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Cold War masculinities in Turkish literature: A survey of March 12 novels

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Cold War Masculinities in Turkish Literature: A Survey of March 12 Novels

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Introduction

A common figure of speech in Turkish that communicates the power of a hardship, struggle, or burden on an individual is “having the milk one had drunk from his mother pumped out through his nostrils [anasından emdiği süt burnundan gelmek].” The significance of this saying, besides the savage image of torture it implies of a fluid being forced out the nostrils, is its metaphorical suggestion of the mother’s breast milk being stored in the adult individual’s body for years. By means of such an imaginary, this figure of speech points out the special link between the past and the present despite the gap that separates them. It hints that people carry their pasts within them and also suggests that, when under repression, one encounters elements of his past. This figure of speech illuminates the project of this dissertation for two reasons: first, with its violent imagery, it eloquently represents the extremity of the struggles with which the March 12 novels abound. It powerfully epitomizes the damage done by the military intervention of 12 March 1971, which forced tens of thousands of people to find themselves, in a sudden twist of the fate, as powerless children/citizens at the hands of an aggressive father/state. Second, by pointing out the ultimate presence of the past in the present, by means of its formula of “history” as metaphorical breast milk concealed in the adult body, this figure of speech suggests that what happened on March 12, 1971 actually keeps trembling the ground, especially for the people who encountered the period in traumatic ways. For those who recog-

nize how battles that evoked cultural and political conflicts in Turkey's past still reverberate in Turkey's present, this, of course, is no surprise.

This dissertation focuses on a collection of literary works that deals with the merits and consequences of post-1968 radicalism in Turkey. It revisits the crises of this radicalism in the so-called March 12 novels to carry out a narratological analysis with a gender-conscious agenda. My hypothesis is that the March 12 novels carry out a cultural critique of hypermasculinity, by using excessive masculinity as a metaphor for the abuse of power that permeated the society, and that they reveal a contemporary account of the "Bihruz bey syndrome," a syndrome named after one of the most controversial fictional characters in the Turkish novel.

The germ of the second part of this argument can be found in Şerif Mardin's famous article on the outrageous Westernization of upper classes in the Ottoman Empire. In this article, Mardin discusses the literary representations of Ottoman Westernization by referring to Recaizade Ekrem's famous novel *Araba Sevdası* (The Carriage Affair, 1896). Following Mardin, several literary critics, who concentrate on the reflections of Ottoman-Turkish modernization in literature, noted Bihruz bey, the archetypal protagonist of this novel. In addition to an extravagant snobbism, infatuation with Western culture, and estrangement from cultural values, the caricature dandy Bihruz bey also embodies feminine interests and manners, integrating liberalizing endeavors with a decay of indigenous masculine traits. Şerif Mardin argues that the aversion felt for Bihruz bey is the product of a cultural antipathy, which targets individuals challenging the societal norms, and hints that a similar scapegoating can be found in the disdain for socialism in 1960s Turkey.¹ Socialists, in other words, are the ones who found themselves as the new culturally-alienated "Bihruz bey"s in late 1960s, according to Mardin.

When the horrific memories of the military intervention are considered, gender and sexuality might be seen as inappropriate subjects for scholarly study of the March 12 novels. This dissertation, however, is framed by an opinion quite the opposite because gender plays a crucial role, both in the history of March 12 and its literary accounts. I will elaborate on this role in the following paragraphs. The military intervention of March 12, 1971 punished 1968 radicalism "radically," and traumatized a mass of individuals of different generations, social statuses,

¹Şerif Mardin, "Super Westernization in Urban Life in the Ottoman Empire in the Last Quarter of the Nineteenth Century," in *Turkey: Geographical and Social Perspectives*. (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1974), pp. 415, 442.

and political engagements. These people, in that period, may be said to have the milk they had drunk from their mothers pumped out their nostrils, as the saying goes. The concept of effeminacy and the fear of the feminine have a profound critical relevance to the gendered discourses of power that shaped the traumatization caused by the March 12 intervention. They are also relevant to Turkish modernization in general. That is why masculinity has been chosen as a research topic in this study.

This thesis is intended to focus on the contemporary Bihruz bey syndrome as seen in March 12 novels. The main aims of this research are to explore and map masculinity-related issues in the March 12 novels; to investigate how such issues are presented and how masculinities are portrayed in the narratives; to explore how masculinity is intertwined inseparably with issues of power, identity, and prevailing ideology; and to find out what differences and similarities lay in the approach of men and women writers of the period to the perceptions of men and masculinity in 1970s Turkey.

To understand the men and masculinities of March 12, it is necessary to grasp the atmosphere of March 12, 1971. This requires positioning the military intervention of 1971 within the greater political history of Turkey and between the two military interventions of 1960 and 1980. When a group of middle-rank officers assembled in a council called the National Unity Committee (Milli Birlik Komitesi, MBK), removed president Celal Bayar and the cabinet from power on May 27, 1960, and sent them to the court with various charges, their excuse was the government's "ambivalence toward modernity and secularism, and ultra-conservative social and economical policies."² The court passed death sentences on some of the detainees, but only three of those sentences were confirmed by the NUC. Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, Minister of Foreign Affairs Fatin Rüştü Zorlu, and Minister of Financial Affairs Hasan Polatkan were executed on September 16-17, 1961 for their misuse of power and abrogation of the constitution.³ When the armed forces organized themselves into a National Security Council (Milli Güvenlik Kurulu, MGK) and took control on September 12, 1980, the excuse was the much-sheltered political polarization between radical groups and the parliamentary deadlocks, which prevented the politicians from solving the problems. The

²Ergun Özbudun, *The Role of Military in Recent Turkish Politics*. (Harvard University: Center for International Affairs, 1966), p. 13.

³Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*. (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 1993), p. 261.

casualties of the 1980 coup were heavier: among the many punished with death, fifty were executed. The military outlawed all political parties and passed “more than six hundred laws” drastically affecting the socio-economical and political structures.⁴

In his pivotal monograph *The Socialist Movement in Turkey 1960-1980*, Igor Lipovsky describes the period between those two military interventions as the “unique moment in the history of the propagation of socialist ideology” in the country.⁵ The intervention of March 12, 1971 put the brakes on the rise of socialism and the following one on September 12, 1980 irreparably damaged the possibility of oppositional politics in Turkey. The 1971 intervention was different from the 1960 and 1980 coups since the military did not assume direct power but urged for an above-parties government and exercised its influence behind the scenes. This is why the 12 March 1971 coup is generally differentiated from the other two assumptions of power by the military as “the coup with a memorandum.”⁶

A considerable portion of the literature about military interventions in Turkey evaluates the 1960 intervention as an update to the Kemalist modernization project and refers to the coup as a “revolution.”⁷ Some scholars point to the liberating laws that followed the 1960 coup as the distinguishing traits of this intervention. Feroz Ahmad, for example, underlines “the decision to involve intellectuals” as active agents in the formation of the new constitution as an important factor that gives this intervention the shade of “an institutional revolution” rather than solely a military takeover.⁸ 1960 constitution indeed created an atmosphere of liberation. Having taken advantage of liberal attitudes toward organized political activity in the constitution, various political ideologies such as Islamist, Turkist, and socialist organized around political clubs. Especially after the election victory of the Turkish Workers’ Party (Türkiye İşçi Partisi, TİP), which succeeded

⁴Ergun Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation*. (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), p. 26.

⁵Igor Lipovsky, *The Socialist Movement in Turkey*. (London and New York: E.J.Brill, 1992), p. 2.

⁶A similar title is used for the postmodern coup of 28 February 1997, which made the first Islamist prime minister of the country, Necmettin Erbakan, resign. See Figure C.4, on page 317.

