The Writer and the Nation-State:
Language, Aesthetics, Ideology and Power in Turkish Literature (1927-2015)

by

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to my family

aileme

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Abstract

"The Writer and the Nation-State" is a novel attempt to understand the structural (trans)formation of Turkish writing from empire to nation since the late nineteenth century, which investigates (a) the interrelation of language and literature; (b) the development of the concepts of the literary and literariness; and (c) the dialectical relationship between the writer and the heteropatriarchal nation-state. Focusing equally on literary, historical, social, and political processes in Turkey's period of modernity and modernization, this study analyzes writer, language, text, aesthetics, and ideology to show how such transformations have been manifested in poetry as well as literary and critical prose in Ottoman, Turkish, and English.

The relationship between the writer and the state, especially since the foundation of the Republic in 1923, remains largely unexplored in Turkish literary studies. This study fills the gap by arguing that it is a dialectical relationship in which the mutual constitution of writer and state engenders the text, whether in collaboration and reciprocity or in contest and conflict. The study also shows that separation of form and theme in modern Turkish literature emerges from the chronotope of nationalism mobilized by the state-writer, who is driven by the urge to situate form (and hence modernity) outside itself, and therefore seeks to appropriate the referential content of discourse to "the original Turkish soul." This self-orientalizing mode of Turkish literature is intensified by the writer-state during the period of Republican nationalization, and yet fails to fully assimilate the non-literary implications of *edeb*, which challenges the demarcation of form and content by empowering content to shape form, and hence expands the chronotope of ethno-centrist literary-nationalism to that of ethically guided literary-pluralism.

Preface

"The Writer and the Nation-State: Language, Aesthetics, Ideology and Power in Turkish Literature (1927-2015)" was inspired foremost by my personal and intellectual history growing up in the Republic of Turkey at the dawn of 1990s during a certain period of time when violence and silence haunted the society.[1] Literature (and visual media) then served the *mistaken* role of a sanctuary amidst this violent silence. Literature indeed was blanketing the ongoing terror as snow was doing in the city of Kars in Orhan Pamuk's *Snow* (2002). Literature was not the victim. If literature then was complicit in violence (of the state and society), what role could the republic of letters possibly have played in the formation of the Republican nation-state?

The idea behind this project became crystallized during the state's vilification and persecution of the signatory academics (Academics for Peace)[2] in the aftermath of signing the call for peace letter in January 2016. The ongoing trials of academics helped reorient my focus back to the future--to the longue durée of the modern Turkish literary production vis-à-vis the nation-state formation from post-Tanzimat of Young Ottomans, then Young Turks, and later Committee of Union and Progress (1839 onwards) to the first Republic of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1923), and lastly to the second Republic of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (2002 onwards). I wished to understand the history behind the perpetual oppression on freedom of thought, fear from intellectuals and from certain literature, and to find out why the not-colonized modern Republican nation-state was still not a democracy. There were already examples of post-colonial democratic nation-states including African countries and India. And the case of the modern nation-state Turkey was similar yet different. I needed to first address these two questions: (1) What are the intersections and, more significant to my study, differences between post-colonial nation-state formation out of the colony,

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[1] It was a period of conspiracy assassinations, forced disappearances of mostly Kurdish people, and of the rise of "radical Islam" as narrated in Pamuk's *Snow* (2002).
[2] For further information about Academics for Peace see https://barisicinakademisyenler.net/node/1

and the emergence of the Turkish nation-state out of the Ottoman Empire? (2) More importantly, how do these differences and intersections manifest themselves, and how has the extant scholarship dealt with this?

I realize that my study is not the first to ask these questions nor will be the last. My dissertation, however, is the first attempt to read the historical transformation and continuity from empire to republic through (a) language, literature (b) development of the concept of the literary and literariness (c) dialectical relationship between the writer and the (heteropatriarchal) nation-state. In doing so, my study shows the ways in which post-imperial Republic of Turkey accelerated the separation of the so called ("Western") form from (*milli*) content, literature (obsolete *edeb*) from literary literature (*edebiyat*), Islam (not from state but) from society, and modernity from tradition, whereby engineering its very own (false) dichotomies by way of self-orientalization. I focus on the first two dichotomies as each, in fact, intersects with one another, and because of the belief that such bifurcation in literature already informs the others.[3] Although I exemplified from "nationalist" texts of the writer-state (writings by the state) and state-writer (writings by the author) in the early Republican era (1923-1950), I have chosen the contemporary literary texts which, as I argue, resist the separation of form from content, whereby mobilizing literary ethics embedded in *edeb*. I left out the contemporary works which do not fit in this criterion. Although there have been "nationalist" literary writings by "state-writers" after 1950s, unlike in the early Republican era continuing until 1960s, literary production has not been curtailed by such works.[4] My texts, on the other hand, resist the literary-formulaic force in *edebiyat* with the ethical gesture in *edeb* which incorporates difference[5] as positivity against the homogenizing force of the heteropatriarchal nation-state.

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[3] This assertion however is beyond the scope of this dissertation, and awaits further research.
[4] Nationalist writing albeit is abundant in Turkey's academia. Future scholarship can possibly expand the breath of this research through such comparisons.
[5] Based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, among others.

"The Writer and the Nation-State" comprises four main chapters. Chapter 1 "Introduction" surveys the history of Turkish literary studies in Turkey from the late nineteenth century onwards. Chapter 2, "The Writer-State and the State-Writer in the Republic," examines the formation of writing, the (literary) public sphere in the coffeehouses, and the reception of writing in the cultural texts of Kemal Atatürk and his contemporary Mehmet Fuat Köprülü in the early republican period, and the emergence of the "writer-state" and the "state-writer" as mutually constitutive, contesting entities. This chapter proposes that reading public beginning from the mid nineteenth to early twentieth century played a huge role in the changing idea of literariness. Its four sub-sections therefore contextualize reading and writing in the late nineteenth-early twentieth to the early Republican period: Section I sets the historical and theoretical background to the alphabet and writing reforms; section II traces the formation of the reading public in four parts; section III surveys the reception of literary writing, and the last section analyzes transliteration, transcription and interpretation in the republic.

Chapter 3, "Illegible Letters of Disobedience Power-Aesthetics in Ece Ayhan's Poetics," discusses the poet Ece Ayhan's (1931-2002) oppositional poetry and critical prose in comparison with the early Republican poet Nazım Hikmet (1902-1963) in order to situate "illegible" writing as a medium of "power-aesthetics" that subverts the state's nativist, gendered, and heteropatriarchal system. While Ece's poetic oeuvre delineates the state's pact with books and with literature from late fifties onwards, his critical writing attests to the anti-authoritative and militarist Republicanism of the state. *Kınar Hanım* (1958) for instance exploits the ambiguities of *edebiyat* originating in non-literary connotations of *edeb*, claiming not only formal and thematic unity but also ethical heterogeneity of *edebiyat* against the homogenizing gravity of nationalism.

Chapter 4, "Anti-state Heterotopias in Novels by Murat Uyurkulak and Orhan Pamuk" then explores the concept "snow" and "inferno" in *Snow* (2002) by Orhan Pamuk and *Glow* (2006) by

Murat Uyurkulak respectively as anti-state heterotopias, which use hermeneutical ambivalence as self-censorship to open up alternative spaces inside and outside the nation-state and its linguistic determinism. While Uyurkulak's *Glow* (2006) employs elements of speculative and apocalyptic fiction in order to subvert linguistic and political oppression, *Snow* (2002) mobilizes the protagonist Ka to excavate the history and politics covered under the silence of snow.

Chapter 5, "Women's Intersectional Resistances against Heteropatriarchy: Contemporary Writing and Cinema by Sevgi Soysal, Ahu Öztürk and Perihan Mağden" interrogates the works of Sevgi Soysal and more contemporary writer Perihan Mağden and filmmaker Ahu Öztürk, who align the isolated feminist power of language against the writer-state's and the state-writer's patriarchal authoritarian discourse from the early Republic onwards, disclosing forms of textual and contextual alienation that are exacerbated by their personal and social isolation. Summing up the historical developments of the past century, their divergent ethnic, gender, and sexual identities and the identities they represent explain precisely why they are situated in a space of resistance that is at once outside and against the state.

Conclusion summarizes the ways in which these texts employ ethical implications of *edeb* before *edebiyat* was coined and inform us about the violence of separating content from form.

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My study took its current shape at the Memorial Library, whose collection I profusely consulted either by searching through its open stacks and discovering new works, by scrutinizing its online database and referring to the Interlibrary Loan service which provided all the articles and books I needed from around the world libraries when I was not able to travel. I am therefore grateful to the UW-Madison libraries and their wonderful staff; without their invaluable help to

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Teşekkürler…

Biographical Notes on Authors

The following notes provide basic information about the modern and contemporary Turkish writers who are discussed in detail in this study. Information about their works is included in the Bibliography.

Chapter 1 (introduction) and Chapter 2

Hasan Ali Yücel (1897-1961) was a writer, politician, and culture ideologue, who served as the Minister of Education from 1938 to 1946, founded Village Institutes (1940-1950), and ordered translations of World Classics into Turkish. İyi Vatandaş, İyi İnsan (*Good Citizen, Good Human*) (1971), *Kültür Üzerine Düşünceler* (Thoughts on Culture) (1974) collection of his essays published in Cumhuriyet Newspaper between 1952-1957.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938) was the first president and among the founders of the Turkish Republic. He gave his famous speech at the second congress of the People's Republican Party in 1927. *The Speech* (*Nutuk*) was first published in Ottoman Turkish in 1927, in English in 1929 (Leipzig), and in Latinized Turkish in 1938. *Nutuk* narrates the events from the Turkish Independence War in 1919 to the foundation of the Republic in 1923 from Atatürk's point of view.

Mehmet Fuat Köprülü (1890-1966) was a Turcologist and minister of foreign affairs in the Turkish Republic. He is from the famous "Köprülü" family, who served in the higher ranks in the Ottoman Empire since the seventeenth century. He was also a writer and translator, and among the ideologues of *milli edebiyat* (national literature) movement. His *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature* appeared in English in 2006. The *Mehmet Fuat Koprulu Scholarship Program* offers scholarship to Turkish PhD students at the University of Cambridge.

Chapter 3

Nazım Hikmet (1902-1963): Born in Ottoman Salonica, died in Moscow, Hikmet was among the first modernist poets in the Turkish language publishing during the early Republican Era. He was a self-declared communist who was exiled and revoked of citizenship (which was posthumously restored in 2009). He wrote plays and novels in addition to poetry, and his poetry has been translated into more than fifty languages. His selected poems and his epic *Human Landscapes from My Country* among others appeared in English.

Ece Ayhan (1931-2002): "Civil" poet Ece published essays and poetry beginning in late fifties during the post-Republican period. He wrote both verse and prose poems, and has two dictionaries by other writers and critics for reading his poetry: *Dictionary of Ece Ayhan* and *Dictionary of Çok Eski Adıyladır* (1982). His *A Blind Cat Black* and *Orthodoxies* appeared in English in 1997.

Chapter 4

Orhan Pamuk (1952): A contemporary novelist and the 2006 Nobel Laureate, Pamuk is translated in more than sixty languages. All his works have been translated into English among which his first novel *Cevdet Bey and His Sons* (1982) was translated in 2015. His latest is *The Red Haired Woman* (2016). Pamuk also published essays including *Other Colors* (1999), *Istanbul: Memories and the City* (2005) and *The Naïve and Sentimental Novelist* (2010). Pamuk was charged with "insulting Turkishness" in 2005 under Article 301 for stating that Armenians and Kurds were killed in Turkey in Germany, but the case was dropped in 2006.

Murat Uyurkulak (1972) is a contemporary novelist and short story writer. His works include *Tol* (2002), *Har* (2006), *Bazuka* (2011), and *Merhume* (2016). *Tol* and *Har* were translated in German as *Zorn* (2008), and *Glut: Ein Roman der Apokalypse* (2013) respectively. *Tol* means "revenge" in Kurdish, and *Har* has multiple meanings in Kurdish and Turkish comprising "glow, prick, bad person, liar" among others.

Chapter 5

Sevgi Soysal (1936-1976) was a woman writer. Her *Tante Rosa* (1968) was translated into German in 1982 and *Noontime in Yenisehir* was translated into English in 2016. Soysal's mother was German, and her *Tante Rosa* was allegedly influenced by her mother's, maternal grandmother's, and her own experiences.

Perihan Mağden (1960) is a contemporary woman writer. She is widely translated in English, German and French. Her works in English include *Messenger Boy Murders* (1991), *Two Girls* (2002), *Escape* (2007) and *Ali and Ramazan* (2010). She wrote in the newspaper *Taraf*, and was acquited from charges under Article 301 in 2006 for turning people against military service as she wrote in favor of conscientious objection in 2005.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: AN OVERVIEW OF MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY TURKISH LITERARY STUDIES

After the failed coup attempt on July 15, 2016 in Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan announced the foundation of a magnificient presidential library (*kütüphane*) inside the presidential palace or what is currently known as the presidential *külliye.*[6] Naming is significant primarly because the palace now has attained the function of a religious complex, which originally provided the Ottoman public with its religious and non-religious amenities including a library among others. The presidential library has been announced to comprise the largest number of books as the largest library in Turkey. Among the most visible and controversial contemporary historians İlber Ortaylı has dedicated his personal library to *külliye* after having been awarded the Presidential Grand Award for Culture and Art in 2017. Yet, in the summer of 2018, the public was informed that this library would only be part of a grander "reading" project Erdoğan initiated. This time, the goal is to found national reading houses (*kıraathane*s) all over the country inspired primarily by older coffeehouses and later reading houses of the Ottoman Empire. At a rally for 2018 presidential elections in Hatay, Erdoğan voiced the plan to spread the nation's *kıraathane*s (*millet kıraathaneleri*) to each city for the nation's youth[7] to adopt the habit of reading since the literacy rate according to the state head is not as high as it should be.[8] These *kıraathane*s differ from classical European style libraries as they will provide a collaborative, talking space for discussing

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[6] An Ottoman mosque complex with library, hamam, kitchen, school and other amenities for public use.
[7] In another speech within the same month, Erdoğan specified this group of youth by claiming that if the young do not read, they will join the terrorist organization PKK https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/cumhurbaskani-recep-tayyip-erdogan-anlamini-biliyorlar-kiraathane-okuma-evidir,JNdtrREoUUSVM9jK29_BCA
[8] For the news in English, see https://www.aa.com.tr/en/culture-and-art/istanbul-library-to-reflect-erdogans-kiraathane-model/1177146

books, and will offer free limited copier service and internet, and will serve free treats and tea while reinvigorating the Ottoman coffeehouse spirit. Once again, we see the literacy turn propagated by the head of state; once again the state is proactively invested in teaching to read through book production, preservation, and distribution reminiscent of the early Republican reading projects at the state level. After learning to read in the Latinized letters in schools and in such party-state sponsored organizations as people's houses (*halkevleri*) following the 1928 alphabet reform, the nation's youth in particular has yet been encumbered by another official reading task in the very alphabet this time set in modernized *kıraathane*s.[9]

Despite underscoring the value of reading, spatial qualities of the *kütüphane* in presidential *külliye* as well as of the more recent planned *kıraathane*s have been the sole point of discussion. While the public has been informed about the library's ecclectical Seljuki-Ottoman architectural style, and the amenities in *kıraathane*s, specifics of the books[10] to be purchased, donated, and (allowed to be) read are unknown to date.[11] And to be sure, the question as to who will decide which books to include in and exclude from the *kütüphane* and *kıraathane*s is kept all the more hidden. Time and again, role of literature in relation to this uncanny mobilization to read inevitably comes into play. When the emphasis is on reading and literacy, literary literature (*edebiyat*) (at least traditionally) emerges as the most distinctive written body of work among others. Then we neither can possibly escape the question of the percentage and content of the literary works within

[9] This current (re)turn to reading curiously postdates violence in the country further provoked by the then prime minister Erdoğan since the end of 2013. Peace process was rescinded in 2015 followed by military operations targeting Kurdish civilians in the northern Kurdistan (*Bakurê Kurdistanê*) in the borders of Turkey. A group of academics within and outside Turkey signed a petition against this state violence in January 2016, large number of whom have since then been laid off from their positions. Among them some have been on exile, and some lack travel freedom as their passports have been confiscated by the police. Reading this (re)turn to reading within this context is therefore essential to grasp the specific socio-historical layers that have led to this recent interest in promoting reading by the head of the state.

[10] Including but not limited to the information regarding the genres, subjects, editions, languages, and translations.

[11] Apart from a vague prediction about the populist historian Ortaylı's archive, presumably comprising Ottoman-Turkish history books written by likeminded Turkish nationalist historians, and others whitewashing the Ottoman-Turkish history and denying the atrocities against the Ottoman ethno-religious minorities.

the books made available to the public nor can we be surprized by the sheer unknowability of such an inquiry. How would a presidential library of Erdoğan look like from the lenses of *edebiyat*? How will the books be classified? Will there be separate stacks under *edebiyat*, and *edebiyat*s from which languages and regions will find shelves? What role does the particular history of literary literature as *edebiyat* in Turkish play in the formation of the Republican and contemporary Turkish writer?

Such questions focalizing the history of *edebiyat* and literariness began to inform the backdrop of my dissertation "The Writer and the Nation-State: Language, Aesthetics, Ideology and Power in Turkish Literature (1927-2015)," which began to take its current shape before the news of the state's grandiose presidential library (*kütüphane*) and *kıraathane* projects. I started my research during the post-2015 period of turmoil characterized by the ruling party's end of its first phase of liberal democracy and peace-making discourse and the beginning of the second phase of rising authorianism perpetuated by violence and polarization currently prevalent in Turkey. This phase of political violence perhaps ironically provoked me to ponder the history of the Turkish Republic, especially the rhetorical connection between the discourses of Mustafa Kemal co-opted and recycled by Erdoğan when deemed necessary particularly in the aftermath of the attempted coup in July 15, 2016. Both struck me as moving and mobilizing writers of the state, whose rhetorical footprints are most significantly grounded in ethno-linguistic nationalism and patriarchy, which are also imbricated in the works of writers whom I call as state-writers of the Republican era. Influenced and directed by singular literariness in *edebiyat*, these works paradoxically overemphasized creating a national literary canon, which did away with the ethical implicatons of the former term for literature *edeb*. It is no coincidince therefore that discusssions of national literature (*milli edebiyat*) and replacement of *edeb* with *edebiyat* occured within the same period of time.

1.1. Turkish Literature and the Postcolonial Literary Criticism

Modern Turkish literature has largely been shaped by its resistance against the radicalized reforms of the state, particularly the language reforms culminating in the alphabet change in 1928. The state's adoption of the Latin alphabet was a politically charged social engineering plan belonging to a grander nationalist modernity project. This national project was violent in nature; it instrumented violence, and stroked violent outcomes. Although what constitutes Turkey after the fall of the Ottoman Empire was never formally colonized, the new state, ironically, situated its historical predecessor as a colonizer, and strived to dissociate itself from the empire's affiliations, which, ironically, resulted in the Republic's rendering itself a self-created post-colony.

Turkish literary production, however, fails to be fully assimilative to the postcolonial literary framework, since, in one respect, this literature is still occupied by the nation state's violent, domesticating reforms. Although the minor aspect of the modern Turkish literature (minority writing in a major language) can be discussed within the scope of the postcolonial framework of literary criticism, theoretical perspectives of this scheme are inadequate to explain the peculiar trajectories of Turkish Literature. Yet, despite the state's ardent efforts to homogenize a multilingual and multiethnic cultures under the rubric of nationalist modernity, Turkish literary works resist this violent occupation and have been generating their peculiar anti-colonial, anti-national narratives, which, at the same time, contest our irrevocable *national* literary categories as well as the normative postcolonial scholarship.

Compared to the nationalist writers of the post-colony who "reinvented their identities either as a self-willed return to precolonial traditions or as a conscious rejection of an imposed European identity", nationalist writers of the Republic denied affiliation with the Ottoman multiculturalism at its dawn, and identified with a pre-Islamic origin and with Europe as the carrier of nationalism as well as advanced civilization (Gikandi, 1996; 194). Modern Turkish Literature

after the early Republic has been a battleground framed by the anxieties, denials, confrontations and contradictions of this contesting nationalized landscape that disrupts its post-colonial literary perspectives as Bhabha writes,

> The nation is no longer the sign of modernity under which cultural differences are homogenized in the 'horizontal' view of society. The nation reveals, in its ambivalent and vacillating representation, the ethnography of its own historicity and opens up the possibility of other narratives of the people and their difference.[12]

It is not the nation per se in the Turkish case, however, which carries this hybridization potential, but the nation despite the nationalizing (homogenizing) force. When Partha Chatterjee calls for a self-generated imagined community and "new forms of the modern state" for the post colony, modern Turkish literary imagination, one might suggest, disposes of fictitious affiliations with reaffirmations of the (colonialist) nationalist state.

The multilingualism of the postcolonial condition is contradicted by the Republican ideology via asserting monolingualism. Distinct from Indian modernity and literature, which, according to Vinay Dharwadker "were formed as writers in the networks linking indigenous multilingual literacy and specific zones of East-West acculturation," Turkish nationalist modernity has been shaped by the history of violence against its multilingual and multiethnic body of citizens (218). That the first massacres of the Armenians in 1789 followed by the Armenian Genocide of 1915 during the Ottoman Empire culminated in the collective violence and deportation of most of the remaining non-Muslim minorities, largely Greeks, in 1955 after the Republic, discloses the continuity of Turkish nationalism as a means to assimilate the heterogeneous voices. Ethnic and religious homogenization was succeeded by linguistic purification. The nation-state has internally

[12] Homi Bhabha, "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation" *Nation and Narration,* (New York: Routledge, 1990) 300.

displaced the writing intellectual along with its ethnic and religious others confining all in a homogenous time and space of an imagined nationalist modernity. Ertürk has judiciously pointed at the uniquely violent character of the Turkish literary modernity as follows:

> Belonging purely neither to the imperial, nor to the anti-colonial histories of nationalist language reform in the World-historical twentieth century, modern Turkish grammatology emerges as a limit narrative about the self-consummating violence of the modern: a violence that can no longer be either obscured, or disinherited. (xi).

Such persistent violence against its own citizens construes the radically nationalist and thus self-deprecating character of the nationalist Turkish state. Literary canon in Turkish narrates a scar inflicted by the state violence, a scar, however, which we can no longer read as a deficiency but as a restoring, style shaping character of this narrative.

1.2. Formations of Language and Literariness in the Nation

Language summarizes a large portion of one's conceptualization of the world shedding light on one's practices and perspectives in this historical presence. De/selection of words and phrases is at the same time blueprinted by one's interpretation of narratives, which is dialectically inspired by ideological power. Written language(s) had to go through reformation with the promulgation of the print technology in different parts of the world at different times. In some parts of the globe, however, politics played a major role in giving shape to the written language(s) after nationalism. Cyrillicization of the majority of the languages spoken under the Soviet rule is one instance among many nation-state projects. Ottoman-Turkish went through a comparable and yet different process with its codification in many alphabets of the empire in addition to the Perso-Arabic script. Prevalence of the print culture particularly in the 19th century necessitated a simplified alphabet whereby a mass production and distribution became a priority. What

distinguishes the language reforms after the transition from empire to republic is the mobilization of their potential ideological power to generate a national nation (*ulus*) from an imperial nation (*millet*) through a consciously evoked ethno-linguistic nationalism.

Although the late Ottoman linguistic reforms, but above all, the republican language reform was to an extent a "catastrophic success" as Geoffrey Lewis puts it in its political and cultural contexts, literature and its writer against the state have, perhaps contradictorily and inconsistently, distanced themselves from such linguistic eugenics. The immediate target of such control was, at first, press, which was used as a nationalist propaganda tool but which also, included the first novel form printed as serial novels (*tefrika roman*) in newspapers, and hence the current studies affirm that the first literary writers were both compliant and incongruous with the state during the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There has been a strong literary magazine tradition in Turkey, which has tremendously shaped Turkish literary modernity since this period, and the literary circle in Turkey has originated and developed around this prolific periodicals publishing market, the significance of which has also been overlooked although even the first Ottoman novels were published as serials in newspapers and literary magazines. This conjunctional ambivalence implies the Republican state policy of erasing the pre-1928 memory.[13]

Empirical consequence of such an endeavor was its detriment to the alphabets other than the Latinized Turkish, and to the spoken languages other than the *native*/folk Turkish. Hobsbawm explains the mechanism of "nation as progress" as follows, "The small people, language or culture fitted into progress only insofar as it accepted subordinate status to some larger unit or retired from battle to become a repository of nostalgia and other sentiments – in short, accepted the status of old family furniture" (1990, 41). The new nation-state of Turkey exploited literary language as

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[13] A recent project on "History of Serial Novels in Turkish Literature (1831-1928)", however, which has been initiated by Özyeğin University in Istanbul, has been made available on a database since January 1, 2017. The project workshop open to the public was held in the same university on April 7, 2017.

power to control a heterogeneous society reproducing ur-narratives about the origins of *the* nation. Literary power of language aided the nation-state in its controversially rewriting historical narratives and (re)presenting them as history per se. Literary production also served to promulgate the nationalist agenda infusing the public with the idea of one nation (Turk), one language (Turkish), and one religion (Sunni-Islam) despite being "secular" on paper. Still, there has not been an *outside* language encroaching on and competing with a native language (Turkish). On the contrary, the major language has left no place of existence for minority languages, rendering Turkish the sole language of publication.[14] There exists no Turkish-English Literature as does the "Indian branch" of English Literature as Salman Rushdie conveys; therefore, no such "hybridity" is formed in the auspicious *homeland* (1992, p.65).

"…But it is not Turkish Literature..!" is a conventional response from an unspecialized reader to a Turkish literary text evaluated as *unconventional* without implicating a negative/positive assessment. Yet, what is Turkish Literature, really? And what we talk about when we talk about Turkish Literature versus literature in Turkish? These two phrases, indeed, have separate semantic, aesthetic and ideological connotations when uttered in Turkish—the first referring to the national formation and the second to literature produced in Turkish. A significant cluster of literary criticism in Turkish adopts *Turk*ish *literature* ("*Türk Edebiyatı*", "literature of the Turk") as opposed to *Turkish literature* ("*Türkçe Edebiyat*") elevating the national in the literary category not readily discernable in English (*Türk*: Turk; *Türkçe*: Turkish language).[15] One of the oppositions to *Türkçe Edebiyat* stems from the ambiguity of the term implying both *Turkish literature* and *literature in Turkish*. And there is also *Türkçede edebiyat* (literature in Turkish), which connotes literatures in translation as well. Today *çeviri edebiyat* (literature in translation) is

[14] Regardless of the publications in Kurdish, which have only recently proliferated.
[15] Literature of Turkey ("Türkiye Edebiyatı") is among the suggestions as an alternative to *Literature of the Turk*, however, it poses another difficulty with emphasizing the post-imperial national geography, and risks obviating the Ottoman literary works.

commonly used to singularly denote the translated texts into Turkish. If we already have a term for translated literature (in Turkish), why not use *Türkçe edebiyat* in order to mark literature written in Turkish? And what if it slightly disorients itself to include *other* languages and literatures produced in or translated to Turkish, and *other* ethnicities writing in Turkish? Why does a Kurdish poet or an Armenian writer writing in Turkish need to be included in the ethno-centrically defined field of *Turk's literature*? Imagine the category of Turkish-German writing essentialized as *Gasterbeiterliteratur* (guest worker literature), which is exemplified also in the works of Emine Sevgi Özdamar writing in German but also of such writers as Aras Ören writing in German and Turkish in Germany, and Sevgi Sosyal writing in Turkish on Germany in Turkey. Özdamar is as much a German writer as she is a Turkish one and vice versa producing a body of work beyond the categories of both *Gasterbeiterliteratur* and *Türk Edebiyatı*, the latter of which has to date completely alienated Turkish-German writing.

More contemporary second and third generation Turkish-German (and Kurdish-German) writers who are no longer "guests" in Germany, have for the last two decades been producing texts that criticize the implications of the soci-economic identity-based category generated for their work in the beginning. *Gasterbeiterliteratur* however stands still, which proves that it takes consciously systematic effort to decolonize our literary vocabulary. *Türk Edebiyatı* (Turk's Literature) just like *Gasterbeiterliteratur*, has been calling forth our intrusion. All of the above writers among others need in fact be included in the Turkish literary field of *Türkçe Edebiyat* (and not *Türk Edebiyatı*) without erasing their peculiar narrative trajectories.

Imagine also the difference between English literature and literature in English, the latter of which comprises global literatures written in English whereas the former is more of an established field of a literature understood by perhaps a less inclusive academia to be produced by English writers writing in English in England. Non-English writers writing in English in England

are largely considered part of British rather than English literature. Nigerian-English and Indian-English are other terms to define the latter. These are still contested, colonial mindedly framed spheres in world literature. Far from being a mere lexical inquiry, therefore, this linguistic/literary nationalism that Turkish literature finds itself informs the backdrop of Turkish literary studies.

In the introduction of *New Perspectives on Turkey*: "Literature and the Nation: Confronting the Unhealed Wounds", the editors, accordingly, highlight some of the characteristics of the early Republican Turkish Literature one of which is identified as the gendered representation question of the nation: "While the Anatolian land that was to make up the fabric of the nation is represented as female in its simultaneous desirability and elusiveness, the national protagonist is male…whose quest to live up to the example of the father (of the nation) was repeatedly frustrated, a subject whose pathos was latent in the early republican novels…" (Köroğlu et al. 2007, 8). This interpretation reads a continuity in the gendered nationalization of the land in the literary works stretching from the early 20th century onwards all the same stressing in other parts of the introduction that there has been a shift in these narratives towards challenging the nationalist representation of the land after 1970s (7).

The question of what ails "Turkish Literature" as a national formation with its inclusions, omissions, and contradictions, perhaps, has not been a common inquiry in the Turkish literary scholarship except more recent intrusions by a cluster of scholars who claim that "national" inclinations do not necessarily harbor in the literary works (referring particularly to the literature of the World War I period) themselves but in the scholars' "nationalist" approach to these works once considered the castles of the Turkish *national* literature. "Denationalized" rereading of the literary works belonging to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, on the other hand, unveiled a critical set of narratives which according to Adak and Altınay result first of all from a "radical shift in scholarship… "enabling them [the critics] to notice and engage with moments of

resistance (to official history) and history writing from different perspectives (such as not taking the Turkish protagonist or the allegory of the Turkish nation as the norm)" (25-26).

Another reason for this change in the literary scholarship suggested by Adak and Altınay is allegedly a transformation in history writing which has welcomed the testimonies and autobiographies as "monuments" in themselves "not subservient to an outside, external, objective history imposed as 'official truth'" (26). Analyzed through this lens, these scholars argue that "Turkish memoirs and fiction do not singlehandedly serve the interests of the national imaginary. Even those that have been show-cased as perfect examples of 'national literature' (for instance, Halide Edib's *Ateşten Gömlek*) harbor contradictions and inconsistencies that unsettle the 'republican defensive narrative' of 1915" (26).

Although limited in the temporal scope i.e. considering a period of wars and catastrophes particularly, according to this argument, there exists more of a problem of reading by the scholars than writing by the authors per se. This methodological insight also pinpoints the lexical nationalism mentioned in the beginning prevalent in (still) using *literature of the Turk* (*Türk Edebiyatı*) instead of *Turkish literature* (*Türkçe Edebiyat*). This has been a recent debate in Turkish literary circles, which indicates the latent nationalist tendency by (a majority of) literary scholars in intentionally indiscriminating overt concepts like *Turk* and *Turkish language* insisting that "Turk" in "literature of the Turk" has been naturalized to include *all* in Turkey despite their ethnic differences, thus promoting and perpetuating the nationalist argument on the literary stage.[16]

Another strand in the discussion of Turkish Literature as a national formation unfolds, on the other hand, in writers', specifically, poets' excessive linguistic obsession with Turkish in a way to obstruct them from participating in comparative literary exchanges with other languages as the literary critic and poet Necmi Zeka observed (533). Pamuk's *Snow* also disconcertedly thematizes

[16] See http://t24.com.tr/k24/yazi/konusmalar-dilici-ceviri1,1152 for the most recent debate on this topic.

this language issue in the narrator's commentary on a poet named Fahir, whose "poems influenced by his poetry translations into an artificial pure Turkish were dearth of inspiration, poor and incomprehensible" (56). Fahir, what may seem paradoxical, is also an ardent supporter of Western poetry, who studied at Saint Joseph, and not surprisingly, also went to Paris just as the later Ottoman and early Republican intellectuals were meant to do. What is interesting in this account is the fact that poetry translations into Turkish from "Western" languages did not necessarily enrich Turkish; conversely, translation mechanism as is construed by the "purists" deprived the language of its organically historical richness.

If we read Turkish linguistic reforms in the light of such Turkish "humanistic" nationalism, then its applause by the majority including the literary circles render at least comprehensible. Yet, such a grand linguistic project should anticipate a literary loss. The linguistic pride, Zeka reminds us, resulting from a false belief in nationalistic superiority endorsed over a century invokes an obstacle in front of literary innovation in Turkish, and purports in "A Prisoner of Language" that modern Turkish poets unjustifiably believe that the peculiarity of their language "prevents their poetry from being translated and read extensively. However, taking refuge in an idealized language not only gives rise to unjustified grandiosity, but also often leads Turkish poets to work with a limited number of obsolete ideas and worn-out sentimentalities" (533). Although the overgeneralizing tone of the observation needs caution, Zeka's attention is important taking into account the relatively long tradition of poetry writing and the extant popularity of the genre producing large number of poets (not necessarily poetry readers) in Turkish every year.

In "Exiles at Home: Questions for Turkish and Global Literary Studies", Hülya Adak rightly questioned the success of the alphabet and language reforms of the Kemalist Republic investigating the early Rebublican writer's ideology vis–à–vis their work. Referring to the Republican poet Nazım Hikmet and writer Falih Rıfkı Atay, Adak writes: "On the one hand, they

vouched for the language reform through their collaboration with the Türk Dil Kurumu (Lewis 70), on the other, they did not abide by the dictates of the reform in their literary and nonfictional work" (2008, 23). In relation to Adak's reflection, Nergis Ertürk argued in her *Grammatology and Literary Modernity in Turkey* that despite the ideological differences between Nazım Hikmet and other "conservative" writers of the Republican era, Hikmet also acknowledged and mobilized "the internal heterogeneity of the Turkish language" (161). One can then attentively respond to Adak's relevant inquiry when she proposes: "If an earlier generation of writers resisted the language reform, then further questions await literary scholarship: Did literature keep an autonomous distance from the [language] reform, and was the reform unsuccessful in this respect?" (2008, 24). Ertürk affirmed this question elucidating the ways in which the late Ottoman and early Republican canonical, yet scarcely translated, literary works inhabit the unruliness of language: "Despite and against the extremity of measures for nationalization, such self-reflexive literary *stagings* demonstrate that no control of linguistic communication is ever complete" (2011, 17). Coercion of language is certainly not complete but undeniably has opened a deep wound obstructing a heterogeneously rich literary tradition to emerge in the Republican lands.[17]

Ethnocentrism has penetrated the artistic and political spheres in Turkey via a systematic use/circulation of language as the bearer of nationalist ideology. Turkish literary studies have also collaborated with the ideologues of the new Turkish Republic in a way to engineer a homogeneous language stripped of its mobility/liquidity which stands in stark contrast to the normative and at times naive concept of language as an organically evolving entity, and literature as a pure aesthetic production. Aesthetics of the majority of literary works during the late Ottoman and early Republic

[17] I would also be wary of a too optimistic reading of literature as power to rebuke state's control over language keeping in mind Zeka's attentiveness to the poetic and prosaic works, which (still) follow in the nationalist ideologue's wake in their linguistic confinement.

were informed by their authors' respective ideologies, which might have differed in some aspects, but unified in nationalism as the sole encompassing ideological stance.

Against the rule of monolingualism of the early nation-states as in the Turkish case, Rebecca Walkowitz's suggestion to turn our attention away from the nineteenth century novels when national languages normalized the perception that literature had a (national) language, to the contemporary novel which is already born translated and multilingual needs consideration (2015, 29-30). Orhan Pamuk's (2006) *The Black Book*, for instance, exploits the orientalized Sufi practices to criticize the alphabet reform as the narrator articulates Galip's experience with *Hurufism*—the Sufi sect believing in God's manifestation in the Arabic alphabet—as follows: "he could easily make out the *alif*s and *lam*s that made up the first four letters of the word Allah, but stranger still…the tears falling from their eyes resemble the Os, Us, and Cs in the Latin alphabet. This was the first time Galip had come across a Hurufi response to the 1928 Alphabet Revolution" (300). In addition, Erdağ Göknar's commentary that Pamuk uses Sufi tradition, an unorthodox sect of Islam, to politicize the alphabet reform by the secular state, here, Pamuk peculiarly pinpoints the similar sacralization of the Latin alphabet by the state, which, contradictorily, aimed to secularize the Turkish language eliminating the sacred (non-arbitrary) Arabic orthography (227). In contemporary Turkish writing, the fear from writing with its non-arbitrary signs has compellingly been replaced by the fear of writing in an unescapably sacralized language regardless of its non-arbitrary signs.

1.3. Modes of Writing and Resistance in a Multilingual Nation and Outside

There has been an emerging body of criticism on minor literature, literary resistance, literature and trauma, coup d'état novels, literature and memory, and on violence in contemporary Turkish literary studies, which forces us to reconsider the role of the nation-state in relation to the literary writer, and thus to the literary text. Although the extant literary scholarship guides us to understand the corporeal and epistemic violence that the individual literary works evince, no substantial research has been done to interrogate the dialectical relationship between the writer and the nation-state, out of which such violence, first of all, emerges. In *The Making of the State Writer*, Evgeny Dobrenko (2003) writes, "*The transformation of the author into his own censor—herein is the true history of Soviet literature*…Soviet culture overcame the eternal abyss between art and life, or, in the terms of traditional culture—from Pushkin to Blok—between 'poet and mob,' between 'poetry and utility'" (2003, xviii). One can claim a similar trajectory as far as Turkish literature is concerned, and this censorship follows various paths lending itself further to literary transgressions.

Expanding on the theory of minor literature upheld by Deleuze and Guattari drawing from Kafka, in *Beyond the Mother* Tongue, Yasemin Yıldız stresses the underlying multilingual structure in a seemingly monolingual text like Kafka's:

> Writing *on* Yiddish but *in* German in these varied genres, Kafka addresses the problem of having a mother tongue that is socially unsanctioned within a larger structure increasingly governed by the monolingual paradigm. In the process, he rearticulates the mother tongue itself as inescapably uncanny (*unheimlich*) rather than familiar, as the paradigm would have it. (35)

Problematizing the holy mother tongue, hence the nation built on it, Yıldız questions the internal dynamics of writing too easily decoupled as practicing in and outside the nation.

Intellectual imprisonment has been so violent that even the migrant writer cannot escape it. Again, Yıldız observes referring to a familiar text for the Turkish-German readers of the Turkish-Kurdish-German author Sevgi Özdamar writing in German: "Her acts of literal translation are not set against German as an imposed language, but *against violence in the "mother tongue" itself*. That mother tongue, in turn, is a result of monolingualizing strategies of the nation state" (149, emphasis mine). Yıldız's shrewd observation is important especially for the contemporary Turkish literary context where I share her line of reasoning attesting to the inherent violence in Turkish as in Özdamar's so called mother tongue.

Despite writing in German, can we then consider Özdamar's literary oeuvre a component of Turkish literature in the way we can see *Auf der anderen Seite* ("*The Edge of Heaven*") by Fatih Akın (2007) within the history of Turkish Cinema? There is certainly more at work in Özdamar's writing than its narrativization in German. When Özdamar mobilizes literal translation, it performs to lay bare the violence in Turkish, whose affect transfers into German. As a minority writing in a major language, does Özdamar's writing necessarily invoke the minor literary category theorized by Deleuze and Guattari? I am, nevertheless, more inclined to favor a lesser essentialized (and conservative) conceptualization of "becoming minor," proposed by JanMohamed and Lloyd, "is not a question of essence (as the stereotypes of minorities in dominant ideology would want us to believe) but a question of position: a subject-position that in the final analysis can be defined only in 'political' terms" (9). This subject-position, I think, might help more accurately define the writings not only by minorities but also by some segments of the majority positioning themselves with the minorities (not only ethnic and linguistic). Moreover, the collected writings *Kendi Kendinin Terzisi Bir Kambur* (named after one of Ece's poem) in Turkish published by Özdamar comprise the poet Ece Ayhan's diary and letters to Özdamar during his hospitalization in Zurih in

1974. And by bringing Turkish literature to Germany via Turkish, it puts *Turk Edebiyatı* to challenge once again.

The poet Ece Ayhan (1931-2002) is idiosyncratic in the Turkish Literary history as a result of writing *as if* a minority, and of constantly interrupting the *yerli ve milli* (local and national) tenets of *Türk Edebiyatı*. Ece's poetry not only thematizes minority histories, but also alienates the official Turkish language as if it is a foreign language whereby framing its aesthetics. Ece's literary oeuvre from *Kınar Hanım'ın Denizleri* (1959) ("*Ms. Kınar's Seas*") to *Yort Savul* (1977) (literally "*Get out of the Way*") demonstrates a minor subjectification with his extremely unconventional handling of Turkish bolstered by Ece's own recoding of the language rendering it illegible not for the implied reader, who is not proficient in *the* language, but precisely in its socio-historically charged codes.

Modern Turkey's history is written by the history of its coup d'etats narrated by violent literary production. Since memory studies have taken an uphold in Turkey recently, in part due to the literary scholars aligning outside the national literary canon, there is a growing interest also in the testimony literature written by the imprisoned and tortured as well as by the ones who witnessed this historical moment relatively from the outside. According to the scholars of testimony literature, this body of prison literature has been a way out of this collective violence ensuring confrontation and hence resistance: "literature evolving around coup d'etats have replaced truth comissions in Turkey where confrontation with coup d'etats have not been experienced and where truth comissions haven't been founded as in Latin America (Çalışkan and Günay-Erkol, 2016, 27-28). Has Turkish literary stage, finally, welcomed confrontation with a violent past, which itself once contributed, and has thus catered to literary resistance?

As the utmost state writer, Atatürk's prophetic role, was not only asserted by himself in *Nutuk*. If one also looks at the writings on culture by the Republican education minister Hasan Ali

Yücel, where he cites a paragraph from *Nutuk* followed by a commentary in which he addresses Atatürk in the third person capital letter "O": "...We must listen to Him [O'nu] before everyone else. We must think over His words. We do not sufficiently teach Him; we must do. The ones who oppose Him for various reasons, again seek refuge in Him when they run into trouble[18]..." (1972, 191-192). If these lines are isolated, one can take them for a section in Qur'an or hadith which refer only to God (Allah) in the third person capital. Atatürk's sacralization speaks to the consecration of the Turkish language at the hand of a literary institution as a state apparatus.

The thematic rubrics under which Turkish literature organized itself comprises the state, text, and the writer, all of which enter a dialectical relationship swinging between conflict and negotiation. While some writers subscribed to the state's discourse, some resisted, albeit not completely independent from the influence of space and time.

Against such mysticization of Atatürk, for instance, Adak rereads Halide Edib Adıvar's (1953) play *Masks or Souls?* through Vaclav Havel arguing that "in the last scene of *Masks or Souls?* the masses created by teleology of modernity were turned into robots in prison jumpsuits without any authenticity and individuality. The end of positivist Republican ideal is not 'a laic paradise', but is an absolute 'nightmare'" (2016, 172). Adıvar, then, forsees the tragedy of a mechanical Westernisation in a dystopian future.

Adak and Altınay, accordingly, project on "methodological nationalism" of the feminist scholarship "on women [that] remained oblivious to questions of ethnicity, whereby a critical attitude to nationalism and the recognition of nations as modern, historical constructs does not guarantee a framework of analysis that does not reproduce some of the basic assumptions of nationalism" (2010, 14-15). The latest feminist scholarship exemplified by Adak and Altınay

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[18] "...Her zaman, herkesten çok O'nu dinlemeliyiz. Kâfi derecede O'nu öğretmiyoruz. Öğretmeliyiz. Ona, türlü sebeplerden en karşıt olanlar bile başları sıkıştığı zaman gene O'na sığınmaktadırlar..."

themselves, however, has begun to overcome this problem interrogating the issues of ethnicity, i.e. Kurdish women's struggle in their discussions.

1.4. The Dialectics of Religion, Literature, and the Women Writer

Today structural patriarchy of the state recognizes and controls (one) state-religion under which women suffer the most. Imposing one (state) interpretation of one religious sect (Sunni-Islam) through state institutions by the Republic was not the kind of "freedom" women had opted for. Still ambivalence towards practicing Islam prevailed for a long time. While women were being stripped off of their headscarves in late 1920s, Sunni-Islam was moving on its way to become the official state religion. Article II of the first Republican constitution in 1924 did not list religion as a constituent until it was amended in 1928 to include Islam as the state religion. Turkish civil code including women's rights adopted from Swiss civil code was accepted with minor revisions in 1926. Yet state surveillance of women's bodies have continued in diverse measures from empire to republic regardless of the given voting and working rights.[19]

Modernization movements had already begun in the 18th century, two centuries before the foundation of the Republic. Hence, Republican reforms mark the continuation of the Ottoman modernization efforts, and do not characteristically assert an epistemic "rupture" as sometimes bluntly articulated. On Sufism's shaping of modernity in Turkey, Brian Silverstein aptly pinpoints that the domestication of Islam into [chiefly] a religion in Turkey is "a *fait accompli* [which] results superficially from the Republican reforms but more substantially from centuries of Ottoman institutional reform and incremental shifts in the authority and prestige of Islamic regimes of

[19] It is surprising to see today so many of the "secular" identified (*laik*) women being content with these limited public rights while their mostly private rights are being trampled on.

knowledge and power vis-a-vis other ones" (2007, 59). Islam, in short, transformed from being the dominant culture with products, practices, and perspectives, for which Islam was the umbrella, to solely a religious denomination *outside* the culture. In this sense, Gökalp's early twentieth century thesis about culture emcompassing *the original Turkish-Islamic soul* separate from (Western) civilization was not true to its *origin*s. By then, the idea and function of Islam in the society had already begun to change.

Print capitalism in the 19th century as Benedict Anderson conveys, already necessitated the simplification of the Ottoman orthography and inaugurated the nationalist tendencies (44-45).[20] Since the alphabet reform in 1928, largely accepted by the scholars as being the most radical of all the Republican reforms rendering the Ottoman modernization reforms obscure, continuity of Ottoman literary modernity throughout the Republican period has been overwhelmingly swept aside.

Recent scholarship continues to bring out a more nuanced relationship between state and religion, which is grounded in state's perpetual control and promulgation of one religious sect, satisfying the goal of religious unity in addition to that of linguistic and national unities. Transition from empire to nation-state did not necessarily culminate in transformation within the governing state structure, as the historian Erik Jan Zürcher claims; rather the nation-state has inherited the empire's authoritarian institualization (2010, 282). Şerif Mardin also observes that the new Republic is founded on "the ancient ideal of the preservation of the state. Systems for training the bureaucrats might have changed, but the Ottoman tradition that the state counted more than individuals had remained…Gradually, concern for the state was transformed into an ideology of nascent nationalisms" (2006, 196). One can easily decipher the selfsame rhetoric of "the continuity

[20] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006).

of the state" (*devletin bekāsı*) by each hitherto government even at the expense of its people. Andrew Davison further suggests that abolishing caliphate in the name of laicism "actually created a new structure of control and oversight between the state and Islam in which the republic's founders sought to use the powers of state to interpret, oversee, and administer (including financially) religious doctrine and practice" (2003, 338). Ayşe Kadıoğlu complicates the matter conveying that state Islam was advocated by Turkish republican laicism "furthering national solidarity and integration in order to attain the larger goal of westernization. Accordingly, the state's relations with its non-Muslim citizens involved increasingly more discriminatory practices. Moreover, all conflicts between the state and folk Islam were assessed in terms of progress versus reaction" (2010, 497).

