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SPATIALIZING THE NEOLIBERAL TURN: TURKISH NOVELS OF THE LONG 1980s

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For Lily

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the changing spatial logics of Turkish literature written at the neoliberal turn and after, often during times of political strife and military occupation. Analyzing works by Adalet Ağaoğlu, Orhan Pamuk, Nazlı Eray, Bilge Karasu, Latife Tekin, Emine Sevgi Özdamar, Elif Şafak, and Fatih Akin, I probe how space—variously architectural, geographic, and surrealist—overshadows the narrative’s bumbling and automatonish characters, becoming in a way the main character itself, as it slides from miniscule to vast, from still to dynamic. I argue that these works use the spaces of the everyday to renegotiate their embeddings within and exclusions from the spaces of a nation which is itself perpetually in the process of renegotiating its own relationship to the global.

Introduction: Istanbul, the Neoliberal Turn, and Spatial Allegory

The modern discipline of comparative literature has had a long and troubled love affair with the city of Istanbul. The transcontinental city has been said to foster percolation among unhoused intellectuals—starting with Jewish philologists who were exiled to the University of Istanbul during the Nazi period—that paved the way for modern studies of cosmopolitanism and globality. Famously, Edward Said has established Erich Auerbach’s non-Occidental exile as the exemplary condition for the mode of thought he calls secular criticism, a kind of minoritarian cosmopolitanism that critiques the majoritarian ideals of being “at home” and “in place.” Said argues that the “extraordinary insight and brilliance” of Auerbach’s *Mimesis* was founded on “an agonizing distance” from Western cultural tradition that was both embodied and enabled by the very otherness of the city of Istanbul (Said 6).¹ More recently, Emily Apter has shifted focus from Auerbach to his colleague Leo Spitzer, and by extension from the Turkish city as a site of distance to one of exchange, what she terms global *translatio*. Apter argues “it was the volatile crossing of Turkish language politics with European philological humanism that produced the conditions conducive to the invention of comparative literature as a global discipline, at least in its early guise” (263).

Recently, Nergis Ertürk has pushed back against the grand sweep of these narratives, calling attention to the “simultaneously substantial and spectralized non-place, or ‘absent presence,’ of Turkish literature” in such genealogies, “which by choice or by necessity converge on the activities of European exiles in Istanbul” (xi). Such comparative-critical histories pay scant attention to either the “homelessness” or the “volatile crossings” *within* Turkish

¹ As Said glosses this otherness: “the Orient and Islam also stood for the ultimate alienation from and opposition to Europe [...] For centuries, Turkey and Islam hung over Europe like a gigantic composite monster, seeming to threaten Europe with destruction. To have been an exile in Istanbul at that time of fascism in Europe was a deeply resonating and intense form of exile from Europe” (6).

nationalism, making little room, to give just one germane example, to consider the nationalist ideologue Ziya Gökalp's strategic opposition of cosmopolitanism, derided for its individualism, to the favored mode of "internationalism," which sought to distinguish Turkish culture through an exoticizing appreciation of European cultures.² Moreover, the failure of comparatists to engage in questions of home or homelessness in Turkish literature and literary thought arguably contributes to what Nurdan Gürbilek terms the "criticism of a lack" within Turkish scholarship: the trend of social, cultural, and literary critique "devoted to demonstrating what Turkish society, culture, or literature lacks" (599).³

Ertürk suggests that the spectralization of Turkish literature by both Said and Apter was in part necessitated by the "profound self-alienation, even what we might call 'self-surgery'" of early republican linguistic and literary modes (xi). To move beyond the historical scope of Ertürk's rich exploration of the "self-consummating violence of the modern," it is clear that a kind of "absent presence" persists into recent Turkish literary history as well, pervading both internal and global engagements with Turkish literature. In the 1970s and 80s, as avant-garde techniques and global themes began to supplant the nationalistically circumscribed social realist mode in Turkish novels, this language of lack in criticism took the form of nostalgia for the political resonance of earlier writings. In Berna Moran's view, the sociological and political themes of earlier periods simply "lost their strength" in the wake of the 1980s coup and its forcible de-politicizations (2003, 9). From a more critical perspective, Nüket Esen argues that novelists faced with the social and economic complications of the post-coup period "abandoned

² Orhan Koçak terms this strategy "Westernization against the West" (311-12), and Meltem Ahıska has dubbed it "Occidentalism." Ahıska expounds on how the West informed the hegemonic national imaginary with not a little ambivalence: "'the West' has either been celebrated as a 'model' to be followed or exorcised as a threat to 'indigenous' national values" (353).

³ As Gürbilek notes, this is a trend with many names, including "secondariness," "belatedness," and "fatherlessness" ("Dandies," 600). Sibel Bozdoğan and Esra Akcan point out that a word exists—*kopyacılık*—to specifically denote the copying of Western models in an architectural context (186).

classical realistic approaches that tried to solve such challenges in favour of playing games and making pleasure out of literature” (328). In their departures from social realism, literatures of the 1970s and 80s in Turkey are often read as either politically deficient or as triflingly escapist.

On the world literature stage, the rhetoric surrounding Turkish literature since the 1980s is characterized by excess rather than lack—though predictably an excess which minimizes as it elevates, electing as a proxy for the expansive and uneven topography of contemporary Turkish literature an author who is widely considered to be more a citizen of the world than of Turkey.⁴ Despite Orhan Pamuk’s commitment to deprogramming such ventriloquism in his own work, his status as *the* Turkish author in the world literature canon nonetheless reinforces the phenomenon that David Damrosch has referred to as a “literary Miss Universe competition” in which “an entire nation may be represented by a single author” (48). Pamuk’s Kurdish, Armenian, feminist, migrant, and queer contemporaries are often sidelined by his purported emblemizing of Turkish literature on the global stage, perhaps to his chagrin as well. As Hülya Adak critiques, in the face of the “modernist conception of exile as a privileged state of consciousness” (21), there are myriad authors whose novels—using experimental techniques, for example, “to challenge the myths of state feminism” and “narrate state-inflicted violence and the complicity of the state in de-politicizing Turkish society”—still await serious literary scholarship decades after their publication (23).

In a way, the genealogy of global comparative literature situates Istanbul as a particular type of “substantial and spectralized non-place,” namely as “bridge,” providing the discipline access beyond Europe. Turkey is often reified way through what Nurdan Gürbilek calls that

⁴ Consider, for example, Güneli Gün’s argument that Pamuk “borrowed attitudes and strategies from Third World authors writing for the consumption of the First World” (62) or Grant Farred’s claim that he is “only secondarily Turkish.”

“unavoidable, and Pollyanna-ish, trope” of the bridge (1). A common point of departure for scholarly works on Turkey, metaphors of bridges and passages are justifiably derided for their “obfuscat[ion] of conflicts between the binaries that the metaphors celebrate: conflicts between East and West, between Europe and Asia, between Islam and secularism” (Öktem 1). Meltem Ahıska points toward the paradoxical stasis of this symbol of transit, noting that “Turkey has been trying to cross the bridge between the East and the West for more than a hundred years now, with a self-conscious anxiety that it is arrested in time and space by the bridge itself” (353).

As these critiques of the bridge suggest, what is at issue in Turkish literature’s “absent presence” in world literary scholarship is a problem with space that has undergirded the whole narrative of Istanbul as the birthplace of comparative literature from the beginning. This origin story and its progeny depend on the elision of a Turkey that is dynamic, expansive and irreducibly textual, behind a city that, as a geopolitical place, is believed to provide a passive thoroughfare for the intellectual cross-pollination of (mostly European) citizens of the universe. Much remains to be theorized about the spatial logics of Turkish literature on and off the world literary stage.

This dissertation seeks to examine these changing spatial logics of novels written at the neoliberal turn, many of them during times of political strife and military occupation. In the novels I analyze—by Adalet Ağaoğlu, Orhan Pamuk, Nazlı Eray, Bilge Karasu, Latife Tekin, Emine Sevgi Özdamar, and Elif Şafak—space, variously architectural, geographic, and surreal—overshadows the narrative’s bumbling and automatonish characters, becoming in a way the main character itself, as it slides from miniscule to vast, from still to dynamic. Set in the depoliticized and neoliberal spaces of the 1980s and 90s, these novels thus give “spectralized non-place” a new resonance, inviting us to fashion a more robust theory of what literary space “is,” and what

it has to say about social spaces of the world that resist reification.

The 1980 Coup and the Neoliberal Turn

The sense among some Turkish literary scholars that the literatures of the 1970s and 80s were politically deficient—though certainly part of a global inquiry into the political limitations of aesthetic modes in general—also relates to the particular political climates unfolding in Turkey at the time, from the polarized anarchy of the 1970s to the forcible depoliticizations of the 1980s. Kerem Öktem has aptly characterized the aftermath of the 1980 military coup in Turkey as a “*tabula rasa*.” On September 12, 1980, military generals led by Kenan Evren formed the National Security Council (NSC), and took control over the executive and legislative branches of the government, forcibly dismissing the minority government of Süleyman Demirel. The goings on of civil society subsequently ground to a halt under the forcible depoliticizations of this guardian state, which closed down every semblance of collective organizing—from trade unions and political parties to the mere discussion of politics in a public setting. Beyond censoring the press and jailing active politicians, the NSC had millions of citizens surveilled, 650,000 detained (some indefinitely, under conditions of torture), 210,000 tried for supposedly communist or Islamist affiliations, and 50 executed. Through these extreme methods of bulldozing both political space and individual liberties, the NSC established a widespread politico-cultural *tabula rasa* which laid the groundwork for Turkey’s neoliberal turn.

The coup’s depoliticizations were gradually lifted throughout the 1980s—with the leader of the Motherland Party Turgut Özal’s democratic election to prime minister in 1983, the lifting of the ban on former politicians in 1987, and the end of General Evren’s reign as president in 1989. In fact, Özal’s policies of globalized economic liberalization have been regarded with

measured optimism for their role in expanding the middle class and ushering in an era of cultural pluralism. Özal's liberalization of the market boosted the culture industry, resulting in an "explosion of speech" through television, radio, film, advertising, and popular news magazines, whose venues proliferated throughout the 80s and 90s, in spite—and sometimes in flagrant defiance—of the guardian state's strict censorship laws.⁵ The voices amplified by this media boom, and perhaps encouraged by the relatively inclusive ideology of the Motherland Party, fostered a new individualist ethos in Turkey, which at first embraced a plurality of identities, so long as they were expressed within the confines of individualism rather than "in the name of some political mission" (Gürbilek 6). As the military's grip on the government continued to loosen in the late 80s and early 90s, what started out as a strictly individualist multiculturalism expanded into identity-based, sometimes intersecting social movements, organized around Kurdish, Islamic, LGBTQ, and feminist issues.

Yet, this neoliberal turn in Turkey cannot of course be separated from the radical anti-politics machinery that brought it to fruition. As Erol, et al. have noted of the 1980s, "a depoliticized understanding of social movements and non-governmental organizations became hegemonic" (4), leaving behind a legacy of what Bozdoğan and Akcan have termed "an apolitical and submissive Turkey" (201). The strategies of force that cleared a path for Turkey's liberalization and entry into the global marketplace continue to inspire ambivalence, particularly for leftists mourning the loss of 1970s opposition movements. Nurdan Gürbilek has tabulated at length the socio-cultural contradictions, tensions, and disparities produced by the globally oriented anti-politics machinery of the 1980s: from blatant economic disparities; to discrepant attitudes towards religion, freedom of speech, and sexuality; to the paradoxes of a

⁵ As Kerem Öktem notes, "Everything that was banned made its way into the living rooms of the nation thanks to Star."

multiculturalism that invisibly abets discrimination against minorities. Gürbilek argues these polarities are undergirded by a strategy of power that crystallized in Turkey during the 1980s in tandem with the neoliberal dynamics unevenly spreading similar differentials all over the world; the Turkey of these years, she argues, was governed by the disingenuously “liberal” strategy of a “politics promising freedom of speech settled snugly into prohibitive policies of state” (8).

Globally, this dialectic maps onto the neoliberal agenda wherein, as David Harvey articulates it, “the programmatic attempt to advance the cause of individual freedom [can] appeal to a mass base and so disguise the drive to restore class power” (40).

The ambivalence wrought by the neoliberal prying apart of individual freedoms and class-consciousness is quintessentially illustrated in the changing role and status of feminism in the decade following the coup. While the 1980s by no means marked the birth of feminism in Turkey,⁶ it fostered a newly autonomous feminism—both in the sense of the movement’s deliberate disengagement from the interests of either the state or the Marxist opposition of the previous decade, and in its ideological investment in issues of women’s individual autonomy over their bodies and property. This phase of feminist activism put in motion measures to tangibly improve women’s lives in Turkey: bringing issues of sexual harassment and domestic violence into public discourse through targeted publications and protests, establishing organizations and shelters to help battered women and children, and challenging misogynistic property, marriage, and prostitution laws of the civil code and the constitution. As advocates for

⁶ Though it is a kind of truism “that feminism emerged in Turkey ‘in the unique context of the 1980s’” (Arat 104), Şirin Tekeli is careful to stress that feminist thought and activism has taken many shapes throughout the twentieth century. Tekeli divides feminism in Turkey before the 1980s into three phrases: the feminism of the late Ottoman period, when feminists advocated for better education and a active participation in public life; the nationalist feminism of the early republican era, where women advocated for gender equality in exchange for loyalty to the state; and the Marxist feminism of the 1970s, where gender equality was considered a subsidiary component of leftist ideologies. In neoliberal phase, feminist activism became particularly invested in issues of bodily and sexual autonomy.

autonomy in these ways, many feminists believed the Marxist movements of the 1970s to have been anti-feminist in their subsuming of what was termed “the woman question” under the broader pursuits of gender and class equality (Tekeli 13).

Yet, the neoliberal climate also introduced new challenges into women’s lives unaccounted for by a feminism so divorced from Marxism. In the face of increasing economic pressures, combined with the neoliberal privileging of the family as the determinant of social status, married women in both working-class and middle-class families began to shoulder unpaid domestic responsibilities formerly performed by male relatives—such as shopping, budgeting, guiding children through the hoops and hurdles of the educational process, and managing relationships with future in-laws and extended family—often in addition to working outside of the home to make ends meet. These new feminine labors, though granting married women greater powers as “family representatives” (Özbay) and “breadwinners” (Bolak), arguably did so merely within the confines of new configurations of old patriarchal dynamics. Though women in their daily lives of course found new tactics for negotiating these new challenges, the complexities of the “invisible power dynamics” they faced arguably fell through the cracks of feminist frameworks so staunchly decoupled from Marxist critiques of capitalism. Perhaps not surprisingly, ambivalence towards the particular brand of feminism that followed the coup ranged from measured disappointment that the movement lacked the class consciousness of earlier decades, to the more acrimonious belief that this phase of feminism was a “Septembrist” ideology, which is to say, a direct descendent of the military coup itself (Tekeli 13).

Urbanization in the Global Capitalist Market

The limitations of 1980s feminism in spite of its landmark successes are paradigmatic of

the way in which neoliberal freedoms are in many ways rigidly circumscribed. Writing of the sweep of politico-cultural contradictions that unfurled after the coup—taking hold in cultural attitudes towards not only gender and class, but also religion, sexuality, and ethnicity—Gürbilek spins out a page-long anaphoric trail of the cliché “land of,” describing how Turkey is a “land of” excess as well as poverty, “a land of” multiculturalism as well as nationalism, and so on. Though pointing to real sociocultural tensions, the construct is of course also somewhat tongue-in-cheek, a commentary on the persistence of quaint essentialisms in the neoliberal world order. Stepping back from this string of “land of”s, Gürbilek stresses that “it would not be right to extract a ‘land of contradictions’ from these contrary images,” which “must be historicized, not offered as natural contradictions of an unchanging Turkish climate” (3). I would add that, in order to see what Turkey really is a “land of,” and to parse the particularities of Turkey’s entry into the global marketplace, it is crucial to examine how the spaces of Turkey transformed as a result of the coup and the neoliberal turn.

During the 1980s, ongoing processes of nationally underwritten urbanization interlaced with global forces of the decade to radically transform the spaces of Turkey. The narrative of urbanization in Turkey from the 1950s up until the coup has been characterized by three major processes: cities crowding with multi-story apartment buildings (*apartmanlaşma*), rural to urban migration and the consequent proliferation of squatter settlements (*gecekondulaşma*), and the incipient rise of the coastal tourism industry (*yazıklaşma*). The 1980s saw the radicalization of these trends, a spike in their magnitude as the nation’s metropolises grew taller and wider and its coastal towns and cities took on the nation’s growing export and international tourism industries. These trends of exponential growth were critically subtended by the guardian state’s strategies of both sociocultural and geospatial bulldozing and partitioning.

As Turkey's overall population approached 60 million in the early 1980s, the nation's urban population surpassed the rural population for the first time (Şey 153, Erol et al. 5). With this growth of major metropolises, wealthy and middle-class residents began to flee what they perceived as "the chemical, social and cultural pollutants" that "threatened their daily lives" (Öncü 57), adding to these trends of urbanization the phenomenon known as *sıteleşme*, the spread of the middle and upper-middle class into suburban villages in the outskirts of cities. New tax credit programs stimulating the production of mass housing for the middle class were implemented in the early 1980s, resulting in the quadrupling of the nation's cooperative housing projects in the span of less than a decade (Bozdoğan and Akcan 243). The consumerist "edge cities" that resulted, though satisfying a demand for affordable housing for the middle class, also contributed to the "homogenization of the built environment" (Bozdoğan and Akcan 242). In fact, they quickly *exceeded* demand, having failed to employ new marketing and advertising techniques to drum up interest in their houses, or, more to the point, to envision site-specific ways to spatially improve residents' quality of life (243). At the same time, the liberalization of the housing market also facilitated the spread of wealthy gated communities, "segregated and sterilized neighborhoods" which functioned as escapes from the city and, effectively, from its "immigrant 'Others'" (253). While secluded suburban villas have been popular among elites since the early republic, the gated communities that began to spring up in the 1980s uniquely reflected the ideological values of the neoliberal era; as Bozdoğan and Akcan note, the buzzwords used to market these houses shifted from function, economy, and health in the early republican era, to "new keywords like pleasure (*keyif*), quality of life (*yaşam kalitesi*), exclusiveness (*ayrıcılık*) and security (*güven*)" (257).

Happening in tandem with this *sıteleşme*, the size and circumstances of *gecekondu*

neighborhoods also transformed radically under the new capitalist housing market. A series of amnesty laws passed at the beginning of the decade gave licenses to formerly illegal housing settlements, thereby authorizing large construction companies to raze the makeshift structures inhabitants had constructed for themselves and to build concrete multi-story apartment blocs in their place, in this way layering a “new global city ... over the foundations of the illegal city that preceded it” (Bozdoğan and Akcan 237). Thus, these amnesty laws—perhaps a good faith effort to legitimize the self-built neighborhoods of the urban poor—were in practice arguably more beneficial to predatory construction companies.

The decade following the coup also saw a radical spike in the tourism industry, and a shift from primarily domestic to international clientele. While tourism before the coup was “a marginal activity” and had been “curbed by the conditions of political strife” at the tail end of the 1970s, the tourism revenues between 1979 and 1989 jumped from around \$200 million to \$3 billion as the number of tourist establishments doubled and the volume of annual visitors more than tripled (Öktem). These expansions manifested in a boom on the Aegean and Mediterranean shores in particular, creating new job opportunities for young locals, particularly for women and workers of Kurdish origin. At the same time, of course, such resorts also arguably reinforced the gap between elite international clientele and working-class locals, with whom they had little dialogue, in addition to destroying much of the surrounding forests and natural habitat.

Though tourism in Istanbul was less robust in the 1980s, the nation’s entry into the global economy also inspired a slew of urban renewal projects to recreate its most cosmopolitan city “through the tourist’s gaze” (Öncü 13). While pre-1980s Istanbul has been described nostalgically as the home of “the grey and dusty melancholy of a self-interested bourgeoisie,” where one felt “a sense of isolation from the world and the imperial Ottoman past” (Öktem),

these renewal initiatives destroyed the modernist structures of the early republican era to make way for the restoration of historical Ottoman spaces as well as infrastructural expansions connecting older and newer parts of the city. The city's Motherland mayor from 1984-89, Bedrettin Dalan "all but tore down Istanbul and built it anew" initiating "feverish clearance operations" throughout his term in office (Öncü 57). In addition to the construction of the second Bosphorus Bridge in 1988 (named after Mehmed the Conqueror), the surroundings of the Golden Horn were revamped in order to restore its "legendary beauty": 30,000 buildings were torn down to make way for parks and trees that would better frame the estuary, a fate shared by the unsightly buildings abutting historical mosques and churches all over the city, which were replaced with lawns and flowerbeds to help restore the sites' "timeless glory" (57). Dalan's most notorious infrastructural project razed the formerly Greek and Armenian neighborhoods in Beyoğlu, forcing out the mostly poor inhabitants to make way for the circular Tarlabaşı Boulevard, which provided a thoroughfare between the commercial hub at Taksim Square and older districts in the city, but appeared to tourists as "an open wound" for decades, "with entire blocks flattened and massive empty spaces recalling the destruction of war zones" (Öktem). Yet, in spite of the massive destructiveness of these urban renewal initiatives, they elevated Istanbul, formerly secondary to Ankara, to what many have termed a "global city."

On the small scale, these broad processes of urbanization under global pressures were accompanied by new architectural structures and philosophies. Perhaps the most studied new architectural form of the 1980s was the massive shopping center (*alışveriş merkezi*, AVM), which began to crop up in and around the *sitelers* in the outskirts of major metropolises. Commissioned by Özal, the first of the nation's AVM's opened in 1987 about twenty kilometers outside of Istanbul along the highway that connected the city center with Atatürk Airport

(Gürbilek 23). Named the Galleria Ataköy, this glossy shopping center features a light-filled, domed, hexagonal interior plaza, ringed on the central ground floor with gently graduating tiered seating interrupted by plots of grass and trees, and buttressed by a rotunda of glinting escalators and homogenous white walls stretching over and across the inward-facing store fronts on the second and third floors. Öktem notes that, as the first such mall, the Galleria symbolized “the promise of wealth that was soon to reach all Turks.” Pushing this observation further, Gürbilek argues that the structure’s expanse and homogeneity evokes the sacred: because of its remoteness from the city center, its glinting interior, and its function as an expansive gathering place, the Galleria has a shrine-like quality. It is a place where shopping becomes an end in itself, “where one makes the pilgrimage to Commodity” (23). The cascade of AVMs that have sprung up since the Galleria opened typically share these qualities—massive, open, light-filled, and excentric from the bustle of the metropolis. Many have argued that these qualities have transformed the mall “from a market space for the sale of commodities to [the] commodification of experience itself” (Bozdoğan and Akcan 207).

While the Galleria and other AVMs made the commodity into a sacred object, sacred spaces built during the 1980s likewise embraced consumerist culture. The rise in shopping centers coincided with a “boom in mosque construction” (Bozdoğan and Akcan 218), specifically of mosques in the style of “contemporary imitations of classical Ottoman precedents” (220). Quintessentially, the neo-Ottoman Kocatepe Mosque in Ankara, which opened the same year as the Galleria, was an exact replica of the Ottoman imperial Şehzade Mosque in Istanbul, complete with “a large dome supported by four half domes, and the exterior corners marked by four slender minarets with triple balconies in the manner of classical Ottoman imperial mosques” (219). Yet, just as one “visits the Galleria as one visits a shrine,” one could

visit the Kocatepe Mosque as one visits a market, its lower levels offering an extensive dual supermarket/department store and parking garage. Subsequently, mosques ranging from traditionalist replicas to non-traditional innovations—with a sizeable number of neo-traditionalist pastiches in between—proliferated across the country throughout the 1980s and 90s (220).

Bozdoğan and Akcan stress how the mosque boom indexes the strange confluence of “particularist discourses of identity” with the global capitalist market, at a time when “‘modernity at large’ [...] leaves no culture or corner of the world unaffected” (223).

As this abridged history of urbanization suggests, the changing spaces of neoliberal Turkey are remarkable not only for the excesses of globalization they index—transforming the nation into a “land of” more housing, more touristic spaces, bigger hotels, and larger and taller swaths of *gecekondu* neighborhoods—but also for the narratives they tell of a changing relationship to space that is unfolding throughout the 1980s and 90s in similarly neoliberalizing nations all over the world. How we define space and see ourselves in relation to it is changing, as is, perhaps more disconcertingly, how these spaces themselves reconfigure *us*, its neoliberal tenants.

Fredric Jameson’s *postmodern hyperspace* and Marc Auge’s *non-places of supermodernity* hint at how we and space are changing—suggesting a new proliferation of emptiness in the spaces of neoliberalism, as well as a deep anxiety about the individual powerlessness hidden behind the neoliberal celebration of personal freedom. Jameson “reads” the Westin Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles as a hyperspace, its elevator standing in for the very “narrative stroll” which its machinery makes obsolete, and its atrium immersing the occupant in a space that is so full of emptiness that it obliterates the possibility of perceiving distance or volume. Thus, short-circuiting the walking/writing subject in its autoreferentiality,

and enveloping one in its oceanic decompression chamber, the postmodern hyperspace registers “that even sharper dilemma which is the incapacity of our minds, at least at present, to map the great global multinational and decentered communicational network in which we find ourselves caught as individual subjects” (148).

While Jameson’s hyperspace brings us to face our own individual powerlessness in the age of globalization, Marc Auge’s reading of non-places subtly puts pressure on how spatial paradoxes and disparities prop up the grand neoliberal farce of individualism. Non-places, entered into through “solitary contractuality” (76), are the spaces of global neoliberalism “in which neither identity, nor relations, nor history really make any sense” and “in which solitude is experienced as an overburdening or emptying of individuality” (87). Typified by “traveller’s space,” non-places are precisely what begin to proliferate in Turkey during the 1980s and which evince radical disparities of wealth amid the ravages of globalized urbanization—they are massive commercial centers and high-speed roads, as well as “hotel chains and squats, holiday clubs and refugee camps, shantytowns threatened with demolition or doomed to festering longevity” (78).

Reconfiguring Allegory

These “readings” of space and of the narratives of our movement through space shift us into questions of the spaces of literature and how we define “literary space.” In this regard, two related lines of questioning peel off from the recent history of urbanization and globalization in Turkey. First of all, the Marxist skepticism regarding the political potentiality of aesthetics is an enduring one: what can literature—especially the literary enterprises taking place during the strife that preceded the coup, the political vacuum that immediately succeeded it, and the

consumerist culture of neoliberalism that unevenly unfurled in the following decades—illuminate about the contradictory dynamics of the global turn in Turkey? Is literature written under the watchful eye of the guardian state, or later on, in an environment becoming cluttered with the empty immensities of postmodern architectures, fated to reproduce the decade’s reigning apoliticism? Secondly, the circumstances of the coup pressurize the terms of the world literature debate, invoking the question: what might a national literature look like in the context of a global turn that is not only unevenly distributed and ambivalently received, but which is also messily and forcibly in-process? How do we even define nation under a government whose opposing agendas took equal part in constraining its citizens within the confines of the guardian state, on the one hand, and in economically, culturally, and geospatially “opening them up to the world,” on the other?

For the purposes of this dissertation, I want to focus on one pocket in which these debates productively converge—in Walter Benjamin’s and Paul de Man’s dialectical theories of allegory. Although each theorist grapples with the murkiness and contradictions of allegory through modernism’s decidedly temporal lens, I suggest that their dialectics critically inform the way in which allegorical contemplation spatializes and is spatialized in the postmodern aesthetics that accompanied the neoliberal turn.

Walter Benjamin was one of the few Marxists of his time to argue for the political potential of aesthetics, in large part through his enduring fascination with allegory. In his first book *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, Benjamin explores allegory’s analogic relationship during the baroque period to ruins, arguing that allegorical thought aims to destroy its objects in order to build a new totality out of the fragments of the old. In his later works, Benjamin reads allegory as the “armature of the modern”—shifting the figure of analogic significance from ruins

to the commodity. As Gordon Teskey explains, Benjamin's *Arcades Project* explores the ways in which "the luxury commodity replaces the allegorical sign," in a capitalist culture where "coveting replaces reading" and "purchasing replaces interpretation" (124). Fredric Jameson suggests that Benjamin's move from the baroque to the modern isn't merely an incidental shift in historical interest, but is rather undergirded and in fact necessitated by his temporal understanding of allegory as a mode of fleeting access to duration, in contrast to the symbol's capturing of "the instantaneous, the lyrical, the single moment in time" (61). Thus, allegory for Benjamin, caught up as it is in a ruination/creation dialectic, bring us into confrontation with the loss of totality which is the essential condition of the modern.

Three decades after Benjamin's death, Paul DeMan admits to having stumbled upon allegory as a poststructural lens, as a mode of clarifying abstraction requisite to the poststructural enterprise. DeMan, too, uses temporality to distinguish between symbol and allegory, arguing that the relationship between image and substance which comprises the symbol is spatial in nature, whereas "in the world of allegory, time is the originary constitutive category" (207). Building his theory off of analyses of subject/object relations in Romantic literature, De Man suggests that allegory is at the heart of the very structure of rhetorical language: rearing its head at the moment "when it is impossible to decide by grammatical or other linguistic devices which of the two meanings [literal or figurative] prevails" (10). Stepping back from poststructural discourse's dependency on a spatial "inside/outside metaphor"—the idea that there is "an internal law and order of literature" at odds with its "nonverbal outside," and "external politics" (3)—De Man instead reckons with rhetoric's temporal registers of degree and duration. Allegory in his thinking operates metafigurally: as "a supplementary figural superposition," the allegorical narrative is for him always at a temporal (and deconstructive) remove from a narrative's primary

figures and metaphors, and as such “narrate[s] the unreadability of the prior narration.” In short, allegories tell “the story of the failure to read” (205).

In the context of the world literature debate, Fredric Jameson is the theorist most associated with allegory, employing a specific kind of allegoresis to prioritize the political over the aesthetic, and to thereby open up the canon. Throughout his work, Jameson has taken up the threads of Benjamin’s allegorical “straining towards a lost totality” and DeMan’s “allegories of the impossibility of reading,” yet he shifts from the modernist concern with time to a postmodern fascination with space. In fact, he invites us to read De Man’s aesthetic “against a larger historical context in which it offers the spectacle of an incompletely liquidated modernism,” arguing that De Man’s essential “positions and [...] arguments are ‘postmodern,’ [...] even if the conclusions are not” (255). In this view, Benjamin’s utopian temporality—a straining towards the totality of duration—transmogrifies into De Man’s fundamentally postmodern “void of temporal difference.” Moving forward, Jameson tries to rethink allegory spatially in order to open up the canon to the literatures of a world which extends well beyond Benjamin’s Baudrillard and Kafka, and De Man’s Rousseau and Nietzsche. For Jameson, who suggests that the incompleteness of the Western modernist canon is symptomatic of its temporal longing for duration and privileging of the new, a spatialized theory of allegory provides the platform to move beyond an inadequate aesthetics towards a more inclusive theory of world literature.

Of course, Jameson’s most notorious argument about allegory in this vein—and the one most often applied to Turkish literature—is his self-professedly “sweeping claim” that “all third-world text are necessarily [...] to be read as [...] *national allegories*” (69).⁷ In Turkish literary

⁷ The full quote is: “All third-world texts are necessarily, I want to argue, allegorical, and in a very specific way: they are to be read as what I will call *national allegories*, even when, or perhaps I should say, particularly when their forms develop out of predominantly western machineries of representation, such as the novel” (69)

scholarship, such national allegorical readings have contributed to a decades-long inferiority complex relative to western literature. The sheepish discomfort which Jameson undertakes to scrutinize and redress—namely the idea that not only will “[t]he third-world novel [...] not offer the satisfactions of Proust or Joyce” but that “its tendency [is] to remind us of outmoded stages of our own First-World cultural development” (65)—is a mentality that has at all points always already infused the rhetoric of Turkish literary criticism internally. The sting of this claim reverberates back to what Orhan Koçak has termed the “obsessive comparativism” fostered by the National Literature Movement and the Turkish Language Association in the early twentieth century, which together attempted to establish a national identity through a methodology that Koçak has characterized as “Westernization in defiance of the West” (305). In the following decades, this comparativism has influenced both literature and scholarship, manifesting as a complex of “secondariness” and “belatedness” relative to western literary forms. Applying Jameson’s national allegory argument specifically, Jale Parla has argued that journey narratives of the early republic are allegorically oriented toward a nationalistic “cult of the father” in “an internal colonialist attitude toward the motherland [...] to change it so that it becomes worthy of the father” (401). These journeys invariably end in the failures of the nation’s sons, revealing through a kind of paradoxical backformation the state of “fatherlessness” they had been moving in all along. As Parla’s scope moves forward in time, she argues her objects increasingly divest themselves of allegorical paternal longing through irony and parody, suggesting that the problem really is a matter of “catching up” to postmodern modes. This brief history points up the infantilization of Jameson’s implicitly developmental model, in which the so-called “third-world” novel goes through prescribed “first-world” motions, like a younger sibling mimicking in order to learn.

The national allegory argument's infantilizing implications, unfortunate turns of phrase, and its dependency on a "three worlds model" that reproduces the unevenness it describes, have all been roundly and comprehensively critiqued. However, aspects of the national allegory argument have had formidable staying power, proving particularly generative among scholars trying to reckon with questions of force and power—with the individual subject's usually floundering negotiation of the spectral ubiquity and invisible contradiction of political forces. Writing mostly of post-coup literature, Sibel Irzik argues that national allegory operates as an externally imposed force to which characters must submit. She sees the Turkish novels of this time as "tragicomic representations of the compulsion to allegorize," their "characters [...] portrayed as having been condemned to lead allegorical lives," proceeding as "bearers of meanings and destinies imposed on them by [...] 'the hand that has remade history'" (556). Departing from Jameson's categorical claim, Irzik argues that her objects negotiate and problematize that imposition, rather than merely bear it out, as she tracks "the complex ways in which these texts both fulfill and nullify the allegorical impulse" (565). Writing of an array works in the minor world literature canon, Sianne Ngai also reflects on how allegory negotiates political force, arguing that allegorical art teeters queasily in the space between art's guilty "inability to change society" and its modest capacity to "theorize social powerlessness" (2). Ngai hones in on the "ugly feelings" that result, stressing the importance of ambivalence in allegory, which arms narratives against reductively moralist or mawkish readings. Such scholarship points us in fruitful directions for imagining what kind of a form allegory might take in the context of the coup and the irreducible ambivalence of its aftermath.