⁷Walter Wiker, *The Turkish Revolution 1960-1961*. (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 1963); Clement Dodd, *Democracy and Development in Turkey*. (London: The Eothen Press, 1979).

⁸Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*. (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 127.

in sending fifteen representatives to the parliament in 1965, an intensified mood of change became prevalent in Turkey.

During this period, there was a deeply radicalizing atmosphere in Turkey under the influence of global anti-authority movements. There were dramatic social, economic, and political changes; anxiety was prevalent in the country upon the emergence of unusual and challenging perspectives.⁹ Student movements ushered in a new vision of radical leftist politics. Clubs of Thought (Fikir Kulüpleri), established in universities in the 1950s to criticize Adnan Menderes' right-wing Democrat Party government became home to leftist students in action.¹⁰ In the second half of the 1960s tumultuous challenges and much-vexed disputes took the country refuge. Clubs of Thought united in a Federation of Clubs of Thought (Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu, FKF) in 1965. The clubs led to a boom in translations of cult books about the theory and praxis of socialism and also the political environment of revolt.¹¹ In 1967, the Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions (Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, DİSK), an organization devoted to enhancing the revolutionary level and awareness of workers, and bringing them together in political struggle, was born and a rash of riots began to sweep the large cities.¹²

This extremely politicized atmosphere gradually turned into an oppressive one, with much friction between various political groups.¹³ The defeat of the Turkish Workers' Party in the 1969 elections became a turning point.¹⁴ When the 1969 elections resulted in an intensified victory of Süleyman Demirel's Justice Party (Adalet Partisi, AP), the heir to executed Prime Minister Adnan Menderes' Democratic Party (Demokrat Parti, DP), revolution with the help of a military intervention became a popular choice for some leftists. The National Democratic Revolution (Milli Demokratik Devrim, MDD) movement advocated that the contribution of the armed forces is crucial to abolishment of the existing regime

⁹See Murat Belge, "The Left", in Irvin C. Schick and Ertuğrul Ahmet Tonak, eds., *Turkey in Transition*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 147-176, Tevfik Çavdar, *Türkiye 1968*. (İstanbul: Bilgi Yayınları, 1969), Tanıl Bora, "68: İkinci Eleme.", *Birikim* 109 (1998), p. 28-37, Idem, "68 Ruhunu Nedir?", *Birikim* 109 (1998), p. 92-96.

¹⁰Ben Ball, "'Sol' Searching: The Dilemmas of the Turkish Left.", Master's thesis, Bilkent University. (January 1999), p. 143.

¹¹Erkan Ünal, "Invited Sojourners: A Survey of the Translations into Turkish of Non-Fiction Left Books Between 1960 and 1971.", Ph.D thesis, Boğaziçi University. (October 1997).

¹²Zürcher (as in n. 3), p. 253-92.

¹³Rıfat Bali, *Turkish Student's Movements and the Turkish Left in the 1950's-1960's*. (İstanbul: Isis Press, 2006).

¹⁴Zürcher (as in n. 3), p. 368.

in Turkey. The dissociation within leftist circles deepened when some of them switched to an armed guerilla struggle under the influence of experiences in Latin America and Vietnam.¹⁵

During its fourth general meeting in 1969, the Federation of Idea Clubs took the name The Federation of the Revolutionary Youth of Turkey (Devrimci Gençlik Federasyonu, DEV-GENÇ).¹⁶ Two other factions further developed within Dev-Genç and gained support among the students. The one headed by Deniz Gezmiş called itself The Turkish Army for People's Liberation (Türk Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu, THKO). The faction under the leadership of Mahir Çayan took the name The Turkish Party for Popular Liberation (Türk Halk Kurtuluş Partisi Cephesi, THKP-C).¹⁷ Another group initiated Turkish Army for the Liberation of Workers and Peasants (Türkiye İşçi Köylü Kurtuluş Ordusu, TİKKO) under the leadership of İbrahim Kaypakkaya.

In this period, the 1968 spirit was in action, organizing strikes and rallies in resonance with the fervor of their European counterparts and anti-Americanism was at its peak.¹⁸ The Turkish left was active outside the country as well. Some members of the Turkish left were stationed in Palestine to take part in the Palestinian resistance and fight against Israel.¹⁹ There were also right-wing paramilitary organizations in the country that defined their aim as to “combat communism.” These groups convened in boot camps for lectures on battle and war techniques, under the protection of the extreme right-wing Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP) headed by Alparslan Türkeş.²⁰ Members of those radical right-wing pan-Turkist factions called themselves “ülküücü [idealist]” or “bozkurt [greywolf]”.²¹ They were organized under “Ülkü Ocakları (Ideal

¹⁵Çetin Yetkin, *12 Mart 1971 Öncesinde Türkiye’de Soldaki Bölünmeler*. (Ankara: Toplumsal Dönüşüm Yayınları, 1970).

¹⁶Gün Zileli, *Yarılma: 1954-1972*. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), p. 389.

¹⁷Paul J. Magnarella, “Civil Violence in Turkey: Its Infrastructural, Social and Cultural Foundations”, in *Sex Roles, Family and Community in Turkey*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 394.

¹⁸Nur Bilge Criss, “A Short History of Anti-Americanism and Terrorism: The Turkish Case.”, *The Journal of American History* 89, no. 2, (URL: <http://www.historycooperative.org/cgi-bin/jsttop.cgi?act=justtop&url=http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/jah/89.2/criss.html>).

¹⁹Cengiz Çandar, “A Turk in the Palestinian Resistance.”, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 30, no. 1 (2000).

²⁰See Figure C.4, on page 317.

²¹Greywolf is a metaphor inspired by the ancient Turkish mythology before Islam that, as Ayşe Neviye Çağlar puts it, “encompasses self-sacrifice for the ideal, militarism, racism, and the desire to be the guide and the vanguard of the nation”. For more information about the term,

Hearths),” founded in 1969 by right-wing students with the aim to spread and raise the nationalistic consciousness.²² Jacob Landau states that by 1970, about 100,000 people were gathered in some 1500 hearths.²³ Similar to the German *Freikorps*, the anti-communist youth organized into squads and raised by former senior officers of the German army after the First World War, the greywolves received a paramilitary training reinforced with lectures on high ideals of Turkish nationalism from former officers in specially designed camps.²⁴

In early 1970, Turkey found herself almost in a civil war between the revolutionaries and the greywolves. A violent blood feud erupted in the streets between armed student groups.²⁵ There were massive casualties in street fights almost every day and numerous politically motivated murders, the perpetrators of which were left mostly unidentified. On March 9, 1971, a left-wing junta was discovered by Mahir Kaynak, the undercover Turkish Intelligence Agent hiding among the leftist intelligentsia. The members of the junta, “five generals, one admiral, and thirty five colonels,” quickly obtained a forced retirement.²⁶ The atmosphere became even more complicated when superiors of the left-inclined military officers issued a memorandum on March 12, 1971, accusing the government of not taking the necessary steps to prevent anarchy and fratricide.

Demirel’s government was forced to resign after the commanders of the armed forces delivered a joint memorandum to President Cevdet Sunay stating that “the parliament and the government pulled the country into anarchy, fratricide, and socio-economic unrest and failed to exercise the constitutional reforms.”²⁷ In the memorandum, the commanders argued that “a strong and credible government

see Ayşe Neviye Çağlar, “The Greywolves As Metaphor,” in *Turkish State, Turkish Society*. (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 91.

²²Tanil Bora, “Nationalist Discourses in Turkey,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no. 2 (2003), p. 450-1.

²³Jacob Landau, *Panturkism: A Study of Turkish Irredentism*. (Connecticut: The Shoe String Press Inc., 1981), p. 148.