If we scrutinize the present paying attention to the discourses by the so called nationalists and the Islamists regarding the ethnic and religious minorities, we can, in fact, easily behold a consensus in their hostile rhetoric towards these communities whose struggle for equality is, in their words, an obstacle to "the continuity of the state." These intersecting comments, therefore, are pivotal in understanding the conceptual, institutional, empirical dis/continuities between empire and nation-state, the latter not only attempting to control language promoting a purified, homogenous one (a modified Turkish), but also religion promoting its own homogenous version (a Turkish style Sunni-Islam) regulated by the state itself.

Women, in particular, become the show window of state control, which rendered "uncontrolled" religion (Islam) as "backward" as Kadıoğlu notes: "Headscarves have become a symbol of backwardness since they represent an Islam that is not subservient to the state. Today, women with headscarves are viewed as dangerous not simply because they are religious but rather because they represent a challenge to the control of the state over Islam" (2010, 497).

Beginning with the foundation of the republic, state control on folk Islam and Islamic attire not only marginalized the pious women but via a systemic defeminization also exerted its oppression on the secular women as such.

Not only the leftist, secularist but also the Islamic subaltern became the actors in this literary resistance to this new state of the religion controlled by the nation-state. 1970-1980's boom of *Islamic bildungsroman* ("*hidayet romanları"*) welcomes a rereading of this subaltern subject whose subjectivity was continuously humiliated by the practices of a radical state-secularism, which strictly controlled the public visibility of Islam while ardently mobilizing its institutionalized discourse elsewhere. Proliferation of women writers with or without headscarves simultaneous with the male writers with religious sensitivities during the 1980s has contributed to a misleading (and orientalized) category of "conservative literature". Ironically, the very concept of "conservative" is at times utilized to describe a pseudo "progressive" ideology such as Kemalism as one of the leading women writers Adalet Ağaoğlu (1929) also discerns in her novel *Lying Down to Die* [*Ölmeye Yatmak*] (1973). This novel construes the Kemalist project's feminism overwhelmingly buttressed by Turkey's leftist movement beginning in mid 1960s as a failure.

Literary criticism, which is more ideologically motivated than literarily, needs also to deconstruct such non literary categories as "conservative" versus "progressive," condescending to scrutinize this body of literature.[21] Although I do not attribute the predominance of "women postmodernist writers" to "the broad range of new languages [that] postmodernism has offered to historically underrepresented or marginalized voices" as Azade Seyhan suggests, contemporary Turkish writing is vastly diversified, but more resulting from an increasing resistance of literary

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[21] Ahmet Sait Akçay's (2006) *Bellekteki Huriler / İslamcı Popülist Kültüre Eleştirel Bakış* is one such introductory source notwithstanding the sarcasm in its title. Also see Cihan Aktaş's (2007) *Bir Hayat Tarzı Eleştirisi: İslamcılık* for a discussion on the sociology of Islamism with a feminist perspective.

language against the official (2001, 170).[22] It was not postmodernism which had the agency to mobilize the outcast, but the very real life-politics which drove writers of all backgrounds to claim their own voices in a literary world hitherto dominated by a discursive heteropatriarchal state-writer and writer-state.

Religion and literature have had a dialectical hold on each other since the formation of the secular state. To the extent that the new nation-state utilized religious rhetoric adhering to Sunni-Islamic branch in official discourses, writers of the new secular-republic, which might seem paradoxical, also collaborated to benefit from the unifying power of an orthodox Islam in order to help fashion a new nation. When religion was crucified as backwardness on the public sphere, at the same time, it served an integral part of the literary discourse particularly in the narratives on WWI and Independence War of Turkey as put to debate by the literary critics. In the beginning of 1950s, although (state) religion has ceased to lose its grip on narratives as state propaganda, religion prominently as a heterodox belief system has continued to shape the literary sphere in the modernist writings of say Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (1901-1962) and Peyami Safa (1899-1961). These writers utilized the heterodox underpinnings of Islam whereby deviating from the Republican state's separating Islam from the society (by way of institutionalizing religion). Pamuk's *Snow* also illustrates how Islam as a living momentum in Ka's experience has the potential to counter religious fanaticism, which is sometimes wrongly used as a metaphor for Islam. Modes of writing *the* religion with its heterogeneity in the modern and contemporary Turkish literary works await literary-historical critical attention since despite the contrary holistic

[22] The literary works by Sevgi Soysal, Adalet Ağaoğlu, Sevim Burak, Leyla Erbil and Latife Tekin among others, for instance, fostered a new generation of prominent (women) writers such as Aslı Erdoğan, Sema Kaygusuz, Perihan Mağden and Ayfer Tunç among many as a result of a literary revival sparked by what I will call a negative enlightenment, which put into question the tremendous impact of the (masculine) nationalist state tradition on the society, thereby obliging the writers to exploit the tools of the literary language to mitigate multifarious violence(s) of the past swaying the present.

interpretations of the present, religion like language, harbors ambivalence, and therefore, catalyzes resistance to statist regularizations.

1.5. Towards a Non-Hegemonic Turkish Literary Studies?

Critiquing Moretti's "distant reading" in a seminal article titled "The Object of Comparison," Jale Parla compellingly argued that globalization has helped free the Ottoman-Turkish Literary scholarship from the Turcologists' philological monopoly over the study of this body of literature (2004, 118). Drawing on Ahmet Mithat's novels, Parla also underlined that the potential for hybridity, which is achieved by what Moretti calls "formal compromise," that is the mixing of European formal devices with local context and narrative tradition, was undermined in the Turkish literary scholarship up until 1970s since when the Ottoman-Turkish literary production has been revisited as a result of a combination of *hybrid* influences—as I derive from Parla's suggestion—not necessarily pertaining to one origin (123-124).

I seek to analyze the key features of post-Republican Turkish literary production, and of the Turkish literary criticism which, I think, did not take enough issue with the interrelated concepts of language, aesthetics, and ideology; not only in discussing the literary works, but also in interrogating its own critical tools. I, therefore, attempt to put the critics into dialogue among themselves, hoping to provoke and to enrich a discussion on the Turkish literary-critical tradition. In doing so, I would also like to interpose a question on the limits of the existing theoretical perspectives, involving the post-colonial literary critical framework, which is conducive for comparison and at the same time inadequate to lay out the diverging points of the post-imperial Turkish literary formation. I anticipate the hybridity experimented on the literary level by writers to incite endeavors in utilizing hybrid approaches to literature by literary critics without them

necessarily having to resort to appropriate this and that theoretical standpoint as the sole method to analyze the Turkish literary production. Literary critics educated both in Turcology and "Western[23]" literature departments in Turkey despite having antithetical approaches to literary criticism still share a homogeneous conservative philosophy by utilizing translation and commentary of the philological school or (post)structuralist framework for texual analysis respectively. As much as Turkish texts do not singularly demand one type of analytical strategy non-Turkish texts do not either. Literary texts and authors themselves have less to do in the applied methods by critics; and less because certain authors and their texts in fact inserted power over criticism of their texts not through censorship by direct coercion (some were not even alive to do so) but more so through their symbolic power in the Turkish literary history. And this self-enacted censorship is by no means unique to Turcologists. Artificial division of Turkish and western languages and literature departments based on both Orientalist and Occidentalist tendencies only point at the two sides of the same coin. In this sense, (post)colonization (of the not colonized) more singlehandedly and thus forcefully happened on the discursive level in the literary academia in Turkey than perhaps elsewhere in the colonized (third) world. The need to put to circulation *edebiyat* replacing *edeb* in the late and long nineteenth century attests to a self-colonizing force of literary studies, which had to insert a difference from other disciplines as well as from its own past literary and non-literary connotations at a particular point in time when Turkish had to be differentiated from being non-Turkish.

Borrowing a post-colonial terminology, decolonizing our literary-critical vocabulary as critics, is central to primarily reconstruct a perspective devoid of possible nationalist tendencies, and as such to reevaluate the literary works inside and outside the literary scene through a hybrid

[23] Eastern (*Doğu Dilleri ve Edebiyatları*) and Western Languages and Literatures (*Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatları*) are common departmental names in Turkey's universities, and are separate from the Turkish Language and Literature departments.

strategy, which is both holistic and at the same time particular for we since the beginning of writing have been reading texts in translation, analyzing in the original language(s), and deriving critical tools from within. To accept this is to also accept that no text nor any theory belongs to one nineteenth century formulated concept and corporeality of nation.

I propose that the linguistic obsession with Turkish in the majority of Turkish literary works not taken as a sign but as the sacralized style shaping entity confines the language in one geography curtailing its translative feature as Necmi Zeka (2003) ably argues for the poetic works; moreover such logocentric preoccupation accompanying a trenchant ethnocentrism hinders the literary critic from generating formal and contextual arguments pertaining to the aesthetic and political dimension(s) of the text, reading which would, first of all, require the critic to step outside of what the text's language singularly points at. Language for what we have quite generously learnt from M. M. Bakhtin is not and cannot be an abstract notion; it is a complete system living its many contexts embedded in history and philosophy to begin with among others. Philological framework as we understand today, therefore, will be insufficient to fully understand a literary text in any genre. Although Bakhtin argues that in poetry words are decontextualized to belong only to that particular poem, whereby comprising its monological, closed nature, I read this statement, perhaps a bit subjectively, in order to not underscore ahistorical and aspatial literariness in poetic discourse but more so a particular unsituatedness of poetry within space and time. That is why a poem is readable throughout years, centuries, and locations, offering newly discovered meanings each time and space. Yet, despite the difficulty of translating poetry and literary texts in general resulting from the peculiar risk to jeopardize its original literariness, treating literariness as a closed system of descriptive linguistic rules to provide literary affect is in itself a self-restrictive approach, which would in the end turn the text into a flattering but incomprehensible wordiness.

Ambiguity and at times incoherency unfolding in the translations of literary and philosophical texts from different languages into Turkish thus only work to intensify the existing problem, oftentimes manifesting itself in articulations of Turkish, precisely in the poets' inconsistent use of images or in prose writers' sacrificing meaning and clarity for the sake of accomplishing linguistic (not necessarily philosophical) complexity. Teleological approach to Turkish, in fact, deprives both the writer and the critic of mobilizing the language to its fullest potential beyond its philological markers.

"Literature is compensation for the destructiveness of life, not only as memory but also as *utopian* resistance against violence of history. It resists not only by remembering but also by imagining an alternative to the past" wrote Sibel Irzık in her poignant commentary on Yaşar Kemal's (2004) trilogy *An Island Story* (2013, 59). Disillusionment with the Kemalist utopia as Oğuz Atay's (1972) magnum opus *The Disconnected* brilliantly evoked is partially due to non-identitarian ethnographic and archival research as well as to the flourishing of the publishing market within which minority writers and writers writing from the outside could find a voice. Despite the state's efforts to obviate the literary as well as sociological and political memory, contemporary scholarship is decisively dedicated to archive this body of literature. Literary criticism on Turkish literature, perhaps, has never been as radically heterogeneous thanks to the myriad literary magazines and to new branch of scholars who are trained in comparative literary studies including but not limited to Ottoman, Turkish, Euro-American Literatures and Comparative Literary Studies.

One can, yet, ask whether writing in Turkish has fully stripped of its state ideological orientation to finally face epistemic and physical oppressions also against *other* languages, alphabets, religions, ethnic groups, gender and sexualities. As the sociologist Fatma Müge Göçek (2015) aptly argues in *Denial of Violence*, violence against the (ethnic) minorieties persists today

since the nation-state after the empire has not acknowledged its violence against the Armenians, on the contrary, has been using distorted information to deny it in collaboration with its institutions such as the Turkish Language Society (TDK), Turkish Historical Society (TTK), and the state funded diaspora organizations outside the country (2). Adak suggested that Turkish Literature lacks ethical conversations on past violences, and yet "Adıvar's apology letter written before the WW1 could have been a pioneering text. In this letter, Adıvar mourns for all the victims exposed to violence, transferring her personal reaction against the Armenian massacre to the reader as being full of guilt and responsibility" (37). Adak, however, mentions the shift in Adıvar's writing after the war positining herself with the defenders of atrocities against the Armenians. As such, Ece's poetry even in the 1950s resisted the homogenizing power of the state via self-assuredly giving voice to the forgotten. The evident gap in the literary discourse notwithstanding, contemporary works like *Snow* deepen the scar narrating characters who are perpetually left with a humiliating burden inflicted upon them by the violent nation-state, or like *Har* which opens to critique the violence in history as well as in the language. Sevgi Soysal's trenchant everyday feminism in 1960s reverberating in Perihan Mağden's feminist-queer[24] minority inclusive writing from 1990s to the present manifests a more radical intersectional writing as resistance against heteropatriarhical state-society. Cinematic works by such women directors as Yeşim Ustaoğlu and Ahu Öztürk fiercely question heteropatriarchy also complicating it with disclosing double opression of poor Kurdish wo/men. More recent literary texts fearlessly open to debate the official histories of the state, and if I may say, walk on the road that Ece's "civil" poetry has paved. In her article published on Financial Times on post-2010 literature, Nilüfer Kuyaş comments that "Perhaps more noteworthy is the emergence of a powerful genre of 'underground realism', given

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[24] I use queer for its inclusivity. See more on the uses of queer in *Queer: A Graphic History* (2016) by Barker and Scheele.

voice by the dissident, conscience-stricken, fiercely individualistic literary current predominating in Turkey. These writers' political engagement is philosophical, their language often poetic, their stories subtly subversive, almost abstract"[25] I would replace "individualistic" with Ece's "civil" to describe the trajectory of this emerging literature that is more couraregous in its resistance to the official language and more liberated in its subject matter.

Literary critical study when carried out literally *critically* pinning its needles on its worn out methodologies, at first, might help disclose a turning away from the state sponsored oppression perpetuated by such denial (and violence) as part of the nationalist ideology, and thus can teach us about confrontation with past mistakes at least on the literary level. The literary scholar of Turkish should, then, begin with deconstructing her literary critical vocabulary problematizing the lexical nationalism, which has been taken for granted. Despite a positively growing number of literary and critical production against such violent centrisms, ethno-logocentric conception of the word/world, arguably, still poses a threat to Turkish literary production and to its criticism. Venkat Mani notes European scholars and writers' exclusion of Turkey's "intellectual presence in Europe" in his *Cosmopolitical Claims* (2007) relocating inclusion within its borders (8). Expanding on Parla's gesture, the Turkish literary and the Euro-American literary scholarship must accentuate the dialogue in mutual acknowledgement of their respective liabilities for a wider literary-worldly understanding. This might also provide the literary scholar of Turkish a collective, non-isolating alternative to attempting to tackle the overarching methodological issues of the Turkish Literary History, which, indeed, requires an anthology size international and interdisciplinary collaborative labor. Such an engagement, however, would not only break the intimidation experienced differently by the unjustifiably dichotomized local and international literary scholars, it would,

[25] "Novel ideas for strange times in Turkey," September 2016, https://www.ft.com/content/24943994-54ce-11e6-9664-e0bdc13c3bef

above all, obligate the specialist in Turkish to lower the stakes of a futile linguistic arrogance concentrated on the writer's language, which she also claims her own, and to fasten her attention instead, expanding on Bakhtin's novelistic discourse, on the literary language and its stylistics overarching all (non)genres, ergo on the literary text's acts, delineating its aesthetics and politics (2002, 263).[26]

[26] Mikhail Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel", *The Dialogic Imagination* (Austin: U Texas, 2002).

CHAPTER 2

THE WRITER-STATE AND THE STATE-WRITER IN THE REPUBLIC

> The fear of illegible writing, in the world of discourse, is always a symptom of the fear of the "illegible" social other(s) within the social body itself
>
> Nergis Ertürk,
> *Grammatology and Literary Modernity in Turkey*

> Faced with an antinomy that is unique to their situation (and that appears only to them), they have to make an unavoidably painful choice: either to affirm their difference and so condemn themselves to the difficult and uncertain fate of national writers (whether their appeal is regional, popular, or other) writing in 'small' literary languages that are hardly, or not at all, recognized in the international literary world; or to betray their heritage and, denying their differences, assimilate the values of one of the great literary centers.
>
> Pascale Casanova,
> *The World Republic of Letters*

In the Turkish context, the state (*devlet*), at times, unfolded in (the state/official) language, in the (Kemalist) ideology, the oppressive power, the canonized aesthetics, and, even as the writer itself in the literary and political texts. The writer, on the other hand, either collaborated with the state (*devlet*) resuscitating the idea of the state as nation when needed (whereby becoming a part of *millet*), or challenged this notion altogether, all the same enriching the relationship between the writer and the state. In three sections outlined as "Formation of Language and Writing in the Republic," "Formation of a Reading Public in the Republic," and "Reception of Literary Writing in the Republic," this chapter discusses the questions of what comprises writer and state in the Turkish literature written during and after the Republic, the role of the writer and the state in the production, circulation and distribution of the texts, and the ways in which this relationship has evolved. It shows that ambivalence in *edeb*'s signifying both manners and literature has been lost to the precision of the literary *edebiyat* at the turn of the nineteenth century followed by a feverish

literary nationalism of *milli edebiyat* in the early twentieth century, particularly during the Young Turk regime, in an attempt to underscore an authentic Turkish soul. Although the descriptive adjective "*milli*" disappeared in the early Republican period, the state-writer and the writer-state collaborated to inscribe *the national* in their writings whereby elevating an official state narrative over an unofficial literary one.

This chapter tackles the following questions of the Turkish literary history accordingly: How did the concept of literariness evolve from the post-Tanzimat to the early twentieth century, and what were its linguistic, literary, and political implications? How did this transformation influence the relationship between writer and the state during the early Republican period and its aftermath? In what ways has the contemporary literary production contributed to and subverted the primacy of literariness and the state? How the difference of this late nineteenth century *edebiyat* coined to denote artistic literature harnesses itself in Turkish literature since the foundation of the republic? What are the ways in which history of literariness in Turkish informs the aesthetics and politics of Turkish literature? Which role the writer plays in this history of literariness in relation to the nation-state?

2.1. Formation of Language and Writing in the Republic

> As for the Orijinal Turkish Soul, needless to say, there is an abundance of imitation in the original and of material in the soul. Moreover, the material is a foreign material.
>
> Nurdan Gürbilek, *Kötü Çocuk Türk*

The epigraph to the chapter by Ertürk summarizes the pivotal characteristic of writing reforms in the republic by stressing that "the fear of illegible writing" emanates from the fear of "illegible social orders." By transforming the *illegible* alphabet to the *legible*, Ertürk suggests, the language reforms attempted to control writing whereby assuming a freedom from the haunting "ontology of death" (ambivalence of reading) as forcefully manipulated by the late Ottoman-early

republican writers. Against such ethnocentric writing, Ertürk offers in her *Grammatology and Literary Modernity in Turkey* (2011), *other writings* by Hikmet, Safa and Tanpınar that reevaluate and resuscitate what was considered *outside* by employing "linguistic foreignization." Derrida's theory of monolingualism saliently helps Ertürk establish the foundational argument that prioritizes writing practices over the others. This particular framework, without doubt, is productive as illustrated in not only through close reading of the texts but also via a meticulous contextualization of the peculiar socio-historical processes. Ertürk's in-depth tracing of the transformation of writing in the late empire and the early republic as a result of revolution in communications technology, and its particular trajectory in Turkey provides invaluable information, offering a novel insight into the aesthetics and politics of the alphabet reform and its literary reworkings. Her rereading of the canonical literary texts is, *itself* a teaching lesson as she argues for these texts to be. Extant literary criticism pioneered by Jale Parla, Sibel Irzık, Nurdan Gürbilek, and Nergis Ertürk among others[27] usurped comparatist method to its inclusivism to exhibit convergences and divergences between the Turkish literary trajectory and its close/distant literary neighbors. Timely contributions by these scholars necessarily broaden our critical vocabulary and horizon in and comparatively for the Turkish literary studies.

The fact that a recently insightful response to this valuable scholarship came from Irzık and Parla in a collaborative article entitled "Comparative Literature in Turkey," hints at a growing dialogic encounter among the comparatists in Turkey and outside. Arguing for phonocentric entanglement of the Ottoman-Turkish literary culture in order to subvert internal and external trauma, Ertürk's comparative analysis, as these scholars acknowledge, adds to the body of recent ethical and methodological confrontations in the field: "The problems that present themselves in

[27] That women scholars outnumber their male contemporaries in the Turkish and comparative literary studies also reflects the field's gendered reconfiguration.

the Turkish context today, for instance, have to do with several forms of *repressed* relations of comparativeness with the *Ottoman heritage* and with *culturally and linguistically marginalized collectivities* (emphasis mine)."[28] Writers and scholars have recently exploited the prevalent linguistic interiority (hence superiority) as a result of vulnerabilities of loss not as an excuse but a component of the determining historical trajectory since the latter half of the nineteenth century heightened by the writing reforms in the early twentieth century. Both scholars also echo another literary critic Hülya Adak's perspective in her work on the late Ottoman-early Republican (woman) writer Halide Edib Adıvar, whose confrontational narrative on the Armenian genocide, as Adak insightfully discloses, has changed throughout the years due to the continual wars exacerbated by *foreign* powers inside and outside.[29] As these scholars' discussions make clear, such self-reflective critical engagement underscores an acknowledgement of a potentially existing comparativeness in the Ottoman or modern Turkish literary texts under inspection. *Grammatology* happens in this peculiar context of unraveling the historical and political baggage in the Turkish literary circles whereby converging with and contesting the extant criticism, which was previously less concerned with laying out the parameters of literary ethnocentrisms than (still) recomposing an unquestioningly formulated *Turkish Literature* per se.

It is well known that printing in Ottoman-Turkish using the Armenian and Greek letters by these respective groups, and in Hebrew by the expelled Jews from Spain became prevalent since the 16th century. As Ertürk also mentions, this technology had already been practiced precisely among the non-Muslim populations in the Ottoman Empire long before İbrahim Müteferrika introduced the printing press with Arabic typesetting to the predominantly Muslim readership in the 18th century.[30] We are also informed by Kathryn A. Schwartz that such relatively late

[28] *Revista Brasileira de Literatura Comparada* 30 (2017): 121-132.
[29] Hülya Adak, *Halide Edib: Ermeni Kırımı, Şiddet, Şiddetsizlik* (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi UP), 2016.
[30] The episode on the trajectory of Armenian printing in the Ottoman History Podcast shows that Armenian printing proliferated as a result of the foremost need for printing the Bible. The reason for using Turkish, however, is

incorporation of the printing press in the Ottoman empire conjures more contextualization with regards to its manuscript tradition than has been done so far by European scholars of Ottoman printing, who, through a genealogy of misinformation and co-optation, disseminated the idea that the print technology was banned by the Ottoman Sultans.[31] Schwartz's meticulous archival research coupled with an ethical precision make evident that there exists no such letters of ban by the mentioned Sultans to support the wrongly perpetuated claim: "What it does support, however, is scholars' longstanding attempt to explain the Ottoman experience of printing through that of Europe. Ban or no ban, it is this perspective that ought to be made an object of study and finally dislodged from the foundational core of scholarship on Ottoman printing" (Schwartz 29). In addition to its debunking a widely circulated and accepted idea purported throughout decades without evidence, I engage with this article also for its underlining the necessity to question a particularly Eurocentric perspective, which has been internalized by non-European scholars as well. Irzık and Parla's aforementioned pointing at a lack of comparative perspective in Turkey as a result of a "combined effect of the foreign philologists' Eurocentrism and the silences and denials imposed by Turkish nationalism during those founding years" converges nicely with Schwartz's call for putting into question such uncontested perspective(s).

I would like to expand on *Grammatology*'s perhaps a bit heavily justified concentration on print and writing. Classical logocentricism (i.e. emphasis of speech over writing) as Ertürk phrases, did not necessarily change its substance with the printing technology. Nevertheless, communication technology's use of language as a "*translative* medium" as Ertürk has shown, was deployed to an extremely phonocentric result by the nationalists in the Turkish context (Ertürk 2011, 37). Impatience to erase the difference of writing coincided with a nationalist temptation to

explained by the Ottoman-Armenians' high level of proficiency in Turkish. It is argued that Ottoman-Armenians were relatively well versed in the Turkish language than in Armenian.

[31] Kathryn A. Schwartz, "Did Ottoman Sultans Ban Print?" *Book History* 20 (2017): 1-39.

erase a "linguistic outside", which resulted in a "non-literature" in the early republican period (73-74). In trying to dismantle ambiguity through pedagogical interventions, literature according to Ertürk, was rendered "empty" by the writings of the state-writers such as Ahmet Mithat and Ömer Seyfettin. On the other hand, such writers as Nazım Hikmet, Peyami Safa and Tanpınar, who came to a point in practice to see the writing reforms draining, reportedly exploited language to exhibit its versatility. Their writing as Ertürk observes differs from that of the former group both in its thematic and formal workings teaching us the other indocile trajectories language may take. Language's imminent freedom from coercion and co-optation is demystified through a comparative (and deconstructive) reading of the texts deploying contrasting measures to form their literariness. If, then, the texts by the writers belonging to the former anxiety camp of Mithat and Ömer, who are very careful to frame their message within their control to surveil their carefully construed meaning, are non-literary precisely because of their ultra-pedagogical language, then, do we also partially accept the *literary* to be inherently free from control? To answer this question, perhaps we need to reevaluate how the concept of *literariness* in Turkish language and literature has involved throughout almost two centuries.

Evening out the stakes for what composes the literary also requires a historical-linguistic distinction between literature (*edebiyat* from Arabic *adab*) and the literary (*edebî*). *Edeb*iyat is the plural form of *edeb* which also connotes nurture (and manners), and the latter was commonly used in lieu of the former before the first reformation era *Tanzimat* (1839-1876) followed by the First Constitutional Era *I. Meşrutiyet Devri* (1876-1878) in the Ottoman Empire.[32] Before the late-nineteenth century, *ilmü'l-edeb* or *ulûm-i edebiyye* was used to correspond to the meaning of "literature" to denominate the field in English. Since poetry was the most commonly practiced

[32] "Edep kavramı zaman içerisinde kazandığı çeşitli anlamlarıyla Türk-İslâm kültür tarihine de girmiş, ayrıca Batı dillerindeki "littérature"ün karşılığı olarak XIX. yüzyıla kadar edep, ilmü'l-edeb veya ulûm-i edebiyye tabirleri görülürken bu yüzyılın sonlarından itibaren edebiyat kelimesi kullanılmaya başlanmıştır" (*Islam Ansiklopedisi*).

literary genre, the word *şiir* became a generic name to constitute for *edeb*. The word was used interchangeably to mean both literature and manners by writers who exploited the double meaning of the homophone in their texts.[33] *Edebiyat* particularly after *Tanzimat* might have come to be utilized as a sole literary concept to differentiate itself from the former connotations of schooling that are not necessarily literary.[34]

The urge to draw a line between *edeb* and *edebiyat*, then, seems to coincide also with what Ertürk purports as an endeavor to prevent the inescapability of death "*öldü*" (اولدو) from literally *happening* "*oldu*" (اولدو) written alike in Ottoman script. The unrelenting urge to distinguish *death* from *happening* in writing perhaps affirms Walter Ong's point on "the deadness of the text, its removal from the living human lifeworld, its rigid visual fixity, [which] assures its endurance and its potential for being resurrected into limitless living contexts by a potentially infinite number of living readers (1977, 230-71)" (81). In this sense, one can also read this rewriting indulgence as a way to not necessarily escape death but rather to be able to precisely inscribe death for it to "resurrect" in "limitless living contexts" without being confused *in writing* with another *happening*.

The former undertaking of *edeb* and *edebiyat*, however, distinguishes from the latter in the word's (*edeb*) inserting a sameness not only in writing but also in utterance. The same word, therefore, can both address nurture and literature in the same sentence regardless of writing while "died" and "happened" contextually dissociate in reading. Although *edebiyat* eventually replaced *edeb,* no consensus was reached even by 1880s as to what *edebiyat* appended to *edeb* or excluded from it as Karakoç conveys (17). *Edebiyat*, however, is narrower in scope than *literature* in the

[33] Poet, playwright İbrahim Şinâsî's: "Fenn-i edeb bir mârifettir ki insana haslet-âmûz-ı edeb olduğu için edeb ve sâhibi edîb tesmiye edilmiştir" in *Kubbealtı Lugatı* under "edep".
[34] İrfan Karakoç: "1880 yılında dahi "edebiyat"ın kapsamı tam olarak tanımlanamıyor, geleneksel "edepli metin"lerin dışında beğenilen metinlerin de, özellikle Namık Kemal'de olduğu gibi, kelimenin Fransızca karşılığı düşünülerek edebiyata dahil edilebileceği, fakat varolan kültürel ortam nedeniyle yine de edil(e)mediği anlaşılıyor". (Karakoç 17)

sense that the former does not entail a body of writing or research in any field, but the literary field of literature itself.[35] One might then argue that so long as writing differed, the newly assigned meaning(s) could have been belatedly adjusted.

What *edebiyat* entails, however, has always been contested. Literature was not what we have referred to since late modernism in the European calendar, which lays a particular emphasis on *fiction*. Literature today is neither necessarily considered literary (even though it may still be in the broader category of literature) if it is a mere pamphlet for instance nor does it simply translate into literary as is evident from its divergent uses within literature departments itself, let alone the whole academia. A literary scholar employs the term to mean a body of literary texts or scholarship in the field whereas a scholar in medicine for instance refers only to the latter (if recent applications haven't already emerged by the time this sentence has been put down). Although the meaning "literature" in national literature departments are mostly ubiquous, we have not yet reached a consensus on the connotations of "literature" in the discipline of Comparative Literature. The term still denotes a broad range of disciplines beyond literature in less conservative comparative literature departments. Literariness, therefore, has not been immanent in literature. In the seminal chapter "How *Adab* became Literary" in *In the Shadow of World Literature* (2016), Michael Allan follows the historical trajectory of the concept of *adab* [literature] in its attuning to literariness in Egyptian scholarship, and underscores that the ways in which literature assumes its meaning are important in understanding precisely how the texts have come to be read in that particular literary historical context (76). And delves further into the former question on literature: "Is there a concept of literature separate or distinct from formalist conceptions of the literary? We could say that asking about how *adab* becomes literary is to ask about the limits of a purified literariness across

[35] Outside the field of literature, *edebiyat* is not used as in English to signify scholarly research in other fields. Turkish *edebiyat* narrowly comprises literary literature.

space and time" (77).[36] Allan notes that literariness has been associated with pure textual aesthetics in the Euro-American dictionary whereas a closer look into manifestations of *adab* in the Egyptian literary tradition, tells a more nuanced story about conceptualizations of the literary, which not only informs us about its intertwined histories with reading practices in that particular literary history, but also make us reflect on our ready assumptions about what literary *is* (one and only), and question the value of institutional formulations in our readings of world literature. Pascale Casanova's suggested strategy of "compromise" for "small literatures" for instance encourages the dichotomy of form and content, and perpetuates the myth of the structural difference of such literatures from "big" literatures:

> The creative liberty of writers from peripheral countries is not given to them straight away: they earn it as the result of struggles whose reality is denied in the name of literary universality and the equality of all writers as creative artists, by inventing complex strategies that profoundly alter the universe of literary possibilities. The solutions that little by little are arrived at–rescued, as it were, from the structural inertia of the literary world–are the product of compromise; and the methods that they devise for escaping literary destitution become increasingly subtle, on the levels both of style and of literary politics. (Casanova 177)

Against such Eurocentric understanding of literature, *edeb* highlights that which is woefully separated from literature. Allan thus provides a helpful framework for discussing *edeb* in the Turkish context as well. Until after the Ottoman reformation era *Tanzimat* (1939-1876) and the First Constitutional Era (1876-1878), *edeb* was used to denote both literature and manners as is still used in the original Arabic. At the dawn of the First Constitutional Era, *edebiyat*, the plural

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[36] and continues, "In the end, it is a refusal of the binarism of literary theory and world literature: a gesture toward the wordly existence of the term *adab*, embedded in the question of what literature is, and the imbrication of philology and pedagogy it implies" (Allan 77).

of *edebiy*(*y*)*e* (literary) replaced *edeb*, with a new singular use notwithstanding, rendering *edebiyat* the new (literary) literature. *Ta'lîm-i Edebiyât* [*Literary Education*] (1881) by the Ottoman writer and literary critic Recâizâde Mahmut Ekrem (1847-1914) marks one of the first instances of *edebiyat* to appear in a title. From 1880s to most of the Second Constitutional Era *II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi* (1908-1920), bibliographical search evinces that literary texts used *edeb*, *edebiy*(*y*)*e* and *edebiyat* interchangeably during when discussions around *milli edebiyat* (national literature) also emerged. Since late 1920s, following the foundation of the Republic, *edebiyat* has replaced all its synonyms, claiming its unambiguously unique literary sphere.

Prevalence of *edebiyat*, therefore, overcame the uncontrollable ambiguity in *edeb*'s referring to either literature, manners, or both in reading and writing. Considering the war-torn nation's more immediate needs, what could have possibly been the implications of resorting to an unequivocal word to express literature in this particular moment? Ottoman Empire enacted the reforms against nationalist movements inside for the fear of being abused by the colonialist powers outside. In addition to introducing a plethora of legal codes related to economy, education, army, etc. in primarily nationalizing effort, at first paradoxical perhaps, *Tanzimat* also started several resolutions that gave more rights to the non-Muslim community. In doing so, the empire attempted to protect its non-Muslim subjects from separatist tendencies without also risking falling behind the nationalist-modernist advances European empires had made. During the First Constitutional Era (1876-1878), *Kanuni Esasi*, the first Ottoman constitution was augmented, and from then on until the Second Constitutional Era (1908-1920), *edebiyat* emerges as a novel formula on its path to becoming *real* literature under the surveillance of *milli edebiyat* (national literature). This second constitutional period showcased massive socio-political transformations where first political parties were founded, first military coup was experienced, and WWI happened. This linguistic indulgence intensified in the Republic regardless of the writing reforms, since only after

literature's convergence and contestation with the national, "national literature" (*milli edebiyat*) in early twentieth century that *edebiyat* came to mean (literary) literature *only*.

Among the ideologues behind *milli edebiyat*, Turcologist and politician Mehmet Fuad Köprülü (1890-1966) suggested in 1924 that "every literature is national in so far as it is that nation's expression" (Köprülü 8).[37] In the collected essays *Bugünkü Edebiyat* [*Today's Literature*] Köprülü equates national (*milli*) with unique/individual (*şahsi*)[38], explaining the seeming redundancy of employing *milli* if we agree that all literature is already so. Then, Köprülü compares "our literature" to those of the developed civilizations, that is, the West, whose literature is *şahsi* as opposed to "ours" that lacks this specificity, whereby necessitating the descriptive adjective. What Köprülü deplores is the lack of an *original* Turkish soul[39], which forms literary *şahsiyet* of these works. He refrains from detailing the characteristics that render other models *şahsi*, however, explicitly announces that form and content diverge in a literary work, lamenting the way in which this local literature borrows its form from Western works without a particular character in itself, and thus resuscitates the dichotomy of the so-called *East* and *West* on the literary level (10). Köprülü suggests a *global* form with a *local* content as he believes all "great literature" of the British, French, German, and Russian embody (8-9). As a later critical response to controversy around *mili edebiyat*, writer and literary critic Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (1901-1962) argued that the reason to found a *milli edebiyat* stems from a consciousness which necessitated to connect our present to our past after having sufficiently (and necessarily) experimented with what European

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[37] Mehmet Fuad Köprülü. *Bugünkü Edebiyat* (1924).

[38] *Şahsi* is literally "personal" but Köprülü uses it to mean "unique" in this context.

[39] "*Orijinal Türk ruhu*" has been used by various individuals, groups, or institutions from diverging social strata in all aspects of life since late Ottoman, early Republic. Nurdan Gürbilek's essay entitled "Orijinal Türk Ruhu" also discusses this compulsive search for orijinality in Turkish literature.

literature had to offer.[40] Tanpınar's call to return to our roots also squares with the trajectory of *milli edebiyat* which precisely stood on this duality of "our past" and "their present."[41]

Separation of form and content, however, rejuvenates precisely the Orientalist and Occidentalist modes of reading that the *Eastern* (*doğulu*) and *milli* scholar seems to abstain from through generating a nationalized literature: "In the way *millet* (nation) is an [new?] indoctrination, *milli edebiyat* (national literature) is also a new indoctrination for us; just as *millet* is a contemporary community, *milli edebiyat* also means 'contemporary literature', that is 'unique literature,' which reflects national character (*milli şahsiyet*) in its utmost level" (10-11).[42] *Millet, milli, milliyet* in Turkish are all derivations from the Arabic root (ملّ) indicating an originally religious community. Yet, *millet-i Osmaniyye* (Ottoman Community) referred to comprise all the people living in the imperial land without discrimination. *Millet* was descriptive of the Ottoman multi-religious and multi-ethnic community before *nation* itself became prevalent in late nineteenth century. In modern Arabic, equivalent of *millet* (people) in Turkish is *umma* (الأمّة) which shares the same root with the Arabic word for paternal uncle *amm* (عمّ) and aunt (عمّة).[43] *Umma* (*ümmet* in Turkish) however was hitherto particulary used in the Ottoman context to comprise solely a religious community under the guidance of a prophet regardless of the imperial borders in such examples as *Ümmet-i Mûsâ*, *Ümmet-i Îsâ,* and *Ümmet-i Muhammed* (believers of Moses, Christ, and Mohammad respectively). It is striking to note that although the word itself did not denominate a particular religion, it was often used to imply the followers of Muhammad only in such phrases as *hayat-ı içtimaiye-i ümmet* [social life of believers (of Islam)]. Having lost its

[40] Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *Edebiyat Üzerine Makaleler* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1969) 82.
[41] See also Nurdan Gürbilek's "Orijinal Türk Ruhu" in *Kötü Çocuk Türk* (İstanbul: Metis, 2001) where she mentions
[42] Original Ottoman reads: "Millet nasıl ki bir telki[n] ise, milli edebiyat da aynı suretle bizim için yeni bir telki[n]dir; ve millet nasıl asri bir cemiyet demekse milli edebiyat da asri edebiyat, yani milli şahsiyeti en yüksek derecede gösteren ebda' edebiyat demektir."
[43] *The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, ed. JM. Cowan (Urbana: Spoken Language Services, 1994).

ambiguous multi-religious denominations, the word itself today refers singularly to the believers of Islam.[44] While *ümmet* has been linguistically Islamicized, *amme* (عامّه) or *umum* (عموم) originating from the same root with *ümmet* (امّت) nevertheless translates to "public" in modern Turkish keeping its original non-religious connotation (at least on the surface because it still is a highly charged word particularly in its distinguishing and controlling various publics).[45] In the aftermath of the 1876 Ottoman constitutional reform recognizing the equality of its subjects influenced by French nationalism, Ottoman religious denomination *ümmet* became more and more ethnic *millet* now acquiring *milli* identity apart from the religious (*dinî*).

Since the late nineteenth century but particularly in early twentieth century *millet* came to be used in Turkish as equivalent of *nation* in French.[46] Köprülü was right in acknowledging that the concept of nation (*millet*) as well as national literature (*milli edebiyat*) was a novelty since the empire was a multi-ethnic and religious entity unlike the modern understanding of nation as one homogeneous community. "Nation as novelty," in this association, then, finds full resonance in *national* narration as novelty (Hobsbawm 1990 41).[47] Aamir Mufti had already drawn our attention to nationalism as an orientalist formulation as follows: "Orientalist theories of cultural difference are grounded in *a notion of indigeneity as the condition of culture*—a chronotope, properly speaking, of deep habitation in time—and that therefore *nationalism is fundamentally an Orientalist cultural impulse*" (emphasis original).[48] Arguing for a supposedly *original* content with a *foreign* form summarizes the self-Orientalizing mode of Turkish literary history, whose

[44] In his speeches, president Erdoğan exploits the word often targeting precisely the Sunni-Islamic majority.
[45] Today old Turkish *kamu* is used more than *amme* and *umum* which largely appear in legal language. Unlike the older generation, new generation of speakers rarely use the latter in daily life.
[46] "Religious community. From Arabic *millah* 'religion' or 'religious community.' Used by the Ottomans (1517–1922) to refer to self-governing non-Muslim religious communities. Under policy established by Mehmed II (r. 1451–81), major non-Muslim religious groups were allowed to follow their own civil and religious rules, subject to their own religious leaders, who were given official status in the administration. With the fall of the Ottoman Empire, *millet* came to mean 'nation' in modern Turkish," *Oxford Dictionary of Islam.*
[47] Eric Hobsbawn, "The Nation as Novelty," *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1990).
[48] Aamir Mufti, *Forget English* (2016) 37.

influence is undeniably intact in a plethora of Turk(ish) language and literature departments, in civil literary circles and magazines to date.

Given the obscurity of what in fact constitutes *şahsiyet* (personality) in a literary text beyond such abstract notions as soul (*ruh*) and taste (*zevk*), one is forced to join in a *sense* of a putative narrative nationalism as such (Köprülü 9). Naming, in this regard, precedes content: one has to offer a name to this novelty before it actualizes itself; thus, literature should first assume its embeddedness in a preconceived nationality before fully exercising its alleged nationality (however it *is going to be* implemented). This particular reformulation of *milli* and *millet* in the early twentieth century, independent from its credibility, reverses the logic of B. Anderson's forceful argument for "imagined communities," which, in its conception, requires, first of all, an inside (content), its being imagined notwithstanding, before coming to existence as a corporeal nation outside. Anderson's notion of a nation as imagined, in fact, solidifies the condition of a national existence even before its borders appear. In the Turkish context, however, emergence of *millet* calls for a hitherto unimagined construction. As Köprülü's brief statement conveys, *milli edebiyat* with its unique character has to be established from the beginning.

Köprülü, nevertheless, overlooks in the aforementioned passage that *millet* was a new principle everywhere, not only outside of a so-called unchangingly situated Europe. As much as nation was a novelty to the Ottomans, it was to the other empires adjacent to itself as well. Extracting the singularity of the Ottoman subject hence renders Köprülü's otherwise logical assumption problematic. There was no homogeneously formulated English, German or Russian literature; each reflected a more complicated world in its own world making way than what an allegedly unique national literature could have achieved. Imagining a Kafka writing in German in the Austro-Hungarian Empire ensconces itself beyond a singular *milli şahsiyet* (national character) of German literature. Privileging an originary difference that also needs fixing is a regressive and

self-destructive position. That capitalist modernity did not actualize itself in the Ottoman territory the way it did in Europe thereby preventing the formation of a *national* bourgeois as in English, French and German empires for instance, does not necessarily beget dearth of *milli edebiyat* in the late Ottoman and early republic.

When pedagogical and nationalist texts of say Ahmet Mithat (1844-1912) and of particularly Ömer Seyfettin (1884-1920) respectively become "non-literature" in their attempt to obliterate *difference* in writing and in the nation, in Ertürk's reading, I assume what is in fact purported is the non-literariness of literature rather than literature as an imminently literary concept itself. I take issue with Ertürk's argument here because *edebiyat* had not yet assumed a self-standing literariness until after these works were published. Only since the beginning of the twentieth century one can trace a consistent use of literature as a literary concept in tandem with the discussions around national literature (*milli edebiyat*). This peculiar articulation of "non-literature," perhaps, too readily accepts the formalist conceptualization of literature as nothing but literary.

Prioritizing *edebiyat* (literature) over *edeb* (manners and education) in the beginning of the nineteenth century thus pivots the politics of reading and interpretation in the empire to republic. Following the trajectory of *edeb(iyat)* in Turkish literary history might help us understand how one interprets a text and why in one way and not other, how reading practices have transformed as it did over time, and by which institutions. For that reason, writing reform's urge to domesticate "constitutive (and fatal) indeterminacy that is always immanent in writing," and "non-literature" as one aspect of the late Ottoman and early republican period deserve a closer attention than they have been paid. Indeterminacy is, admittedly, a working of writing in the first place, but not only so; learning to write and read is a dialectical process, which is always contested regardless of the literary sign. Reading cannot also be determined either from inside or outside. As much as writing

itself was rendered *legible* through an orthographic reform, language as a whole of the signified and signifier nevertheless could not escape *illegibility*. That is to say, in addition to the state writing reforms that molded the literary sphere in the republic preceding it, its reading practices connected also to the private publishing industry have extensively shaped this writing and reading public.

2.2. Formation of a Reading Public in the Republic[49]

a. Reading Public

Print becomes the space that need to occupy this new collectivity of *millet* particularly in post-*Tanzimat* era when as a hitherto unimagined community, this *millet* was rendered to be self-conscious about its albeit narrowly defined community as *Türk Milleti* (the Turkish nation) over the course of the time. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines literacy primarily as "the ability to read and write," with a secondary meaning delineating "knowledge that relates to a specified subject."[50] The initial significance calls for the productive skill of writing in addition to the receptive reading skill. Literacy, as is understood today, requires both skills to be satisfied with a connotation of expertise in a field. Reading, then, inhabits literacy partially, and when we say reading knowledge in such and such language, we agree on not having gained full literacy in that language, for full literacy also requires the ability to write. The Oxford English Dictionary on the other hand demarcates the secondary meaning as "The ability to 'read' a specified subject or medium."[51] Reading thus arises as the prerequisite for literacy, which itself necessitates writing. Literacy as opposed to orality is tied to the written text regardless of its writer, and imagines speech

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[49] The scope of this research is limited to the Turkish reading public sphere.
[50] Merriam-Webster online dictionary https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/literacy
[51] http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/109054?redirectedFrom=literacy#eid

only visually (Ong 12).[52] The arbitrary sign is still a sign, and once it is inscribed in our mind, uninscribing it becomes impossible. For the literate us, there is no anachronistic turning back to "primary orality" as Walter Ong calls, and to fully understand the linguistic experience of an oral culture since we are born into literacy (11). Reading the signs has become our primary tool for making sense of the world, and for forming a complicated relationship with it. We can no longer think of a word uttered to us without also thinking of its written form. Ong goes as far as to suggest that "to dissociate words from writing is psychologically threatening, for literates' sense of *control* over language is closely tied to the visual transformations of language" (14, emphasis mine). Illegibility as the preamble in the chapter opening reminds us thus incites fear among the literate, who anxiously need to be in charge of words and their representation.

Reading often have different connotations emerging from different reading practices in varied geographies. Reading in Turkish (with the verb root *oku-*) for instance invites recitation; reading Qur'an (*Kur'an okumak*) alludes, in fact, to reciting Qur'an without necessarily *reading* (i.e. understanding) it in the late modern sense. Yet, "such written compositions" as Ong claims "enforced attention to texts even more, for truly written compositions came into being as texts only, even though many of them were commonly listened to rather than silently read, from Livy's histories to Dante's *Comedia* and beyond" (10).

As Benjamin C. Fortna asserts in *Learning to Read in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic* (2010): "Our bias in favor and our generally positive experience of reading conditions the way we think of reading historically. It makes it difficult for us to recapture the radical dimension of a society in transition from scant to predominant literacy" (41). Only in the late nineteenth century Ottoman society, approximately between the First Constitutional Era (1876-1978) and the Second (1908-1920), reading earned its predominant literacy due to an

[52] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (New York: Methuen, 1982).

emphasis not only on reciting (religious texts) but reading secular ones by the new reading Public.[53] Expansion of literacy in the turn of the century however was not unique to the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. As Malcolm Bradbury informs in the context of England in the same period, "The reading public was undergoing a considerable expansion in numerical and in class terms, under opportunities deriving from rising income, increasing leisure and a growing literacy" (204).[54] No longer of a singular interest to a limited high society reading public, reading and writing globally became a mass priority with the advances in print technology, lower prices for paper, and other related reasons including production and distribution of a vast range of reading materials. Books of various kinds, newspapers, literary magazines, and periodicals among others both reflected and helped diversify the new Turkish reading public from the 1880s onwards which was hitherto dominated by a reading (and ruling) elite.