Repurposing Jameson's national allegory argument, this dissertation seeks to both expand beyond the masculinist scope of his method and objects, and at the same time to narrow in on the

spaces of the domestic and the everyday which he largely elides in his collapsing together of libidinal and national political spaces. Such adjustments are important, not simply to make room for a more gender-balanced canon, but vitally, to make room for internal critiques of feminism that reckon with the ambivalences, fractures, and erasures of the movement as it takes on new shapes under neoliberalism. A different scope than the national also responds to the call among scholars for bottom-up studies that explore how power operates in culture “not only at the macro level but also at the very micro, capillary sites of the everyday” (Erol, et al. 4). I propose, in short, that the best approach to chart a course through the literature of post-coup Turkey is to read that literature not as national allegory, but *neoliberal allegory*—in other words, as allegory, which, in disarticulating from the nation, positions itself at various angles from which to scrutinize, inhabit, and even limitedly reconfigure the nation’s changing relationship to the global order.

The word neoliberalism contains a strange dualism—the prefix referring to the principles of neoclassical economics, and the root of the word to the liberal “commitment to personal freedoms” (Harvey 20). Margaret Thatcher explained neoliberalism’s overriding of social solidarities with individualist and family values quite patly, proclaiming: “Economics are the method, but the object is to change the soul” (qtd. in Harvey 23). But reading Karl Polanyi’s prophetic critique of the dualism fundamental to free market society, David Harvey excavates how this economic engineering of liberal ideals invisibly abets authoritarianism. The free market’s “good freedoms”—of conscience, speech, meeting, and association—are byproducts of its “bad freedoms”—such as “the freedom to make inordinate gains without commensurable service to the community” or “the freedom to profit from public calamities secretly engineered for private advantage” (36). Polanyi thus argued, in 1944, that this precarious “liberal utopian

vision” is both sustained and frustrated by “force, violence and authoritarianism [...] or even outright fascism” (37).

I argue that allegory is uniquely structurally equipped to denaturalize the politically dangerous dualisms of neoliberalism. Brenda Machosky reminds us that allegory, which literally translates to “other speaking,” has (at least) a double ontology; it is “a phenomenologically simultaneous appearance of two things in the same image, in the same ‘space’ at the same time” (2). Especially in its modernist and postmodern guises, allegorical contemplation teaches us that literature is duplicitous, and that literary space is practiced in the art of doubling, stacking one narrative precariously astride another, daring us to take stock of the tower that results.

Moreover, allegorical literature is precisely the venue in which aestheticizations of space—metaphors, symbols, and emblems—are scrutinizingly disengaged from the places to which they refer. Whereas symbolism tends to reify—rendering Turkey *as* a bridge—allegory prosthetically engages spatial phenomena, particularly various manner of partitions. Allegory is spatialized not as but in relation to, for example, a “gap” (Machosky 16), a “wall” (Fletcher 10), and a “veil” (Teskey 123); its “meanings” imagined as, the “empty field” on the other side of a “hermeneutic wall,” (Fletcher 15), or as what “comes forward to entangle itself in the veil, leaving behind something more profoundly obscured” (Teskey 123). Thus, if “space hides consequences from us,” as Edward Soja proclaims it does, spatial allegory focuses our attention on the hiding.

Chapter Summaries

Like the residents of and visitors to the spaces of globally urbanizing Turkey, the novels I analyze in this dissertation all variously experiment, politicize, and strategize as they makes their

homes in and around city apartments, squatter settlements, vacation villages, hotels, beaches, bus stations, and shopping centers. My spatial focus in these chapters modulates conceptually: from national, to cosmopolitical, to paranational, to transnational, and figurally: from the isolated vacation house to the corporatized resort town, to the provisional apartment, to the transcontinental city.

Taking national allegory as a point of departure, my first chapter probes the nation conceived of as being-at-a-remove, figured through the vacation house and its nested enclosures. Set during the political anarchy that preceded the coup, Adalet Ağaoğlu's *Summer's End* (1980) and Orhan Pamuk's *Silent House* (1983) both stage in their plots a last reunion among a bereaved family in a vacation village that is unable to fully expel the violence of the political present. Each experiments in its forms with interior perspectives that eerily emanate from the fraught domestic interiors of the family's soon-to-be-demolished house in a resort community on the seaside. These uncanny domestic and psychological interiors inflect a political uncanny as well, the verging from nation to not-nation and back. As such, their narratives' spatial modes not only provide sanctuary, but also themselves narratively *take refuge*, their nested architectures "sorting away" the social, storing difference safely out of sight. In reading through these nestings, I explore through what spatializations allegory is able to both stand at a remove and to problematize its own standing-at-a-remove.

In the politically polarized climate of the late 1970s and the depoliticizations of the 1980s, novels that phenomenologized moments of national isolation and stasis were joined by narratives that equally worried over the unwieldy dynamics and expansions of a government that increasingly saw itself as cosmopolitan. My second chapter examines such allegories of cosmopolitanism, specifically the sinister, minimalist, fantastical "trip" narratives of Bilge

Karasu's *Garden of the Departed Cats* (1979) and Nazlı Eray's *Orpheus* (1983), both set in the international touristic spaces of seaside resort cities. I examine how these novels negotiate an ambivalence towards the figure of the cosmopolitan dandy through characters who are violently made to "become worldly," transforming into earth and air through the machinations of a bureaucratized touristic landscape.

My third chapter takes up residence in a paranational space whose contours are not captured by either the sweeping scope of the cosmopolitan archetypal landscape or the miniaturizing architectures of national allegories. It is a spatiality—mapped out in novels about children—that is not seen but heard, a being-over-there that negotiates and to some degree recuperates the vocal thrownness of twentieth-century language politics in Turkey. Latife Tekin's *Dear Shameless Death* (1983) and Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *Life is a Caravanserai: has two doors, I came in one, I went out the other* (1992), both semi-autobiographical magical realist narratives of a family's migrations within Turkey, measure the reverberations of voice in spaces that are always changing and indexing change—through doorways and windows, and in construction sites in progress and living rooms with perpetually rearranged furniture. I argue that these novels convey and perform a multiplicity of spatial dislocations through a kind of *echolocation*, inhabiting spaces in which distance and nearness, enclosures and openings, are remapped through and *as* voice.

My final chapter zooms chronologically forward and spatially outward to reflect on a neoliberal longing for emotionalism which attaches to the city of Istanbul as a site of transnational belonging. Elif Şafak's novel *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2007) and Fatih Akin's film *The Edge of Heaven* (2007), both international "tales of two cities," depict families broken up by violent histories spliced back together in the neoliberal spaces of the transcontinental city. Both

works depict Istanbul ambivalently, as at once a utopian site of transnational intimacies, and the locus of a proliferation of sometimes violent coincidences.

1. Architectures of Remove in the Vacation Novel

There it is, on the shore, a white ship—this house—waits for us, to let us escape from the deluge, to take us to green-blue, calm waters... —Nevin, *Summer's End*

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's summer residence in Florya, Istanbul, designed by the architect Seyfi Arkan in 1934, epitomizes the strange mix of austerity and fantasy fuelling the modernist nation-building project in Turkey. Standing on pilotis in the sea, a long row of windows stretching between its contoured deck spaces, a white metal railing running along the seventy-meter bridge connecting it to shore, this elongated house is a modernist paragon of horizontality, capturing Le Corbusier's ocean-liner aesthetic a little too perfectly. The severity of the ship-like building with its portholes surveilling the beach was softened in early republican propaganda with images of Atatürk waving from the deck with his adopted daughter Ülkü, swimming and rowing with beach-goers, and jovially mingling on the beach with young men and women in their bathing suits, images which were almost invariably captioned with the words, "the most democratic president of the world" (Bozdoğan and Akcan 89).

Such photographs of a smiling Atatürk on holiday with his ship house in the background employed the visual language of architecture "to disseminate new standards of taste to the nation and to exemplify how to lead a modern life" (Bozdoğan and Akcan 86). Modern living was to emulate egalitarianism, paradoxically, through the elitist aesthetics of modernist architecture and fashion. The Florya house quietly appropriated the designs of Ottoman sea baths—wooden structures on pilotis which had allowed for semi-private, gender-segregated sea-bathing—and repackaged them in the overtly forward-thrusting visual cues of industrial modernism, reshaping a heterogeneous past in the service of a future whose democratic progressivism demanded steely homogeneity. Ülkü too was appropriated in these campaigns—adopted from a rural farm life,

styled androgynously in short haircut and sailor's dresses, and pasted to the president's side as his "inseparable pet," to use Andrew Mango's turn of phrase (514). Standing together in front of their ship house, Atatürk and Ülkü—"father of the Turks," and "country"—the father and daughter signified the scope of Mustafa Kemal's benevolent paternalism—as champion of the modern Turkish woman, rescuer of rural Anatolia, and father to the entire nation.

Throughout the 1930s and 40s, the Florya mansion was joined by a smattering of avant-garde coastal houses commissioned and owned by the Kemalist elite. Though even coastal campgrounds for pop-up buildings were accessible only to the relatively wealthy in the early years of the republic, seaside housing became increasingly commonplace in the 1960s, and expanded in the 1970s into a thriving market of vacation villages with cookie cutter units affordable for the middle class (Şey 173). Advertising for these coastal summer homes cloaked the often xenophobic fears driving middle-class families away from the city in the existentialist pathos of being-at-a-remove. In spite of their role in haphazardly urbanizing the seashores, vacation houses were presented as a means of escape from the polluted and cramped city apartment lifestyle. Portrayed as felicitous spaces couched in the natural beauty of the seaside landscape, they offered their tenants the Bachelardian fantasy of "a return to the earth" (Gürel 41).

While the vacation village market was booming in the 1970s, the nation's political infrastructure was eroding. Citizens on the left and right alike clamored for Turkey's leaders to assert the nation's independence from the interests of predatory foreign powers, particularly the U.S. At the same time, the political climate became radically polarized, with extremists operating through terrorist means on both the left and the right (Ahmad 245). The violence between these

factions snowballed throughout the 1970s, reaching a pitch of anarchy verging on civil war by 1977 (Cizre 309). Street shootings between rival factions escalated, and became a daily occurrence by 1979, resulting in an average of a dozen deaths per day. Militant nationalists known as the Grey Wolves carried out a string of targeted massacres against leftist student demonstrators and Alevi communities in the latter half of the decade. With faith in the government dwindling, the liberal media warned openly of the threat of a fascist takeover (Ahmad 246), and in 1979, at least fifteen journalists, politicians, academics, and trade unionists fell victim to assassinations that were covertly state-sponsored (Öktem). In the context of the decade's anarchic violence, the vacation house's return-to-earth narrative had a particularly utopian resonance—not just as an escape from hectic city life, but also from the broken political machinery that was wreaking violent havoc all over the country. Refusing to intervene on the government's behalf in these years, the generals who masterminded the coup thus ratcheted up the urgency of the nation's need to “take refuge,” paving the way for the coup and its forcible depoliticizations in the early 1980s, and offering a “vacation” from politics as usual.

I mean to suggest that there is something sinister in the seaside vacation house's utopianism. It has functioned as a site where the agendas of the guardian state are implemented, *in and through* its very emblemizing of reprieve from the political present. The Florya House—though advertised as the place where even the president could go to spend time with his daughter and mingle with everyday people—was also in practice a site for international boundary management. Famously, the ship house hosted the private visit of King Edward VIII, a meeting which produced much lore of Atatürk's “dignified patriotism” even while he engaged in the diplomatic task of burying the hatchet. As Andrew Mango details:

We are told that when a Turkish waiter dropped a plate, Atatürk apologized, saying, “We can train our people for any job, except that of a lackey,” and that when the king steadied himself by placing his hand on the quayside as he landed, Atatürk said, “Don’t worry, the soil of our country is clean.” 505

Such anecdotes, whatever their purchase on the reality of the British monarch’s visit, situate the Florya House as an important figure in the wider project of what Orhan Koçak has termed “Westernization in defiance of the West,” a strategy of diplomatic relations informed by the unspoken motto to “*do like them, but remain one of us*” (310-11). Koçak notes that this approach was internationalist rather than cosmopolitan, predicated on the idea that separate nations can appreciate other cultures at arm’s length only. In their liminality, coastal resort villages were as a prime site for the implementation of this guarded strategy. As Meltem Gürel has argued, the mixed gender beaches and waterside dance halls of seaside villages exemplify Foucauldian *biopower*, as the fluid boundaries of spatial designs tangibly facilitated the project of secularization and the desegregation of formerly gendered spaces (31).

But of course, power is not merely unilaterally implemented by the state and adopted by citizens, but is rather in a perpetual state of pressured renegotiation as it moves through the “capillary sites of the everyday” (Erol, et al. 4). In addition to channeling disciplinary power, the summerhouse has also functioned through the decades as a “significant testing ground for new ideas,” offering architects a “playground, where international and mainstream architectural precepts and aesthetics were picked up, mimicked, worked with, appropriated, and adapted” (Gürel 49). In its affiliation with the sea and the edge of the nation, the vacation house educes not only boundary management but also the porousness and peripherality that necessitates it, gesturing towards the limits of the nation and the potential for supranational allegiances.

As a site where new ideologies are ambivalently negotiated, rather than simply

implemented and adopted, the vacation house bears a structural similarity to literature, which is also a site for experimentation and recuperation within and limitedly against its operationalizations for national purposes. The converse is also true: as Bill Brown phrases it, literature is itself a “recreational form that, in its conscious and unconscious relation to other recreational forms, discloses their liberating and restricting contradictions” (13). The vacation house and its literary figurations both offer rich sites for retheorizing the powerlessness of being stuck between the violences of political anarchy and militarized depoliticization.

Adalet Ağaoğlu’s *Summer’s End* (Yaz Sonu, 1979) and Orhan Pamuk’s *Silent House* (Sessiz Ev, 1983), both host the doomed-to-fail fantasy of being-at-a-remove in a vacation house during the strife of the late 1970s. Both novels trouble over the failure of the vacation home to stave off or provide sanctuary from the violence of the political present, while formally experimenting with interior narratives that eerily emanate from the fraught architectural interiors of a family’s soon-to-be-demolished house in a resort community on the seaside. In so doing, they funnel the conflicting valences of the vacation house into a central question about the convergence of forms: given its structural *similarity* to literature, what are we to make of the vacation house *as* a literary figure? In other words, as a site where writing happens *about* the kinds of writing that happen “on vacation,” how does the vacation house narrative retheorize being-at-a-remove both narratively and architecturally? Allegory, with its fundamentally plural ontology, is indispensable in thinking through these questions, inviting us to read the two—the narrative and the house—as both intrusively “occupying” one another. I argue, on the one hand, that architectures of remove reshape the narrative form itself, demanding that it work within the confines of spaces that withdraw, enclose, and even violently reorganize their occupants. On the

other hand, the narrative form problematizes the work of “sorting” that these architectures perform, drawing out and troubling over the hidden violences of being-at-a-remove.

To piece through these claims, I will begin with the vacation house of either novel—how it materializes and how the novel’s characters regard it. I defer a detailed account of the plot, to first focus instead on the figure of the house as a kind of a character and a narrative in its own right, as each novel arguably invites us to do. In the following section, I will attempt to theorize the ways in which a vacation house’s modes of being-at-a-remove disguise the social sorting it both participates in and reinforces. Finally, I will turn to a closer reading of each novel, to probe how these narratives which are shaped by architectures of sorting—by cabinetry, chests, closets, and boxes—find ways to cope with the ambivalence of being literarily complicit in sorting out of sight the narratives they really want to tell.

House as Allegory

As I will show, the vacation house uncannily comes to life in each novel, exceeding the status of figure. These houses both actively participate in and sinisterly disrupt the writing processes they are supposed to provide sanctuary for, inviting us to unpack the fundamental uncanniness of being-at-a-remove. However, these houses do not merely provide exemplary instances of the *heimlich* verging its unsettling opposite; they also point up a political uncanny, performing the recuperative uncanniness of destabilizing “the spatial forms of the national” (Vidler 10).

Summer’s End opens with the first-person frame narrative of a woman alone on vacation in the seaside resort town of Side, who uses the empty house she can see in the distance from her

hotel balcony as inspiration for the novel she is writing. The magnetic focus of the frame, the house is depicted as an eerily long-established structure with no clear origin point. It is unveiled to readers repeatedly, each description masquerading as the first reveal. The house's first mention gestures to an inaccessible past from whence it came, reverberating back into the uncertain outside of the novel: "Who knows how many times in the past few days I have seen the small old abandoned house next to the motel" (17). After a long description of the resort and its surroundings, the house is re-introduced with a single-sentence, three-word paragraph: "Then, the house" (25). Despite this godlike proclamation of the mere noun, the narrator insists on the house's belated appearance to her eyes: "It may be thought odd, no one may believe it, but the last thing my eye picked out was that small old abandoned house that was closest to the restaurant and the section of the motel where I was settled."

This house is peculiarly affiliated with fluidity and chatter, and is suggested to be a kind of fluid itself: "It is a house that constantly speaks in a murmur, tells stories, after an encounter with the eye. As your eye moves in that direction, you also happen upon an illusion; you can even be caught in a downpour of images" (25). The narrator gets caught in such a downpour on the next page, again in a mystical sentence fragment that needs no verb, a trailing list: "The abandoned house, that garden surrounded by a broken wooden fence on two sides—the third side is a slope going down to the sea—beside a low, white, and quite beautiful wall put up by the motel owner along the border of the house and the motel, the ashen-colored witch's brooms, the burnt thorn bushes, the weeds..." (26). The image of the house, a veritable wave, washes over the writer-narrator in its ebbs and flows. Rather than representing architectural solidity and enclosure as one might expect, the house seems to metonymize instead the fluidity of the seaside

it abuts.

Though it evokes porousness and the national outside, the house is easy to read as a metaphor for nation. Each mention is treated as though it is the first—the first time the narrator noticed the house, and the first time the reader encounters it as well. Yet, the opening section’s trailing mystical sentence structures also make the house seem originless, an essential part of the landscape that has always-already been there. Its timeless and recursive image, seeming at once ready to collapse and prepared to stand forever, codes it as a tradition of the novel’s invention, while its function in the writer-narrator’s plot is to draw together an imagined community. Like the silent house, this structure—abandoned, and as it turns out, easy to break into, and soon to be demolished—conjures the tenuousness of a nation in crisis.

Though confessing a desire for a “pure vacation” free of the threat of violence, images of war and lost lives seep into the writer-narrator’s novel, in which her character Nevin’s final visit to the seaside is occasioned by the death of Nevin’s son in a political skirmish at Istanbul University. Though it is unclear whether there is direct a corollary in the writer-narrator’s personal life, she writes openly about how the surrounding violence and unrest infiltrates into her seaside writing retreat. She compares the signs at her hotel reading “Our hotel is not responsible for stolen goods” to signs she had seen on the street proclaiming, “Our government is not responsible for lives that have been lost!” (24). Later, she sees disembodied threats in the sand as she walks along the beach pondering her novel—“THERE IS WAR! BE READY FOR THE WAR!”—accompanied by the letters TIT, the slogan for the Turkish Revenge Brigade.¹ After she decides to converse with this text, writing back “in small letters with a very small stick,

¹ The TIT (*Türk Intikam Tugayı*) are a terrorist ultranationalist organization which formed around 1978, during the anarchy that preceded the coup.

‘With whom?’” she stumbles across the ominously scrawled reply, “WITH THE LIKES OF YOU” (31). Yet, the writer-narrator willfully neutralizes this threat, later convincing herself it was a “witty” reply, a matter of “dignity” rather than safety, and even a non-issue on that front as well. She chides herself: “it was simple nonsense that I had run away from that spot quickly, embarrassed,” that “there was nothing there to ruffle my dignity, nothing” (33). Indulging in such erasures, amid a heavy theme of water washing away images and tensions, the narrative gives a pervading sense of struggling to forestall disaster, to push out what lurks at the edges.

Whereas the house in *Summer’s End* is uncanny by virtue of its fluidity and chatter, the family dwelling in *Silent House* is described as strange precisely because it is solid and silent, as one would expect a house to be. The site of a summertime family reunion in Cennethisar, the eponymous *Silent House* is rare in its age among a town of renovated cookie-cutter resort homes, and in its perpetual occupancy through the empty winter months by the family’s grandmother Fatma and her servant Recep. When discussed by characters external to the house, its silence is accompanied by various adjectives that signal its outmodedness (“old,” “decrepit”) and its uncanniness (“strange,” “weird,” “awful”) more directly. Yet, the strangest thing about this silence is how it works to reliably distinguish the house from other inanimate structures. Ceylan, the wealthy friend and love interest of the family’s youngest son Metin, describes the house in this way as a means of introducing her friend to her mother—“Oh, Mom, this is Metin. They live in that old house. The strange silent house” (93)—perhaps meaning to indicate how to situate Metin socioeconomically as well as geographically. Hasan, the nephew of the house’s live-in servant Recep, also refers to the house as “the strange, silent house,” recalling a time when his house and the silent house were the only two around, its silence less a characteristic of the

structure itself than of the surrounding once-empty town, yet to be flooded with tourists and mass-produced resort houses (112, 157). In both cases, the vague characteristic is deployed as a means of specification, a euphemism, perhaps, for the socioeconomic decline of its tenants.

Like the abandoned house in *Summer's End*, the Silent House also emblemizes both the nation and the national outside. Two opposed, intergenerational descriptions of the house voiced early in the novel bear out the house's proximity to the symbolism of the disappointed dreams of nation building. Fatma, the eldest surviving family member, recalls the circumstances in which the house was built and her late husband Selahattin's manic dreams for the future its "European" layout would enable for their family:

Selahattin used to take me by the hand and show me around. Here's where my examining room will be, here's the dining room, here's the European kitchen; I'm having a separate room built for each of the kids, because everyone should be able to shut himself up and develop his own personality, yes, Fatma, I want three kids. And see, I'm not having bars put on the window—what an ugly idea! Are women birds or animals? We're all free, if you want you can up and leave me, we're putting in shutters and we're going to have windows just as Europeans do, and don't say over there and over here anymore, Fatma, that extension isn't a window seat, it's called a balcony. It's a window that opens onto freedom, isn't it a beautiful view? Istanbul must be over there, underneath those clouds, Fatma, fifty kilometers [...] 20-21.

Selahattin's maniacal utopianism—conjuring with each "here's where" of his not-yet-built house a better good life modeled on European features and domestic ideals—articulates the forward-thinking national architectural ideals of his time, espoused primarily by the Ottoman revivalist movement.² Like the architectural movements that followed, Ottoman revivalism aimed in its vision of households to "extend the Westernizing agenda of the state into family life and private

² The prevailing architectural tradition in Turkey from 1908 to 1931, Ottoman revivalism employed "modern materials and modern construction techniques" yet encased these in the kind of ornamental woodwork and ironwork associated with nineteenth century architecture. At the time, Ottoman revivalism saw itself as participating in "a unique, progressive, and radical break with the nation's own imperial, 'anachronistic,' and 'backward' past" (Bozdoğan 21).

space” in part by facilitating the “democratization of the family” and the degendering of private space (Bozdoğan 194). Selahattin’s forced phrasing of these ideals molds him into an agglomerate of the movement’s ideological proponents, recalling the rhetoric of the nationalist ideologue Ziya Gökalp, and especially the words of writer Peyami Safa. This particular passage, envisioning the “liberation” of women through European windows, parodies Safa’s paternalistic call “to open wide the windows of the house and the mind of the Turkish girl to the outside, to nature and society,” which was of course qualified by a capitulation to the “natural” gendered division between public and private, as “from time immemorial, every woman’s center of operation has been her home: so will it be for the modern Turkish girl and woman” (qtd. in Bozdoğan 194). For Selahattin, like Safa, women could be liberated from *within* the confines of the home through its opening up to the world outside.³ Selahattin’s architectural innovations clearly furnish his dream of himself as the liberator of his wife and future children, giving each of them their own room to develop their own unique personality.

When Fatma’s flashback fades into the narrative present of her grandson Faruk’s perspective in the next chapter, the failure of Selahattin’s exuberant vision is made evident. Faruk pulls into the driveway to be greeted by the dilapidated and uninviting house: “I put the car in the garden and looked glumly over the house, which seemed older and emptier each time I came. [...] I peered into Grandmother and Recep’s damp, deadly interior darkness, which was visible between the decrepit wings of the big front door they’d left open for us” (38). The house’s decorative flair has become an eyesore: “the paint on the woodwork was all peeling [...] and the wrought iron on the downstairs windows was completely rusted.” Seeing these features,

³ As Safa phrased it, “Through sun, air, books, and radio, this center, this home, will be flooded with all the amenities, interests, and excitement of both nature and the society outside,” (qtd in Bozdoğan, 194).

Faruk comically paraphrases the very definition of the uncanny, as though to preempt any such psychologizing impulses in the reader: “I had a strange feeling: it was as if there were terrible things in this house that I had never apprehended before owing to familiarity but that I was now recognizing with surprise and anxiety.” The ajar door, which could symbolize an invitation to the return of home comforts, becomes horror here, opening onto the house’s overdetermined uncanny emptiness—its “damp, deadly interior darkness.”

Faruk’s description of the house, evincing the house’s failed progressivism in hindsight, jibes with the fate of Ottoman revivalism, which as Bozdoğan notes, came to be seen “as modern architecture’s academic, stylistic, and anachronistic ‘other’ that had to be left behind in order to capture the zeitgeist of the modern age” (20). Originally built as a temporary refuge from political unrest, yet enduring for decades as the town around it transformed into a wealthy suburb of summer homes, the silent house is a relic, out of place in a town reserved for seasonal stays only. The house’s familiarity is the very reason for its alien quality among a sea of modern resort condos, an uncanniness which forebodes a violent reordering of the national “home” more broadly.

The wavelike descriptions of the *Summer’s End* house and the stubbornly non-specific solidity of the *Silent House* both allegorize the nation of Turkey in the fraught political present of the 1970s. Each house stands allegorically for the nation, but through a particular uncanniness which also undermines the national—through the erasures of waves lapping in, and the perpetual voicing of an inexplicable silence. On the cusp of demolition, these seaside houses index a government on the eve of a coup d’état. However, as I will argue, the house’s internal architectures also meaningfully reshape the ways in which these narratives see themselves as

allegory and even engage in allegorical critique of the limitations of their narrative enclosures.

Boxes within Boxes

I thought about the dream, the images in the dream, how I was very small, I had left Istanbul and was on a train, and as the train moved, I could see gardens, one within another, lovely old gardens. Soon Istanbul was far away and we were in those gardens within gardens within gardens. —Fatma, *Silent House*

Bachelard lyricizes in *The Poetics of Space* that the house is the place that “shelters daydreaming,” “protects the dreamer,” and “allows one to dream in peace” (6). The purpose of such reveries is to “de-socialize our important memories,” in order to clear the path for a phenomenology of intimacy. To this end, Bachelard displays an obsession with nesting, as he ruminates on dwellings within dwellings and boxes within boxes, not to mention “wardrobes with their shelves, desks with their drawers, and chests with their false bottoms.” These nested architectures bear witness to the human “need for secrecy” (81), and serve in their endless chaining of compartments within compartments as models of the “infinite quality of the intimate dimension” (83).

Invested as he is in phenomenology, Bachelard is seduced by the idea that such architectures neatly couch an innermost secret intimacy away from the outside world and its uneven sociopolitical topography. His felicitous spaces, nested one within another, elide the often sociopolitical schematizations which the “vertical house,” with all its interior wardrobes and cabinetry, not only depends upon but also at times violently reinforces. Fleeing this reality, Bachelard’s poetics of cabinetry attempt their own sorting: aligning the private with the interior, and expelling all things sociopolitical or public to the house’s exterior. Taking social inequalities and political strife to be extraneous from the phenomenological enterprise in this way,

Bachelard's domestic interior is desocialized, degendered, and utterly private.

Arguably, the uncanny quality of the vacation house in both *Summer's End* and *Silent House* arises as a consequence of the cyclical collision of its "public" resonance as nation and its "private" resonance as refuge from national politics. The deep ambivalence at the heart of the vacation house points up the messy crossings between public and private which it was perhaps designed to escape. The Florya house, too, embodied the instability of the partition between public and private. In offering glimpses into Atatürk's semi-private vacations with his daughter, and participating in the transformation of the beach into a semi-public space, it complexly renegotiated the spatial configurations of public and private.

Feminist human geographers have for decades moved to vitally denaturalize the gendered splits between public and private, showing the ideological underpinnings of this opposition in the past and advocating for its present and future dissolution. Doreen Massey has famously denounced the hegemonic gendering of the space/time dichotomy, noting how "time which is aligned with history, progress, civilization, politics and transcendence" is "coded masculine" while the "space" conceived of as stasis has "in the traditions of western thought, been coded feminine" (6-7). Feminist scholars have increasingly called for spatial analyses to draw out the divergences that already undermined the hegemony of such schema in the past as well as the present. Diana Fuss has noted, for example, how the solitary yet dialogic act of writing-at-home in the nineteenth century embodies the entanglement of the public with the interior: "While other professions followed the general migration into the public sphere, writers remained essentially where they were, seeing no apparent contradiction between the increasingly private act of dwelling and the increasingly public act of writing" (10). Sharon Marcus spins out the

consequences of this line of thinking for gender, arguing that nineteenth-century Paris was an emblematic site of the dissolutions of gendered divisions of public and private: “allowing us to see, for example, that the home was often a masculine domain, and that heterosexual imperatives demanded the presence of women in streets as well as homes” (3). This vein of analysis shines a light on the historical inconsistency of the schematization of public as masculine and private as feminine, and undermines the conflation of private with interior domestic space and of public with the space outside of the home.

Scholarship on both Aġaoġlu and Pamuk is largely uncurious about the ways in which *Summer’s End* and *Silent House* intervene in the schematizations of masculine/public/exterior and feminine/private/interior. Aġaoġlu’s works are discussed primarily in terms of their perspective and form, praised for their “degendered” account of intellectual interiority (Aslan), for the epiphanic flashes of “inner awakening” sparked by their moment-to-moment narration (Erol), and for their comprehensive employment of postmodern techniques (de Brujin, Elmas). This emphasis on Aġaoġlu’s intellectualism and postmodernism occludes a critical anxiety about gender, which surfaces most clearly in the careful degendering of Aslan’s comparison of *Lying Down to Die* with *A Room of One’s Own*: “What these two novels highlight is the need for sufficient private room free of external intervention, whereby intellectuals act out their subjectivity” (7). This degendered vision of privacy effectively aligns with the traditionally masculine vision of interiority, of a writing space that unproblematically both mimics and encloses the beautiful cosmos of the writer’s soul.

Scholarship on Pamuk’s *Silent House* also participates in the fetishization of a disingenuously degendered intellectual interiority. Scholars tend to either situate the novel in

Pamuk's broader oeuvre—seeing it as a stepping stone towards his ineffably greater and more cosmopolitan novels—or to constellate it with the works of other acclaimed (male) Turkish authors of the twentieth century. Such works are strung together to create a purportedly more plural and inclusive account of “multiple modernities” (Lüleci 171), to put the novel into intertextual dialogue with the (masculinist) Western canon (Kuleli), and to “give voice” to “different critical visions of becoming modern” (Erteğrul 636). As Erteğrul phrases it, the works of Tanpınar, Atay, and Pamuk “deserve the ‘modern’ label not only because of their literary quality—such as the able use of stream of consciousness in exposing their subjects’ soul-searching and internal journeys of becoming—but also because of their ideational terrain” (636). Such a terrain—implied to be a central part of the experience of Turkish modernity more broadly—seems to have something to do with a writerly autonomy whose unspoken masculinity simply goes without saying.

The scholarly silence around gender in these works is symptomatic of a logic of egalitarianism dependent on rigid—and often invisible—schematizations. While the modernist project in Turkey, as elsewhere, attempted to discursively align the private/interior/feminine as harmonious counterparts to the public/exterior/masculine, the vacation house of the 1970s offered up a fantasy of escape from the violent political public through the absolute refuge of a private interior imagined to be as freely degendered as it was apolitical. In its peripherality to the nation and its natural surroundings, the vacation house thus indexes the dream of sheltering from one rigid schematization within the walls of another.

To retheorize gender in these works thus requires an account of their narratives’ spatial modes of not only providing sanctuary, but also of themselves narratively *taking refuge*. In

pondering structures that provide refuge from potential trespassers, Bachelard praises architectures that nestingly couch away secrets: “This is where boxes that fit into one another come in. The least important secrets are put in the first box, the idea being that they will suffice to satisfy [the trespasser’s] curiosity, which can also be fed on false secrets” (82). We could read this spatialization of secrecy allegorically—both as a kind of allegory, and as an articulation of the kind of work allegory does. As Gordon Teskey observes, allegory is deeply invested in secrecy, in “mysteriously disclosing a secret to the initiated while keeping away the profane” (123). Bachelard’s fascination with degrees of remove *ad infinitum* also spatializes Paul de Man’s temporal theory of allegories of reading, wherein “the allegorical sign” necessarily always “refer[s] to another sign that precedes it,” its meaning dependent on repetition and remove (“Blindness,” 207), and its distinction from metaphorical figures entirely a matter of degree. In fact De Man’s argument that allegories are narratives of the failure to read is meaningfully oriented toward questions of secrecy, moving as it does toward a deconstructive understanding of the way in which language withholds secrets from us.