²⁴Idem, *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey*. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), p. 215, Zürcher (as in n. 3), p. 270. Greywolves gained international notoriety when one of their members Mehmet Ali Ağca, shot and nearly killed Pope John Paul II on May 13, 1981. Also see Daniele Ganser, *NATO’s Secret Armies: Operation Gladio and Terrorism in Western Europe*. (London: Frank Cass, 2005).

²⁵Şerif Mardin, “Youth and Violence in Turkey,” *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 19 (1978); Leyla Neyzi, “Object or Subject? The Paradox of ‘Youth’ in Turkey,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 3 (2001).

²⁶Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment with Democracy: 1950-1975* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1977), p. 292.

²⁷Cumhuriyet, “12 Mart Muhtırası.” (13 March 1971).

(should) be formed which would be able to end the anarchy and carry out reforms in a Kemalist spirit.”²⁸ Demirel resigned the same day and a new cabinet “consisting largely of technocrats from outside the political establishments” was formed.²⁹ The interim government declared a state of emergency in eleven cities that used to have a politically active atmosphere.

On May 17, 1971, Ephraim Elrom, the Israeli consul to İstanbul, got kidnapped. On May 23, 1971, İstanbul is placed under a 15-hour curfew to find Elrom and his kidnappers. The police began to arrest leaders, activists, and sympathizers of the left in a major campaign. On 25 May 1971, Elrom is found dead and The Turkish Army for People’s Liberation (THKO) in alliance with Palestinians, claimed responsibility. In the following months, hundreds of people were taken into custody, including student leaders, intellectuals, journalists, and acclaimed writers.³⁰ The military pursued a brutal campaign and made arbitrary arrests.³¹ Some people were taken away without any explanation or notice to friends and families, creating a frightening atmosphere in the country. Prominent members of The Turkish Army for People’s Liberation, Deniz Gezmiş, Hüseyin İnan, and Yusuf Aslan were arrested in 1971 and executed in 1972. The same year, Mahir Çayan and his friends were killed. İbrahim Kaypakkaya died under torture in 1973. Parliamentary elections were held on October 14, 1973, but the political violence rose drastically, especially after the general amnesty in 1974. It continued to cause numerous deaths and finally became the excuse for another devastating *coup d’état*, this time a direct military rule with tanks lining in the streets of Ankara on September 12, 1980.³² Ironically enough, Demirel’s Justice Party proposed March 12’s infamous General Faik Türein as a presidential candidate while trying to prevent another intervention, but this attempt did not keep

²⁸ *Cumhuriyet* (as in n. 27).

²⁹ Zürcher (as in n. 3), p. 271.

³⁰ Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment with Democracy: 1950-1975* (as in n. 26), p. 292.

³¹ Burak Gürel, “Communist Police!: The State in the 1970 Turkey.”, *The Journal of Historical Studies on Turkey* 2 (2004), p. 1-18.

³² For a detailed history of the abortive March 9 coup, the March 12 memorandum and other military interventions Turkey experienced see Zürcher (as in n. 3), Zafer Üskül, *Siyaset ve Asker: Cumhuriyet Döneminde Sıkıyönetim Uygulamaları*. (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 1997), Doğan Akyaz, *Askeri Müdahalelerin Orduya Etkisi: Hiyerarşi Dışı Örgütlenmeden Emir Komuta Zincirine*. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002), William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*. (London: Routledge, 1994), George Harris, “The Role of Military in Turkish Politics I”, *Middle East Journal* 19, no. 1 (1965), Özbudun, *The Role of Military in Recent Turkish Politics*. (as in n. 2), Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, “The Anatomy of the Turkish Military’s Political Autonomy.”, *Comparative Politics* 29, no. 2 (1997).

the military from assuming power in 1980. The new coup dwarfed the March 12 intervention in brutality and placed Turkey on a new track.³³

It is hard to obtain a reliable count of casualties in the ten-year period between 1970 and 1980, but the number is assumed to be above 5,000. According to Ergun Özbudun, casualties between 1975 and 1980 are the “equivalent of Turkish losses in the War of Independence.” Özbudun argues that more than 5,000 were killed and three times as many were wounded in this five-year period.³⁴ Erik Jan Zürcher mentions an increase in the number of victims from 230 in 1977 to 1200-1500 in 1979.³⁵ Kenneth Mackenzie places the number of victims at 231 in 1977 and 832 in 1978³⁶, while Justus Leicht refers to an article that appeared in the August 5-6, 1981 issue of the Swiss newspaper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, which argues that around 5,000 were killed from 1975 to 1980, more than two-thirds of which were victims of right-wing terror.³⁷ In 1981, authorities accused the greywolves of carrying out 694 murders in the six-year period between 1974 and 1980.³⁸

The history of brutality and hatred in the ten-year interval between 1970 and 1980 has been only superficially charted. Most of the painful memories of this specific period of Turkish history are still to be confronted. Despite the fact that each of the three breakdowns of the regime in 1960, 1971, and 1980 are followed by parliamentary elections after two to three years, each intervention had a far reaching influence on the dynamics of parliamentary politics in Turkey and also on the ways people engage themselves with the idea of democracy. Stuck in an untenable atmosphere of violence and chaos, many people saw the military as a savior and welcomed the armed forces’ taking power in 1971 and 1980, since it seemed to them to be the only alternative. Military intervention is perceived to be a timely act in an attempt to preserve the quasi-democratic status quo of the country. Not a single member of the juntas was subjected to a judicial inquiry for

³³Üskül (as in n. 32); Sam Kaplan, “Din-ü Devlet All Over Again? The Politics of Military Secularism and Religious Militarism in Turkey Following the 1980 Coup”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, no. 1 (2002).

³⁴Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation*. (as in n. 4), p. 35.

³⁵Zürcher (as in n. 3), p. 276.

³⁶Kenneth Mackenzie, “Turkey Under the Generals.”, *Conflict Studies* (January 1981), p. 8.

³⁷Justus Leicht, “Twenty Years Since the Military Coup in Turkey.” (September 2000), <URL: <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2000/sep2000/turk-s27.shtml>>.

³⁸Albert Jongman and Alex Peter Schmid, *Political Terrorism: A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theories & Literature*. (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2005), p. 674.

the human rights violations committed. There were some trials of junior officers, especially after the 1980 intervention, but no trial took place, not even a symbolic one, for higher officers. This institutionalized a powerful silence on these periods of Turkish history.³⁹

A boom of memoirs and testimonials touching upon the ravages of the September 12 coup came out in 1990s but the March 12 intervention and the military rule that followed in the interval 1971-1973 made limited appearance as defining themes in biographical or autobiographical form.⁴⁰ Testimonials of March 12 emerged quite late, after considerable time had passed over the dreadful military intervention of September 12, 1980 and time wore off the most devastating experiences.⁴¹ Testimonies and biographies of people who witnessed the period are still limited in number. In contrast to the limited number of testimonials, however, there is a rich body of fictional writing concentrated on the memories of March 12. This literary crusade produced its most fruitful examples in the nine-year period between the two successive military interventions of 1971 and 1980. Several novels followed one another in publication after the military assumed power in 1971 and numerous writers, whose positions range from ordinary observers of the political atmosphere to radical activists, contributed to this surge.⁴²

In his *Testimony After Catastrophe*, which concentrates on the appraisal of the testimonies of atrocity, torture, the Holocaust, and ethnic cleansing in the Balkans during the 1990s, Stevan Weine indicates that fictionalized testimonials perform an important function, since they carry out a more nuanced discussion of the traumatic events and their consequences on individuals.⁴³ A similarly

³⁹For an overview of accounts that see military intervention as the safety valve of the country, see Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*. (London: The Eothen Press, 1985), p.125, Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), p.82. For critical approaches to military interventions, see Sakallıoğlu (as in n. 32), p. 154, Hıdır Göktaş and Metin Gülbay, *Kışladan Anayasaya Ordu: Siyasi Kültürde TSK'nın Yeri*. (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2004), p. 137.