Reading in the post-*Tanzimat* Ottoman Empire and the early Republic as a historical process has been put to inquiry as part of literacy oftentimes within the paradigm of alphabet (writing) reforms without a particular focus on practices of reading itself, a scholarly gap which Benjamin C. Fortna's work has filled with its scope of reading as a child. Reading is often and rightly considered to be synonymous with literacy, and *Learning to Read* when affirming this alignment also disrupts the inevitable association. By analyzing the continuities as well as changes from the late Ottoman approach to reading to the Republic, Fortna shows that the concept of reading has transformed into something more than itself beginning in the post-Constitutional period, gaining a particular meaning of not only reading (the script) but also comprehending secular texts on a massive scale: "Efforts at engendering change, whether in the form of the Hamidian-era school texts, the smuggled counter propaganda of the anti-regime activists, the

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[53] By capitalizing the public, I draw attention to the preexisting practice of secular reading by the elite, and its later proliferation within the common folk via formal education.
[54] See Malcolm Bradbury, *The Social Context of Modern English Literature* (Schocken Books: New York, 1971).

proliferation of periodical literature in the Young Turk era or the revamped state-supplied texts of the Kemalist period, shared a common faith in the power of reading that transcended the antagonisms of their individual agendas" (23). Ascendance of a reading public sphere, then, was important to each successive period beginning in 1880s with differing degrees of orientation.

The early republic was fully involved in this endeavor to spread literacy through its educational state organizations in addition to regular schools (Fortna 33). And since the emphasis was on teaching the Latinized script after 1928 rather than spreading literacy in Ottoman, which was already happening before the foundation of the republic, we can also say that reading comprehension became secondary to reading and writing in the new alphabet. Fortna further claims that Kemalist alphabet reform in fact curtailed the hitherto raising Ottoman literacy rates, and inhibited communication across generations.[55] The exemplary reading performances of a purified Turkish text by the state were received with confusion as they were barely comprehensible. These texts utilized words of pure Turkish origin, which were not in use before, in lieu of the Perso-Arabic ones. This contradicts with the late nineteenth century praxis when *Osmanlıca* (The Ottoman Language) was celebrated even by the pioneers of the language reforms such as Ahmet Cevdet as a hybrid language containing elements of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish.[56] Until the early twentieth century, a self standing Turkish language (Türk Dili) was not on the horizon, the idea of which was later orchestrated by the first Turkologists and Turkish nationalists simultaneously as Suraiya Faroqhi affirms the belatedness of Turkish nationalism which only

[55] "The myth of the modern republic as an enlightened vehicle sweeping away backwardness, superstition and illiteracy relied heavily upon short-term historical amnesia. Considerable evidence has shown that literacy rates, while not high, were rising in the late Ottoman period, thanks to a concerted, sustained effort to increase educational provision and the emergence of a dynamic publishing market, including an impressive list of titles devoted to reading children" (24).

[56] Ottoman History Podcast, from the episode "The Politics of the Turkish Language Reform" with Emmanuel Szurek on January 5, 2017 http://www.ottomanhistorypodcast.com/2017/01/turkish-language-reform.html.

gained political power after 1908 beginning of the Second Constitutional Era (Faroqhi 270).[57] Literary public sphere in the early Republic, then, was predominantly a national-literary public sphere dominated by the Young Turk members of the Committee of Union and Progress. Nadir Özbek observes that contrary to liberal expectations that an expanding public sphere is necessarily a democratic one, in the early twentieth-century Ottoman context, however, this was hardly the case. Rather, the Young Turk elite had monopoly on this sphere, with the ongoing wars only aiding their goals to promote their exclusivist agenda (796).[58] Özbek, thus, challenges the notion that state and society are mutually exclusive. Although what Özbek dwells on is the political public sphere, particularly, the literary sphere could not escape the homogeneous takeover of the Young Turks "in the context of a blurred boundary between state and civil society, public and private" (797).

"Young Turks" or *Jön Türkler* is a term which does not define one homogeneous group of people; it is in fact more proper to use it to define a period when intellectuals and bureaucrats gathered under the common idea of Ottoman nationalism heavily influenced by French nationalism. They went to France to further their knowledge and returned with revolutionary ideas to replace absolute monarchy with constitutional monarchy, and in fact they were pioneers in reinstituting the Constitutional Era in 1908. Scholars usually refer to the period when these "new" Turks held sway under their political party Committee of Union of Progress during 1908-1918. Still not all "Young Turks" joined CUP; instead they formed other parties among which "Freedom and Accord Party" was the strongest opposition to CUP.

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[57] Suraiya Faroqhi, *Subjects of the Sultan: Culture and Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire* (I.B.Tauris & Co., 2005).
[58] Nadir Özbek, "Defining the Public Sphere during the Late Ottoman Empire: War, Mass Mobilization and the Young Turk Regime (1908-18)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 43/5 (September 2007): 795-809.

The Young Turks founded partially civil societies such as the Ottoman Red Crescent Society (*Osmanlı Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti*), the Ottoman Navy League (*Osmanlı Donanma-i Milliye Iane Cemiyeti*), and the Committee of National Defence (*Mudafaa-i Milliye Cemiyeti*) whose "patriotic and nationalist political discourse, moreover, had the effect of marginalizing other civic initiatives not directly related to patriotic goals. The overall effect of this course was the 'nationalization' and 'militarization' of philanthropic activity" (Özbek 797). Through investigating each society, Özbek conveys that the sole reality of a broder political public sphere does not readily avail itself to formation of a democratic society; on the contrary, as the post 1908 Ottoman contex showcases, may well impede such democratization (807). Yet, despite the dominance of the Young Turk ideology, we should be careful to not erase the still existing unofficial public space, which became less visible during a vehemently nationalized sphere. We can inquire then the particularities of the literary public sphere in the early republic, emerging out of a recently nationalized social and political environment.

b. Public Sphere

Habermas offers a comparative historical trajectory of the transformation of the public sphere in Europe (England, Germany, and France) where public sphere of civil society was formed during the "merchantilist phase of capitalism" (20-23).[59] The most important historical outcome of this new sphere formed by "private" people according to Habermas is that "the claim to power" has transformed by "rational-critical public debate" (28). The non-ruling bourgeois invented rational-critical public debate, which renounces the form of a claim to rule such as the principle of

[59] Jürgen Habermas, "The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society," trans. Thomas Burger with Fredrick Lawrence, (Cambridge: MIT, 1992).

the divine right of kings (28). The reason for creating debate was to question power, not to acquire power: "Their [the bourgeois] power claims against the public authority were thus not directed against the concentration of powers of command that ought to be 'divided'; instead, they undercut the principle on which existing rule was based" (28). They not only changed the ways in which power was exercised but the very conditions of power itself hitherto confined to the ruling elite. When public opinion becomes the only basis of how society should be governed, then there emerges a real foundation to change the very basis of the exercise of power. This structural public shaping process, however paradoxical, came into being first behind the doors of cafes, salons, and table societies as Habermas conveys: "reason…itself needed to be protected from becoming public because it was a threat to any and all relations of domination" (35). Public opinion was first debated in "the world of letters" as part of literary criticism, which then entered into the political realm (32). No matter how internally heterogeneous this public of private people was being composed of people of "unequal social status," and of unequal income, it was still a bourgeois circle for whom "social equality was possible at first only as an equality *outside the state*" (34-35, emphasis mine).

This type of public sphere formed only after public and private spheres separated with the emergence of the modern *nation*, characteristically diverges from that of the Ottoman Empire, which was not an autonomous sphere belonging solely to the public that comprised private people. Boundaries of the public and private spheres were (and still are) blurred, which, however, did not impede formation of an Ottoman public sphere in its own way. Alan Mikhail argues against Habermasian dichotomy between the public and private, since such distinction did not exist in the Ottoman society, and claims further that Habermas's theory hinders our understanding of the

workings of the Ottoman cafés.[60] If one accepts the following categorization of the Ottoman public sphere including "first, the-state apparatus, divided into servants of the Porte and servants of the sultan, and the sultan himself; second, the press, divided into its larger, official and loyalist, group, and its smaller, opposition, group; and third, unofficial and private society," it becomes apparent that unlike Habermas's model, this public sphere, particularly in the nineteenth century, accommodates perhaps not the state directly but its encroaching branches as well.[61] Nancy Fraser also counter this dichotomy in a famous essay arguing that:

> any conception of the public sphere that requires a sharp separation between (associational) civil society and the state will be unable to imagine the forms of self-management, inter-public coordination, and political accountability that are essential to a democratic and egalitarian society. The bourgeois public sphere, therefore, is not adequate for contemporary critical theory. What is needed rather, is a post-bourgeois conception that can permit us to envision a greater role for (at least some) public spheres than mere autonomous opinion formation removed from authoritative decision-making. A post-bourgeois conception would enable us to think about strong *and* weak publics, as well as about various hybrid forms. In addition, it would allow us to theorize the range of possible relations among such publics thereby expanding our capacity to envision democratic possibilities beyond the limits of actually existing democracy. (Fraser 1990 76-77)[62]

As such, the bourgeois public sphere is not enough to understand the late Ottoman society either. Such a reminder alerts us about the heterogeneity of the Ottoman public sphere that did not

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[60] Alan Mikhail, "Gender, Urban Space and the Ottoman Coffee House," in *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee: Leisure and Lifestyle in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Dana Sajdi (New York: Tauris, 200) 135.
[61] Elisabeth B. Frierson, "Gender, Consumption, and Patriotism: The Emergence of an Ottoman Public Sphere"
[62] Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social Text* 25/26 (1990): 56-80.

solely harbor a state controlled nor completely autonomous one but more of an in-between space connected to other publics with religious, ethnic, linguistic, and economic variation. Thinking democracy on a wide spectrum would provide more room to improve it. Breaching the curbs between "strong" publics as parliaments and "weak" publics as civil society including local self-governments on municipal and neighborhood level is a promising start. Among the weak publics, the Ottoman and later Republican coffeehouse is an important space where literature, politics, trade, and various chores are negotiated. It has transformed from a largely non-reading to a predominantly literary public sphere where in its heyday writers and their reading public came together to discuss literature and literary events. One of the most persistent characteristics of this literary sphere is its being primarily a dialogic space, whose therefore political feature could not be curtailed either by the empire or the republic.

c. Literary Public Sphere: The Ottoman Coffeehouse

The Ottoman coffeehouse was not only a state infused space, but a heterogenously stratified one. Borrowing the term from Foucault, Alan Mikhail likens Ottoman coffeehouse (*kahvehane*) to heterotopia "as spaces of layered functionality and a multitude of ambiences" (Mikhail "Gender" 137).[63] *Kahvehane* literally translates to coffeehouse, fusing Arabic *kahve* and Persian *hane*. *Kahve* (coffee) also denotes the place itself, and is used interchangeable with *kahvehane* (coffeehouse). The drink suffuses the lodge with its metonymical materiality and radiation. Even after coffee was replaced by tea in the mid twentieth century as the most popular drink, *kahve* kept its name, where tea came to be served as the main drink. The word harbors its roots from Arabic قهوة (whose etymology is unknown according to the Encyclopedia of Islam) with

[63] Mikhail uses Komecoglu's association here

an Ottoman linguistic hospitality, which is reciprocal.[64] Among the Arabic words for coffeehouse owner, *qahwaji* قهوجى is inflicted with the Turkish suffix "-CI," designating the doer. One can interpret it as a later Ottoman *kahve(hane)* influence over its predominantly Arabic speaking lands where such an established culture was hitherto not present. *Kahve(hane)* culture, in fact, expanded rapidly outside the imperial borders to major European cities due to the empire's adjacency to and intercultural exchanges with its western neighbors through largely mercantilist endeavors. Owners of the first coffeehouses primarily in London, Ottoman Jews play an important role in this enterprise.

Today, Ottoman coffeehouses established in the sixteenth century are known to have spread to Europe (not vice versa), and have contributed to the foundation and proliferation of European public spheres.[65] This acknowledgement, of course, does not imply that the Ottoman coffee culture was unchangingly transferred to European cities, which were shaped by their peculiar historical, social, political, and economic contexts. As Michiel Leezenberg conveys, Ottoman coffeehouses created a peculiarly Ottoman public sphere not necessarily compatible with that of Habermas with a particular cultural and political dimension challenging one uncontested model of *the European public sphere*, thus, of *the modern nation* (275).[66] Cengiz Kırlı underscores the emergence and role of the coffeehouse within an "international and intercultural context that bred coffeehouse life as much as local social and political change. And it was in the coffeehouse, more than anywhere else, that the pervasive experience of modernity in the nineteenth century was

[64] Encyclopedia of Islam: "as it is probable that the drinking of coffee spread in the Yemen out of Ṣūfī circles and a special significance was given to wine in the poetical language of the mystics, a transference of the poetic name for wine to the new beverage would not be at all impossible."

[65] Cengiz Kırlı notes: "…Europe imported the drink and its institution with the full knowledge of their 'Turkish' origin and without any attempt to disassociate the cultural meanings that surrounded its consumption, and precisely because of this, coffee deserves a different treatment from other 'soft drugs'. Unlike these exotic colonial products, it was a cultural import from the Ottoman Empire" in Kırlı, "Leisure and Sociability" 163.

[66] Michiel Leezenberg, "The Structural Transformation of the Coffeehouse: Religion, Language, and the Public Sphere in the Modernizing Muslim World," *Things: Religion and the Question of Materiality*, ed. Dick Houtman, and Birgit Meyer (Fordham UP, 2012) ProQuest Ebook Central, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/wisc/detail.action?docID=3239739.

negotiated, interpreted and contested" (176).[67] In this sense, experience of modernity in the European capitols coincided with that of the Ottoman. Establishment of the reading house (*kıraathane*) beyond the traditional coffeehouse in the mid nineteenth century evinces the simultaneity of literary modernities, in particular, in such imperial centers.

In the Ottoman model, coffeehouse becomes the multilingual and secular (in the sense of a non-clerical and non-stative secularism) mixed class community where many languages are heard (not necessarily read), debates around the government issues (*devlet işleri*) abound, and literary performances take place (273).[68] *Kahvehane* culture must have had influence also on the Ottoman folk literature, which is mainly an oral tradition where *âşık*s, poet singers, travelled reading and singing poetry from memory. One scholar even forms parallel between establishment of coffeehouses, and the development of the tradition of *âşık*s in the sixteenth century, where *âşık*s both performed their art and also earned money from the coffeehouse audience (Yalap 1926).[69] Oral and visual performances of *aşık*s (troubadour or bards), *meddah*s (storytellers) and *Karagözcü*s (Karagöz shadow puppeteers)[70] help us visualize the ascendance of orality in coffeehouses where emergence of mass-literacy was not transformative until in the wake of the

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[67] Cengiz Kırlı, "Coffeehouses leisure and sociability in Ottoman Istanbul," *Leisure cultures in urban Europe, c.1700–1870* (Manchester UP, 2016).
[68] ibid.
[69] Hakan Yalap, "Klasik Türk Edebiyatı Işığında Edebiyat ve Kültür Tarihimizde Kahve ve Kahvehaneler," *İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Araştırmaları Dergisi* 6/3 (2017): 1907-1930.
[70] Originating from the Arabic word to love, *Âşık* is a poet singer usually travelling and playing *saz* accompanying their songs. This tradition has a long history stretching back and expanding to the old Turkic period in Central Asia. Before Islamic influence, *ozan* was the name for this kind of performer among the Turkic tribes. After Islamicization of Turkic people, *aşık* tradition became more associate with Sufism. Yunus Emre (1238-1320) is among the most established *aşık*s based in Anatolia. *Meddah* (from Arabic to praise) is the performing story teller. It follows the similar historical and geographical trajectory with *aşık* tradition originating among the Central Asian Turkic tribes (called *baksı*), and then fusing with the Islamic tradition in Anatolia. *Meddah*s told stories about various topics ranging from the everyday to myths, religious figures to sultans. *Karagöz* is a shadow puppet theater play casting two main characters *Karagöz* and *Hacivat*. According to some resources, it entered the Ottoman scene in the sixteenth century via Egypt. Yet there is no consensus among the historians about the play's origins so far. The play satirizes the society through the characters acting as stereotypes, gypsy Karagöz being the gawky and blunt as opposed to the mannered *Hacivat* who speaks in Istanbul Turkish. *Karagöz* involved many supporting stock characters as the Armenian, Greek, Gypsy, Kurd, Jewish, Laz, etc., representing different ethnicities and religions in the Ottoman Empire.

nineteenth century. Coffehouses sort of shouldered an overdue process for the transformation of the Ottoman society from indulging in collective performativity to individual literacy.

As early as in the seventeenth century, the sultan Murad IV closed down coffeehouses, seeing a potential threat in this mixture of classes where people from different hierarchies gathered and socialize.[71] This type of hybrid sociability must have been considered—as ironic as it may seem—a menace to the social order (Grehan 1363). Dismantling hierarchical structures by the public has been countered by the states wherever it emerged since the early modern period, and the Ottoman context is no exception to this transnational pursuit of legitimacy. Coffeehouse culture had already been established in the Ottoman Empire by that time when it began to emerge in Europe.[72] Moreover, as Kömeçoğlu discloses unlike other social areas such as hamams, bazaars, and mosques, "the coffeehouse emerged as an *institution*, whose major and active function was sociability" (Kömeçoğlu 8, emphasis mine). Diversity of (male) audience welcoming literate and illiterate alike, and of activities distinguishes the coffeehouse from other venues of sociability in the empire (8). These activities as relayed by Kömeçoğlu not only involve discursive practices taking place as do so in the Habermasian coffeehouse but also "performative, theatrical and bodily practices" enacted by such performers as *aşık*s, *meddah*s and *Karagözcü*s (11). Heterogeneity of people and practices render the Ottoman coffeehouse a heterotopia (Kömeçoğlu 16).

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[71] James Grehan, "Smoking and 'Early Modern' Sociability: The Great Tobacco Debate in the Ottoman Middle East (Seventeenth to Eighteenth Centuries)", *The American Historical Review* 111, 5 (December 2006): 1352-1377.
[72] Uğur Kömeçoğlu, "The Publicness and Sociabilities of the Ottoman Coffeehouse," *The Public* 12/2 (2005).

d. Little Magazines and Transformation of the Reading Sphere at Coffeehouses

In the late nineteenth century, Abdulhamit II's (1842-1918) personal endeavors to expand publications particularly in Ottoman language among others to create a controlled public sphere affirms the active involvement of the state entity in this process. Publication in the Ottoman language refers to the Ottoman Turkish written in the Perso-Arabic script; otherwise, printed texts in the Ottoman Turkish written in Armenian and Greek alphabets were already abundant, but were consumed exclusively by these respective communities. A Turkish reading public sphere, then, evidently flourished during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but through an active state promotion and thus control. Yet, it would be far too generalizing to state that there was not even a semi-autonomous reading public sphere simultaneously emerging with a state sponsored organism. Privately owned literary magazines evince yet another formation partially (not completely) freed from state surveillance. Preexistence of a patronage system also interrupts what is sometimes thought to be a unidirectional state-public encounter. The fact that all belonged to the imperial state (and bequeathed to the republic) regardless of ownership, which bestowed the right to itself to confiscate private property of all kinds for the permanent benevolence of the state, does not mean that state was able to directly monitor public exchanges. The degree and the means of controlling this space perhaps matter more as we also know that censor and at times closure of privately owned literary magazines in the transitional period point to this peculiar understanding of the state role not as much the guarantor of individual property rights as its proprietor. During Abdulhamit II, an institutional censor called *Encümen-i teftiş ve muâyene* (Committe of Inspection and Control) was founded to control publications. *Encümen* committee consisted many notable writers and translators among them as well as some ignorant officials.[73] Since *kıraathane*s are

[73] Johann Straus, "Publishing in a multi-ethnic society," *Late Ottoman Society: Intellectual Legacy*, ed. Elisabeth Ozdalga, (RoutlegeCurzon: New York, 2005): 237-238.

mainly reading cafes, where Young Turks and their publications were heavily present, they could not escape from the censorship bureau as the group was then considered to be conducting treacherous acts against the empire. As Johann Strauss reports from Dr Stambolski's memoirs that "on 27 February 1875 the *kıraathane* of Şehzadebaşı, where he used to go to browse Turkish papers, was closed down by the police, by order of the censor, since there was what he calls 'a Young Turkish flair'" (Strauss, "Publishing" 237).[74] On one hand, the sultan was patronizing the printing press, on the other he strictly controlled what was being written, and what the subjects were reading.

The hybrid Ottoman coffeehouse, therefore, was not equivalent of *salon*s in Paris where reading and literary criticism prevailed. Yet, a similar reading (coffee)house (*kıraathane*) was first established in the mid nineteenth century in 1861 in Istanbul, which "was a mix of the European café, a literary salon and a men's social club" (Fortna 162).[75] *Kıraathane* is a noun phrase combined with the Arabic word *kıraat* meaning reading (قراءة), and Persian *hane*, that is house (or lodge). Leezenberg argues that vernacularization itself is not enough to define the function of coffeehouses in the nineteenth century, which operated with an ideological mission to make the common people (*amma*) understand the written material (273). With the expansion of the newspaper in the nineteenth century, news was read aloud to the predominantly illiterate public, which according to Leezenberg, contributed to the simplification of the high language of the elite, and paved the way for later language reforms (274). This observation pushes Leezenberg to suggest that contrary to Benedict Anderson's formulation of the emergence and expansion of the print technology itself as the producer of the modern, secular nation-state, "it [the latter] is shaped in and by *particular practices* that make use of these technologies" (274 emphasis mine). Among

[74] Ibid.
[75] Benjamin Fortna, *Learning to Read in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) 162.

such practices is oral literary tradition that does not necessitate literacy (reading a writing) in the modern sense to acquire and disseminate new information. A story or a new regulation by the sultan (*ferman*) was equally transmitted among the public by performing reading. As such in the nineteenth century, newspaper news found a hearing public, which did not need to buy and read the newspaper themselves. Within the oral paradigm, and still predominantly tied to its practices, the Ottoman public did not necessarily deem mass literacy hitherto as important as it did in the late nineteenth century onwards.

The reason for the emphasis on public literacy in later periods is manifold. With the expansion of Ottoman bureaucracy and Westernization in the eighteenth century, it might have sought to implement its legitimacy in a more "republican" way than that which was hitherto conceived (Turnaoğlu 14).[76] And one of the ways to inflict legitimacy is through sustaining a thorough communicative strategy between the state and its subjects in order to secure its hegemony over an expansive geography. Receiving, understanding, and circulating the message construed primary interests of this public up until the middle of the nineteenth century where literacy began to be more prominent. Although the Ottoman coffeehouse might not have played a direct role in advertising literacy, as a cluster of exchanging messages it acted as a vessel in leveraging languages to the uses of this particularly urban public. Simplification of language prior to its exploitation as a romanticized national tool beginning in the mid nineteenth century, thus, must have come out as a result of a need to communicate the news with this mixed sphere. [77] Multilingualism was one of the distinguishing factors of the Ottoman coffeehouse from its European predecessors, and the ways in which this linguistic diversification influenced formation

[76] Banu Turnaoğlu, *The Formation of Turkish Republicanism* (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 2017).
[77] Gül Karagöz-Kızılca argues, "Based on the circulation rates that remained small in number, particularly outside urban centers where people had limited access to newspapers, many Ottoman historians view the newspapers of the period as an elite source. Yet, newspapers were hardly the sole source for disseminating news in the Ottoman Empire. The expansion of newspapers did not result in the disappearance of 'oral communication forms…", 12-13.

of the Ottoman public sphere(s) has been addressed in extant scholarship. Expanding on Habermas's formulation of public spheres in London, Paris, and Berlin, Leezenberg claims that "public languages are actually *constitutive* of public spheres" (281). Multilingualism was an Ottoman reality which was often overlooked as result of an ongoing exclusivist literary perspective as well as of dearth of scholars trained in the languages of the empire. Johann Strauss interrogates reading practices of the nineteenth century Ottoman public by comparing different ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups, and informs that Armeno-Turkish of Armenians, *Karamanli* (Turkish-Greek) of Greeks, and vernacular Spanish of Sephardic Jews complicate the public sphere paradigm as was upheld in Europe (52).[78] In this polyglot hub, in fact, expecting emergence of a uniform public sphere does not make justice to the particular milieu of the Ottoman *millets*.[79]

Modern drama as a performative genre from 1850s also emerges as a result particularly of the efforts of Armenian playwrights who had closer ties with European literary centers. Mehmet Fatih Uslu argues in their study on the Turkish and Armenian theater in the Ottoman Empire that "Ottoman theater as a uniformed structure offers a space where monologism is interrupted during a period of time when entities moving away or even splitting from each other find an opportunity to talk and understand each other" (17). Yet, extermination of the non-Muslim population as pioneers of the modern dramatic writing in the empire, together with the genre's ideological utility particularly during and after the Young Turk regime causes its dialogical character to evaporate.[80]

One might also say that from the sixteenth century onwards, the non-reading public sphere also constituted one of the components of the (reading) public sphere in the Ottoman society. We should bear in mind this semi illiterate trajectory of the Ottoman public sphere, which can well be

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[78] Johann Strauss, "Who read what in the Ottoman Empire?" *Arabic Middle Eastern Literatures* 6, 1. 2003.
[79] Bedros der Matossian argues for the existence of multiple public spheres among the ethnic groups after 1908 revolution, 189.
[80] Drama is to date the lesser popular genre among others in the Turkish literary history, as I believe, resulting partially from collective descendance of performative genres in the late nineteenth century as well as from the genre's abuse as an ideological tool at the hands of the state and political groups during the heyday of nationalism.

read not necessarily isolated from but as complimentary to the history of the print technology itself insofar the studies on the latter acknowledge reading, writing, and oral practices, which call for attention in the formations of the Ottoman literary public sphere as well.

The late Ottoman and later early republican coffeehouse had close ties to the publishing industry, and with the spread of newspapers, coffeehouses transformed into reading houses.[81] Considering the low purchasing power of the society, relatively high cost of paper, and still lower literacy level in the mid nineteenth century, we can easily imagine that coffeehouse served as a collective listening lodge or cinema except that most of the audience did not necessarily purchase the item. Why would one with modest income pay for the newspaper when they can already hear the news at the coffeehouse on a daily basis? This collective auditing practice however as might be expected must have caused a problem on the publisher's side, which depended on individual sales on a mass scale. The Ottoman historian Suraiya Faroqhi cites Beşir Fuad (1852-1887), a famous author and publisher of a literary and science magazine, who complained about the low sales blaming it on the coffeehouses.[82] No doubt that early publishers did not make enough profit in the short term to sustain their otherwise potentially lucrative business, but in the long term, coffeehouses provided them the much needed reading public.

One of the famous turn of the century reading houses belonged to an Ottoman-Armenian, and was called *Sarafim Efendi Kıraathanesi* (Mr. Sarafim Reading House), which housed on its first floor its own printing house, operating from 1857 to 1920s.[83] Readers with non-readers gathered in the hybrid atmosphere of the coffeehouse at the turn of the century, the former replacing the latter by time but still diversifying and stratifying within itself as new social events

[81] Tanpınar, *Beş Şehir* (1987 [1946]): 71-77.
[82] Faroqhi continues "Readership may have increased, but the publisher failed to benefit", 263.
[83] See Salah Birsel, *Kahveler Kitabı* (Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1983).

open up the space for newer milieus. *Sarafim* must have been abandoned during the turmoil of WWI as with other preexisting coffeehouses at the time. Among the literary magazines coming out of coffeehouses, we can count *Dergâh*, first published on April 15, 1921 by writers and critics, who gathered at *İkbal Kıraathanesi* (Ikbal Reading House).[84] In *Beş Şehir* (Five Cities) Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (1901-1962), writer and professor of literature at Istanbul University, narrates their frequent meetings at İkbal as a cluster of writers and critics, including his teacher poet Yahya Kemal (1884-1958). Each had a group with their own table and discussed topics ranging from current news about the War of Independence following the WWI to the latest literary publications. After what Tanpınar frames as "national victory" referring to the war against The Entente, Ikbal reading houses were abandoned after the early 1920s.[85] Writer and critic Salah Birsel reports that "*Dergah* published fourty two issues, and after its closure, İkbal was left to journalists. The place was rejuvenated in 1951 after Orhan Kemal moved from Adana to Istanbul when Ikbal became the coffeehouse of Orhan and his friends" (Birsel 335).[86] Another famous reading house *Küllük* (Küllük Kahvesi) emerged for the literati in the early republic and frequently hosted the then leading literary figures including Tanpınar, Yaşar Kemal, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu among others, who also published a literary magazine *Küllük* honoring the cafe's name. Social and economic transformation after the war might have negatively influenced the then standing coffeehouses, and as in the case of Ikbal, some reentered the social scene with a different literary audience.

Today, *kahve* is the most common use with *kahvehane,* and *kıraathane* is rarely seen on the coffeehouse windows except in the countryside and lower middle class neighborhoods of the cities. And their function has gradually shifted from a hybrid reading sociability to a more

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[84] Ibid 332.
[85] Tanpınar (1946): 71-77.
[86] Ibid, 335. Orhan Kemal (1914-1970) was a novelist with a realistic style.

homogeneous non-reading one where predominantly working-class men and farmers gather to spend idle time. *Kahve(hane)* is still the place where women are excluded. If we in fact have a look at the occupational statistics of the coffeehouse, even during its heyday when it was intellectually oriented, its occupants were predominantly men. Cafes, on the other hand, have begun to replace *kahvehane*s, addressing the youth from all genders and backgrounds with their locations in the city centers. They are however becoming more gentrified offering an expensive experience to the rich Istanbulites in certain enclosed neighborhoods. Every neighborhood in Istanbul yet harbors many cafes today (sometimes side by side with *kahve*s), and they serve a variety of European style drinks and pastries. Some of the cafes are located inside the bookstores where people have the option to purchase literary magazines and books, and read them there while sitting at the café. These comprise the kind of space appealing more to a reading public where literary events and autograph sessions usually take place.

The Turkish reading public sphere, which originated and was shaped predominantly by *kahvehane* and later *kıraathane* cultures have transformed not so drastically perhaps in the late Ottoman and early republic despite the radical social reformations but particularly after first in 1955s with the pogrom that drove the urban Christians, particularly the remnants of Greeks from their homeland, and then with the wholesale incorporation of Turkey into capitalism in 1980s. Turkish reading public sphere did emerge with the plethora of other languages, once accepting itself as a heterogenous language that is Ottoman. Today, study of the Ottoman language itself—let alone other languages—for academic purposes is a revived pursuit. Not even one university's Turkish Literature department in modern Turkey to date acknowledges "Ottoman literature" as a literary area. Instead the category within which Ottoman literature is located is entitled "Old Turk(ish) literature" as opposed to the "New/Contemporary Turk(ish) literature." *New* and *old* as adjectives to describe a literary period, in particular, delineate not only a juxtaposition but more

decisively a temporal abyss. In *Nineteenth Century Turkish Literary History*[87] (1949), one of the most prominent works on the subject, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (1901-1962) commented on *Tanzimat*'s generating a dichotomy in the nation which "disrupted its spiritual unity. Even today, this duality inherited from those times, and expressed through such phrases as 'European' [*alafranga*] and 'Turkish' [*alaturka*] styles (as in music), 'old' and 'new' (as in discursive topics) is the biggest fatalities of *Tanzimat* [*fatalitesidir*]" (Tanpınar 1976; 136).[88] One gets used to forgetting the temporal abyss enforced by the dichotomies of old and new; one should reimburse this forgetting by questioning its self-orientalist drives.

2.3. Reception of Literary Writing in the Republic

The texts published and circulated by the state (State Press) and by the National Education Ministry, and performed by the subjects at its institutions establish the foundations of the writer-state. Speech (*Nutuk*) (1927) including the Address to the Youth (*Gençliğe Hitabe*) (1927) by Atatürk, Student Pledge (*Andımız*)[89] (1933) by Reşit Galip, and the National Anthem (*İstiklal Marşı*) (1921) by Mehmet Akif Ersoy compose the primary writings of the state as a nation. The secondary texts for the theoretical background include the writings of the writer and politician Ziya Gökalp (1876-1924) and Halide Edib Adıvar (1884-1964), and the renowned Education Minister Hasan Ali Yücel (1897-1961).

These texts however do not only comprise the canons of the Ottoman-Turkish literary history but also others incorporated into the Turkish literary production written in Arabic, Persian as well as in major European languages regardless of their anonymity. Translations of, say *Leyla ve*

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[87] Not translated into English yet.
[88] Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *19uncu Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, (İstanbul: Çağlayan, 1976 [1949]).
[89] Literally "Our Pledge" in Turkish.

Mecnun (Laila wa Majnun), literary works of Rumi, literary philosophical texts of Aristotle and Plato into Turkish in the Republican period served to refashion a nation (*ulus*) distinct from that (*millet*) of the Ottoman Empire. Translation project itself parallels with the idea of reclaiming the Anatolian land, a mythical dominance over this land *as if* it belonged to this new Turkish Republic from the beginning of time, which precisely fits in with the claims of the Sun Language "Theory", a pseudoscientific linguistic hypothesis supported by Atatürk, arguing for the proto-Turkish as the source language.[90] The writer-state, therefore, attempted to appropriate *other* texts too in its nationalist imagination.

This literature series was published by *İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları,* (*İş Bank Cultural Press*), and sponsored by the Translation Bureau of the state both of which were founded by the Education Minister Hasan Ali Yücel (1897-1961) who also established the Village Institutes (1940-1954) (*Köy Enstitüleri*). After Atatürk, Yücel became one of the most important cultural engineers in the history of Turkey. It is important to see these cultural projects as the interrelated sections of the state institutionalization of Turkish nationalism rather than the individualistic ambition of one person, (regardless of Yücel's personal interests). In a book bringing together Yücel's articles on culture between 1952-1957 entitled *Thoughts on Culture* (Kültür Üzerine Düşünceler), which was first published by *Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları* (Turkey's İş Bank Culture Publications) in 1974, Yücel entrusts cultural institutions such as libraries, theaters and cinemas to be constructed in *the East* (i.e. predominantly Kurdish part of Turkey) as well as in each corner of the homeland with the role of sustaining the national unity (*milli birlik*), which, without the former condition cannot be realized (Yücel 40). In this passage, Yücel comments on the necessity to build a university in *the East* in accordance with Ataturk's wish before he died in

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[90] See Abdülkadir İnan, *Güneş Dil Teorisi Üzerine Ders Notları* [*Course Notes on Sun Language Theory*], (Dil, Tarih ve Coğrafya Fakültesi, 1936).

1938 in order to "raise valued Turkish people" (Yücel 45).[91] Yucel here stresses the fact that "Turkish" is a supra-identity encompassing all the supposedly sub *national* identities, the idea endorsed by the republic. He even goes as far as giving the Scottish in the U.K as an example of a sub group within one and only English nation. This national formulation, in fact, has since been adopted by the (Kemalist) nationalist groups as their diverging point from the ethno-nationalists when they deem necessary to distinguish their nationalist ideology from that of, say, the Nazis. It is not too hard to notice the Kemalist nationalists' arbitrary ideological alignments considering that Ataturk himself had attempted to steer a *scientific* committee to do research on the physical characteristics of the *pure* Turks.[92] The tenets of Kemalist nationalism have adapted to the specific needs of the audience depending on location and time. One needs to read Yucel's ideas on culture in light of the specificity of the Kemalist nationalist project in order to understand its cultural aspect.

An understanding of culture under the service of the nation-state is thus repeated throughout Yücel's writing. The fact that *Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları* was also the publisher of the World Classics in Turkish in collaboration with the Translation Bureau sheds some light on the utility of cultural products for the national project. In the general foreword of the translated classics, Yucel prioritizes the linguistic unity to achieve humanistic idealism. The "mission" here is to integrate Western cultural products to form a unique Turkish humanism, however seemingly paradoxical. It is only through reading these classics in (latinized) Turkish, Yucel contends, that the souls of the Turkish people will be elevated. What lies beneath the literary translational practice here is self-evidently beyond literature and translation. The writer-state, thus, becomes involved in a hitherto neglected practice of generating (translators), publishing (state

[91] Yücel, Hasan Ali. *Kültür Üzerine Düşünceler*, (Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, Ankara: 1974).
[92] Within the scope of this project which wasn't less pseudo-scientific than the Sun Language Theory was, the greatest Ottoman architect Mimar Sinan's grave was reported to be opened to measure his skull.

printing press) and distributing (national education ministry) western literature in translation. The early republic diverges from the empire in its handling the translation activity as a cultural and political instrument.[93] The multilingual empire began to project on translation as a communicative (not necessarily cultural) tool in the nineteenth century when the wars threatened the territorial integrity, and the first internal *enemies* emerged. As Yücel purports, the new Turkish state needed to *enrich* Turkish after tackling to eliminate the Perso-Arabic loanwords and grammatical functions in the language for purity. Despite the blatant partiality to western linguistic influence, the new cultural project to attain foremost a unified Turkish identity took its toll trenchantly and with great support from the day's intelligentsia. Writers including poets were actors in the translations from European languages including English, German and French, the latter being the lingua franca in late Ottoman and early republic. Artists including painters and writers studied in Paris and contributed to the promulgation of French as *the* language. Literacy in French was a symbol of prestige, and its overuse of dandiness as the 19th century novel *Araba Sevdası* [*A Carriage Affair* 1986] satirizes.[94] French painting and writing extensively influenced the artists' production.

The nation-state (*ulus devlet*) is a novel concept not commonly used in folk Turkish to refer to the post-imperial state of Turkey. Turkish, rather, utilizes the state (*devlet*) and the nation (*millet*), separately, and refers to the motherland as *memleket* or *vatan*, all etymologically Arabic. The Ottoman Empire organized its subjects around the concept of the nation (*millet*) living in the Ottoman State (*Devlet-ü Osmaniye*) composed of different ethnicities and religions. *Ulus*, the Turkish equivalent, on the other hand, is reintroduced in the 20th century's nationalized (Turkified)

[93] This tendency to controlled translation by the state has shifted its target since 1990s when Turkey began to take its part in a globalizing economy as Gürcağlar notes, "Translation is still considered a tool, but this time the intention is not to use translation to plan Turkish culture; translation is rather seen as a tool for national image building and asserting a position for Turkey in an increasingly global cultural market" (Gürcağlar 143).

vocabulary to signify a parting from the Ottoman idea of *millet* (nation) to the nationalist Republic of *ulus* (nation). Almost a century of linguistic efforts, peculiarly the ultranationalist thinkers' ardent struggle to replace *millet* with *ulus* notwithstanding, *ulus devlet* (nation-state) still resonates a translative failure. Suffice it to say, even Atatürk, the upmost ideologue behind this new idea of *ulus* prioritized *millet* when addressing the nation in his writings and speeches. On the very first page of *Nutuk*, his speech delivered to the congress in 1927, Atatürk mentions the condition of *millet* as "exhausted and poor", and "the ones [the Ottoman sultans], who drove *millet* and *memleket* to the condition of war, were busy with saving themselves, and escaped *memleket*" leaving it to its fate (*Nutuk* 1).[95]

Atatürk delivered *Nutuk* (the Speech) to the congress in 1927 narrating the events from the beginning of the Turkish War of Independence in 1919 after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in WWI up until the foundation of the Republic in 1923. *Nutuk* was published in the Ottoman Turkish in the same year it was dictated, a year before the alphabet reform in 1928. It was published in the Ottoman alphabet with each print numbered until 1934, the date it was first transcribed and published in the Latinized alphabet, which also bears omissions, and transcription mistakes to be repeated in future prints. Yet, it had already appeared in German first before it was transcribed in modern Turkish as early as 1929 published by K. F. Koehler in Leipzig. *Nutuk* was addressed to the future generation rather than the public it was then delivered to, and since only the last generation of Ottoman reading public would have understood *Nutuk* as it was, its transcribed version could not be deciphered as problematic. On the contrary, this translation project, became precisely the first model for the 1928 alphabet reform to be introduced only a year after the speech. Yet, it was only after six years from the alphabet reform that *Nutuk* was first published in the Latinized alphabet by *Devlet Matbaası* (State Press), and only in 1963 it was published with

[95] All translations from *Nutuk* are mine based on the original publication in Ottoman Turkish in 1927.

simplifications for the reader and with a *pure* Turkish title *Söylev* instead of the Arabic *Nutuk*. Compared to the grand ambition of the alphabet and language reforms targeting rapid transformation, 1963 emerges as belated for *Nutuk* (*Söylev*) to appear in its first purified (from Arabic and Persian loanwords) form. *Nutuk*, however, is the most commonly preferred publishing title to date despite the contrary propaganda. *Nutuk*'s publishing history, thus, also gives clues about the discordances in state praxis pertaining to linguistic nationalism.

The mistakes and omissions based on the false transcriptions made in its 1934 publication were repeated in the later prints by various publishing houses up until 2011 when, finally, Yapı Kredi Press published a new print based on the original 1927 version. *Nutuk* had to wait almost eighty years to be retranscribed from the 1927 original version in the Ottoman alphabet. Suffice it to say, only after 2011, the public could properly read *Nutuk* in the Latinized alphabet.[96] If such iterative recklessness occurs in a seminal state writing like *Nutuk*, which was originally published by the state press, and is perpetuated by the private publishing houses, one, naturally, questions the reliability of particularly the first world classics series translated from (largely) European languages into Turkish.

Nutuk presents itself as one man's prophetic narrative of a particular historical moment, and as a semi autobiographical epic of an ur nation, targets the future, the children of the republic as the protector of this unmovingly epic presence. It is not surprising, then, to read Atatürk's emphasis on commending the republic to the youth at the end of *Nutuk* which is separately known as *Gençliğe Hitabe* (*Address to the Youth*): "The Turkish Youth! Your first mission is to protect and preserve the Turkish independence and republic. This mission is the only foundation for your existence and future. This foundation is your most precious treasure..." (*Nutuk* 627).[97] As Hülya

[96] I exclude from the public a small cluster of scholars trained in Arabic, Ottoman Turkish or Persian, and who always had access to the original *Nutuk* through archives.
[97] "Ey Türk Gençliği! Birinci vazifen, Türk istiklâlini, Türk Cumhuriyetini, ilelebet, muhafaza ve müdafaa etmektir. Mevcudiyetinin ve istikbalinin yegâne temeli budur. Bu temel, senin, en kıymetli hazinendir...''

Adak observes in her comparative reading of Halide Edib and Atatürk's writings, "The only mission left for future generations is to preserve this *fixed* and *unchanging* entity, the nation and the name of its creator/father, 'Atatürk'" (emphasis mine 523). Conceptualizing this stable state as a mystical entity, *Nutuk* provides the children with an overall ultra-nationalist identity with religious undertones above all other identities.

In *the Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (1980) by Milan Kundera, children are instructed by Husak "the president of forgetting" to not look back because "we must never allow the future to collapse under the burden of memory" (187). Children embody the future in the novel since they have no memory of the past as opposed to Tamina who has a past in Prague and who nonetheless assimilates into their pastless manners in the children's island.[98] The mission of the Turkish youth, similarly, is to forget the past but only a permitted epoch, and to remember what is being narrated by Atatürk as the only historical truth. It is mandatory for primary and secondary schools to hang this *Gençliğe Hitabe* section of *Nutuk* on the walls together with the Turkish National Anthem accompanied by the statue of Atatürk. This address, however, was not only intended to be read but rehearsed collectively by the students on official days. Peremptory tone of the address is manifest indicating what this mission, the only reason for the youth's entity, will include and require from the youth in the coming lines in order to protect the republic. One can imagine even only reading the initial lines, the myriad of arduous tasks expected from this youth to actualize the mission. This text has paved the way for the same youth some of whom were militarized to declare coups precisely to protect the republic. In *The Political Formation of Childhood in Turkey* (2011) Güven G. Öztan mentions the instrumentality of children's literature focusing on travels to "foreign" lands since the late nineteenth century onwards and particularly after the republic to ingrain the feeling

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[98] The narrator continues: "History is a succession of ephemeral changes. Eternal values exist outside history. They are immutable and have no need of memory. Husak is president of the eternal, not the ephemeral. He is on the side of children, and children are life, and life is 'seeing, hearing, eating, drinking, urinating, defecating, diving into water and observing the firmament, laughing, and crying'" (187).

of belonging to Turkishness in its "comparison" with and against other "European" countries (69-71).

I would like to revisit the previous inquiry as to why it took the state sponsored publishing house almost thirty years to publish a modern Turkish version of *Nutuk* although it was addressed to the future generation after the language reforms? I remember memorizing *Gençliğe Hitabe* in the primary school which I did not much understand due to the obsolete words, but surprisingly, comprehension did not really matter as much as performativity. Orhan Pamuk's *Snow* unfolds the parody of performativity where the performative dominates over the action to the point where it becomes hard to distinguish the simulation of a military coup from the real one simultaneously taking place at the stage. Language itself thus serves as a performative battleground. As such, I was supposed to memorize *Gençliğe Hitabe* in the end, and we were not questioned on our understanding. *Okumak* (to read) without mistake and understanding was the ultimate goal. As a pre-ordained child of Kemalism, unaware of the horrific mission awaiting me and the whole youth, I was carried away by the heartening command to safeguard our nation against a common obscure enemy. Was the whole translation project of *Nutuk*, then, an intended belatedness by the state to elevate affect before meaning in order to engineer good young soldiers? Pre-college students still read the same text with same obsolete words as if *reading* the Qur'an, which is reading the signs without understanding. When there was extreme emphasis on adopting pure Turkish words in the early republic, belatedness of translating *Nutuk* into modern Turkish appears to be an oxymoron.

Alphabet change and linguistic purity had a double effect: mystification of both the Arabic (or Ottoman) script and the Latinized Turkish. One can in fact come across a text in Arabic and immediately take it for Qur'an because for the lay Turkish speaker today it means nothing beyond

a holy sign.[99] As such, the new Latinized alphabet was mystified almost to the extent of being God's letters, which Orhan Pamuk shrewdly satirizes in *The Black Book*.

2.4.Transliteration, transcription and interpretation

In 1934 when Nutuk was first transliterated from Ottoman-Turkish into the Latinized Turkish by the State Press, certain transcription issues regarding paraphrasing and interpreting must have arisen since reading requires a certain amount of subjectivity as much as writing, which, however, does not naturally lend itself to similar degrees of interpretativeness. If *Nutuk*'s language posed such hermeneutical difficulty when transcribed into its "same" language, intralingual transcription, then, seems to undergo a similar process with interlingual translation. The reasons that coerced the transcriptionists into partially omitting and modifying the text are arguably ideological as well as translative.

1950 marks Turkey's inauguration into a multi-party system after almost three decades of one party rule by Ataturk's *Republican People's Party* (RPP) since the foundation of the republic. Not that this historical moment was the first trial of a democratic system since there were attempts at introducing opposition even by Ataturk himself to form a multi-party government; however, these democratic trials failed with the outlaw of the opposition parties by the ruling party as they were considered, in the end, as a threat to the foundational state ideology with their alleged Islamist tendencies. What is perhaps overlooked during this early Republican period, is its early anti-Communism which resulted in the poet Nazım Hikmet's exile and later imprisonment. In line with

[99] Not only in Turkey, but also in predominantly Muslim populations of the past Soviet Union and today's Russia politics of alphabet reforms caused similar issues. According to a recent news, being mistaken for Qur'an, the 1926 Arabic edition of the Soviet Penal Code has been passed from generation to generation in Bashkortostan region of Russia http://tass.com/society/1008001.

the Truman doctrine's cold war agenda, this anti-Communist trend continued during the next chapter of the multi-party government, and is still intact in the center left and right party policies, which make up the majority in the parliament. Suffice it to say, the clandestine group named counter-guerilla ideologically guided and actively backed by the Truman doctrine against communism in Turkey worked both to oppress the leftist movements as well as to homogenize, i.e. Turkify the country, grandest of which was the 1955 Istanbul pogrom engineered by the counter-guerrilla forces. This secret group evolved into legalized units within the military to counter "terrorism," peculiarly the Kurdish resistance.[100]

1950 witnessed the first time democratically elected party victory over the center left RPP, which was, then, aptly named as the Democratic Party. The election of a moderately right-wing party with a liberal economic package and populism indeed, officially, ended Turkey's one party era.[101] Yet, it was not long before the military rule took control of the parliament in 1960, and outlawed the party condemning the head chair and his vice president to death penalty. The army acted as the de facto agent of CHP, which, by law, could not itself ban the Democrat Party, but, which, in fact, veiled itself under the legal military apparatus of the state. Having never regained its majority in the parliament since 1950, CHP's role as the protector of the state ideology has not much changed until today. In fact, the coup d'état's of 1960, 1971, 1980, and 1997 illustrate precisely the post-1950's "democratic" tradition intimidated by military interventions whenever the ruling government deemed to conflict with the state ideology i.e. CHP. The question remains as to what the components of this state ideology are, and the ways in which they are incorporated into various state institutions, which to date employ oppression with different tactics but via similar authoritarianism.

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[100] For further Info on CIA's role into educating these forces, see Daniele Ganser, *NATO's secret armies: operation Gladio and terrorism in Western Europe* (New York: Frank Cass, 2005).
[101] Nazim Hikmet was released under an amnesty rule this new government enacted in 1950 before his final escape to USSR.

Nazım Hikmet's case as a literary and political figure is examplary in terms of embodying the paradoxes of the new Republican ideology. As a vocal communist, Hikmet was marginalized both by the late Ottoman imperial government and by the newly founded republican state. Despite Hikmet's nationalist and communist tendencies combined as driving forces of his art, (Kemalist) nationalist part of his identity was not an enough shield to protect him from ostracization by the state. Hikmet's communism as Hikmet's literary oeuvre also reflects his ambivalent position, which is similar to that of the "romantic strategy" employed by the postcolonial African writers as suggested by Gikandi.[102] These writers, accordingly, tried to utilize realism and romanticism in a way to create a lovable land without completely breaking away from the realities of that land as it was. Hikmet, as such, exploited a similar strategy in his patriotic lines in the service of the people's imagination for an endearing nation, which also did not shy away from telling the brute (predominantly economic) realities of that time except the grimmest reality the extermination of the Armenian population from their ancestral land. Hikmet's nationalism prevented him from connecting with the minorities, and thus, from generating opposition against such state brutality. (Nationalist) Communism's materialist and cultural modernity severely limited Hikmet's poetic resistance to only economic inequality resulting in his poetry's complete indifference to ethnic and religious oppressions of the time in Turkey as well as in the USSR.

Another republican writer and political leader Halide Edib Adıvar (1902-1963), who was a contemporary of Hikmet (1902-1963), displayed a similar ambivalence in her literary and political works, which according to a recent study revealed Edib's transformation as a nationalist writer after the World World I (Adak 2016; 37). Comparing two autobiographical narrations, *Nutuk* (the speech) by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk delivered in 1927 narrating his "prophetic" role in

[102] Simon Gikandi, "Realism, Romance, and the Problem of African Literary History". *Modern Language Quarterly*, 73 (2012): 309-328.

the independence struggle and Halide Edib Adıvar's *The Turkish Ordeal* written in 1928 in English narrating her role in the national movement, Hülya Adak suggests that a "potential resistance" by Halide Edib against the self "myth" of Mustafa Kemal has been overlooked due to the intentional omissions and modifications in the translation of her work into Turkish as *The Turk's Ordeal with Fire* which was undertaken only in 1962: "Rather than challenging the Kemalist national myth as expounded in Nutuk through strategies employed in *the Turkish Ordeal*, such as the historical and intersubjective exploration of the self and other, *The Turk's Ordeal with Fire* paradoxically endorses the Kemalist national myth" (Adak, "National Myths" 524).

Edib's oeuvre differs from Hikmet's in its feminist and at time religious underpinnings, and as Adak argued in her monograph, carried a potential to confront particularly the Armenian genocide in its prewar period. In addition to referring to the "event" in her works, Edib even penned a letter to apologize for the atrocities committed against the Armenian population as a member of the parliament and as a conscientious human being. These moments of confrontation were trumped by the nationalism exacerbated during the WWI with allied occupation of the Ottoman Empire (Adak 37).[103]

With Hikmet and Adıvar, the Republican writer Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (1901-1962) plays an important role in critiquing the materialist modernity of the new Republican state in his novels and essays. As a professor of literature Tanpinar worked with Spitzer and late Auerbach in their exile at Istanbul University, and witnessed the eventual pogrom of Greek intellectuals from the university and from the Turkish state, which, at the same time, acted as a shelter for the Jewish intellectuals exiled from the German state. This seemingly contradictory practice of homogenizing the state while welcoming the expelled Jewish scholars was at the heart of Turkey's ambivalent

[103] Ibid.

modernization (westernization) project. Similarly, one can read the immense translation project upheld first by the Translation Bureau alongside this hosting praxis. This project undertook the translation of a great number (substantially European) World Classics into Turkish, whereby incorporating the Western literary tradition into the Turkish literary institution. Emphasis on reading this European literary heritage in Turkish (only) is particularly pertinent in engineering a new literary public who is literate notably in the new Latinized ortography.

Hence, if one is to redefine dissidence in the early Republican Turkey, Edib's and Hikmet's timeline forges precisely the early republican-nationalist ideological archive with its contradictions and omissions in the discourses of a symptomatic resistance. Reading Edib and Hikmet side by side might as well alert us against the dominant nationalist discourse as it evolves throughout time. Similar to Edib's differences in writing to an English speaking audience in English in her later career with writing to the Turkish readers, it's not surprising to come across in Hikmet's literary chronology, the timeline of the most patriotic poetry collections the *Epic* of *Independence War* coinciding with his later exile in USSR.

Temporal and spatial movement thus become pivotal elements in a writer's oeuvre. This moves us along the discussion of writing in exile and as a nationalist writer. Writing in exile does enrich one's perspective in ways that would not be possible when writing inside the nation. Yet, assuming that writers outside the nation become more alert to heterogeneity and rights issues is too optimistic to begin with. True that they may become attentive to some aspects of the intersecting social, cultural and economic issues; however, that does not necessarily valorize their aesthetic and political standpoints. On the contrary, as it happened with Adıvar and Hikmet, writing to a "foreign" audience and in exile exacerbated their nationalistic emotions respectively. There emerges degrees of difference that prioritize some socio-economic and ideological aspects of the nation over the others in the writings taking place in and outside the nation. Writing outside

the nation, I consider, provides the writer with various tools: lenses to simultaneously and selectively zoom in and out, to magnify and minimize, and filters to crystallize and mist her vision if I may use a photographic terminology. Reterritorialization, i.e. migration, thus, does not itself symptomatically elevate this writer. Migration bears too many conditions; privileges and inequalities (based on class, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, etc.) to assign a writer one (and only) position to stand in regards to the nation. Regardless of spatial and temporal distance, a writer's work from empire to republic was translated, transliterated, and interpreted to not conflict with the ideology of the state. Co-optation was fully articulated by the state with aid of the state writers against which literary-political resistance began to emerge in the second half of the republican twentieth century.

CHAPTER 3

ILLEGIBLE LETTERS OF DISOBEDIENCE: POWER-AESTHETICS IN ECE AYHAN'S POETICS

When state and its poets sleep like two intertwined spoons
A ship was sent from Karpiç[104] *to the pitch-black sea where he came*

Ece Ayhan, "The Sultan with Lilies"

3.1. Obedient Disobedience: From Hikmet's Ambivalent Nationalism to Ece's Civil Disobedience

The poetry of Ece Ayhan (1931-2002) underscores an ethical historicism which is partial to the oppressed, and opposed to the censor-state unraveling in the society and the individual. This poetic text, as such, emerges out of a degrees of contrariness and constitutiveness between the poet, the authoritarian state and the state-society alike. Ayhan writes back against such "constitutive" censorship by mobilizing the strategy of what I call "illegible" writing as self-censorship which subverts the official nativist discourse. Ayhan's poetry challenges Nazım Hikmet's (1902-1963) "humanist" poetry informing its ambivalent romantic nationalism. In doing so, the poems epitomize an iterative tension which resists against the state and society's implicit censorship of erasing unofficial histories of the marginalized who, echoing Spivak, have been rendered voiceless. This poetic space thus becomes a battleground for confrontation, conflict with and disclosure of an unethical past hovering over the present and the future. This chapter argues

[104] *Karpiç* is the name of a famous restaurant in Ankara where the Byelorussian owner Juri Georges Karpovitch escaped from the Bolshevik Revolution and settled. After Atatürk's alleged visit calling him *Karpiç*, it came to be known as such. The restaurant was a meeting point for bureaucrats as well as writers. Ayhan possibly refers to such illiberal familiarity between poets and the state in the poem.

that against such structural violation, Ayhan's ethically informed self-censorship curtails precisely the censoring powers that be, and reminds us once again the forgotten ethical principles implicit in *edeb*.

Writer is not considered a writer before publishing a body of writing. The act of writing itself without a witness, then, is not as relevant to the stage of writing as it is to the art of writing. Writing also becomes art as long as it has a readership. If a piece of writing has never been read at least by one other, in which case its presence will not be known to the outside, one cannot talk either about the writing as art or the writer. Public, then, becomes the first criterion to begin a discussion of art; if so, what shall one make of the still resonating mottos of "art for art's sake" versus "art for public's sake" when existence of art (writing) stipulates a public? If what is implied by the rigorous statement is not the individual artist's intentions to conduct their art for the sake of art only, and not for the sake of another object such as society, for instance, then both slogans render themselves paradoxical. And although an artist's (writer's) intentions behind their artistic agenda should be the least of our concerns, long standing impact of these statements still weighs heavily on the discussions of writing and writer in the Turkish literary tradition.

The Young Turk and later early republic's approach to literary public and literature in particular was practical, which prioritized efficiency for mass literacy as a continuation of the empire. Pursuing the accelerated formation of a collective national body, the republic regarded literature as a pedagogical tool for its modernizing social engineering project. This spirit, needles to emphasize perhaps, favored the "art for public's sake" motto in its urgency to elevate its imagined public to the level of other nationally *civilized* entities. Soviet example's utility was experienced precisely on the ferocious reinvention of social realism. While fear from Communism surrounded the new Republic, impact of Boshevik Revolution was felt in Republican writers' employing social realism as the most suitable movement. Yet, the Republican social realism

differed in its being romanticized with emphasis on nationalism and populism (Oktay 31-32).[105] Destruction of the first world war that came with population exhanges had economically haunted the new system and emphasizing progressive ideals out of a seemingly egalitarian urge with equal attention to harsh social and economic conditions provided a sense of unity in the society as well as legitimacy in the government. The later village novel predominantly produced by the village institute graduates also followed this idea of presumably depicting society as it is. The pedagogical mission to be not only realistic but also romantically idealistic, which meant *milli* (national) in that context, helped overshadow the aesthetic dimension in all genres of writing.

Not only the centralized state but also the largest minority Kurdish intellectuals believed that for the development of the Kurds, literature was essential. In the Kurdish magazine *Roji Kurd* dated 1913, Abdulaziz Baban writes in an article "A Request from our Literature and Writers" that Kurdish literature had confused the idea of "art is for art's sake" with triviality by writing praises to governors and concubines (107-108).[106] Baban urges Kurdish writers, by addressing them directly, to work for the benefit of their people, to educate them, and to raise them to the level of other civilized nations such as Germany, Italy, and Japan (108). Baban goes as far as to claim that the "last battles were won thanks to writers and poets" (108). Similarity of the discourse of such intellectuals as Baban with that of Young Turks is striking in the sense that during this period of accelerated imperial decline, major and minor segments of the late Ottoman society converged in the power of literature to uplift their respective impoverished communities. Literature in Turkey perhaps has not reached to this level of instrumentality again since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. We might thus wonder whether this particular mission weighted on literature's, and hence writer's shoulder entitled the latter to situate herself above the society as its

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[105] See Ahmet Oktay, *Toplumcu Gerçekçiliğin Kaynakları*.
[106] *Roji Kurd* 1.3 (1913).

teacher. In a recent study on poetry in middle school textbooks from 1929 to 2005, Hilmi Tezgör shows that the most showcased poets are a cluster of poets called "Syllabists" [*Hececiler*] who published during the first period of the Republic under the influence of the then current of *milli edebiyat.* Other modernists, avant-gardists and contemporary poets as Tezgör writes are not included in the textbooks until today (2005) (179).[107] For almost eighty years, the poetry curriculum has not changed. Even this reality provides us with information about the pedagogical influence of the early Republican period until very recently.

Even Nazım Hikmet's "revolutionary" poetry in the sense that it did away with the poetic conventions of the previous era at the turn of the century carries this duality specific to the early republican period. Although his poetry criticizes the poor conditions of his folk, and blames the then recent capitalistic endeavors of the government, this poetry undertakes it by standing on a higher ground than *them* (these poor and ignorant people) situating the poetic persona in a godly position who has the ethnic and class privilege, and does not necessarily identify with *them*. This hierarchical positioning oneself renders the poet acting as the instructor of the state. The poet situated as the enlightened unlike the rest of the society as Ece Ayhan (Çağlar) (1931-2002) comments, "did not in principle have any problem with the republic, whose basket was knit loosely …Hikmet's imprisonment in the end was nothing but a conflict of holding the power between the Kemalists, and Hikmet cannot be thought outside the frame of the republic."[108] Ece was perhaps among the the few if not the only who dared to voice this collaborative aspect of Hikmet within the dominant Kemalist ideology among the intellectuals and artists.[109] Ece implies in his poetry

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[107] Hilmi Tezgör, *"Bin Atlı Akınlarda Çocuklar": Ortaokul Türkçe Ders Kitaplarında Şiir (1929-2005),* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2013).
[108] Ece Ayhan, *Şiirin Bir Altın Çağı*, (İstanbul: YKY, 1993) 55-56.
[109] Writer Peyami Safa had well documented long disputes with Hikmet about these similar issues. See Ertürk's *Grammatology* for a comprehensive discussion.

that Atatürk is Mustafa V (as the first Republican sultan!), hinting at the fact that monarchy only changed system of hands from empire to republic (Ayhan 2017, 204).[110]

It is not a secret that Hikmet wrote a personal letter to Atatürk requesting his release from prison, pledging allegiance to the republic, to the reforms and Kemalist ideology.[111] In a recent study, Erkan Irmak discusses nationalism, propaganda, and ideology in particular attention to Hikmet's two poetry collections *Kurtuluş Savaşı Destanı* (Epic of the Independence War) and *Memleketimden İnsan Manzaraları* (Human Landscapes from my Country). Investigating Hikmet's works with respect to their literary and political contexts, Irmak concurs with the assumption that Hikmet was coerced into writing the former, which narrates the Independence War from a Kemalist stative perspective, with the hope of being pardoned for the indictments against him.[112] Unofficial testimonies of the then witnesses on both sides, who were close to the government, and Hikmet, also attest to the factuality of this hypothesis. Both collections were published quite later in the mid 1960s though written in late 1930s due to the state ban on publishing Hikmet's works, which was removed in 1965. Another reason for assuming Hikmet's censoring his poetry, or better, co-opting official state history in writing *Epic* is the fact that Hikmet had preferred to publish *Epic* not as a separate book but within the latter collection *Human Landscapes*.[113] As Irmak also pinpoints, we can perhaps think that Hikmet thus was not quite pleased with *Epic* for having sacrificed the artistic freedom for personal freedom. The art in Hikmet's peculiar case was in fact made to serve the state-society much to the artist's dismay notwithstanding. Broader significance of this literary-historical moment appears once we become alert to the ways in which Hikmet as a poet has so far been awe-inspiringly co-opted by the

[110] The last Mustafa was the sultan Mustafa IV and the only famous Mustafa afterwards was Mustafa Kemal.
[111] Hikmet's alleged letter to Atatürk dated August 18, 1938 https://www.haberturk.com/kultur-sanat/haber/622967-iste-nazimin-ataturke-yazdigi-mektup
[112] Erkan Irmak. *Kayıp Destanın İzinde. Kuvayi Milliye ve Memleketimden İnsan Manzaraları'nda Milliyteçilik, Propaganda ve İdeoloji* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2011).
[113] Ibid.

nationalist groups including but not limited to politicians, writers, academics, and publishing houses, via their exclusive attention to *Epic* without investing much interest in any other poetry collection by Hikmet. Irmak makes a strong case arguing that obsession with Hikmet by different groups either to assimilate his political stance into nationalist politics (by the Kemalists for instance) or to undermine his influence making communist and atheist allegations (by the so called Islamists) throughout the decades in itself deserves particular investigation precisely because regardless of the ideological differences, both sides were solely involved in legitimizing their political stances through an unsolicited exploitation of Hikmet's politics and poetics.[114] Since we can never fully know what Hikmet's intentions were in writing *Epic*, and moreover, since I am not as interested in the artist's motivation as I am in pursuing the literary, social, and historical context, which shaped Hikmet's certain (perhaps inconsistent) alignments, and the ways in which such cooperation was further (ab)used particularly by literary circles, following Hikmet's oeuvre may inform us about transforming literary tensions in the following post-Republican era.

Even if we assume that such an apology letter to Ataturk did not exist, Hikmet's political and aesthetic oeuvre still gives clues about his ambivalent alignments, which are deeply informed by a republican pedagogical discourse. The poem "Dünyanın En Tuhaf Mahluku" [The Strangest Creature in the World] (1947) writes: "You are like a scorpion, my brother, / You are in a coward darkness like scorpion. / You are like a mussel, my brother/ Closed and relaxed like a mussel. / And you are terrifying like a crater. / Not one, not five, you are with hundred million, unfortunately. / You're like a sheep, my brother…/ And in this world, this torture is because of you. // I do not have the heart to say but you have most of the fault, my dear brother" (Hikmet 2002, 150)[115] One may call someone who is not a brother by blood a brother still out of sincerity as well as contempt.

[114] Ibid.
[115] Nazım Hikmet, *Yatar Bursa Kalesinde: Şiirler 4* (İstanbul YKY, 2002).

The brother or sister (the non-gendered *kardeş* in Turkish) here is literally not "dear" but a distant sibling who is looked down upon, and who can be likened to a scorpion or a sheep as if all but the poet knows everything, has political consciousness coupled with inherent goodness; therefore is free from blame unlike the reprimanded brother. Hikmet's overtly communist ideology was in fact compatible with the republic in its sort of heroic gesture when expressing his disappointment with the naïve and all the same unreliable nature of the people abused by that system. Situating people both as victims and perpetrators of the condition they find themselves in singularly burdens *the people* existing at a comfortable distance from the poet with responsibility, which makes overlooking one's own liability in contributing to the continuation of the allegedly abusive system possible. In doing so, the poet's imagination of his people corresponds to the republican imagination of "the West" as well as rearticulation of its internal religious and ethno-linguistic others. State discourse towards both agrees on the greater culpability of the other than of itself. When the artist articulates this stative discourse often latently unless they are state ideologues, it hinders formation of an autonomous literary public sphere including "civil poetry" (*sivil şiir*) in the words of the poet Ece Ayhan.

It would not be hyperbolic to claim that the first poet-critic to radically break free from the ambivalent entrapment of *arts for arts sake* versus *arts for society's sake* was Ece Ayhan. Perhaps, nothing can summarize Ece's ouevre's character more aptly than its iterative adjectival phrase *toplumsal köklersiz* (social without roots) as a subversion of the well-worn epitome of "social roots," which both the late empire but particularly the early Republic was occupied with investigating. Rereading Ece's poems and critical (life)writings, in fact, indicates that *toplumsal köklersiz* becomes a trope, which could help us get a better sense of his overall artistic and political stance perhaps a bit urgently regarded as an exception among others pertaining to the social and political climate of 1950s.

Ece is one of the few among the writers who embodied an opposition against authority in his writing as well as in his "civil" life. Ece's poetic oeuvre and political-life stance are interdependent as discerned from his poems, diaries, essays as well as from other writers' encounters with him. Ece referred to himself by his first and middle names, did not prefer to use his last name "Çağlar" presumably because he considered given surnames mandated by the state a form of dominance, against which he resisted as a denominator of his aesthetics-life-politics.[116] Ece's unrelentingly critical stance against authority unfolds in multiple ways in his writings. The essays and diaries openly target individuals and institutions of oppression including the literary groups (*eküri*), which have internalized stative manipulations of power for their various interests.[117] Ece is civil in the state's as well as in the society's eyes also as a homosexual alluding to homosociability in his poetry. Rejecting the official control on sexuality, Ece becomes the first unorthodox (heretic) writer to deeply influence many (male[118]) writers and poets to come among whom Bilge Karasu, Sami Baydar, Murathan Mungan, and Küçük İskender are the most well known. The republic (*cumhuriyet*) as a synecdoche does not escape from Ece's raging attention, either. Unlike his contemporaries, who did not (or could not) reprehend the wrongdoings of the republic, Ece did not romanticize what he saw as another illiberal system of governance after the demise of the empire. In this sense, Ece's criticism is targeted towards the power holding cluster of the elite, which the republic has inherited from the empire and succesively sustained. The acting personas had transferred from the imperial aristocracy to the Young Turks and later to the

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[116] Etymologically Mongolian, "Ece" means ruler, queen, and is used colloquially to mean elder relatives such as older brother/sister, father, uncle, etc. In one of the essays, Ece prioritizes the meaning of "older brother", and then recounts the second murder of the Turkish Alevi sufi poet Pir Sultan Abdal whose sister lamented his execution by calling him "Ece." Referring to the Sivas massacre in 1993 where a group of fanatical mobs encouraged by the police and the army burnt down the hotel where Alevi writers and poets were staying for a festival, Ece recounts that Abdal was executed in Sivas in 1993 again, and continues: "In history important poets were executed twice" (*Sivil* 33).

[117] For this reason, Ece could not get along with many of his contemporaries in the literary scene.

[118] While male homosexuality has been well known at least within the literary *eküri*, female homosexuality has not been a subject to write or talk about within the same community. Literary circle in Turkey to date is overwhelmingly dominated by men regardless of sexuality.

republican party circle. We can thus say that Ece's intellectual stance against a remerging elite's holding on to power was exceptional during as early as in mid 1950s when a partizan hegemony over the founding party appeared on the electoral level, which only differed in its disrupting the republican party's hitherto economic etatism. Seemingly a radical move, transition from a minoritarian anti-democratic system to a majoritarian electoral democracy in fact was not a systemic change. This time, another group of rural elites who were largely involved in business than in public service (doctor, lawyer, teacher, etc.) occupying the previous generation grasped the power (Belge 2016, 61).[119]

Ece's education in public administration and short burocratic life as a district governor have repercussions in his unequivocal "civil" poetry or poetry of disobediance, resulting from an unrelenting attitude towards what he considers a *black* official oppressive history.[120] Dialectical thinking is prevalent in Ece's poetry where he poetically conflates and approximates authoritarian praxes in the empire and in the republic whereby delineating the foundational regressive and exclusivist continuities in both systems of states. The poetic space becomes a battleground for confrontation: a conflict with and a disclosure of an unjust past embedded in the present and the future. The poetic text, as such, emerges out of a degrees of contrariness and constitutiveness between the poet and the authoritarian state. In the poem "Phoenix" [*Anka*] in the collection *Çok Eski Adıyladır* [*It is with Its Very Old Name*] (1982), Ece retells a historical narrative to delineate the relationship between the state and its poet during what is known as *Bâb-ı Âlî Baskını* (Raid on the Sublime Port) in 1913, which was in fact a coup enacted by the Committee of Union and Progress: "1. One day an anonymous essay is published in Babıali. There appears a phoenix gaze

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[119] Murat Belge, *Step ve Bozkır: Rusça ve Türkçe Edebiyatta Doğu-Batı Sorunu ve Kültür* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2016).
[120] Born in southwestern Turkey, Ece studied political science and public administration at Ankara University and worked as a district governor in different rural towns for a few years until 1966 when he finally resigned and moved to Istanbul to fully dedicate himself to art and poetry, in particular.

from Çamlıca over the Bosphorus. / 2. A rain starts at the Pink Mansion[121], and the government is on its feet. Who might have written it? / 3. They learn; and everyone sits back on their state chairs heaving a sigh of relief. / 4. "*Oh, was it our poet Yahya? The one on the ground*" Talât Paşa[122] had apparently said (Ayhan *Çok Eski*, 207).[123] Here Ece's target is the poet Yahya Kemal Beyatlı (1884-1958) who had nationalistic alignments, returning from Paris to İstanbul after the Babıali coup. It is not a coincidence that the poem is entitled phoenix; once the CUP finds out about the identity of the writer who happens to be one of them, they rejuvenate from their own ashes. *The state poet* [*devlet şairi*] in Ece's words as the tradition went became a state bureaucrat in the following years up until his death.

Semantic alienation as a form of violence also pits itself against authoritarian violence in this poetry, speaking a not at once discernible truth to power. Ece debunks all the totalizing force that puts alternative historical moments and ways of being in a bag of clichés. And the zenith of this force is embodied in the monarchic imperial-state of the Ottoman Empire and in the republican nation-state of Turkey respectively. The iterative tension in Ece's poetry generates from an ethical historicism which is ceaselessly partial to the oppressed and against the oppressor regardless of its worn out entitlements. This tension has both implicitly and explicitly been transmitted into the works of later contemporary writers, who manipulated that gesture creating their own power aesthetics. The prologue of Murat Uyurkulak's *Har* (2006) for instance is a direct reference to Ece Ayhan, and quotes his poem "Open Atlas" whose original title was "Kurdish Flowers": "An atlas sold over the counter only in the Middle East / Who says that the under-aged cannot read." The novel centers around the problem of interpretation in the same language challenging its alleged control by the state.

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[121] Headquarters of the Committee of Union and Progress.
[122] Among the three head commanders (three Pashas) of CUP.
[123] Ece Ayhan, *Bütün Yort Savul'lar! (1954-1997): Toplu Şiirler* (İstanbul: YKY, 2017).

Although Ece's essays help illuminate his ethical philosophy and the ways in which his poetic oeuvre unravels, only a thorough intertextually comparative reading of his poetry would unlock his idiosyncratic aesthetics and politics. The prose-poem "An Eyeless Cat Black"[124] [*Bakışsız Bir Kedi Kara*] by Ece Ayhan is a rigorous example to interrupt this dichotomized discussion: There comes an absent-minded acrobat from the see of late hours. Turns off the lamp; lies down by my weeping side. It is for Danyal Yalvaç.[125] There is a blind woman downstairs. My relative. She talks in her sleep in a language I do not know. With a heavy butterfly on her breast: broken drawers inside. A sorrow aunt drinks in the attic…An Eyeless Cat Black crosses the street…" (2017, 75).

What immediately emerges is a striking juxtaposition of images unlikely to be incontestably collocated neither in the material nor the intellectual realm. If we take the first line, a tightrope walker is expected to have a superior sense of balance and focus intolerant of any manifestation of the contrary. Lost in thought or dream, Ece's is an imperfect acrobat coming from "the sea of late hours"; that is, the nocturnal territory of sleep. The absentminded tightrope walker brings darkness before lying down next to the first person poetic persona's side where he weeps, and ushers him into the sea of dreams. Is he hoping that the Jewish prophet Danyal Yalvaç interpret his dream?

Siding with a broken persona, the imperfect acrobat personifies Ece, a unique dissent in the Turkish literary history as a result of writing *as if* a minority, whereby exemplifying an early mode of intersectional resistance against all sorts of oppression. Minor in Turkish literature does

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[124] See an alternative translation and homoerotic interpretation of this poem by the Turkish-English poetry translator Murat Nemet-Nejat's *A Blind Cat Black and Orthodoxies* (Sun & Moon Press, 1997).

[125] From the dictionary of Ece Ayhan by Ender Erenel, we learn that it was a Jewish prophet who was allegedly famous for interpreting dreams: "Milâttan 700 yıl önce yaşadığı söylenen bir İsrail peygamberidir. Rüya yorumlarıyla ün yapmıştır. Remil (Bakışsız Bir Kedi Kara'da, bu sözcük de kullanılmış) denilen falı ve rüya yorumlamasını onun bulduğu söylenir" https://korsanarsiv.wordpress.com/2006/03/25/ece-ayhan-sozlugu-ender-erenel/

not only include writings of etno-linguistic minorities, it refers more to a mode of writing beginning in 1940s with the poetic movement called "Strange" (*Garip*) in the aftermath of the grand narratives about the state and nation (including Hikmet's "grand" poetry), following in the steps of the folk poetry tradition, which differentiated itself from the high palace poetry (*Divan şiiri*). Up until Ece, hovewer, no poetry had explored the uncharted territory of blackness, sadness, and foreignness embedded in the connotations of living as and being an "unorthodox." Ece's poetry not only thematizes *minor* indicators of minority histories, but also alienates the official Turkish language as if it is a foreign language, and fashions a new *civil* language unintelligible to the registers of officiality. Ece's poetry manifests that official discourse fails to appropriate the poetic language, which is both Turkish and not at the same time despite the language's *legible*, Latinized signs. Native endeavor to read Ece's (not only but also) Turkish poetry renders a hitherto legible language illegible. Perusing Ece's Turkish, one might say, resembles a failed attempt to *read* in the Ottoman Turkish by solely depending on a transliteration proficiency in the Perso-Arabic script.[126]

To "read" (*oku-*) itself is a heteronym with multiple meanings in Turkish including to read a written word (the script), to sing, to interpret, to pray, and to study. The meanings are all intertwined generating from an older Turkish root (*okı-*) referring to "to call" and "to read aloud". This *reading* practice with a preexisting oral component amalgamated with the prevalent Islamic orality. Since the first commendment brought to prophet Mohammed is also read! (*iqra*!), the Turkish verb undertook other connonations after wedding to Arabic (and Persian).[127] To read in the Islamic Arabic context and in the oral Turkish both alludes to "to recite" rather than read from a text, which finds resonance in the Turkish Islamic reading practices prioritizing oral recitation

[126] Relaunching the Ottoman-Turkish language classes, the neo-liberal and neo-Ottomanist government overlooks this particular problem.
[127] Persian verb "*khanden*" also means both to read and study.

of the Qur'an from memory over its silent rendition. *Mawlid* recitation, for instance, not only celebrating the birth of the prophet Mohammad (as is common within Islamic communities) but also after a funeral in (Ottoman) Turkey has been a continuous rendition of folk Islam.[128] Etimologically and historically embedded in orality, the act of reading hence was synonymous with poetry when its object was also written down.[129] Ece's poetry forcefully intervenes in this translational and hermeneutical liminality through problematizing official language and history.

3.2. A Dark History Black: Ece's Rewriting against the Early Republic in *Ms. Kınar's Seas* (1959)

Ece's literary oeuvre from *Kınar Hanım'ın Denizleri* (1959) ("*Ms. Kınar's Seas*") to *Yort Savul* (1977) (literally "*Get out of the Way*") demonstrates a minor subjectification with his extremely unconventional handling of Turkish bolstered by Ece's own recoding of the language rendering it illegible not for the implied reader, who is not proficient in *the* language, but precisely in its socio-historically charged codes. Ms. Kınar Hanım (1876-1950) who gave the poetry book her name was an Armenian theater actor, whom the poet commemorates nostalgically in the poem "Ms. Kınar's Seas". The poetry collection mobilizes unconventional words including slang, occupational terminology, reverted idiomatic expressions, non-Turkish characters (such as *Kınar*) and contextual references that demand at least a bit of research. Ece's poetry invites an intralingual translation not only on the semantic level but primarily on the (extra)contextual. This language is not a given language accessible in the state textbooks; on the contrary, it is unintelligible to the textbook writer and reader. Ece's language targets precisely the outside of this state audience: the

[128] The 15th century Ottoman poet Suleyman Celebi's *Mevlûd* tells the stories of the prophet Mohammad, and reading from this piece since then has been prevailing during a Mawlid.
[129] Kwame Anthony Appiah. "Boundaries of Culture". *PMLA* 132.3 (2007). 513-525. "The term *literature* once referred to anything written down and circulated; all books were literature. The birth of literature, in the modern sense of imaginative writing—an attainment that distinguished, you might say, the civilized from 'the barbarians'—was an act (513) of separation: its parturition was a partition" (513-4).

outsiders in Turkish history, which does not, however, necessarily mean that they can *read* it. In fact, every attempt to *read* Ece's poetry is doomed to be a failed heuristic decoding because its linguistic codes are alienated from the audience's familiar histories. It is thus, what may first seem paradoxical, both anachronistic and extraterritorial while deeply entrenched in history and space. That is, by the time the poetic images read as out of space and time, one begins to discern an alternative historicism albeit antithetical to the official one.

Skimming through the officially charged vocabulary in *Ms. Kınar's Seas* (1959), one can easily seize the negativity associated with the new republic. Referring also to Fikret Muallâ (1904-1967), a renown Parisian painter of Turkish descent with mental disability, Ece uses unconventional phrases and metaphors as follows: he "turkishized[130] his baroque consciousness"; "Oh, a closed turkish raki hit the market"; "Infilation [*enflasyonu*] of death to the republic"; "died in the republic as did the trees"; "became republic towards the masses that drink sparkling water"; "morning came to the turkish only speaking men street"; "not being able to sleep also in the republic", etc. As much as a literal translation hinders the lyricism, one can still unpack the satirical tone Ece employs here towards an official turkishness escorting the republic.

Death, blackness and the republic often accompany each other in the same verses if not lines as do in the first lines above belonging to the poem entitled "Death Songs of Children" where Fikret Muallâ is at the focus. Muallâ is known to have been hospitalized at Bakirkoy psychiatric hospital in Istanbul during one of his returns from Paris, and Ece alludes to this phase of Muallâ when he constantly code switched from French to Turkish, and "awoke, turkishized his baroque consciousness…woke up a turkishized fikret muallâ lunatic.[131]" Ece also refers to Muallâ in the

[130] "uyandırdı türkçeledi barok bilincini"

[131] "uyandı türkçelendi fikret mualla bir deli". "türkçelendi" is a neology by Ece, which literally translates to "became the Turkish language himself". Fikret Muallâ (1904-1967) was an avant-garde Turkish painter who mostly worked and lived in Paris. He suffered from mental and physical illnesses and hence was isolated from the Turkish art scene which he believed did not understand his work. He befriended the artists such as Nazim Hikmet, Abidin Dino, Semiha Berksoy and Pablo Picasso.

same poem as his "ex-father" who "drinks black beer in every declaration of the republic three / in the middle of metropoles fikret muallâ I / chase those without poetry my enemies must stand up" (Ayhan, *Kınar* 34). The poem was written in the 50s, and the republic's foundation (1923) was celebrated decennially, which means that Muallâ (and Ayhan) witnessed it the third time by then. Ece's subjectification of Muallâ as "I" in slang and his "ex-father" is by no means arbitrary since Ece must have felt empathy for Muallâ who was marginalized both by his family and by the artistic circles. Including himself, Ece writes an alternative history of the marginalized, the subaltern, or the unorthodox, whoever that does not fit in the society, for he tries to manifest that *the* dominant history is the story of the powerful.

What distinguishes Ece from his poetic ancestors and contemporaries was precisely his early disillusionment with official histories be it the empire or the republic, and hence his disregard for any political and social authority without excuse. His essays reveal his childhood encounter with hierarchy and power inequality perpetuated by a republican outfit which presented a populist face. Nothing had foundationally changed from monarchy to republic; there still were the rulers above, the (one) party and its followers, which were complicit in marginalizing its *other* others whom they reduce to "the enemies of the revolution". Any opposition to its autocratic practices was projected as counter-revolutionary regardless of the would be legitimate reasons; thus, the masses were persuaded into supporting the necessity of the one-party rule to sustain stability for a while which in fact last almost three decades.

The poem entitled "The Distant Aunt" (1958) ("Uzak Hala") in *Ms. Kınar's Seas* mentions Neyyire Hanım[132] aka Münire Eyüp Ertuğrul (1902-1943) one of the first two Muslim theater actresses in the Ottoman Empire. Ece prefers the psedonym Neyyire Hanım over her official name because she is known as such. The poetic persona calls out to her who allegedly lauds the first

[132] Neyyire Hanim is named in three poems in this collection one of which carries her name.

Ottoman operetta composer Dikran Cuhaciyan (1837-1898) of Armenian origin and his operetta "Leblebici Horhor." And asks "can't you still sleep even in the republic?" (Ayhan, *Kınar* 39-40). Neyyire Hanim was married to Muhsin Ertugrul (1892-1979) who was also a theater actor and composer. She could not have met Cuhaciyan, and could not have "thrown flowers to him" either but must have seen operettas of Leblebici Horhor also produced by Ertugrul. Anachronism gestures towards a conspiracy between the later actors. The question is rhetorical and implies that the "distant (paternal) aunt" Neyyire Hanim as the pioneer Muslim actress who lived during the transition from empire to republic is *still* restless. There is an uneasiness with the paternal aunt who is not close but distant. Did she think she might have found solace "in the republic" and is disappointed to not have done so? Her going out to the sea when "september is filling inside an arsenic bottle" hints at a suicidal tendency (39). What is the implied nature of this tense relationship between a Muslim actress, a former Armenian composer and an invisible Turkish theator director in the poem? Is the bond of confidentiality (on the intellectual genocide) haunted by a sudden unraveling of the past on a theater scene? What is lethal about the republic as iteratively suggested in the other poems in *Ms. Kınar's Seas*?

"In the republic" girding oneself with a critical eye against every oppressive mechanism meant exclusion from privileges, those that are handed down not necessarily through blood but by a social contract of Turkishness[133], which fastened the recently established ties of ethno-nationalism and xenophobia with patriarchy and homophobia in the empire. This critical inquiry is not impossible to achieve from today's perspective since time has sustained a distance between now and then to contest the early republican arguments. During the 50s, however, the republic was still young, and Ece persistently kept an account of the subaltern at a time when an exclusionary

[133] See Barış Ünlü, *Türklük Sözleşmesi* [*Contract of Turkishness*], (İstanbul: Dipnot, 2018).

nationalism was at its zenith, thereby penning the "civil" history of a bygone plurality.[134] Ece questioned the ways in which one relates to the everyday histories of the other. "The Distant Aunt" weighs on our mind as part of this civil (and stolen) history, which we remember to forget. Tekfor Nalyan wrote and Cuhaciyan composed "Leblebici Horhor"; the operetta lives but the creators are forgotten. After an incomplete attempt in 1916 based on the original operetta by the first Turkish director Fuat Uzkınay (1888-1956), Ertugrul made it into a movie with the same title in 1923 and 1934 reworking the scenario with the poet Nazım Hikmet. Ece encrypts these then unrecognized figures in the poems who played key roles in the artistic modernity in the Ottoman Empire. The republican official history throws them inside the "wells" where Kınar Hanım weeps, and the mermaid Eftalya "died like trees in the republic" (*Kınar* 29). Kınar Hanım is now alive not necessarily thanks to the new historical accounts on the Armenian actresses in the Ottoman Empire but most notably to such poetic revivification for history carried through the present. Among Nazım Hikmet's later poems, "Hope" (*Umut*) written in the same year as "Kınar" in 1958 elicits a still humanistically optimistic poetic voice when juxtaposing nuclear reactors and their deeds with mundane daily routines:

> ………………………….
>
> atomic reactors work, work
>
> when sun rises, made up months pass
>
> and a child dies when sun rises,
>
> a Japanese child in Hiroshima,
>
> twelve year old and numbered
>
> dies in nineteenth fifty-eight

[134] 1955 Istanbul pogrom, which Ece might have witnessed, homogenized (Turkified) the remaining marks of a heterogeneous empire.

neither from pertussis nor meningitis,

a child dies in Hiroshima

because she was born in nineteenth forty-five.

....

atomic reactors work, work

when sun rises, made up months pass

and when sun rises a chubby man

gets out of his bed, gets dressed absently:

“Whom shall rat on today?

How shall I win the manager’s favor?”

....

atomic reactors work, work

when sun rises, made up months pass

and when sun rises, I spent a night,

a long night sleepless again in pain

I thought about longing, death,

about you, the country,

You, the country and our world.

atomic reactors work, work

when sun rises, made up months pass

and when sun rises isn’t there any hope?

Hope, hope, hope,

Hope is in the human…(Hikmet 2002, 151-153).[135]

Hikmet wrote this poem between March 12 and 14 from Warsaw to Świder as he notes on the page in the original Turkish version. He was in exile, and devastating afteraffects of the WWII were still manifesting. It was a time when children from Hiroshima died not because of natural diseases but because of human made weapons. In the following lines, when nuclear reactors work, all a layperson can think is to move above someone else by informing against them. Then the poetic voice himself thinks about it all and his beloved and his country when nuclear reactors still work and sun rises. And the hope is still there and that it is in human, the same human who built the nuclear reactors in the first place. Evinced from these lines, forced exile profusely influenced Hikmet's poetics. Unlike with Ece, Hikmet does form positive associations with *the* country emboldened with longing. It therefore cannot escape being nostalgic either for when one longs for a thing, the thing positively attracts the person rather than the other way around. Love for the beloved and for the homeland thus rightfully preoccupy Hikmet more than their possible wrongdoings. This also explains why *evil* (as capitalism and imperialism) is also externally situated in his poetry. If it were not for that, the country is pure and innocent like its people who transformed under capitalism into corruption; therefore we should believe in humanity (and goodness in people) as our savior.

[135] Original Turkish reads as follows: "İşler atom reaktörleri işler, / Yapma aylar geçer güneş doğarken / Ve güneş doğarken ölür bir çocuk. / Bir japon çocuğu Hiroşima'da, / On iki yaşında ve numaralı, / Ve ne boğmacadan ne menenjitten. / Ölür bin dokuzyüz elli sekiz de, / Ölür bir japon çocuğu Hiroşima'da / Dokuzyüz kırkbeşte doğduğu için. /... / İşler atom reaktörleri işler, / Yapma aylar doğar güneş doğarken / Ve güneş doğarken tombul bir adam, / Yatağından çıkar dalgın giyinir. / 'Bugün kimi kime gammazlamalı, / Amirin gözüne nasıl girmeli'. /... / İşler atom reaktörleri işler, / Yapma aylar geçer güneş doğarken / Ve güneş doğarken ben bir geceyi, / Bir uzun geceyi gene uykusuz / Ağrılar içinde geçirmişimdir. / Düşünmüşümdür hasretliği ölümü. / Seni, memleketi düşünmüşümdür / Seni, memleketi ve dünyamızı. / İşler atom reaktörleri işler, / Yapma aylar geçer güneş doğarken / Ve güneş doğarken hiç umut yok mu? / Umut, umut, umut… / Umut insanda." Nazım Hikmet, *Yeni Şiirler (1951-1959)*, (İstanbul: YKY, 2002).

Ece reverts this optimism through his critical view of *the* country and its official history. The opening poem entitled "Phaeton" refers to an elder sister ("abla")[136] with a "violet gasser revolver"[137] taking a "suicide black phaeton while passing by Pera's death love streets."[138] This elder sister stops by a "flower shop without flowers" but "vincas on the window with oleander photos". We know that the sister is alone because the first lines reads as follows: "what played in his master's voice gramophones / now appears was the tenuous melancholy of her loneliness" (*Kinar* 5). The sister commits suicide because the first-person poetic voice exclaims in the final verses: "I haven't committed suicide for the last three nights, I cannot know / of a suicide black phaeton's ascending the sky with its horses / may it be because my sister picked the vincas" (5). The persona pretends to not grasp whereby disclosing that the horses reared because of the gunshot. Now, beyond its poetics, it tells of a forgotten name in an unofficial history.

Fikriye Hanim was an influential woman during the early republic who took a leading role with Ataturk in Turkey's independence war. She was orphanated from childhood, and as Atatürk's half niece from his father's side stayed in their family home for some time. As predictable, Fikriye Hanım was in love with Atatürk; his mother Munire Hanım, quite annoyed by her presence, convinces him to send this woman of poor health off to a clinic in Europe. During that time, Atatürk is married to Latife Hanım, and when Fikriye reads the news on the papers travels back to Çankaya Kiosk in Ankara to confront the couple. Atatürk's adjutant sends a quick telgraf about Fikriye's return to which Atatürk responds furiously, and orders her immediate return back to the clinic. Yet, Fikriye cannot be stopped, and arrives at the kioks. After an uncomfortable correspondence,

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[136] "Abla" is also used by men and women to address non-relative women in Turkish out of respect and/or sincerity. In the poem this secondary usage is explicit.

[137] Karadağ tabancası

[138] Pera meaning "across" in Greek is an old neighborhood in Istanbul-Europe populated mainly by Greeks until the 1955 pogrom.

Fikriye understands the grieve situation and allegedly shots herself in a phaeton on her way back from the kiosk with a gasser revolver she bought as a gift to Atatürk.[139]

The last part of the event, however, is dubious and (surprisingly) there is no official record about the whereabouts of Fikriye's death.[140] Yet, according to her nephew whom the journalist Can Dündar interviewed in early 2000s, Fikriye's brother investigates the event after her later death in the hospital and learns that she was in fact shot behind, and was heard by another patient crying "they shot me, the rascals!".[141] Mystery stories are charming, and Ece did not overlook Fikriye Hanım's death either especially because she was directly associated with Atatürk, the first president, and thus the official head of the state. During the time of the poem, however, no unofficial account was available but the newspaper report, which must have been summoned by the state officials (otherwise is unlikely regarding an event involving the state head).[142] Still, Ece preferred to make a gesture to Fikriye whom the early republican wiped off of its history (literally so since even her grave's whereabouts is still unknown). The official republican state history in Ece's conceptualization carries negative connotations, which he deconstructs through pitting the unofficial people and objects against official manifestations of the republic. Without naming Fikriye Hanım in the poem, Ece commemorates her forgotten legacy challenging the selective amnesia of the state concerning the forbidden aspects of *its* past. As Ece also acknowledges, "despite an allegedly glorious past probably because it [past] strangled its own children…it will not cease to follow the republics, subsequent historical categories, steps, and processes." Past casts its shadow on the present historically, and he further claims that "after its [past] death, art is the

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[139] The official news about her death as published in *Vatan Newspaper* on June 1, 1924 narrates that Fikriye Hanım was not allowed to enter the kiosk by the then aids/security guards, and when forced to leave, committed suicide with her pistol inside the phaeton. I follow the less official account in Dündar's documentary. See Dündar's related newspaper article (2010) on the mystery of the death of Fikriye Hanım http://www.milliyet.com.tr/-halam-intihar-etmedi-sirtindan-vurdular-/can-dundar/pazar/yazardetay/28.02.2010/1204802/default.htm

[140] Journalist Can Dündar's documentary about Fikriye Hanım underlines the missing information in her case.

[141] In the same article, Dündar mentions that he interviewed Fikriye's nephew in U.S who told him the unofficial story emphasizing that the remaining family was catechized after her aunt's death.

[142] During the one-party state rule, all publications were under strict surveillance and direct state control.

only creation that can live without social roots" (Ayhan, *Devlet ve Tabiat* 106-107).[143] The mentioned past is inevitably to be opposed because it is that of the powerful since the past as we know it cannot be written by any other but the one holding sway. The latter possesses the agents to construct its own (hi)story at the expense of others.

Ece's criticizes the imbalance of seizing power by the state in order to not provide peace, equality, and justice for its citizens but to enjoy the privileges of power to sustain itself for the sake of itself. In such a stative system–regardless of its alignments with (constitutional) monarchy, communism, capitalism, republicanism or other forms of governmental ideologies– rulers speak untruth for power pretending to favor the interests of the mass, disguising autocracy through propagating majoritarian electoral democracy, but in fact, only watch for *their own* profit, whereby guaranteeing continuity of an equivocally exploitative system (*their own* here ranges from their immediate relatives to their fellow partizan stake holders). In doing so, existing bureocracy heavily stratifies over time in a Kafkaesque manner with citizens appeased to have the chance to vote in a quasi democratic election in every four year. It is this deeper reading of the systems of the Republic and of its predecessor empire that generates dissappointment with Ece. Past was wrong, and its present has failed to escape from the former's shadow. Thus present is more to be blamed for not having learnt from its past, which justifies Ece's implicitly or explicitly commenting on the Republican present-past more than it does on the Ottoman. This present, according to the poet-thinker, begins with the foundation of the Republic rooted in the stative authocracy of the late nineteenth, early twentieth century monarchy, and continues until today; thus, a gloomy present-past looms on our current existence. Military intervention against the democratically elected governments during the Second Constitutional Era began before the Republic enacted first by its

[143] *Devlet ve Tabiat ya da Ortaikiden Ayrılan Çocuklar için Şiirler* (Istanbul: E Yayınları, 1973) 106.

ideologues.[144] What makes it then so hard for us to break free from the fetters of the oppressive aspects of this past? Is it because we, the heirs of a "sick" empire, have inherited its evils as the state? Ece's poetry and prose seem to question the causes of an inherited guilt, shame, and self-hate that only work to harvest flowers of further evil. In this sense, as also acknowledged by some other scholars, by way of poetic aesthetics, Ece forms a language ethics from early on up until late 1990s.

Poet, journalist and critic Ahmet Oktay affirms Ece's keen attention to the republican ideology in his first poems, wherein he makes direct references. According to Oktay, "the sphere in question is *authority*; his assessment of history is *negative*…His first goal seems to reinstate *marginalization* on a historical level" (Oktay *Şair ile* 123-4 emphasis original). [145] Ahmet Oktay's apt observation finds resonance in Ece's opponence to the ones holding power in the first poetry collection *Kınar,* iteratively reenacted in his later poems. Another literary critic Orhan Koçak's counterargument against Oktay's observation saying that reading counter Republican ideology in Ece's first poems is anachronical in that it attributes the characteristics of his later poems to his earlier ones (Koçak "Sayıklar" 268).[146] Yet, we can observe the poet's counter ideological stance even in his earliest *Kınar* when we closely read the poems, which verify the accuracy of Oktay's commentary. I concur that Koçak's argument stems more from an ideological disagreement than a literary critical one as he continues as follows: "at least a fraction of the so called the Republican

[144] 1908 Young Turk Revolution countered by 1909 coup; 1912 coup by the Freedom and Accord Party (a fraction of Young Turks) against the Committee of Union of Progress (CUP) followed by 1913 CUP countercoup.
[145] Ahmet Oktay, "Türk Şiirinde Tarih İlgisi," *Şair ile Kurtarıcı* (1992): 116-126. 'Ece Ayhan'ın ilk şiirlerindeki göndermeler doğrudan doğruya cumhuriyet ideolojisine yöneliktir. Toplumun kenarına itilmiş kişileri ve kesimleri gün ışığına çıkarmak için hem sınırda yaşamış insanları (Kantocular, azınlıklar) hem de unutulmuş adları gündeme getirir. Yaşamın günü deforme edilmiş bir dilin de aracılığıyla içinden parçalamayı öngörür Ece Ayhan. Başkent Ankara'ya karşı Başkent Sirkeci'yi çıkarır. Sorguladığı alan *iktidar*dır. En genel anlamında: Onun tarihi değerlendirişi *olumsuz*dur: Bu yanıyla da, farklı düzlemde olmakla birlikte sanki Tevfik Fikret'in yıllar sonra duyulan ekosudur…Şair, ekonomik/politik/ideolojik düzeylerde baskılanan bireyi, uzlaşmayı istemeyen bireyi öngörmektedir hep. *Marjinalliği* tarih boyutunda algılamak birincil amacı gözükmektedir (123-124).''
[146] Orhan Koçak, "Sayıklar Bir Dilde Bilmediğim: Ece Ayhan Şiirinde Dil ve Bağlam" in *Mor Külhani: Ece Ayhan Şiiri*, ed. Orhan Kahyaoğlu (İstanbul: neKitaplar, 2004) 257-281.

ideology argued to be criticized by Ece Ayhan wished the similar disengagement [from this ideology]. Ece Ayhan did not question this desire" (269). Koçak mentions within this fraction such literary and political figures as Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, Hasan Ali Yücel, and Cemil Meriç, whom according to Koçak had also disengaged with the Republican ideology especially after 1940s. First of all, it would be enough to say here perhaps that Ece radically distinguishes from these mentioned thinkers, and that his dissidence shares no critical point with that of those, who antagonized the Republic for very different reasons than Ece's (we have already seen Yücel in the previous chapter).[147] These writers were mutually upset about the degrading spiritual component in the culture, and their writing laments the disappearance of certain values, but they did not hold state ideology responsible for that albeit partially. As advocates of nationalism, they would not form such a causal link between the state and society; instead they looked for external reasons or at best blamed the society for their pitiful condition without closely investigating the reasons, and failing to detect the historical continuities and breaking points. Secondly, Ece's criticism against a system of thought and praxis should not be confused with that which is against individuals sparing one or two on the way. It would otherwise be a misnomer for Ece's anti-stative life-writing, and a cursory observation Ece's poetry does not easily lend itself to.

Official history that is the history of the powerful is negated by this poetry through forcefully engaging with the subaltern's undocumented history to use Spivak's terminology. Ece's negative judgment if not of history in general but of *documented* history in particular correlates with his invoking undocumented histories in order to subvert the authority in question during that historical moment.

[147] Despite their differences what brought these writers together is an inescapable belief in the *original Turkish soul*, which Ece could only problematize further.

In this sense, Ece reevaluates the concept of history as is relevant to that of the field, society, and of the culture, which oftentimes overlooks unwritten and hence undocumented realities. It is the hegemonic institutional history of the authority over marginalized stories which Ece gives voice to. For the poet, poetry's intervention in such loopholes of normative conceptualizations of history becomes inevitable. Particular histories' privilege can only be undone by decisive intercession of others' unarchived voices, documented by radical poetics. Against the privilege state of the documented history, the official archive, Ece's poetry gives agency to the unofficial existence of the subaltern, not because as Spivak also argued that they cannot speak, but because their voices are systematically silenced in order to not be heard. As Ece's poetry exemplifies, when official histories choose to perpetuate in keeping its outcasts unheard, poetry may well become their only reliable narrator.

3.3. Orphaned Verses: State's Outcast Students in *The State and Nature* (1973)

> I want to open the second front, to assert that there's meaning outside reason, to be anarchist in poetic rules, to delve into meaning of meaninglessness, to transcend language--as I cannot limit these realities with linguistic rules--to generate a new form as an inevitable result of a new essence, and a new essence as a result of a new form by liberating words from its matter. (Ayhan, *Bakır* 12)

responds Ece when asked about what he aims to achieve with his art. Form and essence then mutually construct each other by "liberating words from its matter", which might read as a key point in understanding Ece's poetics. To separate the word from its signified also corresponds to an ahistoricity, which emancipates the word to build its own history anew. In his "Discourse on the Novel," Bakhtin claims that in poetry, word is separated from its existing contexts unlike in prose, and attains a novel singular meaning, *the* meaning to which the poet attributes (2002, 279).

Yet, if as Bakhtin argues this decontextualization characterizes poetry, does Ece's poetic concern above become emblematic of Bakhtin's theory? And, if we take Ece's aspiration, Bakhtin's definition for poetry might not in the end has been as extensively practiced as prescribed. That is to say, Bakhtin might as well consider this very poetry as *the poetry as ideal*, and that selection frames the limits of our objectivity as well as points us a non-normative writing experience guided through trials and failures to attain this *ideal*.

Recontextualization matters to Ece as a poet, who consciously strives to transcend poetry only as language for a poetry as intersectional critique of history and art coalesced in form and content. Poetry has never been a mere rhetorical device as for Ece it is closer to having an Aristotelian artistic and philosophical utility beyond a conception of *belles letres.* Art has never been produced in a vacuum, isolated from society, its culture, and politics, and thus "liberating words from its matter" though seemingly paradoxical materializes in poetry almost as a leitmotif that helps distance such context from the letter for a moment in order to make a point precisely about that context now transformed by way of anachronism, obsolete wording, juxtaposition, and travesty.

The unsettling and unusually wordy title of the poetry collection *The State and the Nature or Poems for the Seventh Grader Drop outs* (1973) evinces Ece's interest in juxtaposing putatively unrelated concepts. From the title, one can only presume that the mentioned drop out students attend public schools and thus is the connection with the state. What is more striking is the purpose of the conjunctive "or" that works to equate the poems written for the state and the nature with the ones for drop outs. We can then imagine drop outs transitioning from nurture as state to nature. Anyone who has not witnessed or heard of dropping out from the seventh grade particularly, which corresponds to age thirteen in Turkey, will have a harder time to grasp the peculiarity of that period in a teen's life attending a public school in rural (and oftentimes impoverished) territory. It might

as well be what Ece had in mind when entitling the collection: to render the meaning transparent only to the seventh grade drop outs and to their allies. Although the intended audience might not have enough access to the poems included, these are nonetheless the poems written for the state's teenager outcasts. Ece conveys that he decided to write poems for the seventh grader drop outs after having read the news of a seventh grader, who committed suicide after dropping out of school, and after their parents' ad calling for their son's return home saying that they forgave him was posthumously published. The ad was published too late for the son to read.[148] This incident had apparently influenced Ece so much so that he penned a whole collection based on this initial newsstory.

Though the date of the collection's publication in 1973 coincides two years after the second coup d'état in Republican Turkey, which is also called a military memorandum imposed upon the then ruling center right party, most poems had been written before that. This coup attempt ended in government handover to officials appointed by the military. These politicians had mainly espaused nationalist-conservative ideologies in order to forcefully suppress the ever growing leftist student movements. Counter insurgency was also founded during the time to clamp down on the Kurdish movement. Social upheaval posed a threat to the government, which had seen leftism spreading, and in their eyes even more forebodingly, in solidarity with the Kurdish movement. As is the case with the history of Turkey as well as with the particular histories of such countries as Argentina, which witnessed a long junta rule alike, this intervention resulted in rejuvenating physical and psychological torture houses, mass incarceration, and forced disappearances primarily conducted by MIT (National Intelligence Agency) and its paramilitary organizations including the ultranationalist Grey Wolfs. Iterative "death" theme in *The State and the Nature*,

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[148] "bir şiiri bitirdikten sonra gazetede bir ilân okudum. orta ikiden belge alan bir çocuk intihar etmiş. ertesi günkü aynı gazetede ise gecikmiş bir ilân vardı: "eve dön oğlum, seni affettik!" iş işten geçmiştir" in *Dipyazılar* (istanbul: yapı kredi yayınları, 1996) 75.

then asks for a reading informed by the unique social, political, and historical circumstances of the late 1960s Turkey.

Although Ece did not personally experience persecution, he was a close witness to such brutal events happening all over the country. Working as a disctrict governor in small towns from 1963 to 1966, Ece felt the pulse of the escalating tension culminating in the upcoming instability at the turn of the decade. His political science education and governmental experience might have played a role in his keen attention to politics and historiography rather than history itself. As district governors usually build close relationship with state institutions in the districts they work, it is also highly probable that Ece had seen (or heard from the school teachers) the majority of students particulary at the seventh grade dropping out of school. Ece must have thought about the exclusive weight of the seventh grade that pushed these middle schoolers to give up. People having born and grown up during the mid 1960s and 70s in impoverished towns and villages to either an impoverished family or to a community with strong feudal practices provide plenty of examples of teenage drop outs, who voluntarily (or at times involuntarily) attended middle school. Primary education had been mandated between the ages seven to fourteen as part of the education law legislated in 1961. Although the first five years were mandatory to take place at primary schools, the law could not be fully enacted outside the regional boarding schools for the remaining three years (middle school) due to the dearth of teachers and infrastructure. Textbooks (published and distributed by the Educational Ministry) where available were the only resource for literacy in Turkish. Literariness in Turkish literature section of a textbook is oftentimes gauged by its romantically nationalist poetry and prose selection. Carefully selected “literary” texts in line with the official state ideology by such figures as Ziya Gökalp, Namık Kemal and Halide Edib still dominate elementary textbooks. Education, particularly among unrecognized minorities, has been used to spread nationalist literacy in Turkish. Rural areas were in large part still pauperized during

the 1960s and 1970s. Students without access to a boarding school had the option to take supplementary courses, if available, outside the primary school system. It was not until 1997 however that a new legislation mandating a continuous eight year education at schools came into effect.[149] This meant that before 1997, teenagers predominantly from rural Turkey, who were somehow able to continue middle school within the school system, could decide to leave their institution without penalty. These teenagers as we call them from an urban perspective, were not oftentimes considered teenagers in their households. They were mostly considered as workers contributing to the family economy in different ways, by taking care of the live stock, or the family farm. As much as it is hard for the post feudal part of the country to come to terms with teenagers working instead of going to school, that was (and still is) a collective survival method for the extended family, which did not have enough capitol to hire workers outside the family. When there is farm work waiting in such an agrarian society without any other livelihood, it would be perhaps naive to expect from the family head to be willing to send particularly the able (male) child to boardingschool, which is often located far away from their village, restricting travel sometimes even during school breaks.

There is also another ethno-linguistic dimension to the feudal condition, which makes continuing education complicated for particular ethnic groups. One of the most remote and impoverished areas are situated in Turkey's Kurdistan (next to mountaneous northeastern region), where children's first language is Kurdish. Since education in any language other than Turkish[150] has been unconstitutional, school children, who did not know a word of Turkish, were forced to learn Turkish quite often from a teacher who did not speak Kurdish, either.[151] Mutual

[149] *Milli Eğitim Dergisi* https://dhgm.meb.gov.tr/yayimlar/dergiler/Milli_Egitim_Dergisi/153-154/ari.htm
[150] Except the recognized minority languages such as Armenian and Greek, whose rights were secured under the treaty of Lousanne in 1923.
[151] Since education system is also centralized according to the constitution, teachers from non-Kurdish areas were appointed to Kurdish speaking areas for various reasons, assimilation purposes taking the lead. The documentary *İki*

incomprehensibility in the classroom (as is predictable) might have discouraged some of these students from continuing their education in the first place. If some persisted, no doubt, such an endeavour must have required great deal of sacrifice on the students' part (however not necessarily on the teachers').

Under these circumstances, without any parental support (probably countered by resistance even) and educational support to feel valued, to be regarded as a distinct individual, it in fact becomes hard not to question the reason these students would seek to continue going to school. One can then expect the prevalence of dropping out of school at the seventh grade just one year before finishing. Published in 1973, *The State and the Nature or Poems for the Seventh Grade Drop outs* deserves a reading situated within this particular social and historical contex, which otherwise will not provide any clue with its signature Ece Ayhan obscurity though not as much introverted as his previous two poetry collections *A Blind Cat Black* (1965) and *Heterodoxies* (1968) following *Kınar Hanım's Seas* (1959). The reason for the former's extravertedness lies in its extended use of dramatic monologue, which does not however render it necessarily less obscure semantically as has often been upheld by scholars. I will on the contrary argue that dramatic monologue works to disguise the recontextualized historicity of the poems.

The first poem "The Anonymous Student Memorial" exemplifies the ways in which this form of speech perhaps helps heighten the affect but does not easily let the poem open itself up. The poem still expects from the reader to undertake a great deal of excavation to unpack the hidden associations. To begin with the title, monuments are important to any state; they exhibit which values the state upholds highly. Looking only at the monuments of a country, one can approximate the level of democracy, justice and equality in that society. One can also observe the extent to

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Dil Bir Bavul poignantly depicts the brute reality of the mandatory monolingual education peculiarly for Kurdish speaking students in the classroom.

which the state has confronted with the dark corners of its past (as is common among the nation-states built following the WWI and afterwards). And monuments are always built for famous (and public) individuals and events either to celebrate or commemorate unlike in this poem's title where the mentioned student is apparently nameless and unknown to public. By removing the necessary association between publicity and commemoration, the poem takes away public figure privilege and hands it to an anonymous figure. In doing so, it puts into question social hierarchy, particularly power handed in to specific individuals by the state to propagate and sustain the latter's own ideology. A memorial need not be dedicated to an individual person; in fact, a good deal of states showcases memorials that also commemorate their past virtues and crimes. Specificity of this monument as student however lies in the overtly politicized history of monuments in the Turkish state. What immediately comes to mind when one utters the word monument is not as much relatable as perhaps uniform. Notable dominance of memorials for individuals from past to present over say memorials for collective memory might as well distinguish image for monuments in the Turkish society's mind from that of some societies, which at least partially confronted with their past (in a relatively realistic fashion).

Given the abundance of memorials for Seljuk and Ottoman sultans, and later maintained by those of Atatürk, we can better predict the intended meaning of an anonymous memorial for an *insignificant student body* whose anonymity is antithetical to the monument's defined purpose. That is not to say that a memorial necessarily commemorates the ones whose names are known, but even in the case where every person's name is unknown, the event for which these anonymous people are being remembered is well acknowledged by the state. In this case, however, neither the student nor the event is acknowledged. On the contrary, it is precisely the state that commits a crime for which this memorial is constructed. That student could well be one among many other students whom as we will see are subjugated and figuratively "murdered" by an oppressive state

whose power is taught in its textbooks, and is consistently emulated by teachers–who practice it on students–and through such discourse and performativity thus becomes more affective within a classroom setting. That should be the reason why Ece chose this setting to imply the extent of state pressure on the society.

The first stanza of "The Anonymous Student Memorial" reads as follows: "Look at here, in here, under this black marble a student is buried / If ever let to live one more break, he would be tested on nature / He was murdered in the class on the state" (Ayhan 1982, 13). As the first line makes explicit, the marble of the memorial is black, which stands for death, and as the third line explicates is associated with the state. The state is complicit in murdering the student, and the fact that the action takes place in a class implies penetration of state in a regular classroom. The state's classroom is not the place of education but of torture for all students but turns out to be even more deadly for some *others*. The student is predictably tested on the state, and fails; however, if he were tested on the nature, he would have passed and survived. We can only hypothesize because we are also assured that these students are doomed to fail in a class with the topic on the state. It is not hard to discern that Ece is one of them; he does not isolate himself from the marginalized personas in the poems unlike Hikmet for instance when we hear the poem entitled "Them" in the opening of the *Epic* another self exclusion: "They are as many as the ant on earth, fish in water, bird in air; / coward, brave, ignorant, supreme and many / and the ones who upset and generate are them / only their adventures take place in our epic..." (Hikmet, *Kuvayi Milliye* 11).[152] The poetic voice here is further away from these people abundant on earth whereas among the oppressed students Ece can be easily located. They are only altered and alienated by the state not by the poetic persona.

[152] Nazım Hikmet, *Kuvay-i Milliye: Şiirler 3*, (İstanbul: YKY, 2002).

The nature, which seemingly stands on their side, however, does not either appear to be completely incompetent with the state as we learn from the following stanza: “The common, wrong question of the state and the nature was this: / Where does Transoxiana (*Maveraünnnehir*) flow into? / The one and right response of a finger in the last row: / Into the heart of a pale folk’s children riot” (13). How is it possible that the student correctly answers a wrongly put question? In this case, there is apparently a right answer for a wrong question. First of all, no doubt that the question is obstensibly wrong since Transoxiana, that is *Maveraünnehir*, is not a river but the name of a region between Oxus and Syr Darya Rivers in Central Asia. Yet, as the name is originally Arabic, (meaning beyond the Oxus River), and only the last word *nehir* itself translates to river in Turkish (and the rest is meaninless), the teacher could well have taken the whole word as a misnomer for a river. Most students who were schooled in Turkey must in fact heard this wrong question in their geography class when the misnomer became more real than the reality itself.[153] To be sure, the landlocked territory *Maveraünnehir* cannot possibly flow into anywhere! If the state’s teachers were a little bit informed of geography and of their language’s history, they would not have used this misnomer. Ece seems to be playing with the fact that when the ones who do not know history, geography, and their language ask a question motivated by dearth of basic knowledge, the only truthful response becomes the one, which is seemingly further away from the literal truth, that is, it flows “into the heart of a pale folk’s children’s riot.” We come across atlas and maps often in Ece’s poetry. The two-line poem “They will flow into!” in later *Çok Eski Adıyladır* (1982) writes: “1. The furthest East. The teacher was going to talk about Anatolia. She hangs the map. / 2. The whole class is scared; lakes, rivers will flow into!” (Ayhan, 2017 195). Where are they going to flow into? As we know now most probably “into the heart of a pale folk’s children’s riot.” Even

[153] Having gone to school more than four decades after Ece Ayhan, I remember similar questions being asked in my classes.

the map of the East Anatolia evokes fear and perhaps also revolt in the students. Its geography is a rebellious zone so much so that even its waters will not stay in the map.

The student on the last raw in “The Anonymous Student Memorial” was able to grasp violence enacted upon them in state institutions; he was sitting behind the classroom because he was not so much into the class but into the brute reality of everyday violence of *the state as class*. Such violence could only put more wood under the burning souls of the poor students. A past junk dealer, the father of the dead student “ties a purple tatted scarf in order to settle this death, too.” The conjuction “too” makes explicit that another child was already lost in the family. Was that child also killed in a class on the state? The question lingers whether the previous death was related to the state as no clue is given except a semantically charged “too.” The stanza ends with the father’s words: “I had him believe that he had toys.” And the next lines voice the mother who is a late-night laundry woman. “Since the day, the late-night laundrier mother wearing a military cloak / and nursing a fawn, had it written down as such: / Oh, they returned my son’s labor to his hand” [154] (13). The mother puts a fawn in place of her baby son, and why would be the reason for her dressing in a soldier’s cloak? This line points at a possibility that the son has been murdered by a soldier.

The poor more directly encounter epistemic and physical state violence. First of all, they do not have the socio-economic privilege to seek alternate ways to educate their children. The poem discloses that the mother made the note written down, so she did not, or more possibly, could not write it herself. And when this economic disadvantage is coupled with their subjugated minority status, their precariousness becomes inevitable. They have less protection from the security forces whom can abuse their power more recklessly when confronted by subjugation.

[154] Ece tells in an interview that this line “Ah ki oğlumun emeğini eline verdiler” was uttered by the mother of a student leader Battal Mehetoğlu who was murdered by the police in the past. She was allegedly asked about how she felt, and this was her response (*Sivil Denemeler Kara*, 1998): 65.

Although there is no explicit indication of the student's ethnic or religious minority status, one can suggest from the mother's illiteracy that this can well be a family, whose first language is not Turkish, which they only learn at school (if they ever attend). The only minority group that is able to challenge the state are the Kurds since the population of the others were either reduced by deportations, or if not, they have been socially and politically assimilated (if not culturally) into the major society.[155] Within the majority of the Kurdish families in the countryside, mothers are less likely to attend school or have contact with non-Kurdish speakers; therefore they are less likely to have literacy in Turkish unlike the fathers, who, mainly because of work, need to learn the official state language even if they did not have formal education.

Though we can so much speculate about the student's ethnic identity, the end of the poem illuminates us more about the socio-economic background as well as the nature of death of the student. It closes with a poem written by his classmates addressed to the dead student: "His friends had knit this poem with oleanders: / Do not mind, 128! In the small public protocol boarding schools of suicide / There is a bigger child in every child's heart / The whole class will send you birds without envelopes at children's festivals." The classmates put together a poem with a poisonous flower that calls for an omen. The student was poisoned by the oppressive boarding school where he committed suicide. And the classmates' poem implies that this student is neither the first nor the last one to do so as the second and third lines pinpoint. In these public boarding schools governed by protocols only death can prevail since the degree of oppression and surveillance push students even to the brink of suicide. The students attending these schools overwhelmingly come from impoverished families, and they mature much earlier than their more privileged peers going through everyday hardships inflicted on them precisely by these state

[155] Here, I am referring more to such ethnic minorities as Laz population in the northeast and the Arabs in the south and southeast. The non-Muslim ethno-religious minorities like Greeks and Armenians are officially considered a minority in the constitution with rights to education in their own languages and schools as agreed in the Lausanne treaty of 1923.

institutions, the teachers, and the overall education system. The teachers are thus not to be solely blamed since they were also educated in the same system who had asked them the wrong questions alike.

The classmates try to console the dead student by telling him that they "will send birds without envelopes" so that finally after death he can be free from state violence. Between "enlightened" imprisonment and death, this student like some others chooses the latter option. This line inverts the common logic of the association of envelopes and birds, and disrupts the familiarity by inserting its own poetic logic with an attempt to alienate our wording and thus mentality into rethinking and creating something anew, in this case, a precision coming from deeper emphaty for people we have not met and in the end may never do. In this way, the poem also alludes to Attar's famous *The Conference of the Birds* (1177) in which thirty birds set on a journey to find Simurg (thirty birds) as their alleged sovereign only to realize in the end of the journey that they are Simurg. It is therefore not only that "the poet uses the abyss between conflicting terms to cause the reader to suspect his expression" as argued by the poet and critic Gülce Başer since the terms are not in "conflict" but more pertinently are in unaccustomed association, and what emerges from that perhaps is not so much an "abyss" as a surplus of expression through the negated word "without envelope" (*zarfsız*), which attempts to subvert the official association. Birds were only instrumental in carrying messages before the mailing system was invented; they were in a way subjugated by people to serve the latter's needs. By prioritizing birds in lieu of the message, the poem underscores the importance of freedom that do not exist at those state boarding schools. In the opening section, Ece commented that he wanted "to generate a new form as an inevitable result of a new essence, and a new essence as a result of a new form by liberating words from its matter" (Ayhan, *Bakır* 12). We can see this decontextualization taking place again by dismantling the historical connection between birds and envelopes. In addition to liberating "birds" as a signifier

from its context, the poem also draws attention to their ages old exploitation, and poetically liberates birds from such abuse. Although the student dies, keeping in mind that the act was most probably committed by a motivation to be finally freed from oppression, birds will be liberated as a gesture or a symbol for the liberation of all students in the future because as *The Conference of the Birds* reminds students in the end are birds.

The poem "Open Atlas" in the same collection *Yort Savul* (1982) more directly addresses the background of the targeted students; this is an atlas "sold over the counter only in the Middle East / Who says that under-aged cannot read" (29).[156] An atlas is defined as a bounded collection of maps which are usually in line with a state's official claims to its borders; therefore, it cannot be completely neutral in terms of its representational politics. An atlas taught in a state school system reflects the state's official borders and demographic information. On the other hand, the unofficial atlas in the poem harnesses an example of counter cartography that subverts the formal state version whereby critiquing the latter's relation to power-knowledge. The poem describes a scene in a middle school classroom where "plucked Kurdish flowers", —used as a metaphor for Kurdish kids as a minority in the classroom—read from an atlas in whose seas they are drown. The atlas is "open" because it displays the unofficial geography of the Kurdish population. And it symbolizes the world these students live in, which does not resemble the atlas in their geography class. The class is contrasted to the world bearing life lessons, and thus infiruates the teacher. As the noise of the donkey implies, teacher's discourse is an incomprehensible blubber for them. Kurdish children do not understand the Turkish speaking teacher particularly when they are in their first few years at school. And even after they master the official language in the following years, the topics covered mostly have no connection with their worlds as minorities in a system that do not recognize their language, culture, and geography. The poem implies that those middle

[156] Ece Ayhan, *Yort Savul* (İstanbul: Adam, 1982 [1977]).

schoolers *understand* the world more than their appointed teacher does because theirs has been tested through daily hardships, and not taught in the textbooks nor by teachers.

A tom thumb is absent—possibly dead because they need to attend a funeral again— and an empty class' sea sits in their place. The school metaphorically kills these Kurdish students by rendering them invisible because they do not belong there; their experiences find no reciprocity. The original title of this poem was "Kurdish Flowers," which was retitled as "Open Atlas" after the 1980 coup d'état when one could be imprisoned for uttering the word "Kurdish." No writer and writing were able to escape the thoroughly implemented state censorship during the time. Given titles draw immediate attention when skimming through a book and its contents, self-censorship enacted as a result of state censorship must have become inevitable. The relative obscurity of the title (for the state), however, did not diminish its poetic strength. On the contrary, we might say that delineating the title as such invites the reader to a closer engagement with the poem by forcing them to contemplate on the phrase "Open Atlas." In doing so, the reader is challenged to work through this image first, and then is introduced to "the plucked Kurdish flowers" in the poem whereby being coerced into forming the association between the two images, which, in fact, provides an easier access to the poem. In the end, the state as censor failed to curtail poetic and political resistance against ethnocentric fundamentalism for the Ece Ayhan readership.

In the poem "That Place" ("Orası") (1958) Nazım Hikmet greets a couple of ethnicities including Indonesian, Kurdish, Armenian, Turkish, Indian, American, and others: "...You sit in the throne on my heart next to one another equally /...Dear people of all races / and all countries / there is also the country of countries in this world. / It is neither Turkey nor Russia /... the first new man of my century is from there / Comrade Lenin is countryman of all my countries" (Hikmet 2002, 178-180). This implied country of communism claims an utmost important place in Hikmet's heart above all people who for him occupy an "equal" place. In the second decade of the twenty-first

century U.S., this might remind one of the countermovement of "All Lives Matter" against "Black Lives Matter" whose supporters were confused about equality and justice. This poem perhaps helps mark the difference between two literary-ethical stances one of which intentionally and vocally sides with the marginalized when the other asserts to be "equally" close to all undermining histories of subjugation.

In the poem "Gökyüzünde Bir Cenaze Töreni" ("A Funeral in the Sky") in *Devlet ve Tabiat* (1973), Ece rewrites the lyrics of a children's game[157] that reads, "I sell butter / I sell honey / I myself sell as my master is apparently dead…" to revivify a scene where a balooner whose balloons are "blood blue" flies into the sky with his son and mother watching from below. Not the balloons but the ballooner ascends, and the balloons are not blood red but "blood blue" as the sky is covered in blood as if it is a solid matter. The poetic voice I asks in the first line whether the ballooner will come across Hezarfen Efendi above, who did not fall from the sky. Mr. Hezarfen was a seventeenth century Ottoman scientist who experimented with flying, by building a simple glider with which he flew a distance of almost two miles. The then sultan Murat IV exiled Hezarfen Efendi finding his inventions menacing to the social order.[158] The ballooner is rendered analoguous to Hezarfen Efendi presumably as an outcast, and got murdered because "it is the season when birds are shot on Üsküdar pier area" (Ayhan, *Yort Savul* 34). The poem uses the extended metaphor of "bird(s)" to denote what appears to be the free spirited dissent.

The next italicized (original) lines read as follows:

………………………………

Next thing I know an unburiable funeral in the sky

And below, in front of a bundle of balloons watered

[157] Equivalent of "Duck, duck, goose" in North America
[158] In *Islam Ansiklopedisi* under "Hezarfen Ahmet Çelebi".

A tom thumb with bullet feet is broken but he won't cry

My dad, who masterfully delays death, got killed,

I sell

Freed birds on a broken off old woman's lap

My son got killed, I sell

on Üsküdar pier area. (34)[159]

Ece transfers the state of death in the children's game, to being killed in the poem, which is voiced by two personas: a child and an old woman who see the funeral of their father and son in the sky respectively. Why does the child has a bullet feet? Has he been shot on his feet? Is this another murder by unknown assailants in the republic? In the poem "Death Fugue" (*Todesfuge* in original German), Romanian-Jewish Paul Celan (1920-1970) voices the horror of the Holocaust during when he lost his parents. Writing in the language of the perpetrators, Celan fleshes out the experience of death "a master from Deutschland" where the victims drink the oxymoronic "black milk" day and night. The second stanza alludes to digging a grave in the sky for the two dead Margarate and Sulamith as follows: "…A man lives in the house he plays with his vipers he writes / he writes when it grows dark to Deutschland your golden hair Margareta / Your ashen hair Shulamith we shovel a grave in the air there you won't lie too cramped" (228).

When the lyrics of the children's game in Ece's poem are rearranged as to narrate murder whose victim has a funeral in the sky, here we also witness a preparation of a funeral in the air where the bodies will not lie on top of each other. Even after the murder of their family member, the son and the mother will talk mimicking the children's game lyric, which points to the fact that

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[159] My literal translation. Turkish original reads as, "Düşmemiş Hezarfen Efendi'yle karşılaşır mı acaba? / Bir bakmışım baloncusu uçmuş kan mavisi balonlar / Kuşların vurulduğu mevsim Üsküdar iskele alanında / Bir bakmışım gökyüzünde gömülmez bir cenaze töreni / Ve aşağıda, yıkanmış balonlar demetinin başında /Kurşun ayaklı bir parmak çocuk, kırılır ağlamaz /*Ölümü ustaca oyalayan babam öldürülmüş ben* satarım / Kopmuş bir kocakarının da eteklerinde azat kuşları /*Oğlum öldürülmüş ben satarım Üsküdar iskele alanında*"

even the right of mourning is being undermined let alone of seeking justice. Ece transfers the tension of the violent lyrics to an almost mythical scene where that violence is actualized but not realized. Just as children are unaware of the violence in the game lyrics, the son and the mother are not enough woke to violence by murder that their reciting the lyrics even in their own voice go unnoticed, flying into the air. In doing so, Ece internally translates the lyrics into a poem similarly construing the violence in Turkish whereas Özdamar literally translates Turkish sayings into German, exhibiting the violence imminent in Turkish as Yasemin Yıldız argues (149).

3.4. A Self-Tailoring Humpback[160] between Cultural Criticism and Disobedient Life-Writing in *Civil Essays Black* (1998)

"On these docile and obedient lands, no matter the circumstances, everyone can replace one another *for the sake of power* as long as they become the head even of the muddy water, of *the added value*" (Ayhan, *Sivil* 31, emphasis original).[161] In this quotation from the essay "Standing at Attention is the Basis of the State" in the collected book of essays *Civil Essays Black* (1998), Ece articulates his disbelief in democracy in the land of the people, who continuously seek to hold sway. The essay's title parodies the anonymous saying "Justice is the Basis of the State" often attributed to the second Muslim caliph Umar ibn Al-Khattab as well as Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic (depending on the interpreter's ideological alignments).[162] What renders it significant for Ece is the fact that this statement is inscribed on every wall behind where the judge stands in Turkey's courtrooms. Justice, then, is supposed to be the highest tenet in the eyes of the state whereas history proves the opposite. Existence of this reminder for the court whose presence hinges on the presence of justice perhaps should also make us question the reasons why judges

[160] From the poem with the same title "Kendi Kendinin Terzisi Bir Kambur"
[161] "Bu uslu ve uysal topraklarda, koşullar ne olursa olsun, herkes herkesin yerini alabilir 'iktidar uğruna.' Yeter ki, bulanık mulanık akan suyun, 'artı-değer'in başında bulunulsun." Ayhan, (*Sivil Denemeler Kara*, 2001[1998]) 31.
[162] There has not been a consensus among the historians about the actuality of this saying.

would need such a token that is supposed to be already immanent in a democratic society in the first place. Ece's intrusion precisely underscores that despite the visible claim to otherwise, it is, in fact, not justice, which constitutes the foundation of the state, but standing at attention as if waiting for a military order.

Ece also discloses in this quotation cynicism against all forms of power mobilized by all aspects of the society regardless of the mobilizing actor. No matter how historically situated Ece's words sound with a clear indication of "these lands," one can read it also as a universal complaint about the irresistable nature of power. Yet, we should also remember that it is always more tempting to some than others. What makes it more desirable to the extent that a given society as a whole is driven by the motivation to seize power within mundane, daily exchanges expanding to administrative roles. We can discern from the above quotation that Ece's criticism against hegemony is far from being limited to the state nor the nature; in fact, what we witness in Ece's mentioning "blonde state writers" in his prose that if the problem of power were to be that straightforward (i.e. the state holds sway against the people), there would not be much to be worried about. The society in the end would dismantle this oppressive state, and build its own democratic society based on civil liberties, on the equal rights of human beings and the nature. Ece's critical writing, however, echoeing the quotation above, offers a more negatively comlex hypothesis about the relationship between the state, society, and the writer that is based on the dialectics of power and being.

In what follows Ece observes the continuity of power mechanism from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic. He argues against what he considers as the "rotten" historians, suggesting instead that "the Jannisary guild was in fact never shut down. *Standing at attention* has only changed towns. The best of trade is now being conducted. In addition, the guilds have doubled. See, the bird called power is built on the added value: in order to share [i.e. to confiscate] is the basis of the

state!" (Ayhan, *Sivil* 35 emphasis original). The Ottoman Jannisary was not only the empire's military but also constituted its strongest guild. In this sense, it played a significant role comprising the Ottoman bourgeouis. What Ece claims (also in the line with his favorite sociologist Şerif Mardin) that dissolving the Jannisary corps during the reign of sultan Mahmud in 1826 did not in fact bring its end. Disbandment was not effective in structural transformation neither of the military nor of trade system much as traditional forms of slavery were abolished only to be replaced by capitalist-modern labor exploitation that still benefits the same (ethnically, religiously, and racially) advantageous class. After dissolving the Jannissary corps-guild, the Ottoman state continued controlling and taking share of the trade, preventing as well formation of an autonomous bourgeois class. State controlled bourgeois composed also sections of the military still shares power with the republican state, having to "stand at attention" in order to continue to do so. The state tradition of sharing power with the money holders and the military has persisted from empire to republic, which has prevented a democratic state formation since democratic attempts have been used by all political circles as a tool to gain even more power, and particularly to sustain the power of the state.

What distinguishes Ece from many of his contemporaries, however, is not only his opposition to state power implemented through its corporeal institutions. A large number of writers have suffered from the state malaise, and have criticized it for harnessing ultra-authoritarian and fascistic tactics since the foundation of the republic. Yet, Ece goes beyond burdening the state with the utmost crime; he sticks his critical thorns to the writers and poets who, except a few, were pleased with the status quo. Ece voices his criticism particularly against these writers of the status quo or more pertinently *state writers* who according to Ece comprise the majority of the Turkish literary circle that cannot be overlooked. In another essay "Erasers are also Erased when

Erasing"[163] (1995) Ece laments "a poet's forgetting their humanness" because according to Ece, forgetting someone's being a human and talking in that manner are overwhelmingly the merit of the writers "siding with the power or are not they intimately in '*devilish solidarity*' with the ones in power?" (Ayhan, *Sivil* 7). Ece's cynicism results from a critical understanding of Turkey's history where these writers calling for democracy today condoned or even at times approved anti-democratic state practices for the benefit of the society. They did not necessarily resist against the power mechanism but against those who held the power at a certain period of time. And this selective critique of power for Ece precisely echoes the state mentality. Such selective criticism only works to disguise how writers benefit from power as much as the ways in which power systematically and therefore invisibly operates.

Ece's belief in abuse of power today by the state and tomorrow by today's privileged oppressed by the state, who will eventually be incorporated in the state's history, drives him to side with the ones completely swept off of history. Those are the ones who were always invisible and will always be to historical narratives written by the winners among whom today's political losers will also take place:

> I am so civil to the extend that I am civil of the civils (*if they let me, even knowing that it is going to be subverted, I would say 'undisciplined' instead of civil*). In my personal life, I am at ease with prostitutes, "pathfinders," the vagrant, ones taking shelter at the city walls and parks, orphans, homeless, outcasts, seventh grader drop outs, solitary park watchmen, directors of single seat tramway museums, ones living in outhouses, gay bullies, tramps…in short, with lumpens, who are left outside the history. (Ayhan, *Sivil* 34, emphasis original)

[163] "Silgiler Silerken Silinirler de"

Poetry thus becomes the only alternative history against the history of the winners. In a book of collected essays on the language of the loser, Gürbilek asked as if prematurely echoing what Umberto Eco expressed in a 2015 Guardian interview[164] on literature about losers as *real* literature: “Now that she has lost the battle called history, imprisoned in pre-history; now that she has been defeated, deprived, silenced; then, from where is the subaltern getting her linguistic grandeur? Can the subaltern’s language really be monumental, sublime, and magnificent?” (2007, 85). Handing in the agency to the subaltern, Gürbilek points at a literature of the loser empowering a language doomed to be defeated: language of the loser/writer (ethnic and religios minority; oppressed; female; unorthodox) against the language of the winner/state (ethnic and religios majority; oppressor; male; orthodox). In order to resist not only the utmost powerful patriarchial state but also the lesser evil, that is, the status quoist society and the state acting individual, Ece’s life poetry could only speak with and for the outcast. Such a dialectic needs revisiting of the contemporary body of literature opening up alternative spaces against the dystopia of the state-society in radical literary-political ways.

[164] https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2015/nov/12/umberto-eco-real-literature-is-about-losers

CHAPTER 4

ANTI-STATE HETEROTOPIAS IN NOVELS BY MURAT UYURKULAK AND ORHAN PAMUK

> It wasn't the poverty or the helplessness that disturbed him; it was the thing he would see again and again during the days to come–in the empty windows of photography shops, in the frozen windows of the crowded teahouses where the city's unemployed passed the time playing cards, and in the city's empty snow-cowered squares. These sights spoke of a strange and powerful loneliness. It was as if he were in a place that the whole world had forgotten, as if it were snowing at the end of the world.
>
> Orhan Pamuk, *Snow*

Heterotopias provide fictional alternative to the worldly state through an extraterritorial and extraphenomenal mediator not only providing counter-sites to the corporeal setting, but also acting as hidden narrators in the novels *Glow*: *A Doomsday Novel* (2006) by Murat Uyurkulak and *Snow* (2002) by Orhan Pamuk. *Glow* and *Snow* demonstrate the continuity of violence instigated by the state resulting in anomy and aversion, but also in hope as the texts themselves turn into violence when resisting against it. This chapter argues that the novels present inferno, self-censorship, snow, and poetry as alternative heterotopias to the violent state by conflating themes of rage and hope, secularism, Islam, and the state oppression, genocide and its denial through the power of literary language.

Uyurkulak's *Glow* narrates the state as born out of dragon's indigestion during the judgement day; a semi apocalyptic, speculative narrative more about the construction of Turkishness than about the state oppression of the Kurdish people. Exploiting ambiguity as self-censorship against state censorship *Glow* weighs on the power of language to resist coercion. Pamuk's *Snow* (2002) focuses on the politics of representation and interpretation through framing

history writing as prophesy and speculation. Setting snow as a heterotopia for spatial and historical memory, the novel indirectly criticizes the secular state as superstitious and totalitarian as its antinomy the so-called radical Islamists, as well as European colonialism and failure of "multiculturalism" and one way "integration," which have created the former through humiliation, isolation, and inequality. The novel, therefore, is not a subjectively narrative representation of Turkey as has been argued by a considerable number of scholars, as much as it pens false European representations about Turkey and the overall *Muslim East* within and outside Europe.

In "Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias," Michel Foucault defines them as sorts of "counter-sites" against the real sites within the world:

> There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places — places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society — which are something like *counter-sites*, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously *represented, contested, and inverted*. Places of this kind are *outside* of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias. (Foucault 1986; 26, emphasis mine)

Both *Snow* and *Glow* epitomize linguistic, and historical resistances against the official state language and narrative by exploiting inferno, self-censorship, snow, and poetry as "counter-sites" and in the end rendering the unofficial literary language heterotopia against the official state language.

4.1. Hermeneutics of (Self-)Censorship in Uyurkulak's *Glow* (2006)

In her article "Walls of Silence: Translating the Armenian Genocide into Turkish and Self-Censorship," Nazan Maksudyan identifies translational censorship in the Turkish translations of the world history books particularly on the issue of the Armenian genocide.[165] Through a detailed bilingual comparison, Maksudyan suggests that these translations, which distorted and omitted the information on the massacres in the source language, perpetuate the collective silence on the Armenian genocide conforming to the official state narrative. Borrowing from Pierre Bourdieu, she contends that "structural censorship" that is "determined by unwritten rules" rather than imposed by an external entity such as state would help explain this translational censorship.[166]

I read Maksudyan's argument side by side with Judith Butler's response to the claim of incomplete nature of censoring a text, where she infers the reason that "the text in question takes on new life as part of the very discourse produced by the mechanism of censorship" (249). In order to make sense of this phenomenon, Butler suggests that we need to first understand censorship as a "productive form of power" (249). Without attributing a positive meaning to the adjective "productive", Butler conceptualizes censorship "also [as] formative of subjects and the legitimate boundaries of speech" (251-252).[167] We can thus consider Maksudyan's reading of translational silence as one form of self-censorship *produced* by this active censorship that is also structural.

During the process of producing an artwork, artists negotiate the form and content of their objects not completely independent from censorship as broadly conceived. I argue that censorship

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[165] Nazan Maksudyan, "Walls of Silence: Translating the Armenian Genocide into Turkish and Self-Censorship," *Critique* 37/4 (2009): 635-649.
[166] Ibid, 638.
[167] Judith Butler, "Ruled Out: Vocabularies of the Censor". *Censorship and Silencing: Practices of Cultural Regulation*, ed. Robert C Post. (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1998).

as a *productive* form of power is precisely a product of the *active censor* that is an artwork produced by an artist, who *intentionally* exploits the external power of censorship against itself.

As such the novels *Glow* (2006) by Murat Uyurkulak and *Snow* (2002) by Orhan Pamuk *actively* resist the state's coercions through their aesthetics and politics by employing illegibility, speculation, and circumlocution respectively, whereby also rendering implicit censorship "productive."

The novel *Glow* by the author Murat Uyurkulak simultaneously takes place in two fictional spheres: this world and the celestial one. In this so called world *Netamiye*, which "was born out of a dragon's indigestion" lives the protagonist named *Numune* (meaning sample) with his parents. *Numune*'s nameless brother died in the war with *Xırbos* (psedonymy for Kurds) while doing his military service. *Numune*'s parents consider him a loose, who unlike his brother, is neither a good student nor a patriot. *Numune* narrates his disillusionment with the state and its war propaganda in the first person. On the other celestial sphere "angels" work as messengers for *Netamiye*, but they cannot speak to the residents of the country, who do not see the actual reality, since these angels were banned from telling stories. When angels talk about humans on earth, they are surprised by the humans' immense capacity to twist truth to their end with the guidance of words, and by absolute contrast between their lives (reality) and believes (illusion) (*Har* 28). It is a story divided into chapters beginning with an elegy, and narrates the violent 1990s--our *Heart of Darkness*--with pricks and stones, and with humor where Armenian and Kurdish oppression play a central part. The fictive country of *Netamiye* is a banished, self-destructive monster land feeding on its own people. *Glow* exploits an amalgamation of science-fiction, speculative fiction, fantasy, and traditional *meddah* storytelling elements.

Illegibility including euphemisms comprises one of the main strategies the novel employs, which not only helps the text navigate state censorship, but also constitutes its aesthetics and

politics. For instance, the country of *Netamiye* does not have a meaning. Etymologically an Arabic word, *Nataana*, however, means "stench." The closest existing word in Turkish is *Netameli*, which translates as "sinister". People occupying *Netamiye* has also such foreboding names as *Thirteen*, *Thirty-five*, and *the Crooks,* which capitalize the country's misery. *Netamlar*, *Xırbolar,* and *Topikler* similarly, are coined by the author to name the different groups at odds in *Netamiye.* Here, the author juxtaposes linguistic aspects of different languages to create a euphemism. Kurdish *Xırbo* translates to *jerk*, and is inflected with the Turkish plural ending -lAr, and read as "*Xırbolar*" to denote a group. *Topik* is a traditional Armenian dish, which is also inflected with the Turkish plural ending read as "*Topikler.*" When *Glow* was published in 2006, ban on using the Kurdish letters x, q, w, î, ê, û had not yet been released. These letters as well as the parliamentary speeches conducted in Kurdish by the Kurdish MPs were recorded as illegible. *Glow*, hence, communicates in an unreadable language in the state's eyes not only due to its use of letters and words from such *unrecognized* languages, but also to its language operating on a metaphorical level, which subverts external state censorship as Butler projects, "If the censor is never fully separable from that which it seeks to censor, perhaps censorship is implicated in the material it seeks to censor in ways that produce paradoxical consequences. If censoring a text is always in some sense incomplete, it may be partly because the text in question takes on new life as part of the very discourse produced by the mechanism of censorship" (249). This type of structural censorship that is active in its workings unlike forced censorship is more relevant to Turkish literature which could not free from the fetters of the state censor, either.

In deciphering the relationship between hermeneutics and grammar, Fredrich Schleiermacher argues that:

> language is the manner in which thought is real. For there are no thoughts without speech. The speaking of the words relates solely to the presence of another person,

> and to this extent is contingent. But no one can think without words. Without words the thought is not yet completed and clear. Now as hermeneutics is supposed to lead to the understanding of the thought-content but the thought-content is only real via language, hermeneutics depends on grammar as knowledge of the language. (Schleiermacher 8)[168]

Glow plays with semantic ambiguity intensified by self-censorship by means of language, which complicates uniform interpretation, and unsettles our absolute believes when differentiating so called fact facts from alternative facts. The novel has sixteen sections (*bāb*s 'doors'), and begins from the section sixteen counting backwards, each opening with a fictional elegy. The third section before the last is written as a dramatic monologue in numbered verses with alliterations. Through a satiric mode, it denotes aphorisms as if summarizing the human condition. Yet, words constantly fail us without granting a common understanding. The verse number 23, for instance, reads [quote]: "See the black crowd inside you / The doomsday of the boiling crowd / One who starts up with anger doesn't always sit down with a loss / It's a country now, occupying her seat as the plural and murderer" [unquote] (*Glow* 228).[169] The last line mobilizes the ambiguity rising from the gender neutral third person pronoun and from the option to omit the adverb "as" in Turkish, resulting in an anonymous possessor and subject. This line may as well read, [quote] "It's a country now, the plural and murderer occupy her seat," [unquote] whereby completely transforming the agency in the sentence. In the first version, it is the country herself who is also the plural and

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[168] The complete passage is as follows: "...The speaking of the words relates solely to the presence of another person, and to this extent is contingent. But no one can think without words. Without words the thought is not yet completed and clear...If we now look at thought in the act of communication through language, which is precisely the mediation for the shared nature of thought, then this has no other tendency than to produce knowledge as something which is common to all. In this way the common relationship of grammar and hermeneutics to dialectic, as the science of the unity of knowledge, results.—Every utterance can, further, only be understood via the knowledge of the whole of the historical life to which it belongs, or via the history which is relevant or it. The science of history, though, is ethics" in Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, trans. Andrew Bowie (New York: Cambridge UP, 1988) 7-8.

[169] "İçindeki kara kalabalığı gör. / Kalabalığın kaynaştığı mahşer gününü. / Öfkeyle kalkan zararla oturmaz daima. / Bir ülkedir artık o, çoğul ve katil oturur koltuğunda."

murderer sitting on her seat, whereas in the second version, it is still a country but here some unidentified *others* who happen to be both the plural and murderer confiscate her seat. The first interpretation holds the state of *Netamiye* accountable for murdering its own people while the second version blames *Xırbolar* for invading *Netamiye*. Speaking the so called *same language*, hence, we may well interpret its signs altogether differently depending on our perspective. Obfuscating the so called intended meaning thus abets the writer to exploit multiple meanings, and to circumvent constitutional speech regulations on blaming the state with murder.

Criticisms against the Republican state policies are articulated through the narration of the angels. After the angels are educated in the country of Netamiye, and in its language, the narrator angel records the history of the country as follows:

> Eighty years ago when Netamiye turned from a grand empire to a Republic as small as a salt shaker, the new governors had attempted to start everything from scratch, and cut away their language which had reached its heyday through their interactions with other nations. Moreover, they apparently banned other languages spoken in the remaining lands, and hence rendered millions of people mute, on whose heads they put new hats. Fortunately, there was abundance of knobs in the new language from past, which made it easier for us to learn it. (*Har* 47)

Avoiding naming the mentioned locations, and rendering the story via the angel's speech, the novel circumvents censorship through also coming up with an innovatively narrative solution. As such, the last section (door) numbered *00* opens with the first two lines of the poem "Yokuş Yola" (*To the Hill Road*) by the poet Turgut Uyar. And the following lines were intentionally left blank with three dots, perhaps, to be hummed by the informed reader as follows: "if you take it as spring or so where you plucked the thorns / somewhere bleeds in kurdistan, muş-tatvan road." Still a taboo word, appearance of "Kurdistan" in the text, would have certainly resulted in censorship.

By leaving the rest of the poem as above to be completed by the reader, the novel chooses to keep reserved in order to be published. What is omitted are the unspeakable, invisible, contested. We should thus keep in mind the roaring silence the novel poses to be interpreted in unassimilative ways.

The angel who narrates the events happening in Netamiye belongs to the group assigned to the impoverished and war-torn East of the country. S/he records that their biggest fear was to come across their fellow angels assigned to the West of the country because they would start making fun of the former and their assigned zone. “They would boast about how prosperous, free, and fun their side is...Moreover, they would force us to tell Eastern tales. They’d listen to the tales we tell, and burst into laughter by ascribing the most heart-wrenching tales to the East’s unruly childishness...They would put that baleful point: We were losers...” (*Har* 50-51). The novel delineates denigrating the people of the East (implied Kurds) by the West (implied Turks) narrated through outsider status of the angels, the heterotopic zone that allows for critical stance. Foucault’s mirror metaphor might help explain the function of the above allegorical passage:

> From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed toward me, from the ground of this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am. The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there. (“Other” 46).[170]

[170] Michel Foucault, 1984.

In-betweenness of reality and fiction renders the mirror a heterotopia. The above narration of the angelic messengers imitates the function of the mirror, which is between fictive reality and actual reality. This narrative strategy makes possible to tell the belittling gaze of the West towards the East, which also extends beyond the borders of Turkey. *West of the world* can easily replace "West of the country" by both inserting ambiguity and circumventing antagonistic criticism. It also pushes the (to be) Anglophone reader[171] to read herself in these lines, to read her gaze towards a geographically, socially, or racially constructed East. This triple function justifies the novel's aesthetic (and political) strategy.

In an interview appeared in *The Hindu* in 2017, Homi Bhabha pointed at two types of resistance against censorship, first exemplified in Indian writers' returning their prestigious Sahitya Akademi awards in 2015 to raise their voice against the violation of freedom of expression in the country. And second type of resistance according to Bhabha takes precedence within the artworks themselves.[172] As Judith Butler also accentuates, self-censorship harnesses power as an implicitly stratified entity, and advises us to forcefully inquire the ways in which "social forms of censorship come to *appear* and to *operate* as constitutive and inalterable conditions of speech" (257).[173] Despite its goal to control artistic creation, artists may achieve in manipulating its power against itself. This reciprocal censoring practice then, as exemplified in *Glow* might help engender innovation in art when the same artists try to circumvent censorship by resorting to formal and contextual rearrangements. According to the late Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami, "the more a filmmaker comes under pressure due to the nature of their work, the more they are forced to come up with better solutions, and find new means of expression."[174] Such creativity however

[171] *Glow* appeared in German in 2013 as *Glut: Ein Roman der Apokalypse*, and there has not been a readership in English translation yet.
[172] http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/interview/a-populist-nationalism-is-now-alive/article19697534.ece
[173] Judith Butler, 1998.
[174] Interview with Kiarostami is available online https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qi5IPxuVtgg

cannot be achieved without the artwork's endless capacity to mobilize its *productive* power through the artist's conscious attempt to resist imposed censorship as violence.

On the second level of the novel, simultaneous with the other story, the story of angels in the solar system waiting to find a "chosen" one before the doomsday unfolds. These angels were also granted a land on the earth to check on human beings, and to elect and write a report on the ambassador nominees in the human planet with the order of their creator *Big A*. They, however, do not have the ability to use their language creatively to tell stories to the humans. They do not have the same time consciousness as the ones on the earth have since they are eternal unlike human beings. Yet the angels are aware of the absurdities committed by humans in the earth, and are amazed by the ability of human beings to change reality by subverting language, and lament their lack of linguistic communication, which would otherwise avail them to tell the reality on the earth to humans as they see it (*Glow* 28).

Humans, according to the narrator Angel, "are able to build countries that sacralize life in feverish sentences on a stack of bones, and freedom on chains colder than ice…because they were unaware of our real stories" (28). Humans are lost in their delusion to believe what is not at stake because they have been deceived by propagandistic discourse. Uyurkulak mobilizes this narrative strategy to alienate the reader to their immediate environment in order for them to look upon themselves from the outside to question their knowledge and self assurance. "It is not only our language," the narrator angel asserts "which has been fastened but we also have been fastened, almost glued to one another. We were many but one; alone but packed. And we did not have the right to complain about this damned uniformity, this evil destiny, which we had no clue why has been smeared on us" (28). The narrator angel complains about the unibodied selflessness enacted upon them by the celestial ruler Big A. From the beginning, the novel negates uniformity in all its repercussions as foreboding through the perspective of the angels. It is hard to miss the reference

to linguistic, religious, and stative ("*tek dil, tek din, tek devlet*") unity emphized by the Republican state as well as implicit reference to the founder Atatürk ("father of Turks") as Big A (*Büyük A*).

Notwithstanding the fantastic elements, the novel is too realistic to be categorized within the fantastic genre as also claimed by the author in an interview.[175] *Glow* can also be read as speculative fiction because of the probability (as well as improbability) of its events, and its quasi real end of the world setting between utopia and dystopia as Meltem Gürle argued: "Unlike the modernist utopias, his utopia refuses to envisage a movement towards a better future, but is marked with the ominous voice of doomsday, inviting destruction as well as salvation" (2007, 143). The outer world story works to deepen and expand our limited "human" perspective whether it is the first person or the omnipotent third person, problematizing the legitimacy of the sum of our ephemeral viewpoints. Defining speculative fiction, Marek Oziewicz states that

> Despite its perplexing heterogeneity, speculative fiction across the board shares two qualities. First, it interrogates normative notions about reality and challenges the materialist complacency that nothing exists beyond the phenomenal world... Speculative fiction may well be theorized as an imaginative necessity: a mode of critical inquiry that celebrates human creative power. Second, speculative fiction offers no pretense of being factual or accurate. This denial endows it with a potential for challenging consensus reality, besides making speculative fiction politically scrappy, cognitively empowering, and affectively stimulating. With all its borderless messiness, the field of speculative fiction can thus be considered the

[175] "I think my fiction is not fantastic; *Har* is quite 'real'. What is fantastic is Netamiye itself. What is a country if not fantasia where twelve-year olds got shot by thirteen bullets, and labelled as 'terrorists', the ones who resist war because of their conscience are rotten in prisons...? In *Har*, I might have tried to pull this strange fantasia to the level of 'reality.'" Since the newspaper *Özgür Gündem* where the original interview was published was shot down by the state, ironically perhaps for making terrorist propaganda, the interview has become available in such other websites: http://begenmeyenokumasin.com/kimse-kendi-kendine-yamulmaz/.

> unlimited cloud space for our multicultural world's non-mimetic traditions that help us share and reclaim forgotten or marginalized modes of engagement with reality. (22)

Glow's creative power as such lies in its maximizing the humane potential of extraterrestial creatures and setting pitted against the worldly humans, who are portrayed most of the time as ignorant, hypocrite, indecent, and cruel.

That the angels ridicule human acts yet cannot narrate it to them in a human language poses a question to the limits of communication, of fiction, and of literature ultimately. On the other hand, they see that a human language is also useless on the hand of human beings who live almost a farcical life with their dramas they enact upon themselves with their futile and yet absolute beliefs in countries, systems, governments, ideologies, etc. Since the context is Turkey, the war between *Netamlar* and *Xırbolar* was perpetuated by the state *Netamiye* which was "born out of a great dragon's indigeston" devastating the lives on both sides out of futile reasons (*Glow* 25).

Glow underlines the impossibility of communication at the end of the day regardless of the linguistic ability. Human beings and angels interpret the signs differently, hence, the suggestion is that linguistic competence fails to achieve comprehensibility, which creates semantic violence. In *Human Acts* (2016) by Han Kang, the first narrator looking for his friend's body among the accumulated corpses, which were hard to identify as a result of their mutilation, murmurs to the officer working there without making sense of singing the national anthem and covering the deceaseds' coffins with the flag "as though it was not the nation itself that murdered them" (Kang 18). The officer cannot comprehend why the nation is being blamed for the acts of the generals whose orders "the ordinary soldiers" simply followed. The narrator is befalled by the answer as it appears "to have answered a completely different question than his" (18). This confusion between the speakers of a same language emanates from a hermeneutical dilemma.

As much as this narrator falls short of understanding the paradox in human actions, the first person human narrator *Numune* of *Glow* is also unable to understand his parents' unquestioned faith in a leader, an ideology, a country, feeding on the war between the two people of the same land, the war, which also caused the death of his brother when fighting as a soldier. Growing up in this family, *Numune*, himself was a loyal follower of the official history as is narrated in the textbooks, and reflects on this past with a parodic tone to higlight both their parents' naivete as well as his political transformation. He likens the family combined of "my father, mother, me, my *male* sibling" to "a can of cheese…a monologic quartet" (*Glow* 13, emphasis mine). The emphasis, in fact, delineates an inversion in the adjective-noun phrase which literally reads as "my sibling male". In a nominal sentence in Turkish, only personal pronouns (optional) and endings (mandatory) build the subject-verb agreement, and the language does not use an equivalent of the verb to be. The third person singular (and plural when the subject/pronoun is explicit) does not take a personal ending, and that so called lack indicates the third person singular/plural. This inversion not only puts an emphasis on the sibling's gender, it also denotes "male" as the predicate of the sentence invoking a meaning where all family members *are* male including the mother. Except Numune, they do not have proper names and are prototypes of a mother, father and brother. By reducing the family members to one gender, the author stresses the extent of homogeneity in the microcosm of the family. The nation does not only denote to one language, one ethicity, one religion, it also is one gender, that is male.

Before his brother's death in a clash with *Xırbolar* (pseudonym for Kurds) as Numune scurrilously narrates, they were an ordinary middle-class apolitical family with parents wishing for their sons to have a better education providing an opportunity for high income occupation in prospect. Yet, seeming to have not recovered from his adolescence, Numune had lost his faith in such worldly endeavors and soon falls from grace in his parents' eyes. Graduating from a mediocre

high school, Numune's brother gets into a prestigious college while he, himself, hardly enters into a type of "poor academic brothel" (*Glow* 21). Numune depicts himself as a loser as opposed to his brother with a foreseeable bright future. Not only do two brothers differ in their sense of duty towards their studies, but they also do so towards their country. Registering himself into one university then to another, Numune postpones his mandatory service in the army, a mission celebrated as the most honorable mission towards one's country, and martrydom as the highest rank to be reached. The brother, on the other hand, runs for the national service as soon as he finishes college. Adding to a culmination of negatives that Numune beholds, his disapproval of the army service contributes to his father's bearing grudge against Numune. Although a veteran in the same family would make Numune exempt from serving in the army with the father's approval, his father does not consent the idea of sacrificing his favorite child and sparing the unpopular other from service, which he thinks as a matter of honor even in his sickbed. Numune thus has no choice but do his mandatory duty; he is finally stationed at the most conflicting zone as a special force. When *Numune* narrates the story, he keeps an ironic distance to what he had thought would happen and the reality he would actualize later. As a narrator of today fictionalizing his past, *Numune* distinguishes his present moment from that historical moment. He retells remembering the presence of a seller of *Xırbo* origin in his neighborhood but that he could not care less.

Numune deplores the ignorant poor for buying this state propaganda whose sons exclusively reach this honorable rank. He ridicules various national public performances his parents conduct in their private home particularly after his brother's death during his service, repeating Kang, "as though it was not the nation itself that murdered them [him]" (Kang 18). Numune becomes an outsider to his parents whose respective narrative beliefs render discernibly antithetical. One cannot even sustain communication with the members of one's own family, who allie with their own gravediggers as Milan Kundera aptly put in *Immortality* when referring to self-

inflicted eradication of artists by the Communist regime (1991). The parents are loyal to the offical narratives of the state, which provoke ethno-nationalist tendencies in the nation's psychology to perpetuate violence on the physical ground.

During his service in one of the infamous war zones, the reader can infer that Numune begins to realize that the *alternative truths* marketed in the news about the (civil) war and Xırbolar conflict with the reality there. He sees that the glorious regular army has, in fact, been incapable of achieving a gain in this war against the insurgency for years, and that infollution about the separatist/terrorist discourse is intentionally propagated. The state abuses fear in the nation against a group for many years; vilifies them in the textbooks, history books, in literature, and finally in the daily media as an enemy. That fear becomes the foundation of the nation-state. In a fear-driven state, as itself knows well, nothing but prophesy and speculation will triumph.

4.2. *Glow*'s Other Languages

Human language has, then, forsaken human beings, who relentlessly struggle for meaning via this would-be same language. If it is not possible to communicate using a common language, then perhaps it is not a common language at all, and that perhaps we are using this language as if it is an alien language. It is as though the narrators try to pose if this language is alien to us as it is, what are we supposed to do with this only language we have, which has condemned us to itself? One of the goals of the writer is, then, to show the extent of such linguistic alienation when we convince ourselves that we make contact with people by means of language. One might wonder, then, whether the task is to reveal the ways in which humans cannot use their language to (not) understand one another. Angels' story, which is otherwise incommunicable since they cannot tell stories to humans, is narrated to the human reader through multiple points of view of the characters

and of the omniscient narrator. They cannot tell, but they partially can via again limited literary tools. *Numune* realizes the impossibility of language as communication in the end, and does not attempt to speak but cries.

The writer takes on this language issue also with exploiting the semantic and hermeneutical dilemma generating out of the linguistic alienation, and strives to lay bare this alienation through free indirect discourse, variations on the points of view, and stratified stories using metanarratives in addition to lierary motifs such as parody, irony or extended metaphors. Expanding on Bakhtin's carnivalesque in *Rabelais*, Meltem Gürle contends that parodic language is employed as a way to counter state authority and its static authoritarian language: "Through the novel, Uyurkulak demonstrates how carnival laughter presents the only way of defying authority. It provides the victims of power with a strong tool for resistance, a tool that negates the solemn nature of authority by placing a mirror before its eyes, making it see itself in the light of the absurd, and thereby reducing it to a mere parody of itself" (2007; 129). In addition, *Glow* exploits the richness of spoken language and extensively resorts to an ironic use of (male) slang and idiomatic expressions, which disengage the everyday unofficial language from its familiar semantics. The text, then, maintains that our so called unofficial daily language has already been contaminated by the dominant official use, that we all, from the beginning, speak the official version of the language we are born to. What it offers is to de-officialize the language burdened with official linguistic clichés and patterns, with semantic opacity and hermeneutic conflict.

Nergis Erturk's argument that the origins of literary modernity are rooted in the telecommunication technology, which coincided with the late Ottoman and new nation-state's urge to control the written language in order to prevent ambiguity, and that the early republican Turkish literary production is marked by this anxiety to control the language with uncanny signs finds resonance in *Glow*'s manipulation of this ambiguity of the Turkish language which, regardless of

after almost a century of the alphabet reform, evidently continues to haunt the state apparatus. The state's language policy resulted in mystification of both the Arabic script as well as the Latinized letters. Turkish literary language, however, lays bare the unholiness in the Turkish language written in the Latin alphabet. The confusion arising from how to differentiate the verb to be (*olmak*) from to die (*ölmek*) in the Ottoman Turkish alphabet, where both words are written alike—context determining the meaning—is perpetuated in the literary language. *Glow* insists that this language with its so-called *legible* signs carries the potential to render itself *illegible.* The nation-state with its attempt to control meaning fails to do so in its negotiation with the writer, who ceaselessly elicits the inherent ambiguity in a homogenized language as well as its violence as a confined one. Two seemingly paradoxical literary processes operate simultaneously in *Glow*: one claims ambiguity as a gap and a manipulative tool by the authority within the attempted linguistic control; the other proposes to leave no room for ambiguity claiming every word as already occupied, and thus meaning as previously controlled. Literary, therefore, renders as a mediator between these two positions occupying and resisting both at the same time. *Glow* explicitly discloses the literary task of widening our material space through a mental illustrating other possibilities. Contrary to the romantically corporate understanding of literature as an escape from reality (whatever it means for the corporate real), literature, in fact, makes one feel in and stand on *the* world via the liminal space it implicates. *Glow*'s celestial setting works to strengthen its embeddedness not only in the land of Turkey but as well as in the world where any sign is no longer legible. One cannot read the signs of the Turkish letters not that they are linguistically illegible (written in Perso-Arabic script) but hermeneutically so. Unreadability of writing transcends the unreadability of signs in the Turkish language entering the domain of literary politics.

Glow posits the struggle of the literary-writer against that of the state-writer side by side.[176] In a recent interview, one of the prominent contemporary women writers Latife Tekin defines her encounter with language as a loss of innocence, a headache as a result of a "collision that had opened a crack through which human noise filtered" (258).[177] Tekin conceptualizes (human) language as an already constructed, instructed entity, which cannot be "innocent". Literary language, particularly, cannot deny its embeddedness in context; therefore, the writer may only choose to exhibit its nature, to render it innocent or not, but cannot fully isolate it from its situatedness in power structures.[178]

Humans, for instance, believe that they live in freedom when their "free" countries are built on blood. The reason behind this antithesis according to angels is humans' unawareness of the angels' "real stories" (*Glow* 28). Since only the angels can see what *in fact* takes place in the human part, and since they cannot convey it to the humans (they've been banned from doing so as a punishment), the angels live in a constant agony for carrying the burden of "human reality". This knowledge, hence, does not empower angels; on the contrary, they are made to suffer from nontransferable knowledge. They are almost choked by the immensity of their stories, which become indigestible without being told to these corporeal entities. Notice however that humans, not angels, live in fantasy; they (a)buse language to deceive themselves. One might as well read this human language as the official language versus the angels' unofficial language.

The celestial and corporeal worlds as such might also stand for the oppressed Kurds who use an *unofficial* language and the privileged others speaking in an *official* one respectively. Humans do not hear angels' real stories just as the non-Kurdish population does not. Although the latter has already mastered the other's language, linguistic proficiency does not guarantee mutual

[176] "It is 1971, and Mirek says that the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting" Milan Kundera, *Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980) 3.
[177] Latife Tekin, *Monograf* 8 (2017): 258.
[178] This corresponds to Bakhtin's novelistic theory.

understanding. Unidirectional linguistic integration (or let me put it directly assimilation) certainly does not positively contribute to the socio-political interaction between the two groups sitting on the opposite ends of the power spectrum. Linguist and critic Necmiye Alpay complains about the calls to "mother tongue" use by a significant number of writers and journalists, who singularly call for sensitive use of *the mother tongue*, which considers Turkish as the norm, evading all other existing mother tongues in the country:

> Many people whining about the fact that Turkish is not loved enough, have only in mind the lack of education and English wannabe. Yet, in a country where other mother tongues do not find opportunity to exist, and are forced to be satisfied with the hegemonic language, one should also think about an escape from the hegemonic language. Consciously or unconsciously Turkish is both conquered by a hegemonic language (currently English), and is in the position of a hegemonic language. (207; 209)[179]

It should not delineate as arbitrary then that every section in *Glow* begins with an elegy from a different city in Turkey as an unofficial linguistic opening since elegies constitute a significant portion of Turkish oral literary culture whereby failing to be fully assimilative to official discourses. Elegies function as outer worldly linguistic entities in the text; they are, in fact, situated in the liminal space between truth and fantasy and provide agency between the two. They are one sentence long with alliteration and convey a situation where a wish, resentment, repentance, or sadness is articulated. Each location where the elegy originates also helps invigorate a multitude of positions.

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[179] Alpay continues as follows: "When calling for using Turkish --though you mean not blending English in between—the same text might have a different effect on the people who cannot use their mother tongues freely…Persisting Turkish's hegemony over other mother tongues with the fear of disintegration, creates the opposite effect…" in *Dilimiz, Dillerimiz: Uygulama Üzerine Yazılar* [*Our Language, Our Languages: Writings on Practice*] (Istanbul: Metis, 2003): 209. Alpay was imprisoned for three years following the 1981 coup during which her then professorship was revoked. Her physical isolation from the society during her imprisonment led her interest in language issues.

Our interpretation shifts depending also on the camera angle through which we visualize these worlds if we carry the text into a film scenario. Gürle's observation on *Glow*'s cinematic vision as an anti-authoritarian tool is illuminating when she put forward, "in its mock-serious ambivalent tone of festive madness, Uyurkulak's portrayal of Cinema Grande can be read as an anarchist utopia set against the official and totalizing sternness of authority". (2007, 143). I additionally argue that Uyurkulak does not necessarily fall for the transitory festive unofficialty of language, and rather emphasizes the dearth of a common language, a common interpretation through exploring semantic gaps in Turkish, which, I suggest, is more central to his text, implying that the way one mobilizes language in her own interest to generate meaning be it the authoritarian state or a lay person is a proof of language as a manipulative tool, and that the people as the fool who might be freed to use their unofficial language at a given moment, are also all the more unaware that this so called unofficial language might already have been officialized. There is no original, pure unofficial language; every utterance is under control, which needs to be deciphered in a literary text, manipulating this controlled language's own tools against itself.

The elegy before the last section ends with an optimistic tone for the human *Netams* and *Xırbos* despite taking place in the other world. When they step off of the purgatory side by side, the angel *Tefail* responds to *Onüç*'s cynical inquiry into this intimacy commenting that they are "sisters and brothers" so they cannot be separated, and even if they are separated they are "still sisters and brothers" (*Glow* 247). So the angel Tefail, who cannot use a language to narrate a story, interprets the truth more accurately than her fellow human beings, who are born capable of using the language to its fullest potential. The humans have trouble understanding one another regardless of the linguistic difference as well as unity. They lack the extralingual signs to interpret their shared languages to build a shared living. Language of conscience has been lost to both *Netamlar* and *Xırbolar* at war, yet particularly to the former, who fell for the systematic state propaganda against

the insurgency as well as the civilians slandered as terrorists to disguise an otherwise manifest state terrorism. The state, *Glow* suggests, prevents these two groups of people from comprehending each other as a result of this false linguistic hermeneutics designed and spread by the state to curtail the perceptions of both sides to not discern the truth. This truth narrative, which is, in fact, not narratable by the angels, perhaps paradoxically, can only be narrated by them. Even the most conscientious human being is set far from grasping the reality, the shared humanity, the meaning of which has been blurred beneath a factitious propagandistic state language.

4.3. Sound of Pamuk's *Snow* (2002) between Prophesy and Speculation

> "Without political prophesy, Turkish writers know that their texts might not contribute to the act of rescuing the nation, causing them to be alienated from national goals, resulting in feelings of shame, embarrassment, and perhaps of being irrelevant to their community. They might be pushed into being propagandists of the guardian state, and perhaps even punished for not complying with its demands." (Adak, "Coups" 44)[180]

Glow politicizes its poetics in a way most similar to what Damrosch called glocalism for Pamuk's *Snow* (2002), which, despite the literary-national opposition, became a (sole) model in localizing the world in the twenty-first century Turkish Literature.[181] No wonder *Snow* has become one of the most translated novels into myriad of languages paying due respect to Pamuk's winning the Nobel Prize for literature, which undeniably contributed to the novel's linguistic mass migration.

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[180]Hülya Adak, "Coups, Violence, and Political Turmoil: Aesthetics and Politics in Pamuk's Novels." *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Pamuk*, ed. Sevinç Türkkan, Damrosch, (New York: MLA, 2017) 36-45.
[181] See Damrosch for Pamuk in *How to Read World Literature* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2009) 112.

Pamuk's *Snow* illustrates this persistent dissidence of literature against the state and its official language. The exiled poet Ka, the protagonist, who loses inspiration to write poems travels from Frankfurt to Kars, the northeastern city of Turkey to do research on the mass suicides of the alleged "headscarf" girls for the newspaper "Republic". The underlying reason for this trip is Ka's hope to reunite with his old love İpek. Kars, historically a multiethic and multireligous city originally inhabited by the Armenians and Georgians, is set as a microcosm of Turkey with Republican secularists, radical Islamists and Kurds battling for power. In Kars, the distracted poet Ka is suddenly inspired and starts writing poems to be compiled under the book titled *Snow* with a "deep and mysterious" form (*Snow* 278). Ka sells out the Islamist *Lacivert* to the military and is revenged by one of his followers back in Germany. Then we figure out towards the end that the implied author Orhan who is a friend of Ka, and who visits Kars after his death is actually narrating the story.

As much as *Glow* plays with the tension between intelligibility and speculation, Pamuk's *Snow* (2002), for instance, mobilizes prophesy as well as the nationalistic and orientalist discourses to parody the art of the state as if to recontextualize "all that is solid melts into air" of the *Communist Manifesto*. The novel instrumentalizes a text in the national canon such as Namık Kemal's (1872) *Vatan Yahut Silistre* (*Homeland or Silistra*), and parodies the performativity of the play restaged as *Vatan Yahut Türban* (*Homeland or Headscarf*) to reinstate the frivolous aspects of the Kemalist reforms in a city drifted into a chaos by the alleged "Islamic fundamentalists". The play ends with a real coup, which renders people dead *at the stage*. The novel, hence, reinscribes the new republic a deadly performance in its staging "the internal political theater of performance 'under Western eyes'" (Ertürk 2010; 642). *Snow* thematizes the vicious cycle of representation, which ends up being a failure. In doing so, it focalizes self-consciousness

of a people in the eyes of the so called West, putting into question excessive engegament of the furthest East of Turkey with its appearance from the outside.

The literary scholar Gloria Fisk expands on Nergis Ertürk's point about *Snow*'s preoccupation with the representation of Turkey on the world and literary stage by saying that, "He embeds a message in *Snow* about the representation of Turkey in the world, hinging the plot on specific events in Turkish history but misrepresenting them in a crucial way. That misrepresentation is well hidden from non-Turkish eyes and raises an interpretive question that Anglophone readers have failed to see" (78). As much as Fisk's observation is accurate, is not all fictional representation is misrepresentation in the end? And is not what Anglophone readers have failed to see shared also by the Turkish readers? The interpretive question is in fact relevant to both group of readers not because of the degree of "false" representation which becomes as unreadable to the Turkish reader as to the Anglophone, but precisely because the novel treats those historical events as metonymies to question the official state historiography.

What is crucial in here is the fact that the novel delineates past as speculation and future as prophesy in order to imply not so much that the official ideology wants to open up space for its own history by distorting facts about a distant past and by actively purporting historical amnesia but more so because it is aware of the potential of history writing to reconstruct the future. What the official ideology knows is that a journal bulletin about the poet Ka will change his destiny akin to the way that a prophecy did for Oedipus. What it does not presume however is another fact that history also resists such absolute authority over itself. When written history is censored, and coerced into silence, it resuscitates itself to the future (*Kar* 34).

Snow plays with this agency of unofficial history by making its subservience to oracles of the official history explicit and at the same time by delineating its defiance to such control. The mystical riddle plays the central role precisely as a result of this ambivalence of historical agency

the novel takes to its heart, and then hastily forgets towards the end. When Ka visits the local newspaper office *Serhat City News*, and during his exchange with the owner Serdar Bey, Ka cannot help looking at the news published on the page about him. The news talks about the nationalistic play "Homeland or Headscarf" performed and recorded not so surprizingly by *Serhat Kars Television.* Since the newspaper will be published for the next day, it narrates the events in the past tense. It also mentions that Ka read his last poem "Snow," to which Ka is taken by surprise, and expresses that neither does he have a poem entitled "Snow' nor will he attend the play (34). Yet, Serdar Bey's assertive response is even more unsettling in defining journalism as prophecy when simultaneously denying it:

> Don't be so sure. Since we narrate the events before they happen, many people, who belittled us, who thought that our job is not journalism but prophecy, could not hide their surprise when the events happened precisely as we described them. Many events took place after we reported them. This is what modern journalism looks like. And I'm sure you'll first write a poem entitled 'Snow,' and then will come and read it in order to not take our right to be modern and break our hearts (*Kar* 34).

The novel likens journalism, in this passage, to official history writing. Atatürk's *Speech* as the first official history of the new Republic performed precisely the same task by orienting the present towards its actualization. Ka's seeing another news which announces the road closure due to heavy snow in the city already plots the future narrative for him.

Snow, the concrete matter, was constructed as a metonymy to delineate this central mystery in the novel. In the very beginning of the novel, Ka roams around the city of Kars alone among barking of dogs and children's cries, and "his eyes were filled with tears when he felt that no one but him notices the snow hailing down on the invisible steep mountains at far, on the castle of

Seljuks, and on shanty towns inseparable from historic ruins, as if stretching out into an endless time" (*Kar* 24). Whereas in the beginning silence of snow brings to Ka such melancholy, rejuvenating his belief in God in the isolated corner of the world, later in the novel with Ka, we begin to hear the sound of snow. In a later instance, when Ka watches snow, he does not hear dogs barking or any other sound this time "as if end of the world has come, and everything he sees now, all the world became alert to the snow" (134). It was right after Ka felt destiny and life's secret geometry which has yet to be figured out (134). Gloria Fisk observes that "Pamuk posits the religious expression of the headscarf girls as an expression of civil liberties that obtain in the Islamic East as in the Judeo-Christian West, by narrating how Ka's literary experience grows increasingly mystical over the course of the novel" (87).[182] The implied author, however, is more skeptical about this new experience than Fisk reads into it as the ending suggests.

Expanding on what Erdağ Göknar remarks, claiming that "both 'Orhan' and 'Ka' are not just weaving metaphors of snow, they are writing against its whiteness, which threatens to overwhelm them in its material fragility and its blank sacredness," I would add that snow also works to hide something unfolding in the world of the novel as well as outside (194). Beauty and silence, charming attributes of snow cover up the implicit story in the novel as though at the same time enchanting Ka in order to not disclose it.

At the dinner with Turgut Bey and his daughters Hande and Ipek, Ka looks at the wide street full of election propaganda flags, and "felt from the width of frozen cornices of the old buildings, from the beauty of doors and wall reliefs, from calm but lively facades of the buildings that once upon a time in here some people (trading Armenians in Tiflis? Ottoman pashas collecting tax from dairy farms?) lived a happy, peaceful, even colorful life" (134). The novel is trying to tell the reader something hidden in between the words, that which looks like another detail about Kars,

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[182] Gloria Fisk. *Orhan Pamuk and the Good of World Literature* (Colmbia UP, 2018).

but which, in fact, recounts the lost history of the city partially through free indirect discourse as we also read in the following sentence: “All of those Armenians, Russians, Ottomans, early Republican Turks who turned the city into a humble civilization center had all suddenly left, and it was as though the streets were empty because nobody filled their place” (134). Emptiness and silence accompanied by snow point at an irrevocable loss of a people that once had built a city of civilization about which the city’s current residents do not speak.

Snow disguises its message inserted in details and parenthesis, and a careful reader regardless of reading from the source language or not, will not miss it. The following paragraph recounts that the conflict during the coup between the soldiers and the students at the high school for Imams emerged “not in the main door which still reflects the fine craftsmanship of Armenian blacksmiths but inside the door opening up to the senior dorms and the meeting room” as though the whole story was framed around this sentence (169). Juxtaposing definition of a door relayed to be made by an Armenian with that of another helps the reader not only to envision that scene but more so to accentuate the nonexistence of the former in the present. Using snow, the novel hints at the great distance between present and the past, and the impossibility of representing the past from now. As Nergis Ertürk suggests, “If *Snow* speaks to this (nonlistening) public sphere as world literature, this is not because Ka and Orhan speak for the peoples of Kars as proxies. Nor is the novel a neutral medium for the portrayal of the sufferings of the oppressed. *Snow* rather affirms precisely that which lies outside its own representations: the proximate distance of the other evading its political and literary abstractions” (“Outside”; 641).[183] Talking about the present, therefore, the novel projects as another way of talking about the past, the unspeakable.

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[183] Nergis Ertürk. “Those Outside the Scene: Snow in the World Republic of Letters” *New Literary History* 41/3 (Dec. 2010): 633–51.

By the end of the novel, during Ka's friend Orhan's visiting Kars after Ka's death, Orhan joins İpek and Turgut Bey to see Kadife's act in *Tragedy in Kars*, and describes Kadife's dressing room which "once used by acrobats from St. Petersburg and Moscow, Armenians playing Moliere, and dancers and musicians who'd toured Russia–was ice cold" (*Snow* 398). The National Theater is a dead place now, rugged and devoid of spirit where only state sponsored cliché plays take place. The narrator Orhan uses snow as a metonymy, associated with lifelessness of the dressing room that once was the heart of the city. In addition to such narrative commentary on the previous Armenian presence materialized in the artefacts of Kars, characters' attitudes towards this lost presence also profusely point at a history that is not as naïve as trenchantly claimed by the current locals of Kars.

In a later meeting with Muhtar, he shows Orhan around as narrated by Orhan: "When Muhtar took me to see what was left of the National Theater and the rooms he had converted into an appliance depot, he conceded that he was partly to blame for the destruction of this hundred year-old building, and then by way of consolation he added, 'At least it was an Armenian building and not a Turkish one'" (*Snow* 411-12). Muhtar's bluntness about his hostility towards the other without thinking about Orhan's reaction accentuates ethno-centrism as the norm. Such overt hostility helps conceal guilt and shame, and perpetuates denial of crimes against the other. When Orhan comes across the detective Saffet, the former tells that "He'd been dispatched because the city's intelligence services were keen to know what I was trying to dig up here (was it to do with the 'Armenian thing,'[184] the Kurdish rebels, the religious associations, the political parties?)" (*Snow* 422-3). If there is nothing to hide, why would the intelligence services send a retired detective to watch out for Orhan?

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[184] "The old 'Armenian' events" [Eski "Ermeni" olayları] is closer to the original and more telling about the context. Keeping "old" in the translation is necessary to highlight that it is an outdated event for the Turkish side unlike it is to the Armenians.

Hülya Adak also observes references to the Armenian genocide invoking the denial narratives where the roles of victims and perpetrators exchange roles. Describing the scene where the neighborhood head Muhtar Bey gives Ka a tour of the city, and instructs him to represent it a positive way, Muhtar Bey as Adak writes, "tells Ka that denying the massacres and representing Kars positively are the only way to make the poor people of Kars a little happier. The passage experiments with the idea that placing the burden of denial on a writer frees the contemporary inhabitants of Kars, a poor class oppressed by neoliberal policies, from the horrible burden of a tragic history" ("Coups" 40). This passage also complicates the problem of representation by putting Ka on the spot as a native informant, who is expected to only narrate good stories about their country. The very beginning foreshadows the role of snow in the novel when Ka first arrives in Kars and visited people's houses with Mr. Serdar to find out what was happening in the town: "Ka came to feel as if they had entered a shadow world. The rooms were so dark he could barely make out the shape of the furniture, so when he was compelled to look at the snow outside, it blinded him–it was as if a curtain of tulle had fallen before his eyes, as if he had retreated into the silence of snow to escape from these stories of misery and poverty" (*Snow* 14). *Snow* makes snow participate in this narrative through exploiting its material characteristics such as silence, whiteness, and its temporary solidity blanketing the city's landscape.

Narrating the event when the boarding high school for Imams was busted by the soldiers, the implied author reveals that Ka was in deep, peaceful sleep "perhaps because the softness of this strange, magical snow absorbed the gunshots in the streets of Kars" though the dorm was very close to Ka's hotel (169). And when the students and other insurgents were taken to the police station beaten down on the way, "only a few people in the city noticed what had happened because of the heavy snow" (170). Finally, everyone in Kars had understood that a coup had just taken place but "there was no fear in the air since everything had taken place accompanied by a play on

TV and snow hailing day and night in front of the windows just like in old fairytales" (171). Like a blanket snow covers the border city and disguises the facts from the locals. Snow is indeed magical as it enchants Ka and the people of Kars to not act. Beauty and silence of snow immobilize the people of Kars: "Ka whispered to the girls that Kars is an extremely silent place. 'Because we are afraid even of our own voices,' said Hande. 'This is the silence of snow,' said Ipek" (*Kar* 131). Silence of snow, in fact, whispers to the careful reader's ears, another history of Kars that no longer exists.

4.4. Unruly Misreadings of *Snow*

Unlike *Snow*, *Glow*'s literary journey points precisely at the arbitrariness of meaning and its abusive utility by either the state, the writer, and the text. The literary text does not, however, suggest that it should be prescriptive. On the contrary, it implies the limitlessness of interpretations in a given language, which is presented here as normative. The question lies therein: what is left to the writer if her sole purpose is to render the text endless, and the same time in attempting to do so, makes it vulnerable to centripetal forces?

In *Rabelais and His World* Bakhtin (1984) develops a theory of the "carnivalesque" to understand the development of the European Literature and mentions the medieval carnival time as an "escape from the usual official way of life" (8). Literature, especially the (European) novelistic text as Bakhtin would say, reopens this carnival time disregarding the official discourses. The time of the novel, then, becomes the time of the carnival where the language norms are violated, and assimilated into this free zone. Bakhtin demonstrates a model in "Carnival and Carnivalesque" situated precisely at a specific period and location (medieval Europe), and although this particular conceptualization may work useful to evaluate modern Turkish literary works, I

would be cautious as Bakhtin does in the seminal article "Discourse in the Novel" paying keen attention to language as an already charged world making conception itself:

> As a result of the work done by all these stratifying forces in language, there are no "neutral" words and forms—words and forms that can belong to "no one"; language has been completely taken over, shot through with intentions and accents. For any individual consciousness living in it, language is not an abstract system of normative forms but rather a concrete *heteroglot conception of the world…Each word tastes of the context* and contexts in which it has lived its socially charges life; all words and forms are populated by intentions. (293, emphasis mine)

Having argued for the organic heterogeneity of language and its situatedness, Bakhtin of "Discourse" will make more sense than that of "Carnival" in critiquing the style of the literary text in other contexts, which is itself formed by the "internal dialogism of the word" (279). On Ka's meeting with Blue and others, Gloria Fisks writes,

> Pamuk also intervenes in the work of his translators by converting the 'heteroglossia' that Mikhail Bakhtin identified as a characteristic of novelistic form into novelistic content, generating dialogism that is uniquely translatable. When Bakhtin writes about heteroglossia, he refers to linguistic differences that are extraordinarily difficult to translate from one language to another. Emphasizing the ways that a nation's cultural life becomes audible in the 'diversity of social speech types' it contains, Bakhtin argues that the novel works by putting these types in conversation with one another. Pamuk renders that formal diversity as the actual content of the conversation in the hotel and elsewhere, guaranteeing its legibility to the non-Turkish reader. (46)

What Bakhtin refers to with heteroglossia, however, is extra-linguistic elements of language, not bounded by linguistic difference per se. Abundant diversification of speech types

notwithstanding, *Snow* as a novel, I would say, forms a concept of snow through exploiting the dialogic potential of the word dispersed in its thematic and formal workings regardless of the actual dialogues between its characters.[185] Hence, "translatable dialogism" misses the point of language as a "heteroglot conception of the world" whereby falsely attributing translatability of the so called "linguistic differences that are extraordinarily difficult to translate" to some magical (and undisclosed) linguistic solution of the author, which is arguably not enough to solve the problem of misreadings by the non-Turkish reader.

Fusing reality with fiction in the "Headscarf girls" story, the novel particularly delineates this misunderstanding according to Fisk. Citing the novelist and critic Elif Batuman on her analysis of *Snow*, which puts blame on the writer for being misunderstood by the Anglophone reader, Fisk contends that "His failure of mimesis, in other words, proves untranslatable to readers who can't read the source text. As world literature, the novel generates an interpretive failure with ethical and political consequences" (86). Reading the source text, however, does not itself help the reader *fix* its reading since the suggested "interpretive failure" persists for the Turkish reader as well, which Fisks also admits:

> Snow chronicles the ways the townspeople of Kars *compare* their ideological and political positions, locating themselves on a cultural map that would be illegible to most of Pamuk's readers. And it tests the political utility of the literary project it undertakes with dialogue that reaches implicitly across the entire landscape of

[185] "Discourse", thus, will render a more fruitful discussion in Turkish literary criticism if Bakhtin's theorization of language in the novel (versus in poetry for instance) is given due attention. Poetic language, for Bakhtin, has already forgotten about its context, and so the poet cannot speak beyond the context of which she has *now* generated (p. 297). Poetic style is agreeably a working of one persona's reification; however, the poetry of Edip Cansever (1928-1986), and particularly the poetry collection *Oteller Kenti* (1985) ("*The City of Hotels*"), among other poetic works, for instance, operates on a level to negate Bakhtin's bifurcation between the discourses in these genres. One can indeed read *Oteller Kenti* as a prosaic text with its stratification of discourse and orchestrations of consciousness in its poetic personas. Cansever, then, novelizes *Oteller Kenti* elevating the (prose) poems to speak "through language not in a given language" (Bakhtin, 2002) 299.

> Turkey's national culture while it also suggests that any hope for such an inclusive community is futile. (46-47, emphasis original)

Fisk is indeed right in claiming that different positions of the people of Kars is "illegible to most of Pamuk's readers" who are predominantly spread over Western Turkey, and mostly has no clue about the lives of people living in Eastern provinces such as Kars. Yet, misunderstanding about the headscarf girls is not exclusive to the Anglophone reader. Pamuk intentionally conflates two different stories in order to underscore the secularists' hypocrisy about the headscarf controversy. The sociologist Nilüfer Göle argues in her recent book *Islam and Secularity* (2015) in the context of France that through banning of headscarfs "French society at large expressed its determination to maintain and reinforce the principles of republican secularism. But on the whole, the headscarf debate and the law signified a turning point for French secularism, leading to a critical review of its own understanding and self-presentation in its encounter with Islam" (85).[186] Exclusively influenced by French secularism, Turkey's past headscarf ban also underscores Republican Turkey's own self-representation in its encounter not only with Islam but also newly incremented Western values. As such, semi-fictive reality of the "headscarf girls" story propounds a more complex understanding of the gendered political situation of 90s Turkey as much as it asks from the implied reader occupying Turkey and the world to reevaluate their reading of gendered secularism. In a recent monograph *Sex and Secularism* (2018), Joan Wallach Scott lists the arguments of the book as follows:

> First, the notion that equality between the sexes is inherent to the logic of secularism is false; second, this false historical assertion has been used to justify claims of white, Western, and Christian racial and religious superiority in the present as well as the past; and third, it has functioned to distract attention from a persistent set of

[186] Nilüfer Göle, *Islam and Secularity: The Future of Europe's Public Sphere* (Durham: Duke UP, 2015).

> difficulties related to differences of sex, which Western and non-Western, Christian and non-Christian nations share, despite the different ways in which they have addressed those difficulties. Gender inequality is not simply the by-product of the emergence of modern Western nations, characterized by the separation between the public and the private, the political and the religious; rather, that inequality is at its very heart. And secularism is the discourse that has served to account for this fact. (4)

Misunderstanding of the Anglophone reader, perhaps, results from their being oblivious to the false claims of absolutist secularism, which, in fact, brings them even more closer to Turkey's secularists. "The conspiracy between journalism and theater yields a text that the audience can't read because fiction and fact are so densely braided together in the world they inhabit" (Fisk 89). Fiction, however, always plays with *facts* complicating its factuality, whereby creating an alternative republic of letters. One cannot burden fiction with expectations from a historical archive for literary representation is a failure at its best. It is not *Snow*'s failure to not be transparent about the stories it tells, and thus to make the (Anglophone) reader misunderstand; on the contrary, its success lies precisely on acknowledging and exploiting the complexity of its representational politics. It neither attempts to confuse the reader nor to make them misread the sociological, cultural, and political clues but to contest a peculiar kind of misreading by the state as Erdağ Göknar suggests: "The misreading of religion and political Islam by the state is at the core of Pamuk's critique...In *Snow* the persistent confusion of representation and reality stands in for this foundational misreading and is at the core of Pamuk's novelization of the coup" (187).[187] Yet, there is more to this misreading, which lies in the novel's questioning not only the Turkish state

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[187] Erdağ Göknar, "Political Parody from Coup to Conspiracies," *Orhan Pamuk, Secularism and Blasphemy: The Politics of the Turkish Novel* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

but also European colonialism, and failed multiculturalism. The latter's misreading of Islam and extremism influenced by Salafism against European colonialism, and racism disguised as "Islamophobia" undergirds the novel.

Göle also suggests that postcononialism is not enough to explain the conflict between Muslims and others in today's Europe; "the relationship between Germany and the migrant Turks, which is not linked to a colonial past, is significant in drawing on the novel features of the encounter. In present-day discourse the representation of the Other has shifted from the distant unknown Oriental to that of Muslims living in proximity with Europeans and perceived as threatening intruders" (171). In this sense, reading *Snow'*s failure of mimesis as a mistake makes little justice to the text. What the novel demands is perhaps a different reading, which is less invested in figuring out what is proximate to and distant from *the* facts than in questioning what kind of misreadings we as Western, Anglophone readers have been committing in our misunderstanding not necessarily of Islam but of secularism.

In the beginning of the novel when he meets Ka, Blue's confession about the shame he went through in Germany during his encounters with Germans, underscores the novel's implicit message:

> When I was in Germany, at whatever Muslim association I happened to be visiting, in whatever city–it could be Frankfurt or Cologne, somewhere between the cathedral and the station, or one of the wealthy neighborhoods of Hamburg–wherever I happen to be walking, there was always one German who stood out of the crowd as an object of fascination for me. *The important thing was not what I thought of him but what I thought he might be thinking about me; I'd try to see myself through his eyes* and imagine what he might be thinking about my appearance, my clothes, the way I moved, my history, where I had just been and

> where I was going, who I was. It made me feel terrible but it became a habit; I became used to feeling degraded, and I came to understand how my brothers felt…*Most of the time it's not the Europeans who belittle us. What happens when we look at them is that we belittle ourselves*. (Snow 73, emphasis mine)

This passage makes evident that the novel is certainly not as much interested in representing Turkey to a Western readership than in laying bare the already reproduced representations about Turkey by an Orientalist West, which has consumed the so-called Muslim East until it has left nothing to the Muslim other but its own representations of the latter. If there is a misreading, it evidently results not from the novel's failure of mimesis, but from the Anglophone readership itself, who cannot deal with the complexity of a predominantly Muslim Turkey and is inclined to see its representations multiplied in every reading. Is not that obvious from the reviews on the back of *Snow*'s English translation, which do nothing but multiply dichotomies pitting an already defined "secularism" against "religious fanaticism" and Turkey against Europe.[188]

As an example to counter the critique of misreading, in her article on teaching *Snow* to students, Esra Santesso makes the point that "misreadings may clear the way for alternative interpretations and become instrumental in redefining truth...help students overcome the fear that their outsiderness will result in an embarrassing moment of misconstruing the text: if the text itself is open to the idea of misreading, then misreading must be a legitimate exercise for its readers to indulge in" (132-3).[189] No one reading can bring out the best interpretation if it ever exists; for this reason novels are to be discussed in the classroom, in academic papers, between colleagues and

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[188] I am referring to the 2004 translation published by Alfred A. Knopf.
[189] Esra Mirze Santesso, "Discourse of the Other in Snow," *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Pamuk* (New York: MLA, 2017) 126-134.

friends. This collaborative attempt to read and interpret for meaning making is one of the qualities of what situates a novel in World Literature.

> Perhaps, we have reached the heart of our story. How much is it possible to understand another's pain, another's love? How much can we understand the ones who live in deeper pain, poverty and frustration? If understanding is to put ourselves in the another's shoes, have the rich, the rulers ever understood the wretch living on the corner of the world? How well can the novelist Orhan see the darkness in his poet friend's hard and painful life? (*Kar* 259).

When the implied author asks the reader about the limits of offering emphaty to another, he is also interrogating the limits of our knowledge. As Santesso argues "the desire to feel emphathetic compassion, especially toward those who hold unfamiliar or unpopular opinions, drives *Snow*'s plot; as Pamuk's characters come to represent various ideological positions (through heteroglossia), the author's attempt to humanize–rather than demonize–these opposing advocates becomes apparent" (128). Both the Anglophone and the Western Turkish reader should thus one moment renounce their hubris, and beware of their capacity to understand the other releasing the fixed representations of the latter from their own prejudiced mental confinements.

4.5. Ending of Snow as Failure of Critique against the Authoritarian Secularist State

Silence of snow also disguises unofficial history of the other that has been erased from the official memory. What makes the ending a bit frivolous is downplaying the central puzzle that took issue with Islamic mysticism as a potential alternative to radical Islamism as the sole self-declared heir to the Islamic doctrine as well as to Kemalism as the official state ideology, both of which claim singular agency to past and future through prescriptive fortune telling. Erdağ Göknar argues that the iterative tension in Pamuk's novels emerges from a juxtaposition between *din* (religion) and *devlet* (state): "His technique of coupling religious and secular contexts challenges modernist, nationalist, and orientalist binary logic by showing *din* and *devlet* to be mutually defining – and productive – cultural antinomies" (31-32). This technique also alerts the reader about relativity, by putting Ka the secularist in the Islamist protagonist's shoes. And yet, Ka's assassination at the hand of a radical Islamist narrated by the implied author Orhan undermines the novel's focal problem with representation and interpretation of history.

The meta-narration unabashedly helps to leave blank this issue the novel had promised to complicate if not to unfold in its epigraph by Robert Browning from "Bishop Blougram's Apology": "Our interest's on the dangerous edge of things / The honest thief, the tender murderer, / The superstitious atheist." Browning points at the danger of extremism of all kinds, and the kind in the last line is particularly relevant for *Snow* whose interest unequivocally lies with the religious secularist. Pamuk does not accomplish in the end what he promises in the beginning for he prepares the reader to set off on a journey with Ka, the secularist poet, who is confused to have felt the divine in the snowy Kars, and through whom the author points at the danger of absolutism wherever it comes from. This absolutism becomes an aspect of all groups that radically believe in themselves and their ideas. For this reason, the secularist Ka's exchanges with other stereotypical secularists such as Sunay and Funda, Islamists, and women who are oppressed by the secularist

state inform the reader about the limits of our representations. In other words, through exploiting almost (not overall) stock characters with different world-views and believes, the novel presents a meta-sociability that is not always visible in non-fictional Turkey.

Ka's distance to all sides, however, is both intensified and at the same time weakened by such authorial intrusions as the free indirect discourse, and is dismantled in the end by the emergence of the implied author Orhan. Orhan's intervention puts an end to the initial skeptical stance towards absolutism since he unnecessarily makes explicit fictionality of the narrative as is often the case with Pamuk's narratives as Erdağ Göknar claims: "The 'meta' position of the author-figure bears witness to Ka's transformations in character. 'Orhan,' though he bears witness, remains the staunch figure of secular modernity as he authors the tragedy of Ka and Kars as an indictment of Republican nationalism" (192). We can further suggest that this (male) authorial figure sees the story of Kars even as a failure of Republican nationalism as Göknar continues to argue that the existence of Orhan "contradicts Pamuk's dismantling and deconstruction of the Republican secularization thesis, and demonstrates its modernizing successes rather than its shortcomings" (197-8). With its meta-narration, this authorial figure finally reduces the seriousness of the criticism of secularity, religion, and representation.

In the end, "the superstitious atheist" dies at the hand of the believer. Becoming oblivious to the relationship of silence and covering of snow with (un)official history of Kars, it hollows out its own problematic by way of an exaggerated postmodernist gesture, reminding the reader about its own fictionality to no further sophisticated end.

> Ka's death is the only event through which he and his poetry could generate some interest: and this, only due to a conspiratorial curiosity as to who his murderers might be: "The Islamists, MIT [Turkish Intelligence Agency], the Armenians, German skinheads, the Kurds, Turkish nationalists"? In Mao II, Bill Gray describes

> the author's death as a democratic event, for it is there "for everyone to see, wide open to the world." Not any more in Ka's case. The images of the impotent or dying authors stand as the metaphorized representations of literature's end at the turn of the twenty-first century. (Oruç 163)[190]

Snow attempts but never solves the central puzzle laid out in the epigraph of the novel. And this also shows that Pamuk cannot get out of being trapped in his own understanding and interpretation of Islam when playful meta-fictionality takes over the novel. This moment of authorial narration is when the novel's tendency to allegorize reaches its peak. In her comparison of *Snow* with two other contemporary novels, Sibel Irzık argues that the narrative already has the potential to allegorize given the excessive indulgence with the performative element:

> In *Snow*...parodies of ''solid dramatic structures'' are not simple warnings against the authoritarian and paternalistic potential of allegory, although that is certainly part of the story. They are also not simply the novels' defenses against being reduced to allegories by a readership with a long-standing tradition of doing so, although that too is certainly part of the story. In all these novels, the obsessive return of a theatricality that robs characters of ''authentic'' lives has the function of exhibiting and exorcising the narrative's own compulsion toward political allegory. It is a way of acknowledging but also attempting to overcome the contortions that language, narrative, and individual lives have to go through under social conditions that provide neither a protected private sphere within which individuals can have at least the illusion of sovereignty and freedom, nor a public sphere in which their demands for sovereignty can be freely negotiated. ("Allegorical" 562)

Irzık complicates Jameson's forceful argument of the third world allegory where the borders of private and public spheres are blurred. Exemplifying from iconic post 1950 novels,

[190] Fırat Oruç, *Minor Measures: The Plebeian Aesthetics of World Literature in the Twentieth Century*, Diss. (2010).

where expectation to allegorize is downgraded in a parodic mode, Irzık highlights that the urge to allegorize and at the same time to resist against it "originates not in some situational, materialist consciousness of community, but in the official ideology itself, in its need to mobilize individual lives in the process of imagining the nation in its own terms" (559). Irzık suggest that this ambivalent push to allegorize is balanced by the search for the absent poetry collection, which entitles the novel: "Reading the novel *Snow*, one gets the distinct feeling that the narrative is both amused and horrified by the pull Sunay Zaim's ''national allegories'' exert upon it. While recording this pull, it also rejects it, hopelessly striving to achieve instead, the form of the lost text 'Snow,' the map of a perfect correspondence between poetry and a unique life" (563-4). Yet, the end of the novel embraces the pull to allegorize not necessarily by Sunay Zaim but this time by the implied author Orhan himself. The novel's hitherto balanced exploitation of allegory is disturbed towards the end by the latter's own "authoritarian and paternalistic potential" in Irzık's words (562). Elevating the male authorial figure as the last resort to emancipation, the novel loses its (and makes us lose our) motivation to achieve what Irzık describes above as "the form of the lost text," the fusion of poetry and life. (Meta-)fiction as prescription to the complexity of all the issues *Snow* has raised until the end simplifies those problems embedded in non-fictional life as though reading fiction makes up for world's complaints. It should not be expected to do so, either.

The point is that a sort of anxiety by the naive and sentamental novelist to hastily prevent such expectation where it does not exist (or it should not for the careful reader) ends up diminishing the formal and thematic power hitherto at the center of the narrative. Actual failure therefore does not lie on the contextual inaccesibility of the novel to the Anglophone reader as Fisk suggested, but it lies precisely on the fear from such misunderstanding to take place, which pushes the novel to resort to self-conscious narrative in the end. It achieves to avert possible frustration resulting from such *misreading* not only by the Anglophone reader but also by the local reader mentally and

physically away from the world of Eastern Turkey. Authorial control, however, fails again to completely forestall unwarranted meaning making. Attempting to criticize the wrongdoings of the state in West and East alike, first of all in its colonizing the land of the poor, creating and making sure to retain and expand its Orientalists representations, erasing the unoffical traces of history, and finally in its controlling the present in order to construct the future through prophesy, *Snow* condones its own authoritative voice as semi-official alternative to Orientalist state narratives.

Snow's ending in one way approves secularism as always critical. In the preface to *Is Critique Secular?* on the other hand, Talal Asad, Wendy Brown, Judith Butler and Saba Mahmood suggest that

> The self-limiting function of secular critique takes place when it comes to terms with the epistemic limits of the secular as such; it is marked by the encounter with the untranslatable, which means that it must turn to another form of mapping and understanding—genealogy—if not a different form of critique, to illuminate this encounter. Kant argued, of course, that critique is everywhere concerned with the limits of what can be known. Perhaps it can now be said that secular critique, if it is to remain critical, must be concerned with epistemic limits on the knowable imposed by secularism itself. (xvi)[191]

Beginning with the affirmative potential of the unknowable against the secularist arrogance not only to know but also to control knowledge, the novel's trajectory moves on to reject what it has claimed at the start. In short, *Snow* could not resist the temptation to cross the epistemic limits of secularism even if it was a literary authorial transgression.

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[191] See Asad et.al., *Is Critique Secular? Blasphemy, Injury, and Free Speech* (Berkeley: University of California, 2013).

Whereas snow in *Snow* materializes as that which is secular agreeing with the premise "that secularism is inherently generative and suffused with religious content, that reason always tenders a particular order of rationality, and that critique is inherently situated and partial," its transformation into the authorial figure in the end, collapses the initial critical stance towards state secularism (xix). In this sense, the novel paradoxically construes its anti-thesis finally aligning with the normative argument that "critique is always secular and secularism is always critical" (x).

The nation-state's self-consciousness about its Orientalism as Aamir Mufti had already asserted is a feature of nationalism (*Forget* 37). The contemporary novels such as *Glow* and *Snow*, as a response, exploit the interconnectedness between (self)orientalist and nationalistic tendencies through the unruly boundlessness of the literary language itself as a heterotopia that is perpetually instigated by the iterative tension between the discourses of the official state and the unofficial writer. Published in early 2000s, *Glow* and *Snow* fearlessly articulate that which was forbidden a decade earlier. The so-called Kurdish issue and to a lesser extent the Armenian genocide,[192] the greatest taboos of the Turkish society and the state, finally found ground to be fictionalized against the denialist, antagonizing state.

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[192] *Bastard of Istanbul* (2006) by Elif Shafak narrates the story between a Turkish and Armenian family connected by the Armenian genocide. Before the millennium, an exception would be *Gavur Mahallesi* (1992) by the Anatolian Armenian writer Mıgırdiç Margosyan which was republished in Armenian, Kurdish and Turkish in 2011. The first *Gavur Mahallesi* is an exception to narrate stories of Armenians and Kurds taking place in the Armenian neighborhood of Diyarbakır precisely because it must have been considered a minority literature though written in Turkish. Another reason for its having enjoyed freedom from censorship might also be that it does not comment on the state's position.

CHAPTER 5

WOMEN'S INTERSECTIONAL RESISTANCES AGAINST HETEROPATRIARCHY: CONTEMPORARY WRITING AND CINEMA BY SEVGİ SOYSAL, AHU ÖZTÜRK AND PERİHAN MAĞDEN

This chapter investigates the modalities of writing as women against heteropatriarchal state in the works of contemporary women writers and filmmakers, *Passionate Bangs* (1962) and *Tante Rosa* (1968) by Sevgi Soysal and *Ali and Ramazan* (2010) by Perihan Mağden, *Dust Cloth* (2015) by Ahu Öztürk. Their works exploit the language of women, and chronicle subjects who experience double oppression for their gender, ethnic, and sexual identities, and who resist by their intersectional subjectivities against the state's coercing them into the heteropatriarchal familial and public spheres where they are welcomed as long as they do not challenge the existing modes of oppression. These women's literary and visual works undertake that which has been understated in *edebiyat*'s claim to literariness only. They accentuate the ethical dimension in *edeb* through documenting the intersectional experiences of the marginalized, the "unorthodox" (in Ayhan's language) outlawed in private and public domains.

Passionate Bangs, *Tante Rosa*, *Ali and Ramazan* and *Dust Cloth* point at intersectionality as the most suitable concept to explore multiple experiences and resistances including gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and age. Despite the criticism[193] the term has garnered since its coinage in the nineties by Kimberley Crenshaw to address the black women's experience with racism also

[193] Keisha Lindsay critically engages with intersectionality as follows: "What kind of normative agenda does an intersectional framework engender? The answer lies in embracing and elaborating upon intersectionality's status as a heuristic. When I speak of intersectionality as a heuristic I mean that it illuminates how identities, social categories, or processes of identification and categorization gain meaning from each other but that it does not prescribe which identities, categories, or processes are mutually constructing. The result is that intersectional analysis can be used to make starkly different arguments, including anti-progressive ones, regarding who is disadvantaged and how to remedy their disadvantage" in "God, Gays, and Progressive Politics: Reconceptualizing Intersectionality as a Normatively Malleable Analytical Framework," *American Political Science Association* 11. 2 (2013): 447.

within their communities, mostly resulting from the term's possibility to flatten particular racisms experienced by particular groups, no alternative framework has yet emerged to replace the breath of intersectionality. When analyzing stratified discrimination in one particular group, and groups within a society, intersectionality is still the only existing and applicable theoretical framework.[194] Intersectional feminism in particular alerts us against the danger of evading different experiences and oppressions among women in various contexts.

Since the foundation of the republic, the state has tried to manage private and public spheres to catch up with an industrialized and modernized (West) World. It partially succeeded in modernizing its institutions guided by a secularism that was set to not evade but regulate religion as articulated by various scholars. It did so according to heteropatriarchal values of the time tantamount to that of the global capitalist-modernity, which situated women as second-class citizens in and outside the private and public spheres. The state took particular interest in investing in regulating the private sphere for it knew well that this sphere was constitutive in mobilizing the public one. As actualized in every new nation-state at the turn of the twentieth century, women's place in the society was in direct proportion to their fertility rate, which was paradoxically promoted at the expense of their femininity. Republican era prides itself on giving women's voting rights, and on emancipating them by encouraging them to work outside their domestic spheres; however it paid little attention to emancipate women's lives inside the domestic sphere, to provide equal access to male dominated state institutions or to prevent gendered division of labor.

[194] Without naming it, the writer and civil rights activist Audre Lorde formulated the framework for intersectionality in *Sister Outsider* (1984).

5.1. A Women's Sphere against State Feminism from Late Ottoman to Early Republic

> The political ethos of Western liberalism, as best illustrated in John Locke's writings, is based on the separation of the public and the private (a dichotomy that has been both reified and critiqued by feminist theorists). Indeed, according to the liberal tradition, the private domain in the West, by definition, is meant to be kept far from the reach of public authority as embodied by the state; it is excluded, to a great extent, from policy debates and formulations. In approaching the East and Ottoman society, however, Western critics identified polygamy, women's seclusion, and other aspects of domestic life as pressing areas for change. Similarly the transformation of the private domain under the guidance of a modern state was targeted by Ottoman and Kemalist reformists and statesmen. Their modernization projects—introducing and increasing state control over marriage, divorce, inheritance, etcetera—problematized precisely that which was private. (Arat 25)[195]

As much as heteropatriarchy was a component of modernity, modernity itself paved the way and witnessed suffrage movement, which could only happen in a *modern* lifeworld where women participated (and at times were obliged to participate) in the industrialized work-force in addition to the unpaid domestic labor in the private sphere. Women's oftentimes overrated economic *freedom*, which singularly meant freedom of being paid outside the private sphere, not from subordination to the male head of the family or from unpaid domestic labor in the private sphere, cost their lives. In the twenty-first century where women's domestic labor is largely seen as their primary (unpaid) occupation, which conveniently restricts them from working outside

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[195] Zehra F. Arat, "Politics of Representation and Identity." *Deconstructing Images of "the Turkish Woman"* (New York: Palgrave, 1999).

home, the ability to do the latter having to sacrifice bonding with children, partners, relatives, and friends should not be treated as systematic improvement towards gender equality. Their being educated notwithstanding, the relatively privileged women in late Ottoman society were supposed to use that education to nurture their children, and "not to have an independent identity and be freed from men's control" (Tekeli 185).[196] Nancy Fraser had aptly put it in her criticism of Habermas's gender blind theorization of the private sphere as follows: "[Families] are sites of egocentric, strategic, and instrumental calculation as well as sites of usually exploitative exchanges of services, labor, cash, and sex—and, frequently, sites of coercion and violence" (119).[197] Our conceptualization of family gives necessary clues about our frame of thinking and the ways in which it is been guided by heteronormativity and androcentrism. Taking the hetero-family as the norm and masculinity as the ideal to exhibit Habermas had in mind a hetero family and man as head of the household.

Oblivious to such power dynamic in and outside the domestic sphere, Republican family institution could not sustain equality between the two constitutionally recognized genders. Only women with privilege enjoyed a partial freedom from unpaid domestic tasks, which were handled by poor women, whereby making them collaborators in oppressing less privileged women. In analyzing women who belatedly joined their husbands in their economic migration from rural to cities between 1965-1970, Şirin Tekeli observes that since these women predominantly worked as domestic workers in richer neighborhoods, "one cannot talk about their labor being freed from the family by means of migration" (*Feminizmi* 190). Less attention has been given in literary scholarship to internal migration than migration between countries largely defined by the nineteenth century border nation-states. As much as migrant workers always existed within an

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[196] Şirin Tekeli, *Feminizmi Düşünmek* [*Thinking about Feminism*] (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi UP, 2017).
[197] Nancy Fraser, "Gender and the Politics of Need". *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse, and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory* (University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

empire or modern nation-state, migrant writers too did. I am, therefore, inclined to be cautious about a potentially essentialist argumentation on writing in exile and do not fully agree with Azade Seyhan in her claim that "When exile becomes a condition of critical reflection, its writers find the narrative and cultural coordinates to offer another version of their land's history, a version free of official doctrine and rhetoric, a history of the actual human cost of transformation and migration" (20). Yet, as is evident in Halide Edib's case, exile at times contributed to her nationalistic discourse.[198] I would thus rather convert the precision of "when" to the presumptiveness of "if" to make it sound less prescriptive in Seyhan's claim. We should perhaps keep in mind the question as to why we urge to burden the writer in exile with this task of *freedom* from the nation just because they are spatially outside *to* it.[199] Neither Nazım Hikmet nor Halide Edib in the end were able to free themselves from the nation on exile. On the contrary, they were oftentimes bounded by that which is official.

Not only in the lifeworld, but also in the narrative one, writing women adopted heteropatriarchal norms for different reasons in expressing themselves. Referring to many of the nineteenth-century women writers, Rita Felski notes that "By appropriating such traditionally masculine discourses, women helped to reveal the potential instability of traditional gender divides, even as their versions of these discourses often reveal suggestive and interesting differences" (1995).[200] In the late nineteenth century Ottoman literary context, such renown women writers of the transition period as Fatma Aliye (1862-1936), Zabel Yeseyan (1878-1943), Halide Edib (1884-1964), Halide Nusret Zorlutuna (1901-1984), Suat Derviş (1903-1972) and Samiha Ayverdi (1905-1993) were women who grew up in prosperous families with the exception of Zabel Yeseyan, who was a middle class Ottoman-Armenian writing in Armenian and French.

[198] See Adak's *Halide Edib ve Siyasal Şiddet* for further discussion on this subject.
[199] Migration's gendered class dimension has been a lesser scholarly inquiry except exemplified in Sevgi Özdamar's literary works narrating the stories of Turkish/Kurdish-German women workers.
[200] Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1995).

Yeseyan is exceptional not only because she did not belong to the Ottoman aristocracy but more significantly because she was the only woman intellectual in the black list of the Committee of Union and Progress which administered the final and largest mass deportation of the Armenians from Anatolia in 1915. She escaped the Armenian genocide and allegedly died in Siberia in exile after the Great Purge. Ottoman women writers' stories, therefore, are also unequal histories, an overwhelming majority of which are situated in wealthy bureaucracy.

A political scientist and scholar of women's rights, Zehra Arat also underscores the "elite" status of the women involved in literary and political movements during that transitional period (Arat 29).[201] They all had the educational means to learn languages, and to adapt to the alphabet reform in 1928. Although some of the writers of this transitional period kept writing in Ottoman whose works were then transliterated in the Latin script, a few existing women writers educated in Ottoman either stopped writing or were isolated as in the case of Fatma Aliye, Suat Derviş and to an extent of Samiha Ayverdi and Halide Nusret for clashing with the state over ideological differences.

Despite growing up in a circle close to the palace, both Fatma Aliye and Halide Edib were able to participate in the political sphere only as masculine figures. While Halide Edib continued to participate in the republican struggle, and to produce texts in various genres, Fatma Aliye completely disappeared from literary and political arena with the republic. Her understanding of feminism compatible with Islam conflicted with republican "state feminism [*devlet feminizmi*]"[202] which stabilized heteropatriarchy emancipating women as long as they knew their womanly place

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[201] Zehra F. Arat, "Politics of Representation and Identity," *Deconstructing Images of "the Turkish Woman"* (New York: Palgrave, 1999).

[202] Zehra Arat refers to the late women's rights activist Şirin Tekeli (1944-2017) who used the term borrowing from scholars of state feminism in post-industrial societies. Tekeli was a prolific writer on women's marginalization in political life in Turkey as well as co-founding key organizations to support women in various issues ranging from domestic violence to underrepresentation in literary and political life. She resigned from her academic post at Istanbul University in 1981 criticizing the foundation of YÖK (Higher Education Institute) after the coup, which according to Tekeli was built to depoliticize universities in producing knowledge congruent with the official state ideology.

in the domestic sphere. In her recent work on modernism in the novels of the Ottoman women writers, Ayşegül Günaydın draws attention to Fatma Aliye's encouraging the Ottoman Muslim women to be "followers of famous Muslim women of the past, not of Western women," whereby underscoring the peculiar condition of the Ottoman-Muslim women (37).[203] Fatma Aliye's feminism therefore was not compatible with ambivalent feminism of the Republican period, which considered European way of living or better the ways in which they represent themselves to the outside as the first condition to be modern. As mentioned in Ece's poetry *Karpiç* Restaurant (named by Atatürk) for instance did not play any other than Western music. Headscarf ban albeit not in the constitution until after the 1980 coup was however in practice in public institutions where women worked.

"State feminism" in the context of advance industrialized societies is broadly defined as "activities of government structures that are formally charged with furthering women's status and rights" (Stetson et al. 1-2).[204] Although women gained undeniably important social and political rights in these societies, women's emancipation is still not complete.[205] Republican state feminism with its traditional expectations from women in the domestic sphere as well as expecting them to masculinize themselves in the public sphere imposed on women a dual identity. Zehra Arat aptly summarizes republican view of women as follows:

> Perceiving women as an underutilized labor force and acknowledging their potential, both [Kemalism and modernization] seek to increase women's contributions to the economy. However, this effort does not change the overall gendered and dualistic approach prevalent in both discourses. The public domain continues to be seen as man's domain and it is

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[203] Ayşegül Utku Günaydın, *Kadınlık Daima Bir Muamma: Osmanlı Kadın Yazarların Romanlarında Modernleşme* (İstanbul: Metis, 2017).
[204] Dorothy Mc Bride Stetson and Amy G. Azur eds. *Comparative State Feminism* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1995).
[205] Nordic countries such as Sweden and Norway are seen as the best practitioners of state feminism in areas of domestic violence, workplace regulations and abortion rights.

> defined in masculine terms. Women, on the other hand, with their lives anchored in the family, continue to be seen in terms of reproductive functions such as childbearing, child care, and home economics. Indeed, the theme of motherhood as an essential function and important "duty" of women repeatedly surfaces in Atatürk's speeches. (Arat 26)

As mothers and feminine wives at home versus defeminized employees outside, the roles of the Republican women constantly transformed according to space. Women's private versus public identities were strictly monitored by such state agencies as neighborhood mukhtars, school principals, and workplace managers as well as state like bodies including neighbors, relatives, and husbands. From the first Republican period up until early 2000s, the official dress code required women teachers and female students at public schools to wear suits and uniforms combined only with skirts respectively. Since the late Ottoman and beginning of the Republic, women's bodies particularly have become a political playground.

As a socialist feminist Suat Derviş was ostracized both by the late Ottoman and early Republic. She was a journalist and literary writer particularly narrating the stories of marginalized and poor women. She shared a similar fate with the poet Nazim Hikmet, being blamed by the republic for propagating communism and had to live the rest of her life in exile. Samiha Ayverdi (1905-1993), who was a follower of the Rifa'i Sufi order, did not cherish the reforms as much, wrote novels, short stories, and essays with Islamic mystical component. She was read by a cluster with Islamic mystical alignments than by exclusively women. Being a woman and discursive masculinity, therefore, are not mutually exclusive, and also have more contingent relationship than inevitable.

Women writers' raising their voices against this male hegemony supported by the state began after 1950s when the secularist Republican one party rule began to lose its grip on the nation. Before that women writers in order to be accepted were more invested in supporting the

foundations of the republic amongst incessant wars and fear from occupation, without challenging the status quo, whereby not endangering their newly accepted writer as women positions. As Hülya Adak observed, Halide Edib epitomizes the ambivalence of writing during the transitional period, by growingly adopting the state discourse on the Armenian genocide.[206] Şirin Tekeli underlines that the WWI was instrumental in making women temporarily leave their domestic roles, and participate in the work force opened up by men's abscence as much as the post-war national resistance period against occupation where they were proactively involved in the struggle. Yet, after the demise of the empire, "women returned to their home, to their traditional roles without any reaction" because the republic depended on reproduction of the congenial family to produce work-force that was lost during the wars (*Feminizmi* 185). According to Tekeli, these rural women of the early republic risked their lives by successively giving birth to children, who also had to work in the fields to provide for the family when one income usually was not enough during the time of national economic deprivation. They were however elevated as role models in the period's "village novels" when the republic capitalized on the bourgeois, educated women as "carriers of 'state feminism'" over these uneducated rural women whom "as the reformists also knew" were not able to benefit from constitutional reforms (adapted almost as is from Swiss Civil Code) which would otherwise have drastically improved all women's statuses regardless of class (186).

Nationalized republican family institution thus could not sustain equality between the two constitutionally recognized genders. Only women with privilege enjoyed a partial freedom from unpaid domestic tasks, which were handled by poor women, whereby making them collaborators in oppressing less privileged women. Rural women whom belatedly joined their husbands in their economic migration from village to city between 1950 and 1960 as Şirin Tekeli observes almost singularly provided domestic work in richer neighborhoods. The movie *Dust Cloth* (2015) directed

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[206] See Adak, *Halide Edib ve Siyasal Şiddet.*

by Ahu Öztürk[207] for instance chronicles Kurdish women's unique intersectional oppression as Kurds, women, mothers, and domestic workers from the lowest socio-economic classes in the shantytowns of Istanbul where they migrated for work.[208] This story of women oppressing women is by no means unique to the intelligentsia of the late Ottoman-early Republic; on the contrary, it was (and still is) a fact of global sexism feeding on older aristocratic bonds and presently on racialized and gendered oppression (as in the case of Kurdish women workers).

5.2. One (Republican) Women, One State, One Patriarchy from 1960s to 1990s

By the time the two world wars had ended, and the one-party Republican government finally terminated in 1950, more diverse voices began to be heard from the literary sphere. In an attempt to criticize their own subordination, some women writers born in late 1920s and afterwards, who began publishing in late 1950s as the first generation of Republican writers, ended up challenging the tenets of state feminism founded on heteropatriarchy.[209] This period also coincides with intensification of women's movements in post-industrialized countries where they began to demand regulations on employment in regard to domestic issues. In her dissertation analyzing masculinities in 1970 "Coup" Novels, Çimen Günay Erkol argues that gender was at the heart of the matter in these novels, an aspect that has been overlooked by then predominantly "male-stream" lierary criticism in Turkey. Erkol writes: "On the surface, there were student uprisings, the encounter of the state with its perceived enemies, and fierce riots while, beneath the

[207] Born in 1976, Öztürk is a contemporary woman filmmaker. Her first feature *Dust Cloth* received the best film award at the 35th Istanbul International Film Festival.
[208] Cinema is currently ahead of literature in openly depicting Kurdish women's struggles in Turkey.
[209] I would like to underscore that not all women writers showed resistance to heteropatriarchical state feminism. I am underscoring a different line of positioning than that which did not exist during the early Republican era.

surface, there was a clash of masculinities, each threatened to the core with the brutality of the state, as well as the movement toward equality of women" (27).[210]

The novelist, playwright, and human rights activist Adalet Ağaoğlu (1929) as one of the most prolific living authors is an emblem of this current, narrating the gender discrimination and women's double oppression in the family and outside within the Turkish leftist circles. In her comparative work on women writers including Ağaoğlu's *Lying Down to Die* [*Ölmeye Yatmak*] (1973), literary critic Meltem Gürle notes for the woman protagonist Aysel, who is an educated "Republican woman" [*Cumhuriyet kadını*] that

> She has never been free from the concerns imposed on her by the country's narrative of modernity. Taught to be a strong, independent woman, she discovers, in the barren personal space of the hotel room, that she has been castrated by the regime. The Kemalist public sphere, therefore, though it seemed socially inclusive, was limited by a precondition. Women were invited there not as private individuals entitled to their own opinions but as the bearers of the ideology of the regime…they were allowed to appear in the public sphere only as "an idea"… ("Female Bildungsroman" 96-97)

Ağaoğlu's influence on later generations of women writers, and therefore inevitable crucifixion both by the state as well as by the quasi liberated leftist groups resulted from her dissecting micro masculinities which even the leftists grappled with but could not estrange themselves from.[211] Poet and literary critic Hilmi Yavuz also observes in the same novel that Aysel "comes to acknowledge that being enlightened does not necessarily bring freedom or solution for

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[210] Çimen Günay-Erkol, *Cold War Masculinities in Turkish Literature: A Survey of March 12 Novels*. Diss. (Leiden University, 2008).

[211] My personal experience having been raised in an extended Turkish "leftist" family, which underpins adherence more to Kemalism than universal leftist ideals, exclusively composed of government employees. It is a testimony to the fact that women could not be free from domestic and public oppressions under the guidance of state feminism.

women in the societal level" (1977, 161).[212] Tekeli claims that unlike the left in Europe, which supported feminism, Turkish left considered it as a "threat against their power, and in a stricter sense as a threat that divided class solidarity." This perspective, Tekeli further argues, led leftists resort to patriarchial, masculine discourse in their encounters with women within and without their circles, whereby proving their unreadiness for democracy when it came to women's rights (*Feminizmi* 198). Yet, we should keep in mind that the leftist movements in these Western countries as broadly conceived did not always support women's rights movements, either. Even today, not all the leftist movements in the U.S. for instance consider women's rights as the top priority or even as intersecting with issues of economic inequality and racism. And when we closely engage with those leftists groups, we can also spot micro-agressions towards women resulting from structural patriarchy when it comes to appointments in top positions. Noone can deny the alerting degree of misogny towards women candidates of political parties in the West World either, regardless of their ideological stances. It is enough to say for now that more research is needed to compare the role of feminism in leftist movements globally before falling prey to essentializing dichotomies. In that sense, *Lying Down to Die* could well have taken place in the U.S. of 1950s throughout 1970s where the woman protagonist comes to realize her disillusion by women's emancipation. Regardless of her genetic disposition to depression, Sylvia Plath's disappointment as a writer and woman (and wife and mother) during 1950s is a testament to the status of woman in a Western society in that historical moment.[213] The myth of the freedom of the Republican woman in Ağaoğlu's novel *Lying Down to Die* (1973), therefore, collapses in the end with Aysel's fleeing a seemingly unproblematic life by killing herself.

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[212] Hilmi Yavuz. "*Ölmeye Yatmak* ve Kadının Özgürlüğü" ["*Lying Down to Sleep* and Women's Freedom"]. *Roman Kavramı ve Türk Romanı* [*Concept of the Novel and the Turkish Novel*] (İstanbul: Bilgi, 1977).

[213] On the other end of the spectrum, Marilyn Monroe's suicide in 1962 tells much about unrealistic expectations from famous women on TV during the 1950s.

Latife Tekin's (1957) *Gece Dersleri* (*Night Lessons*) (1986) is another example of women's disillusionment with the leftist movement. It narrates the story of a woman actively engaged in leftist politics, but who feels disoriented by misogynystic practices of the leftist party. In an interview, reknown human rights lawyer Eren Keskin mentions her experience within the socialist party in Turkey, which degraded women for putting make up, an encounter after which she has begun wearing it as a political act.[214] Such advocated defeminization of women often associated with the Republican state feminism finds also resonance in the civil society of the leftist groups.

Within this generation, Sevgi Soysal (1936-1976) also deserves attention as has been given by most recent scholarship.[215] Publishing her first short story collection *Passionate Bangs* (*Tutkulu Perçem*) in 1962, and her first novel *Tante Rosa*[216] in 1968, Soysal was imprisoned by the military government of 1971 for being a leftist, and her second novel *Walking* (*Yürümek*) (1970) was banned for obscenity. Hülya Adak also argues in her comparison of three literary works by women writers among which *Tante Rosa* emerges as an early cornerstone in dealing with women's issues, that "As is evident from these three works, Turkish women writers experiment with l'écriture féminine from the 1960s on." "Feminine writing" explores the possibilities of writing the female body and the possibilities of "language" for giving expression to sexualized and gendered bodies.[217] I expand this definition of feminine to include not only writing the female body but also other bodies from a feminine perspective.

Intersectionality is also a useful concept with which we can analyze the multilayered exploration of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and age in Turkish women's literature. Despite

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[214] https://m.bianet.org/biamag/kadin/151717-eren-keskin-makyaj-yapmaya-nasil-basladim

[215] See the edited volume *Ne Güzel Suçluyuz Biz Hepimiz!* (2013) [*How Nicely Guilty We All Are!*] by Seval Şahin on Soysal's writing.

[216] As in original.

[217] Hülya Adak, "From l'Écriture Féminine to Queer Subjectivities: Sevgi Soysal, Emine Sevgi Özdamar, and Perihan Mağden," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 12. 1 (2016): 110-111.

the criticism[218] the term has garnered since its coinage in the nineties by Kimberley Crenshaw to address the black women's experience with racism also within their communities, mostly resulting from the term's possibility to flatten particular racisms experienced by particular groups, no alternative framework has yet emerged to replace the breath of intersectionality. When analyzing stratified discrimination in one particular group, and groups within a society, intersectionality is still the only existing and applicable theoretical framework.[219] Intersectional feminism in particular alerts us against the danger of evading different experiences and oppressions among women in various contexts.

Largely ignored during her life time by the literary circles, Soysal's contemporary rediscovery speaks also to smoothing of the literary circle's masculinely defined borders. Among the second generation Republican writers, Duygu Asena (1946-2006) also stands out as a vocal feminist and founder of numerous women's magazines. And as the political scientist Fatmagül Berktay mentions Asena was as much berated by "the masculine state" as well as "its so called leftist, enlightened face" in 1970s during a time when there was no sign of "Islamic conservatism" (Berktay 11).[220] Tekeli also points out the belatedness of liberal feminist ideals to influence Turkish society by charging the Turkish left with responsibility as follows:

> The intense debate and the revival of leftwing ideas in the 1960s and 1970s were exceptionally important for Turkey. Young intellectuals turned not only to the West but also to the East and the Third World, bringing a wide range of 'revolutionary' ideas to

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[218] Keisha Lindsay critically engages with intersectionality as follows: "What kind of normative agenda does an intersectional framework engender? The answer lies in embracing and elaborating upon intersectionality's status as a heuristic. When I speak of intersectionality as a heuristic I mean that it illuminates how identities, social categories, or processes of identifi cation and categorization gain meaning from each other but that it does not prescribe which identities, categories, or processes are mutually constructing. The result is that intersectional analysis can be used to make starkly different arguments, including anti-progressive ones, regarding who is disadvantaged and how to remedy their disadvantage" in "God, Gays, and Progressive Politics: Reconceptualizing Intersectionality as a Normatively Malleable Analytical Framework," *American Political Science Association* 11. 2 (2013): 447.

[219] Without naming it, the writer and civil rights activist Audre Lorde formulated the framework for intersectionality in *Sister Outsider* (1984).

[220] "Duygu Asena ile Düşünmek" Sempozyumu Ana Tema Konuşması, Kadir Has Üniversitesi, 19 Nisan 2016.

> Turkish opposition politics. Yet, as they were all as Stalinist and as patriarchal as the bourgeois and conservative parties they criticized, they formed an obstacle to the spread of ideas from the Western women's movements to Turkey. This is why the young women involved in feminist movements and influenced by the debates and actions of their counterparts in France or Great Britain, could paradoxically speak out only after 1980, when the military coup crushed the left. (1992, 140)[221]

Influenced as Tekeli emphasized more by Soviet leftism and existing patriarchy, Turkish left was admittedly crushed by the coup; however, also transformed its politics on the line of more liberal-democratic values spearheaded by various feminist groups including women wearing headscarves whose struggle for a more inclusive public space helped also democratize the Turkish left. Duygu Asena's popular novel *Woman Has No Name* (*Kadının Adı Yok*) (1987) which thematized women's problems and gender inequality was nevertheless banned in 1988 during the neoliberal "Motherland" party government, not so surprizingly, for obscenity. No matter the government, the pattern of book banning for "obscenity" has always been incited by perpetual heteropatriarchial state ideology. One of the victims of this patriarchy on the micro level was a woman poet who committed suicide triggered by her chronic depression. As a "resident alien," Nilgün Marmara (1958-1987) was only posthumously published. [222] Her poems thematize loneliness, alienation, and death, which exhibit thematic and stylistic attributes with "confessional poetry" accentuated with direct references to Sylvia Plath's poetry which she wrote her thesis[223] on. (Marmara 7). Leaving aside the long and convoluted controversies about her suicide, her poems indicate a conflict between her inner world and the world outside, latter of which was never a

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[221] Şirin Tekeli, "Europe, European Feminism, and Women in Turkey," *Women's Studies International Forum* 15. 1 (1992): 139-143.
[222] Nilgün Marmara, *Daktiloya Çekilmiş Şiirler* (Istanbul: Şiir Atı, 1988).
[223] *The Analysis of Sylvia Plath's Poetry in the Framework of Her Suicide*. Thesis (Istanbul: Bogazici University, 1985).

heaven for an educated woman who was anxiously critical of the world's cruel realities. The absent text is the family in her poems which, when scrutinized justify her alienation resulting from an unease with the permanent status of women (no matter how educated they are) primarily as wives and mothers within the family structure.

Women's writing have thus been influenced by their own unequal confrontation first with the family as daughter (and sister) and the society, and second with the family as wife and the (same) society. Tekeli draws attention to women's place in capitalist societies where it is still defined by family as a result of the failure to "socialize" domestic work (*Feminizmi* 32). In other words, as long as domestic work stays separated from the society whose weight is loaded on women within the family, women can neither be fully free from patriarchy nor equal with men.

Ideological discrepancies in women's writing, therefore, also do not much matter because those writers who were even active supporters of the reforms might not have necessarily observed conflict between state feminism and its masculinity; nevertheless, they reprehend the latter in their writing whereby unwittingly critiquing the former. Pious women writers, similarly, formed another line of resistance to state surveillance of women wearing headscarves, contesting the anti-democratic nature of this feminism. Regardless of women writer's ideological alignments in the political public sphere, their writing attests to underlying problems with the masculine, heteropatriarchal state feminism.

Such women writers, who published their main works before 1990s deserve attention in their narrative resistance against the patriarchal family institution, *the* party (Kemalist/leftist/communist), and the state. "Threat" of Islamism through its--by now largely contested argument of "oppresssion of women" was hitherto not at sight nor were Kurds mobilized or their oppression had been heard. Islamist (what is also called) "revivalism" began in late 1970s, but its effects on society have not been visible until even mid 1990s. There was not enough time

for writers to observe and reflect this social transformation in their texts until after the “old” left was fatally wounded and after Islam appeared to demand its space in public following the military intervention of 1981. During this period, Muslim women’s voices began to fuse into the literary scene with their own sensibilities narrating similar themes with that of predominantly leftist women writers. Among them Cihan Aktaş (1960) particularly focalizes women’s stories through the lens of a woman with a headscarf, who was marginalized by the state’s headscarf ban in public.

As we know by now how self-orientalism influenced the Turkish society, it is a commonplace to assume that only women from “traditional” families are suppressed by men and the society. That was the kind of exceptionalism the Republican woman took for granted when she thought she was liberated because she did not have to cover by coercion. If coercion were to be identified only in terms of headscarf, understanding the society in Turkey would be a less complicated task than it actually is. Coercion can in fact be simplified when one begins to separate itself from another community assigning its allegedly identifiable parts as women with headscarf and without one as if headscarf is the only identity one supposed to have. One can easily find an excuse to perpetually generate same authoritative discourse on women’s bodies on one hand when criticizing the state for doing the same on another.

In her work on minorities in Europe, Fatima El-Tayeb criticizes othering of Muslim women by allegedly “progressive” Muslims, who reproduce the image of a homogenous Muslim community to be liberated:

> With this claim to exceptionalism, they enter a strange coalition with those they claim to fight, namely ultraconservative Muslim authorities, both insisting in the necessary link between Islam, patriarchy and antisecularism. Both groups are invested in keeping invisible negotiations of identity within minority communities: internal differences and conflicts already present in the origin societies, urban versus rural, religious versus secular, poor

> versus upper and middle class, are externalized. Within the dominant perception of Muslim communities as homogeneous, the question of what is part of the culture that supposedly sets minorities apart from the majority becomes increasingly reduced to exclusive binaries and what is perceived as diverging from "traditional" structures becomes identified with Westernization, positively or negatively. (105)

A group of Muslim immigrants' own externalizing another based on the constructed images by the European "locals" attests to a destructive self-orientalizing carried out in diaspora. The discourse of saving Muslim women in the end helps the "ultraconservative Muslim authorities" and the Islamophobic Europe fulfilling their respective interests.

Kurdish armed resistance was also officially been formed in 1984 during the time when an alleged "Islamism" began to "infuse" in the state. This is also the time when majority of the Turkish people living outside Turkey's Kurdistan heard about Kurdish people's oppression, and perpetual suppression as however one-sidedly reflected in the news. It was not until early 2000s that Kurdish people's oppression was thematized,[224] and Kurdish women writers started to emerge some of whom were imprisoned in mid to late 1990s for their alleged affiliation with the Kurdish insurgence. Kurdish women's issues intersecting ethnicity, religion, and gender complicate their oppression in relatively disguised ways compared to women belonging to the major ethnicity. Until 2010s, Kurdish literary scene was bountiful with young generation of writers writing in Kurdish and Turkish who persistently expanded the borders of the once conservatively defined Turkish literary scene.[225] Literary scholars then have a right to claim that ethic, religious, and gendered diversification of the Turkish literary scene began afterwards the last military rule.

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[224] Pamuk's *Snow* (2002) thus was quite a "timely" narrative.

[225] This relatively democratic era has come to end after 2010s with the ruling party AKP's second phase that has since then adjusted its policy back to policing Kurds and the Kurdish language.

What is striking, however, women's issues have not dramatically changed since 1960s, and their writing attests to the fact that so called Kemalist (therefore secular) versus Islamist (therefore unsecular) binary fails to mirror women's reality in Turkey; that is, they are subordinated by a uniformly practiced heretopatriarchy. Women's writing from 60s through 90s, then, when read in comparison with post-1990s literature provides strong clues to trace the iterative heteropatriarchal pattern permeating domestic and public spaces occupied by the modern family and the state (entities) respectively. Women are still expected to conduct their domestic roles as wives, mothers, unpaid house workers and caregivers separate from their public roles as employees at all levels.[226]

5.3. An Angry and Naïve Woman against Patriarchy in Soysal's *Passionate Bangs* (1962)[227] and *Tante Rosa* (1968)[228]

Born in 1936 to a Turkish father and a German mother, Sevgi Soysal grew up in a bureuocratic, educated family. His father was an architecht-civil servant at the state's ministry of development and housing. She attended Ankara University and eventually graduated from the department of archeology. She worked for German Consulate and at Ankara Radio. Her third marriage was with Mümtaz Soysal, then professor of constitutional law who was imprisoned by the military government of 1971 for being a communist. Sevgi Soysal was also imprisoned a few times after the coup for the same reason, and her novel *Walking* [*Yürümek*] (1970) was banned for obscenity by the same government. She lost her job at Ankara Radio after her release from prison, and died from cancer at a young age in 1976.

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[226] According to a recent sociological study on masculinity in Turkey "more than 50% of men acknowledge that they never conduct labor other than labor traditionally defined as 'men's work.'" Boratay et al. *Erkekliğin Türkiye Halleri* [*States of Masculinity in Turkey*] (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2017) 384.
[227] Sevgi Soysal, *Tutkulu Perçem* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2004) [1962].
[228] Sevgi Soysal, *Tante Rosa* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2010) [1968].

Soysal's first story collection *Passionate Bangs* (1962) is woven with passion, anger, and isolation that she felt inside her home, intellectual circle as well as on the street. The first story "Passionate Bangs" with the same title of the collection begins as follows:

> The things in things, you see – people on the streets do not see me. But I wander around for days with my passions on my bangs. It's a humid afternoon, dizzy, greeny. I stopped at the intersection. Cars endlessly pass by. They pass by with my crimson, firy face on their windows. I passed the pedestrian crossing at exactly three times. The traffic police didn't see me either. I shouted at him by crying "Stoplight…Stoplight!" I didn't calm down at all. My anger is under my feet as if I roam on the beach at an afternoon's heat- barefoot, on angry sand- my soles are burning. My anger is towards men, men, mostly at them, at the ones who themselves, again love themselves. They pass by in bulk, this army of the hard-hearted men with their two button, one button, three button blazers. I had a bit of hope in the ones without ties, without blazers, but these do not walk around alone – the weak ones. (Soysal 15)

Uneasiness with the gendered cruelness of the city strikes us right in this first paragraph as though the city comprises men only with the invisible implied protagonist. Men embody the city in the police, in the cars, in the government employees by erasing the woman trying to cross the street. The implied woman narrator sees these self-centric mechanized men as a callous army dressed in their mass-produced jackets. These second-generation urban Republican men work for the state, and for the protagonist they have no love for anyone but themselves. Despite their strong appearance as a group, the narrator sees their weakness precisely because they can only exist as a group, not alone, unlike the men without suits, who would perhaps be considered outcasts by some. State workers are devoid of individuality and vitality just like their employer (state). In almost two decades later, we can catch the footprints of Halide Edib's play *Masks or Souls?* (*Maske ve Ruh*)

(serialized in 1937 and published in 1945) in seeing the Republican state as devoid of soul (Adak, *Halide* 72). Whereas Edib, without particular focus on women, satirically attacked the Republican reforms, which were still taking place by the time she wrote the play, the next generation of women writers such as Soysal thematized women's place in domestic and public spaces.

In the story "In this Happiness that has Enmity" (*"Düşmanlığı olan bu sevinçte"*)*,* the first person protagonist expresses her frustration with domestic space as daughter and wife. We hear the wife's voice intermitted by the husband's interrogating her about food at the table:

> ...May he eat more, may he eat more, more. 'What else is there?, 'Is that all?', 'I've been craving for this for some time now, why did you cook this instead of that?', 'why this, why not that but this?' And a woman who asks, who can ask with her cold soup, 'Are you full?' Her affluent love for him, dissatisfaction, frustration, isolation that this love has left to the remainders, and the weight of all this, and the weight of an indescribable love. All is on her, that lump in her throat again. (1962, 27)

Repetition works to intensify the anxiety with the domestic duties and with the husband's inconsiderate questioning taking the wife for granted to complete the domestic tasks obediently. Soysal here criticizes the family structure that allows for abuse, and takes women hostage through a deceptive love that is not what it suggests.

The socialist feminist and Russian revolutionary Alexandra Kollontai (1872-1952) commented on the end of the traditional family that produced "value" for the state with women's productive domestic work which was replaced by mass production at factories. Although, Kollontai contends, women still work in the domestic sphere as well as outside, their domestic work drastically changed in the eyes of the state, which no longer benefited from such secondary

work[229] as it did not produce any "value". As a result, she argued, the traditional family is disappearing because it is no longer useful to the state, and with it the private handling of the domestic work is lending itself to the "collective housekeeping" (Kollontai 254-5).[230] Kollontai's predictions were evidently beyond her time and place as her family model was only marginally achieved in the Soviet Socialist Republic. Even today, we see that the traditional family is still prevalent in capitalist and "socialist" countries alike, and domestic tasks are still carried out overwhelmingly by women regardless of their working status outside. Domestic work division including childcare within the family has not been a serious concern for governments for the last century except in some European countries that are more invested in social welfare than others. All the state facilities to help women notwithstanding, family is considered as much a private matter as it was at the turn of the nineteenth century. Domestic abuse thus is as much a problem of the advanced industrialized societies as it is for the underdeveloped and developing ones.

In the following paragraph of the story, the narrator is reminded of her bearded father and his kiss. She remembers the first disgust of his hairy kiss interrupted by yelling of the husband: "Why don't you eat!" She then likens the "lump" to "a concrete barking" (Soysal 28). Things in the house build connections for the narrator. In the next scene, "a heavier weight crushed the silence"; silence of the dinner table is broken by the noise coming from the radio, noise of the war and Hitler (Soysal 1962 28). Hitler is also a man, husband, and warrior who at that moment weighed more heavily than her husband. Sevgi Soysal might have memories of WWII from the radio when she was a child as radio then was the fastest mass media everyone received the news

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[229] They comprise four tasks according to Kollontai: "cleaning (cleaning the floors, dusting, heating water, care of the lamps etc.), cooking (preparation of dinners and suppers), washing and the care of the linen and clothing of the family (darning and mending)" (254).

[230] Kollontai claims further that "The members of the family do not need the family either, because the task of bringing up the children which was formerly theirs is passing more and more into the hands of the collective" (258). Alexandra, Kollontai, *Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai*. Trans. Alix Holt (London: Allison & Busby, 1977).

around the world. Although Turkey did not participate in the war, it was the most important international news at the time. Rejuvenating her childhood memories, the narrator (and implied author) associates war and men which are antithetical to love that is not self-destructive unlike the narrator's love for her husband. The 1960 coup d'état was already recent when *Passionate Bangs* was published in 1962. The military officials dismantled the democratically elected government, and ruled a curfew where only military officials were free to move. In an environment where social life is frozen and human rights are suspended paradoxically in order to install "democracy" (as if plugging it into a socket), women become the most precarious group.

It is in this historical context that Sevgi Soysal published her short stories and novels, which witnessed two military coups. Her first novel *Yürümek* (1970) was banned for obscenity as mentioned before by the military government during when she was imprisoned. In the preface of the twelfth edition of Soysal's second collected stories *Tante Rosa* (Aunty Rosa) (2010) [1968], literary critic Murat Belge comments that "'the official Turkey' which was not bothered to take steps under the military rule, was going to be bothered, scared by everything someone like Sevgi Soysal did..." (8). The military only wanted to replace order in each case by suppressing democracy because the Republic was built on that same oppressive principle: suspending today's rights for an allegedly more democratic future when deemed necessary by the state. It hence came naturally to the generals who already had a prime model to be emulated. When it forcefully suppressed civil movements which carried the only potential to instigate a democratic society, and hoped to implement order temporarily (which it did by extreme measures), the junta state not only made sure to postpone democracy for decades, but also turned individuals into its own collaborators to ensure the doom of the buds of a possible civil society. Women's movement which comprises one of the largest branches that would shape such an independent society, was also prevented by a collective state-society oppression from becoming a grassroots movement.

We can ask then if Republic had made it a heaven for women giving them all the rights before they even asked for as argued by the Kemalist elites, why this woman also with culturally and socio-economically elite upbringing suffers in the domestic sphere as much as she does in the outside long before Islamism emerged? (which belatedly became an explanation for everything including women's oppression). Let us remember that in the previous story occurring outside home, the narrator's anger is also "towards men, men, mostly at them, at the ones who themselves, again love themselves" ("Passionate" 15). This anger is directed towards men inside and outside the domestic sphere because both are ruled by male dominance. As an educated woman herself, Sevgi Soysal's circle must have composed mainly of "liberated", high middle class, urban women like her. Yet, intellectual and class superiority seem to have little effect on their exclusivist place in private and public. They have to date been considered primarily as wives and mothers (of the state, and then of the male population), and secondarily as teachers, lawyers, and politicians.

The Republican constitutional reforms in the end did not change the society's perspective of women regardless of their class (therefore education level), ethicity and religion. Although laws indicate the opposite, since they are put into interpretation and implemented by lawmakers who are produced by the same society, and who embrace the same discriminatory perspective towards women, women almost always lose their cases against men. It is not simply economical; in fact, women have been protected more on economic plane than others because quantifiable section of the civil code is more transparent (as that of everything else). For instance, although divorce has become more widespread in Turkey, whereas an ex-wife is mostly negatively affected, nothing changes in an ex-husband's life; on the contrary, men might even benefit from divorce. Although an alimony is almost always guaranteed for the ex-wife (and children if any), her social problems transcend economic independence. Ex-husband is not isolated from the society, and is fully supported by his family and friends while the ex-wife is mostly isolated, and might not be

(emotionally and economically) supported by her family either. Ex-husband's family does not feel shame while the ex-wife's family experiences it to the fullest. Above all, in some cases, the wife endangers her life when getting a divorce. The ever increasing rate of murder of (ex-)wives at the hand of (ex-)husbands (as well as both of their families) itself proves that laws cannot protect women from abuse and death in Turkey.[231] Misogyny is rooted in the society, and women's joining the workforce does little to undermine it, even, at times exacerbates their already exploited situation by making them vulnerable to harrassment by bosses, supervisors, managers.

Sevgi Soysal as her contemporaries did, had a keen interest in observing the everyday that which harbored concrete hardships of women particularly. In doing so, she politicized what were then considered marginal issues that peculiarly belonged to women and not to the society as a whole. The problem with the left's grand ideals to dismantle imperialism and capitalism was its undermining women's emancipation, by considering it as secondary or even belated to the allegedly bigger achievements within their circles. They have failed to see such struggle starts with concrete particles dispersed from the family through society--depoliticized political entities. As Mojab Shahrzad rightly puts, "transformation occurs when matter transforms into consciousness and consciousness into matter...This consciousness has, through the practice of women's movements worldwide, changed gender relations through struggles for 'rights', but has failed to dismantle the hierarchy of gender relations" (7).[232] As such, the Republic granted many rights to women, who did not really need to organize, but that has not transformed the gendered hierarchy in the society until the present. Growing up in 1940s, a woman writer's particular attention to family and environment thus is more than legitimate as such precision originates from individual

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[231] According to a recent report on women's murder rate, it "has increased by 27% in 2017 compared to the previous year...Among the murdered 409 women, 39% were murdered by a husband or boyfriend, ex-husband/boyfriend; 33% were murdered by unknown people, and 24% were murdered by a father, son, step son or relative"https://www.amerikaninsesi.com/a/turkiye-de-kadin-cinayetleri-2017-de-yuzde-25-artti/4187800.html
[232] "Introduction" in *Marxism and Feminism*. Ed. Mojab Shahrzad (London: Zen Books, 2015).

experience (matter) as a woman within structural patriarchy, which is also interconnected to patriarchies in other sites.

Soysal's 1968 novella *Tante Rosa* composed of interconnected stories narrates the story of a German woman in Germany (as the title evokes), which was allegedly inspired by the life of Sosyal's German aunt and maternal grandmother.[233] Soysal studied in Germany only briefly after her first marriage in 1956, and returned to Turkey in 1958. Yet, *Tante Rosa* challenges what counts as *Gasterbeiter Literatur* (*Gurbetçilerin Edebiyatı*) as well as Turkish literature. It is in Turkish but takes place in Germany narrating a German woman's life, which has nothing to do with Turkey and Turkish language or people. Taking place in Germany, notwithstanding, *Tante Rosa*'s familiarity to not only women in Turkey but in other places emerges from its early consciousness that women's lives are interconnected at some point. That point is largely centered around marginalization of women with their multiple identities as wives, houseworkers, mothers, caregivers (to children and elders if any), and as workers outside. They are expected to impeccably conduct all these separate roles in a (predominantly advanced industrialized) world that still amazingly wants to deceive itself into believing that their responsibilities are *equal* to men's. Let me take a step back and give its due credit to this world that gave more rights to women than they had before. What I would like to emphasize is that regardless of the given or earned "rights", gendered perspective towards and expectations from women have stayed largely unchanged particularly since the beginning of women's integration into the work force. All women of the world in developing and developed countries today watch TV, read magazines which are full of narrative and visual messages that are constantly sent out to keep the gendered perspective intact. Tante Rosa as well first read the so-called family magazine *Sizlerle Başbaşa* (*Together with You All*) when she was eleven. The interconnected stories in *Tante Rosa* trace the *bildung* of the

[233] Sosyal's mother's given name was Anneliese Rupp before she adopted the Turkish name "Aliye".

character Tante Rosa from her youth to death who is disillusioned by the outside world as represented in the magazine *Sizlerle Başbaşa.* She fails to live up to the criteria those unordinary "role-models" (such as the Queen of England) and romanticized and pranked "life-models" set in the magazine. Rosa is an ordinary woman apparently living through the pre- and post- of the WWII, unaware of racism (of her own), sexism against women, which make her look more naive than she would actually be. Rosa is enmeshed in cheap serial novels published in the magazine (as a family saga), and is fooled by its advertisements for work and lover, which throw her from one place to another, one job to another and one love to another, finally bringing her miserable end.

The first page of the novella tells Rosa's first encounter with the magazine as a child when she decided to be a horse acrobat seeing Queen Victoria in *Sizlerle Başbaşa* magazine dressed in horsedealer style during her visit to the Royal Cavalry Troops. When she informed her mother about her decision to be an acrobat, Rosa's mother was reading a serial novel in the magazine, which depicted a scene where someone was in shame for their sister's pregnant belly seemingly conceived out of the wedlock, and tried to escape her eyes from the belly (1968, 17). Rosa's mother's reading the morality novel at that moment frames the familial background, and foreshadows what is to come for Rosa in the future. In the following section, Rosa is sent to the convent school where she is soon expelled for calling the pastries as "the boy's cock" in its local name in Bavaria (26). Soon, Rosa discovers her sexuality, and one day had an abrupt affair with the neighbor's son Hans from whom she becomes pregnant right away "just as the cheap love romans published in *Sizlerle Başbaşa* magazine told" (30). And just as they also advised to be married to save the honor, she marries to Hans, and soon after learns that the romantic love in those novels was a farce (32). From then on Rosa's life goes up and down amongst affairs, children, and jobs but she always finds a way out of even the most desperate moments. Finally she dies an

ordinary death alone. Rosa's familiarity despite being a Rosa and not Ayşe as the critic Murat Belge put it in the preface, was an uncharted one by that time when Turkish writing focused on much "grander" difficulties than that which chronicled an ordinary woman's ordinary personal life, which in fact is unhesitantly public, thus political (7).

Unapolegitically feminist, *Tante Rosa* particularly and Sevgi Sosyal generally were ignored during that time precisely because of the informed frustration that women had already been given *rights*. It is not surprizing, however, for the then Turkish society which was trying to keep up with its newly minted democracy after a long one party rule, to have failed to properly address women's perpetual issues beyond the rights discourse. The second generation women writers among whom Sevgi Soysal holds a crucial role, thus became the forerunners even before feminism entered the vocabulary of Turkish as a scholarly inquiry. I particularly find these first works of Soysal as groundbreaking in that historical moment as seeds of establishing an underground woman writers' movement against systemic patriarchy after the Republic. If one still believes in the doom of so called "women's problems" (because in a slip of the tongue, we can read "women as problem"), Soysal's early works serve as a strong reminder of the continual isolation, vulnerability, and abuse of women almost always in their encounters with men inside and outside the private home.

There is not much that separates German Rosa from Turkish Ayşe in their second class citizenship except certain cultural practices which might be misread as the latter's originary difference creating the image of a generic Ayşe (always submissive and loyal). Kumkum Sangari drew our attention to the problem with "cultural alterity" based on "traditions" which "obscures the past and present albeit often contrary co-constitution of imperial and subordinate economies, nation spaces and patriarchies" (Sangari 268).[234] Patriarchy is not (and has not been) external to

[234] "Patriarchy/Patriarchies" in *Marxism and Feminism*., ed. Mojab Shahrzad (London: Zen Books, 2015).

Europe or the West the former of which is supposedly carried into such post-patriarchal lands by immigrants and refugees (268).

5.4. Reading Öztürk's *Dust Cloth* (2015) at the Intersection of Ethnicity, Gender, and Class

In addition to being exposed to harrassment within the family, women are also abused within the workforce by the world market system of enslavement. The feminist theorist Cinzia Arruzza argues that at this historical moment, capitalistic mode of oppression has come to enclose "traditional forms of oppression," and that

> Even in countries in which the domestic mode of production remains in place, it is subjected to intense pressure by the country's integration into the world capitalist system. The effects of this system – including colonialism, imperialism, the pillaging of natural resources on the part of the advanced capitalist countries, the objective pressures of the global market economy, etc. – have a significant impact on the social and familial relations that organize the production and distribution of goods, deeply reshaping and exacerbating the exploitation of women and gendered violence. (Arruzza 91)[235]

The movie *Dust Cloth* (2015) captures the daily struggles of the two Kurdish women domestic workers in Istanbul. Nesrin and Hatun live in the same apartment building in a slum from where they set out to clean homes in rich neighborhoods. Nesrin lives on the downstairs with her daughter Asmin, and is worried about her husband, who disappears from sight after Nesrin kicks him off the apartment during what sounds like a frivolous fight. And throughout the film, we learn

[235] Cinzia Arruzza, "Capitalism's Insidious Charm Vs. Women's and Sexual Liberation," *Feminism, Capitalism and Critique: Essays in the Honor of Nancy Fraser*, ed. Banu Bargu and Chiara Bottici (New York: Palgrave, 2017).

nothing about the whereabouts of the husband except in one momentary scene where he again vanishes from sight. Falling into despair, Nesrin is obliged to provide for her daughter as a domestic worker and a single mother.

When Nesrin and Hatun gossip about the personal lives of their upper class women employers, there's a moment we do not hear what they whisper in each other's ear. Their speech is intentionally alienated from the audience though there's no one around to overhear. This silence works to illustrate the extent to which we do not hear others' voices. And this sequence prepares us for what to come when their voice is also hushed by their employers' speech.

During a conversation between her employer Ms. Ayten and her guest neighbor, Hatun becomes speechles when the guest questions whether she is of "Circassian" origin since she looks like one with her blonde hair. Despite Hatun's silence, the guest goes on to mention two old famous Turkish actors of Circassian heritage, who in her words "are all one of *us*." Ayten is burst into laughter, and after weird moments of chuckling, randomly starts to talk about another woman cleaning a neighbor's home, whom she tells is quite "gracious" (*hanımefendi*) to which the guest agrees by saying "*hanımkadın*" (gracious lady). Ayten mentions that apparently this neighbor is from the city of Diyarbakır (the Kurdish capitol). And then cynically adds glancing at Hatun: "You'd never tell she's Kurdish." Hatun looks down by humiliation, which is eloquently captured by close-ups. In the following scene, we see Hatun pensively sitting in the subway with her arms folded, which makes her look shrunked from the verbal assault she experienced moments ago. The film makes explicit the difference of attitude towards being of Circassian origin versus Kurdish by oral and visual exchanges. Hatun censors herself when subjected to the guest's insistence on her being Circassian, and to Ayten's laughter and "compliments" about the other neighbor, who is told to be a *gracious woman for a Kurd*. The director makes a conscious choice by trying to show how these women become silenced based on their gender, ethnic, and class identities. Upper-class

women employers oppress their women workers through micro-agressions resulting from their ignorance for their gendered and racialized struggles.

Notice however that even these affluent women of the ethnic majority appear only within the house though they do not conduct the domestic work themselves. Making other women do the work still contributes to the systemic undervaluing of the domestic work so long as it is treated as a lower status work conducted by lower class women for a much lower stipend. As Arruza argues, housework which in her words is the "'feminized' socially reproductive labor" is undermined by capitalism "by dissolving previous forms of gender oppression only to replace them with entirely new ones or by combining the old and the new into ambiguous and complex forms. These forms of women's oppression are specifically capitalist, as evidenced by their entanglement with commodification, the dynamics of the job market, and the capitalist division of labor" (91). When the husbands of these women employers have the privilege to be outside doing more "important" work (and producing more "value"), women emloyers still need even minimally to supervise professional domestic workers at home. When women are coerced into spending more time at home, repeatedly voiced but much less critically engaged discourse of sustaining equality at "outside" work is hard to achieve.[236]

Despite the state's high level of family support in Turkey (in contrast to the lack of family support in the U.S. for instance), providing "outside" working women long paid and unpaid leave before and after pregnancy, gender inequality persists as a result primarily of the underlying conservative mindset which regards women equal at work perhaps but not within the domestic sphere. And when we shift our attention to poor women of minority, their particular struggles do not overlap with that of the poor women of majority either. As a racialized ethnicity, Kurds in

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[236] As long as traditional gender roles are accepted and promoted within the domestic space, women's emancipation in Turkey or in the U.S. will not be complete.

Turkey are underprivileged in their access to educational and economic means precisely as a result of their "difference," and poor Kurdish women experience the additional gendered dimension of this racialization. Although capitalism undeniably feeds on women's housework, which still does not produce "value" despite being paid, Kurdish women's exploitation bears more complexity than an economic approach could suffice to explain. Kurdish women undertaking "'feminized' socially reproductive labor" are exposed more to "intersectional experience" which is "greater than the sum of racism and sexism" as Crenshaw argued than they are to a singularly class based one.[237] Although Keisha Lindsay blames intersectionality for not being "a necessarily progressive analytical framework" as it is also used by a certain cluster of the majority within a minority group against a marginalized cluster within the same social group, employing the term for better analyzing layered racisms within a group is still (and only) option (456).[238] After defining the advantaged and disadvantaged clusters within a social group, if necessary, another term might be put to use. It is also our job to thoroughly analyze these dynamics without feeling to be binded by one term for, ideally, evidential reality must determinate the term, and not vice versa. In the context of the Kurdish women, other than the valuable practical work done by activist Kurdish women themselves in their own communities under the flagship of freedom, their struggles have often been overlooked both by the academia as well as within their own communities *for different reasons* nothwithstanding. Through oftentimes subtle textual and visual aesthetics, literature and film as much as other creative work therefore help us better notice these already existing stratified

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[237] Kimberley Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Instersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1/8 (1989): 140.

[238] "Intersectionality is not a necessarily progressive analytical framework. As a heuristic it reveals how identities, social categories, or processes of identification and categorization are co-constitutive without prescribing who is disadvantaged as a result or how to ameliorate their disadvantage. Conservative black Christians and others can thus use intersectionality to advance a range of normative arguments including anti-feminist, racist, or heterosexist ones."

forms of discrimination experienced by Kurdish women, elucidating "who is disadvantaged as a result" which intersectionality itself might not be enough to prescribe.

In addition to experiencing ethnic discrimination outside their neighborhood, Hatun and Nesrin also experience micro-power struggle between each other, one of whose husband disappears while the other's provides more financial stability as well as protection. Hatun not only dreams of but saves for buying a house in a neighborhood like the ones they go for cleaning. Hatun's relatively prosperous condition then contrasts with Nesrin's, whose inability to pay her rent puts her at the mercy of Hatun. This novel imbalance takes toll in their day to day exchanges where Hatun begins to micro-manage Nesrin who also becomes vulnerable to her friend's abuse. I therefore argue intersectionality still provides the much needed framework to understand Kurdish women's struggle within the Kurdish community as well as in their negotiations with the broader society.

The two's lives in the end reach a compromise only after Nesrin decides to escape out of despair, leaving her daughter Asmin to Hatun's custody. When Hatun enters Nesrin's deserted home, she looks at the Turkish coffee cup turned upside down on the table, through which Hatun understands that Nesrin has permanently left closing on her future. Neither Nesrin nor Hatun however can imagine a bright future in this gendered and racialized class struggle.

When *Toz Bezi* was released in 2015, it won the best national film award at the 35th Istanbul International Film Festival. Its director and scriptwriter Ahu Öztürk dedicated her award to the peace in the country. She mentioned the sacrifices of Kurdish women, and peace academics most of whom by now have been expelled from their positions for signing a petition calling the state to end the war in Northern Kurdistan (*Bâkur*) in the borders of Turkey. And at the very end of her award speech, she firmly declared her belief that "women are going to build peace if wars will first

shoot women and children."[239] This was a moment of resistance when artists were overwhelmingly coerced into silent self-sensorship as a result of explicit and implicit threats from the state.

5.5. Male Homosociability against Masculinities in Mağden's *Ali and Ramazan* (2010)

In her "Commodities among Themselves" Luce Irigaray commented on the social necessity of homosexuality in patriarchical societies as follows:

> The exchanges upon which patriarchal societies are based take place exclusively among men. Women, signs, commodities, and currency always pass from one man to another; if it were otherwise, we are told, the social order would fall back upon incestuous and exclusively endogamous ties that would paralyze all commerce. Thus the labor force and its products, including those of mother earth, are the object of transactions among men and men alone. This means that the *very possibility of a sociocultural order requires homosexuality* as its organizing principle. (192, emphasis original)

In reality, Irigaray argues that male-homosexuality compared to female one is in fact a marginalized center. We can find some evidence for this decentralization of male-homosexuality in the Ottoman Empire for instance where a third gender called *oğlan* (a boy who has not reached puperty) was largely accepted whereas a female equivalent did not exist.[240] Reminiscent of *Köçek*s,

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[239] Öztürk's full dedication speech reads as follows: "Ben ödülü, Şırnak'ta çocuklarının ölüsünü buzdolabında saklayan annelerden, yurtdışında çocuğuyla vedalaşıp burada tekrar cezaevine gelen sevgili Meral Camcı'ya uzanan o yol adına alıyorum. Savaşlar kadınları ve önce çocukları vuracaksa, barışı da kadınlar kuracak."
[240] Irvin Cemil Schick, "The Ottoman Erotic," *Ottoman History Podcast* December 18 (2016). http://www.ottomanhistorypodcast.com/2016/12/irvin-cemil-schick.html

male dancers, dressed as women are in fact still visible in rural areas where they perfom during weddings or other celebrations, and are considered as part of the folk tradition today.

A pioneer in bringing minorities to the forefront, and the crimes of the authoritarian state to the scene, Ece Ayhan was also among the first writers and poets in Turkey such as the early Republican period short story writer Sait Faik (1906-1954), and later Bilge Karasu (1930-1995) who thematized homosocial and homoerotic (male) relationship, which were needles to say one of the biggest taboos for the state and the society. Nothing has much changed in the state's perspective of (assumed) queer identities although they visibly began to claim a public space for themselves for the last two decades. Yet, their visibility in public space was not going to be reflected in literature until the 1990s during which short story writer and poet Murathan Mungan (1955) and poet Küçük İskender (1964) became among the contemporary authors to more openly thematize male homoeroticism.

Ali and Ramazan (2010) emerged as a meta-novel of all that which was not hitherto bluntly articulated. It also diverges from previous work by having been written by a woman writer. Perihan Mağden (1960) is a writer and columnist whose other novels include *Messenger Boy Murders* (1991), *The Companion* (1994), *2 Girls* (2002),[241] *Escape* (2007), and *Yıldız Yaralanması* [*Star Injury*] (2012). All but *Yıldız Yaralanması* have been translated into English. Her writing career accompanied Mağden's journalistic career, whose *real* events infuse and inspire her fiction. In her essays, Mağden particularly focuses on popular culture, and the ways in which that culture shapes society in Turkey. Mağden's fiction is centered around the politics of everyday. Epigraph of *Ali and Ramazan* (2010) showcases a quotation by the Belgian writer Raoul Vaneigem, which summarizes Mağden's literary politics: "People who talk about revolution and class struggle

[241] The book was made into a film with the same title in 2005 by Kutluğ Ataman.

without referring explicitly to everyday life, and without understanding what is subversive about love and what is positive in the refusal of constraints, have a corpse in their mouth." Her novels chronicle masculinity, homoeroticism and homosexuality; influenced by her colum, her literary language is fluid and heavily mobilizes slang and idiomatic expressions. Mağden is not new to the subject of homosociability; her *2 Girls* (2002) debuts a homosocial relationship between the two young women whose lives are squashed by toxic masculinity.

As a consciencious objector, Mağden also became the target of the state but was finally acquitted in 2006. Mağden's courageous statements against the masculine army-state seeded by *Yeni Osmanlılar* (the New Ottomans), *Jön Türks* and the emergency regime of the CUP, later followed by Kemalism culminated in her isolation from the patriarchical (and male dominated) literary circle, which did not want to appear against the state. The heteropatriachal state also panicked when confronted (particularly) a woman daring to openly reject and criticize the holiest service to the country, whereby paving the way for provision of conscienscious objection. Hence, not only literary writers, but also literary critics turned a blind eye to Mağden's fiction (as they did to Ece's poetry), and her works have oftentimes come to be overlooked in literary magazines as well as in academic publications. Mağden's case in fact resembles Orhan Pamuk's who was crucified by all circles alike for stating the Ottoman and Turkish state's crimes agains Armenians and Kurds respectively. Pamuk's advantage however is to have received the Nobel Prize, which provided him with the privilege of acknowledgement.[242] Only recently, literary scholarship "condescended" to investigate Mağden's fiction,[243] which in fact influenced Orhan Pamuk as vocalized by the writer himself.[244]

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[242] Similarities between Mağden and Pamuk do not end here; they also graduated from the same prestigious English language high school (Robert College).
[243] Hülya Adak is among the literary critics who broke the politically motivated silence around Mağden.
[244] In the backcover of Mağden's *Messenger Boy Murders* (1991), Pamuk acknowledges his admiration for Mağden's fiction.

Ali and Ramazan is a story of two boys named Ali and Ramazan who grow up together in an Istanbul orphanage where they find solace in each other amongst the ugly realities of the orphanage. Their dependence on one another deepens by time turning into an obsessive love affair. Born in an Arab-Alawite (or Nusairi) family, Ali arrives to orphanage after Ramazan, who by then had taken things in control. With death of both of his parents in front of his eyes, Ali becomes the emotional side of the rough Ramazan. Ramazan's relative hegemony over others, as we learn, stems from his sexual abuse by the principal of the orphanage, who is depicted on the other hand as a heterosexual family man with a wife and child. The principal who is only identified as *müdürüm* (my principal) in the narrative is pathologically infatuated with Ramazan, and takes him to whichever orphanage he is appointed. By the time Ali and Ramazan become eighteen, as the rule orders, they leave the orphanage to first conduct their service. Outside is full of worldly challenges that they were not aware of inside the precarious but stable protection orphanage had provided. Ramazan prostitues himself in the dangerous backstreets of Istanbul to make ends meet. Ali is tortured by Ramazan's way of money making, and seeks refuge in drugs. Eventually, Ramazan brings their mutual friend *Kürt Recep* (Kurdish Recep) from orphanage to take care of Ali. As time passes, Recep becomes integrated in money laundering business handled by his fellow Kurds, and holds on to his Kurdishness even more as a newly minted identity. Recep grows out to bear a grudge against Ramazan as his ex-underdog, and in a fight was stabbed by Ramazan. Ramazan's dangerous occupation in the end shows its true color, and he dies amidts a hunt. His death is reported in the third page news with a covered up "alternative" story. Hearing Ramazan's death, Ali commits suicide by hanging himself in the ruins of the orphanage where they were once themselves as Ali and Ramazan.

Nothwithstanding the tragic end, the novel posits homosocial experience as resistance against heteropatricarchy which is depicted in the principal's cruel treatment of his anonymous

wife and child. Ramazan calls his wife *paspas* (doormat) because to Ramazan it is how he treats her. Including the principle himself, all are victims of this heteropatriarchal system which imposes its particular norms based on the recognition of only two genders, and regulated sexual attraction. In this setting, non binary identities are outlawed, and suffer at the hands of their parents (if any) through forced assimilation into expected gender roles and sexual identities of the larger society through ostracising and abuse, and finally of the state through police and at time military violence.

The story of Ali and Ramazan begins with the chapter "Them" ("Onlar") from the end where the news of their deaths are announced on the third page under the headlines as "The Twisted Night: Two Deaths":

> On December 1992, the story of Ali and Ramazan comes to an end, in real life, on the third page [*üçüncü sayfada*]. Ali and Ramazan are the third page children whose short lives were dodged in forty-fifty lines with bloody photos. THE DAY HE WAS TORTURED: They ended up on the third page first with this headline. After the military service, when they walked the streets when the Father State kicked them to the curb of the orphanage. The police apparently had tortured them pulling the car over the station. Ramazan's face is visible in the close shot which shows the wound where the police stubbed out a cigarette on his shoulder. It is visible how beautiful he is, how wounded and sad. The big newspaper announcing their end favored the headline: TWISTED NIGHT: 2 DEATHS. It kindly implied FAGGOT NIGHT: 2 DEATHS. Small language games of a big newspaper. It is always the same… (13)

Coverage of the death of Ali and Ramazan in the news reminds us of the news report of the "great theater master" Sunay Zaim's death by Ipek's sister and leader of "headscarf girls" Kadife at the theater stage in *Snow* under the headline "Death at Stage: Famous Actor Sunay Zaim

was Shot to Death during the Yesterday Night Show" (*Kar* 336). The language of the newspaper chooses to victimize "the frustrated" Sunay Zaim and to vilify "the stubborn leader of the headscarf girls" Kadife by comparing his death to that of the English writer Kyd (336). Newsreporting thus fails to satisfy the need for accessing "facts" because actors of such news are guided by their own biases, interests, and perspectives aligning oftentimes in this context with the state's and their imagined society's position.

The opening section of Ali and Ramazan therefore provides the three oppressive elements of the system: the nonexistent family, instead, the father state both as the family and the punisher, and the homophobic society. Ali and Ramazan are both poor and gay, which marginalizes them even more. Yet they are still men who could find an easier way to survive than if they were poor gay women when they were discharged from the orphanage. Ramazan continues to prostitute himself even after he is freed from sexual abuse of the principle, and for that the novel holds the principle responsible. He is to be blamed for sure, but Ramazan also resorts to violence with his customers or even with his friend Kurdish Recep when there emerges a dispute, which is not a gay woman could possibly dare or would have the power to do. In this respect, we can also see the traces of "harmful masculinity" reflected through the character of Ramazan. Recent scholarship on masculinity studies underline the difference among masculinities and emphasizes that "not all harmful masculinities are hegemonic" particularly violent forms of masculinities unraveling in marginalized sections of the society because they "emphasize power and force...Their origins lie in adversity, including in violence experiences in childhood that have enduring psychological impact, manifesting in a lack of empathy and remorse, which enable acts of violence while positioning the male actors as themselves victims" (114).[245] It is not that this harmful masculinity

[245] R. Jewkes et al, "Hegemonic masculinity: combining theory and practice in gender interventions" *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 17 (2015): 112–127, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2015.1085094.

does not share some tenets of hegemonic masculinity but they are not synonymous.[246] That is the reason why Ramazan is also a victim in the end though he commits violence. Physical force is the only form of power he learns from the principle, and that becomes his survival tool outside on the backstreets of Istanbul. Traumatized by his mother's killing his father and than herself in front of his eyes, Ali on the other hand inflicts violence on himself only. Ali and Ramazan are doubly precarious bodies as gay and poor. And theirs is a harmful masculinity embedded in poverty which eventually harms themselves more than anyone else.

Mağden in the end did not choose to narrate the story of another homosexual love whose protagonists are born in wealth. It is not that they do not exist in the society but because class privilege plays a central role in the spectrum of marginalization. Feminist philosopher Johanna Oksala notes the abuses of homosexuality by the capitalist market as follows:

> In instances when heteronormativity is beneficial for the goal of capitalist accumulation, capitalism works in tandem with the mechanisms of sexual oppression. In geographical locations and historical periods in which the reverse is true, however, it is completely conceivable that capitalism benefits from gay liberation. Fraser gives the example of multinational corporations treating homosexuals as a new market (p.183). In other words, capitalism has a historically contingent and opportunistic relationship to heterosexism, not a logically or functionally necessary one. (78-79)[247]

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[246] Ibid.

[247] Not only capitalism but far right nationalism and xenophobia also have an "opportunistic" relationship with LGBTQ liberation. For a detailed discussion see Heike Schotten, "Homonationalism" *Feminist Journal of Politics* 18/3 (2016): 351-370, EBSCOhost, doi:10.1080/1416742.2015.1103061.

When we look at how particularly the visual art world markets gay artists as commodities who at the same time have to produce today within promiscuous category of gay art,[248] one should also consider the hegemony of homosexual male artists over both heterosexual and homosexual women in the art world for quite a long time. While homosexual male artists[249] are being celebrated in the art market, homosexual women artists do not get the similar degree of attention. That the visibility of homosexual male artists has risen in the past half century has not drastically transformed this balance in favor of women artists in general. In the literary world, since fame does not as spectacularly unravel itself as it does in plastic arts, there is not as much drastic discrepancy among genders in terms of publicity in the bigger scene as is in micro publishing industry in individual countries.

Among the reasons why the state is so much invested in restraining freedom of gender and sexual identities could also be its inability to oversee the family structure if people from all genders and sexualities freely merge, reproduce or in the case of same sex couples find a surrogate or adopt. If we closely look, we can see that keeping races (hence class) separate through protecting biological reproduction by intraracial marriage between heterosexual couples is part of today's family system in large parts of the world. If two women (same with men) from different races get married and adopt children, the domestic labor that the wife was wont to carry out will require most probably more "equal" redistribution, which would itself hugely contribute to disrupt the patriarchy. This does not mean that traditional marriage is the utmost goal to be reached for homosexual women or men. On the contrary, I think that what we encounter as marriage equality in today's industrialized parts of the world renders the struggle obsolote by (without intention)

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[248] See the exhibition "Queer British Art 1861–1967" on Tate's website. Compared to today's, it is hard to discern what makes them "gay art" other than the painters' sexual identities. See also David Hockney and Francis Bacon who were exhibited in the same room as contemporaries: https://www.tate.org.uk/art/queer-british-art-1861-1967.
[249] A pertinent example from Turkey is the openly gay photo realist painter Taner Ceylan (1967) who is reknown for his works depicting nude male homosexuals, and is recognized as "the Turkey's most expensive living artist."

emphasizing the importance of today's "official" marriage institution, which is itself based on the subjugation of women.[250] Marriage co-opts gay rights and pacifies the movement for equality as it is also strategically encouraged by the states for its economical benefits to (mostly heterosexual, cisgendered) couples, which eventually adversely affects women in general. Complete freedom of homosexuality and homosociability not only by law but also by the society itself[251] would perhaps serve as the strongest model to evacuate the capitalistically traditional family based on heteropatriarchy and subjugation of women if only men from all sexualities would be ready to evade their inborn privileges.[252]

As we have seen in *Dust Cloth* (2015), *Ali and Ramazan* (2010) narrates intersectionality of class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, and interrogates the possibility of male homosociability as much as homosexuality. In her article on works of three women writers including Sevgi Soysal and Perihan Mağden, Hülya Adak states that they "experiment with feminine writing (*l'écriture féminine*) in Turkish literature and explore the intersectionality of race, gender, sexuality, and the possibilities of narrating queer sexualities" (107). And these women's writing is not to be confused with the feminized counterdiscourse of the male subject in the late nineteenth century which Rita Felski mentions.[253] A woman's focalizing male-homosexuality can perhaps be read as another counterdiscourse to this feminized male-homosexual subject because it is both "women's writing" and about male homosexual subjectivity. *Ali and Ramazan* is a new threshold in Turkish literature in its realistic and cinematic narrative of male-love and sexuality by a woman writer.

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[250] Queer studies stress the importance of not perpetuating the systems of power for the sake of marriage equality, where the struggle for equality for all genders and sexualities do not end but only begin.
[251] That which has not happened in advance capitalist countries but might be still visible in some of the matriarchial indigeneous societies.
[252] Women of Rojava in Syrian Kurdistan are building the most exemplary society based on the tenets of radical feminist and eco-socialist principles. For further information on the subject, see https://internationalistcommune.com/jineoloji-the-science-of-womens-liberation-in-the-kurdish-movement/
[253] Rita Felski, "Femininization of Writing," *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1995) 93.

From disillusionment of educated and prosperous women with domestic life which does not change with woman's outside work in Sevgi Soysal's *Passionate Bangs* (1962) and *Tante Rosa* (1968), and impoverished Kurdish women's gendered and racialized experiences in *Dust Cloth* (2015)[254] to homosocial resistance in *Ali and Ramazan* (2010), women's writing in Turkish has since early 1960s challenged norms of Republican "state feminism," which has continued to regulate women's public and private worlds. Such works by women writers and artists contest the normative hegemonic relationships supported by women and men alike. Women's creative intrusion against these oppressive stagings of heteropatriarchy in Turkey renders itself among the most provocative and revolutionary artistic grounds to finally free all genders and sexualities in the society.

[254] Its scenario was also written by the director herself.

CONCLUSION

In the Shadow of World Literature, Michael Allan notes that "asking about how *adab* becomes literary...is a refusal of the binarism of literary theory and world literature: a gesture toward the wordly existence of the term *adab*, embedded in the question of what literature is, and the imbrication of philology and pedagogy it implies" (77). In Turkish literature, after *Tanzimat* (1939-1876), *edebiyat* began to replace *edeb*, with a new singular use notwithstanding, rendering *edebiyat* the new (literary) literature. Only after the beginning of the twentieth century one can trace a consistent use of *edebiyat* as a singularly literary concept in tandem with the discussions around national literature (*milli edebiyat*). *Edebiyat*, I argued, emerges at the turn of the twentieth century as a novel formula on its path to become *milli edebiyat*, having to acquire a "global" form with a local content (Köprülü 1914, 8-9). Prioritizing *edebiyat* (literature) over *edeb* (literature and manners) in late nineteenth-early twentieth century, I tried to show, pivots the politics of reading and interpretation in the empire to republic and onwards complicating the literary-political influence of the Republican writing reforms.

In the early years of the Turkish Republic up until 1950s, while the state embodied itself in the writer, the writer too assumed a stake in the formation of the nation-state. This was most palpable during the early years of the Republic, when a nationalist ideology—though ambivalently shared—shaped both state narratives and writers' literary and critical works. The writer-state and the state-writer in the new Republic controlled both reading and writing trying to orient literacy and literature towards a novel *milli* (national) unity based on the separation of form and content as argued by state-writers of *milli edebiyat* (national literature). With the dissolution of one party, one ideology authoritarianism since the 1950s, however, this convergence of the writer and the state has branched into multiple trajectories of contestation, opposition, resistance, and subversion. Some writers, for example, have undermined the state's romanticized ideology of the national

language in order to turn the language itself into an instrument of opposition. In another direction, writers have exploited the “unofficial” aesthetic power of the language to challenge the power of official discourse to legislate narrow and exclusive norms of literary aesthetics. In a different line of attack, post-republican writers have especially leveraged their linguistic, ideological, and gendered positions to create “intersectional” resistance against the centripetal forces of the patriarchal, literary nationalism. In the end, these contemporary literary works as I argued in this dissertation have rejuvenated the literary-ethical connotations of the pre-nineteenth century *edeb* contesting the state’s exclusionary heteropatriarchal and nationalistic discourse.

Terminology[255]

Amme: Belonging to a public. (From Arabic *a'mm*)

Âşık: a poet-singer who sings their poems or poems of other poets. Although it began to be used in this context since the fifteenth century, it has a longer tradition in the pre-Islamic Turkic world.

Edeb / Edep: manners, custom, morals. With *ilmü'l-edeb* (field of literature) and *ulûm-i edebiyye* (literary sciences), *edeb* was used to denote "literature" until the nineteenth century. *Edeb* has completely lost its meaning of literature since then.

Edebiyat: Literature (began to be used after *Tanzimat*). It has been the only word to describe literature today replacing *edeb* since the early twentieth century.

Edebiyye: Literary. It was used in phrases as in *ıstılâhât-ı edebiyye* (literary terms) in feminine form. This use has ceased to exist with *edeb*; however, *edebî* is used in the adjectival phrase to describe literary. Ex: *edebî sohbet* (literary conversation).

Feminine: I use feminine to describe a mode of writing which is not bounded by gender and sexuality.

Heteropatriarchy: A system where heterosexual men dominate women and all other genders and sexual orientations.

Homosocial*:* Social interactions between members of the same sex, particularly of men.

Kahve: Coffee and is today used for coffeehouse. As a place, it is occupied by lower middle class rural and urban men.

Kahvehane: Coffeehouse. Transformed from the Ottoman coffeehouse to *kahve* above where no longer artistic, dialogic, reading activities take place.

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[255] I referred to the following dictionaries here and in the main chapters: *Islam Ansiklopedisi* (Encyclopedia of Islam by the Islamic Studies Center in Turkey), *Kubbealtı Lugatı* (Turkish-Turkish etymological dictionary); Turkish Language Association's *Büyük Türkçe Sözlük*; *Merriam-Webster*; *Oxford*; *the Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*; *Redhouse English and Ottoman Dictionary* (1857).

Kafe: Modern style coffeehouse occupied mostly by urban population.

Karagöz: Turkish shadow puppet theater, and also name of the one of two main characters. It is a combination of two words *kara* (black) and *göz* (eye) because the character *Karagöz* is allegedly a gypsy exhibiting honesty and vulgarity as opposed to the mannered Hacivat who speaks a waxed Ottoman Turkish, and is a self-seeking man.

Kıraathane: Reading house. It does not exist as a "reading" place any more, and the word is rarely used today. President Erdoğan however has recently initiated a plan to revive *kıraathane*s in all over Turkey to allegedly aspread literacy.

Meddah: Traditional performative story teller having origins in pre-Islamic oral literature. Since the sixteenth century they performed at coffeehouses in the Ottoman Empire. The word stems from Arabic *medh* مدح to praise.

I. Meşrutiyet Devri: First Constitutional Period in the Ottoman Empire from 1876 to 1878 when *Kanûn-ı Esâsî* (Basic Law) was heralded.

II. Meşrutiyet Devri: Restoration of the Constitution from 1908 to 1920.

Millet: A (religious) community which emerged as the equivalent of "nation" in the Ottoman Empire since the beginning of the twentieth century. Before that *millet* was an organically developed system of rule, which provided autonomy to religious communities in the empire.

Millî: National

Milliyet: Nationality

Millî edebiyat: National Literature

Non-binary: A person who expresses a gender identity that is neither entirely male nor entirely female. Genderqueer is another term that is similarly used.

Post-Imperial: Period after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire officially in 1922.

Post-Republican: Period after the first party rule in the Turkish Republic in 1950.

Queer: Contested and emcompassing term in current scholarship to define people who are not heterosexual or cisgender, and/or who might not identify themselves as LGBT.

Sivil: Not belonging to the soldiery as in *sivil toplum* (civilian society). In Turkish, the term peculiarly refers to non-military and non-governmental society. In this sense, the adjective incurred semantic specificity in Turkish.

Şahsi: Literally belonging to the personal, private domain. In the context of *şahsi edebiyat*, it means having peculiarly worthy characteristics.

Şahsiyet: An honored character, person(ality). Köprülü uses this word to mean unique qualities of a literature.

Tanzimat: First Reformation Era in the Ottoman Empire beginning during the reign of Sultan Abdülmecid in 1839 with the Edict of Gülhane. Several modernizing reforms took place in the administrative system. It ended with the promulgation of the First Constitutional Era in 1876.

Ulus: Synoymous with *millet* as in nation. It has an old Turkish origin *uluş* (village; city), which became obsolete but reintroduced after the language reform during the early Republican period. Nationalists try to insert a difference between *millet* and *ulus* based on the former's association with the Ottoman *millet* system.

Umum: Public (noun) --sharing the same root with *amme*. *Kamu* and *umum* are interchangeably used in daily life but *umum* is most common in legal literature.

Ümmet: Despite meaning a religious community following a prophet, it is singularly used to refer to Islamic community today. See *amme* and *umum.*

Young Ottomans *(Yeni Osmanlılar)*: A group largely comprising Ottoman writers and intellectuals who were ideological supporters of the ongoing democratic efforts including promulgating constitutional monarchy in the empire in the nineteenth century. They later influenced the formation of the Young Turks.

Young Turks (*Jön Türkler*): A heterogeneous group of nationalist Ottoman students, former bureaucrats, and exiles who started a movement to replace absolute monarchy with constitutional monarchy in the early twentieth century. Some of them joined CUP later, and some opposed and founded Freedom and Accord Party.

The Young Turk Revolution: Restoration of the first Ottoman constitution by Young Turks in 1908.

Acronyms

CHP: (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*) Republican People's Party was established by Atatürk on September 9 1923, and on October 29 1923 it announced the foundation of the Turkish Republic.

CUP: Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakki Partisi*): Founded as a secret society in 1889, it transformed into a party, which consolidated its power particularly after what is called "The Young Turk Revolution" in 1908. It administered the coup against the opposition government of Freedom and Accord Party in 1913.

Note on Style, Transliteration and Translation

I followed MLA's seventh edition for citation. I used footnotes for longer explanations, notes for rare materials, and for additional sources in order to not disrupt the main text. I referred to Ece Ayhan as "Ece" throughout the dissertation conforming to his "civil" life-writing. All transliteration and translations from Ottoman and Modern Turkish into English are mine except in *Snow* where I also used Freely's English translation.

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