Yet, the poetics of the vacation house is inextricably intertwined with its politics, an entanglement which demands a reassessment of how its architectures of sorting “benignly” nestle away the innermost intimacy of the individual daydreamer. To this end, we might productively filter Bachelard’s structuring of secrecy through Jameson’s investment in political allegoresis, to sketch out a compelling blueprint of allegory as a kind of literary cabinetry that sorts away the social, under the guise of protecting the sacred intimacies of the daydreamer. Using this metric in the following analyses, I will explore the ways in which these novels critique their own participation in the ideological schematizations of the vacation house and its architectural

enclosures.

Summer's End

Petra de Bruijn characterizes the structure of *Summer's End* as a babushka doll for its perspectives nested within perspectives. Indeed, the novel's point of view slides axially from the mind of the writer-narrator gradually into the mind of her written character and back, and is divided into distinct sections which signal these perspectival shifts. As the writer-narrator's novel coalesces and the perspective shifts into third person, the mysterious, abandoned house transmogrifies into the erstwhile vacation home of protagonist Nevin's family—the location where she and her now ex-husband Hasan had learned that their son Güney was killed in a political skirmish at his university, and where they and grieving friends will reunite one last time at the summer's end. Nevin arrives early and stays after to enjoy, like the writer-narrator, a solitary vacation. Yet, she is constantly interrupted in this endeavor by the nearby construction of the very resort hotel the narrator writes from, and by the new peasant-class neighbors it has brought her. At the end of the narrative, an unspecified person breaks into her house, but the narrative, though implying a violent ending, omits to reveal either the identity of the intruder or the events that follow, inviting the reader, through the double-meaning of the novel's title, to “write the ending.”

Beyond the nested structuring of these narrations, the narrators themselves thematize “natural” architectures of nests and shells, as miniature analogues to the house couched in nature. In the Bachelardian vision of the “primitiveness of the refuge” (98), nests and shells are of course “associated with the image of a simple house” (98) and “the being that inhabits the protected space” (132). The narrative's nesting doll structure and infatuation with nests spatially

reflects the enduring notion that “every house is, in reality, an outer embodiment of the inner life of its occupant” (Fuss 3). Yet, I argue that the narrative’s dream of the simplicity of the house-as-nest is foiled by the novel’s perspectival shifts, which traffic in queasy overlaps rather than neat nestings, pushing against simplicity to wade through the messy potentials and failures of interior narration as a modality of intimacy.

In particular, the novel interrogates the work of social sorting that the architecture of the vacation house performs, sorting out “undesirables” in service of a bourgeois utopian vision of nested intimacies. In Part II of the novel, in the slow transition into the writer-narrator’s fictional world, her protagonist Nevin gets enveloped in the same landscape she writes in and the timeless house she observes from without. As Nevin gets off a bus and trudges, her luggage in hand, along a dusty lane into the natural beauty of the landscape, the narrative maps “her slim body,” “her grace,” “her smile,” and even “the painful beauty flowing from every aspect of her being” (47) onto the sadly beautiful landscape. Not merely “accustomed to her surroundings,” she “stood almost as if she were integral to this landscape. Like the sea, waves, pine forests, sand, limey soil, many thorns, and even the small patch of marsh and clay.” Accompanying Nevin on this journey from bus stop to house is—unbeknownst to her—the writer-narrator herself, who, in the switch from writing about swimming in the proverbial lake of her own “pure vacation” to observing Nevin’s vacation from an external perspective, retreats into parenthetical commentary, pushing her own thoughts, doubts, dreams, narrative methodology, and background knowledge into parentheses that interrupt the story of this woman walking to her vacation house. These asides show her investment in a kind of solidarity with Nevin—stressing the similarity of their perspectives (“I have seen, in a similar fashion [...] so it is natural for me to think that the

woman I have been following had also seen it in this way,” 42) and even often placing her beside Nevin: “she heard [...] (So did I)” (49). Nevin’s “natural” belonging in the landscape is parried by the narrator’s forced assertions of belonging alongside her as she wends her way to the house.

Yet, in this section, with the narrator curiously half-occupying Nevin’s perspective, both her own and Nevin’s visions of intimacy and belonging are forestalled by a fear of intrusion. Nevin’s belonging in the landscape as she treks towards the house is called into question when she sees upon her approach a shack standing next to the house—“ugly, made of concrete blocks, very hastily put together” (49). The shack’s disunifying presence in its proximity to her house is exacerbated by its noisy inhabitants: a barking dog, a “child’s cry blending with that metallic crackling sound,” uncomfortably close to “the small house that had always stood beautifully isolated in the past!” (51). The shack’s inhabitants don’t merely break up the aesthetic unity of the house on the land; they also invert the question of who is intruding upon whom and who does not belong. The alarm sounds of the dog and baby imply that Nevin herself intrudes: the barking dog “fixing its eyes on the woman, its mouth foaming, [...] as if it did not want to let her take another step.” A woman holding the crying child in her arms appears to put the dog’s objections into words, stepping “over the broken fence that separated the garden from the shack” to interrogate Nevin: “You don’t own the house, do you?” (52).

After this momentary showdown in which each sees the other as a trespasser, this woman offers Nevin an olive branch: “I’ll come help you right away. We’ll open the house, clean it” (52), and goes on to warmly confide: “I’m so glad you came here. I’m all by myself” (53). Imagining their shared bereavement to be a source of potential intimacy, she confesses she knows of Nevin’s loss and consoles: “One of mine, too, died, the middle child between Şadıman

and Osman” (54). Yet the solidarity of the woman’s “we’ll clean it” and her “one of mine, too” are quickly rebuffed by Nevin and the parenthetical writer-narrator alike. Nevin rejects the woman’s offer, carving out her space on this side of “I’ll/ myself” and the other side of “You/your”: “I’ll open the house myself. I’ll clean it. You attend to your work” (53). Showing contrition, Nevin then asks for the woman’s name, but in using it, she wedges a stern honorific between them: “Take care of your work, Hatice hanım.” When Hatice confides about the pain of losing a son, revealing herself to be, like the writer-narrator, perhaps too knowledgeable, Nevin simply “[does] not listen to her.” The writer-narrator readily adds to these snubs, attempting to further align herself with her character. She disavows the conversation entirely, as “words wasted one after another like this” (54), and then punctuates the exchange by imperiously dismissing an ambiguous addressee, much in the manner of Nevin’s attempts to dismiss Hatice: “(That’s it for now. You may leave now.)” (54).

Though they would perhaps seem to stress her continuity with the woman, the narrator’s parenthetical echoes of her character betray in their “I too”s a copycat logic of empathy, expressions of solidarity which are rejected inadvertently but resoundingly by the very character she has created. But, as Nevin approaches and enters her house, having finally shaken her “nosy” neighbor, the writer-narrator seems to become aware that she too is an unwelcome presence in the narrative. When Nevin finally reaches her door and peeks inside the adjacent window, the narrator admits her intrusive intent: “(To be honest: once, standing in this corner with guilt and shame inside me, I also tried to see the interior through the broken shutters.)” (55). Once the woman is inside, threatening to evade the narrative camera “in a totally dim light,” the narrator envisions herself magically transported to the house’s interior so that she can continue to keep

tabs on her character:

(Really. I did indeed want to see inside, peeking through a few shutters that were broken or ajar. But since shutters that are broken or ajar do not let you see much, for a while I kept picturing only the outer lines of the house. Just then, at the moment when I lost myself in the sunset on the sandstone rocks at the edge of the distant pine forest—how strange—I found myself suddenly inside the house.) 58

Though this entry seems to stand for benign writerly inspiration—happening so “strange” and “suddenly,” through losing oneself “in the sunset”—the voyeurism behind the narrator’s inspired access to Nevin is clear, and begins to take on malevolent undertones. Near the end of this section, the narrator marvels at this “strange situation” in which “One of several *me*’s has been waiting in ambush...In a sense, I am everywhere” (78).⁴ Throughout Part II of the novel, the narrative order is infected by these free-floating interchanges of paranoia and voyeurism that ceaselessly shift and drift between characters, cutting in all directions and destabilizing the narrative vision of neatly nested perspectives.

Yet the writer-narrator’s anxieties also affiliate her with the house she intrudes on, which it is implied will also eventually be abandoned by Nevin. Nevin’s first-person narrative in Part III begins just after she herself has been abandoned, left behind at the house by her friends and ex-husband. The sense of abandonment in this section—arguably the “innermost” of the novel—is subtly conveyed through anxious syntaxes and nostalgic tenses. The section opens having already zoomed past the reunion with friends that only pages ago was a future anticipated by Nevin (at a remove, through the narrator’s free-indirect-discourse) to trudge through so many iterations of the now past-tense memory. Broken-record anaphors hammer out the lost sense of “we,” such as when the narrator recalls a revelation her ex-husband had about the six of them:

⁴ These parenthetical asides thus literalize the Benjaminian “interior assault upon the exterior,” which as Fuss has noted, is “capable of creating as many anxieties as it assuage[s], frequently confounding a sense of security with a fear of isolation, or a promise of seclusions with a threat of suffocation” (14).

Hasan was right. [...] We were ourselves. We were the owners of everything, and at the same time we didn't belong to ourselves [...] We were coherent from the beginning to the end. We were incoherent from the beginning to the end. [...] We were the prosecutors of no one. We were the prosecutors of ourselves... 106-107

The antitheses which structure this chant-like memory vacuum out the sense of a solid or perceivable collective self that the repeated phrase “we were” seems to go in search of, pointing back to the emptiness at the center of the tautology “we were ourselves.”

These now already past affirmations are matched by the narrator's musings on intimacies that are no longer possible, through words of conditional potentiality—coulds, woulds, shoulds, and mights—which spiral around formulations that preclude the already modest and lost possibilities they refer to, as they slowly modulate from “coulds” to “might haves” to “would nevers.” In one such passage, Nevin worries over the tenuousness and the unreality of memory, how these cathartic days with friends “would suddenly be as if they'd never been lived.” In what follows, a sandwich of already impossible conditionals—“would not,” “would never again,” “would not”—unspools into a tangled entrails of negation: “would no longer be able to be aware that it was unnecessary” (123). Her opening postulatory “as if they'd never” quickly slides into assured negation: “The lizards with big heads *would not* wander on the thick wooden banisters of the terrace; the spider webs [...] *would never again* stretch in front of me [...]; the powerless moths *would not* circle around the light” (emphasis mine). The narrow aperture that takes note of such tiny creaturely absences contracts yet further to consider a microscopic lost intimacy in the sentence's last clause: “I would no longer be able to be aware that it was unnecessary to talk about those moths...” (ellipses in original). These layers of negation are puzzling, moving past the lamentation of the mere fact that the moths wouldn't circle around the kerosene lamps at night now that the summer is over, to trouble over the loss of the kind of experience one might

have in relation to these moths, one which could occur but whose very unnecessary as occurrence is impossibly longed for. What Nevin realizes she is losing with the moths isn't the conversation she may have had with her friends about them, but rather the collective awareness that such conversation did not need to happen in the first place, the intimacy of not needing to talk about the moths or the present of their being-together. The passage's conclusion patly confirms Nevin's abandonment: "Yes, all of them left. I stayed. The summer ended."

Perhaps in capitulation to these vacated intimacies, the vacation house in Part III becomes a symbol of provisionally taking refuge. At first, this takes the shape of a hopeful image, as Nevin recalls having anticipated her friends' arrival as an event that would transform the house into a mobile sanctuary: "There it is, on the shore, a white ship—this house—waits for us, to let us escape from the deluge, to take us to green-blue, calm waters..." (134). This dream of a vacation home transformed into a ship through the presence of a surrogate family evokes Atatürk's Florya house and the grand savior rhetoric surrounding its propagandization. Yet, this section of the novel pointedly disenchant the language of "taking refuge," associating it with trivial materialisms and aestheticizations that close off channels of sociality. Nevin recalls how: "Hasan had taken refuge in the pictures of naked women in order to gather some hidden sexual power" (142); criticizes "how absurd it was" for she herself to take refuge in music, poetry, and narrative (183); laments how she and Meriç, her only female friend of the trip, "took refuge" in the trappings of oppressive beauty standards, in "false hair, teeth, those corsets" (204); and confesses her longing "to take refuge there at my desk" away from the noise of construction and Hatice's crying baby (186). It is implied in each case that taking refuge in the material world—even perhaps in writing—is a paltry substitute for the alliances that could extend Nevin beyond

her insular milieu.

However, Nevin's recollection of the summer of Güney's death reveals the difficulty of forming such alliances. She and Hasan (still married) had been staying at the house alone for the first time, lounging on the beach and "taking refuge" in the sun and each other, before hearing the news. But, she recalls learning of the permeability of such refuges, how:

The odor of old blood and rotten meat across the country dominated things more and more [...] Doors were tightly shut. People's hearts had been locked up in an even worse way... But no one, none of us, was conscious that the odor of blood and rot had plunged all the way into our bedrooms, had seeped all the way into our lovemaking, cutting that lovemaking to pieces and shriveling them. 175

In hindsight, Nevin suggests that political strife and violence can also make a home within domestic and psychic interiors, just as a "big fear" about "bravery and manliness" "had made a home for itself in Hasan's subconscious" (142). Though longing to take refuge in people rather than the material world, the narrative worries over whether such intimacies are possible between interiorities so besieged by a political present that is destructive and inescapable.

The provisionalness of Nevin's already-foreclosed-upon hopes for the house call back to the writer-narrator's provisional imaginings of what could have taken place inside the abandoned house she sees in the distance. For this narrator, the house both enables and controls her intuition into Nevin's psyche, through which she escapes her thoughts of war, anarchy, and the ineffectual government. Even though she never steps foot inside the house, it is a way of "taking refuge" for her as well, and one that is an integral part of—and inextricable from—her taking-refuge in the writing process itself. The perspectival shifts between sections might thus seem to move deeper and deeper into refuge, into the innermost nesting doll safely buffered by so many larger versions of itself. However, these perspectival shifts "inward" reveal the inevitable presence of the

political “outside” in the most intimate spaces of refuge. The novel’s perspectival shifts thus effectively enact a process of *de-nesting*—of shell-shucking, ransacking, and departure.

Silent House

The narrative perspectives of *Silent House* are also sorted into compartments, as the point of view switches from chapter to chapter between the interior perspectives of five members of the Darvinoğlu family. Set in the small town of Cennethisar just outside of Istanbul, the novel’s eponymous edifice is the site of an ongoing curse for the family, who built the house as a temporary refuge from the political turmoil of the Young Turk Revolution in the early twentieth century, during which they were forcibly banished from Istanbul. The family ended up staying in this house through over half a century of both familial and national turmoil, through the deaths of the family patriarch Selahattin and his eldest and most idealistic son Doğan, which roughly coincide with the military coups d’état of 1960 and 1971, respectively. During this span of time, the surrounding district of Gebze has transformed into a commercialized, bustling resort zone, full of cookie-cutter summer houses whose felicitous family vacation sounds drown out both the anarchic violence of the narrative present and the “silence” of the house as it hosts a final reunion among its surviving family members. This reunion ends, just at the brink of the coup, with the death-by-beating of Nilgün, the family’s only daughter and granddaughter, and the family’s last surviving idealist.

Erdağ Gökner reads the silent house as allegorically “herald[ing] the end of secular modernity as an authoritarian nation-building project” and its silence as “the very silence of literary secularism and historical realism” (72). He sees its inhabitants, too, as serving crisp

allegorical functions: America-obsessed Metin standing for neo-liberalism; scholarly Faruk for secular republicanism; bellicose Hasan for ultranationalism; and idealistic Nilgün for socialism (74). Cross-generationally, Göknaar sees different strains of progressivism dying off through their representative characters over the years, as “Selahattin’s obsessive mania for progress [is] diminished through an absent second generation represented by [his deceased son] Doğan and [Doğan’s] illegitimate half-brothers, and figuratively ‘killed off’ in the death of the leftist student Nilgün” at the hands of her cousin Hasan at the novel’s end. The absence of Nilgün from the narrative foreshadows her death at the novel’s end, which Göknaar argues symbolizes the failure of socialism with the coup of 1980. I will argue that, although the novel certainly invokes this as one layer of meaning, it is merely the first thing we encounter in a long chain of boxes within boxes in which the novel hides its secrets. To read further inward draws out a critique of precisely this kind of social sorting.

Advertising itself as a kind of house, its chapters like the bedrooms of distinct individuals, the book invites a reading of its characters as conflicting and irreducible subjectivities. As Ann Banfield has observed of Virginia Woolf’s oeuvre: “the room is both the perspective and what houses it, dividing it from other perspectives and giving what is shapeless a form, like a mollusk shell enclosing ‘something alive in the centre’” (111). Yet, each chaptered character in *Silent House* obsesses in their own way over architectures of intricately embedded cabinetry whose innermost centers are marked by an *absence* of life. In the opening chapter of the novel, Recep walks through the streets of Gebze in search of a companion and sees emptiness everywhere he looks, ominously foreboding the empty winter to come: “The casinos on the shore were empty. [...] The tea men had lined up hundreds of empty tea glasses in rows [...] The cats

were crouched under the empty chairs” (6). Recep’s nephew Hasan sees emptiness coded as deathly at the center of his own house, somewhere beyond the empty box of a window through which he peers: “The lights of our house! I stopped and looked; our house was like a tomb with a light burning in it. Nothing moving in the windows” (107). And Faruk, whom Recep worries will “burn a hole through” his stomach with his drinking (55), depicts his life back in Istanbul as a melancholic existence among the empty interiors of the television and the refrigerator within his own “empty room” (286) inside of an “empty house” (41). For Faruk, the material fullness of interiors seems to substitute for his psychic fulfillment, as, about to open the refrigerator in the silent house, he “felt that same sense of anticipation, as if something would happen in my life, something.” This hope for something alive at the center is apparently satisfied by the sight of the fridge’s “gleaming interior,” full of “the pitchers, bottles, different colors, tomatoes, eggs, [and] cherries, [which] somehow beguiled me and made me forget my cares” (229).

For the grandmother of the family, such compartmentalizations are full of the romantic hope that their degrees of remove will protect even the mere the memory of a lost keepsake. Fatma’s narration returns again and again to the “gleaming interior” of her most prized possession—a jewelry box which resides in the locked drawer of a cupboard, inside her closet, in her room, in her silent house. She repeatedly catalogues the buffers she goes through in order to get the box out and to put it back again: “I get up from the table, go to my closet, take out the key, and open it, breathing in the cupboard scent. I had put it in the second drawer; and when I open the second drawer, there it is” (145). Yet, the box is empty, guarded for its nostalgic value rather than its contents.

This empty box provides an entryway to the soap operatic saga of Fatma’s past. We

eventually learn that Selahattin had periodically demanded that Fatma open the closet and sell off her jewelry, bit by bit, year by year, to help him finish his encyclopedia, and that her late son Doğan—the father of Faruk, Nilgün, and Metin—had taken the last two diamond solitaire rings and given them to his father’s “illegitimate” sons, who, it is eventually revealed, had both been beaten half to death and bereaved of their mother Gül at Fatma’s hands. Yet, in jealously guarding the now empty box, Fatma is not merely experiencing a nostalgic longing for her old jewelry or a reckoning with the guilt of her actions. Not solely an entry point to the deep interiority of memory, the empty box also functions as a kind of anti-interiority device, snapping her out of her reverie (“Enough you stupid box, I know how life is!” 146), and occasionally turning the narrative to philosophical evaluations of emptiness in general, of the ineluctable something that the interior narration cannot quite reach. When her granddaughter Nilgün interrupts a memory occasioned by the box to ask what she is thinking about, Fatma’s response cloaks emptiness luxuriously in emptiness, suggesting that “something” for her is absence itself: “‘Nothing,’ I said vacantly. ‘I’m thinking about nothing’” (106).

Fatma’s youngest grandson Metin’s contemplation of boxes in boxes suggests that the emptiness at the center is a symptom at least in part of being constructed as an orientalized other. While lounging in the shore town with wealthy “Europeanized” friends trying to find something to entertain themselves (one of whom suggests, “We could go to a Turkish movie and make fun of it,” 133), Metin slips into a reverie about Ceylan, the wealthiest and “most European” of the bunch, with whom he is besotted:

Just as I’d planned all night long in bed, I knew I had to explain myself to her, but when I thought about it, this ‘me’ that I was going to tell her about seemed like it never really existed. The thing I called me was like a box within a box; it was like there was always something else inside it, maybe if I kept looking I could finally find my real self and

express it, but every new box I opened had, instead of a real, true Metin that I could show to Ceylan, just another box hiding him. 133

At face value, this monologue endearingly splices together the timeless philosophical conundrums of psychic interiority and the unlocatability of the “real self” with the melodrama of not being really *seen* by one’s crush.

Yet, Metin’s existential ponderings also gesture away from his interpersonal impasse with Ceylan to the novel’s broader intertextual impasses. Metin’s comparison of his interiority to boxes in boxes also repurposes an orientalist quote from the opening passage of *Peter Pan* about the ineluctable charm of Mrs. Darling:

She was a lovely lady, with a romantic mind and such a sweet mocking mouth. Her romantic mind was like the tiny boxes, one within the other, that come from the puzzling East, however many you discover there is always one more; and her sweet mocking mouth had one kiss on it that Wendy could never get, though there it was, perfectly conspicuous in the righthand corner.

In part, Metin’s allusion to this passage is clearly parodic, the voice of the author bursting through his interior monologue to chuckle at the implication that there is something uniquely puzzling about “the East,” and, not unrelatedly, something inherently funny about a movie made in Turkey rather than Hollywood or Europe. This allusion is also a more pointed commentary on the relationship between the secondary status of non-Western literature and the inherent secondariness of text itself. Metin, whose name means “text” or “copy,” voices here the kind of allegorical anxiety that Sibel Irzik has characterized as the Turkish character’s self-aware yet robotic beholdenness to an allegorical role. Here, Metin openly troubles over his sad fate as a mere text masquerading as a human being, his flat and bratty persona held in tension with a sly self-awareness. He is an allegorical figure subordinated to both the scripts of the nation and to an orientalist gaze that sees boxes in boxes—Turkish characters in a Turkish box in an “Eastern

box”—as the veritable stage set for a fantastical adventure.

But to pursue this chain of boxes to the next degree, a feminist critique of the limitations of Metin’s own anti-orientalist critique emerges. To return to *Peter Pan*, Metin’s allusion implicitly splices two characters together, both aligning him with Mrs. Darling—through the narrator’s feminizing description of the sensually mysterious East—and with Mr. Darling, who goes in pursuit of the charming woman and her boxes in boxes:

The way Mr. Darling won her was this: the many gentlemen who had been boys when she was a girl discovered simultaneously that they loved her, and they all ran to her house to propose to her except Mr. Darling, who took a cab and nipped in first, and so he got her. He got all of her, except the innermost box and the kiss. He never knew about the box, and in time he gave up trying for the kiss.

From this angle, the repurposed metaphor becomes as much a critique of Metin’s obsessive pursuit of Ceylan as of his friends’ disdain for all things “Turkish.” In fact, Metin drunkenly attempts to rape Ceylan near the end of the book, trying to “win” her by wiles and force, as arguably worked for Mr. Darling. The chapter of this near rape—composed of eight, sprawling, run-on, stream of consciousness sentences—parodies the Penelope chapter of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. However, the “yes” which opens, closes, and facilitates flow for Molly Bloom’s narration—and was described by Joyce as a “female word”—is absent from Metin’s narrative, which instead centers around Ceylan’s desperate knot of “no”s that fall in the approximate middle of the chapter. The gender inversion of the narrative perspective transforms the goddess-like feminine flow of Molly Bloom’s body and sexuality into Metin’s drunken masculine excess in the face of feminine lack figured as negation—in Ceylan’s “unapproachable body” and her urgent “No [...] no, no, [...] No way” when Metin is on top of her (198), trailed after Metin backs off by a tepid “No, no, I’m not mad” and finally, in an aloof echo of Fatma contemplating

her empty jewelry box, “Nothing, I’m not thinking anything” (200).

Reading this episode back through Metin’s contemplation of his inner boxes-in-boxes, Metin’s fear that the series is unending implies a fear of castration, of a feminizing gaze that interprets content as form, each smaller box pointing to a hollowed-out masculinity. The episode of his attempted rape, while not disavowing the critique of how the orientalist gaze “boxes up” its others, equally interrogates the masculinist form such anti-orientalist critiques often take.

These myriad boxes in boxes, in both symbolizing and occasioning the silences of the novel’s female characters especially, point back toward the silences characterizing the house’s domestic interior as well as its facade. When the eldest grandson Faruk first re-enters the house, he glosses this silence as the relative quiet through which one can hear the smallest outcries of the house’s inanimate objects: “There was a silence. I felt as if I could hear the furniture expanding and creaking in the hot airless room” (41). Fatma, confined to the house year-round, thinks often of the implications of her furniture’s sounds and silences. At one moment, she imagines her furniture celebrating a kind of autonomy in their most motionless, silent silences—“I can’t see my things anymore, they’re free of my glances, all silent and unto themselves” (26)—suggesting the peacefulness and even liberty of being unseen and unheard. Yet, she later explains the creaking of the silent house’s furniture as a kind of doing-penance, attempting to transform her own guilt for having beaten Selahattin’s lover to death into an intimate ritual shared with her material possessions: “They all sit there, just like me, all around me in the quiet emptiness, they creak, they rattle, in the silence of the night, they seem to be purifying themselves of sin, of guilt” (228). These indirectly opposed valences of silence—as an expression of freedom and a mode of atoning—point towards structuring silences of allegory

itself.

Gökmar marshals a schematization of the house, its inhabitants, and its silences towards a reading of the novel's allegorical account of the instability of its historical moment, parodically taking stock of the progressive ideologies that have died off over the decades. Yet, the silences and creakings of the house's domestic interior—atmospheric, vague, and infinitely recodable—also register an elaborate tapestry of untold narratives lurking behind this schema. The creaking objects in the silent house evoke the historical tragedies and travesties that have slipped—or been pushed—through the cracks of the grand narrative of secular modernity. Through unwitting characters speaking in anachronisms and thinly veiled allusions, the novel repeatedly gestures towards these silences in the outskirts of its narrative: spatially, to the proliferation of squatter settlements (*geceköndü*) in the periphery of the touristy Gebze district where the family resides; and temporally, to the unspoken of and unspeakable Armenian genocide taking place while Selahattin built his dream house. At the same time, the creaking furniture indexes the family tragedies that are taboo to openly discuss and are thus swept into the corners of the novel's room-like interior narration, reverberating through the generations: the domestic violence—of which Fatma is both victim and perpetrator, and through which her granddaughter Nilgün ultimately dies of a cerebral hemorrhage; and the sexual assault—through which, it is implied, Selahattin fathered his illegitimate children in the first place, with the family's young servant Gül whom he obsessively idealized, and which his grandson Metin attempts on a wealthy friend he likewise obsesses over. The novel only ever points toward each of these, aware of its incapacity to really tell the stories that have been filed away too deeply in the lowest orders of boxes in boxes.

Conclusion

These novels draw out the irreducible exteriority of the private space to different effects. The narrators of *Summer's End* at times openly realize the ways in which their investments in privacy and writing as privacy—which attach to the figure of the vacation house—foil the allegiances they could have formed beyond their rather insular milieus. The novel thus expresses an at times sincere and desperate longing for a structure that would not only provide a viable refuge from the violence of the political present, but which could also house intimacies and allegiances that extend beyond the domains of individuality or even privacy.

Silent House, written with the coup's depoliticizations in hindsight, is less invested in refuge and allegiance than in secrecy. The private is thoroughly infused with the political in the novel, through infinite chains of boxes within boxes where the personal and the political devour one another in turn. Closets, chests, and drawers function less to reflect the interior self's Bachelardian proclivity for secretive innermost sorting, than to perform a kind of violent sorting of the "interior," interpellating the self into a larger collective narrative of open secrets and taboos.

Both *Summer's End* and *Silent House* are full of many more chains of boxes within boxes than I have been able to unpack here. But reading them together calls attention to their shared interrogation of both national and personal modes of being-at-a-remove that otherwise goes unaccounted for in critical readings of these works. They propose in their explorations of embedded interiors that architectural and literary forms function as apparatuses of social sorting, the house's rooms and cabinetry, and the novel's chapters and perspectives, functioning to

schematize, hierarchize, and ultimately *sort away* a great deal more than the house's material objects.

2. Becoming Worldly through the Trip Narrative

In the 1930s, the ruling Republican People's Party established community centers in cities and towns all over Turkey called People's Houses (*Halkevleri*), which were intended to help disseminate the cultural tastes and ideologies of the Modern Republic. In order to spread the state's reforms across the Anatolian heartland, as well as gather ethnographic data, the elite *Halkevleri* membership often organized trips to nearby villages. In a particularly striking report of one such village excursion in the province of Kayseri, a 131-year-old local woman looks back on her life, contemplating whether its length was a blessing or a curse, and concludes: "I haven't seen anything. That's it, I came, I will go" (qtd. in Lamprou 208-9). In the report's description, this cynical yet accepting existential insight is tortured out into an agglomeration of archetypal metaphors which cast the woman's aged body and long life as: "a *field*," "a *bridge* connecting the beginning of the previous century with the current one" "a *spring* feeding fifty-four grandchildren," "a *residue* tossed from the previous to this century," and "a precious *treasure* that has to be studied" (qtd. in Lamprou 209, italics in original). Aside from reifying the woman into so many clichés, this description also betrays in its vertiginous mixing of metaphors the anonymous urbanite narrator's deeply unsettled relationship to place. The old woman's veritable shapeshifting from bridge to field to spring is echoed in an array of similarly clumsy figurations in these reports—describing men whose "hands were like fields," and women whose "breasts resembled a productive field" or a "dried out spring" (qtd. in Lamprou 207). Such gendered projections betray their authors' scrambling to capture villagers' supposedly intimate and authentic connections to the landscape.

Literarily, these village excursions—as well as their projected fantasies of body-

landscape unification—were given precedence by a spate of early republican national journey novels, narratives of a cosmopolitan figure “coming home” in a trek from westernized Istanbul into war-torn rural Anatolia. The most famous of these took the form of travelogues, the diaries of urbanite protagonists attempting to extricate themselves from the traitorousness of Istanbul’s cosmopolitan elite.¹ Jale Parla has argued that such narratives displayed in their spatial trajectories a kind of “internal colonialism,” their lone heroes travelling from a metropolis home base inward into the rural hinterland on a duty-bound trek to transform the “motherland” into an “exquisite home” that is “worthy of the father” (“From Allegory to Parable,” 401). These protagonists’ Freudian drives towards the “motherland” are also matched by depictions of bodies *as* land, a predisposition to see peasants as place, and place as peasants. Like the *Halkevi* journals, these novels, with their internalized diary format, were uniquely predisposed to navigate an elusive external landscape through disconcertingly visceral figurations.

This queasy tension between the distanced cosmopolitan diarist and the observed, “authentic” peasant feeds out of a dualism in Turkish literature and criticism stretching back to the Tanzimat era, of snobbish dandies (*züppe*) opposed to authentic provincials. The term *züppe*, which conflates dandy and snob, denotes a character who is meticulously coiffed, carefully aloof, and consciously emulative of forms and fashions deemed to be superior. In his effeminacy coded as duplicitous, the *züppe* figure thus channels a deep cultural mistrust of borrowed intellectualism, particularly what is perceived to arise from ideas “copied” from Europe. Nurdan

¹ Reşat Nuri Güntekin’s *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl* (*Çalılışu/The Wren*, 1922) follows the travels of Feride, a spunky, cosmopolitan, orphaned teenager, who leaves Istanbul to break an engagement with an unfaithful man, and moves from village to village in rural Anatolia teaching for the Ministry of Education. Halide Edip Adivar’s *Shirt of Fire* (*Ateşten Gömleği*, 1922) recalls through the deathbed letters written just before his fatal brain surgery the journey of diplomat Peyami from his affluent life in (Western-occupied) Istanbul to join the nationalist guerrilla forces in Izmir. Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu’s *Stranger* (*Yaban*, 1932), records the travails of officer Ahmet Celal who, disgusted with the indifferent Istanbul intellectual elite during the War of Independence, tries to unlearn his own elitist ways in a small village in Anatolia.

Gürbilek spins out the stakes of the dandy/provincial binary for criticism, which “is torn between a detached observation reproaching its object for its inadequacy and an ardent search for an authentic localness, between snobbish arrogance and provincialist pride, between an unconditional admiration of the stranger and an unconditional hostility to it” (601). She laments the double bind that results from this binary, dooming Turkish literary objects to be deemed either inauthentically derivative or boorishly insular.

As Gürbilek argues, the dandies/provincials binary is certainly entangled in a literary-critical idealization of originality. But in the context of the late 1970s, the dandy also registers a more specific anxiety about cosmopolitanism, and the threat of national citizens and space being appropriated to serve the interests of foreign governments, particularly the United States. Then, as now, Turkey’s national self-interests were embroiled in Western anxieties pertaining to the surrounding nations. In 1978, the budding Iranian Revolution and the rise of a communist government in Afghanistan made Turkey’s stability “essential for the Western strategy in the region” (Ahmad 101). After the coup, the extension of military rule in Turkey— even after democratic elections in 1983—was largely supported by the U.S., for whom stability was more strategically useful than the restoration of democracy or the protection of human rights (101). In fact, the U.S. came to metonymize cosmopolitanism for military officials at the time, in a way that overlaid the cutthroat nature of U.S. involvement in Turkish politics with a sheen of pleasant frivolity.²

² After 1983, a political rivalry developed among military officials between Kemalists and cosmopolitans; Necip Torumtay, considered the head of the “globalising wing of the military,” was deemed an exemplary cosmopolitan in that he “spoke English fluently, liked music,” had a wife who painted, and, importantly, that he was “close to the Pentagon” (104).]

Bilge Karasu's *Garden of the Departed Cats* (*Göçmüş Kediler Bahçesi*, 1979) and Nazlı Eray's *Orpheus* (*Orphee*, 1983) both tell tales of a cosmopolitan *zümme*'s fraught trips into Anatolia. Each protagonist—able to speak the language but themselves of ambiguous nationality—provides a first-person account of their stay in a vacation town, evoking the dandy diarists of the *Halkevleri* village excursions and early republican journey allegories. Both protagonists balance a trivial schedule of touristic consumption—tanning, watching films, eating sweets, and drinking sodas—with an earnest pursuit of an estranged beloved who is gendered masculine in each case. In *Garden*, a young man visits an unnamed town where a live chess game is played every year and is forcibly inducted to play as a pawn, a violent appropriation which foils his pursuit of the alluring and knowledgeable stranger who plays a piece on the opposing team. In *Orpheus*, the female protagonist Eurydice travels to the shore city of Izmir and proceeds to plot several routes of access to Orpheus's spaceship-shaped mansion, where she ultimately inadvertently kills her beloved through the projection of a violent film into his living room. These narratives of trips are formally trip-like as well; both convey the smallness of the trip, through the short sentence, the short tale, the short installment, and the short novel—and its infelicities, through the melding of one location with another, the agonizingly boring waiting, the jolting, jarring flow of a bus ride, the vagueness of short term memory, and the instability of the always shifting “I.”

In comparative studies, the fundamentally unstable and often predatory spaces of Karasu's and Eray's works are largely compressed into windows onto “Turkishness” and reconstituted into readings of “the nation.” In the limited commentary these novels have received outside of Turkish literary studies, the authors' uses of language are usually taken at face value.

The sparse criticism of Eray that exists in English tends to read her works—in the “misleading simplicity” of their language and “democratic accessibility” of their style” (Erol x)—as straightforwardly illuminating sociocultural realities of Turkishness, specifically what it means to be a “Turkish woman.”³ Karasu’s language, on the other hand, has largely been sidelined as “not Turkish enough.”⁴ As Karasu’s translator Aron Aji postulates, his literary and philosophical use of language may have alienated him from readers who expect social realism and open political criticism of the unrest of the 70s and 80s (15-16).⁵ An otherwise positive book review of *Garden* written in English in the *Lambda Book Report* snipes that it is for the most part too “linguistically clever” to be a “page turner” (Butler 25), and recommends reading Karasu’s *Night* or *Death in Troy* instead, both of which are purportedly easier to map onto Turkish geography and recent history (26). The offhand critique of Karasu’s “linguistic cleverness”—as well as the reduction of Eray’s complex pastiching of short sentences to the modifiers of “simple” and “accessible”—register some measure of ambivalence towards formal experimentation taking place outside of the hallowed halls of Western modernism, where it is always in danger of being perceived as derivative.⁶

³ For example, in her contribution to the anthology *Deconstructing Images of the Turkish Woman*, Carel Bertram uses an ethnographic analysis of “literary acts, portrayed in Turkish short stories by Turkish women authors” like Eray to show how “Turkish women are in the process of renegotiating the meaning of the Turkish house” (263). Note also the more recent inclusion of *Orpheus*—necessarily cursory—in Arzu Akbatur’s “Turkish Women Writers in English Translation” a survey intending to show the “bond between writing and increased women’s consciousness” in Turkey.

⁴ This is changing with a recent uptick of rigorous work on Karasu, but its persistence up to a full decade beyond the translation of *Garden* into English in 2003 remains noteworthy and relevant.

⁵ Publishers often responded to Aji’s submissions “that Karasu didn’t strike them as being sufficiently Turkish” (16). “Karasu’dan çevirdiğim metinleri Amerikan yayıncılara örmeye başladığım günlerde, editörlerden en sık duyduğum yorum, Karasu’nun onlara yeterince Türk gelmediği idi.” English translation mine.

⁶ This ambivalence extends to Turkish literary studies of the time, where social realist literature was often felt to offer a more rigorous or authentic political critique than could be afforded by formally experimental literature. See Berna Moran’s third volume of *Türk Romanına Eleştirel bir Bakış*, where he laments how the sociological and political themes of earlier periods in Turkish literature seemed to have lost their strength in the wake of the coup and its forcible de-politicization (9). Nüket Esen has phrased it even more disdainfully: “Left-wing governments were

Yet, many scholars within Turkish literary studies have noted that both Karasu and Eray deliberately situate their works in regional settings that unsettle the novels' relationship to the national. Deniz Göktürk argues in "Imagining Europe as a Realm of Transfiguration," that *Garden of the Departed Cats* "takes us to an imaginary Europe that is not limited to Turkish territory, but expands into the surrounding Mediterranean geography" and offers not a map-like reflection of that territory but rather a "fictitious, literary construction" (133).⁷ Similarly, but with a focus on *Garden's* language rather than its landscape, Kristin Dickinson has convincingly argued that Karasu—informed in life and letters by "a sense of alterity"—works against monolingualism by conjuring a nationalist "pure Turkish" (öz Türkçe), and then rendering this language other to itself. *Orpheus*, too, beyond drawing on broadly Mediterranean cultural intertexts, takes place on a landscape which, in spanning well beyond the geolinguistic terrain of the Turkish city of Izmir, is radically unstable and unlocalizable, likewise made other to itself. Writing about Eray's oeuvre in general, Sibel Erol sees a political purpose in this self-othering, arguing that Eray makes "the national into a metonymic slot for the international," which thereby allows her to undermine "the intellectual as the spokesman for a nationalist ideology" (15).

Göktürk, Dickinson, and Erol all offer useful angles from which to consider the relationship between place, language, and belonging in these works. However, the body-in-space in these narratives has yet to be theorized. In the strange worlds *Garden* and *Orphee* construct of a kind of ancient supermodernity—juxtaposing bus terminals with the sea, and stone reliefs with

collapsing everywhere, and in the face of overly complicated social and economic problems, novelists abandoned classical realistic approaches that tried to solve such challenges in favour of playing games and making pleasure out of literature" (328). In global literary studies, however, the resistance to non-Western modern literature could be largely attributed to a hegemonic demand for innovation and originality, as Eric Hayot notes in his introduction to *On Literary Worlds*.

⁷ In their "dissolving [of] imagined geographies of East and West," Göktürk sees the book's tangle of narratives forcing the "disoriented" reader "to reconfigure given oppositions and distinctions, thereby complicating the model of unilateral discursive domination that Edward W. Said proposed in *Orientalism*" (137).

a spaceship— characters *become* space; they are swallowed up by the land, or projected across it, or robotically cloned to the point that they cease to exist as anything more than the taking up of space. In *Garden*, the first-person writer is devoured by the earth after making an unauthorized false move in a chess game. In *Orphee*, the male beloved—who is of course supposed to be the journeyman, meandering into Hades to save his Eurydice—is described as the landscape itself from the beginning, his very arteries and veins forming the trails Eurydice follows in her trek to find a deeper, innermost part of him. The dandy in these narratives is thus in danger of “becoming worldly”—nightmarishly transforming into the earth through misguided fantasies of authentic belonging, or evaporating into thin air through a cosmopolitan lack of concern for local realities on the ground.

By overlooking how landscapes and bodies reorganize each other in *Garden* and *Orphee*, scholars miss an opportunity to think through the complex gender dynamics at play in the trope of the dandy who wants to belong. In both novels, the touristic space co-opts masculine bodies, transforming them into landscape in an inversion of the tradition of national journey narratives. Exploring a sociality and social failures beyond the nuclear family, these tales animate protagonists with nonmasculine gender roles and nonnormative romantic investments who are in both cases an uncomfortable melding of trivial tourist and purposeful traveler. By reading how the dandy negotiates space in *Garden* and *Orpheus*, I will probe how anxieties and hopes attaching to the gendered body are caught up in these novels’ fraught reworkings of cosmopolitical national space.

Garden of the Departed Cats

Karasu's *Garden of the Departed Cats* takes "trips" both through the shortness of its tales and through their thematic content. It is composed of a thirteen-part frame narrative interspersed with twelve distinct tales. In the frame narrative, the unnamed narrator, whom we are told is a traveler and a writer, visits an unnamed, landlocked town as part of a larger trip in which he has been shuttling from one town to the next all throughout a peninsula on the Mediterranean.⁸ This veritable tourist's journal—which blandly accounts his movements between cafes, cinemas, and sweet shops—is complicated by the materialization of a mysterious stranger, whom the narrator alternately hides from and pursues throughout the course of the narrative. Both of these men share the quality of being liminally neither quite tourist nor quite local, both speaking the language and knowing what to order, while still being clear outsiders to the town. Ultimately, the narrator and the stranger each participate in a live chess game as pawns on opposing teams, the town's team (purple) and the nomads' team (green), respectively.

This frame narrative unfolds in short installments interspersed with magical realist parables that explore the sinister side of the travelling theme. In contrast to the frame narrative's bland touristic locales, the parables' spaces are reminiscent of Borges, Cortazar, and Kafka: an endless tunnel that supplies spontaneous vending machines, a present-day caravanserai, a bus station labyrinth, a city where it always rains, an island that grows exponentially larger every night, a sea that transforms men into finned creatures. Formally trip-like, these parables are full of idiosyncrasies that undermine their own integrity as well as that of the frame.

⁸ Dickinson correlates this unnamed town to Maristoca, Italy, where a live piece chess game annually occurs. However, the landscape is equally evocative of the Datça peninsula in Turkey.

Yet, taken collectively, there is an arc to these parables, as so many variations on the frame narrative's theme of touristic dandyism coming into confrontation with a latently malevolent landscape. In the frame's climactic moment, the narrator makes an unauthorized move on the chessboard, inciting rioting among the players, and ultimately causing a hole in the earth to rip open and swallow him. It is revealed that this story has been told by a proxy narrator all along, the "narrator's" beloved, whom we learn was the very mysterious "stranger" who had played on the green team. Thus, what had seemed to be the trivial diary of a lonely tourist is revealed to be a story about a same-sex couple's fraught and final vacation together, told by the surviving partner from the perspective of the deceased.

In the interlacing plots of its parables and its frame narrative, *Garden of the Departed Cats* resituates the features of the Turkish journey narrative—the dandy's trek into an Anatolia that is at once strange and familiar, driven by a misguided longing to "be one with" the landscape—in a landscape managed by a faceless bureaucracy to which one must simply submit. These narratives suggest that "belonging" as an outsider, requires "getting in line" to such a degree that one becomes the very land longed for.

Bureaucratizing Belonging

The two parables I discuss in detail—"The Man who Misses his Ride, Night after Night" and "The Man Walking in the Tunnel"—both subtly describe a man transforming, through a latently violent bureaucracy, into the very landscape where his desires for authenticity attach. The second parable of *Garden*, "The Man who Misses his Ride," features a man who loves the sea and has desired all his life to go a coastal town called Sazandere. On the very day when he realizes he has lost all desire to go to Sazandere, he decides to go. As he travels, he shucks the

persona of passionate and dutiful citizen desiring to travel to a place where he belongs, to reveal a clumsy and habit-motivated tourist underneath. The narrative that follows reveals both the mechanization of the man's desire to travel to this "coastal town," and the spectralization of his citizenship brought about by the perpetually jamming cogs of this desire. The narrative ever so subtly suggests that the man's desire for the sea dissipates because he has transformed into the sea itself

At the beginning of this parable, the man's desire to belong in the world is projected onto an absent sea that at first indexes complete and harmonious togetherness. The man does not remember the origins of his desire to see Sazandere, but rather connects it to his love of the sea:

Each time he swam, every time his arms were cutting through the water and he watched the gash that almost opened on the water's surface closing back with relentless defiance, whenever he saw his legs swaying inside this cool, colorful gelatinous expanse, he would experience and grasp life with his whole being. (25)

The resistance of this gash to form—while it prefigures the moment at the end of the frame narrative when a hole in the earth appears to swallow up the narrator—is in this moment indicative of the spatial integrity of the sea, its unbreachable wholeness in the eyes of the man, whose body is encompassed utterly by its "gelatinous expanse." The man's fantasy of togetherness symbolized by the sea rather than the land suggests a desire for universal belonging.⁹ Yet, as Dickinson points out, the name of this imaginary town is incongruous with the man's expansive desires: "Though latent with the protagonist's love of water, this beach-town of his imagination does not logically describe a place by the sea: 'sazan' refers to the fresh water fish carp, and 'dere' to a small brook or stream, both reminiscent of a small, central

⁹ Similarly, the images of unification between body and landscape are a common trope in national allegories.

Anatolian town” (118). His desire to go to this “coastal town” thus indexes the trek to Anatolia conventionally seen in Turkish national journey narratives.

When away from the unificatory body of the sea, the man tries to simulate the sea by cobbling together metonymic talismans, bringing home “pebbles and shells so that he should never be without the sea” eating fish to try to “retrieve the smell of the seaweed and the beaches.” The man behaves as if having all the trappings of the sea will allow him to feel it bodily, to “soak up the sea with every pore of his body” (26). He imagines himself embodying, through this oceanic communion with the sea, a flattening of the planes of earth, sea, and air; in his head “he became the sea, he became the boat, and he became the fish; he disproved the old proverb about the fish climbing the poplar.”¹⁰ The sea becomes for him a key to breaching impossible divides. Yet, his desire to unite bodily with the sea manifests in dreams of a creepy eclecticism rather than harmonious unity: “transforming his limbs into sturgeon, and all the curves of his body into jellyfish, to wander the seaweed forests and plunge into currents of mackerel.” This agglomerate evokes what might be monstrous about a sea that totalizes, while its clumsiness speaks to the impossibility of the man’s fantasy.

The man’s chosen symbols for the sea inch from the close metonyms of pebbles, shells, and fish to the distant metaphors of poplar trees and machine sounds. He listens to “the breeze rustling the leaves on tree branches, and to the machines that sound like heartbeats” in an attempt “to find in these sounds the waves crashing against the shore, the sea’s beating heart” (25-26). The imagined mechanical heartbeats of the ocean prefigure the mechanization of the man’s own desires. What periodically signals to the man his need to return to the sea from his landlocked town to the sea is a similarly uncomfortable fusion of the natural and the mechanical: when a

¹⁰ “When the fish climbs the poplar” is the Turkish equivalent of “when pigs learn to fly.”

bird in the poplars repeats “its brief song made of two notes, one high, another low, sounded at fixed intervals,” the man knows “the time ha[s] come for him to return to the sea” (26).

Yet, what incites the man to finally go to the sea at Sazandere after years of being deterred is neither birdsong nor machine heartbeat sounds, but rather the loss of his desire entirely: on the year when “neither the poplars nor the bird stirred the sea in his heart,” he decides to go, stirred by “years of habit” into believing that he *had* to go (27). The man is thus driven towards his telos by *loss* of desire; it is force of habit that propels him along, perhaps a kind of mechanized desire for his lost desire itself.

The narrative continues to describe the spaces the man traverses in his journey across the land as sea-like, suggesting that his desire for the togetherness of the sea at Sazandere is only fulfillable in the smallest metonymic increments. When the man arrives at a bus terminal in a nearby coastal city, he is immediately “swallowed by the deafening rumble, a terrific tempest of noise.” Yet, these oceanic qualities are coded not as embracing, as in the man’s memories of the sea, but as entrapping:

Passing through the terminal gate, he had closed his eyes. Just the way he did when diving off a steep cliff, letting himself into the emptiness. As soon as he opened his eyes, he felt his legs tensing up—ready to start the push-and-spring motion—as if to free himself from the noise by rising to the surface. Yet the noise engulfed him like the water of a muddy lake, wrapped his body with its weeds—like the wild branches of a thousand trees—and assaulted his whole being; it had no surface to which one could escape. He could escape from this lake, this swamp of voices, only if he found the Sazandere bus, only if he sought refuge inside the vehicle, and let the road carry him away.

The man dives into this noise tempest like a deep body of water and then immediately tenses up, preparing to “free himself” from the “noise [that] engulfed him [...] wrapped his body with its weeds [...] and assaulted his whole being.” The sea’s totalizing quality—that it “had no surface”

even—becomes here a suffocating rather than liberating feature. Yet, despite this recoding of the sea as threateningly engulfing, the man’s drive toward the sea remains unhindered.

In response to these now threatening unifications, the man splits off not only from the sea-like terminal but also from himself. He begins to dream of filming himself walking around in a bazaar: he “watched himself from afar and from outside, from the street overlooking the open-air bazaar [...] through the eyes of his camera [...] as he walked through the bazaar, from end to end” (29). This separation is mimicked formally, as the indented passages of his wandering in the terminal periodically interrupt the “main narrative.” The man continues to split off from himself as he dreams, becoming “three people in one, standing both alongside and separate from the two in the bazaar, as if watching them” and then becoming “fourfold, as he watched himself standing in the terminal, and stood outside of everything he saw.” While he worries at first that these multiplications are “mishaps piling one on top of the other,” it is these very self-splittings that provide the subtle solution to his gridlock. It is implied that the man’s self-multiplication is what allows him to finally board a bus headed for Sazandere—as an individual, he is not worth the bus driver’s trouble; as a veritable group of himself he qualifies to go to Sazandere even though it is out of the way.

As he transforms through these self-splittings into tides perpetually breaking and washing away, he becomes comfortable with a kind of mechanical tourist lifestyle: “He rode the tram, went to the sea. Around evening, he returned, ate a good meal.” On another day, “he lay sluggishly in bed till nighttime, barely ate anything, didn’t even read books, felt too lazy even to glance at the evening newspapers he kept buying, and tossed them under his bed instead.” Absurdly, his repetitive visits to the terminal accumulate to the point that he begins to enjoy the

patterns he is subjected to: “Each night he overcame the anxiety that he might forget the sea or miss the bus, instead savoring more and more the pleasure of playing a game according to its rules.” He even seems to feel some control over them, that “he was “becoming a master of the chase.” Yet, at the end of his endeavor, when he finally succeeds in catching a bus to Sazandere, he celebrates *not* having mastered the chase, but rather believing himself to have mastered the skill of desiring: “So it is possible, he prided himself, when one works hard, better yet, when one desires something enough, if one knows how to desire.” Through these tourist habits, his desire is reduced to a kind of industry, work that is done toward reaching a goal, rather than the feeling of wanting the goal itself.

In the process of self-splitting through his bazaar dreams, the man is paradoxically able to witness his own forgetting of the sea, though without knowing whether it was himself or his other self who knew that he forgot: “It was the man in the bazaar who had forgotten the sea. But was it the man watching from the street who knew this, or the one walking in the bazaar/ from end to end?” Forgetting the sea seems to be a function of becoming-sea, a transformation of his desire into a death drive.

Being in the liminal space between knowing he has forgotten and not knowing because he has forgotten entirely prepares the man to keep moving at the moment when he arrives at his destination. Here, he is confronted with an utter lack that could have been debilitating for someone who has forgotten the sea so much he doesn’t know he has forgotten it: all alone, no dust burning his throat, no sound of the sea, no salt smell, no feeling of anger or surprise or sadness, no wonder as to where he is. Yet he walks. Sinking into the sand, the man moves forward; “He no longer cared about the sea. Nor about Sazandere.” The narrative shucks

unanswered questions in the same manner that the man divests his own suitcase and bag: “Was he standing on a seabed where the water had receded over the years?”; and “Was Sazandere—or wherever he happened to be—actually a desert?” These questions are asked not to be answered, but to be deposited. Embarking on this trip, the man had lost his desire itself, and seems to have now gained it back in the form of utter lack, desire as a wasted desert of no sound, no smell, no luggage, and no questions.

While the narrative does not make it explicit, the man arguably perceives this dustscape as a desert rather than an ocean because he has succeeded at *becoming* the sea itself. His desire for a unification with the world and the sense of belonging the sea provides have ultimately led him to give himself up to the world entirely. The spaces of the narrative—both the absent sea and the kafkaesque bus terminal—mechanize his desire, in a way helping him along towards his goal, but only by splitting him off from himself over and over again, turning him into so many waves, until he forgets what his desire was in the first place. Yet, this is of course a sinister success. Though the man had from the start a citizenly quality of loyalty to him—to the unifying sea above all else—this loyalty, in being taken up by the divisive bureaucracies of the bus station, has been transformed into utter touristic disattachment. The unattainable sea by Sazandere thus structures an elaborate desire machine that self-destructs throughout the course of the parable, transforming the man from aspirational citizen to spectral tourist into the object of his desire itself, the sea.

In the sixth parable, “The Man Walking in the Tunnel,” a man transforms into the tunnel he traverses, less through an authentic connection to the landscape, than through the tunnel’s maneuvers of making him more and more dependent on a broken, insular, faceless bureaucracy.

In many ways an inverse of the second parable, this tale opens at the seaside, with a young man, rebelliously detached from the laws of the land, slowly transforming first into citizen and finally into landscape. A young man who also loves the sea finds himself drawn to a cave at the seaside. He enters and finds a tunnel, which he decides to follow through to its end. Though he can see the light at the other side from the beginning, he ends up walking for innumerable days and nights, and when he finally reaches the end, he goes blind: as the narrative phrases it, he is functionally turned “inside out” (109), a veritable walking tunnel.

We are initially led to believe that what propels the man forward in the story is his own whim and rebelliousness, a wildness that likens him to elements of the natural world. The young man’s love for the sea follows upon and structurally imitates the way the currents are oriented toward the sea. Just as, “[a]t the mention of the sea, the currents that flow in every direction couldn’t hold back [...],” so too “[t]he young man couldn’t hold back—he is so in love with the sea” (99). There is an air of the tourist’s leisurely arbitrariness to his actions, as, after swimming in the beloved sea, “he rises and puts on his clothes” but “doesn’t walk back right away, deciding instead to stroll along the shore for a while” (99). When he comes upon a rubble heap, the narrative stubbornly withholds explanation of his whim—telling only that “[h]e experiences a strange feeling. There is no path through. Yet he very much wants to cross to the other side” (100). The plot seems to be propelled forward entirely by the enigmatic cogs of his whim—his “deciding instead,” his “strange feeling,” his “yet.” Though we are offered the explanation that this man lacks common sense, this is immediately qualified with the assertion that he in fact eschews such logic deliberately—“Not that he is lazy; rather [that] he dismisses common sense

and reasonable behavior as unnecessary limits.” It is distinctly—albeit ominously—implied that the man’s whims are a mark of his rebelliousness.

But it becomes clear that his rebelliousness is not merely similar to that of the environment, but is in fact both facilitated and fashioned by that environment. What was initially hinted at with the comparison to currents becomes glaringly clear—the man’s rebellious actions—both the actions themselves and their anti-establishment quality—are not only lubricated by an apparently sympathetic landscape but in fact utterly predicated and structured by an elaborate and fundamentally disharmonious environment. As he stubbornly proceeds towards the cave, the man finds the landscape magically providing a route for him at every turn. Trying to circumvent the rubble heap via the sea, he begins hopping along stones in the water, not realizing until he reaches the last stone that “the rocks have lined up like stepping-stones; his ordeal hasn’t been as significant as it has seemed” (101). When he is ready to give up for lack of further stepping-stones, the man “notices behind him a narrow opening where the sea meets the wall-like cliff facing the rock he is standing next to—an opening that resembles a cave entrance.” The landscape’s beneficence turns sinister here, as the cavern “seems to be smiling darkly,” which elicits an eerily marionette-ish smile from the man in return.

Once inside the tunnel, what appeared to be a phenomenon of the seaside landscape’s “natural” rebelliousness proves to be a function of a municipality’s clumsy bureaucracy. Well into the tunnel, the man sees a faded sign, its barely legible letters spelling, “DO NOT ENTER.” Finding this comical—in no way a deterrent—the man chuckles to himself, shrugs, and keeps walking—wondering if the sign was posted by the municipality (101-2). When he happens upon

a second sign, the man recognizes both the impotence of either sign to keep people out and their portentousness:

In the faint light, his eyes discern another inscription on the wall next to the steel mirror: ‘WISH YOU DIDN’T ENTER.’ He finds this vexing. He is willing to grant that the municipality might have posted this first message. But this one must have been written by someone with a penchant for tasteless jokes. [...] Besides, if the municipality deemed the tunnel dangerous, then it would have fenced off the entrance and rid itself of the problem.

This sign seems aware of its own fruitlessness, throwing into relief the perhaps deliberate ineffectiveness of the previous DO NOT ENTER sign, whose prohibition only becomes legible after it has already been transgressed. Though a taunt rather than an interdiction, WISH YOU DIDN’T ENTER is thus the functional equivalent of the faded and belated DO NOT ENTER sign, neither able to do more than sinisterly forebode. The signs don’t impede the man’s rebellious actions, but rather create the very conditions that make these actions legible as rebellion.

Ineffectual prohibitions, these signs at first seem to merely chasten the man, predicting his death by starvation. Yet, the man then imagines them as part of the tunnel’s disembodied plan to lure tourists. Beginning to worry that he will starve as the tunnel stretches longer and longer, he happens absurdly upon a vending machine, which delivers a freshly cooked plate of fried fish and sides in exchange for coins. Upon receiving this meal, the man’s first thought—surprisingly wry, given that he almost died of starvation—is “Figures! [...] It’s a scheme to lure the tourists...” (104). This commentary recasts the ominous signs as advertisements rather than warnings, suggesting that illicitness is part of what motivates the tourist’s desire. In this light, the sinister tunnel curates a touristic experience that has the built-in thrills and dangers of trespassing.

As though a sightseer pointing to a monument, the man then says aloud, “And look...” before reading the machine’s instructions for dispensing with rubbish and dishware: “*Discharge bones inside hole below. Deposit plate, fork and knife in box above machine. Pull lever in lower left corner.*” These instructions, presented as an additional layer of the tunnel’s elaborate tourist trap, figure the tourist’s desire as both mundanely and mechanically motivated, suggesting that the tourist derives pleasure from lever pulling, that there is something quintessentially touristic about the act of pulling a lever. Additionally, they suggest that tourism is as much about following instructions as it is about transgressing them.

The man, though he scoffs, “does everything as instructed,” but then furtively pockets the bread slices to eat later, as those were not accounted for by the instructions. Just like the DO NOT ENTER signs—which were made and placed in such a way as to be necessarily transgressed—the bread slices constitute a kind of trivial contraband or loophole that was predetermined for the tourist. His scorn—rolling his eyes at the signs, scoffing at the machine, pocketing the bread through a loophole—happens entirely according to the municipality’s own logic and leaves him with a prize that proves utterly useless when he almost starves later on.

Though the tunnel had pushed him to the verge of starvation before the first vending machine absurdly materialized, it then begins to magically provide food for the man at regular intervals according to his hunger: “Each time he feels hungry, he comes upon a vending machine. In a metallic echo of the sea’s stepping stones, the machines offer him just enough food—never too little or too much—just enough to curb his hunger” (105). In tension with the food machines’ magical moderation—appearing only when strictly necessary—the tunnel is also equipped with machines that function to deplete—cigarette machines and change machines, the

latter of which materialize (“pronto!”) the moment he runs out of coins. Together, these two types of machines—selling sticks that burn down to pass the time and money dissected for ready spending—both cause and perfectly represent touristic expenditure. The excess they both codify and generate—that there are “even” cigarette machines, that “coins come gushing out” of change machines in “pocketfuls”—is spent almost instantaneously in the narrative’s impatient pace, which qualifies in the very next breath, “But they are also spent along the way.”

The repetition of these coin-and-lever operated machines evokes the whole serial machinic quality of vacationing: buying tokens to travel, riding a tour bus from one rest stop to the next, and ringing bells to get dishes removed from one’s hotel room. That the machines simply appear when needed—just as the man’s beard seems to inexplicably always be just-shaven—evokes the disembodied machinery of a hotel staff, invisibly serving their clientele.

Interspersed with the man’s hopping from one vending machine to the next are quasi-existential, reverential musings on what brought the man to the tunnel in the first place. He seems unaware that his philosophizing on the yearning for a deeper reality is at odds with the reality of the vending-machine-run world he finds himself in, a cruel and indifferent consumerist municipality controlled by an invisible hand. Just after the man eats his first vending machine meal, he considers how “Having stared and stared at the perfectly level sea, the perfectly still horizon, he had almost forgotten that the world held another dimension” and recalls how, “at the sight of the wall, this forgotten dimension had again become reality” (104). Like Freud, the man seems to have become disenchanted with the oceanic feeling of togetherness—an unfulfillable and regressive desire. The clear implication is that the tunnel is precisely that other, forgotten

dimension, whose nostalgic capital lures the tourist with the promise of existential enlightenment.

But the passage upends itself, decoupling the tunnel from the referent of “forgotten dimension.” While the now-resolved past perfect of “had almost forgotten” and the past continuous of “had again become reality” suggest the reverie will conclude that the man has finally arrived, the man’s thought process curves imperceptibly away from these expectations. First it is revealed that the reality of this dimension is at once abrasively felt and hopelessly impalpable: “one that, almost hitting him in the face, was as close as it was insurmountable and disheartening.” As the reverie begins to resolve (“Just now he is able to understand the sensation...”), it suddenly recodes the man’s current existence of endless walking as itself “dimensionless”; “the reality of having long been advancing through a dimensionless, desolate world is slowly rising into consciousness, taking shape in his mind, in his heart” (104).

The meditation’s bait-and-switch of “forgotten dimension” for “dimensionless, desolate, world” perfectly captures the tourist’s contradictory desire for nostalgia in the form of novelty, achievable through the seemingly novel transgression of an age-old prohibition. On one level, the tunnel could be interpreted as the man’s path through himself to a deeper part of himself—something he can only see when turned completely inside out. Yet it is of course also a path to something soulless—a municipally determined tour of all the bells and whistles of consumer culture. The tunnel’s nostalgic capital is revealed to rely entirely on the novelty of lever pulling and vending machines planted by unseen and disembodied bureaucratic forces.

The man’s loss of sight coincides with his exit from the tunnel: “Soon he no longer sees the hole. He realizes he has lost his sight. He stops. If he turns around and reenters the darkness,

would his eyes see again? [...] His hand that's been feeling its way along the wall suddenly finds itself suspended in the void. There is no wall to his right or left." This journey to himself has severed the man irrevocably from his seaside utopia. He is at his core untouchable by the sun; though "the warmth spreads from his face into his being [...] deep inside, a spot remains ice-cold. The light's warmth cannot reach this spot." Like the man who misses his ride night after night, this man too has disengaged from the sea by the end of the tale. Though he has at last reconnected with this beloved entity, now "he is utterly alone, inside out." In a gruesome actualization of his journey through the tunnel to himself, he has been turned utterly inside out, no longer able to see the outside world, yet simultaneously remote from himself. This foreshadows the moment when the frame narrator falls through a hole at the end of the book, effectively turning the entire narrative that preceded inside out.

In this absurdist parody of touristic consumerism, the turning inside out of one's pockets becomes a turning-inside-out of one's body as well. As a kind of inverse of the previous parable, in which the man was willing to give himself up to belong to the world, this man's "rebellious" desire is *not* to belong, or more exactly, to belong only to himself. But, like in the second parable, this always-already mechanized desire also goes horribly wrong in the literalness of its success, ultimately manifesting in a radical and blinding turning inward. Through this "tourist trap" tunnel, the man becomes himself a kind of walking tunnel, turned inside out by a desire that is utterly beholden to a cruelly machinic municipality.

The Tourist Who (Be)longs

These parables suggest a fluid continuity between the "dandy" and the "provincial"—as their wandering men verge along a möbius strip between the two: in the first case, following a

trajectory from authentically local to mechanically touristic to one-with-the-sea; and in the second case, moving from detached outsider to dependent citizen to one-with-the-land. Such a möbius strip also fundamentally shapes the frame narrative itself, where each expression of “I” twists together the imagined voice of the now deceased “narrator” and the voice of his lover who we find out has performatively taken over the telling of the narrative from the perspective of the deceased. This metanarrative performance is echoed by the narrator’s and stranger’s performances as tourist to one another and to the town, in which a whole “theatrics of passing” emerges. In their theatrical modulations between performing-local and performing-tourist, which are entangled in a self-aware erotic roleplay of performing stranger to one another, the pair muddy the distinctions between dandy and provincial. Though this strategic conflation has recuperative power, it is hopelessly imbricated in the landscape’s bureaucracies, which devouringly enlist citizen and tourist alike. In the frame narrative, the failure to perform the right part consigns the performer to the fate of the men in the parables—condemning him to the sinister tourist traps of a clumsy yet prohibitive municipality.

The frame narrator’s first performance is as tourist to the town; he comments often and unevenly on his tourist status in relation to the attributes of tourists in general. Though he seems to know the language of the town, he takes pains to perform the casual—at times disdainful—ignorance and indifference of a certain type of tourist. Early in the narrative, he buys himself a candied wafer-wheel in a cafe and imagines he understands the wide-eyed waiter’s inexhaustible disbelief at the gluttonous eyes of “the tourists who think they can easily consume such huge sweets by themselves.” He proceeds to eat the entire candied wheel, “just to spite the waiter,” but then, reconsidering, realizes that the waiter’s wide-eyed expression was probably at the

discrepancy between his touristic behavior and non-touristic demeanor—how he spoke the language and read the local newspaper yet over-ordered and overate like a tourist (23). His sense of disjuncture here doesn't arise straightforwardly from his foreignness to the place, but rather from his sense of the cafe owner's uncertainty as to whether he "belongs" or not, from an internalized feeling of simultaneously fitting in and sticking out.

After eating his too-large wafer wheel, the narrator again encounters the mysterious stranger on a terrace at the back of the cafe that overlooks a medieval castle and courtyard. Having materialized out of nowhere, the stranger coolly comments on the view: "Striking, isn't it?" (24). As though this observation is a command, the narrator descends into the courtyard, looking erotically back at the stranger as he does so, and glimpses a notice that he can't quite read at first, but which he later finds posted in the courtyard. He proceeds to pretend not to care: "I assumed the customary indifference of the tourist, and read the notice from start to finish." The narrator's hyper awareness of his tourist status informs a particular performance of the touristic in an attempt to impress the stranger. In part, his indifference—like that of the man in the tunnel who scoffs at the municipality's signs a little too deliberately—provides a buffer against the power of the text of the notice, which remains as yet unrevealed to the reader.

In his nonchalance, the narrator also expresses disdain for a different type of tourist than he, namely the overzealous type performed by his love interest, the stranger. (Of course, in commenting on this quality of the "stranger's," the narrator at once critiques and admires this manic quality in himself.) This man, he says, embodies an "over-educated" kind of tourist—who "consult[s] every imaginable source, acquire[s] every bit of information they can find about the place" before visiting. Rather than allowing the land to reveal itself, these tourists "know

everything from street names to restaurants, from paintings and sculptures in the museums to the history and architecture of the ancient palaces” (54). For them, a trip is the culmination of research—not casual research, but rather a manic desire to assemble a totality of facts about a place. Upon reaching their destinations, such tourists “have learned more facts than even the residents will ever know about their own town.” In attempting to perhaps pass as locals in their knowledge, such tourists give themselves away in their overenthusiasm.

Yet the narrator is ultimately asked to dispense with his touristic persona and perform instead a *mélange* of citizen scripts. When invited to play a pawn for the town’s team (rather than the nomad’s team), he is asked to become a kind of municipal everyman. Suiting up, the narrator muses, “I was a city-dweller, a farmer, a carpenter, a butcher. I lived and worked both in and outside the city. I was a housebuilder, a weaver, I spun and dyed wool. I was a soldier, held a spear; I was a merchant with my money-bag under my tunic” (113).

In keeping with this role-change, the erotic plot begins to bubble up and break through the surface of the narrator’s touristic conceits. Yet, it does so primarily through dreams and telepathic exchanges. When the narrator waits in forced seclusion for the chess game to start, he dreams first of the stranger’s face—his hair “a paler shade of chestnut,” as though he is fading—and then, though realizing it is a dream, he awakens to a second dream of the two of them playfighting (112-13). These layers of abstraction also come into play in the narrator’s and stranger’s telepathic communications on the chess board—a conversation which is still paradoxically a performance, referencing its own unspokenness: “You can drown me in unspoken love./ Yes./ Because.../Because?/ I don’t know. Perhaps...You’re Afraid./ Yes” (174). They again read each other’s thoughts after the narrator loses the game for the purples and has

been kicked out of town: the stranger thinking, “I’ll come with you,” which surprises the narrator, who thinks, “You must be a dream” (233). The eerie unspokenness of these exchanges gives the stranger a ghostly quality, foreshadowing the moment when he appears to be swallowed up by the earth itself.

Yet, of course, the frame’s “big reveal” layers an additional performance atop this fast unraveling narrative. The narrator is in fact a tourist to the “I” he temporarily occupies, as he is the stranger performing the narrator performing his own tourist-ness. With an “I” that claims to now be more genuine, the narrator reveals the ruse: “I decided to [...] write what he couldn’t write, what he couldn’t tell anybody else” (255), clarifying: “He was the tall, dark one. I am a historian, it’s a fact” (256). Through an ominously incomplete postulation, he further reveals that their interactions were as much a performance as his *I*: “If I were to write/ that we had met months ago/ [...] that we had decided to participate as opponents (because our relationship relied so much on trials and tests) in this laughable, allegedly traditional game that was half unearthed from the dustbin of history and half fabricated for the sake of tourists” (255). He then trails off, demurring for the moment to see this narrative through to its outcome. As the (intended) narrator’s moment of not-belonging evinces—moving to capture a piece out of character with his submissive pawn—the ramifications of not playing to type can be catastrophic.

This reveal recasts all the layers of performance leading up to it as exercises in passing before one can belong. Sazandere, envisioned as a coastal city where the man will seamlessly gel with his oceanic surroundings, demands he first separate himself off from himself, offering as a reward a kind of deathly belonging in a waterless desert in Anatolia. Similarly, the tunnel of the sixth parable seems from the outside to offer the path to a natural utopia on the other side, a wild

landscape where the man, in his rebellious demeanor, would fit in. Yet this thoroughfare proves to be a “tourist trap” set up by a local kafakesque “municipality” that demands the man become irrevocably *like* this other landscape—a walking tunnel—before he can reach the landscape he desires. And of course in the frame narrative, the narrator’s failure to perform belonging to the town as a pawn leads to his bodily expulsion from this locale—and retroactively from his own narrative—into death.

The frame’s ending in part bespeaks the failure of this dandy as revolutionary or utopian figure, veritably gobbled up as he is by a municipality that demanded he perform the pawn’s script of “everyman.” Yet, in this failure, the frame’s reveal moment also performs a valuable resistance, disappointing the voyeuristic reportage associated with *Halkevleri* village trips and even national journey allegories. It thus expels *readers* from its narrative as well—ultimately revoking all that it has said before, positing an unwritten “real” narrative to which readers are denied access, somewhere behind the narrative they have just read and the radically destabilized “I” that narrated it.

Orpheus

Nazlı Eray’s novella *Orpheus* refigures the dandy as a cosmopolitan woman whose “internal colonialism” is of a landscape that is explicitly gendered masculine. More of a puzzle than a narrative, *Orpheus* is the first-person account of a Eurydice (Eurydike) who travels to the shore city of Izmir in order to investigate the enigmatic existence of an Orpheus (Orphee), who drives an Alfa Romeo convertible and lives on the outskirts of the city in a house shaped like a spaceship. Eurydice spends her days mired in the touristic non-place of her hotel room—

sleeping, sunbathing, and ordering Pepsi's—and then ventures outside at night, accompanied by her assistant Mr. Night (Gece Bey). The duo take a different path each night but always end up at the same place—a plot of land four hundred meters away from Orpheus's house—where they observe the play of light and shadows inside the house, safely, from afar. Predictably, Eurydice never comes face-to-face with Orpheus in the novella. Less predictably, she inadvertently kills him by projecting the film *Last Tango in Paris* on his house while he is inside. When the character Jeanne shoots a gun in the movie, the bullet kills Orpheus inside his house.

The absurdist novella is less concerned with Izmir as a geopolitical place than it is with Izmir as a site of being out of place. In the disjunctures between its plot and its narrative style, *Orpheus* explores the dialectic of ordinary and extraordinary that characterizes the tourist's experience: the counterintuitive tedium that accompanies adventure, as well as the odd grandiosity that attaches to triviality. The narrator's at once monotone and melodramatic descriptions of herself, the space she occupies, and her movements in space are swollen with ironic lack—as in statements such as “I cut my thumb a little, as I always do.” (2); “I saw a house like a space house” (15); and “I walked back and forth in the room for awhile” (27). In some cases, this “lack of a better way to put it” verges into utter tautology, as in her description of “the pigeon [which] had the dim look of a pigeon” (51). The hyper-simplicity of Eurydice's short sentences that curl back into themselves is parried by a fantastical excess in the narrative's anachronistic and anatomic plot twists: that the ancient Greek myth takes place in twentieth century Izmir; that Eurydice and Mr. Night communicate with a statue of Emperor Hadrian by sending and receiving letters delivered via carrier pigeon; that Eurydice's friend Ankara, the capital city of Turkey, calls her on the phone several times and eventually comes to visit,

bringing all of Tunali Hilmi avenue along with her; and that a mere two-dimensional projection of light and shadows breaches the protective sphere of Orpheus's spaceship shaped house, killing the mythic character inside with a cinematic bullet.

In its cannibalization of an ancient Greek myth, a military coup, an Italian emperor, a personified capital city, and an infamous Italian-made French movie with a global censorship history, this narrative is a frenzied jumble of so many intertexts. As such, the novella invites a reading of intertextuality as a kind of dandyism—the snobbery of borrowed ideas, whose perpetual references outside the story are spatially disunifying. Yet, there is a hidden symbiosis behind the sense of mismatch that results between spare language and chaotic plot. It is a narrative where nothing seems to quite fit, told by a tourist about her time in a city in which she does not quite fit. Where *Garden of the Departed Cats* frustrates the attempt to distinguish between dandies and provincials, Eurydice embodies dandyism to the extreme, keeping company with a herd of other intertextual “tourists” as she trivially wanders and wreaks havoc in a foreign text. Mirroring each other in both their revolutionary interruptiveness and their complacent triviality, dandies and intertexts both embody the failed utopian potential of the vacation space.

Whereas, in *Garden*, the landscape swallows those who traverse it through the malevolence of invisible bureaucracies, in *Orpheus*, space “devours” by virtue of its pervasive intertextuality, which makes everything in way foreign to itself. Orpheus is from the start of this narrative already the land in a way, traversed and mapped by Eurydice, and his tragedy is becoming-air, evaporating into utter placelessness rather than becoming place itself. Thus, the narrative manifests, in contrast to *Garden's* fear of the places that are malevolent, a fear of the groundlessness of being-worldly.

Map, Plans, Reliefs

In her wandering, Eurydice troubles over various aerial and panoramic representations of the coastal city, attempting to decode the treasure maps that all lead to Orpheus. Each of these spatial representations is incompatible with the next—at times suggesting that the city is underground (in Hell), at times above ground (in the desert, at the entrance to Hell), at times under water, in the sky, and even at times inside of Orpheus’s body or his psyche. As Erol notes in her introduction, somewhat complacently, Eray never resolves this ambiguity, instead “keep[ing] alive the potential for multiple interpretations that is at the core of the fantastic.” I suggest that this openness is less benign than merely an openness to interpretation; it is a cannibalizing openness, having the zombie-like quality of the intertext—infectious and uncanny, it is never quite itself, and makes everything around it not quite itself as well.

The first way in which the text makes space alien to itself is by stripping away all detail. Eurydice’s assistant Mr. Night inadvertently performs just such a task through his sketches of the city. The pair’s discussion of Mr. Night’s drawings creates an aesthetic dissonance between medium and message, dangling the promise of excess but providing the leaders with lack. After Eurydice requests on the phone that Mr. Night “sketch a detailed plan of this shore city” (8), Mr. Night confirms in person that he has done so: “Yes, I drew it up. And I drew it with a lot of detail” (9). As she examines the plan, Eurydice belabors the point, marveling, “the plan was very detailed and very beautifully drawn” (10). The sparse information readers are given about the plan unfolds slowly and redundantly, each development spaced a page apart—from the request to the fulfillment to the description. What could have been all one sentence—“I asked Mr. Night to sketch a plan of the shore city, and he did so with detail and beauty”—is broken down into bite-

size action units dissonant with the idea they are to convey of visual intricacy, themselves withholding all promised detail. When an impressed Eurydice asks what Mr. Night does for a living, his response is similarly underwhelming: “I’m not a city planner. And I’m not an architect. But I worked very carefully on the sketch the whole day...” (10, ellipses in original). Fittingly, Mr. Night only ever identifies himself by negation. Humbly insisting he is neither this nor that, his lack of expertise gives him a tourist quality of amateurishness, as well as the absent-from-itself quality of the intertext.

This lack of detail, by creating a disjuncture between what is said and how it is said, also enables a slippage between representing text and represented space. When Mr. Night first shows the plan to Eurydice in a cafe, she observes: “The shore city was truly very small. I leaned down and looked at it closely. The plan was very detailed and beautifully drawn” (10). For a split second, sitting in this abandoned and out of the way cafe, she seems to be a giant looking down on the city itself from a bird’s eye view, before we realize that she is looking only at Mr. Night’s plan of the city. The “it” that she looks at is effectively both the shore city and the map, at once the “real” and the signifier of itself. As happens over and over again throughout the novella, Eurydice turns the space of the city into not just text, but intertext, a pockmarked landscape of signifiers bereaved of both their signifieds and their contexts.

This quality of interchangeability gives the spaces of the novella remarkable shapeshifting powers. For example, the landscape conspires to make a stone relief of two figures ascending a staircase visible to Eurydice. She and Mr. Night try to use this relief to figure out whether they are inside or outside of the underworld, and where the entrance or exit lies. This clue Eurydice “finds” not by looking, but through the invisible machinations of the landscape:

her foot catches a rock in the plot of land near Orpheus's house, she staggers, and then, she explains, "Some force beyond my senses compelled me to bend down and look at the stone" (44). This enigmatic force grows uncanny when Mr. Night remarks that it may "still" be alive; "after all, we're in the middle of an archaeological site" (44). The power of the landscape—while perhaps benevolent in showing Eurydice the stone in the first place—becomes ominous, as a mysterious unseen night animal parries Mr. Night's remark, howling the marks on the stone into being. This animal, though unnamed here, we are elsewhere told is the dog Argus, an allusion to Odysseus's loyal dog who waits for his return home. Robert Finn's translation amends the dog's name to Cerberus, the three-headed dog who stands guard at the entrance to the underworld. Yet, the mismatch of Argus standing guard—whether intended by Eray or not—is a fitting mismatch in the grand scheme of the novella's pastiching of intertexts, and builds a sense of uncanniness—the presence of home where it does not belong.

Thus, this ambiguity—whether the howling dog is loyal and single-minded or malevolent and three-minded—interlaces with an uncertainty as to whether one is "home" or not, which quickly verges into the existential ambiguity of whether one *is* or not. This ontological anxiety is sparked by Mr. Night's own Orphic moment; when he goes back to look at the stone in the light of day—just as mythic Orpheus turned to look at Eurydice from the lighted threshold of the underworld—one figure on the staircase mysteriously disappears from the relief. Taking this change to represent the present, Eurydice initially thinks it means that Orpheus is gone from the world entirely. Upon seeing him bumbling around in his spaceship house, she is then forced to conclude the disappeared figure is her: "This means I do not exist right now, or death is very close to us" (55). What had been an epistemological dilemma for mythical Orpheus ("Is she still

there?") morphs for our Eurydice into an ontological one ("Am I here?"). The stone relief's creation of an uncanny landscape through its garbling of intertexts adds to the growing sense that our robotic protagonist is not only touring Izmir, but is also touring what it means to be human.

It is further implied that Eurydice's existential journey is novelly predicated on an objectified *male* object, one that is both as encompassing and as fragmented as the metaphors of "motherland" in national journey narratives. Eurydice describes her journey to Orpheus as at times a journey through his very body and psyche. This is first obliquely suggested by Mr. Night's plan of the city itself; though translated into English as "plan," the word in the Turkish original is *kroki*, a borrowing from the French *croquis*, which refers to sketches of human models posing and reposing. Eurydice later directly postulates that the land is part of Orpheus's body, marveling: "Ours was a strange journey [...] It was as though we were trying to get to a man by making our way through the labyrinth inside him" (22). Rather than a passing thought, the notion gets re-evoked in the viscerality of Eurydice's night walks to Orpheus, in which "the night [is] as warm as blood" (23) and the goat trails "twis[t] and tur[n] like veins" (65). This fantasy of body-landscape unification is a familiar one in the journey narratives Parla cites, but here it is inverted, a masculine landscape traversed by a female protagonist.

The dawning of a feminist utopia suggested by this inversion of gender roles seems confirmed by Emperor Hadrian's observation that "the map of the world has changed" since his time (69). Overwhelmed by disparate news he heard on the radio, Hadrian admits his own tyrannical approach to finding "solutions" ("I... live by solving problems. Those I cannot solve, I use my authority to cut, to eradicate") and reels at the unwieldiness of problems today ("The results of history have gone beyond my power of authority... how much the world has grown and

how helpless mankind is in the face of magnitude”). His powerlessness in the face of new problems arises in part from his new experience of immobility: “All of my actions are limited by this archaeological site and the fact that I’m made out of stone.” His radical physical limitations now that he is a statue oddly align him with the Eurydice of myth whose reality was confined to stone, who couldn’t depend on her own agency to ascend the staircase of the underworld and emerge into the light. Though Hadrian is distraught, however, his lamentations of the loss of empire and the impotence of a single emperor’s authority “to cut, to eradicate” problems that cannot be solved, implicitly contain the feminist hope for a non-unilateral method in response to problems of great magnitude. This hope attaches to the idea of a map when Hadrian concludes, “In other words, maps have changed a great deal since my time.”

Yet, however it is that “maps these days” can be characterized, they prove fatal for the object of Eurydice’s affections. As the stone relief’s flickering apparition and disappearance foreshadows, Orpheus ultimately disappears—killed not just by a trans-dimensional fictional bullet, but also by the light and shadows which cast a “map of judgment on the lines of his face” (106). As *Last Tango in Paris* plays on the spaceship house, Eurydice is unable to resist locking her eyes on Orpheus throughout the shooting scene, which plays in fits and starts as the action of the novella crawls forward in slow motion. In this inversion of the myth, Eurydice’s compulsive looking is damning for Orpheus: as Eurydice explains, in a sentence of (for this novella) rare length, “I had to look at the whole map of judgment on the lines of his face, the map that would stop all the decaying, destroying answers to problems, stop fate itself, the map that was set up to make a new fate” (106).¹¹ Whereas Orpheus’s body could be viscerally felt in the landscape, hot

¹¹ Onun yüzündeki çizgilerden, tüm sorunların çürütücü, öldürücü yanıtlarını, yazgıyı durduran, sonra yazgıya kurulan, bütün bir yargının haritasını görmeliydim. (135)

and pulsing like blood in veins, his face here is doubly abstracted—not just a map but a “map of judgment”—set up for a higher utopian cause. The moralism of a judgment (*yargı*, literally “sentence”) is imagined to promise a better future through debts paid for a past crime whose details go as unstated as those of Mr. Night’s plan of the city.

Throughout the novella, the whole space of Izmir is compressed into various two-dimensional forms, the details squeezed out, and the arbitrary landmarks magnified. In effect, such compressions map space rather than pictorialize it, creating tapestries of intertext crushed together onto the same collapsible and expandable plane. In effect Eurydice turns everything she touches into a kind of intertext—making the whole landscape uncannily alien to itself.

Ankara the tourist visits Eurydice city

In her introduction to the English translation, Erol suggests the narration takes away the male gaze and gives us female agency in its stead. Much of Erol’s praise of the novella lies in the claim that it uses fantasy to offer a feminist counternarrative to the social realist novels of preceding decades in Turkish literature, and, more broadly, to restore agency to the “abducted maidens” of ancient myth. Yet, in this inversion, where the “maiden” goes in search of the man, Eurydice exhibits remarkable inertia, holding still while the land perpetually rearranges itself around her. Despite her goal being from the outset to reach Orpheus, she never tries to approach any closer than the plot of land four hundred meters away from his house, and is utterly susceptible to every possible derailment that the sometimes hospitable sometimes malevolent shore city presents her with along the way. Eurydice is derailed by every kind of touristic quotidian distraction—the sun that incapacitates her during the day, the rain that delays her film screening—as well as by fantastical, bizarre, alarming contingencies, like the stone relief that

demands her attention in its vicissitudes, and the walls that materialize and dematerialize around her as she treks to Orpheus's house each night. In perhaps the biggest such tangent of the novella, an entire city neighborhood comes to "visit" Eurydice, impishly trapping her in its labyrinthine street and side streets. In her confusion and distress, Eurydice suggests the experience is both uncanny and disorienting, yet she continues to move through the city in a perfectly ordinary and even leisurely fashion.

In the build-up to this scene, a personified Ankara calls Eurydice several times on the phone, always with the tone of a pushy and carefree female friend. When Ankara first calls, laughingly threatening to visit, she sets the stage for a joke about spatial metonymy: Eurydice, told by the bellboy that "Ankara's calling you, ma'am," wonders who could be calling her from the capital, and is then surprised to discover that the city itself is calling her (15).¹² More absurdly, Ankara tells Eurydice she plans to leave herself and fly to the shore city "on the plane called Ankara" (16). Eurydice quickly gives up her fruitless pleas to Ankara to stay put, begging her to at least pack light: "Forget the universities and all that. Please don't bring the post office, the Parliament, [...] the markets, the malls, Ulus Square, the skyscrapers" (17). When Ankara calls again to tell Eurydice she has arrived, the city of the plains is "full of fun," (20) and after yet a third phone call, she is, Eurydice remarks, "as always, full of life" (59). In these phone calls, the capital city is mischievous and cackling, immune to reason, indifferent to protest—an animated figure to counterbalance comatose Eurydice.

When Eurydice finally treks out to Tunali Hilmi Avenue, the trip has a spontaneous quality to it, as though she has been whisked to the neighborhood by a whirlwind. Initiated not by Eurydice's stated intentionality to reach a destination, but rather by the surroundings molding

¹² "Don't you recognize me? I'm Ankara. The place you're from. The place you live, Ankara" (15).

themselves fantastically around her, the visit begins and ends with what appears to be Eurydice's personal bus speeding along out of nowhere and then crashing to a halt to pick up the guileless heroine. It is called the Number II EGO bus, and contains no other passengers, as though it exists purely for Eurydice and the "I" of her psyche. Despite the magical quality of the bus, the action here of course unfolds through Eurydice's characteristically choppy stream of simple sentences: "The front door opened and I got on the bus./ The bus was completely empty. I sat in one of the front seats. We started to head off at top speed towards the hill./ I was excited." Where the Sazandere-bound man is surrounded by buses that are for everyone but himself, Eurydice gets her capital "ME" bus all to herself.

Though Eurydice seems to know the bus is headed for Tunali Hilmi Avenue, she is taken by surprise upon arrival at the labyrinthine clutter of it all. Her first response to the noise and crowdedness of the city is distress: "With the tranquility of the archaeological site and the sharp, intoxicating iodine smell of the sea lost and gone in this web of noise I had unwittingly entered, Tunali Hilmi's utter confusion completely disoriented me" (85). She recalls with her characteristic melodrama: "For a moment I thought my heart would stop./ I trembled for a moment in this explosion of consciousness"; then later complains that "the sun striking my eyes from the cars, windows, and hoods made me dizzy" and that "the sound of a horn that was stuck kept echoing in my ears"; later compares herself to "an animal whose leash had been untied" (86); and later recalls feeling "like I would drown." It is comical how at odds these clamors are with Eurydice's utterly bland and civilized actions. Her distress is comfortably couched in her own accounts of the pleasant (or at least innocuous) activities she fills the time with: going shopping, exploring familiar streets, people watching, and riding a taxi. "I thought of looking at

my watch. It was 5.30,” she says. “I wandered purposelessly down the street, the way I used to do on Sundays,” she recalls. “I went into a shop./ It was a supermarket,” she begins (85). “I had a hard time making myself leave the supermarket,” she concludes (86). Touring human emotions, Eurydice insists she is overwhelmed, but the form in which she says these things is peculiarly underwhelming.

As Eurydice grows more distressed, her horror attaches to the unexpected familiarity of her surroundings. She starts turning left and right onto different streets in search of one she does not already know, but everything is familiar: “I passed in front of buildings that I knew”; “[t]his also was one of those streets I had walked along a thousand times”; “I saw a familiar face in the crowd” (86). When she gets in a taxi and tries to return home, every turn left or right reveals yet another familiar Ankara street, as though the neighborhood is building itself larger and larger around her. Much of her alarm surfaces while she is comfortably reclined in this taxi, commanding the driver to make one turn after another in search of a new street, until finally, beaten, she recalls “I leaned back in the seat and lit up a cigarette./ I could no longer think straight.” It seems that becoming “bored” as she does in this episode is precisely what produces the dissociative feelings she later expresses to Mr. Night, of being “swallow[ed] [...] up like a nightmare” (89). The existential dilemma this familiarity creates for Eurydice is bound up in the leisure class trappings of her touristic persona, in “the cookies, the package of cigarettes, and the newspaper” that sit on her lap as she rides through the city in style. Though she blames her dismay on the “oppressiveness” of the capital, it could also plausibly be read as exasperation at intrusions of the mundane on her touristic adventure.

In its excursion to the everyday, this is one of a very few passages in the novella where we get a glimmer of ordinary, non-touristic human beings going about their daily business. After Eurydice spends two paragraphs listing all the items she ogled in the supermarket, she takes one sentence to observe how “the salesgirls in their blue uniforms looked at me in surprise” (86); she certainly doesn’t waste any time agonizing over the reasons for their stares. She later passes by the street of her shoemaker, his shop shutters closed, sees a punk couple walking by arm in arm in heated discussion, and takes note of a cucumber seller salting peeled cucumbers while youths gather around his stand laughing and talking. Her sense of uncanniness doesn’t attach to the social problems indexed here—she doesn’t question why the shutters are closed, she doesn’t wonder what the man “who looks like he is up to no good” is discussing so passionately, and doesn’t question why the cucumber seller turns the radio off as she walks by—a selective disinterest which symptomizes her utterly naive dandyism.

There is another moment of familiarity that—while it may rattle readers—does not seem to perturb Eurydice one jot. When she walks by the cucumber seller, an announcement blares on his radio: “As the government crisis caused by the failure to agree on a coalition among parties reaches its sixty-third day...” but the seller quickly switches it off as she walks by (87). Though Eurydice has heard announcements pertaining to this government crisis, she is not startled or curious, but simply continues on her way, quickly becoming bored. Later on in the taxi, she sees the physical manifestations of the coup alluded to on the radio: “As the police and soldiers with guns in their hands lined themselves up on either side of the road, a jeep with a blue spotlight on top passed quickly in front of us.” This police car followed by a cavalcade of jet-black cars is clearly the cause of the traffic-jam, but Eurydice has little time to trouble over it, as her magical

EGO bus re-materializes at just this moment to whisk her off back to Izmir. When she hops on board, the traffic goes back to normal, the road narrows, and the bus only speeds up for a second before slamming on its brakes, having already arrived at its destination in the shore city. Thus, as a tourist in Izmir, and an intertext of ancient Greece, Eurydice seems to be utterly exempted from the effects of the coup going on in Ankara in the narrative present.

The ways in which Eurydice “tours” in this passage and in the novella more generally complicate the idea that fantasy is inherently subversive or feminist. As Reina Lewis insists, the “heroicisation of the oppressed can obscure the web of local relations which provide the context for and often the limits of resistance.” When we read Eurydice as mere human tourist, her passiveness points grudgingly but undeniably towards such a limit. Her inertia derives from a power that aligns her with the national patriarchy she would seem to be resisting. The mere fact of Ankara coming to visit shows the degree to which her presence magnetically attracts and distorts her surroundings, practically drawing the capital city to her doorstep at the flick of a wrist.¹³ Moreover, she has the power to ignore, overlook, and supersede not just the drudgery of everyday work, but also the political strife going on around her. The shopgirls gawking at her and the cucumber seller turning off the radio as she walks by reflect in part their own distrust of the magically moneyed protagonist, who proves to be every inch the tourist even upon her short return “home” to Ankara. Eurydice is blissfully unaware of the ways in which her leisure class lifestyle—her very presence in this coastal city, not to mention her ability to sleep, sunbathe, and shop all day, and then walk around past curfew at night—unfairly exempts her from the political

¹³ This calls to mind Blunt and Rose’s admonition: “To overlook the roles played by colonizing women helps to perpetuate imperial notions of transparent space and its unproblematic mimetic representation not only of an ‘other’ but also of itself” (8).

realities announced by the radio and implied by the blank stares given her by the city's everyday inhabitants throughout the narrative.

On another level, however, Eurydice is also a formal creature, a robotic intertext who is clumsily touring a human story. We could consider Eurydice's characterization of her experience in Ankara as more broadly indicative of her animatronic being-in-the-world: "It's something unexpected, between seeing and not seeing, like being here and not being here at the same moment" (90). While as tourist figure she parodies the entitlement and boredom of the leisure class, as intertext, her absurd, not-quite-there quality subverts the patriarchal canons and myths of empire. Her narrative disappoints the expectations of transparency and mimesis that attach to colonial modes of knowing and showing. Formally, she plants readers in an uncanny neighborhood similar to this labyrinthine Tunali Hilmi Avenue, disorienting them through decontextualized familiarity. The phenomenon of happening upon a familiar street whichever direction you turn in occurs for readers throughout the entire novella, not just through the intertextually familiar names of mythical characters and gestures from film noir, but also through Eurydice's mundane micromovements that get tiresomely reiterated, like every time she checks her watch or falls asleep or begins to write a letter. Much of the narrative feels like already-treaded ground, being pointlessly retraced, cursed to endlessly repeat itself. Thus, while she may not as passive tourist reclaim her agency as passive tourist, as intertext, she takes a different feminist tack, refusing readers access to the kinds of details they feel entitled to in a narrative. Eurydice's role as both tourist and intertext in this scene, and in the novella more broadly, thus bespeaks both the failures and the hopes of feminist ideals in the aftermath of the 1980 coup.

Touristic Intertexts: *Last Tango in Paris* in Izmir

The novel version of *Last Tango in Paris*—in both its plot and Eurydice’s engagement with it—creates for the heroine yet another leisure bubble outside of her quest for Orpheus. Each time Eurydice reads this novel—flipping to a random page rather than methodically working her way through the narrative—she is either smoking in bed or sunbathing on the balcony. She precedes and follows her reading with primping and pampering: smoking, showering, washing her hair, letting her hair dry in the sun, and napping. As the novella depicts it, the plot of the novel, too, celebrates this leisure class lifestyle, its love story revolving around the dream of what Eurydice elsewhere refers to as a “decompression chamber,” not unlike Orpheus’s spaceship mansion at the outskirts of the city. As the novel’s preface explains, Jeanne and Paul “seek their happiness in each other’s existence in an empty house, far removed from every thought and feeling” (48).

This preface, which is introduced as though it is the beginning of the narrative itself rather than paratextual matter, interlaces a fantasy of isolation with the dream of a new universe. Its language slides between the particulars of the film and broad generalities about a global crisis. The passage opens with an apocalyptic tone, moving quickly from a comment on the popularity of this film, to musings on the common fears of global warming, nuclear energy, and overpopulation. Perhaps fittingly for a film about sex and self-destruction, its global audience is said to be “reproducing too. Like an ant heap that has begun to feel the heat” (47). This mass-scale reproduction is then funneled into the love plot of two characters:

The female lead of *Last Tango in Paris*, Maria Schneider, with her mini-skirt and maxi-coat, is one of thousands of young girls who wander around among us. Marlon Brando, wading through the wet streets with his hands in his pockets and

his collar raised, is one of the thousands of men going through a crisis, or perhaps all of them.

Here, the actress Maria Schneider is conflated with her character Jeanne, who is “one of thousands,” just as Marlon Brando *is* his character Paul who *is* all men. The transversability of these figures between particular and universal seems to lie in their easily gendered clothing and gestures here—though the mini-skirt and maxi-coat are *hers*, they also make her like “thousands” of wandering girls, just as Brando’s masculine command of his pockets and his collar equates him with thousands of men. Their story is presented as exemplary of “that strange excitement, that hypnotic, primitive force, that disturbing eroticism that motivates mankind,” their dalliance bound up in a broader quintessential human experience. Yet, this universally “primitive” narrative is cast at the same time as being innovative, inciting the dawn of a new era. The passage is peppered with the optimistic language of novelty: “The first showing of *Last Tango in Paris*, on October 1972, will be known as the beginning of a new period in cinema”; it offers “a new dimension and understanding for the seventh art”; it signals “a turning point,” the dawning of “a new age in the universe of cinema.” These professions of artistic innovation blend almost seamlessly into a utopian vision of the human experience in general: “It could be the beginning of a new life” (48).

This utopian notion of the love nest that is at once isolated and universal, and which promises a new and better life, is thrown into relief by radio announcements that precede Eurydice’s first encounter with the book as well her screening of the film, about a local, city-wide lockdown and curfew called for by the new administration. Before Eurydice ever cracks the book, she turns on the radio to hear the sound of a “full deep male voice” announcing in all caps the presence of a “NEW ADMINISTRATION” and the institution of a city-wide lockdown and

curfew.¹⁴ Read in this context, the language of change in the novel's preface is ominous rather than uplifting, its rhetoric and time frame overlapping with the unstable political climate of the 1970s : the first showing of the film in 1972 follows hard upon the heels of the 1971 coup in Turkey, and film director Bertolucci's obscenity trial in 1976 as well as the banning of the film in Italy and myriad other nations throughout the 70s and 80s evoke the wave of censorship and trials that bracketed the 1980 coup. Framed by the hypermasculine voice on the radio proclaiming a new administration, the rhetoric of innovation in this passage thus drags with it a fear and weariness of starting over again under the auspices of martial law, just as the "dream" of holing up in an empty house brings with it the constrictive connotation of a mandatory lockdown. These evocations, rather than reducing the film to a mere allegory for military coups in Turkey, instead situate these coups in a complex international web of curfews, censorship, trials, conflicting ideologies, and disappointed optimism.

Just as the radio announcement of the citywide lockdown directly precedes Eurydice's first reading of *Last Tango in Paris*, a radio announcement in response to the coup prefaces Eurydice and Mr. Night's screening of the film on Orpheus's house. Unlike the deep-voiced all caps announcement, this is a utopian plea for a society that does not depend on the death penalty for justice: "The world that I and others like me want is not one in which people do not kill one another, but a world in which it would be unjustifiable to kill someone." (101). Yet, the speaker laments this as an impossible dream: "In this we are in contradiction. Because the world we live in is one where it is considered just to kill. If one wants to change this, it seems necessary to bear

¹⁴ The announcement appears in all caps, as though shouted: "AS OF THIS MOMENT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION HAS TAKEN OVER PUBLIC AUTHORITY IN ORDER TO ENSURE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SECURITY./ ALL DEPARTURES FROM AND ARRIVALS IN THE COUNTRY HAVE BEEN HALTED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. AS OF THIS MOMENT A 24-HOUR CURFEW IS IN EFFECT."

in mind that one might have to kill” (102). These words ominously set into motion the film and the culminating scene of the novella, in which contradictions collide upon the facade of Orpheus’s house.

Inspired by the maeanadic dismemberment of Orpheus, the novella’s climactic moment overlays the filmic objectification of women, with the intertextual collaging of images, with the tourist’s inadvertently violent divisions of space. The first clip of the film that plays is of Jeanne being introduced to her boyfriend Tom’s film crew, who, as Tom excitedly explains, plan to film all her gestures and interactions with Tom moving forward. Though this clip occurs much later in the actual film, it is played first here, suggesting the intrusion of the camera on Jeanne’s every seemingly private experience hereafter. Tom clearly sees his own directorial vision as romantic: “If I kiss you that could be a film,” he intones; “If I stroke your hair that could be a film” (102). The fulfillment of this dream by another man in a later clip—where Paul postcoitally touches and kisses Jeanne’s face and hair in the presence of a conspicuous sound crew—reveals the voyeuristic capacity of Tom’s directorial enterprise.¹⁵ The presence of a film crew that doesn’t belong on screen, in Jeanne’s house, or in Paul’s apartment—evokes the intrusiveness of the intertext, but also its power to make visible the taboos of private spaces.

The second clip that plays over Orpheus’s house—which happens to be the opening scene of the film—pans voyeuristically over Jeanne’s body and her movements. The scene frames this scopophillic moment with the visual slicing up of space: “The sunbeams were

¹⁵ Though this scene is not “replayed” in the novella, Jeanne later calls Tom’s filming of her “rape,” saying to him at a subway stop, “I’m tired of being raped.” This accusation disturbingly echoes actress Maria Schneider’s own statements about her experiences with director Bertolucci, who improvised the film’s infamous butter scene—in which Paul, using butter as lubricant, anally penetrates Jeanne against her will—and demanded the young actress perform the unscripted scene on the spot.

playing on the intricate iron fence work on the bridge. Without their knowledge even, they were trapped within the flowered iron columns” (103). The camera then goes on to reveal Jeanne piece by piece, starting with her accessories, then moving to her hair, her fur coat, her lips, her “well-developed body,” her tight dress, and her long legs. The camera then takes a quick glance at predatory Paul, the man with the “hard, rigid, mocking” face (103). In inverse tandem with the film’s dismembering objectification of Jeanne is the male-directed scopophilia in the novella: each time the spatial integrity of the house or the film breaks—when curtains flick open or closed, or when a shadowy third figure appears on the screen, Eurydice stops the film to try to get a glimpse of her beloved.

Although she plays a part in this parceling, Eurydice laments the film’s incoherence and incompleteness. Her realization that the reels are mixed up inadvertently voices the reader’s experience of the entire novella: “Forgive me, Emperor, sir, they’ve cut the film up and turned it into nonsense. You saw how suddenly it jumped from place to place!” (105). Her mysterious “they” suggests this cut up version is the product of censorship, which in turn implies the same possibility of the novella itself. Just as the resulting film is “nonsense” in Eurydice’s eyes, she is to readers in some ways a trivial and infantile product of the kinds of decontextualization that censorship entails.

The final scene of the film is parceled up into even shorter, joltier clips, interspersing the slow-motion action of the novella and contaminating the space of Orpheus’s home with the space of the film. As Jeanne, now running away from Paul, finds the key and fumbles to open the door to her apartment, Orpheus’s face finally becomes visible to Eurydice. Like Eurydice, Orpheus becomes intertext here, a touristic intrusion in the film just as the film intrudes into his home—

“This person was out of place, caught in a whirlpool of images, someone who didn’t know what to do” (105). In keeping with its inversion of the myth, Eurydice’s looking coincides with Orpheus’s consignment to the underworld; here, Jeanne pulls out her gun and shoots, killing this intruding intertext that Orpheus has become in lieu of Paul. The parallel that has been running all along between the camera shooting and gun shooting becomes overt here, as vision and violence, line of sight and bullet path come crashing together.

Read as a political critique, the novella’s treatment of *The Last Tango in Paris* cuts many ways: both against the film’s vision of a failingly limited and exploitative universalism, and against the film’s own solution to that failure; both against Eurydice’s naive understanding of the film’s violently captured “love story,” and against the Italian government’s unilateral censorship of the film’s “dangerous ideas.” More broadly, the film, cut up and spliced back together, negotiates anxieties about a cosmopolitanism that zombifies, turning text into intertext and land into air.

Conclusion

In a way *Garden of the Departed Cats* and *Orpheus* negotiate opposite but interlocking anxieties—the former tells narratives of “becoming-land” to examine the violence of place-based “authenticity,” while the latter tells a story about “becoming-air” to interrogate the dangers of detached cosmopolitanism. The characters of *Garden of the Departed Cats*, though attempting to “pass” wherever they are, are only able to achieve “belonging” by submitting to a violently transformative bureaucratic landscape. Eurydice, on the other hand, ever the privileged tourist, denecessitates her own belonging by reordering the world and the text around her. The naive dandies of these narratives are the perfect vehicles for exploring both the absurdity of projected

modes of place-based belonging, and at the same time of articulating a deep ambivalence towards the available modes of global citizenship.

Yet, these citizens of nowhere are also revolutionary figures in both cases—queer and feminist rebels in form if not in plot; they radically destabilize their own narrating “I,” and cloud the reader’s potentially voyeuristic view onto the vacation locales they visit. The proxy narrator of *Garden* expels readers from a hidden “real” frame narrative just as the narrator has been fatally expelled from the town. In omitting to integrate its myriad parables and frame, instead allowing for their orthogonal narratives to spike outward, the narrative revolts against the tyrannical demand to fit in and obey that its characters are subjected to. In *Orpheus*, Eurydice’s flat affect, withholdingly short sentences, and jolty narration all disappoint readers’ expectations of being invited into a fantasy world. Instead, she embodies intertext, formally becoming a kind of zombie Midas that turns all she touches into intertext, taking everything out of the comfort zone of its context. Both tourist protagonists are bumbling and solipsistic, but also full of revolutionary disruptiveness, just as their vacation spaces are coldly bureaucratic, yet rebelliously resistant of the reader’s objectifying gaze.

3. Echolocating the National Beyond in Epics of the Everyday

The Sun-Language Theory, presented at the Third Language Congress in 1936, famously posited that all human languages evolved from an Ur-Turkish. The theory was shaped in part by the work of Viennese linguist Hermann Kvergic, who mapped old Turkic phonemes onto expressions of phenomenological proximity, marking linguistic shifts from closeness (indicated by “m” from *men*, the old Turkish word for “I”), to proximation (“n” from *sen*, meaning “you”), to broadness (“z” from *biz* and *siz*, meaning “we” and “you [plural]”). İbrahim Necmi Dilmen expanded Kvergic’s theory to account for all 168 phonemes used in Turkish, ascribing to each a “psychological unit of meaning,” which he argued was inherent to the phoneme and could be tracked through the roots of Latin, Hittite, Sumerian, and old Chinese. The most primal phoneme, “ağ” (pronounced like an elongated “ah”), was said to be the exclamation uttered “when the first human language speaker first gazed at the sun” (Ertürk 98).

So titled, the Sun-Language Theory was spatialized in Dilmen’s presentation through diagrams of lettered concentric circles marking the self’s consciousness of and proximity to the objects in its zones of vicinity. This faux phenomenological interest was readily scalable to a broader national self-consciousness in relation to Turkey’s proximate external objects. The diagrams’ circles—purportedly emanating from the central perceiving “I”—elaborately “appropriated the subjective and intersubjective, for the nation’s needs and ends,” to use Nergis Ertürk’s turn of phrase (100). Jale Parla has stressed how the theory put a reimagined linguistics to important geopolitical work more broadly: “The invented language, together with the invented history, was expected to map a new national homeland, Anatolia, the territory reclaimed by the

Independence War” (“The Wounded Tongue,” 30). This mapping was complexly internationalist yet anti-cosmopolitan, unifying yet separatist: seeking to align Turkey with Europe through a narrative of cultural superiority, and to unite an Anatolia that was fundamentally diverse through the erasure of its heterogeneous Ottoman-Islamic past (Ertürk 100). Centered and totalizing, the Sun-Language exemplified the monolingual paradigm and its investments in authenticity, rootedness, and static belonging.

Though discredited by many of the scholars who attended its presentation in 1936, the Sun-Language Theory was by no means anomalous in its attempt to remap the nation through linguistic means. The Language Reform of 1928 (*Dil Devrimi*) converted Ottoman Turkish from an Arabic to a Latin script, and required the new alphabet be implemented in both the official documents of state institutions and in the activities of private societies (Zeydanlıoğlu 103). Following Atatürk’s urging in 1930 that “the Turkish nation, which proved able to protect its land and its independence, must also liberate its language from the yoke of foreign languages” (qtd. in Koçak 314), the Turkish Language Institute (*Türk Dil Kurumu*, TDK) was founded in 1932. The TDK went about systematically purging Turkish of its Arabic and Persian influences and introducing in their place “pure” Turkish words derived from Old Turkic roots (Zeydanlıoğlu 103). With the *Soyadı Kanunu* of 1934, which required all citizens to adopt Turkish surnames, this nationalist language ideology infiltrated into people’s private lives, casting the futures of their family lineages within a resoundingly Turkish framework.

But the full geopolitical force of language reform is exemplified by the Turkish Republic’s forcible assimilations and exclusions of the nation’s Kurdish populations throughout the twentieth century. As many scholars have noted, the state deployed a kafkaesque strategy:

articulating policies that specifically targeted Kurdish communities and the use of the Kurdish language, while at the same time denying the very existence of Kurds and Kurdistan in the first place. Welat Zeydanlıoğlu tabulates the ways in which Kurdish language and ethnic identity was pervasively defamed “without the actual pronunciation of the words ‘Kurds,’ ‘Kurdistan,’ or the ‘Kurdish question’” (105); instead, Kurdish populations were referred to as “Mountain Turks” and pejoratively alluded to through rhetoric about “‘the East,’ ‘banditry,’ ‘reactionary politics,’ ‘tribal resistance,’ [and] ‘regional backwardness.’” Beyond such defamatory rhetorics, anti-Kurdish linguicidal policies reverberated throughout the century, and were reinforced with each military coup. In addition to requiring families to adopt Turkish last names by 1959, the language reforms authorized the Interior Ministry to “turkify” the names of villages, resulting in the renaming of over 12,000 villages in the Kurdish provinces and the Black Sea regions by the year 2000 (109). The process of secularizing and centralizing schools— which began under a law in 1924 that banned the non-Turkish educational instruction provided by *medrese*—was later extended into the establishment of boarding schools in Kurdish regions in the 1960s. Beyond forbidding the use of Kurdish in the classroom and separating children from their families, these schools exposed their Kurdish students to bigoted propaganda proclaiming “that Kurds were ‘bad,’ ‘dirty,’ and ‘primitive’” (108). A new law in 1961—appended to the supposedly more “democratic” constitution hammered out after the coup of 1960—made it illegal to disseminate election propaganda in any language other than Turkish. An ominous emblem of the force and persistence of these reforms was the notoriously brutal Diyarbakır Military Prison’s echoing in the 1980s of the early republican “Citizen, speak Turkish” campaign, through a sign hung in the prison entryway which commanded its primarily Kurdish inmates to “Speak Turkish, speak it a

lot!” (109). This prison loomed large in the aftermath of the 1980 coup, when, “all forms of expression of Kurdishness were banned, legally elected mayors were dismissed” and thousands of thousands of Kurdish activists—pacifist and militant alike—were arrested, imprisoned, tortured, and in some cases killed (Bozarslan 350).

Monolingualism powerfully shaped the dynamics of migration in Turkey throughout the twentieth century, both internally and abroad. Most blatantly, the paradigm of national linguistic unity informed the forced resettlement of the 1930s—which was aimed at creating “a country which would speak one single language, think and feel alike” (Kirişçi 181). But the ideologies of monolingualism also played a subtle but powerful role in shaping how cities responded to voluntary rural-urban migration throughout the century. The nomenclature of “Mountain Turks”—purportedly intended to “include” Kurdish communities in a wider unified vision of Turkishness—laid the ideological groundwork to exclude Kurdish populations moving into cities that benefited from their labor. The housing shortage that greeted migrants prompted many to build their own homes on swaths of unzoned land both within the city and on its outskirts. A resourceful response to state failures, these *gecekondu* were dealt with by the state through the same kafkaesque approach it employed in opposition to the Kurdish language—alternately ignored and forcibly plowed down in turns.¹ As rural-urban migration escalated, middle-class and wealthy families fled from city centers into gated suburban havens where they could enjoy being among the “like-minded.”² Writing about these phenomena in 1960s and 70s, Bozdoğan

¹ As Çağlar Keyder has noted, “The principal factor permitting this development was the inability—or the unwillingness—of the state either to provide housing to the immigrants or to institute a regime of enforceable private property. Public authorities simply yielded to inertia, a strategy which contributed to the chaotic development of the city and to the emergence of the legal-illegal dichotomy” (512).

² As Ayşe Öncü notes: “What captured the imagination of Istanbul’s middle classes and became the focus of their desires was the homogeneity of a life-style cleansed of urban clutter—of poverty, of immigrants, of elbowing

has observed: “As large migrant populations encountered the seemingly endless possibilities, lifestyles, aesthetic norms and high cultures of modern life in cities, they also began to be shaped by a profound awareness of their own exclusion from these things” (*Art and Architecture*, 444).

These deliberate and sometimes violent shapings of the linguascape of course situate Turkey within a global monolingual paradigm, whereby, as Yasemin Yildiz notes, “individuals and social formations are imagined to possess one ‘true’ language only” (2). This paradigm of course shaped the experience of Turkish citizens abroad, particularly after the start of the *Gastarbeiter* program in the wake of the 1960 coup (Ahmad 241). Planned as a temporary measure, this labor exchange was intended to maintain the linguistic and cultural integrity of either nation; from the Turkish government’s perspective, the exportation of so-called guest-workers were part of a five year development plan that fully expected Turkish citizens to return from Germany having acquired technical skills that could then stimulate the economy. For its part, West Germany, along with other central European countries who were experiencing an economic boom, solicited labor from Europe’s southern periphery in order to support rapid post-war industrial growth (Seyhan 100, Soysal 199).³ But, as this exchange proved to be permanent for so many, Germany saw a resurgence of nationalist sentiment motivated by linguistic anxieties. In the early 1980s, over a dozen German professors published the “Heidelberg Manifesto,” which appealed to readers to form coalitions to protect the “German language and culture” from further “infiltration” by foreign influences.⁴ These professors argued that

crowds, dirt and traffic—a world of safe and antiseptic social spaces where the ‘ideal home’ signifies clean air, clean water, healthy lives; a homogenous setting, [etc.]” (65).

³ Countries soliciting labor included Austria, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Switzerland. Aside from Turkey, those exporting labor included Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, the former Yugoslavia, Algeria, and Morocco. (See Soysal, 199.)

⁴ As the authors phrased it: “With great concern, we observe the infiltration of the German *Volk* [people] through an influx of millions of foreigners and their families, the infiltration of our language, our culture, and our national

international immigration, in posing a threat to the Germany's linguistic unity, thereby also shook the foundations of the nation's cultural, religious, political, economic, educational, and even "biological" stability.⁵ This xenophobic plea was disguised in part as a paternalistic defense of the children of Turkish immigrants: "What hope for the future do the hundreds of thousands of [guest-worker] children have if they are illiterate in both their native tongue and in the German language? What hope for the future do our own children have if they are being educated in classes with a preponderance of foreigners?"⁶ This appeal to nationalism, cloaked in bizarre academicisms, exemplified the geopolitical investments of monolingualism, which casts language difference as a threat to national security and progress.

Written in the aftermath of the 1980 coup about families migrating within Turkey, Latife Tekin's *Dear Shameless Death*⁷ and Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *Life is a Caravanserai*,⁸ imaginatively rework the geopolitical machinations of twentieth century Turkish language politics. Although semi-autobiographical, centering on female child protagonists, both are narrated through an alternately sweeping and episodic magic realism. Each situates a bildungsroman of its artistic protagonist within a larger narrative about her working-class family's migrations within Turkey, ghosted in each case by an undernarrated international

traditions by foreign influences."/ "Mit großer Sorge beobachten wir die Unterwanderung des deutschen Volkes durch Zuzug von vielen Millionen von Ausländern und ihren Familien, die Überfremdung unserer Sprache, unserer Kultur und unseres Volkstums."

⁵ The authors argued that, "in biological and cybernetic terms, peoples are living systems of a higher order with distinct system qualities that are passed on genetically and through tradition."

⁶ In the original: "Welche Zukunftshoffnung verbleibt den Hunderttausenden von Kindern, die heute sowohl in ihrer Muttersprache wie in der deutschen Sprache Analphabeten sind? Welche Zukunftshoffnung haben unsere eigenen Kinder, die in Klassen mit überwiegend Ausländern ausgebildet werden?"

⁷ *Sevgili Arsiz Ölüm*, 1983. Unless otherwise noted, all translations quoted here are from Saliha Paker and Mel Kenne's English translation. Hereafter referred to as *Shameless*.

⁸ As I will discuss in detail, the full title of Özdamar's first novel is *Life is a Caravanserai has two doors I came in one I went out the other* / *Das Leben ist eine Karavanserei hat zwei Türen aus einer kam ich rein aus der anderen ging ich raus*, 1992. Unless otherwise noted, all translations quoted here are from Luise von Flotow's English translation. Hereafter referred to as *Caravanserai*.

migration—in *Shameless*, that of the family’s mother to Turkey at the novel’s beginning, and in *Caravanserai*, that of the speaker and protagonist to Germany at the novel’s end.

Neither novel names its linguistic elephant in the room, perhaps in part as a commentary on and tactical reclaiming of the language reform’s powers of not-naming. Both are fascinated instead with vocalisms that elude transparent meaning, such as echoes, call-and-response, screaming, silence, babble, and songs. Inviting a comparison of spatial and linguistic migrations, both protagonists linger in spaces that are subject to or emblematic of change—in doorways and among furniture (*mobilya*)—reimagining what are often teleological narratives of migration through the provisional migrations of the everyday. Thus, characters’ movements in space are matched by the linguistic migrations of language that is not so much spoken or written as it is *thrown*. This throwing of voice is both a curse of spatial constriction and a means of feeling out and moving through the world.

(M)other speaking

Dilmen’s concentric circle diagrams depicted the Turkish language as a source of life in its perfectly centered enclosures, an “I” nested within a “we” that neatly incorporated the disunifying “you.” In this way, the Sun-Language Theory, evoking the boxes within boxes of Pamuk’s and Aġaoġlu’s national vacation allegories, aimed to depict the Turkish language as totalizing and utterly centered. Historicizing the idea that a “mother tongue” unifies a nation, Yildiz points to Friedrich Schleiermacher’s use of *Muttersprache* to denote “a unique, irreplaceable, unchangeable biological origin that situates the individual automatically in a kinship network and by extension the nation” (9) Mothers, she notes, are symbolically designated the containers of the national identity through language, and are functionally

appropriated to ensure the transmission of the nation's language to its children, through a "complex imbrication of the mother's body with language and male authority" (11). In this light, we could see the encompassing embrace of the Sun Language Theory's concentric circles as womblike, encirclingly incorporating the "I" within a broader national "we" through a spatialization of kinship that is less a network than a hierarchy.

As childlike narratives with prominent mother figures, *Dear Shameless Death* and *Life is a Caravanserai* are both celebrated for their "authentic" voicing of rural Anatolian identity, and Turkish migrant identity respectively. Yet, I argue that "motherspeak" in these novels is uniquely *disunifying*, recoding "mother tongue" as language that moves through non-genetically maternal channels, rather than emanating from a static and essential, womblike centerpoint. A reading of each of these novel's titles show how they use voice to refigure spatial dislocation outside of the paternalistic rhetorics of national language politics, recoding "mother tongue" as fundamentally provisional, decentered, and perpetually mobile.

The title of Tekin's novel implicitly affiliates motherhood with indeterminacy, a locus of silence and speaking. Translated alternately as *Dear Shameless Death*, *Dear Cheeky Death*, or *Dear Unabashed Death*, but also translatable as *My Dear Shameless Corpse*,⁹ the title muddles whether the speaker is the family's mother Atiye, addressing death itself as she does throughout the novel, or her letter-writing daughter Dirmit, morbidly and affectionately addressing the corpse of her mother, who dies by the novel's end. The dedication, "In memory of my mother," could of course be read as Tekin addressing her own mother; but, if considered diegetic, it could also be read as spoken either by Dirmit the writer to her mother, who dies at the novel's end, or

⁹ The ambiguity arises from the word *ölüm*. If taken as undeclined, *ölüm* indeed means death. However, it could also be read as the first person possessive form (+-m) of the word for corpse, *ölü*.

by Atiye to *her* mother, whom she believes to speak through Dirmit, who had cried upon birth, in the voice of Atiye's mother "May death take you" (25).

These cyclical addresses between mothers, daughters, and grandmothers, continues to surface and swirl throughout the novel, whose gush of narrative is punctuated not by chapters but by Atiye's periodic descents into a deathlike state, in which she takes to her bed convinced she is about to die and converses with Azrael, the angel of death. In these episodes, speakers and spoken to shift places through transcription, recitation, and ventriloquism. In an early "near-death experience" just after the family moves to the city, Atiye asks Dirmit "to write down every one of her last wishes" and then "read them aloud three times over" (92). Here and elsewhere, these so-called wishes are affectionate scolds in disguise, finger-waggings at the shamelessness or cheekiness of her husband, who "should shave the beard from the tip of his chin," and children, who are repeatedly asked to find themselves jobs and settle down (93). In a deathbed episode near the end of the novel, Atiye herself is upbraided, when her dead mother-in-law (who notably shares the name of her elder daughter Nuğber) "open[s] her arms wide and reproache[s]" the bedstricken mother, "reminding her that for many a springtime now she had been waiting for her at the Alacüvek graveyard" (121). The title, intimately and irreverently ribbing, continues to be echoed thus in the mouths of each of the novel's characters, previewing how the narrative voice itself is "shameless," unflinching in the face of the taboo or the nonsensical in its distanced perspective. Revoiced as a mother's scolding, "shamelessness" recuperates taboo—that which is not to be spoken of, and embraces non-referential language—that which symbolically obstructs the transparency of the "sun" and detaches from "rootedness" in the earth. The novel's title is the very embodiment—or more aptly, disembodiment—of communicative exchange, luxuriating in

the ambiguity of context and meaning, addresser and addressee.

Özdamar's title performs a disattachment from fathers, elaborately coding language as fundamentally itinerate rather than housed and centered. *Life is a Caravanserai has two doors I came in one I went out the other*, distortedly echoes a Turkish *atasöz* (literally "father word," a proverb). Originally, "Bu bir kervansaraydır ki konan göçer," which translates to, "This is a caravanserai through which alighters migrate," this proverb uses the caravanserai to express the transience of life in relation to the afterlife,¹⁰ as Seyhan explains: "defining an individual life both as a brief sojourn on earth and a station of an infinite journey" (*Writing Outside*, 142). Though the novel's title has been criticized for "rest[ing] on the laurels of its 'exoticism'" (qtd. in *Writing Outside*, 142), Özdamar's translation and expansion of the proverb undermines the orientalism of its referents. It writes away the verb meaning "to migrate"—*göçmek*—distancing the book from the category of often self-exoticizing *Migrantenliteratur* and filling the gap with a clutter of clauses. The title also distances itself from the migration of birds to which the proverb alludes, replacing a grand transareal metaphor with an image of mundane micromovements in a temporary, earthbound domicile, prefiguring the novel's own downplaying of its international migration relative to everyday itinerancies. Perhaps the title's most striking revision of the *atasöz* is to figure the structure of the caravanserai with two incidental doors when, iconically, it offered only one grandiose portal for both entry and exit. At once anachronistic and anatomic, the title builds an unstable house for the reader.

This mistranslated proverb is perpetually reformulated as it is echoed throughout the novel, passed from one mouth to the next. Like the narrative of *Dear Shameless Death*, *Life is a*

¹⁰ The caravanserai was a stopping place for travellers trekking in and out of merchant cities in Asia and the Middle East.

Caravanserai invites readers to consider the title being spoken by almost every character that passes through the narrative, including the narrator's family members, their acquaintances, the government, and even the non-human creatures and inanimate objects that follow (or in some cases lead) the family from one house to the next. Some iterations of "in one door out the other" poetically express everyday experiences of transience and dislocation in contrast to a grand narrative of being fundamentally "between two worlds," such as when a bird "that had forgotten its address" flies into one window of the narrator's room, "and flew around between the evening walls that were holding their breath" before flying out a different window (225). At other moments, doors are urgently functional, stripped of sentimentality, such as the two doors in the neighboring house of a sex worker which enable a quick escape if necessary ("If the police came in one door, she could take off through the other," 291). As a kind of metaphor for linguistic travel, doors provide an avenue through ambivalence and between registers, and offer an open invitation to non-sequiturs.

The title's doubled "I" thus performs important decentering work, troubling the monolingualist conflation of voice with authenticity. The narrator's grandmother expresses a more direct critique of the individual voice early on in the novel: when the narrator asks her "why people sometimes spoke one way and sometimes another," the grandmother replies: "A throat that a voice comes out of has forty floors. Whenever you want to say something, you should swallow forty times before you speak, some people speak without swallowing, then there's a hand full of shit in the middle" (49). Irreverently revising the autobiographical paradigm, wherein the house both symbolizes and lends durability to the individual self, the grandmother figures the individual voice as a skyscraper, its pretensions to grandeur belied by a

shoddy plumbing system. This suggestion that the individual voice should be used with caution is complemented by the implication near the novel's end that narrative is critically intersubjective: when the narrator observes her neighbor Pakize and her mother telling each other their fathers' war stories, "like two big birds taking words out of each other's mouths" (291). Though they tell stories on their fathers' behalves, this image reconfigures the ventriloquism of father's words operating through the "mother tongue"; rather than the paternalism of "putting words in one's mouth," the two affectionately take them out of each other's mouths, mutually allowing themselves to be mothered. In contrast to the grandmother's depiction of the individual voice as shit-spewing, this passage implies the nourishment of dialogic vocalities, suggesting that narrative is a messy but affectionate exchange between two or more discontinuous "you's," rather than an "I" speaking on behalf of an entity so much larger than itself. The narrator, who moves proverbially in one door and "out the other," relinquishes the story to such flows of communal exchange.

Both *Shameless* and *Caravanserai* use voice to figure dislocation outside of the paternalistic rhetorics of national language politics. Geolinguistic dislocation in these novels is not merely an imposition on their families by the state—though such violences are indeed evoked—but it is also a perpetual, diffuse, and ambivalent aspect of everyday life, a mode of being-away or being-at-odds that manifests as much and as ambivalently in the small act of throwing one's voice away from the body as in the removal of one's body and possessions from a house. In these circumstances, voice provides a means of feeling out and moving through a world that makes one invisible, through a kind of *echolocation*.

Dear Shameless Death: World-of-mouth

Dear Shameless Death tells the story of the Aktaş family who migrate from the small fictional village of Alacüvek—later renamed Akçalı—to an unspecified city, what we might presume to correlate to Istanbul, but which the narrative staunchly refuses to name. In an inversion of the *Halkevi*'s reifications of the villager, *Dear Shameless Death* codes Alacüvek as productive of richly mobile, heterogeneous, and indeterminate vocalities, while the city the family moves to is a site of both vocal and spatial constriction. Though critics typically focus on Dirmit's plotlines throughout the novel—reading her as Tekin's literary avatar—I argue that these vicissitudes of voice are the novel's real objects of interest, in their trajectory from the heteroglossia of the Anatolian village, to the echo chambers of the city, to the climactic moment when the narrative itself is liberated from its quasi-protagonist, and by extension, from the fixity of writing and the written identity.

In Alacüvek, where the family first forms, the wide open space of the village and the surrounding landscape create a sense of vocal sprawl, the narrative expanding to fill the space, full of haphazard paragraphs strung together a la *Arabian Nights*, embedding one story in the next and shifting between voices and spaces without cue or warning. Full of djinns who can and do upend the order of things at any and all moments, the narration moves relentlessly from one event to the next, allowing no focus on any individual character, however traumatic, infuriating, or captivating their story may be. From its very first pages, the order of narrative is flow; offering no glimpses into the past, it doesn't even allow the dust to settle.

The story of the mother Atiye's arrival in the village is representative of this indifferent gush of narrative. The family patriarch Huvat, whose *modus operandi* is to leave the village

periodically and return with befuddling devices from the city in tow, returns from one excursion with an unnamed “woman with flame-red cheeks and milky skin.” We don’t learn the name of this woman or definitively confirm her marriage to Huvat until a few years pass in a matter of breathless paragraphs, in which, to list, she is: beaten up by the women and children of the village who believe her to be djinned; locked in a stable for nine months; attacked by a goat who then turns into the prophet Hızır Aleyhisselam; aided by the Anatolian goddess Akkadın in spontaneously giving birth to a daughter; and finally released back into the village, where she gives birth to two sons in quick succession. Her marriage to Huvat is merely assumed by the naming of her daughter after Huvat’s mother, her pregnancies are never mentioned before the birth of the child is pronounced, and her name is given only as an unceremonious aside upon the birth of her second son (“Atiye—that was her name—was delivered of another son as big as a yearling sheep” [22]). Though perhaps unsympathetic to the violence and confinement Atiye is subjected to, this crowd of details turns taboos surrounding pregnancy and parturition into a whirlwind legend, lending Atiye for a brief but busy passage the highly externalized heroism of the epic character, rather than intimately lingering on her trials and tribulations.

Throughout the family’s time in Alacüvek, the narrative moves freely and somewhat arbitrarily across a wide expanse of spaces, spanning pastures, vineyards, gardens, mountains, caves, springs, the schoolyard, and the family’s house. This spatial sprawl fosters an array of diegetic performative acts, giving free reign to the curses, tattling, screaming, babbling, and silences of the Aktaş family, their neighbors, the djinns, and the “roof-flying wind.” Dirmit whimsically carries on conversations with the rearguard birds (37), and the water-pump (65), wistfully confiding her longing for her absent father and her absent friend Elmas, respectively.

Yet, these non-human interlocutors occasionally turn on her, suggesting she behave badly and then tattling to her mother, as the “roof-flying wind” does when coaxing Dirmit to “eat dirt” (38). Her mother variously mobilizes vows of silence (32), swearing (38), and babbling (47), to punish her husband and children for their transgressions. Yet these acts are also inflicted as punishments, as when the fair-haired nymph Sarıkız, jealous of all the newlywed women, curses them into silence. In this swirl of vocalities, Alacüvek is thus a site of uncodified heterogeneity: silence variously indexing power gained and power lost, dialogue opening onto both intimacies and betrayals. Throughout all this, the narrative eschews all allegiances, observing no taboos.

But there is a sense of disenchantment when the family moves to the city, as the narrative’s voices become beholden to and often quelled by the cramped enclosures of the city. With the absence of djinns and the roof-flying wind, the narration becomes somewhat orderly and increasingly purpose driven, its paragraphs sustaining focus on the characters and events they narrate, the focus shifting more and more to Dirmit. A theme of restriction accompanies this new arrangement; in paragraph after paragraph, the narrative relates stories of entrapment, of unwelcome enclosures, claustrophobia, and cramped spaces. The narrative scope, too, rather than expand from small village to huge city, radically reduces after the move. While barely registering the space of the family’s house in the village of Alacüvek, where hills, fields, rocks, and wind reign, the narrative in the city dwells almost entirely in the family’s small house on a street of single-room houses.

Whereas the expanse of space in Alacüvek lent a sense of mobility and surprise to the narrative, the family’s confined space in the single-room house in the city is rigidly schematized. Certain household objects in the family’s single-room house become linked with actions that are

affectively laden—crying, bleeding, and collapsing—yet also mechanized in their repetitions. For example, the family’s *kilim* (woven rug) registers violence in the form of uncontained bodily fluids. When Mahmut, caught up in gambling, takes three beatings in quick succession—from the police, his brother Seyit, and his father Huvat—his blood “stream[ing] out of his brow, seeping onto the kilim,” functions as a punctuation mark to the episode. While Dirmit is outraged, the narrator proceeds coolly to the following day, when, in a neutralized show of violence, Huvat and Seyit roughly play-wrestle and Seyit pins his father to the floor. In an echo of Mahmut’s gesture from the previous day, this time in play, Huvat, “letting his head drop onto the kilim [...] burst out laughing, and almost choked on his saliva as he tried to catch his breath” (133). Again, Dirmit is alone in being upset, while the rest of the family, including Mahmut, are not only undisturbed but also amused by the game’s coldly comical citation of Mahmut’s bodily fluids soaking into the rug on the previous evening. The kilim later marks Dirmit’s pain when Atiye roughly and repeatedly pinches her for bringing clay—which Atiye mistook for hashish—into the house. After the family collectively destroys all of Dirmit’s clay in trying to discover what it is, her tears “dri[p] all night long as she lay dead still on the kilim, moaning in pain and weeping with her grief” (154). In like manner, quilts are affectively yet mechanically coded as sites of fear, always being hidden under¹¹; the divan as a site of exhaustion, always collapsed upon¹²; and the window a site of sorrow, gazed out of in longing for a lost object.¹³

These circumscribed movements are matched by mechanized sounds, transforming the

¹¹ Dirmit covers herself in a blanket to hide from the noise incited by Zekiye (114), Mahmut hides under his quilt from visions of a ghoulish woman (118), and Seyit covers himself with a quilt to hide from Halit when he beats up Zekiye (224).

¹² After Huvat gets beaten up by youths, he comes home and collapses on the divan (142), as does Seyit after a work accident (159), and Atiye after her son Halit threatens her and runs away (215).

¹³ The eldest daughter Nuğber gazes out the window in longing for the neighbor’s son across the street in just the same way as Huvat when he sits at the window to long for his stolen hat and pontificate its whereabouts.

house into a kind of music box. The formerly silent Zekiye, wife of the eldest Aktaş son Halit, begins to earn money for the family by weaving carpets in the living room, during which she chatters and sings ceaselessly “like clockwork,” while operating the noisy weft in the middle of the living room. This creates a kind of chain reaction of noises: to avoid being confused by Zekiye’s chatter, Atiye begins to shout her prayers as she fingers her beads; leading Huvat to likewise recite his prayers loudly with a hand cupped over his ears; the resulting pandemonium frightens the eldest daughter Nuğber, causing her to “suc[k] in her breath fearfully” in a “grief-stricken sigh that could be heard through the surrounding clamour”; which then disturbs Dirmit in her attempt to read in the bathroom (114). In the cramped space of their single-room house in the city, such vocalizations are stripped of either communicative or performative functionality, converted into pure, cyclical, mechanical energy.

Such echo chambers work to both reinforce and mechanize unspoken gender norms. Quintessentially, we see this when Seyit drags his younger brother Mahmut to an empty construction site, where the partially built structures both symbolize and produce failures of communication. “Trudging” reluctantly between half-built structures, Mahmut says periodically, “Man, this empty construction site scares me like a djinn,” to which Seyit says, as though hearing enthusiasm rather than fear, “We’ll start our own company together, Lion Heart.” (133). This leads Mahmut to consider how, were he to work in such a place, “the towering, dark, wet walls ... [would] drow[n] out his voice.” This half-conversation in echoes spawns another; when Seyit punches Mahmut for not replying to his suggestion, his subsequent apologies, pleas, and threats are each met with a bitter repetition rather than a response:

‘My lion, my ram!’ [says Seyit]
‘My lion, my ram yourself, man.’ [repeats Mahmut]

‘Please man, don’t do this.’
‘Please man, don’t do this yourself, man.’
‘I’ll beat you up again, my boy.’
‘I’ll beat you up again, my boy yourself, man.’
‘The devil tells me “Enough! Be off!”’
‘The devil tells me “Enough! Be off!” yourself man.’
‘Look, for the last time, are you coming with me, man?’
‘Look, for the last time, are you coming with me yourself, man.’

At the end of this exchange a frustrated Seyit punches Mahmut in the eye a second time. In both conversations, repetitions evacuate all the brothers say of communicative power. Words become raw forces that bounce off the walls, inciting a mechanical kind of violence that is one note among many in the cycle of punch-apologize-plea-threaten-punch. The brothers don’t seem to realize that they share the fear of their voices losing power and meaning, whether robbed by the towering wet dark walls or by the inanity of a younger sibling’s everything-you-say-bounces-off-me-and-sticks-to-you game. This unspoken anxiety about language interlocks with a fear of walls and entrapment. Whereas walls often metaphorize failures of communication as figures of lack—by virtue of their spatial intervention between interlocutors, killing words at their inception—the walls at the construction site frustrate communication through the creation of *excess*, the echo chamber they form causing repeated words to crowd out meaning in their rampant proliferations.

Various members of the Aktaş family attempt to interrupt the similarly mechanized space of the house with their budding hobbies, but the house seems unable to accommodate these idiosyncrasies. Halit has a stint of bird-collecting, in which he covers the walls with bird cages, and begins to twitter and warble himself, just like the cages’ inhabitants (173-4), driving his parents to fury. Mahmut sickens his mother with his guitar playing, causing Halit to smash the guitar in a rage. Dirmit tries to use language to deprogram the space of her home when she

begins writing poetry: she “wrapped herself up in a quilt made of words. She slept on a bed of words and sat on a chair of words” (179). But this attempt to create a felicitous space out of text fails when her family laughingly shreds up her notebooks, driving her away from the house in tears. Scolded for her artistic pursuits, Dirmit takes to screaming when she is accosted or treated unjustly, earning herself the nickname, “Yelling Girl.” In one instance Dirmit ranges between extremes of shrieking and silence, refusing to repeat her words in an audible voice:

She went berserk and started to scream at the top of her voice so angrily that not even she could hear what she was saying [...] As her tantrum gradually subsided, Dirmit withdrew to a corner. ‘Now repeat quietly what you’ve just been saying, girl,’ Seyit demanded, planting himself in front of her. When Dirmit turned her head away and remained silent, Seyit grabbed her by the hair and shook her ... (150)

Through such instances of voice made non-referential, the Aktaş family is caught in a queasy balance between the chaos of aspirational voices and the sickening order of spatially-determined stalled gestures.

But, while the structures that house the Aktaş family in the city produce a mechanical repetitiveness, creating echoing voices and citational gestures that overpower their inhabitants, there is one part of the house where excesses of emotion and noise are accommodated. The rooftop—on top of which characters spy, smoke, cuddle, cry, bare their breasts, look at the stars, and write and recite poetry—offers an escape from the family’s household objects that are programmed to register but never ameliorate pain and oppression. When Seyit volunteers Mahmut to work at the dreaded construction site, Mahmut retreats to the roof, and, “overcome by rage,” cries, wipes his nose, gnashes his teeth, looks up at the stars, and closes his eyes (157). Dirmit later rages on the roof when she discovers the double-standard that her brothers may sleep with women while she is forbidden to sleep with men. She storms onto the roof, turning “as red

as the roof tiles” and threatens to throw herself off (207).

In the novel’s climactic moment, the rooftop offer release not just for Dirmit’s emotions, but also for the narrative itself. Forbidden from writing poetry by her family, Dirmit instead writes them all a letter, “a long long letter that took her six days and seven nights to write” (233). Godlike, on the morning of the seventh day, Dirmit: “strung the pages of the letter from one corner of the room to the other, like a rope. The rest of it she stuck up on the nails in the walls. Then she picked up one end of the letter-string and out of sheer spite went up on the roof and dangled the string of pages over the edge” (233-4). When Halit wakes up, seeing the letter filling the room and trailing up to the roof, he climbs up to see it and finds nothing, until “after a while he noticed a long white ribbon sailing out over the city” (234). Halit later tells the family that Dirmit’s letter “turned into a white bird flying over the city,” her words freed in the end not only from the house but also the narrative itself.

This final image poetically evokes the distance of the narrator’s perspective, always hovering over the action. In a subtly cyclical logic, the expansive gush of narrative at the beginning of the novel is thus implied to be the outcome of Dirmit’s release of her words over the rooftops at the novel’s end. It is thus implied that the distanced narrator is not Dirmit herself, but rather her now departed words, hovering in the sky just above the rooftops, flying according to the wind’s vicissitudes.

Life is a Caravanserai: Portal to another word

Though *Life is a Caravanserai* is written in first-person, its narrative voice also extends in absurd ways beyond the child-narrator’s consciousness. The narrative starts on a train, just before the narrator’s birth, and bounces between Malatya, Istanbul, Yenişehir, Cappadocia,

Bursa, and Ankara as the narrator grows up, ending with her solitary move (also on a train) to Germany as a teenager. Preoccupied with doors as a point of access between voice and space, the novel thus registers the national geolinguistic “outside” obliquely, as the kind of “beyond” on the other side of a door that is structurally of the same magnitude and gravity as any other kind of thing that could be on the other side of a door. I argue the novel thus situates its critique of monolingualism within a wider phenomenological inquiry into the everyday linguistic and spatial modes of being-beyond.

For the narrator’s family, their perpetually motive environment impels the ephemerality of their worldly belongings, which seem to flow in and out of their lives beyond anybody’s control. This mobility of objects illuminates the fundamentally mobile nature of voice as well, which moves beyond the control or containment of storeyed enclosures. We can see this valence of “in one door out the other” in a joke the narrator’s Aunt Müzeyyen tells the narrator and her cousins about a man whose objects are stolen from under his nose. The narrator, marveling at all the things the family had brought with them on their picnic “as if they were moving house,” recalls her Aunt Müzeyyen’s story¹⁴:

A man once woke up in the night and saw that a couple of thieves were packing up the things in his apartment. He didn’t say a thing, and the thieves took everything and left. The man rolled up his bed and brought it along following the thieves. The thieves came to their apartment, and were just opening the door when one thief looked behind, and saw the man standing there with his bedroll. He said, “What are you doing here?” The man said, “Didn’t we just move house?” (156)

Read in response to the novel’s title, the story is suggestive of a cavalier, non-possessive attitude toward personal belongings. In filtering them “in one door and out the other,” the story seems to

¹⁴ It is not clear whether she externalizes these thoughts to her family (i.e., whether saying this to her aunt prompted her to tell the story about moving house), or if thinking these thoughts while narrating prompted the memory of the joke to which it is associatively if not chronologically attached. In the context of language that is anti-referential, this could indeed be a relevant ambiguity.

defetishize its objects, as well as decoupling home from the specificity of any given house. The man—who resembles the trodden-down but imperturbable trickster of folk tales—appears to win this game by virtue of his lack of indignance, simply allowing his objects to belong to a community, even one composed of thieves. Yet, what is perhaps funny about the story is the way in which the man’s appearance of indifference abets his determination. His willingness to follow his objects anywhere, even to make himself complicit with thieves in order to do so, evokes as well the passive-aggression of “didn’t we just.” An inverse of the extreme containment figured by the family home in *Shameless*, the joke suggests a stronger attachment to portable possessions than to habitable property in an itinerant context.

With regard to the narrator’s family, the story thematizes their itinerancy, referencing the many instances throughout the novel when the movements of their objects precede and provoke their own migrations, as well as celebrating their seemingly infinite adaptability to new circumstances. Just before the family moves from Istanbul to Yenişehir, the narrator recalls four men coming to the house and tabulating the prices of their objects—“A carpet, worth so many lira.”; “A woolen bedcover, worth so many lira.”; “A radio, worth so many lira.”; etc.—and then proceeding to haul these objects away. (The sense of thievery here is reinforced by the neighbors’ objections—“Aren’t you ashamed before Allah, leave them their bedding”—but the men insist they are beholden to their orders, 43.) Yet later instances of object-migration in the novel recast the narrative of the relentlessness of banks as a story of communal flows that best these banks just as the trickster in the joke bests the robbers. While the family is living in Bursa, anonymous men again show up at the house and take away the family’s wooden benches, chopping them into kindling. Here, however, they replace these with a sofa and armchairs, which

the family needs in order to host and impress the banker's wife in a vie for credit (177). Later, the family's neighbors come by periodically to take this furniture to their houses so they can impress their guests, the matchmakers who are coming to meet their daughters (183). The narrator suggests this made the homes of her neighbors feel like her home—"On the days the armchairs and sofa lived in the neighbors' houses, I was suddenly able to go into their rooms and sit down on the modern armchairs and the sofa." (183). Later, the family sells the sofa and armchairs, moving their remaining furniture with them into their neighbor's house to live rent-free (207), suggesting the family's objects are "theirs" only in an occasional sense, flowing from one residence to the next throughout the novel, thus actualizing the non-proprietary philosophy undergirding the trickster's "didn't we just move house" logic.

But the aunt's joke, at first a thinly veiled reference to the family's circumstances portraying the mobility of their belongings through too-permeable doors, is repackaged as a story about the nation and the loss of its "belongings" to a mismanaged government. The narrator's cousins respond to their mother's story, "Mother we could go to the house of the Democratic Party and say, didn't we just move house" (156). The children's reference to the Democratic Party—implying they stole the "things" of the Republican Party—here represents the interchangeability of parties through the revoiced nonchalance of "didn't we just." The children make a critique—perhaps inadvertently astute—of the way in which the Democratic Party in the buildup to the military coup in 1960 morphed into the same kind of totalitarian one-party government it was created to combat.

In assuming that the man's solution is an adequate one, and that the national situation is equally simplistic, the children's analogic implies that the Democratic Party are thieves, and that

in order to “get our things back,” we have to go along with what they are doing. In this context, “didn’t we just” becomes a euphemistic justification for counter-invasion. This second joke relies on the asymmetry of the comparison between domestic and government house, as much as its aptness as a political critique. Rather than settling on a “real” referent, the layered joke simply creates doorways between the itinerant man, the narrator’s family, and the Republican party, placing their stories in discrete but contiguous rooms.

The aunt’s joke, both in the circumstances of its telling and the circumstances it tells of, evinces how the novel’s shifting vocalisms enable a slippage between metaphor and metonym. The joke gets re-housed, its comedy and tragedy lying in the thresholds between the various “rooms” it enters—the picnic, the thieves’ den, the government house, and of course all the apartments the family lives in throughout the novel. This is how the narrative works too—its metaphors are stolen by subsequent passages, re-housed, and the narrative simply follows them along, simultaneously attached and unattached to its symbols, just as the man in the story is to his worldly belongings.

Doors in the novel don’t merely enable permeability within houses; they also index permeability more broadly, giving access to a “beyond”—whether that beyond be the city streets, the neighbors’ houses, a faraway village, city, or country, the Turkish language, the Turkish landscape, or death. This beyond is positionally rather than essentially determined, its specificity endlessly shifting as the narrative moves forward. Viewed from afar, people who inhabit the “beyond” relative to the viewer’s location intertwine not with the space itself, but rather with that space’s very indeterminacy. The novel’s spatialization of the Turkish landscape thus operates as voice does, an unstable pointing to a referent that is itself in flux.

The beyond of the house is often expressed simply as “over there,” a linguistic pointing that always necessitates further pointing; it indexes an uncertain landscape whose occupants’ locations and identities also become uncertain. We can see this early on in the novel, when the narrator’s father, who is commissioned to rebuild a burnt-down knife bazaar, moves the family to Bursa. After once again relocating from one building to another within Bursa, the narrator asks her mother and grandmother where her father is (85).

The mother seems at first to answer the question when she says “[o]ver there,” but then she continues the sentence: “where you can’t see anything, that’s where the holy mountain is supposed to be.” She goes on to name landmarks that the family can’t see at the moment, always situating them in the at once vague-and-specific region of “over there.” After her mother “points out” the holy mosque, the holy bridge, Atatürk’s statue, the military school, the silk factories, and “so many hot springs I don’t have enough fingers to count them on,” the narrator finally reiterates her question, and her mother responds: “I’m just looking for him [...] the burnt-down knife bazaar must be...if you go from Atatürk’s statue to the holy mosque, but keep to the right... that’s where he must be” ([First ellipsis mine; second and third ellipsis in original] 85).

In this passage, *over there* is supposed to be a positional explanation, where things are situated relative to the speakers. But of course the narrator and her family can’t see any of these things; the chain of *over there*’s plotting the layout of Bursa offers both a deferral of the question the narrator asks and a slow demonstration of its answer. We think the father will be located at the first “over there,” “where you can’t see anything,” and of course, given the vagueness of “over there,” that *is* where he is. Relative to the narrator, he is “over there to the right” somewhere, and relative to the question, the answer is also “over there,” on the next paragraph

and the next page, “where you can’t see anything.” This labyrinth of arrows is as much a temporal and textual deferral as a topographic one, slowly wending the way to the unseen father, who is located at an absent site—where the knife bazaar used to be and will be again but where it isn’t now. His invisibility makes his relationship to the space he inhabits utterly enigmatic and provisional, making him impossible to locate.

A subsequent passage further explores the slippage between *where* and *who*. The narrator recalls asking her mother where she (her mother) is: “I said very often, ‘Mother, Anne, Anne, Anne, where are you, Mother?’” Not only does the narrator repeat the question, but in it, she repeats “mother” in both languages, sandwiching the Turkish “Anne” in the German “Mutter.” The referential redundancies pile up: the question of the mother’s location is asked of the mother herself, in her presence; it is asked often; and each asking is rife with repetitions.

Recalled in the narrative present in both German and Turkish, these repetitions could be read both as a memory of childhood longing for a distracted but present mother, and as a young adult’s heartrending expressions of homesickness for her faraway mother. However, the mother’s response, a tangle of non-sequiturs, playfully upends such lamentations, again plodding through a string of proverbial *over there*’s that collectively disallow her localization, either from the perspective of her daughter who is present in the same room as her, or from the implied perspective of the daughter who writes from “over there” in German. She seems at first to provide a location, but only figuratively and facetiously: “I am in the last street of hell.” She then references the famous novel, *The Shirt of Fire*—written by the early republican nationalist feminist Halide Edip Adivar in the early years of the Republic¹⁵—“When you put on this shirt, in

¹⁵ It is also implicitly a reference to the nationalist author Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, from whom Adivar borrowed the title.

the end you don't know your lover anymore, because in the fire of love you've created another image of your lover, and you burn for this image." She then goes on to narrate her version of the famous legend of Leyla and Mecnun to exemplify what it means to be in love with an image. Tasked by his lover Leyla's father to produce a river from a mountain in exchange for his daughter's hand in marriage, Mecnun drills into a mountain for many years. When he finally succeeds at drawing a river and winning Leyla from her father, he finds he no longer knows her. Instead of marrying this now-stranger, Mecnun becomes a troubadour, wandering across the landscape, singing songs of his lost love, his trajectory mimicking the itinerancy of the novel's title.

The mother's use of this free-associative agglomerate of narratives in response to the narrator's question is sardonic, but also loving. A question whose answer could be mundane (e.g., "I'm in the kitchen.") opens, through the logic of "over there"—onto a philosophical inquiry into the relationship between being and being-there, into how one understands the other's being-in-the-world imagistically. The moral of the story seems to be that you can never find the thing for which you have created an image in your mind. Yet, the advice the mother distills from the legend rejects the interior/exterior dichotomy this moral implies. Her odd gloss of the story is that the narrator "should do something like Mecnun who had drilled through a mountain if [she] wanted [her mother] to love [her]," thus proposing that her daughter do the thing that didn't work for the protagonist of the story. In offering such advice, she dispenses not so much with the wisdom of the fable as with its moral imperative. Her misreading shifts main characters in a way that frustrates analogic readings, collapsing the legend's father/son-in-law and lover/beloved

narratives into a singular mother-daughter narrative. Moreover, it codes incommensurability as a problem of human relationships that spans familial and romantic domains, rather than being particular to the plight of the migrant. In fact, Mecnun's nomadism at the end of the legend is incited *by* such an incommensurability rather than the other way around.

While the mother's *over there*'s plot winding pathways for the narrator to follow—both geographically, to her father, and figuratively, to herself—there is a limit moment in the novel where “over there” indexes absence quite directly. Shortly after the family moves to the steppe outside of Ankara, the Grandmother and the narrator have a conversation about their neighbors, Albanians “who don't understand our tongue” (228). Without much of a transition, and once again as a means of cheering the convalescent narrator, the grandmother notes: “That's a skinny tree over there, I wonder what kind of a tree that could be” (228). She repeats the same observation the next day, and goes on to describe the daughter of the Albanian neighbors to the narrator: “She didn't have a neck, her head was attached right to her shoulders like a poorly sewn doll. When she raised her hands to hang up bedclothes, her head disappeared completely between her shoulders.” But when the narrator recovers, she realizes “there was no such girl and no such tree.” While the neighbors did have a daughter, she was dying of tuberculosis and never came outside.

Just as the father is lost in an uncertain landscape and Mecnun's love of Leyla becomes conflated with his love of the land, here the girl's identity is imbricated in what we are given to believe are her surroundings. The grandmother's commentary on the imaginary tree consistently leads directly into her descriptions of the neighbors' daughter. However, the resonance between girl and tree only works by virtue of a kind of referential resistance. Just as the tree is “skinny”

and unfamiliar, so too is the girl, according to the grandmother's fabricated description of her, characterized by lack—having no neck and a head that disappears. Despite the grandmother's lie, this lack indeed has referential force—speaking to the girl's absence, in reality, from the yard, as well as to her imminent death. Broadly, “over there” in this instance alludes to what is present and absent at once—not just to the daughter hiding behind the curtain, but also to Germany, the implied but never referenced location of the narrative present, as well as to Turkey, which is always referenced but whose head disappears between its shoulders. These ever-shifting *over there*'s thus enact vocal dislocations that manage to map the absences and lacks of the linguascape.

In a final manifestation of the novel's title, the permeabilities and incommensurabilities of voice collide through a traffic accident. Near the end of the novel, the family's mounting anxiety in their life on the steppe comes to a head when a nearby crash shakes their doorless house like an earthquake. The family rushes to the scene, which is full of soldiers, to learn that a man biking to work at the nearby factory was hit by a car. The narrator's description of the car crash sinisterly echoes the title: “He and the car collided, he went through the one window into the car and back out the other window” (232). Here, substituting a window for a door, the narrative actualizes the proverb's message of the transience of life. The car's windows function both literally and metaphorically at once: they stand for themselves, leading the man to death quite literally, but they also stand in syntactically for the doors of the title's anatomically two-doored caravanserai, which themselves historically represent an improbability at the same time as they stand proverbially for the future inevitability of death.

The narrative—which at its beginning was told from within the mother's womb on a

train—ends with the now teenaged narrator on a train to Germany. The novel’s dislocating vocalizations thus implicitly critique both the monolingual paradigm and the autobiographical individualism that undergirds it, gesturing towards its manifestations “over there” in Germany as much as in Turkey. Yet I argue this critique is somewhat of a byproduct of the narrator’s echolocations through everyday space. The novel’s vocalizations are not merely critical, but recuperative, creating a space for phenomenological inquiry alongside national critique, and luxuriating in these vocalizations productive excesses of non-referential language and misreadings across language barriers. Thus, the novel’s dislocations of voice allow it to fully deploy the “other speaking” of “allegory”—its every vocal expression already pointing “over there” beyond itself at the moment of its utterance.

Conclusion

Dear Shameless Death is arguably more invested in voice as lack—in the rupturing powers of voicelessness and silence—while *Life is a Caravanserai* probes the variously traumatic and recuperative excesses of language. Yet, I would argue that both novels, trafficking as they do in non-referential utterances, are devoted to the task of dismantling the autobiographical form as a mode of making-legible. Autobiography participates in a kind of multilingualism—a celebration of the individual voice’s authentic wielding of the mother tongue—which, as Yildiz notes, is fully embedded within the monolingual paradigm and its investments in deep linguistic rootedness. Each of these novels uses by contrast what I have termed *echolocation* to unsettle the autobiographical form’s connection to geolinguistic authenticity. In *Dear Shameless Death*, the narrative ultimately takes over, overthrowing even its

autobiographer to be elevated to the status of myth. In *Life is a Caravanserai*, voice is produced always communally and provisionally, rather than individually and “authentically.” In both cases, voice is coded as always necessarily dislocated and dislocating, rather than authentically rooted.

4. Heart-to-Hearts in Tales of Two Cities

The works of the previous three chapters feature tourists instead of travellers, epics of the everyday instead of sweeping journeys, and interior perspectives that pool rather than stream. Their characters move through space in zombielike fashion, as though being marched forward through quotidian routines and vacation itineraries, not to mention through rote and robotic responses to the narratives in which they are ensnared. Their plots are often stripped of temporal investments like character development, so focused are they on the micromovements in space of their bumbling, sometimes childlike protagonists, who are stuck in the grind of allegory. In short, and most simply, these works worry over spatial movement that turns out to be profoundly *unmoving*.

This tension between spatial freedom and emotional restriction precisely fits the shape of the political and cultural climate of Turkey in the 1980s. As Nurdan Gürbilek characterizes that decade, “a liberal politics promising freedom of speech settled snugly into prohibitive policies of state” (8), with the result that, “freedoms were more restricted than ever before, but people had perhaps never felt so free” (6). In the novels I have discussed so far, the individual protagonists’ movements in space, narrated for the most part in a strangely defamiliarizing first person, explore the contradictions inherent in the neoliberal celebration of individual freedoms, especially as it manifested in the context of the forcibly depoliticized spaces of Turkey in the 1980s.

But aside from allegorically referencing the politico-cultural climate of the times, there is also a way in which these works, written as they were in a “space of struggle” in which “citizens

strive to protect their bodies, their lives, and their relations from incessant surveillance and inevitable intrusion by the empowered state” (Erol et al., 7), are particularly well suited to allegory as a *mode*. Almost all of them are written in a first-person perspective which peculiarly conceals the personal. We could see a kind of spectrum running from *Summer’s End*—perhaps the most sincere attempt to access a first-person personal—to *Dear Shameless Death*, where the autobiographical plot is radically externalized into a distanced and “voiceless” third-person narration. Collectively, the works of the foregoing chapters are suspicious of the individualist ethos as a source of meaning. They engage rather in the allegorical tasks of “speaking about the not-said” and the “not-yet-said” (Hunter), while carefully “concealing the individual body” (Teskey).¹

The characters of these novels—deemphasized as they are relative to the dramas of space—exhibit a dulled emotional pallet, to say the least. Their flatness of affect is, among other things, a symptom of suspicion towards the neoliberal celebration of individual freedoms. As David Harvey has argued, the neoliberal privileging of private property and family values over social solidarities helped to shore up class divisions and disintegrate the Marxist movements of the 1970s; in “a programmatic attempt to advance the cause of individual freedom” neoliberalizing nations all over the world “could appeal to a mass base and so disguise the drive to restore class power” (40). Writing of art’s growing awareness in late modernity of its own powerlessness to politically intervene, Sianne Ngai suggests that the dampening of emotionalism—manifesting in what she terms “ugly feelings”—is brought on by the exhaustion of allegorically trying to “think the aesthetic and the political together” (3). For Ngai, the

¹ In *Allegories and Violence*, Gordon Teskey examines how political allegory ranges from an authoritarian extreme wherein many bodies are incorporated into a single, totalizing form, and its opposite, where the individual speaking body cloaks itself, “disclosing a secret to the initiated while keeping away the profane” (123).

ambivalence and passivity of ugly feelings have recuperative potential; in “produc[ing] and foreground[ing] a failure of emotional release, as a kind of politics” (9), they offer powerful diagnostics of social powerlessness. The bumbling vacationers, dandies, and children of my previous chapters, spatially disconcerted and mired in situations of passivity, exemplify the absence of strong emotion as a mode of negotiating ambivalence towards the literary form.

Yet, leaping forward in time to the aughts of the 21st century, I would suggest there is a rise in narratives that struggle to extract not just meaning but also *feeling* out of the neoliberal machinery in which they are necessarily embedded. Such works reinvest themselves in a longing for the personal, the sincere, and the emotional. They inhabit the voyeur’s perspective; through close-up shots, expositions of plot development, and free indirect discourse, they imagine how spatial allegory could function as an emotional vehicle that moves us beyond the mere message, fostering empathy and “good feelings” rather than stalling out at allegory’s emotional impasses.

In this chapter, I explore works that aim to move their characters emotionally as much as spatially, specifically through two versions of the many-worlds-one-family narrative. Elif Safak’s novel *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2007) and Fatih Akin’s film *Auf der Anderen Seite* (2007), both tell third-person, transnational narratives of families intertwining across countries, continents, generations, and traumatic ruptures. Both works invest in a fantasy of the cosmopolitan city of Istanbul as a place that metabolizes difference, contradiction, wrongdoing, and error, functioning as a meaning-making apparatus that turns randomness into fatedness, sin into forgiveness, and, importantly, motion into emotion.

The Bastard of Istanbul

Originally written in English, Elif Shafak's *The Bastard of Istanbul*, unspools how the pasts and presents of two families living nations apart from one another converge. The novel opens just after the coup of 1980 in Istanbul, with Zeliha Kazancı deciding at the last minute not to get an abortion, and withholding the identity of the father from her grandmother, mother, and sisters. Around the same time, in Tucson, Arizona, recently divorced single mother Rose throws herself at Mustafa Kazancı, Zeliha's expatriate brother, in order to take revenge on her Armenian former in-laws, the Tchakmakchians, by giving her daughter Amy (née Armanoush) a Turkish stepfather. Flash forward two decades, and Zeliha's grumpy, nihilist daughter Asya remains fatherless, and is the only child in her generation of the entire Kazancı clan, which is, save Mustafa, composed entirely of women. Meanwhile, grown Amy, to her mother's chagrin, is devoted to exploring her Armenian identity. The families converge when Armanoush travels to Istanbul and stays with her stepfather's family—with Zeliha, Asya, and a host of aunts—in order to find the childhood home of her grandmother Shushan and reconnect with her family's roots in Istanbul. Morose, rebellious Asya and goody-two-shoes Armanoush become close, and wander the streets of Istanbul together pondering their mysterious—and unbeknownst to them, interconnected—pasts: the unknown identity of the former's father, and the unspeakable experiences of the latter's grandmother.

During the course of this visit, two traumatic points of connection between these families are gradually mystically revealed to Banu Kazancı—that her sister Zeliha's child was conceived through rape by her brother Mustafa, now the stepfather of Armanoush, and, further back in time, that their father Levent Kazancı was the biological son of Shushan Tchakmakchian,

abandoned by her as a baby when she fled the country where her family was murdered in the Armenian Genocide of the early twentieth century, to join her surviving family members in America. The novel goes so far as to postulate, in the end, a deep correlation between these two family secrets: arguing that Levent Kazancı's abandonment by his mother (a circumstance brought about by the Armenian genocide) was the cause of Levent's totalitarian management of his family, which was itself the cause of his son Mustafa raping his own sister several decades later. Though Banu omits to share either of these secrets, they fuel her to kill Mustafa when he visits with Rose to collect Armanoush—or, more exactly, she invites him to kill himself by eating pudding he knows to be poisoned.

In the innerworkings of these complicated narrative arcs, *The Bastard of Istanbul* dismantles capital A allegory into a set of disparate but interlocking codes: mundane codes of conduct, passcodes, and social cues, as well as grander and more enigmatic “secret gates,” “cryptic codes,” and “codes of honor.” The novel tries to transcend its own ironic distance by the attachment of these codes—which circumscribe characters' actions, beliefs, and identities—to “matters of the heart.” The novel's imagined outcomes of this marriage of “code” with “heart” include clichés like “deeper meaning,” “everything happens for a reason,” and “we're all connected in the end.” Its critical reception largely takes these attachments at face value, focusing implicitly on the novel's relationship to empathy and its capacity to make both its characters and its readers *feel*: praising, for example, the novel's “honest intercultural exchange” where “dichotomies can coexist, blend, and overlap” (Krause 89-90), and touting its characters' retention of “deep affective experience and a sense of uniqueness” in spite of the “non-feeling postures” prescribed by the metropolis (Aksoy 45). However, I would put forward the more

cynical reading that the novel is able to map such emotional landscapes—which are necessarily “cryptic”—only by following the very neoliberal codes which restrict and circumscribe its emotions in the first place.

Cryptic codes

From its first pages, the novel sets up the space of the city as a “cryptic code,” overlaid with the enigmas of a selectively revealing free indirect discourse. This notion is first introduced in the opening chapter, when nineteen-year-old Zeliha, making her way angrily through the rainy city streets on her way to an abortion appointment, sees a bumper sticker on a cab that reads, “DON’T CALL ME WRETCHED! THE WRETCHED TOO HAVE A HEART,” words which the narrator interprets as “some sort of cryptic code that a faraway mind had specifically designed for her to decipher and that she in her mortality had never managed to crack” (6).

This message is for some reason disheartening for Zeliha, who becomes despondent, “carrying her broken shoe as if it were a dead bird” as she ponders it. Her response tasks the reader with decipherment as well, seeding the clues for the novel’s many overlapping revelations. After the backstory of this day is revealed—that Zeliha was raped by her brother—certain seemingly random details of the walk fall into place as coordinates of this cryptic code: such as a cabdriver’s unlikely blasting of Madonna’s “Like a Virgin” (echoed by the narrator’s remark that Zeliha walks the earthtoned crowds in her lavender skirt “like a note out of tune”), and the narrator’s characterization of Zeliha as a “harassed *sister*” (11, emphasis in original). The narrative’s peculiar emphasis on Zeliha’s black hair and aquiline nose in this chapter is later stressed as a trait shared not only by her daughter Asya, but also by their American visitor Armanoush, hinting at their shared ancestry that will be revealed to Banu by the novel’s end.

Zeliha's false but telling prediction that "she, rather than any other woman in her whole family, might someday kill a man" (6) ironically foreshadows the novel's denouement, wherein Zeliha's sister Banu—the most *unlikely* woman in the family to kill a person—retributively poisons their brother. Most disturbingly, the bystander apathy registered by the doctor's remark that "pedestrians on the street must have thought we were slaughtering [her]" when she screamed on the operating table (20), ominously evokes the Armenian genocide of Armanoush's ancestors as well as the semi-private circumstances of Zeliha's rape. The narrator's free indirect discourse invites readers to try cracking these elaborately overlapping codes, establishing a conceit that the narrator knows something is wrong with Zeliha, but for some reason can only hint at it through clues and the partial, selective illumination of her emotional state.

The bumper sticker's clichéd message is meaningfully echoed decades later when Armanoush responds in the affirmative to her online friends' skeptical questioning of whether her Turkish stepfather Mustafa "has a heart" ("Oh, he does. He loves my mom, and my mom loves him," 118). It later becomes clear this turn of phrase is a clunky hint for readers as well, as Armanoush's stepfather turns out to be precisely the person who cursed Zeliha with this sense of profound despondency two decades earlier. Once this secret has been revealed near the novel's end, this very bumper sticker in fact reappears to Zeliha's daughter Asya—as she rides in a hearse transporting her dead father's body—allowing readers to finally piece together what its message so dishearteningly evoked for Zeliha.

This code is of course not yet unpacked in the first chapter, but is joined instead by an elaborate—and evocative—*code of conduct*, the "rules of prudence for Istanbulite women." These unspoken but internalized rules prescribe the appropriate measures for a woman to take (or

more often to *not* take) when harassed. Zeliha, who is being followed by one man and cat-called by another on her way to the clinic, breaks the Golden Rule (not to respond to her harasser) and the Silver Rule (not to lose nerve), but manages to adhere to the Copper Rule: not to mention the incident once it is over. To Zeliha, this is a code of access to—and endurance within—certain social spaces, advising not to respond, not to get “emotional,” and to let it go: in sum, a sexist if pragmatic guide for how to be respectable in a fundamentally disrespectful world. But to the reader, these rules also provide a clue as to why Zeliha is pregnant in the first place and refuses to name the father. Her defiance-to-a-point of these rules is later revealed match her response to being raped, during which she protests loudly and vociferously, but after which she attempts to forget and refuses to tell.

The ubiquity of these rules of prudence, internalized and selectively obeyed even by someone as defiant as Zeliha, suggests that her plight is symptomatic of a wider culture of harassment and neglect. The dream she has when put under at the abortion clinic, metabolizing every feature of her grueling walk through the city into an escheresque tableau, suggests that the city itself is the unsolvable cause of her problems, that her unborn child was fathered by an urban void rather than a human being. The dream depicts the city—composed of rain, fishermen, a cabdriver’s false teeth, and innumerable loose cobblestones—cloaked in an outer abyss, and raining down from the sky onto itself: “When a cobblestone fell from the sky, a cobblestone lessened from the pavement below. Above the sky and under the ground, there was the same thing: VO-ID” (19). This tautology implies that “heart” and “code” are part of the same vicious cycle, reflections of one another suspended in nothingness.

Yet, Zeliha is relieved when the screaming fit this nightmare induced in her turns out to

have thwarted her operation. She is rewarded for feeling so by the very city that had terrorized her inside and out up until this point. When she emerges from the clinic still pregnant, the city that she had been “fighting” all afternoon transforms, through a kind of urban pathetic fallacy, into a “blissful metropolis, romantically picturesque, just like Paris” (21). The image of the dead-bird shoe in Zeliha’s hand has been resuscitated, and is now imagined to write a message in the air, like the birds of Greek myth delivering messages between the sacred and the profane. The narrator flags this moment too as code, lest it be lost on readers—“a seagull flew close crying a coded message she was almost on the verge of deciphering” (21)—laying the groundwork for a fantasy of “coded messages” that are freed from the codes of conduct that brought Zeliha to despair in the first place.

A flashback near the end of the novel fills out the context for this scene, detailing the rape, and revealing that Zeliha’s trek to the clinic took place in the 1980s, not long after Turkey’s third military coup d’état, in an Istanbul still under military rule. The novel thus invites readers to weigh whether this rape is to be viewed as merely parallel with the coup, or symbolically representative of the coup—forcibly enacted against a defiant sister proclaiming her personal freedoms, who is afterwards abandoned to navigate a new set of competing interests—or even perhaps, a direct consequence thereof. Zeliha’s cynical musings on illegitimate children in the city—neglected like the “loose cobblestones” ignored by the municipality—suggests, moreover, that the particular brand of neoliberalism characterizing Turkey in the 1990s and 2000s is in a way the “bastard child” of the military coup. Though we are left to assume Zeliha’s cause for celebration on leaving the clinic is that she wants to have a child after all, one might argue that the *narrative’s* cause for celebration is Zeliha’s ability to magically resist the anesthesia she was

under, a metaphorical kernel of hope for a narrative that “moves” us in spite of or beyond its overpowering allegorical imperatives.

This first chapter thus establishes that “heart” and “code” are in strange cahoots in this world. Heart *is* a code, in a way, standing for that which exceeds code, a paradoxical relationship in which the novel is deeply invested. But, it is only *through* a set of competing and contradictory codes that readers have access to something resembling “heart,” namely, the emotional landscape of the novel’s characters. The logic of this particular chapter thus portrays codes as both what lock characters into potentially oppressive fates and what has the capacity to make such fates somehow emotionally revelatory or even uplifting for them.

Where everybody knows your username

Two decades later, as arcs come together, the paradoxes of the city Zeliha came to experience as both oppressive and romantic are explored in greatest detail through two cafes that could be said to heterotopize the city of Istanbul. Cafe Kundera is a dive in Istanbul patronized by pseudo-intellectual nihilists and anarchists, and Cafe Constantinopolis is an online forum “for Greek Americans, Sephardim Americans, and Armenian Americans who were grandchildren of families once based in Istanbul” (111). The novel draws a parallel between the seemingly incompatible social milieus of its millenials Asya and Armanoush through highly ironized, complementary descriptions of these cafes they each respectively frequent. The shared connection to Istanbul of the two cafes indulges in the fantasy that the city is waiting to bring together these two lives that are in some ways perfectly opposite and in others strangely aligned.

Both of these cafes are described as sanctuaries for their protagonists, each a heterotopia that exists in relation to—but importantly outside of—the space of the city of Istanbul. Located

“on a narrow, snaky street on the European side” of Istanbul, Cafe Kundera is covered in so many hundreds of framed pictures that it “gave the impression of being erected on frames instead of bricks” (76). Instead of images of particular people, monuments, or skylines, these frames all “without exception” border snapshots of road “from all over the world,” which take their languid onlookers away from the bustling streets and ambitions of Istanbul to a “faraway land,” indexing not so much the particular places they are located as both symbolizing and enabling the gazer’s transportation elsewhere. Not merely a place of reprieve, Cafe Kundera is pronounced to be “out of time and space [...] the negation of the whole city” (84).

In contrast to the slice of escape Cafe Kundera offers, the aesthetics of Cafe Constantinopolis long to reconstruct the faraway and bygone city as a viewable, grandiose, beautiful whole, a totality in panorama. One enters the website to the sight of “the silhouette of the city canopied under the flickering shades of sunset, veils upon veils of amethyst and black and yellow” (112). Appearing to the tune of the barbershop quartet number “Istanbul not Constantinople,” this stylized panorama then “faded at the bottom and pulled apart, the way a velvet theater curtain opens before the act begins.” Like Cafe Kundera’s framed pictures, these theatrical aesthetics give the sense of taking visitors to an allohistorical reality, what Şafak herself has referred to as a “safe space for the like-minded” (qtd. in Furlanetto, 23).

The sense that a fiction is unfolding yet stalled hangs particularly thickly in the air at Cafe Kundera. One theory behind the cafe’s name and aesthetics is that “this spot in space was nothing but a figment of [Kundera’s] flawed imagination [...] a fictive place with fictive people as regulars” (77), left in limbo when the author became distracted with bigger and better projects halfway through writing it into life. In support of this theory, though it is strangely conjured by

these half-written characters themselves, is the fact that the cafe's regular customers haven't even been named yet, and are referred to instead by technocratic and sometimes pathologizing descriptions of their "identities," for example "the Nonnationalist Scenarist of Ultrationalist Movies" and "the Closeted-Gay Columnist." Even the married man whom Asya is sleeping with is only ever referred to as "the Dipsomaniac Cartoonist" (and his wife, unfortunately, as "the Dipsomaniac Cartoonist's wife"). (At Cafe Constantinopolis, members have handles which—while self-selected—similarly crystallize aspects of their users' identities, such as "Daughter of Sappho," "Alex the Stoic," and "Miserable Coexistence.")

Elena Furlanetto has argued, following the author herself, that these cafes are the picture of entrenched identitarianism, and as such bad versions of an inherently multicultural city. To this point, it is perhaps worth noting how Asya's and Armanoush's own names, though inviting allegorical suppositions, are inherently multicultural and supranational. Asya means "Asia" in Turkish, perhaps an ironized fulfillment of her mother's facetious prediction in the first chapter that "This child will rule over... the entire Middle East and the Balkans, the whole world will know her name" (29). And her visitor's two names—Amy, as she is called in her mother's house, and Armanoush, at her father's house—clearly straddle both America and Armenia.

Yet, each of these women remains devoted to her niche hangout, and, importantly, entangled in romantic complications with a man who not only frequents her cafe, but even arguably embodies its spirit. This spirit involves an exclusionary code of conduct in both cases: as the narrator notes of Cafe Constantinopolis, putting a fine point on its use of password protection: "Just like many real cafes this one was in theory open to everyone but in practice reserved for regular customers" (112). More severely, we are informed that, at Cafe Kundera,

“there were unwritten rules in a group as eclectic as this and they were not to be violated” (85). Both Asya and Amy are revealed, through the magic of free indirect discourse, to feel that there is a hidden intimacy in the forms of disconnect demanded by the codes of conduct at their respective cafes, an intimacy allowed for by relinquishing the need to proclaim or pretend to be intimate. In both cases, this principle is attached to the romantic interest in question. At Cafe Constantinopolis, it is a matter of physical distance: as the narrator spells out quite clearly: “despite the elusiveness of cyberspace or perhaps thanks to it, Armanoush had unknowingly developed a liking for [Baron Baghdassarian]” (113). At Cafe Kundera, this distance is achievable in affect, specifically through “boredom,” which Asya’s Dipsomaniac Cartoonist believes to be the essence at the center of the “Kundera code” (79-80). One might expect love to transcend the identitarianisms of these cafes, but I argue it functions instead in this novel to grease the wheels of such codes, proving to be an integral part of such codes that makes them work, rather than an external force that supersedes them.

In Armanoush’s case, feelings for her faraway crush are described as helping her crack the code to herself:

His words had a far-reaching effect, capable of digging out this other Armanoush that resided inside her but as of yet had not come out, a cryptic being in deep slumber. Somehow Baron Baghdassarian poked that creature with the spear of his words, prodding it until it woke up with a roar and came to light. 114

We are to believe that the website, and specifically, her romantic interest who frequents it, excavates with his words a second, more authentic version of Armanoush, flagged according to the novel’s coded buzzword of choice, as a “cryptic being.” Like a bizarre cyber-version of sleeping beauty’s prince, the violence of his prodding, spearing manner of waking is noted, but romanticized.

Asya, too, seems to follow a personal code first hinted at by her paramour, the Dipsomaniac Cartoonist, who postulates that Kundera is code for “boredom,” a theory which Asya privately spins out into a multi-article “nihilist manifesto.” Yet, her presence in the cafe curiously derails the cartoonist himself from fully articulating this code—perhaps consigning him to remain stuck in the very “beautiful lie” he had been in the process of attempting to pontificate his way out of when she enters the cafe in the middle of his concluding sentence, “with a jingling of the bells of the door ... looking tired beyond her age and pissed off” (83). At the sight of her the besotted man loses his train of thought and changes the subject (83). Thus, by virtue of being so beloved, Asya inadvertently seals off the elucidation of the Kundera code both from readers and from the Kundera customers themselves.

Asya seems to have the unique ability among her Cafe Kundera friends to transcend the limitations of the Kundera code, paradoxically by ruthlessly enforcing it. Near the end of the novel, armed with Armanoush’s friendship and the cartoonist’s love, Asya thickens rather than dismantles the walls of this particular code, the prerequisite for acceptance into this circle of nihilist and anarchist pseudo-intelligentsia. When a new girlfriend of the Nonnationalist Scenarist of Ultrnationalist Movies shows her new tattoo of a wild orchid to Armanoush, “either out of sheer boredom or in an attempt to befriend the only other recent addition to the group” (203), Asya unleashes a wave of fearmongering factoids on her for the following four pages. Having decided to “hate her right away” rather than “wait to see when she would start hating her” (which the narrator assures us are Asya’s only two choices after “having met a new female”), Asya proceeds, with many “In point of fact”s, to assure the girlfriend that tattoos are: unoriginal (“having tattoos around your belly button is one of the oldest customs in world

history,” 205); dangerous (throwing around the terms “blood poisoning, hepatitis,” “*Staphylococcus aureus*,” and “cardiac damage”); and next to impossible to completely and safely remove.

Though a cruel punishment for defying the Kundera code, the purpose of this display seems to be to show Asya’s peculiarly human capacity for emotive eruption, amid Cafe Kundera’s crowd of nameless hacks. This display is described not only as “an attack,” but also as “a show” and “a game,” and Asya’s behavior as unyielding, “angry,” and “menacing,” yet also for some reason as amusing and even lovable. The Dipsomaniac cartoonist, “resisting the urge to kiss her angry lips” (205), watches “with an impish sparkle in his eyes” (206), while Armanoush grins and “pinche[s] herself not to laugh” (207). The scenarist’s girlfriend, meanwhile, “tried to smile,” responded with a “tinge of panic,” “looked really concerned,” and “tried not to lose her cool” as “the color drained from [her] face,” which later “turned grave, etching new lines around her lips and eyes,” as her eyes “grew wide.”

The purpose of this scene for the novel seems to be to demonstrate to Armanoush and the reader what exactly it is that the Dipsomaniac Cartoonist loves about Asya, the answer to which would seem to be her surprising intolerance for people who defy this particular code, in this case for women who share personal information in an attempt to seek approval. One implication of this scene is that the novel’s available forms of intimacy are confined to a vicious cycle of code-cracking and code-enforcing which, in spite of the narrative’s transnational scope and vast empathy for those who have suffered, still depends on the codes it seeks to transcend. Feelings, empathy, and intimacy in this novel thus seem to be necessarily and messily tied to a stuffy system of social mores from which it futilely struggles to take flight.

The Edge of Heaven

Fatih Akin's 2007 film *Auf der Anderen Seite*² similarly tracks the intertwining of three families in Istanbul through traumatic ruptures and splices. Like *The Bastard of Istanbul*, the film thematizes heart shapes, hoping to “flesh them out” from rhetorical structures of symmetry into modes of transnational empathy and allegiance. The film opens with a scene of Necat Aksu driving through a dusty town in the Black Sea Region during the feast of the sacrifice, and is subsequently split into three parts: “Yeter's Death,” “Lotte's Death,” and “On the Other Side”—the last of which picks up where Necat left off. The narrative moves through space rather than time, between Bremen and Hamburg in Germany and between Istanbul and the Black Sea Region in Turkey, as the narrative chronology alternately doubles back and hops forward to follow its various characters travels and travails.

In the first segment of the film in Bremen, Necat's father Ali convinces a sex worker named Yeter to live and sleep exclusively with him in exchange for money, but he strikes and accidentally kills her a matter of days into this arrangement for spurning his advances and threatening to leave.³ He is detained and deported to Turkey, where his now estranged son Necat has moved to find and help Yeter's bereaved daughter. Happening concurrently in the second segment of the film, Yeter's daughter Ayten flies from Istanbul to Hamburg on a fake passport, fleeing a warrant for her arrest for having stolen a gun, and hoping to find her mother. She befriends and has an affair with a recent college graduate named Lotte, who agrees to help her find her mother. However, Ayten is quickly arrested for being in the country illegally, and is

² Literally “On the Other Side.” The English title is *The Edge of Heaven*, and the Turkish, similarly, is *Yaşamın Kıyısında*: (“At the Edge of Life”).

³ As Claudia Breger and many others have noted, both deaths in the film, though accidental, are “violently overdetermined.”

eventually deported and placed in a woman's prison in Turkey. Lotte moves to Istanbul in an attempt to help Ayten, but she ends up getting shot in the street by the very gun Ayten is in prison for stealing. In the third part of the film, Lotte's grieving mother Susanne flies to Istanbul to collect her daughter's personal effects, where she connects with Necat, whom Lotte had happened to room with without either one realizing their mutual investment in helping Ayten. Though this connection remains hidden, Susanne and Necat bond over their respective familial memories, inspiring the former to help a remorseful Ayten get out of prison as her daughter had wanted, and spurring the latter to drive to Trabzon to reunite with his father, whom he had disowned for killing Yeter. The final scenes of the movie show Necat zooming through tree- and sea-lined roads, metadiegetically propelled by the famous Black Sea *türkü* singer "Kazım Koyuncu."⁴ Asking a series of villagers in the lush landscape if they have seen Ali Aksu, Necat is slowly directed to the seaside where the movie ends with him sitting, looking out at the water, waiting for his father to return.

The scenes of the film moving toward the telos disclosed in the given section's title are sutured together with clips of their characters moving searchingly through cities, on foot and via public transit, unwittingly syncing up to the same thematic and geospatial paths, and often missing one another by a hair's breadth. In spite of their longing for emotional connection, the film's characters are largely hypertextual, their movements in space indexing embroilment in intertwining plotlines moreso than an individual, immediate being-in-the-world.

Yet, a longing to *feel* gathers around Necat, the focus of the film's proleptic opening frames. In spite of the scene's emotional music, Necat seems catatonic in the scene, and throughout the film more broadly. In his lack of response to the attendant's commentary on the

⁴ It is perhaps noteworthy that the singer's name means "gentle shepherd who holds his temper."

beloved singer dying of cancer, he could easily be any of the zombielike touristic protagonists from the works of the previous chapters: robotically going through the motions on a journey motivated not simply by desire, but rather by the desire to desire. I will argue that this emotive goal requires his escape from all the transnational complications and intimacies of the film, and from his own investment in other people's lives, to a singularity and simplicity which the film implicitly codes as masculine.

Hall of mirrors

As though in pursuit of this goal, the film employs a visual motif of mirroring that braids its characters' plotlines into a tapestry of transnational humanism, highlighting points of similarity and contact across axes of difference. This mirroring logic is seeded in the opening scene of "Yeter's Death," when Necat's father Ali first patronizes Yeter in the red light district. This scene opens with an older man, Ali, smilingly winding his way to the red light district in Bremen, where he chooses Yeter, a sex worker dressed in red vinyl peeking out from the subterranean window of a red house. Yeter identifies herself as "Jessie" and assures him she does not only French jobs, but also lists "Italian" and "Greek," grandly offering, "Für dich mache ich Internationale." This statement introduces the space of the brothel as a eurocentrically cosmopolitan space, associating it specifically with the European countries considered to be the most romantic and erotic.

When the camera cuts to the man now inside Jessie's dimly lit room, this promise of continental internationalism is actualized through the reflections and refractions of a veritable hall of mirrors. Split in the middle by an open door frame, the room is dimly lit, wood paneled, and richly decorated with pictures and delicate strings of lights. To the left front of the frame,

there is a black and white photograph of a man in a keffiyeh, looking to his right. Behind the door frame on the left side is a shiny poster from behind of a long-haired woman wearing only underwear and stilettos, crouching so her butt just grazes her heels, her head thrown back so her face hovers upside down over her arched back. This poster is split down the middle with a string of lights, highlighting the symmetry of her face and pose. To the right front of the doorframe is what looks like an African mask, also perfectly symmetrical. Two decorative orbs of light hang on either side of the doorframe, inside of which Ali stands, his head cheating to the right just like the man in the keffiyeh, framed on either side by orbs of light and stylized symmetrical faces.

Yet, like a hall of mirrors, the space and the camera's movements within it also operate distortively, fragmenting such symmetries and confounding the viewer's sense of distance and closeness. When Ali first enters the space, the camera moves to center on him from a distance, but stays stationary as Yeter's body moves towards it to get water, her red torso obscuring him and filling the screen. Her customer appears to be sitting quite close, on the bed in the background, but when the camera zooms out as she walks back towards him, he is shown suddenly a hall's length away from her, yet still sitting on the bed. As she continues to move around this seemingly expanding and contracting room getting ready, her image is fractured into torso, chest, and butt, and cast behind her at improbable angles, hinting at additional mirrors unseen by the camera that must be lining every wall of the room. When she is standing within the doorframe, the image of her torso and arms is, through a feat of physics, somehow reflected behind her on the camera's side of the frame, like one of the many pictures on the walls. The same phenomenon occurs on the other side of the doorframe, where the viewer can see the arch of a bookshelf peeking out seemingly directly behind the real object's shoulder, flanked by a

mirrored slice of Jessie's butt.

The space of the room thus visually invites a comparison of Ali's and Yeter's similar backgrounds. When she turns on Turkish music—perhaps to round out the eclectically international ambience of the room, or perhaps to feel at home in this unnerving hall of mirrors—her customer is prompted to ask (in German) if she is Turkish. Getting an aloofly flirtatious affirmative (“Kann sein”), he responds in Turkish: “Şimdi utanıyorum” (Now I'm ashamed),⁵ a response which perhaps expresses the shame of proximity. In this exoticizing pastiche, a space that seems at moments to embody distance itself, Ali finds himself unexpectedly in the presence of a relative familiar. His integration into the space and consequent affiliation with Yeter is made visible through mirrors when the camera cuts to the bedroom side of the doorframe, showing, at an angle, him sitting on the bed, reflected in the mirror across, with a large triangle of chest exposed beneath his split-front shirt, just as she is reflected in the mirror behind, with her corset likewise stretched open across a triangle of exposed cleavage. This shot, in its implicit comparison of the two, hints at Ali's maternalism, which is later demonstrated in his clear affinity for the feminine labor of cooking and gardening, and in his proud assertion that he has been “both mother and father” to Necat.⁶

Yet, as the film will go on to elaborate, Ali and Yeter are importantly mirrored across different axes, and there is a stark limit to the comparisons that can be drawn between the two.

⁵ It is interesting that what counts as a clue to Ali that she is Turkish is the music she plays, irrespective of the diverse international panoply of visual objects in the room. Although the space is distortive, eclectic, and deindividuating, the sound of a *türkü* rings as “authentic” to this man, linking her up to a “homeland,” and affiliating her in particular with the man from the opening frame, whom we later learn is Ali's son, who had zoomed along the Black Sea coast, Turkish folk music blasting.

⁶ As many have noted, Ali Aksu is thus a significant departure from his earlier namesakes in German cinema, who are often stereotypically gruff, down-and-out, male Turkish guest workers, portrayed by affluent German directors and documentarians of the 1970s and 80s, such as Fassbinder's “Ali—Fear Eats the Soul” and the persona of Guenther Wallraff's *Ganz Unten*.

This differential comes into sight when Yeter must explain her name to Ali. Learning that she is Turkish, Ali asks for her real name; he interprets her response—“Yeter,” which means “enough”—as further flirtatious evasiveness, prompting her to explain that she is the youngest of seven sisters, an unwanted addition to a long series, like the furthest duplicate image one can see in a hall of mirrors. This name, applied to a female character whom the section title assures us will die, evokes opposing images of domestic violence, its nuances holding in tension the treatment of women as measurable and therefore disposable, and the activist rhetoric of the 1980s and 90s in Turkey that demands an end to gender-based violence and oppression. In stark contrast to her interlocutors in the film, whose names evoke spatial expanse—“Ali,” which means “elevation,” and his son “Necat,” which means “liberation—“Yeter” is a temporal closing off, the end of a conversation. It is later revealed that Ali and Yeter are from radically different backgrounds in Turkey—he from what seems a comfortable life on the Black Sea coast, her from a life in Maraş which we can imagine was fraught, given that her husband was killed in the massacre of 1978, and that circumstances since have brought her to move to Germany, far away from a daughter whom she perpetually misses.

As Ali takes his leave, the unevenness implied by their names is linked up to a wider gender differential that codes frozen symmetries and stalled serialities as feminine, and purposeful wandering as masculine. When Ali ascends the stairs on his way out, he turns back to look down at Yeter, revealing in the backdrop a gray wall decorated with a red heart outline, and two women directly underneath it talking as though from either side of the heart. The camera cuts to Yeter, in her red vinyl, in a red box, looking up from below street level, a ghostly reflection of her cleavage-exposed torso in the window. This image, which the camera had

earlier zoomed in on and which the partial mirrors seemed to keep capturing and throwing around the room, is echoed again as Ali leaves by the large outline of pink breasts on a pink wall, guarded by a woman in a low-cut pink dress standing under it to the right.

As in *Bastard of Istanbul*, hearts here signal to viewers a moment of “meaning” and “connection,” operating as a rhetorical mode of congealing disparate narrative arcs through formal symmetry and the emotionalism it evokes. Yet, in spite of their definitional symmetry, heart shapes index Ali’s and Yeter’s discrepant emotional investments. For Ali, hearts fade into the background, an atmosphere to match his state of blissful, carefree satisfaction. For Yeter, these particular hearts emblemize contractual agreement, which, taken with the ominously broken reflections of her torso in the window, foreshadow the dangers of such flattened affects pose to her. In contrast to these pastel heart and cleavage outlines, two men in earth-toned clothes who had happened to cross Ali’s path on his way into the district, materialize in front of this tableau. They comment disapprovingly in Turkish on having just heard Yeter speak Turkish as well, a response which amplifies and redirects Ali’s earlier shame at the revelation of Yeter’s nationality, and which will play an important role in her ultimately fatal decision to move in with Ali. In light of the section title’s ominous forecast, the reappearance of these beigely clothed men amid the red light district’s candy-colored reflections and repetitions, lends a strange sense of gendered fatedness to this scene, of characters following circuitous paths towards certain ends.

Cynical symmetries

The film’s visual mirroring, echoing, doubling, and crisscrossing is seen by many critics as the antidote to Necat’s flatness of affect in its potential to foster empathy by showing hidden

connections between the film's characters.⁷ Mirrors do indeed occasionally function as such in this film: highlighting shared struggles, reflecting social truths, and visually splicing together the film's adjacent thematic strands. But, it is clear from the way the mirroring motif plays out both in this scene in particular, and throughout the film at large, that mirroring is neither equal nor unproblematic—prone as it is to unevenness, distortion, and fragmentation. As a kind of understated hall of mirrors, the brothel scene at inspires ambivalence—though not necessarily despair—about the modes by which intimacies are fostered in the transnational spaces of the film.

As a handy metaphor for commonalities that transfer across axes of difference, the film's fascination with mirrors invites viewers to find improbable thematic reflections across its characters' narrative arcs. Themes that track across the film include: a near impossible international search for a person; a character scandalized by a family member's sexual relationship, and concerned about "letting a stranger stay with us"; radicals threatening a character under the guise of inclusion (along the lines of, "you're one of us, so act like it"); the pressure to "repent," coming from both religious and secular corners; and naive or misguided attempts to help "someone less fortunate." These themes cross generational, gendered, national, and ideological divides, hinting—perhaps optimistically—at a universal humanism that unites these disparate arcs. More pessimistically, they at the very least point towards the insurmountable ubiquity of a neoliberal culture that privileges a queasy mix of security and philanthropy, freedom and moralism, and family values and inclusivity.

The sunniest version of these thematic interlacings is crystallized in the romantic relationship between Lotte and Ayten. Akin has expressly articulated that his reasoning for

⁷ See for example Barbara Mennel and Claudia Breger.

choosing to portray a cross-cultural affair between two women lies in the egalitarianism of lesbian love. Accordingly, the “symmetry of women,” though associated with Ali’s dehumanizing treatment of Yeter in the previous segment of the film, is reinvested here with hope and utopian potential in the second segment of the film.

Most iconically, staged at the approximate middle of the film, a long kiss between Lotte and Ayten fleshes out the heart shapes from the previous narrative. Set back on the same side of a table in a crowded club, the camera slowly zooms in as Ayten and Lotte start to kiss. As each looks into the other’s eyes and places a hand over the other’s shoulder, their body shapes mirror one another to form a heart, whose symmetry seems to expel the chaotic and indifferent swarm of crowd around them as the camera pushes in. Elsewhere in this section of the film, scenes of Ayten and Lotte sitting across from one another and looking into each other’s eyes are legion. The camera’s pattern in such moments is to open and close the scene on a medium long profile shot of the two looking into one another’s eyes, and then to toggle between one shoulder and the other, giving equal weight to each of their faces. These symmetries are full of failed utopian potential, indulging in a fantasy that the lesbian relationship creates a space of harmony that is exempted from the city’s chaotic ordering of the world. Claudia Breger notes the harmony of this shot-reverse shot camerawork, as well as the sweetness and sincerity of the early days of this affair.

Yet, the expanse between the two grows and solidifies throughout the course of the film, both spatially, and in the unevenness of their motivations. Like many queer relationships on film, theirs has a death drive, and is fated to end badly. With the exception of the club scene, Ayten and Lotte are almost always situated across a divide—usually a table, sometimes simply an

expanse of space. Their final two meetings are in highly controlled environments, where their symmetry is neither exceptional nor unimpeded, but is rather integrated into a bureaucratic and divisive ordering of the world. First, in a room at the highly routinized German facility where Ayten must await the results of her appeal for asylum, Lotte sits on the twin bed opposite Ayten and the two clasp hands across a wide aisle, as the camera leans back to underscore the distance between them, pausing to capture their fully extended their arms clasping hands before Lotte finally shifts next to Ayten. In their final meeting, the two sit opposite each other on a long table full of women in the visiting room of the prison Ayten is placed at in Turkey. They are also of course divided by the radical disparity between the scope of their problems: while Lotte is naively devoted to helping her less-fortunate girlfriend, and now reeling from the loss of her mother's financial support, while Ayten, her life threatened by comrades in the prison, is tasked to demand help from her girlfriend that is both illegal and dangerous.

Yet, there is a kind of romance to Lotte retracing the path Ayten took at the beginning of the section to stash the gun: she rides the same ferry as Ayten had, while facing the opposite direction, and then wordlessly asks the same sympathetic tenant for access to the building's roof. Even the chase scene that ends in her death—running up and down the mazelike hilly streets of Istanbul—evokes Ayten running away from the police on May Day with the stolen gun. Though it appears to be a random accident Lotte dies in—shot by a boy too young to be held accountable, and who clearly didn't believe the object in his hand was a real, functioning, loaded gun—the film's chiasmatic structure suggests this death was fate. In fact, the children who stole her purse are also swept up into the film's mechanisms of fatedness, their precarious existence having been mentioned to Necat by a civil servant as more fitting recipients of his financial

benevolence than a grown woman he has never met who is suspected by the state of involvement in terrorist activities.

Chiasmus also functions to draw connections between the film's narrative arcs. At opposite ends of the film, Ali and Susanne unwittingly share a moment of parent-child bonding, which together sandwich a moment of cross-generational strife. Fittingly, the outer of these moments involve backwards pronunciation in both cases, each misordering the syllables of a name that is foreign to them, to be corrected by Necat and Ayten respectively. Near the film's beginning, Ali has heard a tip on a horse whose name he pronounces, in a German accent, "Ofliff Sunsine." Necat gently corrects him—"Sunshine of Life"—and translates for his father first into German and then Turkish, and father and son together admire the felicitousness of such a sunny name. Ironically, Ali's winnings from betting on this horse seem to spur him to make what turns out to be a fatal proposal to Yeter, turning good luck into bad deeds, and liveliness into death. It is perhaps a subtle feature of the chiasmatic inversion that Yeter's soon-to-be bereaved daughter is named Ayten ("Moonskin"), in negation of the American sunshine of Ali's good fortune. Ali's fight with his son occurs just before he accidentally kills Yeter, when he coldly dismisses an uncharacteristically outraged Necat: "Senin hayatın ayrıl, Benim hayatım ayrıl" ("Your life is one thing, my life is another").⁸

Following the proper reverse order, Lotte's mother Susanne first echoes Ali's insistence on division with her guest and daughter's girlfriend Ayten. An ominously red-finger-tipped Susanne rebukes Ayten for smoking and saying "Fuck the EU!" in her kitchen while she makes cherry pie, intoning: "I don't want you to talk like that in my house. You can talk like that in your house." Near the end of the film, this cross-generational chiasmus resolves when Susanne

⁸ Literally, ayrıl means "separate," and is thus more spatially evocative than the idiomatic English translation allows.

informs Ayten she can move in with her where has been living on “Kuçurcuma,” which Ayten smilingly corrects to “Çukurcuma.” The chiasmatic relation between these conversations throughout the film implies the development of a surrogate mother-daughter kinship between Susanne and Ayten. Yet, in prefacing Necat’s hoped-for reunion with his father, which precludes the revelation to Ayten of her mother’s death, it arguably subordinates the emotional resolution of Ayten’s grief, guilt, and loss—which are immense, given that she has lost both a girlfriend and a mother—to that of flat Necat, who hasn’t lost anything by comparison, and whose catatonic eyes the camera peers into searchingly just before the film’s end.

The film’s chiasmatic structures thus set up a kind of emotional baton race, where the theme and its attending emotional resonances travel and endure across narrative arcs, leaving certain characters stalled in place behind, miles out from resolution or closure. In this structure, the baton (the feeling) seems to be more important than any individual runner. Yet, it is not insignificant that, through the film’s proleptic structure, Necat is there with the feeling at the crucial moments of the beginning and the end of the race, uniquely “on the other side” of it all.

Conclusion

Reading *The Bastard of Istanbul* and *Auf der Anderen Seite* together highlights their shared labor of negotiating ambivalence towards coincidence as a mode of access to emotional connection. The city in these works is a space of *coinciding*, hosting the chaos of seemingly incompatible codes converging and the romances and traumas of hearts coming together.

On the one hand, the convergence of arcs in both works suggests a redefinition of family as an accrual of coincidences. In *The Bastard of Istanbul*, this notion is spatialized when the

family, driving to the cemetery in three different vehicles, all happen to align, lane by lane, at the same traffic light. Notably, this occurs moments before Asya, in the hearse transporting her dead uncle (whom she doesn't yet know is also her father), notices the same heart bumper sticker her mother had sadly pondered some twenty years earlier. In *Auf der Anderen Seite*, Lotte's rumination on family coincidences in her diary is read by her mother after her death: "I find myself taking paths very similar to hers. Perhaps that's what it is. She sees herself in me." Like Asya unknowingly puzzling over the same words her mother had puzzled over, Susanne later unknowingly follows precisely the same path as her daughter had, saying hello to the same men playing backgammon on the same street at the same time of day.

On the other hand, both narratives also suggest that family loyalty demands one's transcendence of fate and the codes that enforce it in order to protect a beloved family member. In *The Bastard of Istanbul*, Banu displays this quality, committing murder to avenge her sister. In *Auf der Anderen Seite*, Necat is inspired to reunite with his father when he remembers the assurance he had offered him as a child that, placed in Abraham's shoes, he would defy God rather than agree to sacrifice his son. However, in both cases, this mode of transcendence seems to be available only to the exceptional—to Banu, because of her access to all-knowing djinns, and to Necat because of his ability to move through the world and beyond the city unhindered by the codes that Ayten and Yeter are mired in.

Yet, the biggest coincidences in both narratives remain unrevealed to their characters, concealed by the city's undisclosed secrets and missed connections. Asya and Armanoush never learn that they are in fact blood relatives, just as Necat never realizes that his roommate had been in love with and actively helping the person he had been in search of for so many months. At the

same time, the outcomes for attempting to extricate oneself from the fates of the city also go unnarrated in these films—we don't learn what becomes of Banu or get to see Necat reunite with his father. In the end, then, both films relinquish their longed for moments of emotional release, holding in perpetual tension their ambivalence towards the city as the site of family convergence.

Conclusion: Spatial Allegory in the Neoliberal Novel

Written in times of political duress and transformation—from the political anarchy of the late 1970s, to the forcible depoliticizations of the 1980s and the neoliberalizations that followed—these works use space, in the broadest sense, as a means of retheorizing nation in its relation to an ever-changing global order. Their forms and characters inhabit and navigate spaces that figure the national as being-at-a-remove, the cosmopolitical as becoming-worldly, the paranational as being-beyond, and the transnational as being-entangled. In a narrower sense, these works use the spaces of the everyday—such as cabinets, hotels, and furniture—to reconfigure the form of the novel itself.

Many theorists have objected to studies of literary space on the grounds that such endeavors are bound to reify cultural forms. In the case of Turkish literature specifically, a favorite spatial metaphor is of course the static yet liminal bridge, situating the nation as a passive means to an end. But, as I have tried to show in these chapters, spatial allegory usefully erodes such crystallizations, re-reading the sometimes sweeping political registers of allegory through the everyday as much as the other way around. As a kind of analytic, space invites this sliding between concrete and abstract, between political and phenomenological, and between the small-scale and the large-scale—investing, for example, miniature boxes within boxes with the resonance of the 1980 coup's forcible depoliticizations, and using the space of the doorway to reconfigure the linguistic dynamics shaping rural to urban migration. These novels thus complexly negotiate their embeddings within and exclusions from the spaces of a nation which is itself always in the process of renegotiating its own relationship to the global

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