⁴⁰Some testimonials of September 12 are as follows: *Kırk Yıl Önce Kırk Yıl Sonra* (Forty Years Before Forty Years After) by Rifat Ilgaz, *Cezaevi Anıları* (Prison Memoirs) by Nihat Sargın, *Anne Kafamda Bit Var* (Mum I Have Head Lice) by Tarkan Akan, *Bugün Biraz da Dündür* (Today is a Bit Yesterday) by Kemal Özdemir.

⁴¹See for example *Gülleyle'ya Anılar* (Memories to Gülleyla, 2002) by Azra Erhat; *Bir Anenin 68 Anıları* (Memoirs of a Mother from 1968, 2000) by Muazzez Aktolga; *12 Mart'tan 12 Eylül'e Mamak* (Mamak from March 12 to September 12, 1998) by Oral Çalışlar; *Ziverbey Köşkü* (Ziverbey Mansion, 1987) by İlhan Selçuk.

⁴²Melih Cevdet Anday's *Gizli Emir* (Secret Command, 1970), which is acknowledged as the first example of March 12 novels, was published before the military's seize of power.

⁴³Stevan Weine, *Testimony After Catastrophe: Narrating the Traumas of Political Violence*. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2006).

challenging function is fulfilled by the so-called March 12 novels, which carried out a vivid discussion of a dark period, when there was little effort to shed light into it. In 1970s, when there was no rich body of testimonial-historical writings of the period, the fictional perspective provided by these novels, for better or worse, produced the only discussion of the escalating political violence. March 12 novels shouldered the heavy burden of witnessing history and aesthetically assimilating the trauma of the military intervention. They focused on the monopoly of power in the period, the disintegration of families, marriages, and friendships under the tensions of political ideologies, and the profound pain caused by political imprisonment, mishandling, and torture.

Speaking of Holocaust literature, Ernst van Alphen notes that “historical concerns [were] more important than literary concerns” for the writers of this grand trauma.⁴⁴ The same holds true for the novelists of March 12. March 12 novels were texts born into an atmosphere of social, political, and historical tensions that defy a dedicated aesthetic isolation. To understand the brutality of the state against its citizens and of the rival ideologies against each other, was the overarching concern of many examples of this corpus. The need to speak of the events, to recall and encounter them once again, to analyze, criticize, and satirize them, was more important in the literary movement of March 12 than any aesthetic concern. Some writers wrote message-giving novels, indeed. Yet, there were also writers who succeeded in turning their observations and experiences into masterful texts, which defy conventions of propagandist and complacently sentimentalist “bad novels.”

Similar to the imaginative discourses born out of the Holocaust, the literature of March 12 challenged the split between historical and fictional discourses by its hybrid narrations and, in so doing, it also invalidated the claims to an impartial history.⁴⁵ In contrast with the survivors of the Holocaust, those who have written about March 12 found it safer for their testimonies to function as literary accounts instead of historical accounts, in order to escape further oppression by the state. The allegorical discourse in some of the novels was a ploy to deflect political persecution. To make readers historically familiar with the dark face of military rule was apparently one of the primary aims of the writers, but they had to thinly

⁴⁴Ernst van Alphen, *Caught by History: Holocaust Effects in Contemporary Art, Literature and Theory*. (California: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 27.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 31-33, 62.

disguise their agenda because of the oppressiveness of the state. These macabre works initiated the process of publicly narrativizing the experiences of the violence of the political clashes, the oppressive atmosphere created by the memorandum, and the fierce political boasting of the armed forces. At the beginning, writers delineated some oppressed characters who fight an abstract form of oppression in anonymous times and settings because it was too risky to publish works that deal with the tyrannies within realistic accounts at the height of the military intervention. Any narration telling stories of missing family members, inhumane treatment, etc., was a potential target for accusations of insurgency and treason. But, in the course of time, writers slowly moved to alluding, briefly and more critically, to the memories of this period in realistic narrations.

As a new political balance was achieved, new stories of March 12 emerged. Writers of the right wing began narrativizing their version of the events. They tried to reinstate a historical frame that emphasizes the sufferings of the grey-wolves, the anti-communist youth. Their stories were a challenge to the revolutionary leftists' claim to the victim and witness position, and their accounts provided important support for keeping the validity of the March 12 intervention alive, especially when its popularity as "the savior of the country from anarchy" began to wane by the second half of the 1970s. The militancy of the right wing was never grasped as a threat as severe as the leftists' in the atmosphere of March 12. Their stories of victimization ushered in a new witness discourse, which challenged the history constructed from the leftist point of view. After the September 12, 1980 coup, the militant right also got punished to support the impression of a fair balance in the treatment of political radicalism. However, the political dynamics of post-1980s were not in line with such a "fair" balance. During the trials, some members of the Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP) expressed the situation as follows: "We are a political movement whose cadres are in jail but whose views are in power."⁴⁶

In the broad sense of the term "eyewitness," all March 12 writers were eyewitnesses to the throes of political chaos, since they were residents of the large cities, the streets of which were partitioned into camps back in 1970s. However, some writers apparently saw much more than others because they were politically engaged. Writers who became victim to the harsh intervention carried out

⁴⁶Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet, Ocak, Dergâh: 12 Eylül'den 1990'lara Ülkücü Hareket*. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1994), p. 235.

in 1971 wrote narrations with testimonial overtones. They reenacted their bitter experiences as political detainees, focusing on the struggles of isolated individuals, who try to overcome the trauma of their marginalization or victimization by superior forces with official sanction. There were also writers who observed the political polarization in society and the oppression of the military-state without being physically victimized. In their novels, there is also a salient attempt to initiate a link with the realities of the period. In the accounts of all March 12 novels, there is a complex mixture of a recovery of the recent past, a revisiting of real events, and an attempt to speak out about “what has happened.” In some works, there is also a rigorous attempt to occupy the forefront of the collective consciousness of people about March 12 with their specific stories.

The agenda of the March 12 writers was to rewrite history in fictional form and to apprise people of what they had experienced and witnessed during the throes of the March 12 intervention. This communication was of political priority for all writers, regardless of their political sympathies and artistic aims. March 12 novels caught a big audience and became cult books in their times. However, despite this popularity, they have hardly been accepted in curricula as sources of history or literary pride. They are often seen as artistically low-quality novels, which tell “opinionated histories” that bring too much politics to the table. Most critics have evaluated the literary works born out of the memories of March 12 as politically driven forms of fiction, which lapse into sentimentality and produce cliché ways of understanding the events. Even if this were the case, which I do not agree for the entire corpus, and for reasons that will be documented in the following paragraphs, in view of Hayden White’s famous aphorism that “a bad narrative can tell us more about narrativity than a good one,” I think that the March 12 novels would still have things to tell us, about several problems that are considered important in literary studies.⁴⁷

In this dissertation, I will argue for the complexity of the March 12 novels and for the importance of broadening our critical perspectives while approaching them. March 12 novels, in my view, blend history and literature with multiple interacting contexts. They are “complex texts” which, in Dominick LaCapra’s words, “has a set of interacting contexts whose relations to one another are variable and problematic and whose relation to the text being investigated raises

⁴⁷ Hayden White, “The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality.”, in *Narrative Theory: Interdisciplinarity*. (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), p. 70.

difficult issues in interpretation.”⁴⁸ This dissertation will approach the hitherto untouched interaction of social, political, and historical contexts of March 12 novels with the intricate issue of gender, paying a special attention to masculinity. I will consider that to which previous critics of the March 12 novel have insistently turned a deaf ear: the entanglement between power and masculinity. I will address several questions deriving from this entanglement. How does masculinity function in the March 12 novel? How do the novels link gender to the monopoly of power in the throes of March 12? And what kind of “moralizing” is present behind the “narrativizing”?

In what follows, I will comment on previous criticisms of the March 12 novel and explicate the alternative approach of this study, which can be formulated as a reading informed by “feminist new historicism.” The next section will explore the currency of the previously established canon of March 12 novels. In this section, I will also delineate, in some detail, the shortcomings of approaching March 12 novels as ciphers of politics. I will argue that most of the previous critics of the March 12 novel failed to notice that the playful experimentation with politics in the March 12 novels is at the same time a playful experimentation with hegemonic cultural patterns and discourses. The following section will explain the alternative approach of this study to March 12 novels and present the theoretical foundations of such an alternative reading of these familiar texts. I will draw attention to the merits of not seeing literary works as finished end-products. This section will explain how this study will revisit March 12 novels with a gender-conscious agenda and approach them as dynamic sources for understanding shifting definitions of gender and sexuality within the radical political discourses of 1970s Turkey. The last section will recount the development of the March 12 novel as a specific genre and provide an introduction to the novels at the explicit focus of this study.

Dominant trends in reading the March 12 novel

Similar to many other novels that deal with historical incidents in Turkey, March 12 fiction has mostly been evaluated through a filter of relevancy and with an index of verisimilitude, which fixed the critical focus on the fidelity of the narrations to the “fact”s. Almost all of the critics have persisted in reading March 12

⁴⁸Dominick LaCapra, “Rethinking Intellectual History and Reading Texts.”, *History and Theory* 19 (1980), p. 254.

novels as relatively straightforward texts, instead of analyzing their more complex strategies. They preferred not to engage with the novels' much broader exploration of the social and psychological conditions, but focused almost exclusively on the correct representation of political and ideological issues. Mainstream literary criticism analyzed the March 12 novel from a Lukácsian perspective, by giving priority to the "reality" and political obligations of the texts.⁴⁹ Critics addressed the March 12 novels solely with an aim to reflect the dramatic events of the military intervention, seeing history as context and literature as the mirroring text, and conforming with the view that "literature simply reflects history, or it is embedded in the social real, or else it is taken to be product of one or another historical moment."⁵⁰

To evaluate March 12 novels as catalogues of history or ciphers for politics, rather than a collection of imaginative stories about the sufferings and anxieties of individuals in 1970s Turkey, is to ignore several facts in favor of hyperbole. It is true that many examples of the March 12 novel are built on the by then still-fresh memories of the events of the military intervention. They are rich in quotidian details of the coup and brisk in their journalistic-memoiristic style. It is also true that these novels attempt to reach people and seek to motivate them to mobilize notions of resistance to the imposed facts. But, I think that this journalistic and oppositional fervor seems to shadow some other aspects of the novels a little more heavily than it should have done in the eyes of the readers and critics. If "politics" becomes the only answer to the question "What is March 12 literature about" then the shadowing is excessive. This answer overlooks that the novels are built on haunting stories of individuality, fear, and seeking connection, and that they give voice not only to the people's struggles about their political identity, but also to their anxieties of conforming to the norms of the culture and traditions, which impose limits to several other dimensions of their personal identities.

It is a commonplace observation that March 12 novels settle at the cross-section of the veins of "trauma fiction" and "witness literature," both of which are terms encompassing literature produced by the writing victim, the eyewitness, or the proxy witness, people who experienced certain catastrophic and traumatic events either directly or from a distance. An unbiased look at the March 12 nov-

⁴⁹György Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1971), p. 17.

⁵⁰Jürgen Pieters, *Moments of Negotiation: The New Historicism of Stephen Greenblatt*. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2001), p. 12.

els, however, should also recognize that another valid cluster for the March 12 novel can be “novel of manners.” This cluster is as explanatory as the other two because the March 12 novels illustrate a social world of politically engaged men and women, and negotiate the degrees to which these men and women comply with the conventions of their political ideologies, and the overall conventions of the society.⁵¹ The anxiety of not conforming to the norms, whatever they are, is an explicitly manifest problem in the March 12 novel. Since the accepted standards for manners and morals differ markedly between men and women, the novels occupy themselves extensively with gender, while dealing with the resistance between social collective action and individual freedom in the atmosphere of violent political struggles of March 12. Taking this aspect of the March 12 novels into the picture challenges the hackneyed arguments on “the politics” of the corpus. It redirects the critical focus from the political agenda of the novels to the ways in which these texts deal with the individual’s place in the society.

There is not only a problematic definition but also a problematic canon of March 12 novels in the writings of previous critics of the corpus. A very singular image has been presented in previous criticisms, which is quite misleading. Taken as a whole, it can be said that March 12 novels published during the period 1971-1980 consist of a realistic and politically charged discourse of the revolutionary left. However, there are novels that would not fit easily within such a categorization. Likewise, it would not do them justice to say that the works of all politically engaged writers were characterized by mere didacticism and vehement propaganda. Although they have a common pool of motifs, March 12 novels sketch a complex picture, which defies the idea of a “singular canon.”⁵² It is, therefore, not possible to ignore the difficulties of collapsing all March 12 novels into a general scheme, without depriving them of their very important peculiarities.

Going to the level of specific cases, which will then be used to build a larger picture, this dissertation will show that the previous contextualization of novels grouped under the rubric “March 12 novel” are only partly accurate because of the limitations artificially imposed on them. In the broad picture, there are

⁵¹The term “novel of manners” is chiefly used to describe works that deal with the manners of a particular social group, and that try to distinguish “good behavior” from “bad behavior,” inspecting the standards of correctness, and also questions about agency and power.

⁵²Several critics argue for the impossibility of founding singular canons in Turkish literature. See Orhan Tekelioğlu, “Edebiyatta Tekil Bir Ulusal Kanonun Oluşmasının İmkansızlığı Üzerine Notlar.”, *Doğu-Batı* 22 (2003), p.66; Murat Belge, “Türkiye’de Kanon.”, *Kitap-lık* 68 (2004).

satirical novels that do not initiate salient links to historical realities of the period and realistic novels that deny leftist formulations of victimization, next to the realistic novels implicitly or explicitly engaged with revolutionary leftist politics. The category of the March 12 novel, in this project, is intended to cover the novels written by sympathizers of the radical right wing, as well as those that do not adhere to a realistic vision. I surmise that such a reconfigured perspective is necessary not only to achieve a comprehensive idea of the authenticity of the witnessing position and the nature of the victim role in the specific conditions of March 12, but also to be able to compare and contrast the novels' engagement with different ideological strains of politics, dissimilar versions of history, and varying gender anxieties. For this research project, it was vital to open up the previously constructed canon of March 12 novels; otherwise this work too, would turn out to be only partially accurate.

The jettisoning of certain books from the literary canon of March 12 novels is by no means trivial; it should be carefully documented. Critics have mostly prioritized novels with leftist tendencies as the founding elements of the March 12 novel. Literary scholarship in Turkey has given little credit to works informed with the counter-arguments of the right wing as an integral part of the corpus, and pushed the surrealist and satirical works to the peripheries of "the March 12 canon." As Julian Markels succinctly puts it, "Realist novel has been the genre most accommodating to the imagination of class."⁵³ This established belief qualifies as the principal reason for the critics of Turkish fiction to prioritize realistic works of the leftist writers as the cornerstones of the March 12 novel, in the class-conscious political atmosphere of the 1970s. The ignorance of right-wing novels can be explained as a result of the hatred felt for the fascist ideology, and because of the heightened political accent and bigotry in some examples of these novels, which is believed to bring a lack of literary faculty. The politically charged discourse of leftist novels also attracted criticism, but they were accepted as suitable material for critical study, despite the fact that some of them made use of the same kind of propagandist novelistic devices used by the right-wing writers.

Even a short excursion into the previous critical approaches to March 12 novels shows the limited nature of the category of the March 12 novel in Turkish literary criticism and the common approach to its "limited" literary merits. There has

⁵³Julian Markels, *A Marxian Imagination*. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2002), p. 22.

been a concerted effort to critically analyze the characteristics of the political messages provided by the March 12 novels and the “correctness” of their references. I will refer to the writings of Berna Moran, Murat Belge, Fethi Naci, Ahmet Oktay, and Ömer Türkeş, acclaimed independent and academic literary critics of Turkey, to make clear why their visions seem limited to me, and how this dissertation will provide an added dimension to their assessment of the corpus.

Berna Moran, one of the first scholars who approached the March 12 novel critically, argues that the so-called set of March 12 novels is a collection of works that record the tyrannies and struggles encountered by left-wing intellectuals and activists, during the clashes before and after military rule.⁵⁴ On his account, March 12 narratives hark back to pastoral narratives of Turkish literature, “the Anatolian novel.”⁵⁵ Moran states that the “eşkiya,” the noble savage, who fights for justice against the landlords and helps peasants in the Anatolian novel, reappears in a modernized form in the March 12 novel as a social reformer, the revolutionary leftist hero, who fights against the corrupt political and economical system and the injustices of the state. Moran evaluates the corpus of March 12 fiction as historically rather than literally valuable, arguing that the realistic and testimonial accounts of the novels helped them to gain popularity in their times. This popularity inevitably diminished over the course of time, he adds, because of the ignorance of artistic measures by the writers. Moran, however, places Adalet Ağaoğlu’s outstanding novel *Bir Düşün Gecesi* in the margins of the March 12 canon, and argues that this novel stands for a transition to the impolitic and postmodern novel of the post-1980s.⁵⁶

Similar to writers of the Anatolian novel, who seek their subject matter in the oppressed lower-class rural masses, oppression in its broader sense was a fruitful source of inspiration for the novelists of the realist-leftist strain of the predominantly urban March 12 novel. Yet, it is difficult to argue, considering the leftist strain of March 12 novels, that all examples of it were devoted to class dynamics and material oppression. For the writers of March 12, representing “class” was only one of the ways to illustrate the oppressive atmosphere produced by the *coup*

⁵⁴Berna Moran, *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış III*. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1994), p. 11.

⁵⁵Another title dominantly used to refer to the novels characterized with a peasantist discourse that pinpointed the feudal village life of Anatolia and the struggles of the peasants is “köy romanı [village novel]”.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 34.

d'état. Although the notion of class was germane to the leftist writers of both literary movements as an organizing principle, the subject matter of leftist March 12 novelists was more squarely an elite suffering, in the sense that they were primarily engaged with the sufferings of bourgeois intellectuals during the coup. It seems that Moran links the oeuvres of village novelists to the work of March 12 novelists because of the socialist orientation of the writers of both camps, rather than a convincing textual overlap in the literatures.⁵⁷

Contrary to Berna Moran, I would argue that March 12 novels overlap textually, more fittingly, with the existentialist works of the so-called “generation of the 1950,” because they likewise focus on individuals’ struggles in collectivities. The generation of the 1950 is composed of now well-recognized writers of contemporary Turkish fiction such as Vüsat O. Bener, Demir Özlü, Ferit Edgü, Orhan Duru, Yusuf Atılgan, Bilge Karasu, and Tahsin Yücel, who contributed to a new surge in Turkish fiction with stories of isolated individuals who attempt to overcome their solitude with fantasies. Writers of this movement particularly have dealt with the skepticism of urban persona and the growth of his mistrust of people. This movement is definitely an ancestor of March 12 novels, because March 12 novels also abound in characters who question the crisis of their values.

A similar canon of March 12 novels, as seen in Berna Moran’s writings, surfaces in the criticism of Murat Belge, the well-known literary scholar of Turkish literature, who was also a victim of the tyrannies of the March 12 regime. The novels to which Belge refers with the term “March 12” are also the ones that more squarely deal with the realistic accounts of the struggles of the leftist revolutionaries.⁵⁸ In other words, Belge spares leftist novels aside as “the March 12 novels” as well. Murat Belge marks a discussion of “guilt” that is brought to surface by an “anxiety of ideological legitimacy” as the main problem of the March 12 novels. He distinguishes archetypal themes such as “provocation” and “torture” in the novels, and asserts that the corpus is very much shaped by the hierarchy established among the witnesses of the incidents.⁵⁹

Underlining that the interpretations of the events by those who experienced

⁵⁷Ash Daldal mentions the organic connection between some major figures of both literary movements in the context of the Kemalist-leftist journal *Yön*. For more information see Ash Daldal, “The New Middle Class as a Progressive Urban Coalition: The 1960 Coup d’État in Turkey,” *Turkish Studies* 5, no. 3 (2004), p. 87-88.

⁵⁸Murat Belge, *Edebiyat Üstüne Yazılar*. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1998), p. 115.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 127.

prison life and others who didn't were diverse, Belge asserts that writers evaluating the current situation as "insiders" adopted more critical perspectives of the reasons and consequences of March 12, whereas writers who freely wrote as "outsiders" attempted to provide an idealized picture of revolutionaries, probably to compensate for the fact that they were not in prison.⁶⁰ Belge repeated his distaste for sensational "heroification" in some of the March 12 novels in a recent book-interview published in 2007. In the interview, he explains the motive behind his bitter criticism of some of the leftist writers of the period as a result of their unrealistic look at the incidents.⁶¹ Belge says, briefly, that the experiences of the revolutionaries are not honestly shared in March 12 novels.

Several other critics of Turkish literature seem to limit their remarks primarily to a frame of realism, questioning how truthful the narrations were to the facts of the period. Fethi Naci points at the "difficulty of writing about contemporaneous issues" in literature and indicates that most of the writers of March 12 novels put their political views in the narrations directly, instead of engaging the reader in a debate.⁶² He is the critic behind the famous statement that, until the 1979 novel of Adalet Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düşün Gecesi*, "March 12 was often the literature of torture and heroism."⁶³ It is interesting to observe that, despite the praise, Adalet Ağaoğlu herself does not accept her novel as a piece that should be categorized under the rubric "the March 12 novel." In her 2005 speech at Columbia University, she says, "I have never accepted March 12 to be a novel genre. [...] Just because they were published after March 12th, some literary critics have had the tendency of situating my novels in this category. This is wrong."⁶⁴ Ağaoğlu's attempt to save her novel from being "tainted" by the label "the March 12 novel" hints at the extremity of the negative features attached to this literary movement by the critics.

Although I understand that Fethi Naci's attack was at the uncritical reproduction of sensationalism and the pains of the victim position, I consider his remark unfortunate, because of its tendency to group the March 12 novels around an ambivalent story of torture and heroism. As Susan Van Zanten Gallagher plausibly

⁶⁰Belge, Edebiyat Üstüne Yazılar. (as in n. 58), p. 118.

⁶¹Tuba Çandar, *Murat Belge: Bir Hayat*. (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2007), p. 184.

⁶²Fethi Naci, *60 Türk Romanı*. (İstanbul: Oğlak Yayınları, 1988), p. 365.

⁶³Ibid., p. 342.

⁶⁴Adalet Ağaoğlu, "On the Changes of 1970-80 in the Turkish Novel." (4 May 2005), (URL: http://www.lightmillennium.org/2005_15th/aagaoglu_speech.html). This speech is also available online at http://www.lightmillennium.org/2005_15th/aagaoglu_speech.html.

argues in her “Torture and the Novel: J. M. Coetzee’s *Waiting for the Barbarians*,” it is important for writers dealing with torture in their works to achieve a balance, by avoiding the reproduction of the representations of obscenities while, at the same time, taking them seriously.⁶⁵ Naci’s criticism, in my opinion, underestimates the critical look of the March 12 writers at torture, while fiercely exaggerating the sensational reproduction of obscenities in a limited number of novels. No matter how much of a compliment it carries for *Bir Düğün Gecesi*, Naci’s remark is a spuriously unifying one for the rest of March 12 novels.

Another critic, Ahmet Oktay, makes similarly totalizing remarks in his articles. Oktay argues that most March 12 novels suffer from a lack of artistic personification of ideologies.⁶⁶ He underlines the excessive political burden of the narratives.⁶⁷ Despite the disparaging tone he employs for the corpus, Oktay is one of the critics who noticed the new depictions of sexuality in March 12 novels. In a 1981 article entitled “Cinsellik, Erotizm ve Ötesi (Sexuality, Eroticism and Beyond),” in which he delineates the sexual dimension of several controversial works of Turkish literature, Oktay mentions three novels that are central to this dissertation, namely Sevgi Soysal’s *Şafak*, Pınar Kür’s *Yarın Yarın*, and Çetin Altan’s *Büyük Gözaltı* as distinguished works that opened new horizons in the depiction of sexuality in fiction.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, Oktay chooses not to develop this observation into an alternative reading of these novels. In a similar vein, literary critic Konur Ertop, refers to the same three novels in his *Türk Edebiyatında Seks* (Sex in Turkish Literature), but he evaluates them in a negative light, arguing that narratives of sexuality in those novels are in fact tools used to attract popular attention to the works for economical interests.⁶⁹

The heterogeneity of the March 12 novels became more visible when the previously installed canon of March 12 was deconstructed by studies focusing on the representations of the 1968 generation in literature. The literary historian and critic Ömer Türkeş revealed the diversity of the March 12 novels and showed that the previous criticisms of March 12 novels had a limited focus because of their

⁶⁵Susan van Zanten Gallagher, “Torture and the Novel: J. M. Coetzee’s *Waiting for the Barbarians*,” *Contemporary Literature* 29, no. 2 (1998), p. 277.

⁶⁶Ahmet Oktay, “*Gençliğim Eyvah*: Komünizmin Hayaleti”, in *Türkiye’de Popüler Kültür*. (İstanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2002), p. 242.

⁶⁷Idem, “*Yarın Yarın*: Konuk Gelen Devrimci”, in *Türkiye’de Popüler Kültür*. (İstanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2002), p. 261.

⁶⁸Idem, “Cinsellik, Erotizm ve Ötesi.”, *Yazko Edebiyat* 4 (1981), pp. 84, 86, 87.

⁶⁹Konur Ertop, *Türk Edebiyatında Seks*. (İstanbul: Seçme Kitaplar Yayınevi, 1977).

selective approach against the available material.⁷⁰ Although he too frames the March 12 narratives primarily with a “requiem” for the revolutionaries victimized by the military state, Türkeş indicates in this recent article that the March 12 novels articulate different world views and they should not necessarily be limited to the coup period, since they inspired contemporary novelists of the post-1980s as well.

This challenging extension to the canon of March 12 novels is important for two reasons. First, it reminds that the effects of trauma can be multigenerational, because a cultural trauma, “an experience of acute discomfort entering into the core of the collectivity’s sense of its own identity,” may be transformed to younger generations, changing their group identities in several ways.⁷¹ Second, it questions the currency of canons. To be able to analyze the influences of the March 12 military intervention, Türkeş suggests that the canon of March 12 novels should be opened up. Yet, his remarks also indicate a hesitation for alternative readings, especially for those who plan to evacuate “the political” and “the economical” in the name of “the cultural,” and attempt to dwell more squarely on the individual “minor” stories beneath the political “major” ones. Türkeş insists that such a look will sanitize the political messages of the novels, since it will make leftist camaraderie and sufferings of revolutionaries less visible as the leading literary themes of the March 12 novels.

Political content was vital in the establishment of a literature that goes beyond official historiography and touches upon the “truth”s of the period. Although a small number of March 12 novelists can be blamed for exploiting their contemporaneity by making propaganda, not all examples of this literary movement can be collected under the rubric of message-giving novels. Even the March 12 novels that remain within the range of a leftist realism have a number of different guises. Not all of them adhere to a single “political truth” in a propagandist manner. Politics in those novels is not about a choice of taking sides in the contemporary political scene or parroting party politics, but rather a state of having certain norms, beliefs, and ways of life rather than some others. It is also important to note that politics has never been an unexceptional ingredient in Turkish literature. Eminent literary critic Sibel Irzik affirms the political nature of Turkish fiction,

⁷⁰Ömer Türkeş, “Romanda 12 Mart Suretleri ve ’68 Kuşağı,” *Birikim* 132 (2000), p. 80-85.

⁷¹Jeffrey Alexander and al, *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. (California: University of California Press, 2004), p. 10.

using H. B. Stendhal's pistol shot metaphor: she says that "even in the modern Turkish novels that place themselves more squarely within the mainstream Western novelistic tradition of narrating the evolution of an authentic subjectivity, politics has never been a pistol shot in the middle of a concert."⁷² This remark reminds us that it is necessary to approach the "politics" of March 12 novels cautiously.

Generally speaking, politics can be said to be intricately woven into images, patterns, and discourses in the March 12 novel. In the majority of March 12 novels, political sensibilities and concerns appear in engagement with a panoply of cultural orientations that exercised control, both in the past and over the period identified by the oppressive measures of military rule. But, critics seem to overlook this aspect of the March 12 novel. March 12 novels are not urban versions of pastoral village novels. They are not political flags waved at the skies of ideologies. They are not socialist realist novels that attempt to institute the education of working-class people in the spirit of socialism. They are novels featuring stories of ordinary people and ordinary lives, stories that shed light on the disillusionment of the citizens of Turkey in a period of rapid change that pushed the country toward an earnest self-interrogation.

Critics also seem to overlook that March 12 novels stood for a dynamic refraction rather than a static reflection. They were "producers of history" as much as "products of history" because, in the upheavals of their times, the characters in those texts became role models for a considerable number of people, who experienced military rule in a similar vein with them, as victims. March 12 novels, regardless of their political sympathies, inspired a hero cult, a "charismatic" political hero that fights to overcome oppression. Some of the writers depicted their heroes as saviors of epic proportions and wrote tales of derring-do, while others dressed them with victimized but resolute images. In both ways, these characters served as role models and people modeled themselves after utterances from literature. March 12 novels produced a kind of "Werther effect," influencing young activists of 1970s and pushing them into an arresting questioning as seen in the novels.⁷³ By this token, it would be fair to say that these novels were not "transparent windows through which the past opens itself for inspection," in Stephen

⁷²Sibel Irzik, "Allegorical Lives: The Public and the Private in the Modern Turkish Novel," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no. 2 (2003), p. 551.

⁷³The Werther effect is a term born out of Goethe's seminal 1774 novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, which has a hero that shoots himself after an ill-fated love. The young Werther

Greenblatt's words, "but building blocks in the collective reality effect to which every cultural formation gives shape and meaning."⁷⁴ March 12 novels did both cultural and psychological work. They provided access to the "linguistic, cultural, social and political fabric of the past" while, at the same time, contributing to the imagination and formation of this fabric.⁷⁵

In 1970s Turkey, people were disillusioned by the violent fighting in the streets, cynical of the state as their protector, and ambivalent about the generic slogans of political figures. The March 12 intervention came as an external trauma, which placed individuals in search of identification, and made them rethink certain notions of political attachment as well as the basic tenets of being "human." March 12 novels participated in the reinstitution of dignity among the masses in an atmosphere of political vengeance and anarchic disorder. These novels were an involvement in the social and political conflicts that they tend to narrativize. Such a look at March 12 novels indicates a post-structuralist and postmodern approach to literature, because it challenges the idea of literary text as an individual "end product," and introduces the idea of an interactive relationship between the text and its surroundings. It also shatters the old dogma which views literature as a mirror of historical, social, and political realities "from a safe distance."⁷⁶ In the following section, I will explain, in a more detailed manner, how this study will approach March 12 novels.

What is 'new' in this study of the 'old' March 12 novel?

This study argues that it is necessary to radically revise the negative and indeed hostile critical approach to March 12 novels, and recognize their literary efforts. It should not be overlooked that March 12 novels attempt to construct a live and sensually responsive realism, which reflects the historical reality of the military

became a role model for subsequent young men to commit suicide in a similar manner upon the publication of the novel.

⁷⁴Pieters, *Moments of Negotiation: The New Historicism of Stephen Greenblatt*. (as in n. 50), p. 34.

⁷⁵John Brannigan, *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), p. 12.

⁷⁶Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 7.

intervention and, at the same time, deals with the struggles of individuals who found themselves in a crossfire of ideologies. Although they do not possess exceptional literary qualities or show sparks of artistic invention as do the works of some ostentatious stylists, these novels offer a properly aesthetic experience to readers. March 12 novels yield an intense stimulation of senses, of fear and other feelings, and offer an aesthetic assimilation of the traumas of violence and brutality. They pull the readers into an ethical confrontation with the history of March 12, a state of emergency suspending civil liberties and curtailing individual rights.

March 12 novels can primarily be said to magnify the complex relationship of individuals with power structures, focusing on the immediate past of the country as the explicit object of study. They do not treat individuals as passive victims of impersonal historical processes, as argued by previous critics, but reveal them as living subjects, who participated tragically in shaping their world. In addition to their critical engagement with power, the stories of the March 12 novels also raise questions about the constructed nature of history, the process of witnessing, and memory. Equally important is the exploration in March 12 novels of the “gendered nature” of power. The 1970s was not only a period of radical politics, but also an interval with deepening concerns about gender roles and sexuality. In this period, “gender talk” fashioned a new set of understandings about the individual and its role in collective identities. These years witnessed a rise in critical questioning of the predominantly masculine political world, and an intense curiosity about the potentials of individuality, as well as a rise of anti-authority mass movements.⁷⁷

Individuality became a popular discussion in 1970s Turkey on the sociopolitical level, as well as on the psychological level. The negotiation of the “theory” and “praxis” of gender became prevalent. Sexuality began to occupy a more important and explicit center of gravity in the debates, in parallel to the rise of the libertarian spirit of 1968. In the second half of the 1970s, this questioning even nurtured an *avant-garde* wave in Turkish cinema, which explicitly took sexual relations as a main frame of reference. It made a controversial opening to an

⁷⁷Yılmaz Pirlı, “A Critical Perspective on the Leftist Student Movements in Turkey between 1960 and 1971,” Master’s thesis, Boğaziçi University. (İstanbul, 1995), Bağış Erten, “A Comparative Analysis of the 1968 Movement in Turkey,” Master’s thesis, Boğaziçi University. (October 2003).

erotic-pornographic cinema *a la Turca*.⁷⁸ Literature too, took on a more valiant new face. Several topics earlier considered taboo became manifest. The frequency of sexual passages increased as a result of the growing interest in individuality. This transformation manifested itself in March 12 novels as well. It is possible to say that March 12 fiction represents the first organized attempt to handle desire as a political phenomenon in all its complexity and paradox, with multiple meanings and contradictions, and without overlooking the bodily sensations. It is with some forefront examples of March 12 novels that the onset of puberty, the awakening of sexual awareness, and the physiological much more than the psychological details of desire began to occupy pivotal places in contemporary Turkish fiction.

This study argues that the crises of post-1968 radicalism are elaborated in March 12 novels as crises of gender. The emerging culture of insurgency associated with the spirit of 1968 is grasped as an attempt to corrupt or weaken the established social structures, and gave birth to a conservatory reaction aimed at the rehabilitation and reinstitution of power structures. A masculinity that strives for change, encountered a rival masculinity that upholds traditions and resists change, in the specific settings of March 12. A contemporary Bihruz bey syndrome emerged, symptomatic of an aversion felt for acute cultural transformations, and this influenced March 12 writers. Intellectuals and the youth tilted toward the revolutionary left, and their peripheral conditions became popular topics in the literature of the period. This contemporary Bihruz bey syndrome targeted a collection of masculinities associated with an intellectual discontent with the conditions of the 1970s. These masculinities stood for an alienation and disconnectedness with the established culture. They were representing, in Nurdan Gürbilek's words, "people torn away from life and, of course, from manly virtues, people occupied with insignificant details, excessively sophisticated and rather effeminate."⁷⁹

Gender is central to March 12 fiction, because what happened then was a

⁷⁸Many critics consider this transformation as the transformation of class-conscious Turkish cinema to de-politicized filmmaking. See Gülseren Güçhan, *Toplumsal Değişme ve Türk Sineması*. (Ankara: İmge Yayınları, 1992), Giovanni Scognamiglio and Metin Demirhan, *Erotik Türk Sineması*. (İstanbul: Kabcacı Yayınevi, 2002), Cihan Demirci, *Araya Parça Giren Yıllar*. (İstanbul: İnkılap Yayınları, 2004).

⁷⁹Nurdan Gürbilek, "Dandies and Originals: Authenticity, Belatedness and the Turkish Novel," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no. 2 (2003), p. 609.

gender conflict as much as a political war.⁸⁰ On the surface, there were student uprisings, the encounter of the state with its perceived enemies, and fierce riots while, beneath the 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. This is a rather overlooked aspect of the March 12 novels, which the mainstream (and *male-stream*) literary criticism in Turkey did not analyze in detail. Although both the left-wing and right-wing writers of the March 12 novel developed ideals of love, erotics, and models of the relationship between individuals in their works to enhance the idea of “the other” in a period of escalating revenge, the gender dimension of the corpus has mostly been overlooked, and March 12 novels have hardly been analyzed focusing on such issues.

The primary element of the gender crisis that surfaces in the March 12 novels is masculinity. In March 12 novels, there is an apparently noticeable problem of “toughness” and “softness,” what Daniel Bell once called the “polarization of images,” which reduces political positions to stark dichotomies and praises the toughness alternative for security and well-being.⁸¹ This problem has a central position in the corpus and it is by trying to act “tough” in specific ways that characters in March 12 novels construct their identities. What counts as masculinity is discussed within this problem of toughness. The peripheral condition of the subversive masculinities is not subject to ridicule, as strongly as it was in the Tanzimat novels in which Şerif Mardin diagnosed the Bihruz bey syndrome, but humiliation is inherent to the exploration of masculinities.⁸²

⁸⁰Several studies negotiate the link of gender to traumatic events like political upheavals and war. Lynne Segal calls war as “women’s passport into the experiences and world of men” Lynne Segal, *Is the Future Female? Troubled Thoughts on Contemporary Feminism*. (London: Virago Press, 1987), p. 171. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar assert in their influential book *No Man’s Land* that First World War was a form of sex warfare, which produced discourses of gender and citizenship while contesting them at the same moment Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *No Man’s Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 21, 34. Elaine Showalter underlines the Great War as “a crisis of masculinity and a trial of the Victorian masculine ideal.” Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), p. 171. A more recent study is Joanna Bourke’s *Dismembering the Male* