully removed the handwritten manuscript from its envelope. At first glance, I wondered how I would ever manage to decipher it, as I had only just begun learning Armenian and its cursive script. By chance, Zakarya Mildanoğlu was sitting next to me, someone fluent in reading and speaking Armenian. He read the first few lines aloud, and that moment proved decisive: I requested a digital facsimile of the manuscript so that I could study and transliterate the text back home in Vienna. After receiving the facsimile and completing the transliteration on my own, I realised that this was something truly unique, far more complex and layered than it had initially appeared.

I would therefore like to begin by expressing my heartfelt gratitude to the Hrant Dink Foundation, whose trust and support made this research possible. Without their willingness to share and support this research, I would never have discovered this Early Republican Armeno-Turkish monologue. The Foundation not only granted me access to Hagop Ayvaz's legacy but also connected me with experts in Armenian and Turkish theatre history, some of whom had even known Ayvaz personally. I am especially grateful to Zeynep Taşkın, Lara Taş, İren Bıçakcı, Adom Şaşkal, and Damla Barın for supporting my research and offering valuable insights on exploring minoritarian cultural heritage in Turkey. I am also deeply thankful to my two interview partners, Boğos Çalgıcıoğlu and Nesim Ovadya İzrail, for generously sharing their time, memories, and insights. Their perspectives added depth to my understanding of Hagop Ayvaz's life, his theatrical legacy, and the broader cultural history surrounding his work.

My sincere thanks go as well to my professors: Yavuz Köse for introducing me to Armeno-Turkish studies and for his early academic support, including access to research projects, learning resources, and language programmes; Gisela Procházka-Eisl for her continuous support and for inspiring my early engagement with literary questions; and Claudia Römer, who introduced me to the foundations of academic research and writing during my early studies.

This thesis would not have been possible without the unwavering support of my friends and family. I am deeply thankful to my mother, Feryal, and to my siblings — Ceyda, Eda Seher, Gizem, Sedef Cansu, and Efe Mertcan — for their encouragement and belief in me throughout my academic path. I am also especially grateful to my cousin Sinem, who introduced me to Ottoman and Turkish studies when I was still a teenager.

Finally, my warmest thanks go to my dear friends. You were the first to hear and read my ideas, and your feedback, encouragement, and patience have been invaluable throughout this process.

I dedicate this to my father, Turgut, and to everyone who understands the struggle of enduring silence and denial.

Teşekkürler

Hagop Ayvaz'ın Ermenice harfli Türkçe monoloğu *Uիqի Uէվիյօրում* [Sizi Seviyorum] ile ilk karşılaşmam, Ocak 2024'te Hrant Dink Vakfı'ndaki kültürel miras projesi "KarDes'te gönüllü olarak çalışmaya başlamamla gerçekleşti. Bu görevim kapsamında, Vakfın arşivinde yer alan Ermenice harfli Türkçe el yazmaları ve kitapları inceleme fırsatı buldum. Çoğu tiyatro eseriydi; bir kısmı el yazması, bir kısmı ise matbu nüshalardı. Nereden başlayacağımı bilemeden koleksiyonu taramaya başladım. Bir başlık hemen dikkatimi çekti: Hagop Ayvaz'ın *Sizi Seviyorum* adlı metni. Ayvaz'ın bu olağanüstü arşivi koruyan ve ölümünden kısa bir süre önce onu *Agos* gazetesine, daha doğrusu, bugünkü Hrant Dink Vakfı'na, emanet eden kişi olduğunu biliyordum. Vakfın verdiği bilgiye göre, bu metin 1932 yılında yazılmış bir monologdu. Bu bilgi merakımı daha da artırdı: Kimi seviyordu? Peki, neden bu metin Türkçe olarak yazılmıştı ama Ermenice harflerle, özellikle de Harf İnkılabı'ndan sadece dört yıl sonra? Yanıtları aramaya kararlı bir şekilde, el yazmasını dikkatle zarftan çıkardım. İlk bakışta, "Bunu nasıl çözeceğim?" diye düşündüm. Ermeniceyi ve el yazısı okumayı öğrenmeye yeni başlamıştım. Tesadüfen yanımda oturan Zakarya Mildanoğlu, Ermeniceyi akıcı bir şekilde konuşan ve okuyan bir uzmandır. İlk birkaç satırı bana yüksek sesle okudu ve o an belirleyici oldu. Metni daha yakından inceleyebilmek ve transliterasyonunu yapmak üzere dijital bir faksimilesini talep ettim. Dijital faksimileyi aldıktan ve kendi başıma çalışıp deşifre ettikten sonra, bu metnin ilk bakışta göründüğünden çok daha katmanlı ve özgün olduğunu fark ettim.

Bu nedenle, bu araştırmayı mümkün kılan güvenleri ve destekleri için Hrant Dink Vakfı'na en içten teşekkürlerimi sunarak başlamak istiyorum. Bu çalışmayı benimle paylaşmaya ve araştırmamı desteklemeye yönelik açık yaklaşımları olmasaydı, bu erken Cumhuriyet dönemi Ermenice harfli Türkçe monoloğu keşfetmem mümkün olmazdı. Vakıf, yalnızca Hagop Ayvaz'ın mirasına erişimimi sağlamakla kalmadı; Ayvaz'ı şahsen tanımış olan bazı Ermeni ve Türk tiyatro tarihi uzmanlarıyla tanışmam için de bana imkân sundu. Araştırmamı destekledikleri ve Türkiye'deki azınlıkların kültürel mirasını keşfetmemde bana değerli rehberlik sundukları için Zeynep Taşkın, Lara Taş, İren Bıçakcı, Adom Şaşkal ve Damla Barın'a özellikle müteşekkirim. Zamanlarını, anılarını ve görüşlerini benimle cömertçe paylaşan iki röportaj ortağım Boğos Çalgıcıoğlu ve Nesim Ovadya İzrail'e de derin teşekkürlerimi sunuyorum. Onların katkıları, Hagop Ayvaz'ın yaşamını, arşivinin ve eserinin ait olduğu daha geniş kültürel tarihi anlamamda derinlik kazandırdı.

Ayrıca hocalarıma da en içten teşekkürlerimi sunmak isterim: Beni Ermenice harfli Türkçe çalışmalarla tanıştıran ve araştırma projelerine, kaynaklara ve dil programlarına erişim sağlayarak akademik gelişimimin ilk dönemlerinde destekleyen Yavuz Köse'ye; akademik yolculuğum boyunca desteğini esirgemeyen ve edebiyatla ilgili sorulara yönelik ilgimi şekillendiren Gisela Procházka-Eisl'e ve öğrenimimin ilk yıllarında beni akademik araştırma ve yazının temelleriyle tanıştıran Claudia Römer'e.

Bu tez, arkadaşlarımın ve ailemin sarsılmaz desteği olmadan mümkün olamazdı. Akademik yolculuğum boyunca bana inanan ve her zaman yanımda olan annem Feryal'e ve kardeşlerim Ceyda, Eda Seher, Gizem, Sedef Cansu ve Efe Mertcan'a derin teşekkürlerimi sunuyorum. Ayrıca, beni daha genç yaşta Osmanlı ve Türkiye çalışmalarıyla tanıştıran kuzenim Sinem'e özellikle minnettarım.

Son olarak, fikirlerimi ilk duyan ve okuyan sevgili arkadaşlarıma en içten teşekkürlerimi sunuyorum. Geri bildirimleriniz, desteğiniz ve sabrınız bu sürecin en kıymetli parçalarından biriydi.

Bu çalışmayı babam Turgut'a ve sessizlik ile inkârın yükünü taşıyan herkese ithaf ediyorum.

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Note on Transliteration and Translation

The Armeno-Turkish monologue [play] *Սիqի Սէվիյօրում* was transliterated following the transcription principles proposed by Hülya Çelik and Ani Sargsyan[2] in their comparative study on Armeno-Turkish literary standards. As the original manuscript is unpaginated, all page references in this thesis refer to my working transliteration, which was structured for the purpose of text analyses and citation. In transliterating Ayvaz's monologue, the original punctuation has been preserved, with particular attention paid to the use of ellipses and abrupt periods, which are integral to the emotional and performative rhythm. Furthermore, certain compound names and expressions such as *Cebidelikzade*, *Sevdazade*, and *Bukrekzade* were left untranslated in the English version, as their satirical tone and cultural resonance would be diminished through direct translation. All translations, unless otherwise indicated, have been conducted by the author.

Armenian Alphabet	Pronunciation in (Armeno-)Turkish	Proposed Transcription
Ա ա	*a* as in ադամ [*adam*, "man"]	a
Բ բ	*p* as in qապու [*ḳapu,* "door"]	ṗ
Գ գ	*k* as in qապու [*ḳapu*]	ḳ
Դ դ	*t* as in վարդապետ [*Varṭabed*, "priest"]	ṭ
Ե ե	*y* as in եէտի [*yedi*, "seven"]	y
Զ զ	*z* as in qըz [*ḳız*, "girl"]	z
Է է	*e* as in միլլէթ [*millet*, "nation, people"]	e
Ը ը	*ı* as in եազըq [*yazıḳ*, "a pity, a shame"]	ı
Թ թ	*t* as in ատ [*at*, "horse"]	t
Ժ ժ	*j* as in միւժտէ [*müjde*, "good news"]	j
Ի ի	*i* as in զիյադէ [ziyade, "more, much, too much"]	i
Լ լ	*l* as in էօյլէ [öyle, "so, in that manner"]	l
Խ խ	*ẖ* as in տախի [daẖi, "also"]	ẖ

[2] Hülya Çelik and Ani Sargsyan, "Introducing Transcription Standards for Armeno-Turkish Literary Studies," *Diyâr* 3, no. 2 (2022): 161–189.

Ծ ծ	*ʤ* as in ծառայ [ʤaŕa, “slave”]	ʤ
Կ կ	*g* as in կէրի [geri, “back”]	g
Հ h	*h* as in հէման [heman, “at once”]	h
Ձ ձ	*ts* as in ձօն [tson, “gift”]	ts
Ղ ղ	*ġ* as in ղօղրու [doġru, “right”]	ġ
Ճ ճ	*c* as in ճան [can, “soul, live”]	c
Մ մ	*m* as in ամմա [amma, “but”]	m
Յ յ	*y* as in էյլէր [eyler, “he / she / it does”]	y
Ն ն	*n* as in նիշան [nişan, “sign, trace”]	n
Շ շ	*ş* as in պաշ [baş, “head”]	ş
Ո n	*o* in the medial position as in Գրիգոր [Ḳriḳor] or vo in the initial position as in որդի [vorṭi, “son”]	o / vo
Չ չ	*ç* as in չօք [çoḳ, “many, much”]	ç
Պ պ	*b* as in պիր [bir, “one”]	b
Ջ ջ	*ç* as in Վինջենցո [Vinçentso]	ç
Ռ ռ	*r* as in ախօռ [aḫoŕ, “stable”]	ŕ
Ս u	*s* as in սօնրա [sonra, “then”]	s
Վ վ	*v* as in ճիվան [civan, “young”]	v
Տ տ	*d* as in քատար [ḳadar, “(as) much, many as”]	d
Ր ր	*r* as in փէտէր [peder, “father”]	r
Ց ց	*ts* as in հայց [hayots, “Armenian”]	ts
Ւ ւ	*v* as in Լուսաւորիչ [Lusavoriç, “the Illuminator”]	v
Փ փ	*p* as in փէք [pek, “much, many”]	p
Ք ք	*k* as in քէօր [kör, “blind”]	k
Օ օ	*o* as in եօք [yoḳ, “non-existent, absent, not”]	o
Ֆ ֆ	*f* as in հաֆիֆ [hafif, “light in weight, light in degree”]	f
Էo	կէօզ [göz]	ö
Իւ	դիւքեան [dükyan <dükkan]	ü
ու	Պօլու [Bolu]	u

Note on Turkish Pronunciation

Turkish proper nouns have been transcribed using the modern Turkish Latin alphabet. The letters b, d, f, k, l, m, n, o, p, r, s, t, v, y, and z are pronounced approximately as in English. The letters q, w, and x are not used in standard Turkish.

Here is a guide to Turkish-specific letters and their approximate English equivalents:

- a — as in *car*
- c — as in *jam*
- ç — as in *church*
- e — as in *pet* or *let*
- g — always as in *garden*
- ğ — referred to as "soft g" (*yumuşak g* in Turkish), does not have an independent sound; rather, it functions to extend the preceding vowel or facilitate a seamless glide between vowels.
- ı — like the second *e* in *taken* (a central, unrounded vowel)
- i — as in *machine*
- o — as in *port*
- ö — like the *u* in *fur* (British English) or *e* in *her*
- ş — as in *shy*
- u — as in *rule*
- ü — as in the German *über*, or like *u* in *menu*

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1 Introduction

EVERYONE IS EQUAL BEFORE THE LAW WITHOUT DISTINCTION AS TO LANGUAGE, RACE, COLOUR, SEX, POLITICAL OPINION, PHILOSOPHICAL BELIEF, RELIGION AND SECT, OR ANY SUCH GROUNDS.[3]

— ARTICLE 10, CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

Among Hagop Ayvaz personal belongings, one finds a folded page from the Turkish Constitution: the clause that guarantees the equality of all citizens, regardless of religion, language, or ethnicity. Ayvaz was an Armenian playwright, actor, stage critic, and editor of one of the longest-running theatre journals in Turkey, *Kulis.* For Ayvaz, this was not merely a legal text but a symbolic lifeline, a portable reminder of a promise that was never truly fulfilled.

At the Lausanne Conference, İsmet İnönü had argued against the need for international guarantees of minority rights in Turkey, claiming that such protections had been exploited by imperial powers.[4] While the treaty that followed granted certain rights to non-Muslim religious minorities, it made no provision for linguistic or ethnic protections. This gap laid the groundwork for the systematic marginalisation of minority languages, cultures, and identities, including Armenians.[5] As a result, Armenians were formally recognised as a religious minority but their linguistic and cultural characteristics increasingly came under pressure. As Ohannes Kılıçdağı observes, the legal framework's emphasis on religious identity resulted in Armenians being recorded solely according to their faith, thereby erasing their linguistic and cultural presence from official recognition.[6] This administrative reduction was compounded in the early Republican period by policies that increasingly marginalised the public use of Armenian, leading to the cultural and political silencing of the community.[7] These structural developments

[3] Section 10 of the Turkish constitution, also found in Hagop Ayvaz's archive, in his personal belongings. Box of Hagop Ayvaz's Personal Items, Hagop Ayvaz Collection, Hrant Dink Foundation Archive. This object, resembling a compact photo album or a wallet, was found among Hagop Ayvaz's personal effects and contains a photograph, his press card, and a clipping of Article 10 of the Turkish Constitution.
[4] Genell, Aimee M., 'From the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic: International Law and Minority Rights before and after Lausanne', in *They All Made Peace - What Is Peace? The 1923 Treaty of Lausanne and the New Imperial Order*, ed. Jonathan Conlin and Hilmi Ozan Özavcı (Chicago: Gingko Library, 2023), 30.
[5] Ibid., 51.
[6] Ohannes Kılıçdağı, "Ne 'Millet' Ne Vatandaş: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Ermeniler," in *Cumhuriyet'in 100 Yılı: Çemberin Dışındakiler – Azınlıklar*, ed. Elçin Macar (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2024), 83–84.
[7] Ibid., 85.

provide the backdrop against which Hagop Ayvaz's decision to write a monologue in Turkish but in the Armenian script can also be understood. This act demonstrates linguistic visibility while remaining readable within a cultural code that eludes control, an act that could be understood as a performative expression of a non-visible but resilient identity.

This study presents the inaugural scholarly examination of Hagop Ayvaz's unpublished Armeno-Turkish monologue, *Սիզի Սէվիյորում* (Sizi Seviyorum, hereafter *I Love You*), composed in 1932 in Turkish using Armenian script, a phenomenon that has historically eluded the purview of both Turkish and Armenian historiographies. The study innovatively enhances accessibility by employing transliteration, translation, close reading, and contextual interpretation. Ayvaz's monologue, although neither staged nor published, has remarkable theatricality and profound critical insight. It explores issues of romance, social ambition, and male self-presentation while concurrently including autobiographical traces.

This thesis does not approach *I Love You* as a confessional document but as a performative intervention, an act of cultural resilience articulated through irony, fragmentation, and subversion. At the intersection of theatre- and performance studies, philosophy, and political history, the analysis draws on Jacques Derrida's concept of iterability and Paavo Paavolainen's dramaturgy of *texture* to frame the monologue as a spectral performance: deferred, fragmented, and historically situated. The text, though silent in terms of stage performance, enacts a forceful presence through its form and content. What if *I Love You* is not merely a literary artefact but a subtle act of survival, a self-positioning gesture from the margins of Early Republican Turkey?

The guiding questions of this thesis emerge from this intersection: How does Ayvaz's choice to write in Armenian script but in Turkish function as a performative gesture within a landscape shaped by authoritarian nation-building and linguistic engineering? In what ways does the monologue articulate cultural survival, resistance, or resilience through its formal, linguistic, and thematic strategies? What autobiographical traces are present in the monologue, and how do they interact with theatrical traditions and minoritarian self-representation? Can *I Love You* be read as a silent but active contribution to an Armeno-Turkish theatrical tradition, and what does this imply for the historiography of Turkish and Armenian theatre? To what extent does the monologue reveal an entanglement of performativity and theatricality?

I Love You revolves around a monologic narrator who reflects on unfulfilled love, economic hardship, and personal failure against the backdrop of a rapidly modernising Turkish society. Themes such as romantic longing, class tension, masculine insecurity, and social isolation

unfold in an ironic, fragmented voice that oscillates between incisive critique and theatrical self-awareness. These topics are not merely thematic but closely tied to the monologue's form, language, and cultural context, constituting a performative critique from the margins.

This study draws on Jacques Derrida's philosophical theory of performativity and Teemu Paavolainen's concept of dramaturgy to analyse the performative and theatrical dimensions of *I Love You*. Derrida's notion of iterability illuminates how the monologue becomes performative through repetition, fragmentation, and spectral address, thereby exposing the act of writing itself as inherently performative. Paavolainen's dramaturgical perspective complements this by foregrounding the layered textures and materialities through which performative meaning takes shape—even in texts that exist solely on the page and have never been staged. By combining these frameworks, the analysis combines philosophy, theatre studies, and performance theory, enabling an interdisciplinary approach. This method consciously departs from actor- or embodiment-centred models of performance, instead redirecting attention from bodily presence on stage to the political potential of writing, particularly under conditions of marginalisation.

To deepen this performative reading and foreground its political stakes, the analysis draws on theories of resistance, resilience and infrapolitics, which illuminate how marginalised actors navigate and subtly contest dominant structures through encoded, non-confrontational cultural practices. Resistance typically denotes symbolic or direct acts that challenge hegemonic structures, while resilience refers to the capacity to endure, adapt, and assert identity within systems that seek to erase difference.[8] Drawing on James C. Scott's concept of infrapolitics, this analysis focuses on subtle, coded, and often hidden forms of expression, such as scripts, archival texts, and aesthetic strategies, as vital spaces for both dissent and survival. Scott's notion of "hidden transcripts" includes not only embodied actions but also linguistic and formal adaptations that assert identity and critique power covertly.[9] Diana Taylor's distinction between "archive" and "repertoire" similarly highlights how written texts, especially those outside official circulation, can preserve memory and enact quiet refusal.[10] In such repressive contexts,

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[8] Philippe Bourbeau and Caitlin Ryan, "Resilience, Resistance, Infrapolitics and Enmeshment," in *Resilience in Social, Cultural and Political Spheres*, ed. Benjamin Rampp, Martin Endreß, and Marie Naumann (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 2019), 167 and 170.
[9] James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 20 and 183-84.
[10] Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 19 and 89.

materials like Ayvaz's monologue become crucial markers of resilience and dissent. As Philippe Bourbeau and Caitlin Ryan note, the boundary between enduring and resisting is often blurred, as these processes can operate in tandem rather than in strict opposition.[11] Following their relational framework, this study similarly approaches aesthetic practices as sites where resilience enables survival under pressure and resistance activates acts of memory and refusal, together asserting minoritarian presence in the face of erasure. Within this framework, resilient and resistant acts, particularly in artistic or performative contexts, can be seen as mutually reinforcing strategies that challenge and unsettle dominant narratives.

Turkish theatre historiography has long marginalised non-Muslim contributions, particularly those of Armenians. As Şeyda Nur Yıldırım notes, this exclusion was not accidental but part of a nation-building project that aligned theatre with Turkishness.[12] Scholars such as Rüstem Ertuğ Altınay and Hülya Adak have challenged this view, framing theatre as a political space that negotiates memory and identity.[13] Murat Cankara and Fırat Güllü similarly advocate for a historiography that recovers suppressed voices and recognises multicultural contributions. Cankara highlights how, in the wake of Hrant Dink's assassination, the role of theatre in Turkey has undergone a significant transformation. The urgency surrounding issues of minority memory and historical justice has intensified, even as fundamental structural challenges persist.[14] This aligns with Güllü's call to reframe Turkish theatre history through a multicultural lens and to move beyond exclusive national paradigms.[15] Nesim Ovadya İzrail underlines that Armenian theatre-artists, once central to the Ottoman stage, have been largely erased from Turkish narratives. Ayvaz's overlooked monologue offers a critical counterpoint to this silencing. Through its script, form, and tone, it intervenes in dominant historiographies and anticipates later counter-theatrical movements.

Recent research by Aram Ghoogasian and Jennifer Manoukian has substantially redefined the understanding of Armeno-Turkish by contesting the dominant hybridity paradigm. Instead of

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[11] Bourbeau and Ryan, "Resilience, Resistance," 169-170.
[12] Şeyda Nur Yıldırım, "Staging Theatre Historiography: The Afterlives of Ottoman Armenian Drama in Contemporary Turkish Public Theatre," *Theatre Research International* 48, no. 3 (2023): 248.
[13] Hülya Adak and Rüstem Ertuğ Altınay, "Introduction: Theatre and Politics in Turkey and Its Diasporas," *Comparative Drama* 52, no. 3–4 (2018): 191.
[14] Murat Cankara, "Enter Armenians: The Rediscovery of Armenian Theater in Post-Hrant Dink Turkey," *Theatre and Performance Notes and Counternotes* 1, no. 2 (5 August 2024): 190.
[15] Fırat Güllü, "Geç Osmanlı ve Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Ermenilerin Türkçe Tiyatro Faaliyetlerinden Tasfiyesi," in *Yok Edilen Medeniyet: Geç Osmanlı ve Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemlerinde Gayrimüslim Varlığı*, ed. Ararat Şekeryan and Nvart Taşçı (Istanbul: Hrant Dink Vakfı Yayınları, 2015), 290-291.

depicting Turkish as a borrowed or imposed language, both advocate for a denationalised viewpoint that acknowledges it as a common imperial medium intricately woven into Armenian culture and literary heritage.[16] Their interventions challenge nationalist conceptions that regard Armenian and Turkish as fundamentally separate languages belonging to different ethno-cultural domains. Ghoogasian advocates for a "depropriative" idiom that acknowledges Turkish not as the only domain of Turks but as a multilingual literary realm collaboratively influenced by Armenian authors, editors, and readers.[17] In contrast, Manoukian employs a sociolinguistic perspective to analyse how bilingual Armenian men in 19th-century Istanbul pragmatically chose Turkish as their preferred language in daily, educational, and literary settings. Her empirical research illustrates that Turkish frequently served as a medium for social mobility, urban status, and closeness among Ottoman Armenians, rather than solely acting as a tool for assimilation.[18] Both scholars contend that Turkish was not extrinsic to Armenian life but rather an integral and formative component of it. Building on these insights, this thesis proposes a reading of Ayvaz's monologue *I Love You* not as a hybrid literary gesture but potentially as a performative continuation of a broader, albeit suppressed, Armeno-Turkish theatrical tradition. While further research is required to fully situate Ayvaz's work within this framework, this study suggests that his use of Turkish in the Armenian script may be understood as a cultural assertion rather than a compromise. The monologue's scriptural choices, ironic tone, and structural fragmentation may thus be interpreted as performative strategies of memory, defiance, and survival. Focusing on this single archival text, the study aims to illuminate how performativity and cultural memory[19] converge in subtle yet significant ways. Rather than reconstructing a full theatrical history, it offers a close reading of one moment of resistant authorship, inviting further exploration of similar traces across Armeno-Turkish cultural production.

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[16] Aram Ghoogasian, "What We Talk About When We Talk About Armeno-Turkish," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 9, no. 1 (2022): 319–23., Aram Ghoogasian, "The Problem with Hybridity: A Critique of Armeno-Turkish Studies," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 25, no. 1 (2022): 39-40., Jennifer Manoukian, "Forbidden Attraction: Ottoman Armenians and the Turkish Language in the Age of Nationalism," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 11, no. 1 (2024): 215.

[17] Ghoogasian, "The Problem with Hybridity", 45-46.

[18] Manoukian, "Forbidden Attraction", 232.

[19] This study uses the concept of *cultural memory* to refer to the dynamic and mediated processes through which societies remember, forget, and negotiate the past. Following Astrid Erll, cultural memory is understood as an interplay between past and present, shaped by socio-cultural contexts, institutions, and media., See Astrid Erll, "Cultural Memory Studies: An Introduction," in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 2–4.

Six chapters structure this thesis. Chapter 1 introduces the research topic, situates it within relevant academic debates, and outlines the guiding questions and objectives of the study. Chapter 2 develops the conceptual tools necessary for the subsequent analysis, drawing primarily on Jacques Derrida and Teemu Paavolainen to frame notions of performativity, theatricality, and performance. Chapter 3 presents the methodological framework, which combines archival research, biographical contextualisation, and systematising expert interviews, while also reflecting on theory as an analytical method. Chapter 4 reconstructs the life and cultural legacy of Hagop Ayvaz, focusing on his biography, his long-running theatre journal *Kulis*, and the role of his archive in shaping cultural memory and identity. Chapter 5 offers a detailed performative reading of Ayvaz's Armeno-Turkish monologue *I Love You*, contextualising it historically and socio-politically and analysing its dramaturgical structure, use of Armenian script, and critique of class, ideology, and modernity. The chapter further explores the text's irony, autobiographical traces, and its intertextual engagement with İ. Galip's 1930 monologue *I Love You*, highlighting Ayvaz's subversive reappropriation of form and voice. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes by repositioning the monologue not only as a contribution to the Armeno-Turkish theatrical tradition but also as a performative act of archival resistance. It traces how *I Love You*, though never staged, enacts memory, minoritarian agency, and cultural endurance, thereby offering new theoretical and archival insights into the silenced margins of the history of theatre in Turkey.

2 Approaching Performativity, Theatricality and Performance

Before describing the methodology of this study, it is necessary to outline the theoretical frameworks that guide its analytical approach. Since the monologue is examined not only as a text but as a performative and theatrical act, this chapter introduces the conceptual tools that enable such a reading. This chapter draws primarily on Jacques Derrida and Teemu Paavolainen as the central theoretical frameworks used to analyse Ayvaz's monologue. While Judith Butler, Jon McKenzie, and Rebecca Schneider provide important coordinates within the broader discourse on performativity and performance, this study engages their work in different capacities.[20] McKenzie and Schneider are cited primarily to contextualise the theoretical field and map key developments in performance studies. Butler's concept of resignification[21], by contrast, holds conceptual relevance for the analysis, especially through Paavo Paavolainen's adaptation of her work. Nonetheless, the primary analytical lenses remain Jacques Derrida's philosophy of iterability and Paavolainen's dramaturgical framework, which together structure the core interpretive approach to Ayvaz's monologue. While the term *performativity* has been shaped by diverse disciplines, from linguistics and philosophy to theatre and cultural studies, this study draws specifically on Jacques Derrida's concept of *iterability* and Teemu Paavolainen's dramaturgical texture to explore how the text operates as a performative and theatrical act of minoritarian inscription.[22] These theoretical tools support the broader hypothesis that *I Love You* functions not merely as a literary monologue but as a performative gesture of cultural resilience.

The monologue occupies an indeterminate space between performance and performativity: it expresses presence via absence, establishes identity through writing, and produces theatricality without physical embodiment. This dual framework, performance as event and performativity as inscription, underlies the analysis. This study is grounded in the epistemological assumption

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[20] See Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Jon McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance* (London: Routledge, 2001); Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (London: Routledge, 2011).

[21] Butler argues that performativity allows for the resignification of language, whereby injurious terms or socially authoritative expressions can be re-appropriated and recontextualised, breaking from their harmful or exclusionary and origins to generate new, counter-hegemonic meanings and futures., See Butler, *Excitable Speech,* 14 and 167.

[22] Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context", in *Limited Inc*, trans. Samuel Weber and Jeffrey Mehlman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 1–23; Teemu Paavolainen, *Theatricality and Performativity: Writings on Texture from Plato's Cave to Urban Activism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

that theatre is inherently performative, not only through live embodiment but also through its structuring of meaning, affect and subjectivity. Rather than treating theatricality and performativity as opposing categories, this study approaches them as dialectically intertwined modes of articulation. Following Paavolainen, this study reads theatrical *texture* as a performative ecology in which identities, contradictions, and desires are not simply represented but dynamically enacted, even within a written, non-performed monologue.

The concepts of *theatricality* and *performativity* have undergone significant conceptual shifts throughout the 20th century.[23] While theatricality initially referred to the aesthetics of staged performance, theorists such as Nikolai Evreinov and later Erika Fischer-Lichte emphasised its broader cultural relevance beyond the theatre.[24] Performativity, shaped by J.L. Austin's speech act theory and later redefined by Derrida, focuses on the constitutive power of utterances and actions.[25] This chapter draws on these theoretical developments while focusing on Derrida's and Paavolainen's contributions, which allow for a reading of Ayvaz's monologue as both a theatrical and performative act of minoritarian inscription.

According to John Hillis Miller, we must distinguish between performance, as in theatrical enactment or artistic presentation, and performativity, as in the ability of language to do something and bring something into being. Even though a performance might feature "a spectacular rendition of Hamlet," this has "practically nothing to do" with a performative statement like "I promise to be there at ten," which uses language to act in the world.[26] This distinction is especially beneficial in comprehending *I Love You*. Despite being structured like a theatrical monologue (play), it was never performed and might not have been written with traditional theatrical performance in mind. Rather, it serves as a performative text, using writing to affirm cultural identity, critique social structures, and enact Armenian presence in times of absence. Since the monologue's theatrical form is simulated rather than actualised, its power lies in what Miller — drawing on Derrida — calls *iterability*: the capacity of a text to repeat and rupture across contexts.[27] Ayvaz not only simulates the performative conditions of theatre but also iterates İ. Galip's monologue, repeating its form only to subvert it from within. He

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[23] Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Performativität: Eine kulturwissenschaftliche Einführung*, 4., aktualisierte und ergänzte Ausgabe, UTB Kultur, Musik, Theater 5458 (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2021), 33-36.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid., 43.
[26] J. Hillis Miller, "Derrida's Special Theory of Performativity," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 106, no. 2 (2007), 219.
[27] Miller, "Derrida's Special Theory of Performativity,", 230.

thereby enacts a resignification that exceeds both the original genre and authorial intent. In this regard, *I Love You* operates performatively, not through bodily enactment but through the very act of writing, which simulates theatricality and enacts performance on the page. The act of writing has ontological, political, and emotional implications. This perspective is consistent with Derrida's idea that a performative utterance can arise as a "response to a demand by the wholly other", creating new subjectivities and upending linear temporality, rather than requiring a stable subject or a set stage.[28] In the context of Ayvaz's monologue, this suggests that the act of writing itself becomes a response to historical erasure. It is a method of asserting presence even when there is no stage, audience, or fixed identity. The monologue thus performs not from a place of authority but from fragmentation, rupture, and deferral.

In *Perform or Else*, Jon McKenzie deconstructs the limited view of performance as mere bodily enactment and introduces a more expansive framework that includes discursive and technical acts. Referencing Butler, McKenzie emphasises that performativity entails "a reiteration of norms that precede, constrain, and exceed the performer, and thus cannot be regarded as the product of the performer's 'will' or 'choice'". He warns that conflating performativity with performance would be erroneous.[29] In his discussion of Derrida, McKenzie explicitly grounds his analysis in the concept of "generalised writing," emphasising that performativity emerges through the iterable, citational structure of language, whether spoken or written. McKenzie's *Perform or Else* carefully separates performance and performativity, illustrating that both paradigms support modern power and resistance, sometimes overlap. He demonstrates that discursive and textual acts can resist dominant norms "from within" by means of repetition, citation, and structural disruption.[30] Thus, performativity is a contested arena where physical or textual performance can impose or undermine norms. Hagop Ayvaz's *I Love You*, in this broader context, is a performative act that does not require embodiment, as the analysis in Chapter 5 will demonstrate. Through its symbolic form and parody, the monologue conjures a presence that is neither staged nor embodied but rather inscribed.

As Rebecca Schneider argues in *Performing Remains*, performance is not what disappears but precisely what remains, across bodies, texts, and time. Her notion allows us to think of

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[28] Miller, "Derrida's Special Theory of Performativity,", 232.
[29] McKenzie, *Perform or Else*, 169.
[30] Ibid., 167 and 213.

performance not as ephemeral but as trace, return, and reiteration.[31] She questions any neat separation between live embodiment and documentation, arguing that all these forms participate in the ongoing reiteration and surfacing of performance across time and space. She notes that even archival practices, texts, and documentation can be thought of as performative and as participating in the process of remaining rather than simply recording or fixing what has "disappeared."[32] Ayvaz's monologue play continues to exist as a performative remainder that unfolds over time, serving as a resistant gesture of cultural survival. Although the separation between performance and performativity is analytically beneficial, Ayvaz's *I Love You* complicates this dichotomy. The text operates autonomously, generating what McKenzie and Schneider characterise as non-embodied, yet literally inscribed acts of performance.

Paavolainen differentiates theatricality from performativity in both philosophical and functional terms yet insists they are dialectically interwoven. He demonstrates both conceptually and through his textual metaphors that their relationship is one of mutual shaping and ongoing negotiation rather than strict opposition.[33] Such an approach enables an analysis of the monologue that highlights the fluid and complicated relationship among appearance and action, spectacle and doing, surface and depth. *Theatricality* typically signifies a characteristic of appearance, excess, and spectacle, historically linked to the visual or representational dimensions of art and culture, involving observation, detachment, and the manifestation of actions or relationships. It is associated with perspective, abstraction, and objectification, frequently regarded as a "derived realm" with negative implications (such as falseness or inauthenticity). He promotes a restoration of the beneficial aspects of theatricality: its moral influence, its capacity to make relationships visible, and its ability to create critical distance, not merely as spectacle but as a means of fostering reflective participation, ethical consciousness, and a redefinition of standards.[34] Conversely, *performativity* is rooted in action, initiating change, or reinforcing normativity by repetitive behaviour. He does not limit performativity just to theatre or drama. Paavolainen shows that performativity names the way we tacitly weave worlds and identities, variously concealed or clarified by the step-aside tactics of theatricality.[35] Throughout his work, Paavolainen employs metaphors — such as texture,

[31] Schneider, *Performing Remains,* 102-106.
[32] Ibid. 99 and 101.
[33] Paavolainen, *Theatricality and Performativity,* 2-3.
[34] Ibid., 5.
[35] Ibid., 32.

threads, knots, and weave — to complicate and enrich the dialectical relationship between performativity and theatricality. As he outlines in an earlier article, these metaphors are conceptually adapted from cognitive ecological models, highlighting the dynamic, relational, and extended nature of theatrical meaning-making.[36] Paavolainen's metaphors are not limited to staged or live performance but expressly developed to address the kind of complex, textured performativity seen in texts like Ayvaz's monologue. He reconceptualises dramaturgy not simply as the sequencing of theatrical events or the domain of the theatre maker but as a broader, textural principle that governs how meaning, action, and material are organised and made to interact.[37] He argues that dramaturgy is not just a sequence of actions destined for the stage but a *weave:*

> So, suppose we imagine dramaturgy not on the mechanistic model of the assembly line, but rather as an assembly of lines: of divergent actions and materials that bring forth a meaningful event in their very interweaving.[38]

Texture serves as a model for how cultural, social, or artistic processes are not linear or isolated but interwoven, emergent, and heterogeneous. Paavolainen argues that while text, as a dramaturgical paradigm, follows a linear and hierarchical structure shaped by the logic of print culture, texture operates as a simultaneous and heterogeneous performative ecology, in which dramatic categories emerge only retrospectively through the interweaving of trajectories.[39] This analysis will employ Paavolainen's concept of texture:

> More generally, the language of texture helps us turn from rigid semantic conditions … to the more temporal or dramaturgical dynamics of their discursive and material 'interweaving'… to partake in the 'new wave of materialist thought' whose 'post-Butlerian accounts of performativity' would challenge a perceived 'cul-de-sac of discursive idealism.[40]

Texture describes both the quality and structure that emerges from the weave, the "experienced quality of textuality", and the unique feel or pattern that arises as elements are interwoven.[41] Paavolainen uses *threads* to describe the individual sections or units of writing within his work,

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[36] Teemu Paavolainen, "Textures of Thought: Theatricality, Performativity, and the Extended/Enactive Debate," in *The Cognitive Humanities: Embodied Mind in Literature and Culture*, ed. Peter Garratt (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 71–92.
[37] Teemu Paavolainen, "Fabric Philosophy: The 'Texture' of Theatricality and Performativity," *Performance Philosophy* 2, no. 2 (2017): 172–188., 175.
[38] Paavolainen, *Theatricality and Performativity,* 17.
[39] Ibid., 18.
[40] Ibid., 10.
[41] Ibid., 20.

which function as strands that, through their interrelation, form a more complex and unified thematic *fabric*.[42] Thread refers both to the structure of his book and, by extension, any individual element — such as an argument, motif, or thematic line — that can be woven with others into a broader, interconnected weave.[43] A *weave* (of dramaturgy) is the dynamic, multistranded process of constructing meaning and pattern through the interrelation of diverse threads. Weaves always comprise threads, but threads themselves can be actions, emotions, materials, or even narrative devices – anything that contributes to the broader fabric or "mesh of dramaturgy."[44] *Knots*, using Paavolainen's vocabulary, are points where multiple threads entangle, intersect, or become densely intertwined, creating moments of intensified meaning or change, a "local thickening of the fabric." In this sense, knots act as what Paavolainen elsewhere terms "nodal conductors": sites within a text or performance where meaning, affect, or potential for transformation becomes especially compressed or charged. These moments of condensation are where performativity and theatricality become most potent, as the convergence of threads generates a heightened visibility, action, or rupture within the dramaturgical texture of the work. Such knots or nodal conductors are crucial, as they allow identity, memory, and emotion to reverberate throughout the fabric of the text with intensified resonance.[45] The fabric is the composite field that results, while texture is the specific, perceptible quality that arises from this complex interplay. Paavolainen explicitly wants to show that texture, weave, threads, and knots can structure meaning and experience in both written texts and theatrical performance, challenging theatre's "representation versus event" and literature's "fixed versus dynamic" binaries.[46] As he suggests, theatrical textures compress stories of performative constitution into gestures, words, and objects, into nodal conductors that activate meaning without relying on material embodiment.[47] This framework allows reading Ayvaz's monologue as a performative and theatrical fabric: a texture that stages contradiction, longing, and cultural resilience not merely through script and language, but through the interplay of narrative voice, self-irony, audience address, and shifting identities. When applied to Ayvaz's Armeno-Turkish monologue, these metaphors depict the text as a dynamic network of interwoven cultural and historical elements rather than a static artefact. Defining Armeno-Turkish as a *performative fabric* in

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[42] Paavolainen, *Theatricality and Performativity,* 129.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid., 17, 18 and 20.
[45] Ibid., 264.
[46] Ibid., 3.
[47] Paavolainen, *Fabric Philosophy*, 181.

Ayvaz's monologue aligns with Paavolainen's approach, as it foregrounds the ongoing, iterative negotiation of identity, memory, and language, implicating both the acts of writing and performing and the surfaces upon which visibility emerges. Writing is thus not secondary to performance; it is a mode of performativity. The texture of the written monologue, with its structure, repetitions, silences, and references, constitutes threads, and knots that (re)produce, contest, or rework the reality of Early Republican Turkey. Paavolainen places strong emphasis on this "extended dramaturgical texture," which may be "stretched beyond imposed teleology," emphasizing emergence over closure or embodiment.[48] He reframes dramaturgy as a performative operation, not a mechanical blueprint. Instead of classical Aristotelian structure, he offers a dynamic metaphor of texture and weaving, an approach that enables the analysis of textual theatricality beyond representation. In Ayvaz's monologue, dramaturgical choices do not simply narrate; they perform social critique, temporal dislocation, and identity negotiation through the arrangement and friction of threads. Paavolainen's framework thus dissolves the stage-text binary: writing is not only documentation but itself a performative, dramaturgical act, a site of weaving and knotting realities.[49] This perspective raises the hypothesis that, even in the absence of literal theatrical embodiment, minoritarian writing such as Ayvaz's can be read as a performative fabric whose texture is itself world-making, resistant, and generative. While Paavolainen provides a dramaturgical lens grounded in performance studies to analyse how textual structures enact performative meaning, the following section turns to Jacques Derrida, whose philosophical rethinking of performativity through the concept of *iterability* enables a different yet complementary framework. Derrida's approach illuminates how Ayvaz's monologue, even as a written and unpublished text, can function performatively through repetition, citation, and disruption of context.

In his response to Austin, particularly in the text *Signature, Event, Context*, Derrida radically challenges and transforms the concept of performativity. Drawing on the idea of iterability, he argues:

> Every sign, linguistic or non-linguistic, spoken or written (in the current sense of this opposition), in a small or large unit, can be *cited* put between quotation marks; in so doing it can break with every given context, engendering an infinity of new contexts in a manner which is absolutely illimitable.[50]

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[48] Paavolainen, *Theatricality and Performativity*., 129.
[49] Ibid., 9.
[50] Derrida, "Signature Event Context," 12.

Austin marginalises theatrical, poetic, and fictional utterances, framing them as derivative or "parasitic" upon ordinary language use. He contends that performative speech acts should only be examined in conventional, real-world contexts, explicitly excluding instances where language is employed in fictional or staged settings, such as an actor delivering lines in a play, a poet embedding speech within verse, or a soliloquy's introspective performance. In such cases, he argues, language operates in an altered, non-serious mode, detached from its standard communicative function.[51] Derrida challenges this artificial distinction by demonstrating that the very phenomenon Austin marginalises reveals the fundamental structure of all language. Every linguistic utterance, whether a solemn oath or a theatrical declaration, relies on iterability, which refers to the necessary repeatability of signs. Iterability ensures that any text can "function outside of its initial context and beyond the intentional reach of the author/emitting subjectivity."[52] For Derrida, signs are never self-contained; they signify through their relationship to other signs, and their meaning is never fully present. This repeatability renders any strict separation between "authentic" and "parasitic" speech acts illogical. What Austin views as disruptive exceptions are, for Derrida, constitutive: even an ostensibly authentic performative act like a marriage ceremony derives its force from repeatable, citational structures that function equally in fictional contexts.[53] Derrida posits that parasitism is a fundamental requirement for all utterances, rendering iterability a "quasi-transcendental" characteristic of language.[54] Derrida argues that iterability is essential to all language, including performatives, since there is no pure performative entirely free from the possibility of being cited, mimicked, or repeated in altered contexts.

> "Could a performative utterance succeed if its formulation did not repeat a 'coded' or iterable utterance, or in other words, if the formula I pronounce in order to open a meeting, launch a ship or a marriage were not identifiable as conforming with an iterable model, if it were not then identifiable in some way as a *citation*?"[55]

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[51] Derrida, "Signature Event Context," 16.
[52] Tawny Andersen, *Performativity as Critical Praxis: J.L. Austin, Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler, Catherine Malabou, c. 1955–2014* (PhD diss., McGill University, 2017), 75.
[53] Derrida, "Signature Event Context.," 17-19.
[54] Andersen, *Performativity as Critical Praxis*, 81.
[55] Derrida, "Signature Event Context," 18.

The *signature*, traditionally viewed as a guarantee of presence, is itself subject to iterability. It can be detached from the body of the signer and continue to function as a performative mark.[56] The signature thus becomes a paradoxical site, signifying both presence and absence, origin, and rupture.[57] For Derrida, the signature invents the signer. Through the act of signing, the subject is performatively constituted and brought into being by the act itself.[58] Derrida contends that although purpose is not fully dismissed, it cannot dominate the entirety of context and framework.[59] Authorial intention has a place, but it is not the sovereign determinant of the text's meaning or performative force.[60] This liberation means language itself, through its structure and iterability, possesses a form of agency independent of the author's conscious will.[61] In *Of Grammatology*[62] Derrida launches a foundational critique of Western philosophy's logocentrism, the privileging of speech over writing, presence over absence, and immediacy over mediation. Traditionally, writing has been viewed as a mere supplement to speech, a derivative form that comes after the "true" expression of meaning. Derrida reverses this hierarchy by showing that writing is not secondary but constitutive of meaning itself. He argues that language operates through a play of differences and deferrals, not through direct access to presence or fixed reference points.[63] At the core of this critique is Derrida's notion of *différance*, a neologism combining the French words *différer* (to differ) and *différer* (to defer). Meaning arises not from the presence of a fixed signified but from its constant deferral in an endless chain of signifiers.[64] Meaning is always shaped by absence, otherness, and delay. present but is always shaped by what it is not — by absence, by otherness, and by delay.[65] Derrida also cautions against thinking of *différance* as if it could simply be named, defined or made present to thought or language.[66] Drawing on Saussure, he demonstrates how meaning (in language and, more generally, in signification) is derived from a chain of differences without any initial presence; "each so-called 'present' element that appears on the scene of presence refers to

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[56] Derrida, "Signature Event Context," 20.
[57] Andersen, *Performativity as Critical Praxis,* 84-85.
[58] Ibid. 85-86.
[59] Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context", 18.
[60] James Loxley, *Performativity*, Reprint, The New Critical Idiom (London: Routledge, 2008), 90.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Jaques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*. Translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Corrected Edition. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.
[63] Andersen, *Performativity as Critical Praxis*, 153.
[64] Ibid. 50 and 56.
[65] Derrida, *Randgänge der Philosophie*, 19.
[66] Ibid., 11.

something other than itself, while bearing the mark of a past element and being already characterised by its relation to a future element."[67] Thus, différance is the *movement* — in time and space — by which meaning, identity, and presence are both generated and constantly deferred and renegotiated.[68] Hagop Ayvaz's monologue shows how Armenian script, Turkish language, and the sociopolitical and socioeconomic registers of Republican Turkey interact to create not only identification but also production. Drawing on Derrida's concept of différance, these components create gaps, delays, and shifts that Ayvaz and his monologue actively occupy. The monologue performs identity by means of différance, an identity not set but rather one that arises in the gap between languages, scripts, and historical records, rather than stating a pre-existing self. Derrida underscores that signs do not carry meaning in isolation but signify only in relation to other signs, thereby undermining the metaphysical tradition that ties meaning to immediate presence or intuition. Instead, signs operate through what he calls the *trace*, the mark of an absent presence that conditions meaning but is itself never fully present.[69] Every sign is inhabited by this trace, which both opens and disrupts the possibility of stable reference.[70] This conclusion holds not just for writing but for speech and all semiotic practice. Derrida demonstrates that difference and delay also govern speech. by difference and delay. The supposed presence of the speaker in their speech is a fiction. Thus, writing becomes the name for a broader logic of signification, one that includes speech but also exceeds it by exposing the dependence of all meaning on mediation, spacing, and iteration.[71] Through this deconstruction of logocentrism, Derrida opens the field to what he calls grammatology, the study of writing not as a secondary mode but as the fundamental structure through which meaning, identity, and even consciousness is formed. Grammatology is thus a radical theory of language, one that unravels the binary oppositions that structure Western metaphysics and shows that the centre is always already displaced.[72] James Loxley explicitly draws connections between Derrida and performance theory, noting Derrida's challenge to Austin and the implications for the performative dimension of language and theatre. Loxley writes, for example, that Derrida "explored what seemed to him to be the contradictions in Artaud's pursuit of a theatre that might

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[67] Derrida, *Randgänge der Philosophie*., 18.
[68] Ibid., 17.
[69] Ibid., 16-19.
[70] Ibid., 29 and 33.
[71] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, xxxix and lxx. & J. Hillis Miller, "Performativity as Performance / Performativity as Speech Act" 231.
[72] Derrida, *Of Grammatology,* xxxix.

be redeemed from the inauthenticity of representation"[73] and that Derrida's theory of citationality and iterability is as much about "serious" performance as about so-called "parasitic" or "non-serious" ones.[74] Loxley posits that Derrida's contribution is crucial: he illustrates that all cultural performances are permeated by repetition, contingency, and difference, rendering performativity an unstable basis and instead an open, generative, and occasionally subversive process, integral to identity, politics, and art.[75]

Derrida's concepts are particularly useful for analysing Ayvaz's monologue, as they allow us to approach the text not merely as a written artefact but as a performative event. The monologue may be seen to enact performative force through repetition, trace, and the deferral of presence. Written in Armenian script, it potentially operates as a trace of cultural memory and historical rupture, simultaneously asserting and fragmenting identity through the materiality of script. This reading will be further developed in the analytical chapter. Derrida's theories on performativity elucidate the actions of the text itself, regardless of Ayvaz and his intentions. What traces does it produce, which cultural codes does it provoke, and what performative effects does it enact?

[73] Loxley, *Performativity,* 150.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid., 89.

3 Methodology

The previous chapter outlined the theoretical framework of this study, focusing on Derrida's and Paavolainen's concepts of performativity, theatricality, and texture. These perspectives not only inform the textual interpretation of Ayvaz's monologue but also shape the broader methodological approach of this study. The following section describes the research design, which combines archival work and expert interviews with a close reading of the text through the lens of the theoretical concepts introduced above.

This paper uses a multimethod research design combining archival research, biographical contextualisation, expert interviews based on a thematic guide following Cornelia Helfferich's methodology[76], and text analysis informed by performativity theory. The goal is to highlight the performative aspects of Hagop Ayvaz's Armeno-Turkish monologue [play] *I Love You*, placing it in context with more general issues of identity, class, memory, and cultural resilience. Every approach adds a particular perspective from which one can grasp the text and its historical, political, theatrical, and affective settings.

3.1 Archival Research and Biographical Contextualisation

Archival research, like that carried out in the private archive of Hagop Ayvaz at the Hrant Dink Foundation in Istanbul, where unpublished manuscripts, handwritten notes, photographs, private documents, and tangible artefacts are examined, is not only an empirical activity but also a performative, embodied engagement with the past. Instead of just being a way to collect information, these archive-based methods help us understand the historical context, how things were made, and what has been left out. The encounter with the archive, as Arlette Farge observes, is always more than simply extracting facts: "The material is so vivid that it calls both for emotional engagement and for reflection (...) It is a rare and precious feeling to suddenly come upon so many forgotten lives."[77] This process is fundamentally performative and affective, involving a dynamic, reflexive relationship with traces of cultural memory rather than a mere instrumental use of archival sources.[78] Farge emphasises that the initial experience with

[76] Cornelia Helfferich. "Leitfaden- und Experteninterviews [Guideline-Based and Expert Interviews]." In *Handbuch Methoden der empirischen Sozialforschung*, eds. Nina Baur and Jörg Blasius, (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2022), 875-891.
[77] Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, trans. T. Scott-Railton (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 8.
[78] Ibid., 31 and 72.

archival materials is intensely emotional and sensory. Historians are called to an affective involvement when handling handcrafted documents, reading voice traces, and uncovering forgotten lives in objects like letters or personal belongings. "An archival manuscript is a living document (...) the feel of touching traces of the past,"[79] which can never be fully reproduced through mechanical copies or digital images. The notion of critical historical hermeneutics can be linked to Farge's insistence that archives never fully yield their information but "leave so much unsaid," always requiring active reconstruction of social contexts, practices, and strategies underlying the documents.[80] The research at the Hrant Dink Foundation and Hagop Ayvaz's private archive went beyond a positivist accumulation of empirical data, building on Arlette Farge's analysis of archival practice. Instead, unpublished manuscripts, handwritten notes, photographs, and commonplace items became counterparts in a living dialogue with the past. Farge claims that rather than just collecting information or objectively observing events, this process represents a critical historical hermeneutics since it is an interpretive attempt that reconstructs the contexts of production, circulation, and silencing. She asserts that these archival encounters are invariably performative and affective, generating a wealth of meaning and introducing the researcher to the lived experience of cultural memory.[81]

More than just a collection, Ayvaz's archive serves as a living repository of cultural memory for two interconnected communities, Armenians and Turks. For this thesis, the archive provides a crucial entry point into a marginalised theatrical history and offers the very material, including textual, visual, and paratextual sources, that allows for a performative, politically situated reading of Ayvaz's monologue. The most convincing method here is based on Aleida Assmann's distinction between functional memory and archival memory.[82] According to this perspective, the archive actively contributes to the formation of collective identity by keeping things that are essential for long-term memory but are no longer in direct cultural circulation. Assmann posits that the archive fulfils a distinct, supplementary purpose to museums and libraries, which engage in an "active" memory role. In contrast, the archive keeps a "passive" store, frequently "forgetting" until materials are required for cultural recovery or reinterpretation.[83] Both Derrida

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[79] Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, 15.
[80] Ibid., 55.
[81] Ibid., 30-31.
[82] Aleida Assmann, "Archive im Wandel der Mediengeschichte [Archives in the Shifting History of Media]," in *Archivologie: Theorien des Archivs in Wissenschaft, Medien und Künsten*, eds. Knut Ebeling and Stephan Günzel (Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos, 2009), 168.
[83] Assmann, "Archive im Wandel der Mediengeschichte," 168.

and Foucault contend that the archive is more than just a repository; it is a dynamic generative force in culture.[84] Foucault called the archive the "law of what can be said," the condition for knowledge's possibility, not just its preservation.[85] Derrida emphasised that the archive is not "innocent"; it is charged with power, selection, and sometimes trauma.[86] Derrida sees the archive as inherently theatrical, a site of staging, repetition, and spectral presence that is deeply entangled with absence and authority. Schneider emphasises the necessity of recognising both the spectral and the continuous, corporeal, and reiterative dimensions through which theatre and archives function as dynamic, performative arenas for memory, the present, and regeneration.[87] While archival materials offer access to textual and contextual traces of Ayvaz's theatrical practice, they also open a space for biographical reconstruction. In this sense, biographical research functions not as a separate method but as an interpretive extension of the archival reading. Drawing on the sociological model of biographical research by Gabriele Rosenthal, the analysis treats Ayvaz's life not as background information but as a dynamic structure of meaning that is informed by the monologue's performative qualities.[88] The monologue is approached not only as a literary document but as a self-referential biographical act embedded in a historical moment. Rosenthal's method constantly reinterprets the past, present, and future, thereby understanding biography as both an individual and a social creation.[89] Such an approach lets one grasp Ayvaz's self-positioning as an Armenian artist in the early Turkish Republic and how his life experience influenced the critical, performative power of the text. Importantly, Rosenthal highlights the value of documents, archival materials, and secondary sources in reconstructing life histories, especially where direct contact is impossible.[90] Focussing on his minoritarian status within the history of theatre in Turkey, the biographical dimension draws from archival materials, personal documents/belongings and secondary sources on Hagop Ayvaz's life and his archive, which was exhibited as *Coulisse: A*

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[84] Knut Ebeling and Stephan Günzel, "Einleitung" in *Archivologie: Theorien des Archivs in Wissenschaft, Medien und Künsten*, ed. Knut Ebeling and Stephan Günzel (Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos, 2009), 18.
[85] Ibid., 13.
[86] Jacques Derrida, "Dem Archiv verschrieben" in *Archivologie: Theorien des Archivs in Wissenschaft, Medien und Künsten*, eds. Knut Ebeling and Stephan Günzel (Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos, 2009), 30.
[87] Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 109-110.
[88] Gabriele Rosenthal, "Biographieforschung [Biographical Research]," in *Handbuch Methoden der empirischen Sozialforschung*, ed. Nina Baur and Jörg Blasius (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2022), 653-654.
[89] Ibid., 647.
[90] Ibid., 652 and 655.

Chronicler of Theatre[91] in 2020 under the auspices of the Hrant Dink Foundation, the Yapi Kredi Culture, Arts and Publishing and the Theatre Foundation of Turkey.

3.2 Qualitative Expert Interviews

To complement the archival and biographical analysis, this study includes two semi-structured expert interviews with Armenian and Turkish theatre experts who have worked on Hagop Ayvaz's legacy.[92] The interviews were conducted using a flexible, thematic guide by Cornelia Helfferich and focused on insider knowledge, historical framing, and personal accounts of Hagop Ayvaz. Çalgıcıoğlu, who knew Ayvaz personally, contributed biographical and thematic insight; Izrail offered perspectives on the archive and broader theatrical contexts. Their insights are integrated throughout the analysis, particularly in the biographical and contextual framing in Chapters 4 to 5. The interviews support rather than constitute the analytical framework and are therefore in line with the "systematising" function.[93] They are intended to close factual gaps, validate historical interpretations, or offer contextual clarifications regarding Hagop Ayvaz and his oeuvre.[94] Instead of producing stand-alone theoretical insights, a systematising expert interview is a research method in which a select group of experts serve as advisors or knowledge mediators, offering factual and experiential knowledge to effectively fill informational gaps, validate interpretations, and provide context.[95] The interviews are not treated as objects of textual analysis themselves but rather as complementary sources that provide historical, biographical, and contextual insight into Hagop Ayvaz's life and legacy. They serve to enrich the interpretation of the monologue without replacing the central textual analysis. This approach follows a systematising logic in which expert interviews are used to clarify, verify, or situate the main object of study[96] — in this case, a literary and performative text.

3.3 Theoretical Framework as Analytical Method

In addition to these methods, the study employs theoretical concepts from Derrida and Paavolainen not just as background theory but as analytical instruments. Derrida's concept of iterability and the performative force of writing enable an analysis of the monologue as a

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[91] https://sanat.ykykultur.com.tr/sergiler/kulis-bir-tiyatro-bellegi-hagop-ayvaz#
[92] Nesim Ovadya İzrail is a theatre expert and historian known for his research on theatre in the Ottoman Empire. Boğos Çalgıcıoğlu is an actor, director, and theatre historian who personally knew Hagop Ayvaz and has published on the history of Armenian theatre.
[93] Helfferich, "Leitfaden- und Experteninterviews", 877
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid., 887.
[96] Helfferich, "Leitfaden- und Experteninterviews", 877.

performative text. Paavolainen's theory of dramaturgical texture allows the text to be interpreted as a meshwork of threads, knots, and tensions that enacts performativity and theatricality even in the absence of physical performance. In addition to these theories, Lehmann's notion of postdramatic theatre, which is historically rooted in the late twentieth century, serves as a useful lens for identifying features such as metatheatricality[97], fragmentation, and narrative disruption within the monologue. Crucially, as Lehmann argues, innovative "text theatre" forms remain a genuine and authentic variant of the postdramatic, not merely a superseded relic of earlier practice, thus legitimising the analysis of written monologues as postdramatic objects.[98] Rather than anachronistic, this retrospective application is genealogical, allowing the monologue's anticipatory qualities to emerge more clearly. The choice to read Hagop Ayvaz's unpublished Armeno-Turkish monologue through the lens of performativity is therefore not a speculative gesture but a methodological decision rooted in the conditions of the text: a theatrical text that was never performed, written in Armenian script that renders it inaccessible to many Turkish speakers, and preserved only within the confines of a personal archive. In this sense, the monologue itself enacts a performative politics. It stages its own impossibility, its refusal to be public, and its embeddedness in a historical rupture. These frameworks are not imposed onto the text but emerge organically from its structure and its historical situatedness. The theatrical monologue becomes a space where cultural memory, class, identity, and resilience intersect, and the theoretical tools help articulate this interplay without dissolving its complexities. This multimethodological approach allows for a holistic yet nuanced reading of Ayvaz's monologue. This includes a cultural-historical contextualisation of Early Republican Turkey in Chapter 5.1, which is not merely descriptive but analytical: it examines the sociopolitical and historical discourses that shaped minority cultural production and public visibility. Drawing on discourse theory, it situates Ayvaz's monologue within the broader framework of censorship, class stratification, and the nationalisation of theatre and language. By combining archival research, biographical contextualisation, expert interviews, discourse analysis, and theoretical reading, the study positions itself at the intersection of cultural studies, performance and theatre studies, Ottoman, Turkish, and Armenian studies, and

[97] Metatheatricality refers to moments in a play or performance when the work draws attention to itself as theatre, making the audience aware that they are watching a theatrical production rather than reality. This often involves characters addressing the audience directly, commenting on the nature of performance, or referencing the process of making theatre.
[98] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 17.

minoritarian memory work. This integrated methodology honours the multilayered nature of the text and foregrounds the political and performative stakes of its archival survival and form. Interdisciplinarity is not simply a framework but a necessity in approaching this kind of material. The text resists singular categorisation: it is literary, theatrical, political, autobiographical, and symbolic at once. The thesis transcends disciplinary boundaries, employing theory as a tool to delve into the unsaid, unread, or unreadable aspects of the text. This methodological choice is both deliberate and responsive to the text's own complexity. While the main analytical tools are drawn from Derrida's theory of performativity and Paavolainen's dramaturgical metaphors, the analysis is further informed by Catherine Belsey's concept of "interrogative text."[99] These perspectives support the interpretation of irony, ambiguity, and ideological displacement within the monologue, particularly in relation to class critique, marginalised identities, and the cultural politics of language. Their inclusion enhances the critical reading while maintaining the methodological focus on the theoretical and dramaturgical lens.

[99] The interrogative text is a form of literature that resists giving the reader a single, reassuring meaning, instead prompting readers to confront questions, contradictions, and ambiguities—making the act of reading an active, critical process rather than a passive one, See Catherine Belsey, *Critical Practice*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 75.

4 Hagop Ayvaz: Life, Archive and Cultural Legacy

To better understand the monologue's form and implications, this chapter reconstructs the life and work of Hagop Ayvaz. His personal history illuminates how *I Love You* emerges from lived precarity, theatrical aspiration, and a broader struggle for cultural presence. These biographical insights are not merely contextual; they are central to understanding how Ayvaz's work engages with questions of cultural memory and identity, both as thematic concerns within the text and as formative conditions of its production.

4.1 Biography

Hagop Ayvaz was born in 1911 in the Yenikapı district of Istanbul. He was an important persona in the theatrical landscape of Turkey, especially in Istanbul's theatre scene. His real name was Hagop Ayvazyan, but because of the Turkish Name Law of 1934, which tried to get rid of Armenian ethnic indicators like the suffix -yan, he had to delete this part of his name.[100] According to expert interviewee Çalgıcıoğlu, Ayvaz deliberately omitted the Armenian suffix -yan, from his surname as a means of navigating the social pressures of Turkish policies.[101] Later, he referred to himself with ironic self-designation as "Langalı Baron Hagop" (Baron Hagop from Langa) thereby reflecting both his neighbourhood and his status in the Armenian community. Ayvaz's early years were marked by loss, migration, and poverty. After the death of his father and the remarriage of his mother, the family moved to Topkapı, where many surviving Armenians from the Ottoman periphery settled in the 1920s. Following World War I and the 1918 ceasefire, a substantial portion of the Armenian people who endured the deportations and atrocities during the Armenian Genocide migrated to Istanbul. "Gayans" (camps) were established in Istanbul to house the rural Armenian population that had relocated to the city, with Topkapı being one of the areas where these camps were situated. Young Ayvaz was raised witnessing the effects of the genocide and the formation of the Republic of Turkey.[102] Hagop Ayvaz completed primary education at Levon Vartuhyan School in Topkapı and junior high at Esayan School in Taksim. His family's financial hardships forced him to leave school and apprentice in his stepfather's shoemaking workshop. In an interview with Boğos

[100] Ayşan Sönmez, "Hagop Ayvaz: An 'Honnête Homme' Negotiating Life in a New Nation-State — The 'Rebirth' of Armenian Theatre in the Turkish 'Underground,'" *Observatoire de la Turquie contemporaine*, September 15, 2021,https://www.observatoireturquie.fr/hagop-ayvaz-an-honnete-homme-negotiating-life-in-a-new-nation-state-the-rebirth-of-armenian-theatre-in-the-turkish-underground/, 7, and Boğos Çalgıcıoğlu, Zoom interview by Emre Görkem Onur, Vienna, February 19, 2025, 11–12.
[101] Çalgıcıoğlu, interview, 12.
[102] Sönmez, "Hagop Ayvaz," 8.

Çalgıcıoğlu and Berç Noradukyan, Ayvaz talks about his love for theatre and literature. His first language was Armenian, but he also gained knowledge of Ottoman Turkish thanks to his teacher Stepan Gurdikyan. During his time as an apprentice at his stepfather's shoe store, he began to take an interest in the satirical magazine *Karagöz and Köroğlan* to expand his Ottoman Turkish.[103] In this atmosphere, in 1928 he experiences his very first contacts with theatre. His companion, Harutyun Samurkaş, accompanied him, although his family objected,[104] to a theatrical performance at the Orient Theatre (Şark Tiyatrosu), organised by Armenian theatre troupes under the direction of Krikor Hagopyan; the name of the play was *The Blind Painter*. Ayvaz stated that "he adored that play when he was young and tried to imitate Boğos Karakaş," who was staging the play.[105] He told how he met Krikor Hagopyan and how Hagopyan was thrilled about the encounter, as for the first time someone was willing to work for him without being paid. Then in 1928, he got a role in Srapion Manasyan's Armenian operetta *The Miller's Daughter*, in which he had only one line. Thanks to Lusi Hagopyan, he later received small roles, such as the doctor in *The Ironmaster.*[106] Thus, he gathered his first experiences in the theatrical landscape of the Armenian community and his first encounters on their stages. He joined Karakaş's theatre group with people like Bedros Baltazar, Krikor Çobanyan, and Jerfin Elmas and played there for six years. In 1929, for a daily pay of 1 lira, he performed on the same stage in the play[107], alongside the acting group of Jerfin and Aram Elmas.[108]Çalgıcıoğlu says that he financed his life with the money he earned from these activities.[109] He played small roles for a few years, like the doctor or the policeman, until one day, specifically on August 30 in 1930, he had to play the lover in *Murder in the Black Mill*. The actual actor who was supposed to take on this role did not show up. Karakaş said to Ayvaz, "Look, you will have to play the lover," while the curtain was about to rise in ten or fifteen seconds. "Go to the prompter; he will help you, and you will play this role," said Karakaş.[110] After a successful improvised

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[103] Berç Noradıkyan, Boğos Çalgıcıoğlu, and Hagop Ayvaz, "I Doubt If They Can Find Another Person as Crazy as Me," in *Coulisse: Hagop Ayvaz (1911–2006, Istanbul) — A Chronicler of Theatre*, eds. Hrant Dink Foundation, Yapı Kredi Culture, Arts and Publishing, and Theatre Foundation of Turkey (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Culture, Arts and Publishing, 2020), 44.
[104] Çalgıcıoğlu, interview, 3.
[105] Noradukyan, Çalgıcıoğlu, and Ayvaz, "I Doubt If They Can Find Another Person as Crazy as Me," 43-44.
[106] Ibid., 45.
[107] Banu Atça, "Hagop Ayvaz's Biography," in *Coulisse: Hagop Ayvaz (1911–2006, Istanbul) — A Chronicler of Theatre*, eds. Hrant Dink Foundation, Yapı Kredi Culture, Arts and Publishing, and Theatre Foundation of Turkey (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Culture, Arts and Publishing, 2020), 53.
[108] Çalgıcıoğlu, interview, 10.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Noradukyan, Çalgıcıoğlu, and Ayvaz, "I Doubt If They Can Find Another Person as Crazy as Me," 46.

collaboration with the prompter Sufi Bey, the young Hagop Ayvaz mastered the stage as a lover in 1930. At the end of the performance, Karakaş kissed him on the cheeks and said, "From now on, you will play all the lover roles!" Ayvaz himself says that "playing the lover that week was the greatest trophy for him."[111] After that, he continued to play the lover on stage, and just two years later, in 1932, his Armeno-Turkish monologue titled *I Love You* appears, a text in which a narrator takes on the role of a lover.

Alongside his theatrical efforts, Ayvaz began his career as an author and journalist in the 1930s. His first play, *Bir Aktörün Hayatı yahut Son Perde* (commonly referred to as *Son Perde*, hereafter *The Final Act*), was written in Turkish in 1932 and later translated into Armenian by Aşod Madatyan in 1950. Ayvaz both performed and directed the play, which was staged the first time in the late 1940s,[112] while the screenplay, published in 1950 in Armenian, received extensive attention.[113] In 1935, he commenced writing theatre criticism for the Armenian-language daily newspaper *Jamanak* and contributed to several journals like *Turkiya*, *Gavroş*, and *Nor Or* in years that followed and signed his writings as "Cıbur,"[114] "Mimos,"[115] and "H. Ayvaz."[116] In 1936, he was drafted into military service and stationed in Afyonkarahisar. Although initially assigned to supervise the box office, he soon took charge of the military cinema's entire operation, from scheduling and administration to renovation. He contacted major film companies such as Özen Film, Ipek Film, and Kemal Film and began screening contemporary films. After completing his first year of service, he returned to Istanbul and married Arşaluys Balayan in 1937. They had two children named Suzan and Garo.[117] He took a variety of professions to earn a living, such as working in a workshop that dyed wool and then as a shop assistant at a textile company, where he applied his theatrical abilities to engage with customers.[118] Many theatre artists, including his close friend Toto Karaca (Irma Felegyan), whom he called "my sister", bought the textiles for their costumes from him.[119] In 1939, Ayvaz was once again drafted into military service. Stationed in Hadımköy, Istanbul, he was subjected to forty-five days of physically demanding road and construction labour. During this time, he

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[111] Noradukyan, Çalgıcıoğlu, and Ayvaz, "I Doubt If They Can Find Another Person as Crazy as Me," 47.
[112] Çalgıcıoğlu, interview, 9.
[113] Atça, "Hagop Ayvaz's Biography," 53.
[114] *Cıbur* is the Armenian word for "cicada" (*cır-cır böceği* in Turkish).
[115] *Mimos*, meaning 'mime artist' (*Fantomimci* in Turkish).
[116] Sönmez, "Hagop Ayvaz", 8. and Atça, "Hagop Ayvaz's Biography," 54.
[117] Atça, "Hagop Ayvaz's Biography," 54.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid., 55.

and his close companions, Torkom Sırabyan and Berç Manukyan, managed to organise theatrical performances within the army's theatre unit. Although subsequently discharged, Ayvaz was conscripted a third time in May 1942 under the "Twenty Classes"[120] program — a discriminatory policy that specifically targeted non-Muslims for additional military service. Deployed to Yozgat and Karaman in Central Anatolia, he nevertheless continued his theatrical pursuits by producing performances of the traditional shadow play Karagöz and Hacivat.[121] "He also used theatre as a way of survival" says Banu Atça in an online panel.[122] "If I couldn't do anything else, I made Karagöz and Hacivat out of cardboard, and somehow, I held on to life with them," Ayvaz said.[123] Eventually, he was granted permission to focus on theatrical work for the remainder of his service, staging plays for high-ranking military officials[124] After his final discharge, he returned to civilian life, working in textile factories under poor conditions.[125] Those unable to pay the tax, including the elderly, were sent to forced labour camps in harsh conditions (such as Aşkale). Only through the help of an officer he had met during his military service did he escape deportation to the Aşkale labour camp. "He would stay in contact with the children of that officer and harbour unlimited love for that family," as Gürün states.[126] In 1943, Ayvaz began publishing on theatre, starting with a short book on Muhsin Ertuğrul, a key figure in Turkish theatre and Ayvaz's life, followed by a second volume on Behzat Butak. This second book also featured Ayvaz's reflections on prominent actors such as Cahide Sonku, Ismail Galip Arcan and Talât Artemel. Ayvaz envisioned these publications as part of a growing anthology of Turkish theatre history. He expressed deep appreciation for Ertuğrul's skill and importance in shaping Turkish theatre. He credited him with inspiring his own theatre taste and passion and celebrated Ertuğrul's major roles and productions, such as *Hamlet* and *King Lear*

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[120] The "Twenty Classes," in Turkish *Yirmi Kura Askerlik* refers to the special conscription of non-Muslims during World War II, in which Armenians were deployed primarily as forced labourers rather than integrated into regular military units. See Talin Suciyan, *The Armenians in Modern Turkey* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 74.
[121] Karagöz and Hacivat are iconic characters from Ottoman-era Turkish shadow theatre, known for their satirical dialogue and social commentary.
[122] Banu Atca, in, *Hagop Ayvaz: Tiyatroya Adanmış Bir Ömür,* YouTube video,49:42, published by Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, January 13, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZtTB5Fudbs&t=1053s.
[123] Banu Atca, in, *Hagop Ayvaz: Tiyatroya Adanmış Bir Ömür,* YouTube video, 50:00, published by Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, January 13, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZtTB5Fudbs&t=1053s.
[124] Ibid. and Sönmez, *Hagop Ayvaz*, 9.
[125] The Wealth Tax of 1942 primarily affected Armenians, Greeks, and Jews, functioning less as a wartime measure than as a means of economic expropriation and wealth transfer to the Muslim population. See Talin Suciyan, *The Armenians in Modern Turkey* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 83.
[126] Dikmen Gürün, "To Kulis with Love," in *Coulisse: Hagop Ayvaz (1911–2006, Istanbul) — A Chronicler of Theatre*, eds. Hrant Dink Foundation, Yapı Kredi Culture, Arts and Publishing, and Theatre Foundation of Turkey (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Culture, Arts and Publishing, 2020), 20.

Ayvaz expressly stated, “I owe the development of my taste for theatre to him [Muhsin Ertuğrul].”[127] This was a powerful acknowledgement from Ayvaz, who had himself become a major figure in Turkish and Armenian theatre.

In 1955, the pogroms of 6-7 September[128] caused many Armenians, including some of Ayvaz’s close friends, to emigrate. Though devastated by the injustice, Ayvaz remained in Turkey. He often expressed sorrow over his experiences but maintained a deep attachment to his homeland, calling it his irreplaceable home.[129]

> I was born in this land, I belong here. This is my home. I never thought of abandoning my country. Yet, sometimes, when I remember what I had to go through, I am very much saddened, and I feel gloomy.[130]

These biographical cuts show that Hagop Ayvaz, as an Armenian in the Republic of Turkey, should be regarded not only as an *honnête homme*[131] but also as a survivor of various social and political exclusions. He then worked as a travelling fabric seller, collaborating with theatre artists for stage costumes.

4.2 KULIS — Turkey’s longest-running theatre periodical

In 1946, as Turkey entered a more liberal post-war period influenced by Western alliances and the end of the single-party era, significant changes also occurred in the cultural field. That year, Armenian intellectuals Suren Şamlıyan, the founder of *Marmara* and Mardiros Koçunyan, owner of *Jamanak*, accompanied by Hagop Ayvaz, travelled to Ankara to meet with government officials. During this visit they directly asked Prime Minister Şükrü Saracoğlu[132] why Armenian plays were not being permitted, implying the de facto ban, that had been in charge since the

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[127] Nesim Ovadya İzrail, “Muhsin Ertuğrul, Vahram Papazyan, Aşod Madatyan, Hagop Ayvaz,” in *Muhsin Ertuğrul*, ed. Gökhan Akçura (Istanbul: İBB Kültür A.Ş. Yayınları, 2023), 138.
[128] The 6–7 September 1955 pogroms marked a peak of state-tolerated violence against non-Muslim minorities in Istanbul, primarily targeting Greeks but also affecting Armenians and Jews. There were between 11 and 15 deaths, 300 injuries, and at least 60 rapes reported, but actual numbers may be higher. See Baskın Oran, *Minorities and Minority Rights in Turkey: From the Ottoman Empire to the Present State*, Trans. John William Day, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2021, 125.
[129] Gürün, “To Kulis with Love”, 20.
[130] Hagop Ayvaz in a conversation with Dikmen Gürün, from Gürün, “To Kulis with Love,” 20.
[131] The term *honnête homme*, borrowed from Sönmez, aptly characterises Hagop Ayvaz as an individual of broad cultural knowledge, refined social graces, and humanist values, reflecting his unique role within the cultural landscape of the Turkish Republic, See Sönmez, “Hagop Ayvaz,” 1.
[132] Çalgıcıoğlu, interview, 13.

establishment of the Republic.[133] The encounter marked a turning point in the history of Armenian theatre in the Republic: Saracoğlu reportedly stated that he was unaware of such a prohibition and granted permission for Armenians to stage plays in their own language.[134] Following this meeting, the informal suppression of Armenian-language theatre was effectively lifted. Theatre groups regrouped, Armenian-language periodicals reappeared, and Armenian schools began staging plays. In this context, Ayvaz together with his friends Zareh Arşag and Nazaret Donikyan founded *Kulis*, an Armenian-language theatre magazine that became a vital platform for cultural dialogue and the longest-running theatre periodical in Turkey. Although As expert interviewee Nesim Ovadya İzrail notes, *Kulis* was initially founded with a small group of friends; however, he emphasises that the responsibility for the publication soon fell entirely on Ayvaz, who went on to manage and publish the magazine single-handedly for fifty years.[135] Simultaneously, figures like Aşod Madatyan — one of Ayvaz's mentors and his "first teacher" — translated Turkish plays like Faruk Nafiz Çamlıbel's *Canavar* (Monster) into Armenian (*Kazan*) and staged them through independent theatre companies. Aşod Madatyan, nearly three decades older than Hagop Ayvaz, was a highly respected figure in the theatre world of Istanbul, known for his long-standing career as both actor and director at the municipal Darülbedayi.[136] Ayvaz saw him as a lifelong mentor and later credited him with opening the door to Turkish-Armenian theatrical exchange.[137] Ayvaz called Madatyan "Baba," which means father, or "tiyatro hocam," my theatre teacher. In 1939, Madatyan sent Ayvaz a picture that had the words "To Hagop Ayvaz, from Baba with love" written on the back.[138] Both wrote books about the figures of the Turkish and Armenian theatres of their time, which have now also been published by Aras. [139]

While Armenians had historically pioneered modern theatre in the Ottoman Empire, their renewed cultural visibility in the Republic occurred in a parallel, often marginal space, shaped

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[133] Nesim Ovadya İzrail, *Osmanlı ve Türkiye Tiyatrosunda Şahinyanlar* (Istanbul: BGST Yayınları, 2018), 133-134.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Nesim Ovadya İzrail, Zoom interview by Emre Görkem Onur, Vienna, February 19, 2025, 8.
[136] Darülbedayi, founded in 1914, was the first institutional theatre in the Ottoman Empire and later the Republican period. Originally conceived as both a school and a performance venue, it evolved into what is now known as the Istanbul City Theatre (Şehir Tiyatrosu).
[137] İzrail, "Muhsin Ertuğrul, Vahram Papazyan, Aşod Madatyan, Hagop Ayvaz," 138-139.
[138] Nesim Ovadya İzrail, *Düşler Sahnesinde: Rejisör Aşod Madatyan ve Kozmopolitizmden Milliyetçiliğe Türkiye'de Tiyatro 1902–1962* (Istanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 2022), 14.
[139] Hagop Ayvaz, *Sahne Arkadaşlarım: Tiyatro Tarihimizden Simalar*, ed. Yetvart Tomasyan and Rober Koptaş, trans. Payline Tomasyan (Istanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 2020) & Aşod Madatyan, *Sahnemizin Değerleri*, ed. Rober Koptaş, foreword by Nesim Ovadya İzrail (Istanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 2022).

by ongoing nationalist exclusions in the new nation-state.[140] During this historical period, Ayvaz established the magazine *Kulis*, which debuted in 1946 and was published consistently for fifty years, until 1996, with a corpus of 1104 issues. It was the longest-running theatrical publication in Turkey and offered a distinctive venue for cultural interchange within the international Armenian community and between Armenian and Turkish artists. Ayvaz recognised from the outset that *Kulis* should function not merely as a documentation entity but also as a dynamic platform that would reinforce and unite the Armenian diaspora. In 1950, he travelled with a suitcase filled with publications via places such as Aleppo, Beirut, Cairo, Athens, Sofia, and Yerevan to get subscribers, gather content, and establish a transnational network.[141] *Kulis* represented significantly more than a mere magazine. This project exemplified cultural resilience by preserving the Armenian language, memory, and theatrical traditions within a predominantly monolingual nation-state.[142] The magazine aimed for inclusivity by employing colloquial Armenian rather than high literary forms, thereby enhancing comprehension among lower- and middle-class readers. The content was read in various locations, including the Istanbul neighbourhoods of Kumkapı, Yenikapı, and Samatya, historically inhabited by fishermen, cobblers, and shopkeepers.[143]

> Between 1954 and 1956, Ayvaz published some issues of *Kulis* in Turkish with the support of the Istanbul Operetta Association. Earlier, from 1947 to 1950, he had organized annual 'Kulis Nights', which brought Armenian and Turkish actors together onstage. Those events facilitated the establishment of channels of communication and means of connecting that led to the creation of new networks and provided a unique opportunity for people to unite around theatre. Notably, the profile of the participants was quite diverse. For example, at one such event Toto Karaca (Irma Felegyan), whom Turkish audiences knew from the silver screen, took to the stage with Nubar Aznavuryan (along with his choir) and some Azerbaijani dancers, and the *Ses Operası Kumpanyası* (Ses Opera Company) put on a performance and the Greek Singer Zmaro Dekavalas gave a concert.[144]

In addition to his editorial work, Ayvaz continued to engage actively in theatre production. In the 1960s, he established *Pokr Taderahump*, meaning "Little Company" in Armenian, a theatrical group associated with the Esayan Alumni Association.[145] Ayvaz directed, wrote, performed, and mentored emerging generations.[146] In this context, he directed different plays

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[140] Sönmez, "Hagop Ayvaz," 3.
[141] Ibid., 10-11.
[142] Ibid., 9-10 and 16.
[143] Ibid., 12-13.
[144] Sönmez, "Hagop Ayvaz," 12.
[145] Ibid., 9. and Atça, "Hagop Ayvaz's Biography," 56.
[146] Sönmez, "Hagop Ayvaz," 13.

such as I. Galip Arcan's *Rica Ederim Kesmeyiniz* (Please Do Not Interrupt), Simon Ekmeçiyan's *Dayi Garabed* (Uncle Garabed), including his own play *Şaderen Megı* (One of Many, or in Turkish *Son Perde*) and also Hagop Baronyan's *Hars u Gesur* (The Bride and the Mother-in-law).[147] Numerous subsequent actors and intellectuals, including Sosi Cindoyan and Garbis Muradyan, commenced their careers on that stage.[148] Despite political setbacks, including the 1955 pogrom and the 1980 military coup that significantly curtailed cultural life in Istanbul, Ayvaz maintained his commitment to his mission. During the 1990s, he contributed to the Armenian edition of the newspaper *Agos*, focusing on theatre history and producing memory portraits of deceased actor colleagues. Ayvaz's archive, which he termed his "heaven," organised in shoeboxes and envelopes, exemplifies a meticulous archival dedication that not only preserved but also illuminated facets of the vibrant theatrical history of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey often overlooked in official narratives. His oeuvre is profoundly biographical, political, and performative. *Kulis* not only established a monument to an oppressed art form but also positioned Ayvaz as an *honnête homme*, serving as a humanist and chronicler during a period when official memory politics sought to marginalise Armenian culture. In her reflection, Dikmen Gürün recalls how Hagop Ayvaz's lifelong wish was to see his collection of *Kulis* magazines and his personal archive housed in a proper theatre museum in Istanbul. He had often criticised the existing infrastructure, especially the underdeveloped Theatre Museum located within the Yıldız Palace Theatre, which lacked adequate staffing and care. Gürün shares her own visits there and underlines the urgent need for expansion and professionalisation of such institutions to protect invaluable documents of Turkish and Armenian theatre history.[149] Ayvaz's archive included rare materials, such as the first musical programmes of the Ottoman-era Darülbedayi and photographs of early performances. He was particularly disheartened by the demolition of the historic Drama Theatre in Tepebaşı, viewing it as a symbol of a society more inclined to destroy than to preserve.[150] In his final days, Ayvaz had considered donating his archive to the Atatürk Library. Gürün advised him to entrust it instead to the Faculty of Literature at Istanbul University. Despite her efforts to coordinate this, time passed too quickly, and the plan remained unfulfilled.[151] Shortly before his death, he had

[147] Atça, "Hagop Ayvaz's Biography," 56.
[148] Sönmez, "Hagop Ayvaz," 14.
[149] Gürün, "To Kulis with Love," 24.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid. 24-25.

donated his collection and magazines to the Armenian newspaper *Agos*, which is now housed and preserved in the Hrant Dink Foundation's archive. Gürün emphasises Ayvaz's unwavering dedication to theatre, even after *Kulis* ceased publication. His love for the stage endured through his memories, writings, and ongoing relationships in the theatre world. Thanks to *Kulis*, he connected with major figures such as Muhsin Ertuğrul, Metin And, and Haldun Taner and stayed in touch with Armenian artists from the diaspora. He considered these connections "his real wealth."[152] In 2005, Ayvaz was honoured with the Honorary Award of the Theatre Critics Association of Turkey, which he humbly accepted. Gürün concludes by celebrating the Hrant Dink Foundation's efforts to preserve Ayvaz's legacy by opening his archive to the public and collaborating on the inauguration of a new theatre museum in Turkey with the Theatre Foundation of Turkey, thereby paying tribute to Ayvaz's decades of commitment to theatrical and collective memory and his life's work, *Kulis*.[153]

Figure 1: Genç Sanatkârlar heyetinden Hagop Ayvaz- Torkom Sırabyan- rejisör Aşod Madatyan 6/4/934 üçüzler, Ref. No: 1.1.1.933, Hrant Dink Foundation Archive, Hagop Ayvaz Collection.

[152] Gürün, "To Kulis with Love," 26.
[153] Ibid.

4.3 Archive and Cultural Memory: Reconstructing Identity and Heritage

Curated by Esen Çamurdan (Theatre Foundation of Turkey), Kevser Güler (Yapı Kredi Culture, Arts, and Publishing), and Banu Atça (Hrant Dink Foundation), the *Coulisse* exhibition examines the life and archive of Istanbul-based Armenian theatre artist and publisher Hagop Ayvaz. The exhibition remains accessible as a digital experience, allowing visitors to explore Ayvaz's archive and theatrical legacy online.[154] Through his half-century-long publishing *Kulis*, a cultural and theatrical journal, Ayvaz created a large library of theatrical history in Turkey. After his death in 2006, the Hrant Dink Foundation digitised and catalogued Ayvaz's archive. The exhibition highlights Armenian contributions to Ottoman and Turkish theatre, notably during nationalist periods that marginalised Armenian artists.[155] Three primary components of the exhibition reflect on the biography of Ayvaz and history of Armenian theatre in Istanbul, the historical significance of the *Kulis* magazine, and wider Ottoman and Turkish theatre developments. The exhibition, framed as *Coulisse*, promotes a pluralist, inclusive view of Turkey's theatre history. It stresses Ayvaz's endurance, commitment, and culture and the arts' importance in coexistence and collective memory.[156] Esen Çamurdan examines the curatorial process that went into showcasing Hagop Ayvaz's archive, presenting it as a cognitive and emotional trip through memory. The title *Coulisse*, or *Kulis* which means "backstage," was purposefully chosen as the title to emphasise the curators' goal of exposing what is hidden behind the scenes, not only in theatre but also in history and identity.[157] Çamurdan emphasises that archiving is not merely an act of preservation but a cultural intervention that actively shapes collective memory and identity. To illuminate what had been obscured or forgotten, working with Ayvaz's materials required "stepping into his own backstage" and reading and choosing from his life's records.[158] The archive becomes a site of both resilience and survival, where cultural loss is countered by acts of memory and documentation. Ayvaz used archiving to

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[154] For the online exhibition, see *Coulisse* accessed June 18, 2025,https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=56QoccVoN7t&fbclid=IwAR33iLTbTLLKodxE4zDXyMdySRzVXQ9h9n-H2paZEuh9gRS78VrZ_oJP-LQ

[155] Hrant Dink Foundation, Theatre Foundation of Turkey, and Yapı Kredi Culture, Arts and Publishing, *Coulisse: Hagop Ayvaz, A Chronicler of Theater / Kulis: Bir Tiyatro Belleği, Hagop Ayvaz* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2020), 7–9.

[156] Ibid.

[157] Esen Çamurdan, "A Journey Through the Hagop Ayvaz Archive," in *Coulisse: Hagop Ayvaz, A Chronicler of Theater / Kulis: Bir Tiyatro Belleği, Hagop Ayvaz* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2020), 11.

[158] Ibid., 11-12.

prevent the theatre community he was a part of from going extinct. His lifelong collection constituted more than an act of preservation; it was a deliberate political gesture aimed at countering erasure.[159]Ayvaz considered the absence of a theatre museum in Turkey a serious void in the country's cultural memory infrastructure. He considered archiving to be a permanent act and a responsibility to future generations.[160] The curatorial team views the archive as a performative engagement that links individual experience with public history, rather than merely a static repository.[161] Ayvaz's meticulous collection of fragments — photos, notes, and journals — in Armenian, Ottoman, and Turkish is referred to as a "penny bank of memory".[162] These resources shed light on lost stages, abandoned locations, and Istanbul's rich cultural history. All things considered, the archive is presented as a living thing that not only preserves the past but also stimulates critical thinking and group introspection. Ayvaz dedication to recording turns into a cultural and moral requirement, serving as a reminder that memory needs to be shared and protected. İzrail was one of the first people to engage with Ayvaz's archive after his death. In his interview he describes the archive as extremely rich but at that time completely disorganised. The materials were unsystematically placed on tables, in boxes, and in stacks; it was an unstructured state but with great potential.[163] He was surprised by the abundance: not only theatre texts but also letters, sketches, posters, programmes, and photos. Particularly impressive was that Ayvaz had collected and preserved everything himself, indicating a strong intention to document. For İzrail, the archive was like a memory of the Armenian theatre in Istanbul, which had no official archive for decades.[164] He emphasises that the Armeno-Turkish section was for him the most compelling part of the archive.[165] These texts are particularly valuable because they make visible a cultural transitional space that could otherwise easily be forgotten. The monologue *I Love You* falls precisely into this area. As İzrail notes, Ayvaz's personal archive constitutes much more than a private collection; it acts as a site of cultural memory that preserves traces of Armenian presence within Turkish theatre history. In this sense, the archive functions as a performative act of cultural survival, a counter-memory resisting national erasure.[166] He calls it a significant value, not only for Armenian theatre but

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[159] Çamurdan, "A Journey Through the Hagop Ayvaz Archive," 13.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid., 14.
[163] Izrail, interview, 3.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid., 10.
[166] İzrail, "Don't Forget to Mention the Archive," 28.

for the entire memory of theatre in Turkey.[167] İzrail's research led him to discover unique items in the archive: rare first editions of plays (e.g., Namik Kemal's *Akif Bey* from 1874 or Teodor Kasab's *Hamid the Miser* from 1874), handwritten scripts in Armenian script, and forgotten documentation of performances that reveal a richer and more complex theatrical past.[168] This includes theatre books, performance photos, press clippings, and memorabilia covering not just Istanbul but also Europe and America.[169] The handwritten playbooks in Armenian script, which İzrail describes as a significant and rich part of the archive, are especially remarkable. He notes that these notebooks probably contain plays that were performed both in the late Ottoman and early Republican eras, though the authors and precise dates are still unknown.[170] Izrail even speculates that Aşod Madatyan's archive is embedded within Ayvaz's archive, as both shared a dedication to preserving Armenian theatre.[171] İzrail urges cultural institutions to make Ayvaz's materials publicly accessible and reminds readers of Ayvaz's own insistence on crediting the *Kulis* archive in publications. For him, Ayvaz's practice of collecting and recording was not just personal but deeply symbolic, aimed at safeguarding the memory of a theatre culture that might otherwise be forgotten.[172] Ayvaz's meticulous care for documentation was not only archival but also testimonial: he repeatedly insisted that materials from the *Kulis* archive be properly cited, even urging editors to include "Photos courtesy of Kulis Archive" in captions.[173] For him, citation was an act of survival, a way to ensure that *Kulis*, and the culture it preserved, would continue to live on through future generations. The decades-long invisibility of Armenian theatre and the contributions of Armenians to Turkish theatre, as described by İzrail[174], underscores the political significance of archives like Ayvaz's. The archive operates not only retrospectively but also transformatively: It raises the question of who gets a place in the cultural memory and who does not. In addition to Çamurdan's and İzrail's perspectives, recent theoretical debates in memory and archival studies offer further ways to understand Ayvaz's archive as a dynamic and political site of cultural resilience.

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[167] Izrail, interview, 6.
[168] İzrail, "Don't Forget to Mention the Archive," 30-31.
[169] Ibid., 30.
[170] Ibid., 32.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Ibid., 33-34.
[173] Ibid., 34.
[174] Izrail, interview, 4-5.

While archives have traditionally been seen as neutral repositories of past events, current theories emphasise their role as active producers of identity, power, and memory. Feng argues that "collective memory is the link connecting archives and identity" and that archives today must represent a societal foundation for justice and marginalised groups, not merely a place for evidence management.[175] In the context of Ayvaz's archive, its significance can be observed as follows: It is not a state archive but a *community archive* that, as described by Bastian and Flinn, not only documents but also "shapes memory" through a conscious selection, care, and contextualisation of marginalised voices.[176] These "affective ties" between archives and their community enable a different relationship to the past that goes beyond objective representation.[177] As Stuart Hall suggests, heritage is not a neutral legacy but a contested terrain, where dominant narratives are constantly unsettled by counter-memories and acts of cultural resistance.[178] In this sense, Ayvaz's archive also functions as a site of cultural heritage in Stuart Hall's understanding, not as a fixed inheritance but as a contested practice of remembering and re-narrating minority histories. Ayvaz's collection, especially the Armeno-Turkish materials, represents a counter-memory that opposes the memory dictated by the state. His materials challenge the prevailing narrative of the Turkification of theatre by chronicling multilingual theatre activities that have hitherto remained obscured. Astrid Erll emphasises that cultural memory is an "interplay of past and present in socio-cultural contexts," meaning it is always renegotiated situationally.[179] Ayvaz's materials in particular show how cultural memory functions beyond national borders and how minority archival material contributes performatively to cultural self-location. In a similar vein, Koureas et al. argue that Ottoman transcultural memories challenge nationalised closures, offering instead a framework for plural, overlapping histories.[180] Ayvaz's archive, which contains materials related to Ottoman, Armenian, and Turkish theatre history, is an example of such a transcultural memory in action.

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[175] Huiling Feng, "Identity and Archives: Return and Expansion of the Social Value of Archives," *Archival Science* 17, no. 1 (2017): 98-100.
[176] Jeannette A. Bastian and Andrew Flinn, ed., "Introduction" in *Community Archives, Community Spaces: Heritage, Memory and Identity* (London: Facet Publishing, 2020), xxiii.
[177] Michelle Caswell, "Affective Bonds: What Community Archives Can Teach Mainstream Institutions," in *Community Archives, Community Spaces: Heritage, Memory and Identity*, ed. Jeannette A. Bastian and Andrew Flinn (London: Facet Publishing, 2020), 22-23.
[178] Stuart Hall, "Whose Heritage? Un-Settling 'The Heritage', Re-Imagining the Post-Nation," *Third Text* 13, no. 49 (1999): 3–13, here 5-7., Following Stuart Hall, 'heritage' is used here not as an apolitical legacy but as a site of cultural struggle and identity negotiation.
[179] Erll "Cultural Memory Studies: An Introduction," 2.
[180] Gabriel Koureas et al., "Ottoman Transcultural Memories: Introduction," *Memory Studies* 12, no. 5 (2019): 483–492, here 487-488.

Such an archive documents the multidirectional exchanges and transformations that occurred within and across ethnic and cultural boundaries in the Ottoman Empire and its successor state. This aligns with the argument that transcultural memory "travels" across "social, linguistic and political borders," constantly being transformed through different times and spaces.[181] The special issue's approach, as outlined by Koureas et al., frames Ottoman transcultural memories as dynamic archives, where memories of coexistence interplay with instances of memory conflict/politics. This perspective underlines the continuing importance of diverse, often minority, archives in challenging, complicating, and enriching collective memory.

[181] Gabriel Koureas et al., "Ottoman Transcultural Memories," 487-488.

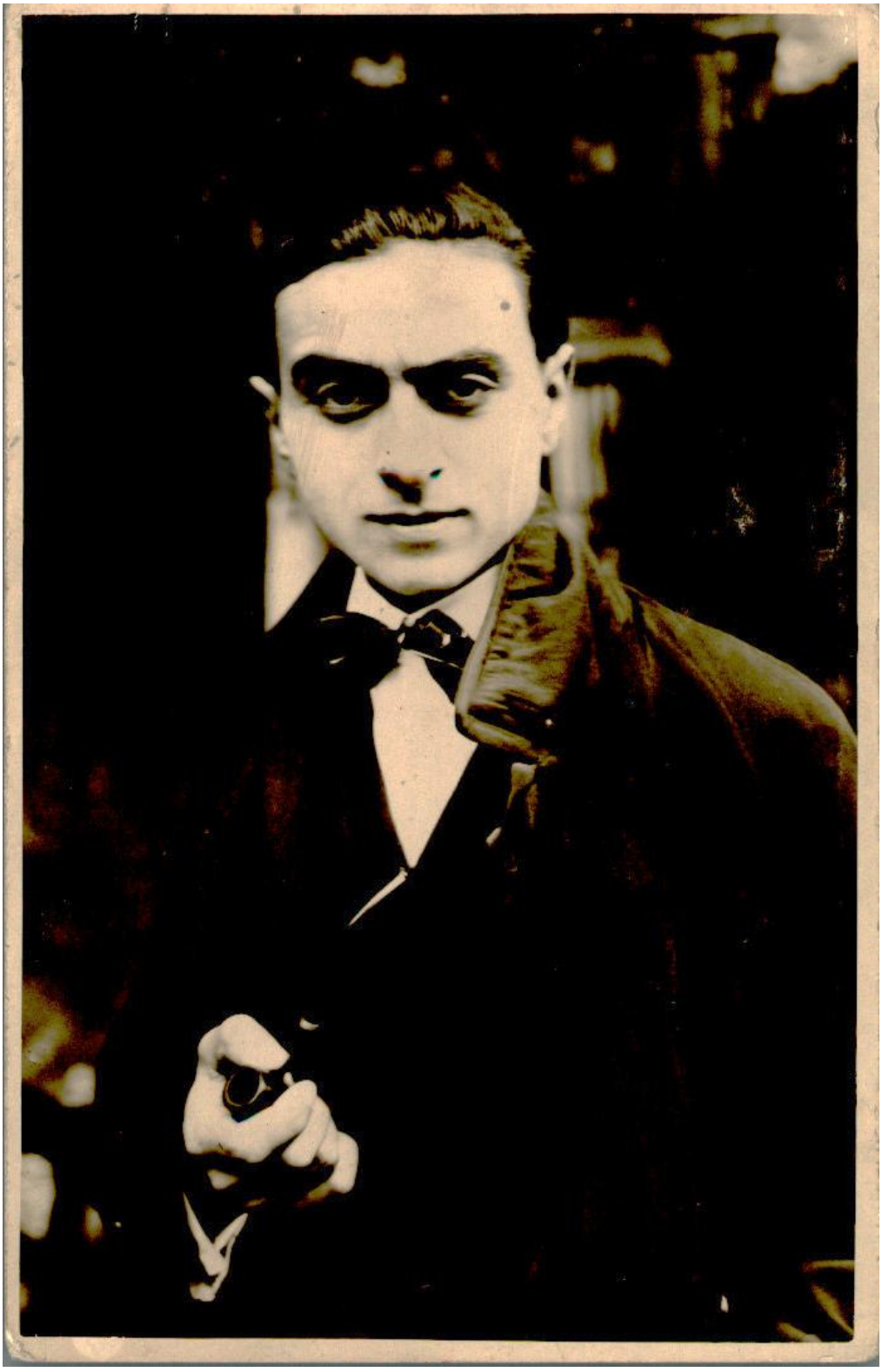

Figure 2: Hagop Ayvaz 1930, Ref. No: 1.1.2.368 1, Hrant Dink Foundation Archive, Hagop Ayvaz Collection.

5 Hagop Ayvaz's Armeno-Turkish Monologue Play *I Love You*

Before engaging directly with the performative textual analysis of Hagop Ayvaz's *I Love You*, this chapter begins by mapping the historical, cultural, and political contexts in which the monologue was written. These contexts do not merely serve as background but as constitutive frameworks that inform and are reflected in the monologue's performative and theatrical strategies. Understanding these dimensions is crucial for grasping the significance of the text's formal and ideological gestures.

5.1 Historical, Cultural and Political Contexts

5.1.1 Armeno-Turkish Theatre and the Legacy of the Mekhitarists

Mechitar of Sebaste established the Mekhitarist order in the early 18th century. It played a crucial role in the evolution of contemporary Armenian theatre and influenced Ottoman and Turkish theatre as well. The Mekhitarists wrote farces and comedies in both Classical and vernacular Armenian from their monastery on San Lazzaro in Venice. These plays often showed what life was like in the Ottoman Empire. The first theatre plays dealt with religious themes.[182] Theatre plays began to incorporate historical events from 1790 onwards.[183] Yervant Baret Manok asserts that by the late 1790s, thematic shifts occurred, correlating this transformation with the French Revolution, and observes that comedies began to be presented in vernacular language, specifically Turkish. In these plays, multiple languages are also used simultaneously, which is a stark contrast to the religious plays that were mostly performed in Classical Armenian.[184] These plays featured not just Armenian but also Jewish, Greek, and Turkish characters, utilising comedy based on everyday interactions and ethnic stereotypes common in Ottoman society.[185] The Mekhitarists were the first to write Turkish theatre plays (i.e., in Armeno-Turkish), and they did it as early as the late 18th century.[186] Armeno-Turkish made it possible for Armenians who spoke Turkish as their first language and could read Armenian script to read plays and books in the language they spoke every day.[187] The Mekhitarists' first

[182] Yervant Baret Manok, *Doğu ile Batı Arasında San Lazzaro Sahnesi: Ermeni Mıkhitarist Manastırı ve İlk Türkçe Tiyatro Oyunları*, trans. Mehmet Fatih Uslu (İstanbul: BGST Yayınları, 2013), 41-42.
[183] Ibid., 42.
[184] Ibid., 43.
[185] Ibid., 44.
[186] Ibid., 36.
[187] Ibid., 31-34.

Armeno-Turkish play was written in 1798.[188] Through schools like the Raphealian College, the Mekhitarists introduced theatre to Armenian communities in the Ottoman Empire, particularly in Istanbul. Their students helped spread modern theatre across the empire.[189] In the late 18th and especially during the 19th century, theatre in the Ottoman Empire underwent significant transformation. Before this period, theatrical performances were largely confined to informal, elite, or folk contexts, with little structured, Western-style public theatre.[190] Modern theatre, initially presented in diplomatic circles and embassies, started to make its way into the public sphere with the advent of the Tanzimat reforms[191] and the larger Ottoman and Armenian Enlightenment. Armenians emerged as important cultural transmitters and innovators, leveraging both the educational reforms and transnational connections promoted by networks such as the Mekhitarists. By establishing theatres such as the Aramyan, established by Hovannes Kasparyan (1846–66); Ortaköy Theatre, founded by Mıgırdıç Beşiktaşlıyan (1856); and Pera Groups, founded by Srabyon Hekimyan, they professionalised performance, staged and wrote plays in both Armenian and Turkish (the latter frequently in Armeno-Turkish script), and founded the first local modern theatre troupes in Istanbul.[192] Ayvaz continues this practice of Armeno-Turkish within theatrical expression by using the Armenian script for the Turkish language, but in a completely different space and time.

5.1.2 Armenian Contributions to Ottoman Theatre

By the mid-1800s, institutional developments enhanced the Armenian contribution to theatre. Hagop Vartovyan, known in Turkish as Güllü Agop, got a state monopoly on Turkish-language theatre in 1869. He ran professional companies that put on both Turkish and Armenian plays, brought in Western styles of drama, and taught performers. He renamed the Gedikpaşa theatre to "Tiyatro-i Osmani" (Ottoman Theatre) and could manage a monopoly with the government's permission for ten years (1870-1880).[193] Many of these actors would go on to become important figures in Turkish theatre. It is important to note that Greek theatrical companies also existed,

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[188] Manok, *Doğu ile Batı Arasında,* 55.
[189] Ibid., 50.
[190] Zerrin Yanıkkaya, "A Panoramic Journey Through Türkiye's Touring Theatrical Landscape," in *Reconsidering Turkish Theatre in the Republic's Centenary*, ed. İhsan Kerem Karaboğa and Nihan Şentürk (Istanbul: Istanbul University Press, 2025), 14.
[191] The Tanzimat reforms sought to restructure Ottoman administrative, financial, military, judicial, educational, social, and intellectual institutions.
[192] Ayşan Sönmez, "Reflections on the Legacy of 19th-century Istanbul Armenian Theater Projects in the Contexts of Ottomanism and Turkishness," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 28, no. 2 (February 3, 2022): 256.
[193] Ibid., 255.

but they did not act in Turkish.[194] This made Armenians even more important as the medium's popularisers among Turkish-speaking audiences.

> In 1874, as Şarasan has noted, almost all of those who were involved in the Ottoman Armenian stage participated in the Gedikpaşa Theater; at this time, there was no independent Armenian initiative. Armenian theatre groups had either dispersed during this time or were closed by the government due to their perceived "nationalist views." The initial intention was that this theatre would become an imperial theatre that staged both Turkish- and Armenian-language plays. The Gedikpaşa Theater started to stage plays composed by Turkish playwrights including Namık Kemal, Ebüziyya Tevfik, and Şemsettin Sami, prominent members of the Young Turk movement. It is important to note that, over time, there were almost no new Armenian plays produced by the Gedikpaşa theatre, and very few plays even performed in the Armenian language. As the repertoire at Gedikpaşa consisted of more and more plays in Turkish, some sectors of the Armenian community saw this as an affront, and put a distance between themselves and Hagop Vartovyan's theatre.[195]

The Ottoman Theatre was at first an imperial theatre that showed off Ottoman multicultural modernity. In fact, the first Turkish nationalist play, *Vatan Yahut Silistre* (The Motherland or Silistre) by Namık Kemal, was staged there in 1873 by Hagop Vartovyan and a mostly Armenian cast, which sparked both cultural and political controversy.[196] Çalgıcıoğlu asserts that *Vatan Yahut Silistre* was originally composed in Armeno-Turkish, a claim he supports by referencing multiple secondary sources. Nevertheless, he does not possess the primary evidence to substantiate this claim.[197] For Turkish actors, skills in Armeno-Turkish constituted an opportunity to gain a foothold in the theatre world, as Izrail elucidates in his interview.[198] Güllü writes that, besides Armenian and Turkish, other languages such as Greek or Bulgarian were also used for performances at Vartovyan's theatre.[199] He also states that Vartovyan's troupe has little to do with the Armenian renaissance but an important role in the circulation of Turkish theatre within the Ottoman Empire.[200]

> We can say that Turkish theatre owes its foundations and development to Vartovyan. Because until that day, no one had ever thought of performing in Turkish, let alone actually doing it. We

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[194] Defne Cizakça, "Identity and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Istanbulite Theatre," in *Assembling Identities: Ideas of Community in Late Antiquity and the Early Modern Period*, ed. Sam Wiseman (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 23.
[195] Sönmez, "Reflections on the Legacy of 19th-century Istanbul Armenian Theater Projects", 258.
[196] Ibid., 251.
[197] Çalgıcıoğlu, interview, 7.
[198] Izrail, interview, 9.
[199] Fırat Güllü, *Vartovyan Kumpanyası ve Yeni Osmanlılar: Osmanlıya Has Çokkültürlü Bir Politik Tiyatro Girişimi*, (Beyoğlu, İstanbul: bgst Yayınları, 2008), 43.
[200] Ibid., 56.

> can say that Vartovyan's staging of Turkish plays served two important purposes: First, to bring the theatre under the protection of the Ottoman government, and second, to endear the theatre to the Turkish audience, thereby increasing its profits severalfold.[201]

As the century went on, changes in official policy and cultural politics slowly replaced Armenian-language plays and performances with Turkish ones. This was especially true as the state's focus shifted from Ottomanism to Turkification. Some Armenians felt this as a betrayal and left the stage, while others moved to other Ottoman and post-Ottoman contexts, sharing their knowledge.[202] Erdem Ünal Demirci writes that especially after the performance of *Vatan Yahut Silistre*, the people became acquainted with nationalist ideas, and thus theatre not only took on a critical role against the monarchy but also paved the way for the invention of theatre as a propaganda tool.[203]

> By moving away from Armenian theatre plays and expressing Turkish in a hegemonic discourse, and later getting rid of Armenian actors and turning to Muslim Turkish actors, it will become one of the main objectives. Therefore, this approach will emerge not only by exceeding the boundaries of the opposition group that criticises the government but also as a product of more general policies.[204]

During Abdülhamid's reign, there were certain limitations imposed on the cultural sector, especially on theatrical activities. Under the period of censorship, numerous theatre practitioners departed from Istanbul to embark on tours.[205] During this time, Mardiros Mınakyan took over the *Osmanlı Dram Kumpanyası* (Ottoman Drama Company).[206] With the proclamation of the second constitutional period in 1908, censorship was lifted, and Armenian theatre artists continued where they had left off.[207] Aşod Madatyan founded *Azad Tadron* (Free Theatre) together with Yenovk Şahen and Şahen Hovannesyan. In their brochure, they announced that they would prioritise socialist ideas in their plays.[208] Vahram Papazyan also joined them for some performances, leading to the *Ermeni Dramatik Tiyatrosu* (Armenian Drama Company).[209] During World War I and the ongoing Armenian Genocide, Aşod Madatyan

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[201] Şarasan (Sarkis Tütüncüyan), *Türkiye Ermenileri Sahnesi ve çalışanları*, transl. Boğos Çalgıcıoğlu (İstanbul: BGST Yayınları, 2008), 20-21.
[202] Sönmez, "Reflections on the Legacy of 19th-century Istanbul Armenian Theater Projects", 258-259.
[203] Erdem Ünal Demirci, *Türkiye'de Tiyatronun Siyasal Rolü (1850–1950)* (İstanbul: Federe Yayınları, 2010), 57.
[204] Ibid.
[205] İzrail, *Düşler Sahnesinde, 16.*
[206] Ibid.
[207] Ibid., 17.
[208] Ibid., 19.
[209] İzrail, *Düşler Sahnesinde*., 28.

went into hiding to avoid forced conscription and persecution during the 1915 arrests of Armenian intellectuals. He was captured in 1916, sentenced for desertion, and sent to Aleppo in 1917. He later managed to escape from deportation to Der Zor and hid until conditions allowed him to return.[210] Following this period, Madatyan resumed his theatrical activities despite the increasingly repressive atmosphere under the Committee of Union and Progress, whose Turkification increasingly excluded Armenians from cultural life.

In 1914, Darülbedayi was established as a state theatre institution, aiming to professionalise Turkish theatre.[211] This marked the beginning of a systematic marginalisation of Armenian actors, despite their pivotal contributions to Ottoman and Turkish theatre.[212] Çalgıcıoğlu states that one of the founding aims of Darülbedayi was explicitly to remove Armenians from the theatrical stage. He notes that there was even a specific clause supporting this objective: to establish a conservatory that would train Turkish actors. As a result, Armenian performers were gradually pushed out. Many lost their jobs or were relegated to the provinces, while those who remained in Istanbul could only perform in amateur settings, such as school associations and local clubs.[213] While Armenian actresses remained in the ensemble for a while due to the religious ban on Muslim women performing, Armenian male actors were largely excluded from the new state theatre, which aimed to Turkify the stage.[214] Figures such as Eliza Binemeciyan and Kınar Sıvacıyan initially held key roles but were gradually marginalised as Turkish actresses entered the scene. Although the *Armenian Dramatic Company* dissolved, Armenian actresses continued to perform in various other Istanbul troupes, indicating a dispersed but resilient presence.[215] This formative function was unexpectedly disrupted by the political turmoil of the First World War and its aftermath. After the end of the war, a transitional period began for Istanbul with the Allied occupation, during which the conditions for the theatre also changed. The Armistice period (1918–1922) and the signing of the Armistice of Mudros, created a unique political, social, and cultural environment in Istanbul. This atmosphere significantly influenced the theatre scene, which included both Turkish and Armenian productions, by introducing distinct characteristics that distinguished this era.[216] This period

[210] İzrail, *Düşler Sahnesinde*, 34-35.
[211] Ibid., 36-37.
[212] Ibid., 66-67.
[213] Çalgıcıoğlu, interview, 4-5.
[214] Ibid.
[215] İzrail, *Düşler Sahnesinde*., 68-69.
[216] Ibid., 40-42.

marked a remarkable era for Armenian theatre. Survivors of the genocide and returnees, along with artists fleeing hardships in the Caucasus, contributed to a vibrant cultural scene. Numerous companies flourished, offering a robust network of performances and innovation.[217]

5.1.3 Staging the Nation: Performing Turkishness

The short period of relative openness ceased with the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923. This marked both a political and a cultural rupture: one that also profoundly affected the field of theatre. The new nation-state under its first president, Mustafa Kemal, later Atatürk, formulated clear cultural policies, which were particularly manifested in theatre. Although a degree of variety prevailed during Ottoman governance, the introduction of new aesthetic and linguistic standards, like the Alphabet Reform of 1928, significantly influenced the cultural milieu. The Late Ottoman Empire presented a diverse theatrical repertoire, significantly influenced by Armenian contributions to modern theatre; however, the cultural landscape experienced a profound upheaval with the emergence of the Turkish Republic. The new leadership relied on a unified national discourse, in which the Turkish language and identity became central and intertwined. This realignment had immediate effects on the stages of the Early Republic: Armenian was de facto displaced from public stages, plays in other minority languages were hardly ever approved, and the municipal theatre Darülbedayi increasingly aligned itself with state narratives.[218] It transformed from a semi-private, financially precarious entity into a representation of state-driven, professional, and inclusive art, intended to demonstrate that Turkish society is striving for modernisation.[219] The new state purposefully used the arts, including theatre, to further its main ideology. This was made clear by the Constitution of 1928, which put the fine arts under the control of these ideas. Thus, theatre was supposed to help create a new national identity and assist social, cultural, and political changes.[220] Theatre plays of the 1930s aimed to promote the values and virtues of "Turkishness," emphasising bravery, heroism, loyalty, unity, patriotism, obedience to authority, and self-sacrifice for the nation as important themes. Individuals were urged to abandon personal differences in favour of collective values. The theatrical text was performative,

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[217] İzrail, *Düşler Sahnesinde*, 42-50.
[218] Reha Keskin, "The Struggle of the Modern Armenian Theatre for Existence on the Threshold of the Centenary," in *Reconsidering Turkish Theatre*, ed. İhsan Kerem Karaboğa and Nihan Şentürk (Istanbul: Istanbul University Press, 2025), 243-44.
[219] Tahsin Konur, "Cumhuriyet Döneminde Devlet-Tiyatro İlişkisi," *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi* 31, no. 1-2 (1987), 308-309.
[220] Semra Şen, "Atatürk, Cumhuriyet ve Tiyatro," *Erdem* 11, no. 32 (1998): 621-22.

anticipating that spectators would internalise and emulate the values it conveyed.[221] The term "National Theatre" was reinterpreted by Turkish artists to signify "Turkish-language theatre," so disregarding the multilingual, multicultural roots of both institutional and popular theatre. Their contributions were reinterpreted as helpful rather than foundational; official narratives emphasised ethnically Turkish individuals and organisations, rendering minority involvement invisible in the formation of national memory.[222] This shaped not just what was performed, but who and what was remembered, as well as what was purposefully forgotten, on the national stage. Plays frequently illustrated the "glorious episodes of Turkish history," the principles of sacrifice and solidarity, and the victory of republican ideals over ignorance and retrogression. The focus was on "epic emotions" like fearlessness, perpetual nationalism, and devotion for the state.[223] Institutions such as the People's Houses and the Turkish History Institution were instrumental in sponsoring theatre that depicted historical and national values and cultural policies.[224] The Turks, who were a sub-identity in the Ottoman mosaic, became the dominant identity from now on.[225] Demirci notes how, before the official "Citizen, Speak Turkish" campaign, Turkish was already mandatory from 1926 onwards.[226] Keskin, contends that this language nationalism was profoundly internalised by minority groups. Lerna Ekmekçioğlu emphasises that Armenians during the 1920s and 1930s frequently remained silent or "contented themselves" with their limited rights, perceiving little alternative but to outwardly exhibit loyalty and utility to the newly established Turkish nation.[227] Barış Ünlü's notion of the "Turkishness Contract" delineates a framework of implicit norms and pressures: minorities suffer by conforming to unexpressed expectations (such as speaking Turkish and concealing their differences), notwithstanding the absence of clear prohibitions.[228] Public theatre became an instrument of national unity, achieved through omission, expulsion, or coerced assimilation of the very groups who had, for generations, been foundational to the Ottoman theatrical

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[221] Esra Dicle, "Nationalist Affection in the Theatre Plays of the People's Houses Period (1932–1951)," in *Reconsidering Turkish Theatre*, eds. İhsan Kerem Karaboğa, Nihan Şentürk (Istanbul: Istanbul University Press, 2025), 149.
[222] İstek Serhan Erbek, "Ethical Regime in the Early Republican Theatre," in *Reconsidering Turkish Theatre*, ed. İhsan Kerem Karaboğa and Nihan Şentürk (Istanbul: Istanbul University Press, 2025), 106.
[223] Dicle, "Nationalist Affection", 149-50.
[224] Şen, "Atatürk, Cumhuriyet ve Tiyatro, 623-25.
[225] Demirci, *Türkiye'de Tiyatronun Siyasal Rolü,* 78.
[226] Ibid.
[227] Ekmekçioğlu cited from Reha Keskin, "The Struggle of the Modern Armenian Theatre," 243.
[228] Ünlü cited from Keskin, "The Struggle of the Modern Armenian Theatre," 244.

tradition.[229] Although theatre was not the sole method of identity creation, it was nonetheless significantly utilised within this context.[230] Ismail Hakki Baltacıoğlu was an advocate for the Turkification of the theatre. He demanded a "Turkish diction," which thus excluded Armenians, who had an accent when speaking Turkish,[231] a "Turkish stage," "Turkish themes," a "Turkish infrastructure" in theatre, and a "Turkish understanding."[232] In the chapter on school theatre in his 1938 publication, *Toplu Tedris* (Collective Teaching), Baltacıoğlu asserts that the objective of school theatre is to cultivate a suitable national theatre. He articulates this notion by condemning Mınakyan's company, asserting that the presence of Armenian players on stage constituted a barrier to the national theatre and a "disaster" for it.[233] Muhsin Ertuğrul emerged as a pivotal player in cultural policy for theatre during this period, advocating specific principles related to theatre and performances to engage the populace. Demirci asserts that this period altered the contemporary comprehension of theatre, as Bertolt Brecht contravened the principles established by Ertuğrul during the same era.[234] The changes in theatre did not stop at education policy either. School stage plays developed from earlier Ottoman educational-theatrical practices and eventually became a powerful tool for state propaganda. This change was closely tied to the ideological goals of the one-party government and the country's larger efforts to build a modern nation. School plays heavily featured the themes and messages prioritised by the ruling single-party ideology, serving to shape and normalise the Republican worldview for children. Content went far beyond pure entertainment or aesthetic development, instead emphasising national unity, Kemalist reforms, and social roles in line with state priorities.[235] Artistic growth or enjoyment was subordinated to political aims; the plays became "didactic pulpits" rather than sources of aesthetic engagement or entertainment.[236] In the 1930s, Turkey's literacy rate was extremely low, which meant that written forms of propaganda and education

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[229] Keskin, "The Struggle of the Modern Armenian Theatre,", 243-44.
[230] Demirci, *Türkiye'de Tiyatronun Siyasal Rolü*., 95.
[231] See Cankara "May a Wasp Sting Your Tongue!: The Armenian Stereotype in Ottoman Popular Performances from the Empire to the Nation-State." *Comparative Drama* 52, no. 3/4 (2018): 215–42 for an in-depth discussion of Armenians' prominent role in Ottoman theatre and their complex relationship to the Turkish language. His article demonstrates how Armenians were frequently marked out for their accented Turkish in performances, singled out for ridicule, and eventually marginalised in both stage practice and theatre historiography as part of the broader process of Turkification.
[232] Demirci, *Türkiye'de Tiyatronun Siyasal Rolü*., 102.
[233] Reha Keskin, "The Struggle of the Modern Armenian Theatre," 240-241.
[234] Demirci, *Türkiye'de Tiyatronun Siyasal Rolü*, 121-123.
[235] Nilgün Firidinoğlu, "Official Regulations on School Plays in the Early Republican Period," in *Reconsidering Turkish Theatre*, ed. İhsan Kerem Karaboğa and Nihan Şentürk (Istanbul: Istanbul University Press, 2025), 86.
[236] Ibid., 95.

could not reach the majority of the population effectively.[237] Theatre, thus performances, by contrast, were readily accessible, easy to understand, and could reach large audiences quickly and emotionally. Recognising this, Kemalist policymakers emphasised theatre as a means of public communication and ideological formation.[238] Esra Dicle Başbuğ analyses the People's Houses in the Kemalist era and their association with theatre. These houses played a crucial role in disseminating Kemalist values.[239] By 1933, the number of established People's Houses had already reached 55.[240] Between 1932 and 1951, a total of 386 plays were staged in the People's Houses. 110 of them were shaped by Kemalist propaganda and reflected the official Turkish History Thesis,[241] a clear example of nationalist historicism at its height.[242] Many plays celebrated Turkish history and the nation's founding and village development, which worked to foster a sense of unity, shared destiny, and national pride. On the tenth anniversary of the Republic, more than one hundred plays were performed to cultivate grassroots support for these ideas.[243] Elif Çongur writes about the role of theatre in the emergence of Turkish identity. She describes how the People's Houses continue the Young Turks values.[244] The tenth anniversary of the Republic marks an important point in Turkish identity politics. Following the enactment of a law on June 11, 1933, to celebrate the Republic's tenth anniversary, a wave of plays emerged that were infused with nationalist ideology. Halit Fahri Ozansoy's *On Yılın Destanı* (The Epic of the Tenth Year) is a prime example of this. Çongur mentions other titles that are also supposed to highlight the reforms and the alleged progressiveness of the Kemalists: *Istiklal* (Freedom) by Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Kahraman* (Hero) by Faruk Nafiz Çamlıbel, *Sönmeyen Ateş* (The Unextinguished Flame) by Nahit Sırrı Örik, and more.[245] Behçet Kemal Çağlar's *Coban* (The Shepherd) is equally exemplary and, according to Çongur, shows how identity is

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[237] Keskin, "The Struggle of the Modern Armenian Theatre", 240.
[238] Dicle, "Nationalist Affection", 149.
[239] Esra Dicle Başbuğ, *Resmî İdeoloji Sahnede: Kemalist İdeolojinin İnşasında Halkevleri Dönemi Tiyatro Oyunlarının Etkisi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2013), 42.
[240] Başbuğ, *Resmî İdeoloji Sahnede*, 43.
[241] The Turkish History Thesis, aimed to construct and legitimise a unified national identity by asserting that Turks were the founders of major ancient civilisations and stressing a deep-rooted, honourable Turkish past, particularly to generate national consciousness among new generations following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. This thesis positioned Turkishness as a central, enduring element of the nation, both as an academic mission and a sociopolitical tool in shaping and sustaining a collective national identity, See Büşra Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih: Türkiye'de "Resmî Tarih" Tezinin Oluşumu (1929–1937)* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003), 13 and 103.
[242] Başbuğ, *Resmî İdeoloji Sahnede*., 51.
[243] Esra Dicle Başbuğ, *The Role of the Theatre in the Construction of State Ideology* (PhD diss., Boğaziçi University, 2010), v-vi and 60.
[244] Elif Çongur, *Ulusal Kimliği Tiyatro ile Kurmak: Türk Tiyatrosunun Kimlik İnşasındaki İşlevi* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2017), 92.
[245] Çongur, *Ulusal Kimliği Tiyatro ile Kurmak*, 98-99.

controlled and determined top-down. *Coban* propagates that the Turkish "race" is the founder of all civilisations.[246] Based on these examples, it becomes clear how the Ottoman theatre, which was strongly influenced by Armenians, changed with the founding of the Republic and the lives of Armenian theatre lovers and makers, like young Hagop Ayvaz in 1932. All scripts required approval from the General Directorate of the ruling party. This ensured uniformity in public theatre performances, eliminating disagreements and conflicting concepts. This centralisation maintained the ideological message's purity and efficacy.[247] Theatre became a regular part of national holidays, along with poetry readings and radio shows. The structural alterations provided the context for the life of the young Armenian theatre enthusiast, Hagop Ayvaz. As a member of a marginalised community with limited access to official structures, he had to contend for his position in the theatre world through other avenues, demonstrating both courage and compassion. In this newly formed, nationalistically influenced theatrical environment, the youthful Hagop Ayvaz endeavoured to establish his presence. A 21-year-old theatre enthusiast, raised in challenging circumstances and deprived of formal education opportunities due to parental poverty, found the state-sponsored pathway to theatre inaccessible. Instead, he found his first roles in independent, Armenian-led theatre groups before writing his first official play, *The Final Act* in Turkish, 1932. Simultaneously, he composed a monologue. What differentiates the monologue from his inaugural formal play, however, is its orthography. He composed the monologue in Armenian script but articulated it in Turkish. A theatrical tradition prevalent in the Ottoman Empire that was marginalised from cultural and collective memory following the establishment of the Turkish Republic. The subsequent section will provide a detailed analysis of the monologue: what insights does the Armenian script offer on this period? To what extent can we perceive this Armeno-Turkish monologue as a manifestation of cultural resilience and a performative and theatrical *fabric*?

5.2 Textual and Performative Analysis of *I Love You*

To contextualise the following analysis, a concise summary of *I Love You* will first outline its narrative and dramaturgical structure. The monologue follows a male narrator as he reflects on a failed romantic encounter marked by class difference, humiliation, and theatrical self-exposure. Formally, the monologue comprises two parts, neither of which explicitly reveals

[246] Çongur, *Ulusal Kimliği Tiyatro ile Kurmak*, 111-113.
[247] Başbuğ, *The Role of Theatre*, 54.

their connection. While the first ends with a dramatic invitation to meet after a theatre performance, the second opens with a narration of heartbreak following an encounter in a shoeshine shop, suggesting a shift in setting, tone and perhaps even the identity of the beloved. Nonetheless, narrative resonances and emotional consistencies between the two imply a tenuous coherence. The one-week interval between the two parts further accentuates this shift in emotional register and narrative development. This study treats both parts as a unified whole, capturing the complete arc of the monologue's performative and theatrical fabric. In the first part, the narrator appears to be in the private home of a friend named Ayvaz, where he describes falling in love with a woman he sees in that space. Later, he recognises her in the audience during the theatre performance and invites her to meet him outside after the show. In the second part, he recounts meeting a woman — perhaps the same as in the first scene — in a humble public setting, a shoeshine shop, from where they proceed to the glamorous entertainment venue Belvü. These shifting locations mirror the emotional instability of the narrator and complicate the linearity of the plot. The monologue never clarifies whether these scenes represent real events, theatrical fantasies, or remembered memories. The speaker's voice alternates between mockery and melancholia, between lyrical confession and social critique. He stages himself as a failed suitor, a self-aware actor, and at times a clown. The monologue is not divided into scenes but unfolds in emotionally charged waves, marked by abrupt transitions, contradictions, and metatheatrical gestures. As the following chapters suggest, these dramaturgical strategies may be understood not as incidental features but as integral to the monologue's structure and its critical exploration of love, class, and identity both on and off stage. Each subchapter engages with performative and theatrical dimensions of Ayvaz's monologue and, where relevant, places it in dialogue with İsmail Galip's contemporaneous monologue of the same title from 1930, published in the official magazine *Darülbedayi*.[248]

[248] Launched on 15 February 1930 under the leadership of Muhsin Ertuğrul, *Darülbedayi* was Turkey's first theatre journal. Published by the Istanbul City Theatre, it ran for 83 years with 458 issues, functioning as both an institutional mouthpiece and a platform for theatrical criticism, audience engagement, and cultural politics. See Deniz Depe, "İlk Tiyatro Dergisi: Darülbedayi," *Krom*, no. 60 (March 2024): 60–65.

5.2.1 Armeno-Turkish as Performative Medium: Script and Survival

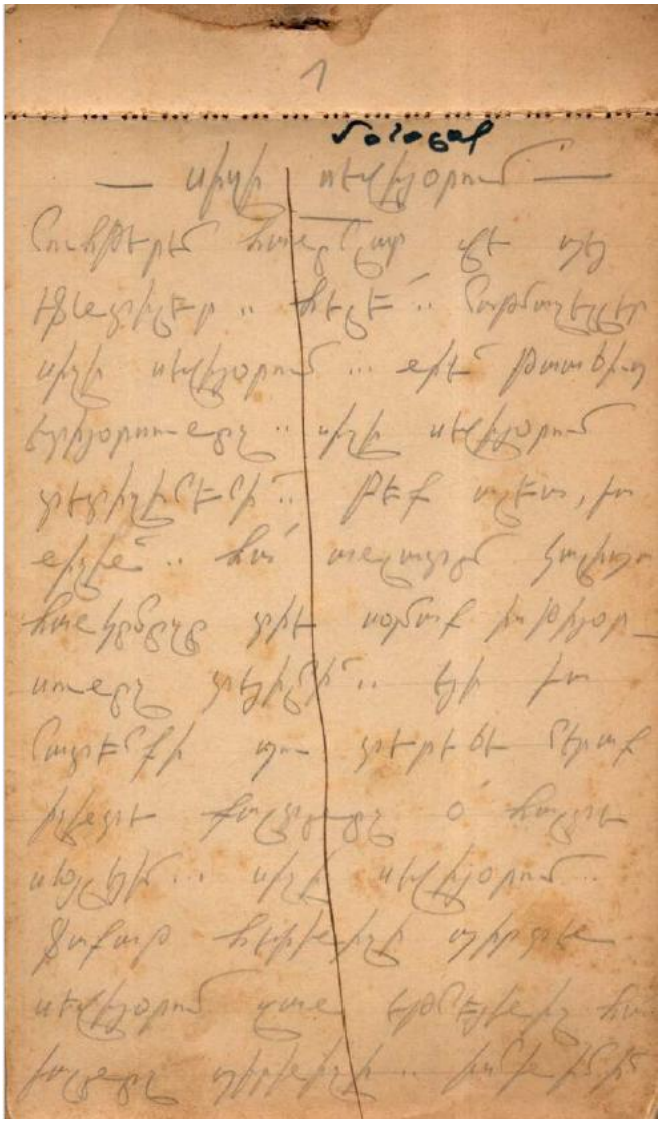

Figure 3: First page of Hagop Ayvaz's Armeno-Turkish monologue, HA292-154. Hrant Dink Foundation Archive, Hagop Ayvaz Collection, 1932.

Ayvaz's use of Turkish in Armenian scripts can be interpreted as a subversive discursive act. It also creates a division between form and substance, resulting in a disparity between expectation and actual perception for the spectator. This expression not only challenges the nationalist alignment of the Turkish language with ethnic identity but also constructs a "hidden transcript" within the hegemonic discourse of Turkish modernity and nationhood. The Armenian letters serve not merely as a communication tool but as a symbol habituated with cultural and identity significance. The monologue demonstrates a distinct connection to Armenian identity, despite being written in Turkish, thereby complicating the relationship between signifier and signified

and contesting the dominance of Turkish language and identity politics in the 1930s. As Derrida argues, the signifier is never simply or transparently anchored to a single signified but is always subject to displacement, iteration, and différance, enabling minority identities and histories to persist through traces and slippages in language.[249] The letters are iterable; they could, in principle, be used repeatedly in new contexts but their specific use in a Turkish text, especially in a post-genocidal context, carries a unique significance. The Armenian language and script were officially marginalised in Turkey during the 1930s and banned from public stages. This ban, though not officially codified in law, was enforced administratively and socially between 1923 and 1946, creating significant barriers for Armenian theatrical activity. This policy stemmed from a wider drive for national homogenisation, where Turkish was promoted as the sole public language, and minority languages were discouraged or suppressed.[250] Following this new policy, Armenian artists could no longer perform their plays in established, prominent venues, like the municipal Darülbedayi. Instead, they were limited to private or community spaces, if they could perform at all.[251] The policy contributed to the erosion of Armenian as a living language in Istanbul by removing a crucial public platform for its use: the theatre. The audience and performer base for Armenian-language theatre decreased substantially, particularly as younger generations grew less fluent.[252]

According to Derrida, every iterable sign produces a trace of its origin, even when it moves into new contexts. By writing his work in Armenian letters, Ayvaz creates a cultural iteration, an act of resistance against the hegemonic cultural policies. The Armenian alphabet, as a repeatable trace, consistently refers to Armenian identity and cultural memory here, even in the context of a Turkish-language text. Ayvaz thus uses the iterability of the Armenian characters to create a persistent memory and presence of his marginalised identity. This script carries, as Derrida would say, a trace that can never fully shed its origin. The choice of Armenian script in a Turkish text creates a *différance*, a repeatable trace that underscores Ayvaz's identity. Ayvaz's use of Armenian writing in the Turkish language creates a play of sameness and difference — a différance. The Armenian scripts mark the text as not fully Turkish or fully

[249] Andersen, *Performativity as Critical Praxis*, 71.
[250] Vartan Estukyan, "İstanbul'da Ermenice Tiyatro 1923–1946 Arası Gayriresmî Olarak Yasaktı," *Agos*, August 2, 2019, https://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/22751/istanbulda-ermenice-tiyatro-1923-1946-arasi-gayriresm-olarak-yasakti
[251] Ibid.
[252] Ibid.

Armenian, continually negotiating meaning "in the gap," never closing on a single presence or reading. The choice to write in the Armenian script functions as a selective gesture, rendering the text inaccessible to large parts of the Turkish-speaking majority and thus performing a subtle inversion of exclusion. Only those who can read Armenian letters can receive or understand this text. Armeno-Turkish here acts as a trace of theatrical traditions lost to cultural destruction, making absence legible through its script. As Derrida would argue, every sign leaves the mark of an absent presence and carries its history into every new context. Ayvaz uses an intangible heritage to say something, to show what is *absent* on paper and on stage. His monologue, never staged, remains as pure possibility — open to repetition, reinterpretation, and new performance. For Derrida, even the most "present" performance is just one instance of iterability; each reading or staging rewrites the work anew. Building on Derrida's notion of iterability and situated in a context where Armenian visibility on stage was politically constrained, the monologue's non-performance reveals its openness to re-reading. Its meaning is not fixed through embodiment but remains deferred, allowing for a continued political and cultural afterlife that resists closure. This non-embodiment of a monologue play in Armenian script could also be linked to the absence of the Armenian body on public stages in the Early Republic of Turkey. These stages are haunted by Armenian theatrical ghosts — a term borrowed and recontextualised from Laure Marchand and Guillaume Perrier's notion of the "Armenian ghost" in contemporary Turkey, which symbolises the denied yet persisting presence of the Armenian past in collective and cultural memory.[253] This makes the monologue more than just a literary work: it becomes a kind of textual embodiment and, at the same time, a "staging" of cultural resistance through its very form. Ayvaz's decision to write his monologue in Armenian script is therefore not merely a carrier of content but a performative act that generates and shifts meaning. A comparative lens further reveals the power of iteration. Ayvaz's monologue shares its title with a monologue by İ. Galip published in the very first issue of *Darülbedayi* in 1930, the official journal of the municipal theatre.[254] By reusing the same phrase, Ayvaz enacts what Derrida calls différance, a repetition with difference that produces meaning through displacement, not presence. The utterance "I love you" no longer signals triumph or romantic success but rather performs class struggle and articulates alienation, both of which will be

[253] Laure Marchand, Guillaume Perrier, Debbie Blythe, and Taner Akçam, *Turkey and the Armenian Ghost: On the Trail of the Genocide* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015).
[254] Arcan, "Sizi Seviyorum," 14–15.

analysed in greater depth in Chapter 5.2.3 In his interview Çalgıcıoğlu explains that Ayvaz chose to write the monologue in Armenian letters simply because it was easier for him.[255] Having learnt Armenian since childhood, he felt more comfortable with the script, which is phonetic and well suited to rendering Turkish sounds. Çalgıcıoğlu stresses that there was "neither a nationalist concern nor a particular affection for the Armenian language" behind this choice; it was purely practical.[256] Even without political intention, the act of writing Turkish in Armenian script becomes a performative expression, not because of what it claims to say but because of the historical conditions that render such a gesture meaningful. Even though Ayvaz himself may not have intended any defiance, a performative reading opens the text to meanings beyond the author's original purpose. Nergis Ertürk applies Derrida's critique of phonocentrism, which highlights the preference for spoken language over written text, to the Turkish language and script reform.[257] She contends that the reform imposes a phonocentric violence, as it reduces the intricately layered written heritage of Ottoman Turkish to a phonetically transparent spoken language, thereby erasing or at least marginalising it.[258] Ottoman Turkish, which employed multiple alphabets (Arabo-Persian, Armenian, Greek, Hebrew, etc.), is thus displaced. The implementation of the Latin script represents not merely a new alphabet but a mechanism for regulating memory and identity. Ertürk shows that the Turkish language reform was not only a political measure but also a form of epistemic violence.[259] Ayvaz's use of the Armenian alphabet resists this and maintains a trace of *différance*. Ayvaz writes in Armeno-Turkish not merely as a phonetic tool but as a medium that enables the expression of subtle phonological distinctions, such as the contrast between consonants (e.g., ψ/բ and բ/գ), even though his use of these letters is not fully consistent and reflects broader tendencies in Armeno-Turkish orthography. Ayvaz's choice of script retains the layered complexity reminiscent of Ottoman and earlier Armeno-Turkish texts, unlike the Latin-based Turkish alphabet introduced in 1928, which prioritised a one-to-one phoneme-grapheme correspondence. While Nergis Ertürk argues that the Turkish script reform enacted a phonocentric ideal of "direct" communication — a "coup not only of the state but of the letter"[260] — Ayvaz's use of a script excluded from the national repertoire enacts what Derrida

[255] Çalgıcıoğlu, interview, 6-7.
[256] Ibid.
[257] Nergis Ertürk, *Grammatology and Literary Modernity in Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
[258] Ibid., 89 and 95.
[259] Ibid. 88.
[260] Ibid.

would call iterability: a repetition that differs. By mobilising a writing system that both echoes and exceeds the logic of phonocentric reform, Ayvaz contests the nationalist reduction of language to pure transparency, exposing instead what Ertürk terms "the violence of abstraction" at the heart of modernist reforms. While Derrida's notion of performativity foregrounds the iterable, material nature of signs, including written scripts, Ayvaz's choice of the Armenian alphabet adds further cultural and historical weight to this iteration. The monologue lies not only in the repeatable trace of language but in the act of writing Turkish through a traumatised script, invoking memory, survival, and resistance. The only explicitly Armenian word in the monologue appears at the end: "գրեց" (*krets* for "written by"), followed by Ayvaz's name. This gesture does more than simply identify the author; it is, in Derrida's sense, a signature: a mark that binds writer to text through both affirmation and differentiation.[261] The Armenian script here inscribes minoritarian identity, and the use of the Armenian word for "written by" reinforces Ayvaz's self-positioning within a linguistic and cultural frame that resists erasure. Following Derrida's concept of hauntology, this final word takes on a spectral quality. The authorial presence enters the text not as a stable origin but as a haunting trace and signature.[262] The script becomes a ghostly medium, conjuring memory and suppressed identity. The monologue is haunted by autobiographical fragments, sociopolitical critique, and what Derrida terms the spectre — "that which returns, uninvited yet necessary, to trouble the present."[263] In this sense, Ayvaz's Armenian signature is not only an act of reclaiming authorship but also a spectral sign of Armenian belonging: it makes the author's presence linger in the text, like a ghost that persists despite efforts to erase it. Ayvaz's signature, written in Armenian, quietly insists on both his identity and his continued presence within a society that sought to make Armenian voices invisible. The text, in its final mark, refuses full assimilation into the dominant landscape of Early Republican Turkey. Building on Ghoogasian's intervention in Armeno-Turkish studies, this thesis interprets Hagop Ayvaz's *I Love You* not as a manifestation of hybridised identity, but as a performative act of minoritarian inscription. In composing a Turkish-language monologue using the Armenian script, Ayvaz enacts a textual strategy that marks Turkish as inherently plural—both culturally and linguistically. The Armenian script is not merely a private writing system, but functions as a deliberate intervention: it disrupts the

[261] Andersen, *Performativity as Critical Praxis*, 85.
[262] Derrida, "Signature Event Context," 8.
[263] Ian Hickey, "Derrida, Hauntology, and the Spectre," in *Haunted Heaney*, (London: Routledge, 2022), 9.

project of Turkish's nationalist monolingualisation and unsettles proprietary claims to language purity. Rather than simply reflecting a liminal or in-between identity, Ayvaz's practice actively reorients the framework of cultural and linguistic affiliation. Through his work, Turkish becomes accessible through Armenian sensibilities, expressions, and forms, challenging the notion that the language "belongs" to any one nation or people. Crucially, this act is not an instance of hybridity as conventionally understood, a blending or negotiation between two discrete cultures. As Ghoogasian argues, hybridity theory, risks reifying distinct boundaries that did not always exist in lived literary realities.[264] Instead, Ayvaz's choice of script and language constitutes a resistant, depropriative gesture: an assertion that Turkish, as used in Armenian contexts, is neither borrowed nor appropriated but fundamentally re-authored and inscribed with a minoritarian différance. Through this act, the monologue becomes a minoritarian performative, a self-conscious articulation of persistence in a script that, despite its marginalisation from public view, endures in the cultural memory and archive of the Armenian community. Assmann underlines that scripts are not neutral vessels, but essential media of cultural memory that shape, preserve, and transmit collective identities. The use of the Armenian script, even in the context of Turkish, invokes the cultural memory linked to that script; it transforms into a tangible medium that encodes history, trauma, and community, what Assmann refers to as a body-external "storage medium" capable of preserving layers of collective experience beyond oral transmission.[265] For Ayvaz, as for many Armenians of his generation and predecessors, writing in Turkish using the Armenian script was not primarily a statement regarding ethnicity, assimilation, or minority identity. Rather, it constituted a broader cultural and literary canon: it embodied what was pragmatic, recognisable, and effective for both communication and artistic expression.[266] From the perspective of performativity theory, Ayvaz's monologue is not merely concerned with language as code; it enacts Armenian cultural memory and recalls earlier performative realities, in which language and script were chosen according to context, audience, and intent, rather than being imposed by nationalist ideology. It elucidates, through its inherent materiality, the pluralistic and interconnected world that existed, highlighting the permeability and cultural exchange that characterised Ottoman linguistic and literary culture prior to the devastation of genocide and the rise of monolingual

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[264] Ghoogasian, "The Problem with Hybridity," 40-41.
[265] Aleida Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume: Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses* (München: C.H. Beck, 1999), 21.
[266] Ghoogasian, "What We Talk About When We Talk About Armeno-Turkish," 322-323.

nationalism. The conscious, performative choice to write Turkish with Armenian letters in 1932, long after the supposed death of pluralism, is a small but potent act that reinscribes Turkish as also, irreducibly, an Armenian language.[267] It reminds not only of what was lost to monolingualism and Turkish nationalism but also of the possibilities for reclaiming more inclusive, nuanced narratives of language and belonging. These narratives recognise polyphonic histories and refuse to confine language to the property of any single group.[268] The monologue is a performative critique of the cultural and language policies of the Early Turkish Republic, without explicitly stating so. Its Armenian form, which deviates significantly from the hegemonic discourse of its time, is sufficient for that. Under the Ottoman millet system, each religious and cultural community was permitted to use its own script. The inauguration of the Latin alphabet marked a decisive break from this pluralism, erasing visible differences and pushing minority populations towards linguistic and cultural assimilation into Turkishness.[269] The change made Turkish the only official and authorised public language. Schools, administration, and publications had to teach and use the new script, and laws and decrees enforced it.[270] Especially when considering that in 1928 Turkey experienced a cultural disruption with the language reform. The conversion from Arabo-Persian to Latin script reshaped Turkish identity and changed the cultural environment, symbolising secularisation, and nationalism. The establishment of a national Turkish alphabet and purified language affected minority scripts and languages, including Armenian, Greek, and Hebrew.[271] The law enacted on 1 November 1928 mandating the adoption of the new Latin script for both official and unofficial transactions was crucial. This legislation mandated that government entities, the media, advertisements, and all published materials adopt the new script without delay, allowing for a one-year transition time.[272] The law did not specifically indicate that "only Latin may be used for writing," so establishing a monopoly on writing; rather, it effectively prohibited the official use of Arabo-Persian and other non-Latin scripts in state, education, media, and public domains. This de facto prohibition supplanted any written modalities in these domains.[273]

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[267] Ghoogasian, "The Problem with Hybridity," 39.
[268] Ibid., 45., and Manoukian, "Forbidden Attraction," 215.
[269] Birol Caymaz and Emmanuel Szurek, "La Révolution Au Pied De La Lettre. L'invention De « L'alphabet Turc »," Thematic Issue, *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 6 (2007), 15.
[270] Yılmaz Çolak, "Language Policy and Official Ideology in Early Republican Turkey," *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, no. 6 (November 2004): 72 and 81.
[271] Caymaz and Szurek, "La Révolution Au Pied de La Lettre," 15.
[272] Çolak, "Language Policy and Official Ideology," 72.
[273] Ibid.

Evidence suggests that towns, like Izmir, have prohibited the use of non-Turkish terminology in public discourse, impacting street vendors and minorities that use their languages.[274] The campaign "Citizen, Speak Turkish!" intensified this drive for monolingualism.[275] Founded in 1932, the Turkish Language Society was a centralised institution that spearheaded language cleansing and nation-building by purifying vocabulary, standardising grammar, and promoting the new script as part of the state's broader cultural transformation project.[276] At this moment, when Turkish language, identity, and state ideology are deeply interconnected, Ayvaz chooses to compose his monologue using Armenian script. This behaviour could have led to adverse consequences for him if the monologue had been intended for public rather than private reflection. Despite the unconventional execution of *I Love You*, the words continued to circulate as a performative cultural product. *I Love You* was never executed in a conventional fashion; the words nonetheless circulated as a performative cultural product. A caption for the 2020 exhibition of Ayvaz's collection described the monologue as a "Turkish monologue play written in Armenian script", suggesting that the curators regarded the manuscript not merely as a personal document but as a theatrical artefact.[277] The monologue and the label were never publicly shown; yet, its existence reveals the monologue's intrinsic theatricality and its ambiguous position among text, memory, and performance.

5.2.2 Dramaturgies of Disruption: Metatheatricality, Fragment, and Fabric

This section examines the dramaturgical structure and formal features of *I Love You*, combining textual analysis with theoretical frameworks from performance and theatre studies. While Paavo Paavolainen's dramaturgical model provides the primary analytical lens by emphasising textual threads, knots, and performative texture, other perspectives, such as Hans-Thies Lehmann's concept of postdramatic theatre, complement the reading. They help situate the monologue within broader discourses on performativity, structure, and theatricality beyond the stage. Before turning to individual examples, it is important to clarify the analytical distinction employed in this section: Narrative structure refers to the sequence of events, character developments, and the overall plot logic, whereas dramaturgical texture designates the interplay

[274] Çolak, "Language Policy and Official Ideology,", 81.
[275] Ibid.
[276] Ibid., 74-75.
[277] Exhibition caption (unpublished), prepared for the 2020 "Coulisse: Hagop Ayvaz, A Chronicler of Theater" exhibition, Hrant Dink Foundation Archive, Istanbul. Caption photographed by the author, September 2024.

of formal, thematic, and affective elements — such as irony, repetition, ellipses, direct address, or tonal shifts — that create a sense of theatricality independently of performance. This section intentionally overlaps with thematic discussions developed in 5.2.3, as it explores how literary techniques generate interpretive effects that anticipate or inform those thematic readings. Rather than treating form and content as separate, the analysis considers formal construction as a potential source of meaning. Drawing on Paavolainen's framework, the monologue is read as a performative and theatrical fabric, composed of multiple thematic threads such as love, shame, and satire, intertwined at key dramaturgical knots, including the ironic "poor actor"[278] moment. While the text contains no explicit stage directions, its metatheatrical features, shifting registers, and unstable speaker–audience dynamic point to a dramaturgical composition embedded in the writing itself. This aligns with Paavolainen's expanded notion of dramaturgy as a performative architecture that enables enactment through reading, even in the absence of actual performance. Retrospectively, and without imposing an anachronistic framework, this section also draws on Lehmann's theory of postdramatic theatre to illuminate the monologue's metatheatrical features. Although Ayvaz's text predates the postdramatic paradigm, its fragmentation, disrupted narrativity, and interplay of voices foreshadow aesthetic principles central to postdramatic forms. In this sense, the monologue's textuality itself becomes a site of theatrical tension, where form performs meaning.

Paavolainen advocates for conceptualising dramaturgy not as a linear sequence but as a *textural field*, a weave of action, affect, materiality, and cognition that refuses closure and transcends the boundaries of embodiment. In Ayvaz's monologue, each narrative, gesture, motif, repeated phrase, and humorous aside serves as a unique thread; these threads are intricately interwoven to form a complex tapestry of comedy and emotion. Paavolainen contends that theatricality extends beyond the stage and physical performance. In *I Love You*, Ayvaz constructs a fragmented monologue that oscillates between irony and empathy, confession, and critique. These tonal variations are not merely artistic features but are performative and theatrical threads, captivating the reader within a web of contradictory emotions and social cues. The monologue intricately interweaves themes of romantic disillusionment, social antagonism, and economic hardship, deliberately refusing resolution. Its performative and theatrical threads include shifting expressions of affection toward one or more women, marked by variable

[278] Ayvaz, *Սիզի Սէվիյօրում* (HA292-154), 1.

references and tonal modulations; a satirical critique of Turkish republican norms governing love, class, and modernity; and sophisticated temporal play, with nonlinear narrative, flashbacks, and fragmented transitions. Recurrent addresses to "ladies and gentlemen" and "mademoiselles,"[279] repeated declarations of love, and detailed accounts of comedic misfortunes each serve as distinct threads, continuously woven together to constitute the monologue's complex performative and *theatrical fabric*. The interplay of these threads generates a dramatic texture that is simultaneously comic and deeply emotional. Foremost among them, the motif of love for the lady weaves persistently through the monologue, occupying a central and distinctive position within its fabric. The narrator enacts his love before an *imagined* audience, at once addressed through direct declarations like "I only love her!" and yet never concretely present. The term *imagined* is deliberately layered: it refers to the monologue's dramatic construction that breaks the fourth wall, the delusional state of the character who conjures an interlocutor, and the historical absence of an actual audience due to the text's non-performance. At the same time, this absent audience is retroactively evoked through the act of reading, whether by later readers, researchers, or cultural institutions. The sentimental tone verges on melodrama, yet consistently remains poised in ambiguity, sustained by this play with presence and absence.

> Esteemed ladies and gentlemen… and especially you, mademoiselles… I love you. Why are you so surprised… is it because I said I love you… well then, why else… ah, I see… you're probably wondering which one of you, aren't you… all right then, since your curiosity has reached such heights, I'll say it… I love you. But don't get the wrong idea… not all of you at once… just one of you….[280]
>
> But courage… if I can't confess this love here, now, in front of everyone, when I couldn't even say it when I was alone… then where could I possibly say it… Mademoiselle… I love you… Come on, why are you all looking at me like that… I only love her… only her…[281]

The monologue subverts a conventional linear narrative by presenting a chronological framework that is fragmented and associative rather than sequential. Instead of unfolding events in order, Ayvaz constructs time as a web of memories, desires, and immediate reactions, seamlessly blending recollections of past interactions, imagined dialogues, and current humiliations without clear boundaries. This approach aligns with Paavolainen's conception of

[279] Ayvaz, *Սիզի Սէվիյօրում*, HA292-154, 1.
[280] Ibid.
[281] Ibid., 2.

threads as strands of memory and meaning, interwoven within the performative act itself. The result is a nonlinear temporal experience in which identity remains fluid, shifting with each temporal transition and narrative thread. Such a structure challenges traditional narrative expectations and reflects the speaker's emotional instability and marginalised position. Time itself becomes both a theatrical device and a site of performativity. An instance of this non-linear temporality is evident from the very outset of the first scene:

> You want to know her name? Well… to be honest, I don't even know it myself… I just love her. Now you'll say, "Come on, how can someone not know the name of the girl he loves?" It happens, dear audience… it really does, … let me tell you about the dream of love I stumbled into… all because of this shyness of mine.[282]

The expression of affection swiftly transitions into a dramatised recollection, not of youthful longing itself, but of how shyness became the foundation for a dreamlike tale of love. This move into flashback signals the onset of a wider retrospective narrative, wherein time is organised through the performative labour of memory. Past and present intermingle, collapsing temporal boundaries. In the subsequent passage, time unfolds as a succession of scenes lacking distinct transitions or stable anchors; the narrative jumps fluidly from one setting to another — street, tram, Ayvaz's house — with temporal shifts that intensify the emotional register.

> I'd rushed out with my hat and put it on the wrong way and the ribbon, which should've been in the back, had ended up in the front… and it made me look like a crested rooster., I didn't know what had become of me… I turned every colour, like the winters of our time…and just like that, as if I'd suddenly overheated, I took off my hat. To stop people from laughing at me even more in that state, I hurried to jump onto the tram… but just my luck… as if the devil himself were chasing me that day, the driver suddenly opened the door, and I missed the handle. And missing the handle, I collapsed like a ripe melon. Falling down wasn't even the worst part but the bouquet in my hand… crushed like a Ramadan flatbread… flattened and shapeless. Now I was really furious. I threw myself into the nearest car and finally caught my breath at Ayvaz's house….[283]

In the second part, "With Her at the Belvü" the narrator again initiates a temporal leap:

> All right, here we go… listen closely. Last Friday, I woke up early in the morning… went straight to my barber and got the closest shave imaginable, smooth as glass. Then, to have my shoes polished, I made my way to a shoeshine shop near Galata Palace….[284]

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[282] Ayvaz, *Սիգի Սէվիյօրում*, HA292-154., 1.
[283] Ibid.
[284] Ibid., 2.

This sentence introduces a recollection of the previous Friday, making the narrative structure retrospectively layered. Within this memory, subtle temporal shifts emerge, particularly during the evening's events and the restaurant visit, as the narrator oscillates between description, reflection, and immediate reaction. Here, time is not organised chronologically or linearly but instead unfolds according to its emotive and performative significance for the narrator. The non-linear temporal transitions in *I Love You,* from retrospective reveries to fragmented present experiences, generate a textured dramaturgy that disrupts linear coherence, weaving a performative fabric of memory, longing, and irony. This non-linear, emotional, and associatively driven temporal framework corresponds with Tracy C. Davis's concept of performative time, a citational and embodied mode of temporal experience in which collective memory and identity are not simply inherited but are continually re-enacted and reconfigured through performance. In this framework, events and identities do not unfold in a strict chronological sequence; rather, the present is constituted by citations of the past and projections of possible futures. Ayvaz's monologue, which deliberately disrupts chronological order in favour of emotional and associative transitions, exemplifies Davis's contention that, within performances, memory and temporality are experienced as fluid, contingent, and subject to ongoing construction through the acts of citing, remembering, and embodying the past in the present.[285]

The process of naming itself becomes a performative act of invention, reflecting the speaker's playful engagement with identity as something consciously constructed rather than given. When the narrator introduces himself as "cotton merchant, Zebiyüz Bukrekzade M. Hayri,"[286] the name functions less as biographical information than as a self-fashioned persona. This fictitious persona is humorously exaggerated, merging a bourgeois occupation with an ostentatious, pseudo-Ottoman appellation. The construction of this persona not only subverts expectations of narrative authenticity or coherence but also highlights the monologue's deep preoccupation with questions of identity, role, and irony, themes further explored in the next chapter of the analysis. Through this gesture, the speaker both stages and destabilises his presence,

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[285] Tracy C. Davis, "Performative Time," in *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography*, ed. Charlotte M. Canning and Thomas Postlewait (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2010), 149-50.
[286] Bukrekzade may refer to *Bukrek*, a benevolent dragon figure in Altai Turkic mythology. The use of this name in the monologue seems deliberately ironic, as it contrasts mythical grandeur with the mundane profession of a cotton merchant.

foregrounding identity not as an inherent substance but as something fundamentally performative.

> She looked… we looked at each other… she smiled… we smiled together… then I winked… and she winked back… and the two of us left the shoeshine shop as friends. As we walked toward the Tunnel, we spoke like two *sevdazade*, like a couple who had loved each other for a long time. I asked her name first. She told me… but I won't say it here. It hurt me too much. Then she asked for mine. And I answered without hesitation… "cotton merchant Zebiyüz Bukrekzade M. Hayri." But never mind… let's not dwell on it. We parted after setting a time for four o'clock..."[287]

This performative oscillation culminates in an ironic climax when, having just introduced himself as an exaggerated cotton merchant, the narrator later steps outside and encounters a man "just like me" asleep on a bench for vagrants beneath the trees.

> And then I rushed out the door, hoping I might find her outside, but apart from the trees in the middle and a chubby man, "just like me," asleep on a vagabond's bench, I saw nothing else....[288]

The sudden shift from invented bourgeois identity to a moment of identification with social precarity destabilises the narrator's persona and lays bare the fragility of class performance. Here, the stage of identity is not a fixed platform but a fleeting, mutable terrain, a locus of rupture within the dramaturgical texture, where threads of aspiration, irony, and vulnerability are intricately knotted, in Paavolainen's terms. The performative weave of *I Love You* is composed of intersecting threads of time, identity, and irony, forming a fabric that is simultaneously intimate, political, and theatrical. Ambiguities surrounding the identities of both lover and beloved, coupled with the monologue's fragmented temporality, infuse the narrative with instability and unsettle conventional expectations of linear storytelling or emotional transparency. By oscillating between theatrical monologue and sociopolitical commentary, the text fuses theatricality with critique, threading the narrator into the broader fabric of Early Republican Turkish modernity. The sustained interplay between satire and sentimentality produces a dynamic textual texture. It shows a performative oscillation between irony, sincerity, and emotional fragility, that not only resists fixed narrative identities but also foregrounds the monologue as a consciously crafted, multilayered dramaturgical texture.

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[287] Ayvaz, *Սիqի Սէվիյորում*, HA292-154, 3.
[288] Ibid., 4.

A *dramaturgical knot* arises when the narrator, newly arrived at a social gathering, is introduced by "Ayvaz" — friend, host, and simultaneously the author of the monologue — as "the actor Cebidelikzade," a sarcastic appellation signifying "son of holey pockets." The suffix "-zade," of Persian origin, traditionally denotes noble descent (as in "Paşazade," son of a pasha); combined here with "ceb-i delik" (holey pocket), it humorously evokes aristocracy through destitution. This scene embodies a metatheatrical interplay wherein the authorial self appears in the third person and identity is staged as both autobiographical assertion and theatrical construction. In Paavolainen's terms, this is a dramaturgical knot: a dense convergence where threads of performativity (the narrator's enacted persona, self-presentation, and social navigation) and theatricality (staged naming, audience laughter, and ironic distancing) are intricately entangled. According to Çalgıcıoğlu, Ayvaz frequently refers to himself in the third person in his later satirical-journalistic writings, further complicating the distinction between author and character.[289] The introduction is, on the surface, a joke, provoking laughter and playing with the absurdity of the title but it also exposes the fragility of the narrator's social standing and the constructed nature of identity. In Paavolainen's terms, this knot is a site where performance, social critique, autobiography, and reflexive irony are bound together, prompting both theatrical recognition and performative instability.

> Now I was truly furious. I threw myself into the nearest automobile and finally caught my breath at Ayvaz's house. (…) Then Ayvaz greeted me… took me by the arm… and led me into the room to present me to the guests… "The actor Cebi Delik Zade and Mister Lion" … Oh God… the laughter… everyone was laughing, clutching their bellies, nearly collapsing from it… why though… for what reason… what happened… ah… I think I understand now… they liked my nickname… sure… why not…[290]

Drawing on Paavolainen's conception of dramaturgy as a textured interweaving of divergent threads, Ayvaz's monologue emerges not as a linear narrative but as a performative event on the page, a dynamic interplay of comic, melancholic, poetic, and everyday elements. Here, analytical attention shifts from seeking singular meaning to examining the emotive intensity and formal complexity generated by accumulations of disjointed memories, abrupt tonal shifts, tentative confessions, and repeated speech acts (such as avowals of love or shame). These features construct a theatrical façade in which narration itself becomes action. Theatricality and

[289] Çalgıcıoğlu, interview, 7-8.
[290] Ayvaz, *Միզի Մէկլիյօրում*, HA292-154, 1.

performativity operate dialectically: moments of heightened expression and comic defamiliarisation foreground the artificiality of the scenario, while performative utterances provoke direct emotional and social engagement. From Paavolainen's perspective, Ayvaz's monologue becomes a sophisticated structure of contradiction, not simply reflecting societal conflict or personal disappointment, but articulating these tensions through its dramatic fabric. The result is not a straightforward story but a complex dramaturgical tapestry, woven from memory, irony, vulnerability, and counter-narratives, where the narrator simultaneously performs and scrutinises his role. This metatheatrical reflexivity aligns with Paavolainen's vision of dramaturgy as a multidimensional "construction of lines," abstaining linear progression in favour of layered interaction. Crucially, the monologue's performativity resides not in live presence but in the textual orchestration of irony, self-displacement, and direct address, qualities that generate a persistent theatrical tension and demonstrate that performativity and theatricality are structurally interwoven rather than mutually exclusive modes. Thus, echoing Paavolainen and Butler's theories of performativity, Ayvaz's monologue resists treating identity or subjectivity as stable or authentic essences. Instead, it foregrounds the process by which identity is iteratively enacted and made visible through performative and theatrical acts: naming, repeated address, self-satire, shifts of persona, and the construction of narrative time. The monologue ultimately becomes a stage where selfhood and memory are continually woven and unravelled. It forms a textual fabric whose meaning, identity, and affect are not pre-given but always emergent, contested, and negotiated through performance.

I Love You is profoundly metatheatrical, functioning simultaneously as a theatrical monologue and a commentary on its own medium, performance, and audience dynamics. This aligns both retrospectively and paradigmatically with Hans-Thies Lehmann's accounts of the postdramatic. In his view, "the theatre situation as such becomes a matrix within whose energy lines the elements of the scenic fictions inscribe themselves. Theatre is emphasised as a situation, not as a fiction."[291] Here, the narrator states that they are within a theatrical performance, a classic metatheatrical moment that explicitly comments on and subverts the fictional level:

> Yes… if you love me, and don't wish to hurt or wear me down any further… then meet me… I'll be waiting, full of longing… at the place where our meeting shall be fulfilled… the tram

[291] Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, 128.

> stop, once the play is over. There… as your tiny, delicate hands drown in my kisses… I will not hold back from telling you again… that I love you… truly and with all my heart.[292]

One of the primary tactics underpinning this self-reflexivity is the systematic dismantling of the fourth wall: the narrator's direct address and use of humour actively position the audience as both spectators and participants.[293] An instance of breaking the fourth wall occurs when the narrator unexpectedly observes the young woman he is talking about on stage within the audience and when is asking the audience not to laugh at him.

> Now I sat down, my eyes scanning the room for that sweet, lively girl who'd opened the door…There … I found her! Sitting among us, listening to me. Oh God, I am going to lose my mind. Now that I… I see her sitting there.. a… I can't… I just can't go on telling my story. My body's trembling like a wooden house in an earthquake. My knees are giving out, I can't breathe… I think I'm going to faint, right here and now...[294]

> Now you'll say… so your great love brought you to this state, did it…? No, dear audience… you didn't understand. Let me explain then, so your curiosity may be satisfied. But first I kindly ask you to promise that you will not laugh at me…And that you will not call me a fool…at least not to my face...[295]

Lehmann describes such gestures as part of "the representational aspect of language receding in favour of its theatrical reality," where "speech and voice but also the body, gesture, or idiosyncratic individuality of an actor or performer in general are 'isolated'…within the frame of the stage they are exhibited through an additional special framing."[296] Ayvaz's work thus anticipates what Lehmann describes as postdramatic monology, in which the performer's direct address foregrounds the immediacy of the theatrical event, shifting emphasis away from mere dramatic representation toward presence and shared experience.[297] Although Lehmann's concept of monology originates in postdramatic theatre, it offers a productive framework for

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[292] Ayvaz, *Uիqի Uէվիյօրուն*, HA292-154, 2.
[293] Ayvaz's *I Love You* also recalls elements of traditional Ottoman performance forms such as *Karagöz* and *Meddah*, in which social commentary was delivered through satire, direct audience address, and metatheatrical devices. While Ayvaz does not directly imitate these forms, he draws on their spirit of parody, exaggeration, and narrative layering. In the 1930s, *Karagöz* stood at a complex cultural intersection—once subversive and popular, it was later reframed by Republican authorities as incompatible with modern, national theatre, though some intellectuals such as Baltacıoğlu sought to recuperate it as part of a Turkish cultural heritage. See Ambra D'Antone, "'Karagöz Is Ours': İsmayıl Hakkı Baltacıoğlu's Cultural Revivalism and the Long Turkish Modernity," *Journal of Art Historiography* 29 (2023): 2, 12–13; and Deniz Başar, *A Dismissed Heritage: Contemporary Performance in Turkey Defined through Karagöz* (PhD diss., Concordia University, 2021), 4.
[294] Ayvaz, *Uիqի Uէվիյօրուն*, HA292-154, 2.
[295] Ibid.
[296] Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* 128.
[297] Ibid., 31.

analysing Ayvaz's *I Love You*. While the text predates some postdramatic aesthetics by several decades, it shares key characteristics of monology: the dissolution of internal dramatic fiction, the direct address to the audience, the blending of authorial and performative presence, and the absence of a dialogic structure. Rather than staging a mimetic scene, Ayvaz's monologue stages the act of speaking itself: emotional, self-reflexive, and socially embedded. Moreover, the narrator's shifting identities, presenting himself as both a fictional "impoverished actor" and Ayvaz's companion, echo the postdramatic tendency to undermine stable distinctions between author, character, and narrator. Lehmann notes that in postdramatic works, "identities…morph from one speech to the next," thus dissolving traditional character boundaries and exposing the constructedness of self and narrative.[298] This pluralisation of identity in *I Love You* allows for a more fluid and performative exploration of subjectivity. The monologue is infused with irony while embracing and satirising societal and romantic traditions, thereby maintaining an ambiguity that undermines the distinction between sincerity and performance. Lehmann notes that postdramatic theatre prioritises the "fragmentary and partial character" of narrative, forsaking unity in favour of instances of comedy, contradiction, and disruption that "rely on individual impulses, fragments, and microstructures of texts."[299] *I Love You* critically explores the distinctions between fiction and reality, between performance and personal revelation. In embracing metatheatricality, Ayvaz's monologue does not simply narrate a story; it enacts the very conditions of its own possibility, echoing Lehmann's assertion that postdramatic theatre "lets the representational aspect of language recede in favour of its theatrical reality."[300] This approach encourages the audience or reader to examine the importance of engaging with theatre not merely as narrative but as a multifaceted medium for social critique, identity negotiation, and the elicitation of emotional and intellectual responses. Lehmann notes that postdramatic theatre often employs "self- reflexive metatheatrical strategies, where the theatre points to itself, the process of representation, and the circumstances of performance,"[301] displacing the primacy of dramatic illusion.

In weaving together the threads of autobiographical fiction and social satire, Ayvaz's monologue resists classical dramaturgy in favour of a fragmented, self-reflexive, and performative structure. This fabric aligns with Paavolainen's notion of dramaturgical texture

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[298] Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*., 11.
[299] Ibid., 57.
[300] Ibid., 128.
[301] Ibid., 17.

and anticipates the postdramatic aesthetics outlined by Lehmann, where theatricality no longer serves representation but becomes a means of affective, ideological, and temporal disruption. While Ayvaz's monologue predates postdramatic theatre and emerges from a different context, reading it through Lehmann's framework highlights some proto-postdramatic tendencies. This is not intended to impose an anachronistic label but to elucidate how elements of Ayvaz's work foreshadow or echo subsequent postdramatic techniques, especially regarding their focus on metatheatricality, self-reflexivity, and the ambivalence between drama and event. Most crucially, the text aligns with what would later be theorised as a *performance text*: it is not simply a script designed for mimetic reproduction but a composition in which performativity is embedded at the linguistic, structural, and conceptual levels.[302] As Lehmann notes, a performance text emerges from the interaction among linguistic material, staging, and the total performance situation, including the dynamics of address, temporality, and the evolving relationship between the work and its implied or actual audience.[303]

5.2.3 Irony, Intertextuality, and the Limits of Modernity

This chapter examines how Hagop Ayvaz's monologue *I Love You*, written in 1932 in Turkish using Armenian script, utilises irony, ideological conflict, and social critique as performative techniques. These elements are analysed not in isolation but as interconnected mechanisms through which the text conveys a performative and theatrical resistance. At its core, the monologue blends exaggerated affect, fragmented narrative, and metatheatrical address to question dominant discourses on class, love, masculinity, and cultural belonging in Early Republican Turkey.

This chapter employs a broad understanding of intertextuality, not necessarily as intentional citation but as a critical framework to compare two texts that share a title, genre, and thematic constellation. To highlight the specificity of the critical approach, the monologue is read in contrast to İ. Galip's 1930 radio-monologue of the same title, *I Love You*. Both monologues share a similar confessional format and sentimental register, yet their ideological stakes diverge radically. Ismail Galip (later I. Galip Arcan, 1893–1974) was a prominent actor, playwright, and theatre thinker of the Early Republican era, trained by Ahmet Fehim and later a close

[302] Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, 85.
[303] Ibid.

collaborator of Muhsin Ertuğrul. Active in the municipal theatre, Galip embodied the ideological and aesthetic ambitions of Early Republican modernity. As Madatyan notes, he was not only a versatile performer but also a subtle thinker of theatre, praised for his refined language, deep psychological portrayal, and fidelity to artistic principles, even if those qualities sometimes made him less accessible to broader audiences.[304] Galip's monologue, voiced by Vasfi Rıza and performed on Istanbul Radio, was published in Latin script and in the journal *Darülbedayi*, aligning it closely with the aesthetic and ideological codes of the Early Turkish Republic. In contrast, Ayvaz reconfigures the structure and motifs of the piece into an Armeno-Turkish textual fabric, diverging not only in script but also in its thematic and stylistic registers. While both texts adopt a monologic structure centred around the phrase "I love you," they articulate radically different subjectivities, class positions, and affective registers. The comparison serves two purposes: (1) it reveals how Ayvaz reworks and subverts a recognizable genre to articulate a minoritarian voice; and (2) it illuminates broader ideological shifts in early Republican theatre and the ways in which satire and irony serve as tools for critical engagement. This comparative approach is embedded into the broader theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2, which explores how dramaturgical form can operate as a site of performative critique. While there is no definitive evidence that Ayvaz wrote *I Love You* as a direct response to İ. Galip's monologue, the similarities in structure and tone invite a comparative reading.

5.2.3.1 Beyond Theatre: Genre and Form

Ayvaz's monologue unfolds through contradiction, tonal instability, and fragmented narration. Rather than offering a cohesive or ideologically closed narrative, the text challenges the reader through narrative gaps, shifting emotional registers, and an unreliable speaking voice. Its hybrid structure is neither entirely dramatic nor purely journalistic. Instead, it resists generic classification. In an expert interview, İzrail observed that *I Love You* may not have been conceived as a theatrical script but rather as a satirical sketch, possibly intended for newspaper publication, such as in *Son Posta*, which was known for printing humorous columns in the early 1930s.[305] This reading aligns with Ayvaz's later satirical output, particularly his creation of the

[304] Aşod Madatyan, *Sahnemizin Değerleri*, (Istanbul: Aras, 2022), 54–57.
[305] Izrail, interview, 11.

character “Lutsika Dudu”,[306] who, according to Boğos Çalgıcıoğlu, may have her origins in the ironic voice first introduced in this monologue.[307] While the direct lineage between *I Love You* and Ayvaz’s later oeuvre exceeds the scope of this thesis, the monologue nevertheless anticipates the tone and strategy of his later satirical style. It marks an early moment in which Ayvaz navigates comedy, masculinity, and socio-economic precarity. By deploying irony as a thematic thread, the text becomes a site of performative resistance, not by declaring opposition explicitly but by subtly dismantling dominant cultural codes from within.

5.2.3.2 Irony and Satirical Tradition

Utilising Catherine Belsey’s notion of the “interrogative text”, the monologue resists ideological closure by prompting active engagement from the reader or listener. Belsey’s analysis of the dramatic monologue emphasises that such texts compel audiences to uncover irony and internal conflict on their own, rather than being guided by overt authorial commentary.[308] In Ayvaz’s case, this insight becomes especially pertinent: the performative structure of the text demands interpretive participation, drawing attention to what is not said as much as to what is spoken. Rather than offering a coherent ideological position, Ayvaz’s monologue performs ambiguity as critique, echoing Belsey’s insistence that meaning is not authorially fixed but dialogically produced. This insight is further elaborated by Terry Eagleton, who argues that irony and humour hold subversive potential by exposing the artificiality and limits of dominant ideologies. In Ayvaz’s monologue, humour does not merely entertain, it disturbs. Laughter becomes an affective response to ideological discomfort, and irony exposes the instability of masculine pride, economic ambition, and nationalist idealism. It thus operates

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[306] Lutsika Dudu, a fictional character devised by Hagop Ayvaz, first appeared in *Kulis* in 1968 and later in *Agos*, serving as a satirical voice of social critique, humour, and communal reflection. Portrayed as an older, sharp-tongued Armenian woman, Dudu combined political awareness with emotional intelligence. Her language, an Istanbulite Armenian dialect infused with Turkish words, was marked by laconic wit, pointed aphorisms, and absurd anecdotes that exposed everyday injustices, such as navigating medical expenses or social hierarchies. According to Karin Karakaşlı, Dudu evolved into Ayvaz’s alter ego, a figure that embodied the dignity and resilience of a community unwilling to assimilate or remain silent. Boğos Çalgıcıoğlu adds that Dudu frequently referenced Ayvaz in the third person (“Today I was with Ayvaz, ah, how much I love Hagop Ayvaz”), a self-referential gesture that may already be foreshadowed in the joyful naming of “Ayvaz” in *I Love You*, See Karin Karakaşlı, “Baron Ayvaz: The Memory of Life,” in *Coulisse: Hagop Ayvaz, a Chronicler of Theater*, ed. Hrant Dink Foundation, Yapı Kredi Culture, Arts and Publishing, and Theatre Foundation of Turkey, (Istanbul: Yapi Kredi Culture, Arts and Publishing, 2022), 37-39, and Çalgıcıoğlu, interview, 7.
[307] Ibid., 8.
[308] Belsey, *Critical Practice*, 65.

not only as a rhetorical figure but as a performative strategy that implicates the audience in the process of deconstructing authority and normativity.[309]

A notable example of Ayvaz's satirical style transpires in a scenario located near Parmakkapı, when the narrator observes a crowd and immediately apprehends that a person has been struck by a vehicle. A comment implying that such incidents no longer surprise anyone quickly diffuses this moment of anxiety. It exemplifies an urban cynicism that normalises tragedy and numbs emotional reactions. The narrative thereafter transitions into a surreal depiction of the future, as the narrator wryly envisions a vehicle entering a shop to satisfy a passenger's unexpected desire for cake or chicken breast. This exaggerated scenario presents the narrator as both observer and critic of a society where indulgent convenience supersedes reason, morality, and social standards. Ayvaz's irony serves as a mechanism for social critique, revealing the inconsistencies inherent in contemporary urban existence, the alienation fostered by commercial culture, and the ideological divides among republican modernity, class ambition, and emotional disenchantment.

> Then, at Parmakkapı, a crowd caught my eye… Oh no, did a car jump the curb and run someone over… But really, we've gotten used to even that, haven't we… A car jumping the curb is no big deal anymore… One of these days, if a passenger suddenly craves cake or chicken breast, well… why would they even bother getting out of the car?[310]

Class and affection are significant threads in Ayvaz's *I Love You*. The love for a woman is expressed through an inner monologue comprising two components. The identity of the woman remains ambiguous, as also noted by Çalgıcıoğlu.[311] The narrator's poor condition is crucial, as he consistently references the class disparities between himself and the woman he desires. In the first part, the narrator encounters the woman in his friend Ayvaz's flat, where he is introduced as "actor Cebidelikzade Aslan Bey." The name "Cebidelikzade Aslan Bey" plays on Ottoman aristocratic naming conventions while embedding sharp social irony. "Aslan Bey" evokes masculine pride ("Aslan" meaning "lion"), whereas the invented patronymic "Cebidelikzade" — literally "son of pocket-holes" — conflates mock nobility with a subtle allusion to poverty and economic precarity. The combination results in an ironic self-staging that reflects the narrator's ambivalent relation to power, class, and identity, masking social

[309] Terry Eagleton, *Humour* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), xi.
[310] Ayvaz, *Սիզի Սէվիյօրում*, HA292-154, 3.
[311] Çalgıcıoğlu, interview, 11.

marginality in the language of Ottoman refinement. The narrator's elaborate introduction as "Cebidelikzade Aslan Bey" is immediately undercut by public ridicule. His response, veiled in sarcasm ("They must have liked my nickname"), performs a subtle reassertion of control through irony. This moment exemplifies the monologue's staging of identity as fundamentally unstable: always on the verge of performance, always vulnerable to collapse. The speaker's pride is undone by laughter, yet it is precisely in this undoing that identity becomes legible, as comic, precarious, and performative. In the climactic confession scene, the narrator delivers an impassioned declaration of love in front of an imagined audience, bordering on collapse: his body trembles, his breath fails, and his emotions overwhelm him. The language is excessive, operatic, and hyperbolic, constructing a grand, theatrical moment of vulnerability.

> Yes, I love you, mademoiselle… and you can be certain that I will love you forever… I worship you like a goddess… you are the crown upon my head… my soul… my life… I love you madly… You want proof…? Let all these people here be my witnesses… I love you…[312]

Yet this vulnerability is quickly undercut by a self-aware, ironic gesture that reveals deeper anxieties about class and economic insufficiency. In a moment of exaggerated sincerity, the narrator proclaims:

> Now that I've confessed the love I carry in my heart for you, mademoiselle… here, in front of all these people… I have just one request. Yes, just one… if you love me too… but really, why wouldn't you…? What am I lacking…? If it's money… well, I'll try to earn that too, with the help of your dear father.….[313]

A passionate declaration swiftly becomes intertwined with an inescapable social reality: love is inherently linked to economic status. His rhetorical question, "What am I lacking?," masks an insecurity with exaggerated confidence. Rather than ending with intimacy, the statement is deferred with theatrical delay ("I'll say it again at the tram stop after the play ends…"), exposing love not as resolution but as repetition. In this way, the romantic speech becomes a satirical performance of class, longing, and spectacle.

The second part, beginning with "With Her at Belvü," shifts from performative monologue to a narrated anecdote. Whereas the first part stages a public declaration of love amid shame and class anxiety, the second recounts a seemingly romantic episode that quickly unfolds as a satirical commentary on seduction, consumption, and financial ruin. The setting changes as

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[312] Ayvaz, *Uիqի Uէվիյօրում,* HA292-154, 2.
[313] Ibid.

well: the narrator meets the girl not in the theatre but unexpectedly in a shoe-shiner's shop, where a flirtatious encounter begins, one that will soon escalate into a costly night at the Belvü. In the second part of the monologue, the narrator engages in a brief but telling act of social masquerade, introducing himself to a fleeting acquaintance at a shoeshine shop as "pamuk tüccarı Zebiyüz Bukrekzade M. Hayri," which stands for "cotton merchant Zebiyüz Bukrekzade M. Hayri." The name *Bukrekzade* appears to refrence "Bükrek," a figure from Turkic mythology known as a heroic warrior who battled the dragon Sangal for nine years in a cosmic struggle between good and evil.[314] Ayvaz ironically subverts this image: his narrator, far from being a mythical fighter, is a socially anxious dreamer who collapses under the weight of a single restaurant bill. By adopting the inflated persona of "pamuk tüccarı Zebiyüz Bukrekzade M. Hayri," the narrator fabricates an identity that deliberately parodies the very tropes of social status, heroic masculinity, and bourgeois aspiration that Republican theatre sought to canonise.[315] The purported allusion to "Bükrek" is rendered hollow in Ayvaz's hands: rather than overcoming adversity, the protagonist is undone by a moment of economic embarrassment and social pretence. Early Republican theatre actively instrumentalised Turkish mythology as a state-sponsored tool for nationalist myth-making, crafting highly scripted displays of virtue and grandeur[316] that the monologue engages with subversively. This satirical act reveals the deliberate construction of identity in reaction to the demands of modernisation and the dominant values of the time. Rather than embodying the heroic ideals dictated by the new cultural paradigm, the narrator's transient display of class and masculinity manifests as a source of anxiety and inadequacy. The performance of identity here is not genuine self-fulfilment but rather a transient, strategic adaptation characterised by failure and irony. By possibly referencing the mythical figure "Bükrek" and turning him into a ridiculous bourgeois caricature, Ayvaz parodies the very mythological and nationalistic imagery that was being harnessed by state theatre to promote masculine heroism and cultural unity. This ironic reversal reveals the flaws in the emotional and symbolic framework of Early Republican theatre, challenging its assertion of embodying a unified and exemplary national identity. Another passage in which

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[314] Harun Duman, "Türk Mitolojisinde Ejderha (Dragon in Turkish Mythology)," *International Journal of Humanities and Education (IJHE)* 5, no. 11 (2019): 487.
[315] Dicle, "Nationalist Affection," 149.
[316] Abdullah Şengül, "Türk Tiyatrosunda Tarih (History in Turkish Theatre)," *Turkish Studies: International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic* 4, no. 1-II (Winter 2009): 1955.

the narrator’s poverty stands out is the scene in which he asks the woman where she wants to go.

> Anyway, as we walked arm in arm, she asked, “Where are we going?” And I, like a cat jumping at liver, answered right away: “The cinema.” She frowned and said she didn’t like the dark, well, before I could even say, “Where shall we go then?” she said she adored *alaturka* music and wanted to hear Denizkizi Eftalya everyone was talking about…I mean, come on, it was our first truce, our very first meeting… how could I possibly disappoint such a sweet girl? You don’t say no to a girl like that..and if I did, I’d just make myself look small and she’d think I was some broke nobody..so of course I said, “Of course, darling, wherever you want to go,” and just like that, we darted through the doors of Belvü.[317]

In this moment, the narrator’s anxiety about appearing poor becomes apparent. His decision to comply with her wish, even though he knows he cannot afford it, is driven less by genuine desire than by the fear of seeming like “some broke nobody.” The romantic gesture is thus already laced with economic performance and the pressure to maintain social appearances.

This interplay of affect and social critique, expressed through irony and exaggeration, links Ayvaz to a longer tradition of Armenian satirical writing. Ayvaz’s monologue also draws from traditional strategies, including the satirical tone in Armenian playwrights such as Hagop Baronyan[318], whom Çalgıcıoğlu explicitly mentions as a point of comparison, especially his periodical *Tadron*, which stands for theatre in Armenian.[319] *Tadron*, a satirical journal founded and edited by Hagop Baronyan in the late 19th century, holds a foundational place in the history of Armenian satirical writing. *Tadron* was also published in Ottoman Turkish under *Tiyatro*, reflecting its multilingual urban readership and Baronyan’s ability to satirise across linguistic boundaries. Remarkably, the journal was banned no fewer than eight times over a span of four years, a testament to both its political audacity and the state’s anxiety over its influence.[320] In his interview, Çalgıcıoğlu draws a direct line between Ayvaz’s monologue and the legacy of *Tadron*[321], suggesting that Ayvaz similarly exposes societal contradictions through irony, exaggeration, and performative voice. Although Ayvaz wrote decades later and in a different political landscape, his monologue *I Love You* recalls the spirit of *Tadron* in its theatrical staging

[317] Ayvaz, *Սիզի Սէվիյօրում,* HA292-154, 3-4.
[318] Güllü refers to Hagop Baronyan as the founding figure of Armenian satire. See Güllü, “Geç Osmanlı ve Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Ermenilerin Türkçe Tiyatro Faaliyetlerinden Tasfiyesi,” 293.
[319] Çalgıcıoğlu, interview, 8.
[320] Zakarya Mildanoğlu, “Ermenice Süreli Mizah Yayınları,” in *Utanç ve Onur: Ermeni Soykırımı’nın 100. Yılı (1915–2015)*, ed. Aydın Çubukçu, Nevzat Onaran, C. Hakkı Zariç, and Onur Öztürk (Istanbul: Evrensel Basım Yayın, 2015), 331.
[321] Çalgıcıoğlu, interview, 8.

of failure, its critique of social climbing, and its use of sardonic humour to question bourgeois values. This intertextual echo reinforces the idea that Ayvaz was not only participating in a theatrical tradition but also reviving a lineage of minoritarian satirical resistance that had been largely silenced in the aftermath of the genocide. Zakarya Mildanoğlu's study of Armenian satirical periodicals from the mid-19th century to the early 1920s highlights the importance of irony and caricature in social commentary. Publications like *Tadron* and *Gavroş*[322] used parody, allegory, and graphic satire to address censorship and authority.[323] Despite their short lifespans, their sheer number and artistic originality demonstrate a lively oppositional culture that predicted and mirrored political ruptures from the Tanzimat to the Young Turk era and the post-genocide years. Far from being an isolated dramatic text, the monologue may thus be seen as continuing a minor literary lineage, one that used humour, not to escape trauma but to confront and perform it under conditions of constraint. Baronyan employed satire to illuminate and mock various societal deficiencies: the ineptitude of civil and ecclesiastical leaders, corruption within the Armenian Patriarchate, ineffectiveness of the National Assembly, stinginess of the wealthy, and the severity of Ottoman officials.[324] Mehmet Fatih Uslu characterises Baronyan as a "master of destruction," who functioned not via idealistic suggestions but through sharp, sarcastic deconstruction of social and moral frameworks. Influenced by Goldoni and Molière, yet divergent from the Enlightenment optimism commonly associated with them, Baronyan predominantly presents himself as an exposer of the contradictions and hypocrisies of modernisation. He does so particularly through characters who navigate the tensions of social mobility and economic hardship.[325] Baronyan's theatre stands out because he adopts Western traditions to dismantle rather than reproduce hegemonic order. His use of comedy, irony, and melodramatic exaggeration to mock official morality is crucial. Uslu also states, that Baronyan also produced texts in Armeno-Turkish.[326] Considering these structural and stylistic elements, Ayvaz's monologue demonstrates notable similarities with the theatrical tradition of Hagop

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[322] *Gavroş*, a satirical theatre journal founded by Yervant Tolayan in 1908, stood at the intersection of Armenian theatrical expression and political critique. Though silenced by genocide and censorship, its critical spirit briefly resurfaced in *Kulis*, the theatre periodical founded by Hagop Ayvaz in 1946., See Nesim Ovadya İzrail, foreword to *Gavroşname: Osmanlı ve Türkiye Ermenilerinin Tiyatro ve Gazetecilik Serüveni, 1900–1935*, by Yervant Tolayan (İstanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 2025), 11.
[323] Mildanoğlu, "Ermenice Süreli Mizah Yayınları," 331 and 335.
[324] Nishan Parlakian and S. Peter Cowe, eds., *Modern Armenian Drama: An Anthology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 62.
[325] Mehmet Fatih Uslu, *Çok Uzak Çok Yakın*: *Osmanlı'dan Türkiye'ye Modern Ermenice Edebiyat* (İstanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 2023), 33-34.
[326] Uslu, *Çok Uzak Çok Yakın*, 41.

Baronyan, the 19th-century Armenian satirist whose works persistently unveiled the contradictions of social existence through irony, fragmentation, and narrative disruption. According to Uslu, Baronyan's characters seldom achieve their aspirations. Rather, they become entangled in scenarios of absurdity, self-deception, and public humiliation, a dramaturgical approach that converts individual failure into a critique of systemic issues.[327] Ayvaz's narrator, too, becomes trapped in his fantasies and illusions. His failure to embody the civility and charm demanded by modern masculinity ultimately transforms him into a figure of ridicule. This link suggests that Ayvaz's monologue not only performs a critique of 1930s Kemalist modernity but also draws on an Armenian dramaturgical and journalistic lineage where humiliation becomes critique, and failure becomes a political form. Like Baronyan's characters, Ayvaz's narrator frequently interrupts the narrative structure by directly engaging the audience, portraying failure as a performance, so revealing the artificiality of social roles and norms. In this setting, Ayvaz does not simply modify İ. Galip's monologue; he reconfigures its structure through the lens of a marginalised Armenian theatrical tradition, rendering the Republic's public voice disconcerting by injecting it with minority sarcasm and estranged dramaturgy.

5.2.3.3 Performing Disruption: Masculinity, Class, and Ideology

Ayvaz's monologue reveals the contradictions between desire and economic instability through irony and self-deprecation, a technique that becomes more pronounced when juxtaposed with İ. Galip's identically titled monologue, presented as a radiophonic theatre piece in 1930 and published in the official *Darülbedayi*. In contrast to Ayvaz's fragmented, self-ironic narrator, İ. Galip's protagonist confidently asserts his love in a tone of theatrical mastery and social control. The comparison reveals not only different aesthetic registers but also divergent performances of class, love, and masculine agency under Early Republican modernity. Notably, both monologues open with a direct address to the audience, echoing one another in structure and tone. While it is impossible to confirm Ayvaz's intentions, the similarity suggests a likely intertextual engagement with Galip's monologue:

> My esteemed listeners and especially you most honourable ladies, who have so kindly granted me your attention...And you, in particular... (please forgive this touch of informality, it's just

[327] Uslu, *Çok Uzak Çok Yakın*., 36-37.

> that tonight, I intend to be a little bold... After all, I'm at a safe distance from you, from the danger, so to speak).[328]

Ayvaz's Armeno-Turkish monologue echoes this rhetorical gesture almost verbatim. Yet, it reframes it with a distinctly ironic inflection:

> Esteemed ladies and gentlemen... and especially you, mademoiselles… I love you.[329]

Both speakers then clarify that their declaration of love is not universal. Galip asserts:

> I love you, but don't think I'm declaring my love to all of you in one breath… God forbid! Is that even possible for a man's heart, one that can barely carry the love of just one among you? Besides (just between us, even if it were possible, how could I say it to all of you at once?) God forbid, in that case I'd have had to say farewell to my mother before coming here… Because by tomorrow, I'd surely have died, either by poison or by dagger. No, no.. not all of you, don't be offended, please! I love just one of you, and it is to her that I speak. To the one who is right now, at this very moment, holding her tiny ear close to the mouth of the world's most marvellous, even most sacred invention: the radio. I say it to her, my one and only beloved who's listening: I love you.[330]

Ayvaz similarly quips:

> Why are you so surprised… is it because I said I love you… well then, why else… ah, I see… you're probably wondering which one of you, aren't you… all right then, since your curiosity has reached such heights, I'll say it… I love you. But don't get the wrong idea… not all of you at once… just one of you….[331]

These parallels in phrasing, structure, and rhetorical stance reveal Ayvaz's conscious engagement with the earlier radiophonic text. While Galip's speaker employs irony as a controlled performative device to assert charm and masculine clarity, Ayvaz's narrator slides into a more destabilising mode of irony, marked by contradiction, class-inflected anxiety, and narrative uncertainty. What begins as mimicry becomes, in Ayvaz's hands, a satirical rewriting of public love discourse under Republican cultural codes. Galip's protagonist presents himself as financially secure and socially confident. Markers of wealth and upward mobility punctuate his speech.

> My portfolio is always full… or at least, not entirely empty. You see, I'm engaged in the arts, I write poetry, I write stories. I can't claim that this makes for a luxurious living… but at least it

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[328] Arcan, "Sizi Seviyorum," 14.
[329] Ayvaz, *Սիգի Սէվիյորում,* HA292-154, 1.
[330] Arcan, "Sizi Seviyorum," 14.
[331] Ayvaz, *Սիգի Սէվիյորում,* HA292-154, 1.

> doesn't kill me. Thankfully, I have an official monthly income of around 400 lira. And if you agree to marry off your daughter to me, I shall rent an apartment in Beyoğlu for the winter, to be close to the theatres and cinemas and a villa on the island for the summer, so she can enjoy the fresh air.[332]

This economic foundation facilitates a confident, controlled, and ultimately effective performative masculinity. His rhetorical elegance is filled with charm and sarcasm, yet consistently emerges from a stance of authority. However, the reference to a 400-lira income reflects a performative exaggeration, rather than economic reality. According to salary records from Darülbedayi in the late 1920s and early 1930s, even first-class actors earned only 125 lira, with lower ranks receiving as little as 25 lira.[333]

> As you can see, I am no longer timid or shy… On the contrary, I am bold, indeed, quite bold. And to prove this to you right here and now, the moment I leave this place, I shall jump straight into a fast car and rush to your house… *Tıring… Tıring…* I shall ring your doorbell.[334]

In sharp contrast, Ayvaz's narrator is overtly destabilised by economic precarity and affective instability. He fumbles through social encounters, becomes the object of ridicule and embarrassment, and is ultimately left alone when the woman abruptly flees, panicked that her husband is calling. Left to face the waiter on his own, the narrator fails to settle the bill at Belvü, sealing the scene as one of romantic collapse and class exposure. After handing over the 10 lira he has on him, he makes a futile attempt to persuade the waiter to overlook the remaining 3 lira. When that fails, he is forced to give up his wristwatch as a desperate form of compensation. The scene exposes the fragility of striving for masculinity with socioeconomic pressure, converting financial insufficiency into a moment of profound performative breakdown.

> Her flying off wasn't the problem… the money in my pocket flew off with her. Ten minutes later, I called the waiter and asked for the bill. One bill… thirteen and a half lira. Well, if I had ten lira on me, where were we supposed to find the other three and a half? I gave the ten lira, spoke gently, took him by the arm, tried to pull him aside somewhere quiet to explain our situation…He didn't fall for it. I begged, it didn't help, in the end, I left my wristwatch as a pledge and got away..[335]

The narrative culminates in a moment of financial and emotional disintegration when he relinquishes his watch and faces abandonment. His masculinity is not victorious but rather

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[332] Arcan, "Sizi Seviyorum," 14.
[333] Konur, "Cumhuriyet Döneminde Devlet-Tiyatro İlişkisi", 308.
[334] Arcan, "Sizi Seviyorum," 15.
[335] Ayvaz*, Սիրի Սէվիյորում,* HA292-154, 4.

precarious, representing material fragility instead of symbolic authority. The expression "I love you," when articulated, is not a declaration but rather a disintegration: fractured, apprehensive, and unsettled. The final sentence also contrasts with I. Galip's monologue; the narrator in Ayvaz lacks confidence yet conveys a connection with the audience:

> And now, my esteemed listeners, I recommend this to you: if you want to get some fresh air and listen to Madame Eftalya, then hurry over to Belvü and you'll see for yourselves what I mean. The atmosphere is so strong, it even reaches into your pockets.[336]

In contrast to İ. Galip's monologue, which culminates in a self-assured romantic gesture and a reaffirmation of masculine agency, Ayvaz's conclusion devolves into commercial parody and ironic self-revelation. His theatrical suggestion to visit Belvü — where even "the air reaches one's pockets"[337] — deconstructs the romantic ideal and substitutes it with a humorous commentary on consumption, delusion, and economic fragility. This moment, where flirting transitions to abandonment and social performance yields to debt, signifies the collapse of ambitious masculinity under the converging constraints of love, class, and Early Republican modernity. The representation of the female figure mirrors this divergence. Galip's beloved is idealised, a romantic goal to be attained through persistence and wit. In Ayvaz's text, by contrast, the woman functions less as a consistent character than as a recurring projection of social difference. Whether as the daughter of a wealthy father observed from the stage or as a companion in a fleeting night at Belvü, she symbolises class hierarchy and unattainability. Her eventual disappearance, together with the narrator's money, underscores not only the instability of romantic attachment but also the protagonist's deep alienation from social mobility. The settings further differentiate the monologues' ideological implications. Galip's voice is mediated through a modern, public platform, the radio, anchoring the piece firmly within the performative and urban modernity of the Early Republican period. Radio and radio theatre were introduced in Turkey in the early 1930s as a contemporary mass medium, significantly transforming the theatrical landscape by greatly enhancing accessibility and outreach, introducing novel dramaturgical and performative practices, and functioning as a pivotal tool in state-driven cultural policy and identity construction. The state and its institutions utilised radio's impact, meticulously overseeing material and employing it to convey preferred values and conventions, foster social cohesion, and instil national identity, occasionally at the expense

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[336] Ayvaz*, Սիգի Սէվիյորում,* HA292-154, 4-5.
[337] Ibid., 5.

of artistic freedom.[338] In contrast to Galip's radiophonic transmission, Ayvaz's text was neither aired nor staged, remaining unpublished in his private archive. This juxtaposition between a publicly sanctioned voice and a text that emulates marginal performance highlights the overarching dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in the cultural output of Early Republican Turkey. Crucially, Ayvaz seizes the act of cultural expression for himself, staging a form of monologic performance outside the sanctioned zones of official theatre. By doing so, he both claims and reconfigures the space of theatrical discourse, not through institutional platforms, but through a minor script, an unperformed format, and a tone of irony.

Both monologues utilise the hat as a theatrical object, although their application reveals fundamentally contrasting conceptions of modernity and social presence. Galip's protagonist treats the hat as a theatrical prop of masculine confidence, hurling it at the maid, striding through the corridor, and entering the parlour with exaggerated bravado. His behaviour reflects a stylised performance of bourgeois masculinity, grounded in entitlement and assertive desire.

> You see, I'm no longer shy or timid… On the contrary, I'm bold, quite bold indeed… And to prove it here before you, I shall, upon leaving this place, jump straight into a fast automobile and rush to your house… *Tıring… Tıring*, I'll ring your doorbell… I'll fling my hat into the maid's face… I'll stride boldly down the corridor… And I shall enter the parlour with confidence.[339]

Conversely, Ayvaz constructs a protagonist who is finally vanquished by the hat. When improperly worn with the ribbon at the front, the hat becomes a visual mockery. Observers stare and laugh, causing the narrator, overwhelmed by embarrassment, to remove it in shame. Boğos Çalgıcıoğlu notes that "he even wore the hat backwards; that is how he critiques it,"[340] highlighting Ayvaz's subtle utilisation of clothing as social commentary. This moment can be perceived as a humorous reference to the 1925 Hat Law (Şapka Kanunu), a Republican regulation that mandated Western headwear as a symbol of national modernity. Ayvaz's gesture does not serve as a direct critique; instead, it illustrates a moment of incongruity and failure, undermining the visual standards of respectability through humorous dissonance.

> I set off...as I strutted along, twirling my cane with flair, something odd caught my attention. People kept turning around to look at me. Again and again. Why? I couldn't figure it out. Were they admiring my rose, perhaps? Well sure, it was a nice rose… but nothing to laugh about… just a regular rose, a common one... So why were they all smirking? I reached the Luxembourg

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[338] Serhat Toptaş, *Radyo Tiyatrosu eserlerinde karakter dönüşümü: Metinlerin anlatısal çözümlenmesi* (*Character Transformation in Radio Theater Works: Narrative Analysis of Text*) (PhD diss., Erciyes University, 2024), 64–66.
[339] Arcan, "Sizi Seviyorum," 15.
[340] Çalgıcıoğlu, interview, 11.

> Café and gave myself a quick glance in the mirror on the wall… and what do you think I saw? Suddenly, all the looks, all the laughter made perfect sense… I'd rushed out with my hat and put it on the wrong way and the ribbon, which should've been in the back, had ended up in the front… and it made me look like a crested rooster, I didn't know what had become of me… I turned every colour, like the winters of our time…and just like that, as if I'd suddenly overheated, I took off my hat..[341]

Galip's text affirms social inclusion and performative dominance, but Ayvaz's narrative illustrates marginalisation and misidentification. The hat, once a symbol of modern civility, becomes in Ayvaz's hands a tool of estrangement. It serves as an illusion of appearance, masking a tragedy of class and identity. Galip's use of irony is rhetorical, playful, and coherent, creating the image of a speaker in control of his narrative. By contrast, Ayvaz's irony dissolves the boundary between speaker and object; he becomes the very target of ridicule. Thus, Ayvaz's monologue is not simply a replication of a popular form but a performative act of resignification. In Derrida's terms, it constitutes an iteration marked by différance: the act of repetition introduces both alteration and displacement, thereby subverting and re-signifying the tradition it cites. The decision to write the monologue in Armenian script intensifies this effect: it withdraws the text from public legibility and places it in a space of cultural opacity, marking both exclusion and resistance. This very withdrawal also frames the monologue's ironic mode: the script choice itself becomes a performative irony. It uses the dominant language while refusing its dominant form. In this way, Ayvaz's text enacts a layered critique of ideology: by mimicking established codes only to destabilise them from within, it turns ideological norms (about class, identity, and modernity) into targets of satire. Irony thus functions not only stylistically but structurally, as a strategy of ideological rupture.

Although never staged, the monologue leaves traces, through language, affect, and form, that challenge dominant narratives of the Early Republic. It resists erasure by reactivating a marginalised theatrical tradition, satirising its exclusions, and calling forth a different kind of audience: one attuned to minoritarian irony, contradiction, and failure. Drawing on Belsey's notion of the "interrogative text," Ayvaz's monologue may be seen to question, rather than affirm, dominant notions of love, class, and modernity in Early Republican Turkey. In line with

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[341] Ayvaz*, Սիգի Սէվիյօրում,* HA292-154, 1.

Eagleton's broader understanding of irony, Ayvaz's use of it not only amuses but also reveals the ideological tensions between public emotion and private material constraint.[342]

Unlike İ. Galip, who was an integral part of the Istanbul City Theatre and aligned with the ideals of the Early Republic, Ayvaz remained structurally excluded from this institutional context. Though he maintained personal connections with members of the municipal theatre, he was never employed there, and his own first play, *The Final Act*, was never staged on its official platform. This exclusion reflects the sociopolitical and ethnonational barriers that shaped Ayvaz's theatrical trajectory. Ayvaz does not engage in love to attain a goal but rather to reveal oneself. This contrast between Galip's officially disseminated radio monologue and Ayvaz's unpublished, marginal text also reflects broader sociopolitical tensions of the 1930s. Theatrical institutions, such as People's Houses and Darülbedayi, were anticipated to bolster state ideology and moral instruction rather than to challenge the social hierarchy or emphasise class conflict.[343] As Görkem Akgöz has shown in her study of Early Republican Turkey's industrialisation policies, the state actively suppressed class consciousness in favour of a nationalist discourse that framed industrial labour as patriotic service.[344] The ruling elite adopted etatism not merely as an economic model but as a political instrument to subdue class divisions and present a homogeneous national subject.[345] While Arcan's confident voice fits neatly into this ideology of coherence, unity, and progress, Ayvaz's fragmented and ironic monologue offers a subtle yet powerful counterpoint. His portrayal of social failure, class anxiety, and exclusion becomes a performative critique of the very structures that sought to erase such differences from public visibility. By subtly invoking Armenian theatrical and satirical traditions deemed incompatible with Turkish modernity by the states' elite, Ayvaz not only entertains but also subverts the ideological hegemony of contemporary stage conventions and challenges the homogenising narratives of the Early Republic. Ayvaz's monologue predominantly employs irony and satire as performative means of critique. Contrary to Galip's speaker, who utilises humour to convey masculine clarity and control, Ayvaz's narrator embodies contradiction and confusion, exhibiting fumbling, hesitation, and eventual collapse under societal expectations. This transition embodies what Eagleton refers to as irony's "double optic" — the concurrent

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[342] Eagleton, *Humour*, 21.
[343] Erbek, "Ethical Regime in the Early Republican Theatre," 107.
[344] Görkem Akgöz, *In the Shadow of War and Empire: Industrialisation, Nation-Building, and Working-Class Politics in Turkey*, 1st ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2024), 70.
[345] Ibid., 16.

engagement with and separation from the subject of critique — manifesting here as a type of narrative self-sabotage.[346] The protagonist's nervous efforts at romantic pursuit, set against a backdrop of economic instability and social failure, reveal the superficiality of bourgeois conventions of love and propriety. Irony undermines established beliefs on gender, class, and identity, highlighting the follies of conventional desire in a swiftly modernising yet socially fragmented world.[347] Simultaneously, Ayvaz's tone engages in satire: the absurd extremes of consumption, the parodic misrepresentation of contemporary masculinity, and the tumultuous interaction at Belvü depict class-coded behaviour as both ludicrous and tragic. According to Eagleton, satire serves as "a field of symbolic struggle," where laughter acts more as a confrontation than a source of comfort,[348] an instrument for revealing and mocking the inflexible structures of republican modernity. Ayvaz is distinguished by the fact that this satire does not conclude with correction or salvation but instead leaves the protagonist in a state of humiliation and isolation. The monologue embodies a minoritarian aesthetics of failure, where irony and satire intertwine to expose the ambivalence between contemporary ideals and actual reality, rather than seeking resolution.

5.2.4 Performing Identity? Autobiographical Traces and Minoritarian Voice

This study does not seek to define *I Love You* as an autobiographical text in the narrow sense. Rather, it draws attention to specific elements such as names, affective registers, socio-economic context, and the form of address. These features evoke the presence of the author and suggest a permeability between personal life and writing. These interpretations are not made in isolation but are contextualised through a close reading of Ayvaz's other Turkish-language texts and supported by insights from the expert interview with Çalgıcıoğlu, who personally knew Ayvaz. Together with additional autobiographical materials from the archive, these sources help frame the textual traces within the broader contours of Ayvaz's life and artistic formation. The decision to write in Armenian script, despite the author's demonstrated familiarity with Latin script in other contemporary texts, reinforces this sense of interiority and selectivity. However, these traces are not treated as evidence of biographical fact. Rather, they are understood as performative gestures that point toward a complex theatrical fabric (see Chapter 5.2.2), one that

[346] Eagleton, *Humour,* 45-46.
[347] Eagleton, *Humour*, 137.
[348] Ibid., 41.

invites, but is not confined to, autobiographical readings. This analytical restraint is intended to leave space for further research on autobiographical writing practices among minoritarian authors in Early Republican Turkey. The preceding chapters of the analysis have solely scrutinised the narrator's identity from a theatrical and performative perspective. This chapter endeavours to contextualise the monologue within the framework of its creator and investigates the degree to which Ayvaz's monologue, its narrator, and Ayvaz's life are interrelated.

While the monologue remains formally fictional, several autobiographical traces suggest a deeper connection to Hagop Ayvaz's own early life. Çalgıcıoğlu, who knew Ayvaz personally, notes in the interview: "In fact, in the monologue, Ayvaz structured it as if it were a different person recounting everything that had happened to him."[349] This narrative distancing may have served as a strategy to process personal experiences, particularly the social stigma, financial hardship and unrequited love that marked his early years, while at the same time shielding himself from direct exposure. Çalgıcıoğlu also reports how Ayvaz was an inconstant lover and a handsome young man during those years.[350] İzrail further adds that these could be "fantasies" of young Ayvaz, noting that during this period of his life, he might have imagined himself as a handsome romantic lead who could win over any girl, especially the daughter of a wealthy father.[351] As İzrail articulates, these dreams are characteristic of adolescence, and regardless of whether Ayvaz encountered such experiences, he adeptly transformed them into his humour.[352] As explained in the biographical section of this study (see Chapter 4), it was precisely during these years that the young Hagop Ayvaz received acclaim for his role as a lover on stage. It seems that this experience had a lasting impact on him. He himself says, "Playing the lover that week was the greatest trophy for me. And after that, during my many years of collaboration with them, I always played the lover."[353] Indeed, playing the lover led him to write a monologue, one that shows the instability of love and modernity. Çalgıcıoğlu emphasised that *I Love You* was not written for the stage but rather as a symbolic, introspective expression. He reads the monologue as a fragmentary, almost spontaneous outpouring of inner contradictions, shaped by the precarious position of Armenian theatre artists in the Early Republican period.

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[349] Çalgıcıoğlu, interview, 8.
[350] Ibid.
[351] Izrail, interview, 13
[352] Ibid.
[353] Noradukyan, Çalgıcıoğlu, and Ayvaz, "I Doubt If They Can Find Another Person as Crazy as Me," 47.

> Let me put it this way. As I said, Hagop Ayvaz did not write this to be staged. It was more like pouring his heart out. He jotted down the thoughts running through his mind in a hasty, spontaneous way. He tries to recall the negative conditions that Armenian theatre practitioners experienced in that era. We can understand this between the lines. Just think about it: an ethnicity — in quotation marks, which introduced theatre to Turkey in the 19th century — became functionally sidelined. If Hagop Ayvaz had not had a personal connection with people like Muhsin Ertuğrul, İsmail Galip Arcan, or even Behzat Butak, he would have disappeared too.[354]

While the narrative voice remains fictional, Çalgıcıoğlu detects between the lines a latent sense of dislocation, exclusion, and cultural melancholy. This reflects a subtle echo of the marginalisation experienced by a community that once pioneered theatre in the Ottoman Empire but was largely erased from the Turkish national stage. He also underscores that Ayvaz was the person who linked the municipal theatre with Armenians.[355]

The comparison between Ayvaz's and Galip's monologues is not based on a proven intertextual intention but on formal, affective, and ideological parallels that reveal significant divergences in tone, address, and cultural positioning. The alteration of I. Galip's writing is elucidated by the fact that Ayvaz had a relationship with these individuals, despite not being legally affiliated with the municipal theatre. His personal archive contains numerous editions of the eponymous journal from Darülbedayi, where I. Galip's monologue was also found. It is important to acknowledge that Hagop Ayvaz may not have intended his monologue *I Love You* as a consciously subversive response to I. Galip's text. On the contrary, given the similarities in structure and tone, Ayvaz might have been inspired by Galip's piece — perhaps even admiring it as a model to emulate. However, this study does not aim to reconstruct the author's intention. Rather, drawing on Derrida's notion of the iterable sign and the performative potential of writing, Ayvaz's adaptation is understood as a site where repetition produces différance, regardless of the author's conscious intent (see Chapter 5.2.1).

While the events narrated in *I Love You* are fictional and symbolically exaggerated, as Çalgıcıoğlu stresses in his interview[356], the emotional register of the text may reflect aspects of Hagop Ayvaz's personal experiences. Prior to the expert interview, a biographical note was found in Ayvaz's own memoirs describing a short-lived but intense relationship with the Bulgarian acrobat Miçe Pençef in the early 1930s.[357] Pençef was part of a travelling troupe that

[354] Çalgıcıoğlu, interview, 9.
[355] Ibid., 2.
[356] Ibid., 11.
[357] Ayvaz, *Sahne Arkadaşlarım*, 138-139.

performed acrobatic shows in Istanbul and, according to Ayvaz, spoke little to no Turkish.[358] Despite the language barrier, Ayvaz and Pençef developed a romantic bond, which soon attracted the attention of her father and fellow troupe members. The relationship ended abruptly when Pençef's family left Istanbul without notice.[359] Interestingly, during the interview, Çalgıcıoğlu independently speculated that the monologue may have been inspired by Ayvaz's relationship with Pençef, reinforcing the plausibility of this autobiographical connection. In his account, Ayvaz describes Miçe as commanding, admired, and elusive,[360] traits that align with the unattainable woman in the monologue. Moreover, the classed and linguistic asymmetry between Ayvaz and Pençef finds a parallel in the monologue's tension between desire and inadequacy. One particularly telling overlap lies in the figure of the father. In both the monologue ['s first part], and Ayvaz's memoire, the female love interest is placed under the shadow of a strict paternal presence. In *I Love You*, the narrator performs his declaration of love in front of a woman seated "next to her rich father,"[361] a detail loaded with both theatrical bravado and classed self-consciousness. This motif resonates with Ayvaz's own account of Miçe's father, whom he describes as "very strict" and "unyielding."[362] The performative dilemma of addressing a desired other under patriarchal surveillance becomes, in this light, a staged expression of both personal frustration and broader social constraint. The protagonist's shame, economic fragility, and sense of public exposure echo the emotional undercurrents of Ayvaz's recollection, suggesting that the monologue, while not a direct account, functions as a symbolic self-portrait. It is precisely in this convergence of personal affect, cultural marginality, and public invisibility that the text reveals its deeper autobiographical resonance. This resonance is filtered not through factual narration but through the performative idiom of irony and theatrical form. Miçe Pençef was Ayvaz's first love, a formative emotional experience that may have left lasting impressions. These are reflected in the monologue's portrayal of unfulfilled longing, vulnerability, and the irreversibility of missed opportunity. A segment of the monologue details the luxurious cuisine at Belvü that the woman requests. These are all

[358] Ayvaz, *Sahne Arkadaşlarım*, 138-139.
[359] Ibid.
[360] Ibid.
[361] Ayvaz*, Սիqի Uէմիյօրում,* HA292-154, 2.
[362] Ayvaz, *Sahne Arkadaşlarım*, 138.

opulent items, provisions that Ayvaz self could never purchase. Çalgıcıoğlu asserts that these items represent Ayvaz's true desires, which remain unattainable owing to their cost.[363]

> What would you like, sweetheart? Come on, tell me, let's not keep the waiter waiting… I shouldn't have said, *"Whatever you want, my darling, I'll go along with it,"* but well, I said it. The waiter came and went in a blink, and suddenly the table was overflowing: double beers… black caviar, Roquefort cheese — *if your mouth's watering, just say the word* — dried mackerel salad, steaming pastries, pan-fried fish, kaşar cheese, and a heaping pile of egg salad, *looked like it through the magnifying glass, anyway*. We drank and drank.. and I, for my part, was floating so high into the clouds I could barely see the person beside me.. between the alcohol's effect, the allure of my darling, Madame Eftalya's voice, and the way the money in my pocket was drying up like water, it had made me entirely drunk and began to make me think like a hashish smoker.[364]

Belvü was one of the first casinos of the Republic era, located directly on the coast of Fenerbahçe-Kalamış, which already served as an exclusive place for music, dance, and fine dining in the Early Republic.[365] Originally used as a private hunting club by Levantines, the estate was converted in the early 20th century into a casino with an attached hotel operation, which was owned by French-Russian owners and later Romanian-Greek operators.[366] In the 1930s, Belvü established itself as a prominent excursion spot where famous artists like Deniz Kızı Eftalya and Müzeyyen Senar performed. The atmosphere was characterised by a Western-influenced, yet Ottoman-hybridised style of entertainment that attracted both the urban elite of Istanbul and guests from Europe. In the evenings, the establishment transformed into a jazz club; at the same time, the less privileged audience could also listen from boats on the water.[367] Belvü thus functions not only as a place for the scene in the monologue but also as a symbol of a social boundary where belonging is performed and negotiated. As Çalgıcıoğlu observes, the choice of Belvü, a luxurious restaurant on the Bosphorus, does not necessarily reflect a real memory but rather a symbolic desire: given that Ayvaz lived on the European side of the city, it remains unclear whether the narrator meets the woman there or whether they cross to the Asian side by ferry, as there was no Bosphorus bridge at the time.[368] These spatial ambiguities, along with other implausibilities, point to a fictional construction that uses exaggeration and symbolic settings to stage social longing rather than document actual events: a place the author

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[363] Çalgıcıoğlu, interview, 11.
[364] Ayvaz, *Sizi Seviyorum [Uիqի Uէվիյoրnւմ]*, 4.
[365] Şeyma Ersoy Çak, "Belvü Gazinosu," in *Online Türkiye Turizm Ansiklopedisi*, ed. Nevin Kozak, 2019, accessed June 12, 2025, https://turkiyeturizmansiklopedisi.com/belvu-gazinosu
[366] Ibid.
[367] Ibid.
[368] Calgicioglu, interview, 11.

himself longed to access. In this reading, the monologue stages not what happened but what could never quite happen: a fantasy of love, recognition, and class transgression. Such moments subtly encode the autobiographical within the performative, blurring the boundary between fiction and self-articulation. Belvü appears as a locus of bourgeois decadence and social distinction, yet also as a site of longing and enchantment for those excluded from it, particularly for individuals from the lower classes, as Ayvaz's narrator hints in closing:

> Now, dear esteemed listeners, let me give you a little recommendation: If you want to get some fresh air and listen to Madam Eftalya, then hurry to Belvü, and you'll see for yourselves that I'm right... The air there is so powerful, it even makes its way into your pockets![369]

In Ayvaz's monologue, Belvü serves not just as a physical setting but also as a metaphorical arena for class aspiration, social enactment, and ultimate failure. The narrator's endeavour to masquerade as a "pamuk tüccarı" (cotton merchant) illustrates the performative nature of belonging within a domain designated for the bourgeois elite. This performance disintegrates under the burden of financial realities, revealing the tenuous framework of identity. The sophisticated environment, accentuated by the reference to Denizkızı Eftalya, establishes a poignant juxtaposition between artistic allure and economic marginalisation. Denizkızı Eftalya's performances at Belvü were not merely symbolic but part of the cultural reality of early 1930s Istanbul, where she became a defining voice of the city's nightscape.[370] Her appearances exemplified a modern yet selectively accessible space of leisure, where Republican entertainment policies overlapped with older Ottoman practices, making her presence in Ayvaz's monologue a symbol of an unattainable world in which art, class, and desire are inextricably entangled. This depiction of Belvü prompts contemplation of the wider sociopolitical role of nightlife establishments in Early Republican Istanbul, where entertainment facilities served as both leisure places and mechanisms of cultural modernisation, social segregation, and ideological expression.[371] Entertainment was ritualised and integrated into national holidays and public ceremonies to make participation in state-sanctioned festivities a sign of citizenship and the new national identity. The ritualistic aspects of entertainment facilitated the leadership in instilling shared values and unity among citizens,

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[369] Ayvaz, *Sizi Seviyorum [Uիqի Uէվիյoրnւմ]*, 4.
[370] Bilen İsliktaş, *Boğaziçi'nin Büyülü Sesi: Denizkızı Eftalya: Dönemi, Yaşamı ve Çevresi* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2023), 107-109.
[371] Mehmet Kendirci, *Cumhuriyet ve Eğlence Politikası: 1923–1938 / Republic and Politics of Entertainment: 1923–1938* (PhD diss., Ankara University, 2019), 233.

hence legitimising the Republic. These occurrences emulated and reinforced contemporary behaviour.[372] During the Early Republican era, entertainment policies significantly influenced the transformation of romantic and social interactions. Recently developed venues, including dance halls and *balos* (public ballroom-style events), facilitated mixed-gender interactions under the guise of modernity, advancing Westernised courtship practices while simultaneously imposing standards of discipline and respectability.[373] Political leaders, like Atatürk, exemplified this modernised social structure. This transition was not uniformly accessible throughout societal segments: urban elites used these places as symbols of prestige and reform, while lower strata frequently faced exclusion owing to economic and cultural obstacles.[374] For minorities, these entertainment reforms led to a significant reduction in visibility and cultural autonomy. Sites formerly associated with Ottoman cosmopolitanism and minority traditions were either marginalised or reinterpreted to align with the national aesthetic. This change was essential to a comprehensive strategy designed to standardise the public sphere, progressively replacing cultural diversity with a regulated republican modernity.[375] Thus, the nocturnal culture of the 1930s, which was luxurious, Westernised, and focused on the elite, served as a medium for the articulation of class ambition, gender expression, and national identity, all while being strictly regulated. In this setting, Ayvaz's monologue emphasises the disparity between theatrical inclusion and authentic exclusion, utilising landmarks like Belvü not simply as physical locations but as symbols of elusive social integration. The fictionalised experience of exclusion at Belvü becomes more significant when considered in conjunction with Ayvaz's personal background. Like his narrator, Ayvaz faced adversity due to poverty from a young age. He departed from school prematurely because of financial difficulties, worked in a shoemaker's shop owned by his stepfather, and subsequently undertook various minor employment opportunities to support himself. These included selling visiting cards, assisting in theatres, and ultimately establishing the *Kulis* magazine, which he was also compelled to suspend due to insufficient funds. When this monologue was composed, Ayvaz was allegedly earning merely one lira per day at the theatre, traversing the city's cultural arenas as a young Armenian artist from the periphery. The mention of a shoemaker's shop in the monologue is intentional; it serves as a clear reference to his personal experience. Like his predecessor Baronyan, Ayvaz's artistic

[372] Kendirci, *Cumhuriyet ve Eğlence Politikası*, 206, 220 and 254.
[373] Ibid.., 31.
[374] Ibid., 178 and 271.
[375] Ibid., 124 and 239.

journey developed within significant material limitations, and this conflict between creative aspiration and financial instability is embedded in the essence of *I Love You*. The monologue serves as a platform where Ayvaz embodies not only imaginary personas but also illustrates the futility of transcending class solely via performance.

Among Ayvaz's limited Turkish-language works, the monologue *I Love You* is distinguished by both its substance and its structure. His first official play, *The Final Act* composed over three years and finalised in 1932, was written in Latin script and adhered to the cultural tenets of the Early Turkish Republic, whereas *I Love You* was rapidly written in Armenian script. This disparity is not solely technological but significantly performative: it indicates a retreat from official visibility and theatrical institutions. While *The Final Act* was ultimately performed in the 1940s and received favourable responses from individuals like Muhsin Ertuğrul, with rehearsals reportedly held at Madatyan's, *I Love You* remained unperformed. It is a more introspective work, confined to the margins of theatrical history. The juxtaposition of the two pieces elucidates Ayvaz's dual role as both an actor within and a critic of the prevailing cultural paradigm. *The Final Act* embodies a need for societal recognition and institutional integration. Its protagonist ascends the social hierarchy but ultimately loses everything: affection, kinship, and creative autonomy because of betrayal, envy, and violence.[376] The play adheres to the principles of Aristotelian drama, preserving unity of action, space, and time, and culminates in a cathartic demise reminiscent of classical tragedy. Kemal, the protagonist, likens himself to Othello, so underscoring the play's connection to traditional Western drama.[377] Consequently, *The Final Act* might be interpreted as Ayvaz's interaction with formal theatre and national aesthetics. In contrast, *I Love You* rejects linear narrative, character hierarchy, and dramatic resolution. The narrator is financially unstable, emotionally unsettled, and socially marginalised, a significant contrast to the celebrated protagonist Kemal in *The Last Act*, who is introduced as a renowned stage actor, praised for his performances in *Othello*, *Hamlet*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, and honoured at an elegant gathering of sculptors and painters where he is toasted with champagne.[378] The monologue embodies a performance of vulnerability, irony, and fragmentation that alludes to autobiographical introspection. Significantly, although *The Last Act* portrays its female character via a moralistic and misogynistic perspective, culminating in

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[376] Hagop Ayvaz, *Bir Aktörün Hayatı Yahut Son Perde* (HA21T-D), 1932, Hagop Ayvaz Collection, Hrant Dink Foundation Archive, Istanbul.
[377] Ibid., 83.
[378] Ibid., 40-50.

her being labelled "orospu"[379] (whore) and "kaltak"[380] (bitch), the monologue abstains from attributing culpability. The woman's departure remains an unresolved emotional void, indicating a more mournful and less accusing approach to gender. This transition signifies a pivot from theatrical spectacle to interior disruption. In his 1933 short story *Güneş Batarken* (hereafter *While the Sun Sets*) Ayvaz revisits the tragic constellation of *The Final Act*, intensifying psychological brutality and gendered conflict through melodramatic excess. Although the short story does not adhere to classical melodramatic structure, it mobilises heightened emotion and narrative violence to portray a deeply ambivalent triangle of love, shame, and artistic obsession.[381] The narrative centres on a sculptor overwhelmed by jealousy who, unable to accept his wife's past as a painter's nude model, drives her to self-harm.[382] In both Latin-scripted texts, the female form serves as a canvas for artistic expression and male trepidation, a motif that *I Love You* deliberately circumvents. Rather of objectifying or penalising the feminine figure, the monologue conveys a subdued, unresolved sense of loss, suggesting a more introspective perspective. In this context, *I Love You* might be interpreted not as a continuation but as a disruption: a minoritarian counter-text that subverts the tropes rehearsed by *The Final Act* and *While the Sun Sets*. The utilisation of Armenian writing underscores its personal and exclusive tone, suggesting a self-identification that defies integration into prevailing standards. The monologue's detachment from official theatrical norms and nationalist aesthetics imparts a subversive quality, illustrating internal conflicts between adaptation and cultural preservation. Rather than staging a public spectacle of downfall as in *The Final Act*, the monologue offers a personal account of theatricality, a veiled articulation of desire, contradiction, and unstable belonging. What *The Final Act* manifests through spectacle, such as public performance, polished dramaturgy, and institutional alignment, *I Love You* conveys through textual withdrawal. It is an unpublished monologue written in Armenian script, never staged, and deliberately fragmented. This contrast marks a shift in Ayvaz's artistic strategy. Rather than seeking integration into the national theatre scene, he begins to articulate a form of minoritarian resistance through formal opacity, irony, and linguistic subversion. It is noteworthy that both *The Last Act* (1932) and the short novella *While*

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[379] Ayvaz, *Bir Aktörün Hayatı Yahut Son Perde* (HA21T-D), 105.
[380] Ibid., 108.
[381] Hagop Ayvaz, *Güneş Batarken* (HA22T-D), Hagop Ayvaz Collection, Hrant Dink Foundation Archive, Istanbul, 1933.
[382] Ibid., 8-9, 17-18.

the Sun Sets (1933) were composed in the newly adopted Latin script of the Turkish Republic in 1928. These writings illustrate Ayvaz's proficiency in the new orthographic system and his ability to create intricate, aesthetically ambitious compositions that interact with prevailing literary and theatrical traditions. His technical mastery is evident in intricate descriptions, organised conversation, and dramatic consistency, all of which conform to republican modernist conventions. In this context, his choice to write *I Love You* in Armenian writing should be interpreted as intentional. It does not indicate a linguistic deficiency but rather represents a minoritarian deconstruction, a textual deviation that restores visibility and cultural memory beyond the dominant paradigm.

Çalgıcıoğlu remarks that "if it were to be performed at all, only Ayvaz himself could have done it"[383] because "only he could convey that emotional state in its truest form."[384] This uncovers a profound reality: the monologue was not intended for conventional theatrical presentation. It was a profoundly personal method of survival, a performative expression by a young man endeavouring to navigate a theatrical environment that afforded him minimal room. Although Ayvaz may not be regarded as a prominent writer, this monologue provides a unique insight into the epistemology of a theatre-maker who perceived performance not solely as stagecraft or literature but as a mode of existence and survival. In *I Love You*, theatre serves as both a technique and a symbol: a vehicle for expression, resistance, and initiation. This early text, authored by a 21-year-old Armenian actor who would subsequently establish one of Turkey's longest-running cultural journals, is notable not for its refined style but for its embodiment of the motivating factor behind Ayvaz's enduring dedication to theatre. The conclusion of the monologue's parts with the Armenian term for "written by" (գրեց — krets), serving as a symbolic signature, underscores this personal and political gesture. The choice to incorporate this singular Armenian term into a Turkish-language monologue is deliberate; it signifies the author's presence in a ghostly yet impactful manner. In the aftermath of genocidal marginalisation, the practice of writing Turkish in Armenian script, documented in archives and reemerging in modern research, illustrates the persistence and transmission of resilience and resistance through lived experience and cultural artefacts. The act of composing the monologue in Armenian script, during a period when the Armenian language and presence were being eliminated from the public sphere, constitutes a conscious act of resistance. In accordance with

[383] Calgicioglu, interview, 8.
[384] Ibid.

Scott's concept of infrapolitics, these hidden transcripts, whether expressed through performance or documented in texts, afford marginalised individuals a means of subtle resistance and cultural endurance against oppression.[385] Scott contrasts the hidden transcript, the offstage, coded discourse and practices developed among the oppressed with the public transcript, or the official, outward expressions and performances that the dominant expect and often enforce in public settings.[386] In contexts where explicit dissent is dangerous, such as the marginalisation and surveillance of Armenians and their cultural legacy, composing a monologue in Armenian script during a period of repression of both the script and the community becomes a hidden act of resistance. By adapting and subverting I. Galip's official radio monologue composed in the hegemonic script into Armenian letters, Ayvaz transforms a public transcript of state-sanctioned identity into a hidden transcript of dissent, reclaiming agency and embedding critique within the very structure of the text. Scott observes that the tension and interplay between public and hidden transcripts reveal the "contradictions, tensions, and immanent possibilities"[387] that underlie all power relations, and that creative acts like this monologue allow subordinate groups to "test the limits of what may be safely ventured in reply to the public transcript of deference and conformity."[388]

Instead of jeopardising public visibility on stage, Ayvaz employed authorship and the archive as a subtle kind of protest: the monologue serves as a coded declaration of identity and continuity, designed to persist beneath the surface of official acknowledgement. Diana Taylor's paradigm elucidates how archival texts can serve as alternative locations of remembering and resistance, safeguarding counter-histories when embodied repertoire is repressed or prohibited.[389] When such materials are preserved within a personal or community-based minoritarian archive, they operate as counter-archives, subverting official narratives and challenging the "stable," normative temporality of national historiography.[390] In the case of Ayvaz's monologue, its inscription in the archive demonstrates how archival texts themselves can become performative interventions. As Taylor argues, such materials do not merely safeguard memory but enact the presence and agency of silenced or marginalised communities,

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[385] Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 4-5.
[386] Ibid.
[387] Ibid., xii.
[388] Ibid., 164-165.
[389] Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 50.
[390] Ibid., 192-193.

especially when live repertoire is suppressed.[391] Through the preservation of cultural knowledge and forms the dominant archive would otherwise seek to exclude, this monologue resists erasure and asserts an ongoing counter-history. In this setting, the monologue serves as a poignant reminder of the diminished Armenian heritage within Turkey's cultural milieu—a testament that traverses the delicate boundary between memory and survival.

By composing this monologue instead of producing it, Ayvaz elevates authorship to a distinct realm, wherein the delineations of performance, identity, and language become indistinct. Rather than designating *I Love You* as a conventional autobiographical monologue, this study proposes to read it as a palimpsestual performance text, a layered site where personal memory, social critique, theatrical convention, and political erasure converge. As Lehmann observes, "palimpsestuous intertextuality and intratextuality are a significant quality of much postdramatic theatre," describing how new works often overwrite, recycle, and juxtapose earlier materials in complex, multi-layered ways.[392] The metaphor of the palimpsest, typically used to describe a manuscript in which earlier texts have been scraped away and overwritten, is particularly resonant in this case:[393] Ayvaz writes in Armeno-Turkish, using the Armenian script to render the Turkish language, a form of expression that had been largely erased from public life in Turkey after the proclamation of the Turkish Republic, silenced by nationalist language reforms and cultural homogenisation. In reviving this script, not as nostalgia but as a medium of satire, irony, and theatrical defiance, Ayvaz inscribes a counter-layer onto the memory politics of the Early Turkish Republic, one that refuses complete assimilation and denial. His narrator slips between fictional roles and biographical echoes, never settling into a stable identity. These shifts are not a failure of representation but an intentional aesthetic that aligns with what postdramatic theorists later describe as fragmentation, performative subjectivity, and anti-mimetic disruption.[394] The autobiographical trace in this monologue does not speak from a fixed past but rather emerges through erasure, a spectral recurrence. What is unspeakable in public performance — minoritarian satire, grief, and dislocation — is restaged through form. In this sense, *I Love You* becomes a palimpsest not only of theatrical forms but of silenced histories, where the autobiographical is performed as a precarious negotiation between memory and survival. The Armenian script becomes a visual residue of erased presence, and the

[391] Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*., 86.
[392] Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, 8-9.
[393] Ibid.
[394] Ibid., 39.

monologue enacts what Derrida might call a writing that marks the trace of what cannot be fully recovered. While Ayvaz worked within the shrinking, politically marginalised Armenian community theatre network, spaces that, as Emine Fişek observes, became increasingly precarious in Early Republican Turkey[395], these venues still played a vital role as sites of cultural expression. Although public opportunities for Armenian theatre were restricted, especially prior to the late 1940s, community theatre continued to offer Ayvaz a space for self-articulation, even if only in private or semi-private spheres. Therefore, Ayvaz's writing becomes more than documentation; it is a performative act, a "stage on the page" where questions of language, survival, and dissent converge. *I Love You* thus stands as a personal and cultural performance, inheriting the legacy of a community theatre that had once contributed to Turkey's multilingual stage. By turning writing into a form of theatrical presence, Ayvaz asserts resilience during a period when Armenian voices and cultural visibility were acutely threatened.

[395] Emine Fişek, *Theatre & Community* (London: Red Globe Press, 2019), 40.

Figure 4: Hagop Ayvaz, Ref. No. 1.1.2.364, Hrant Dink Foundation Archive, Hagop Ayvaz Collection.

6 Conclusion

In a personal document kept by Hagop Ayvaz was a folded note containing Article 10 of the Turkish Constitution,[396] the very sentence that opens this thesis. It promised equality regardless of religion, language, or origin. Yet, Ayvaz's life and his carefully curated archive reveal the stark dissonance between such ideals and the lived realities of Armenians in the Republic of Turkey. His decision to carry this article among his personal belongings was not merely symbolic: it was a silent performance of faith, disappointment, and defiant endurance.

As Ari Şekeryan demonstrates, the Armenian community in Early Republican Turkey, particularly in Istanbul, faced an environment of acute political vulnerability following the withdrawal of Allied support and the consolidation of a repressive nationalist regime. To ensure their survival, Armenians mostly gave up overt political dissent in the face of increased suspicion, a hostile press, and state pressure. Instead, they adopted a strategy of cautious accommodation and public displays of loyalty. Şekeryan frames this response as a classic example of "ethnic bargaining": when minority communities lose external protection and encounter a repressive host state, they moderate their demands and retreat from the political sphere, focusing on cultural persistence and daily survival.[397] In such a constrained space, devoid of real avenues for political participation or open criticism, expressions of identity necessarily become indirect, coded, or performative. It is in this light that Ayvaz's monologue can be understood not as a straightforward act of either defiance or submission but as a carefully crafted negotiation with power. The text performs Armenian identity and cultural memory through denationalised language, theatrical form, and a kind of archival opacity, performing survival at once culturally, historically, and personally.

This thesis began with a recovered text that had long remained unread. Written in 1932 but never published and performed, Ayvaz's monologue *I Love You* reclaims a marginal space within the suppressed Armeno-Turkish theatrical tradition. Genocide and linguistic nationalism largely erased this tradition but it once embodied a pluralistic landscape where Turkish was not exclusively associated with Turkishness. Ayvaz's choice to write in Turkish using the Armenian

[396] Section 10 of the Turkish constitution, also found in Hagop Ayvaz's archive, in his personal belongings. Box of Hagop Ayvaz's Personal Items, Hagop Ayvaz Collection, Hrant Dink Foundation Archive.
[397] Ari Şekeryan, "The Transformation of the Political Position of the Armenian Community in Istanbul vis-à-vis the Declaration of the Republic of Turkey," *Turkish Studies* 21, no. 2 (2020): 298–300.

script cannot be reduced to hybridity or adaptation. Following the insights of Ghoogasian and Manoukian, this study frames Ayvaz's decision as a depropriative act, one that insists on Turkish as a shared, imperial medium that was historically integral to Armenian literary culture. Ayvaz did not write in Turkish because he had no alternative; he wrote in Turkish to *claim* it. The use of the Armenian script in *I Love You* is not nostalgic, nor is it merely personal. It is a deliberate, performative act of linguistic assertion in a moment when Armenian had been pushed out of the public sphere. The monologue stages Turkish in a different key, disentangled from its new nationalist proprietors, and resonating instead with suppressed histories of coexistence and multilingual expression. This is why *I Love You* is important: it reclaims the Turkish language through a script inscribed with silenced histories, resisting the Early Turkish Republic's linguistic purification.

This study has shown that a combined theoretical approach, drawing on Jacques Derrida's philosophical concept of *iterability* and Paavo Paavolainen's theatre- and performance-based metaphors, offer a productive framework for analysing *I Love You* as a performative text. Rather than treating Ayvaz's monologue as a fixed literary artefact, this interwoven methodology enables a reading that foregrounds its theatrical logic, its minoritarian voice, and its embeddedness in Armenian cultural memory. Derrida's philosophy of *iterability* helps account for the tension between repetition and difference that structures the monologue: its reuse of established theatrical forms is not imitation but resignification. The use of Armenian script for a Turkish-language text exemplifies this, both familiar and estranged, present and displaced. Paavolainen's dramaturgical lens, in turn, highlights the formal construction of the monologue as a site of theatrical performance on the page: fragmented voice, shifting affect, direct address, and metatheatrical gestures which enact a drama of marginality and resilience. Seen through this interdisciplinary lens, *I Love You* emerges as a spectral performance text: neither staged nor silent but deferred, elusive, and deeply political. The Armenian signature at the end embodies a minoritarian position that resists assimilation and refuses invisibility. Ultimately, the approach taken in this thesis demonstrates how philosophical and theatrical theory together allow us to grasp writing itself as a performative act — of survival, of resistance, and of cultural inscription.

Further, the analysis has shown how *I Love You* stages a "hidden transcript" in Scott's sense: a concealed, strategic dissent that operates within and against dominant codes. Through satire, ambivalence, and self-deprecating critique, the narrator marks his exclusion from the national or public script while mimicking and distorting its language. The comparison with İ. Galip's

1930 monologue reveals this mechanism clearly. While Galip's text operates within a framework of modernist nationalism and masculine confidence, Ayvaz's version performs a resignification: the same form is re-voiced from the margins, transformed into a commentary on exclusion, poverty, and failed love. The parody is not incidental; it is ideological. It unmasks the performative consensus of Early Republican cultural policies and inserts a divergent, minor key. This monologue is not simply a confessional text or a dramatic fragment. It is a performative articulation of a life lived at the threshold of visibility. In its refusal of staging, it invents another mode of appearance, what Rebecca Schneider calls a performative remainder. The monologue becomes a text that survives not because it was seen or heard but because it insists on being written.

Ayvaz's monologue operates across multiple temporal and spatial registers, calling forth an audience that never existed in embodied form. By writing rather than staging, he preserves a space of potentiality, one that defies the temporal axis of live performance. This study, in turn, participates in this logic: by analysing and recontextualising the monologue as a performative artifact of cultural memory, it breaks with the spatial and temporal constraints imposed by both censorship and historiography. The monologue, once silenced, finds a belated audience, and in doing so, performs a return, not to the stage, but to *history*. *I Love You* therefore contributes not only to the memory of a lost theatrical tradition but to its redefinition. It shows that Armeno-Turkish writing did not vanish after genocide but continued, quietly, under different forms. Ayvaz's monologue becomes an archival moment of that continuity. Its performativity lies in its refusal to assimilate, to disappear, or to conform. It speaks not only of love but of class, alienation, and the impossibility of straightforward belonging. It imagines the stage it was denied, and in doing so, it creates one on the page.

Ultimately, *I Love You* is not merely a forgotten script; it is a performative trace. It refuses to be invisible. It reclaims Turkish as a shared cultural language. It speaks in Armenian letters to those who remember, those who were never meant to read it. It performs history through citation, resistance, and survival. In the words of Jacques Derrida, reflecting on the violent transformation of scripts in Turkey:

> "I try to undertake, to grasp, and to relive what I imagine to have been a letter massacre in Turkey.[398] (..) With the pretext of moving to modern culture, in a single day, people

[398] Jacques Derrida, "İstanbul Mektubu," *Cogito* 47–48 (2006): 23.

> lost the ability to read centuries of memory; they were made ignorant. This is the terrible way of abandoning one's country in search of adventure, the most monstrous but perhaps the only way — loss of memory!"[399]

The Armeno-Turkish monologue undertakes precisely this labour. Rather than seeking restoration of what was lost, it enacts survival through reinscription. The act is not a nostalgic return but a persistent rewriting, making present what official history sought to erase. *I Love You* thus acts as an archival site of resistance and resilience, a testament to Ayvaz's refusal to let memory, identity, and heritage be made invisible.

This thesis marks only a beginning. *I Love You* opens broader avenues for future research, not only into Hagop Ayvaz's oeuvre but into the afterlives of Armeno-Turkish cultural production more generally. The performative strategies identified in this monologue resonate with later satirical personas created by Ayvaz, such as the satirical figure of Lutsika Dudu, whose columns warrant closer analysis in relation to his theatrical writing. His long-standing periodical *Kulis*, too, deserves further study, not merely as a record of theatre history but as a minor archive that chronicled both Armenian and Turkish cultural life over decades. Beyond Ayvaz himself, the discovery of *I Love You* suggests that other Armeno-Turkish texts from Early Republican Turkey may still lie undiscovered in private collections or neglected archives. As such, this work calls for a broader engagement with minoritarian archival and literary remains, texts written not only in the margins of power but also at the margins of our current knowledge. What Ayvaz has left behind is not a closed narrative but a rich, unfolding archive, one that still awaits its readers.

[399] Derrida, "İstanbul Mektubu," 26.

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8 Appendices: Transliterated Monologue and English Translation

Hagop Ayvaz's monologue – *Սիqի Սէվիյորում [Sizi Seviyorum]*, transliterated from Armeno-Turkish by Emre Görkem Onur

muhterem hanımlar ve bey efendiler.. hele.. matmazeller sizi seviyorum…niye taacüb ediyorsunız…sizi seviyorum dediğime mi … ṗek alya, ya niçin… ha anladım galiba hangımızı die sormak istiyorsunız deyilmi… eyi ya mademki bu derece merak içinde kaldınız o halde söyleyim… sizi seviyorum. Fakat heṗinizi birden seviyorum zan etmeyiniz ha yalnız birinizi… ismini mi anlamak istiyorsunız…doġrusı onı bende bilmiyorum…sadece seviyorum. Yahu bir insan sevdiği kızın ismini bilmez olurmı diyeceksiniz. Olurmış efendim…basbayaġı olurmış, bakınız sizlere şu çekingenliġim yüzünden düşdüġüm bu aşk rüyasını anlatayım. arḳadaşlarımdan Ayvazın yıl dönümü münasibetile kendilerini tebrike gidecekdim… o gün gayet muntazam, gayet şık giyinmeye gayret ettim… ilk bahar olduġından göysüme birde yar bana küstüren günde gül takıb yola düzüldüm… bastonımı sallıya sallıya giderken garib bir şey nazar dıkkatımı celb etti. dıkkat ettim ben yürürken herkes dönüb, dönüb bana bakıyordu… niçin … bende anlıyamadım … aceba gülümemi bakıyorlardı…ṗek güzel amma gülümde gülünecek ne vardı…bas bayaġı gül…bildiġimiz güllerden…eh niçin bakıb sırıtıyorlardı…tamam lüksemburg kırahathanesi önüne gelmiştim duvardaki aynaya şöylece bir bakdım…ne görsem beyenirsiniz… meger bu ḳadar bakışların, bu ḳadar gülüşleri yerinde imiş…başıma koduġım şaṗkayı acele ile giydiġimden ters komuşım ve kordelası arkada olacak yerde öne gelmiş beni tepeli horozlara benzetmiş orada ne olduġımı bilemedim…asrımızın kışları gibi renk renk oldum ve heman ısınmışım gibi şaṗkamı çıkardım… beni bu halimle görenlerin daha fazla gülmelerine meydan vermemek için alel acele tıramvaya atlıyacakdım…fakat aksiliġe bakınız…sanki şeytan o gün beni kovalıyormış gibi birden vatman dokuç açmasınmı demiri tutamadım… ve tutamayıncada keleg kavunları gibi yere serildim…yere serildiġim bir şey deyil amma ya elimdeki çiçek demeti…ramazan ṗidesi gibi ezilib yamyası oldu..artık büsbütün hiddetlendim orada bulunan bir otomobile kendimi dar attım ve soluġımı ayvazın evinde aldım…yahu nede kaṗu çıngırakları varmış, sanki 'ayiyorgi' kilisesindeki çan çalınıyormış gibi iṗi bir çekişimle yalan söylemeyim zatı yalan söylemem a tabiyatım deyil.. ne azı yarım saat çaldım nihayet kaṗu açıldı ve beni güzel, şirin, nazik bir kız karşıladı.. sonradan öyrendiġime göre oda benim gibi misafirmiş.. aman allahım ne kız..ne kız..ben deim melek…siz…siz ne derseniz deyiniz çünkü fazla met etmeniz işime

gelmez…korkarım elimden gider…derken ayvaz beni karşıladı koltuklarıma girdi ve beni misafirlerin huzurına çıkartarak onlara taḳdim etti…“aḳtör cebi delik zade ve aslan bey” aman allahım bir gülmektir aldı herkes göbeğini dike dike gülmekten katılıyordu…neden yahu…niçin…ne oldu ha anladım galiba laġabım hoşlarına gitti…gider a…şimdi artık oturmış gözlerimde bana kaṗuyı açan o fıkırdak kızcaazı arıyordum... ha buldum…orada işde, işde aramızda oturmış beni dinliyor aman allahım çıldıracağım…şimdi onı aramızda gördüm a…artık başımdan geçeni nakl edemiyeceġim…aman aman vicudım zelzeleye tutulmuş ahşaṗ evler gibi titriyor ayaklarım kesiliyor…nefesim kesiliyor galiba olduġım yerde bayılıb kalacağım…lakin cesaret…yalnızken itiraf edemediğim şu aşkımı burada da itiraf edemezsem nerede söyleyebilirim…matmazel sizi seviyorum…yahu hepiniz birden ne diye yüzüme bakıyorsınız…yalnız onı seviyorum…yalnız onu…evet sizi seviyorum matmazel hem ebediyende seveceğime emin olabilirsiniz size bir mabude gibi ṗerestiş ediyorum…siz benim baş tacımsınız…canımsınız, ruhumsınız, hayatımsınız…sizi çılgınca seviyorum…isbatmı istiyorsunız…işte bu kadar kişi şahidim olsunki sizi seviyorum…hem canu gönülden…aman onın kim olduġını muhakkak görüb anlamakmı istiyorsunız işte bunı yaṗamıyacaġım… çünkü babası yanında…bakınız, bakınız nasılda bana doġru bakıyor…ne güzel bakış allahım…şeytan bile yakmaya muktedir şimdi matmazel size karşı kalbimde beslediğim aşkı bu kadar kişinin huzırında itiraf ettikten sonra, sizden bir tek recam vardır.. evet bir tek eger sizde beni seviyorsanız…fakat niçin sevmiyecekmişsiniz… benim neyim eksik…ṗaram yoksa onı da ṗederiniz sayesinde kazanmaya gayret ederim…evet eger beni seviyorsanız.. beni üzmek ve daha fazla zayıflatmak istemiyorsanız…ṗiyesimizin hitamında sizi tramvay taakuk maalinde sabırsızlıkla bekliyorum ve buracıkda itiraf ettiğim aşkımı orada mini mini elleriniz ṗuselerime garḳ ederek sizi sevdiğimi söylemekten geri durmayacağım...çünkü sizi hakikaten seviyorum…

krets --- h. Ayvaz

SON 13.08.1932

= onunla belvüde =

- bir kaç saat –

muhterem hanımlar ve bey efendiler.. dikkat ediniz onunla diyorum…niçin…yüreğimi fazlası ile yakdığı için ismini bile anmak istemiyorum…demekki aşkımız sizi bu derecelere ḳadar getirmiş ha diyeceksiniz…hayır efendim anlıyamadınız bari izah edeyim de merakdan kurtulmuş olursınız. lakin evela burnuma gülmiyeceğinize ve bana enayi sende “yüzüme karşı

değil taabi" demiyeceğinize söz vermenizi reca ederim. şimdi başlıyorum ha dikkat geçen cumaa günü sabahleyin erkenden kalkdım doġru berberime gidiṗ sinek kaydı bir tıraş oldum ve iskarṗinlerimi boyatmak maksadı ile galata saraydaki boyacı dükkyanına doġru yola çıktım…hey allahım bir kalabalıkdır yollara akın etmiş, kadın, erkek, çoluk, çocuk…velhasılı bohçayı, seṗeti, gramofonu yakalıyan yola düzülmüş…her halde bunlardan kimi kalamışa, kimi adaya kimi kavaklara gidiṗ cumaayı hoş geçirmek için birer karar vermişlerdir…derken ṗarmakkaṗuda bir kalabalıktır gözüme ilişdi…aman aceba otomobil kaldırıma çıkıb birinimi ezdi…"mamafik bunada alışdık a"kaldırıma çıkışı bir şey deyil yarın o bir gün otomobildeki müşterinin canı ṗasta ve yahut tavuk göysü yemek isterse otomobilden inmeye ne hacet…haydi doġru içeriye ne var aceba, ne olmuş diyerek bende dümenimi o tarafa doġru çevirdim oraya varınca çok yanlış zaaṗlara düşdüġümi anladım…meger ihtiyar bir kadının elindeki seṗetin kolu koṗmuş ve koṗunca da seṗettir ters dönüb içindekiler türlü olmuş.. fasulyalar denizdeki kırmızı balıklar gibi kaldırımda yüzüb duruyor .. ya şu karnı yarıġa ne dersiniz .. hiddetinden çatlıyan şişman adamlar gibi karnındaki olanı dışarıya fırlatmış .. herne hal ise ötekileride sayacak olursam korkarım mideniz bulanacak…ben gine yoluma devam ederken önüme kol kola vermiş bir çift düşmezlermi? .. bunlarda koltuklarına birer havlu ve birerde mayo olduġı halde yürüyorlardı .. nereye .. onu tabii sizde anladınız .. yürekten bir ah çekerek .. evet niye saklayım .. kendi kendime bir ah çekerek benimde böyle çıtır ṗıtır bir bülbülüm olsa öttürmezmiydim onu koluma takıṗ gezdirmezmiydim dedim.. derken kendimi boyacı dükkyanında buldum. boyacı iskarṗinlerimi boyamakla meşgulken karşımda boş oturan boyacının sandalyasına mini mini bir minnoş gelmezmi hey allahım sesimi nede çabuk işittin .. artık kendimden çıkmış bütün nazarlarımı ondan ayırmıyordum. melek .. melek .. hem can alıcı, kese boşaltıcı bir melek .. güzelmi güzel beyendim bu kızın nasıl bir kız olduġını anlamak isterseniz lütfen bir saniye beni dinleyiniz .. saçlarından başlıyorum .. kıvır kıvır ve kesdane renginde bir kukla saçı gibi, ya gözleri zeytin gibi simsiyah, burnunı hiç sormayın bademmi badem .. aġzı ise kumru aġzı, göyüsler yafadan mamül ya o çorabsız ayakları mini mini ve tombul tombul .. bakdıka bakdım .. meger oda beni süzüyormuş, gözlerimi yukarıya kaldırdığım zaman ikimizinde gözleri şimşek gibi birbirine çarṗtı .. bakdı .. bakışdık .. güldü ..gülüşdük .. derken gözümü kırṗtım, oda kırṗtı ve ikimizde ahbab olarak boyacı dükkyanından çıktık tünele doġru yürürken adeta iki sevdazade olmuş ve uzun zamanlar birbirini sevmiş iki çift gibi konuşuyorduk ben evela ismini sordum "söyledi fakat ben söylemek istemiyorum çünkü canımı çok yaktı" oda benim ismimi sordu ve ben bila tereddüd cevab verdim .. ṗambuk tüccarı zebiyüz bukrek zade m. hayri. ne ise uzatmayalım öyleden sonra saat dört için bir

randevu alarak ayrıldım .. şimdi evde oturmuş saatı ellerimin arasında tutmuş sabırsızlanıyor .. dakikalar birer asır ḳadar uzun görünüyordu .. nihayet saat üçü bulunca kalkdım mümkün olduġu kadar kendime çeki düzen verdim bastonımla eldivenlerimi de alıṗ yola çıktım .. aman bebeġim erkence gelib beni bile beklemiş vah yavrum vah işde buda beni sevdiġine bir delil deyilmi sanki… ne hal ise kolkola giriṗ yürürken nereye gideceyiz diye sual etti, ben heman "kedi ciyere atılır gibi" cevab verdim, sinemaya, surat ekşiterek, karanlıktan hoşlanmadığını ilave etti, ey ṗek güzel nereye gidelim demeye kalmadı alaturka musikisini ṗek beyendiġini ve dillerde destan olan deniz kızı eftalya hanımı dinlemek arzusında bulundığını söyledi .. yahu daha ilk barış ilk görüş, böyle mincozun hatırı kırılırmı hiç, yok olmaz denirmi .. bahusus yok olmaz deyince kendimide küçültmüş olacaġım ve kız beni züġürtün birini zann edecek .. hay hay, sevgilim nereyi arzu ediyorsan gidelim diyerek belvü kaṗısında içeriye daldık .. saat şöyle böyle altıyı bulmuştı .. aman allahım bu ne ṗara yok diyenlerin kulakları çınlasın .. heman garsonun biri bizi karşıladı ve çift olduġımızı görünce şöyle köşeyimsi bir yere götürüṗ oturttı .. listesini çıkarıṗ masaya koydu .. yahu biraz soluk vermek yokmu .. hele yorgunlığımızı alalım .. terimiz kurusun bu ne acele .. minnoşum listeyi eline alıb okudıktan sonra benim ona yaṗacaġımı o bana yaṗtı .. ne arzu edersin cicim? .. haydi söylede garsonu bekletmeyelim .. canımın içi sen ne istersen söyle ben razıyım "dememeli idik ya" dedik işte, garsonun gidiṗ gelmesi bir oldu, masaya bir sürü şeyler dizildi, o ne düble biralar .. siyah havyar, rokfor ṗeyniri "aġzınız sulanıyorsa haberin verin" çiroz salatası, sıcak sıcak börekler, balık tavası, kaşer ṗeyniri, ve birde şöyle teṗeleme "ṗertavsızla öyle görünüyor" yumurta salatası .. içdikçe içtik.. ve ben kendi ṗayıma tabi masaya bakdıkca yanımdakini görmiyecek kadar bulutlara karışıyordum.. bir tarafdan içkinin teesiri, minnoşumun cazibesi, diġer taraftan eftalya hanımın sesi ve cebdeki ṗaraların suyu çekmesi beni büsbütün serhoş ediṗ esrarkeşler gibi düşündürmeye başlamıştı. gecenin kaçı olmuştı hatırlamıyorum .. yanımdaki izrayil birden, durub durduġı yerde iyne sokmuşlar gibi aman diye haykırdı .. ne var, ne oluyoruz demeye kalmadı aman kocam beni arıyor, bizi beraber görmesin alimallah öldüġümüz gündir ha .. diyerek kaçmak için ayaġa kalkdı, bende onu tahkib edecektim fakat siz benimle beraber gelirseniz olmaz dedi daha eyi ben şimdi dişarı çıḳar sizi karşıki tıramvay istasiyonunda beklerim sonra sizde gelir beni orada bulursunız ve gireceġimiz yere serbest yürekle, korkumuz olmadan gideriz diyerek telaşlı adımlarla yanımdan ayrılıṗ rüzgyar gibi uçtu .. onun uçması bir şey deyil cebdeki ṗaralarda beraberine uçtu .. on dakika sonra garsonu yanıma çaġırıṗ hesabı görmesini söyledim. bir hesaṗ tamam on üç bucuk lira .. eyi amma bizim yanımızda on lira varsa üç buçuġı nereden bulacaġız .. garsona on lirayı veriṗ tatlı tatlı konuşuṗ koluna girdim ve

derdimizi anlatmak için şöyle tenha bir yere götürecek kandırmak istedimsede kanmadı, niyaz ettik olmadı ve nihayet kol saatımı rehin bırakarak yakamı kurtardım .. sonrada onu dışarıda bulurum ümüdü ile alelacele kaṗıdan çıktıġım zaman ortadaki aġaçlardan ve serseri kanaṗesinde uyuyan “benim gibi” işman bir adamdan başka bir şey görmedim ... şimdi size hey muhterem dinleyicilerim tavsiye ederim güzel hava almak eftalya hanımı dinlemek istiyorsanız belvüye koşunuz ve dediklerimi siz kendinizde isbat edeceksiniz...

hele havası o ḳadar kuvetli ki ceblerinize ḳadar sirayet ediyor.

ḳrets – h. Ayvaz

Son

22/8/1932

English translation of Hagop Ayvaz's Armeno-Turkish monologue *I Love You* by Emre Görkem Onur

Esteemed ladies and gentlemen... and especially you, mademoiselles… I love you. Why are you so surprised? Is it because I said "I love you"? Well then, why else? Ah, I see… you're probably wondering which one of you, aren't you? Well, since your curiosity has reached such heights, I'll say it: I love you. But don't get the wrong idea, not all of you at once… Just one of you. You want to know her name? Well… to be honest, I don't even know it myself. I just love her. Now you'll say, "Come on, how can someone not know the name of the girl he loves?" Oh, but it happens, dear audience…it truly does. Let me tell you about the dream of love I stumbled into… all because of this shyness of mine. I was on my way to congratulate my friend Ayvaz on his anniversary. That day, I made a real effort to look sharp… dressed properly and elegantly. It was spring, and in the spirit of the season, I pinned a rose to my chest, the very same kind I wore on the day she turned away from me..and so I set off...as I strutted along, twirling my cane with flair, something odd caught my attention. People kept turning around to look at me.. again and again. Why? I couldn't figure it out. Were they admiring my rose, perhaps? Well sure, it was a nice rose… but nothing to laugh about… just a regular rose, a common one... So why were they all smirking? I reached the Luxembourg Café and gave myself a quick glance in the mirror on the wall… and what do you think I saw? Suddenly, all the looks, all the laughter made perfect sense… I'd rushed out with my hat and put it on the wrong way and the ribbon, which should've been in the back, had ended up in the front… and it made me look like a crested rooster., I didn't know what had become of me… I turned every colour, like the winters of our time…and just like that, as if I'd suddenly overheated, I took off my hat. To stop people from laughing at me even more in that state, I hurried to jump onto the tram… but just my luck… as if the devil himself were chasing me that day, the driver suddenly opened the door, and I missed the handle. And missing the handle, I collapsed like a ripe melon. Falling down wasn't even the worst part but the bouquet in my hand… crushed like a Ramadan flatbread… flattened and shapeless. Now I was really furious. I threw myself into the nearest car and finally caught my breath at Ayvaz's house… My God, what kind of doorbell was that? It rang like the church bells of St. George Koudounas. I gave the cord a good tug, and I swear, I'm not lying, I'm simply not the type, but I must have rung for at least half an hour.. Finally, the door opened, and there she was: a beautiful, sweet, delicate young lady. I later found out she, too, was just a guest like me. Oh my God… what a girl. Not a girl…an angel.. Say what you... you...like, but don't praise her too much…I'm afraid I might lose her if you do… Then Ayvaz greeted me… took me by

the arm… and led me into the room to present me to the guests… “The actor Cebi Delik Zade and Mister Lion”… Oh God… the laughter… everyone was laughing, clutching their bellies, nearly collapsing from it… why though… for what reason… what happened… ah… I think I understand now… they liked my nickname… sure… why not… Now I sat down, my eyes scanning the room for that sweet, lively girl who’d opened the door…There … I found her.. Sitting among us, listening to me. Oh God, I am going to lose my mind. Now that I… I see her sitting there.. a… I can’t… I just can’t go on telling my story. My body’s trembling like a wooden house in an earthquake. My knees are giving out, I can’t breathe… I think I’m going to faint, right here and now…But courage… if I can’t confess this love here, now, in front of everyone, when I couldn’t even say it when I was alone… then where could I possibly say it… Mademoiselle… I love you… Come on, why are you all looking at me like that… I only love her… only her…Yes, I love you, mademoiselle… and you can be certain that I will love you forever… I worship you like a goddess… you are the crown upon my head… my soul… my life… I love you madly… You want proof…? Let all these people here be my witnesses… I love you.. with all my heart and soul! You’re dying to know who she is, aren’t you? Well, I won’t tell you because her father is sitting right there. But look… just look at how she’s looking at me. Such a gaze, my God, even the Devil would go up in flames from eyes like that.. Now that I’ve confessed the love I carry in my heart for you, mademoiselle… here, in front of all these people… I have just one request. Yes, just one… if you love me too… but really, why wouldn’t you…? What am I lacking…? If it’s money… well, I’ll try to earn that too, with the help of your dear father. Yes… if you love me, and don’t wish to hurt or wear me down any further… then meet me… I’ll be waiting, full of longing… at the place where our meeting shall be fulfilled… the tram stop, once the play is over. There… as your tiny, delicate hands drown in my kisses… I will not hold back from telling you again… that I love you… truly and with all my heart.

written by H. Ayvaz

13/08/1932

With Her at the Belvü

— Just a few hours —

Esteemed ladies and gentlemen, please pay attention. I said with her… Why?.. Because she scorched my soul so fiercely, I don't even want to say her name.. Now you'll say… so your great love brought you to this state, did it…? No, dear audience… you didn't understand. Let me explain then, so your curiosity may be satisfied. But first I kindly ask you to promise that you will not laugh at me…And that you will not call me a fool…at least not to my face. All right, here we go… listen closely. Last Friday, I woke up early in the morning… went straight to my barber and got the closest shave imaginable, smooth as glass. Then, to have my shoes polished, I made my way to a shoeshine shop near Galata Palace…Oh my God, what a crowd! The streets were absolutely flooded, women, men, children, all swarming out together. Whatever they could grab, a bundle, a basket, even a gramophone, they were heading out. Some off to Kalamış, some to the islands, some to the poplar, each one determined to make the most of their Friday. Then, at Parmakkapı, a crowd caught my eye… Oh no, did a car jump the curb and run someone over… But really, we've gotten used to even that, haven't we… A car jumping the curb is no big deal anymore… One of these days, if a passenger suddenly craves cake or chicken breast, well… why would they even bother getting out of the car? So off I went, thinking, "Let's see what's going on in there, what happened?" I turned my course toward the crowd, only to find I'd gotten it all completely wrong… Turned out, an old woman's basket had broken, the handle snapped, the whole thing flipped over, and the contents spilled everywhere. Beans were swimming across the sidewalk like little red fish in the sea..and that Karnıyarık, it had burst open like an angry, overweight man, hurling its guts out in rage… as for the rest…if I listed everything that spilled, I'm afraid it would make you sick.. Just as I continued my way, a couple locked arm in arm suddenly appeared right in front of me...They were walking along, each with a towel over their arm and a swimsuit in hand. Where were they going? Well, I'm sure you can guess. With a sigh…yes, I admit it…with a sigh from deep in my heart, I thought to myself: If I had such a sweet little nightingale, wouldn't I make her sing? Wouldn't I wear her on my arm and stroll around with her? And then I suddenly found myself at the shoeshiner's shop. While the shoeshiner was busy polishing my leather shoes, didn't the empty chair across from me get taken by a dainty little darling? Oh my God, how quickly you answered my prayers.. I was completely beside myself, unable to take my eyes off her.. An angel... an angel…both heart-stealing and wallet-draining.. She was stunning. Truly. If you'd like to know

just what kind of girl she was, then listen to me…moment by moment. Let's start with her hair…soft curls, the colour of chestnuts, like the hair of a doll. And her eyes..black as olives, Her nose? Don't even ask, as delicate as an almond. Her mouth, like a dove's beak. Her breasts made of Yafa oranges and those bare feet, tiny, rounded, and delightfully plump. I kept staring.. and staring some more. Turns out, she was looking at me too. When I finally lifted my eyes, ours met…like lightning bolts colliding. She looked… we looked at each other… she smiled… we smiled together… then I winked… and she winked back… and the two of us left the shoeshine shop as friends. As we walked toward the Tunnel, we spoke like two sevdazade, like a couple who had loved each other for a long time. I asked her name first. She told me… but I won't say it here. It hurt me too much. Then she asked for mine. And I answered without hesitation… "cotton merchant Zebiyüz Bukrekzade M. Hayri." But never mind…let's not dwell on it. We parted after setting a time for four o'clock. Now there I was, sitting at home, holding the clock in my hands, growing more impatient by the second. Each minute stretched out like a century. Finally, around three o'clock, I got up, fixed myself up as best I could, grabbed my cane and gloves, and headed out. Oh, my darling, she had arrived early and was already waiting for me! Ah, poor girl, isn't that proof that she truly loved me? Anyway, as we walked arm in arm, she asked, "Where are we going?" And I, like a cat jumping at liver, answered right away: "The cinema." She frowned and said she didn't like the dark, well, before I could even say, "Where shall we go then?" she said she adored alaturka music and wanted to hear Denizkızı Eftalya everyone was talking about…I mean, come on, it was our first truce, our very first meeting… how could I possibly disappoint such a sweet girl? You don't say no to a girl like that…and if I did, I'd just make myself look small and she'd think I was some broke nobody...so of course I said, "Of course, darling, wherever you want to go," and just like that, we darted through the doors of Belvü. It was around six in the evening. My God! And they say they have no money, their ears must be ringing. One of the waiters greeted us right away…And when he saw we were a couple… he led us to a little spot off to the side… and sat us down…He pulled out the menu and placed it on the table…Come on now… can't we at least catch our breath…? Let us rest a little… let our sweat dry… what's the rush…My darling took the menu… read through it…And what I had planned to do for her…she did to me… "what would you like, sweetheart? Come on, tell me, let's not keep the waiter waiting"…I shouldn't have said, "Whatever you want, my darling, I'll go along with it," but well, I said it. The waiter came and went in a blink, and suddenly the table was overflowing: double beers… black caviar, Roquefort cheese — if your mouth's watering, just say the word — dried mackerel salad, steaming

pastries, pan-fried fish, kaşar cheese, and a heaping pile of egg salad — looked like it through the magnifying glass, anyway. We drank and drank.. and I, for my part, was floating so high into the clouds I could barely see the person beside me... between the alcohol's effect, the allure of my darling, Madame Eftalya's voice, and how fast the money in my pocket was vanishing into thin air, it had made me entirely drunk and began to make me think like a hashish smoker. I don't remember what time it was…Suddenly… the angel of death sitting next to me cried out… as if someone had stuck her with a needle…"Oh God!" Before I could even say, "What is it… what's going on…" She shouted, "My husband's looking for me… if he sees us together, I swear, that'll be the day we die…" She jumped up, trying to run…I was about to follow her… But she said, "No… if you come with me, it won't work…" "Better this way… I'll go out first…I'll wait for you at the tram stop across the street…Then you come and find me there…And we'll go wherever we're going… freely… with no fear in our hearts…" Saying all this in a rush… she left my side…And flew off like the wind… Her flying off wasn't the problem… but the money in my pocket flew off with her too. Ten minutes later, I called the waiter and asked for the bill. One bill… thirteen and a half lira. Well, if I had ten lira on me, where were we supposed to find the other three and a half? I gave the ten lira, spoke gently, took him by the arm, tried to pull him aside somewhere quiet to explain the situation…He didn't fall for it. I begged, it didn't help, in the end, I left my wristwatch as a pledge and got away.. And then I rushed out the door, hoping I might find her outside, but apart from the trees in the middle and a chubby man, just like me, asleep on a vagabond's bench, I saw nothing else. Now, dear esteemed audience, let me give you a little recommendation: If you want to get some fresh air and listen to Madam Eftalya, then hurry to Belvü, and you'll see for yourselves that I'm right... The air there is so powerful, it even makes its way into your pockets.

written by – H. Ayvaz

The End

22/08/1932

9 Abstracts

English version

This thesis presents the first academic analysis of Hagop Ayvaz's unpublished Armeno-Turkish monologue *Uիqի Uէ[իյoրnւմ* [*Sizi Seviyorum]* ("I Love You"), written in 1932 in Turkish using the Armenian script. Composed in the early Republican period of Turkey, the monologue unfolds as a performative act of cultural survival, irony, and resilience. Despite never being staged, *I Love You* exhibits a significant theatricality, exploring themes such as love, masculinity, class mobility, and self-alienation through a fragmented and ironic voice. This study approaches the monologue not as a confessional text but as a spectral performance that enacts and embodies identity and cultural memory through transgression and textual selections.

By drawing on Jacques Derrida's concept of iterability and Teemu Paavolainen's theory of dramaturgical texture, the thesis frames *I Love You* as a performative and textual intervention from the margins of Early Republican Turkey through language, script, and structure. The analysis includes a comparison with İ. Galip's 1930 monologue *I Love You*, which Ayvaz both echoes and subverts. Through ironic citation and formal reworking, Ayvaz transforms Galip's narrative of bourgeois self-assurance into a critique of exclusion and socio-economic precarity. This study integrates archival research from the Hrant Dink Foundation, biographical investigation, expert interviews, and meticulous textual analysis to contextualise Ayvaz's contributions within the wider framework of Armeno-Turkish theatre history. It contends that Ayvaz's employment of Turkish in Armenian script is a minority method of resilience and resistance, inscribing presence through absence and memory through textual performance.

Ultimately, this thesis not only recovers a forgotten theatrical text but also proposes new ways of reading performativity and cultural memory in contexts of political erasure. It positions *I Love You* as a substantial contribution to Armeno-Turkish theatrical history and as a performative representation of minority expression.

Key words**:** Hagop Ayvaz, Armeno-Turkish, Performativity, Theatre in Turkey, Cultural Memory

German version

Diese Masterarbeit stellt die erste wissenschaftliche Analyse von Hagop Ayvaz' unveröffentlichtem armeno-türkischen Monolog *Uիqի Uէվիյօրում* (*Sizi Seviyorum*, „Ich liebe Sie") vor, der 1932 auf Türkisch in armenischer Schrift verfasst wurde. Der Text entfaltet sich in der frühen türkischen Republik als performativer Akt kulturellen Überlebens, geprägt von Ironie, Fragmentierung und Resilienz. Obwohl der Monolog nie zur Aufführung gelangte, weist er eine ausgeprägte Theatralität auf und verhandelt Themen wie Liebe, Männlichkeit, Klassenmobilität und Selbstentfremdung in einer gebrochenen, ironischen Stimme. Die vorliegende Arbeit versteht den Text nicht als Bekenntnisschrift, sondern als spektrale Performance, die Identität und kulturelles Gedächtnis durch Überschreitung und formale Setzungen hervorbringt.

Ausgehend von Jacques Derridas Konzept der *Iterabilität* und Teemu Paavolainens Theorie dramaturgischer Textur wird *Sizi Seviyorum* als performative und textuelle Intervention gelesen, die sich durch Sprache, Schrift und Struktur aus einer marginalisierten Position in der frührepublikanischen Türkei heraus artikuliert. Die Analyse beinhaltet einen Vergleich mit İ. Galips gleichnamigem Monolog von 1930, den Ayvaz zugleich aufgreift und subversiv dekonstruiert. Durch ironische Zitation und formale Umgestaltung verändert Ayvaz Galips Erzählung bürgerlicher Selbstsicherheit in eine Kritik an Ausschluss und sozioökonomischer Prekarität. Die Arbeit basiert auf Archivrecherchen in der Hrant-Dink-Stiftung, biografischer Kontextualisierung, Experteninterviews und einer detaillierten Textanalyse, um Ayvaz' Beitrag im Kontext der armeno-türkischen Theatergeschichte zu verorten. Sie liest Ayvaz' Schriftwahl als minoritäre Strategie von Resilienz und Widerstand, als performative Einschreibung von Erinnerung und Präsenz im Modus der Abwesenheit.

Letztlich rekonstruiert diese Studie nicht nur ein vergessenes Theaterdokument, sondern schlägt auch neue Lesarten von Performativität und kulturellem Gedächtnis in Kontexten politischer Auslöschung vor. *Sizi Seviyorum* wird dabei als bedeutender Beitrag zur armeno-türkischen Theaterlandschaft und als performative Artikulation minoritärer Ausdrucksformen positioniert.

Schlagwörter: Hagop Ayvaz, Armeno-Türkisch, Performativität, Theater in der Türkei, Kulturelles Gedächtnis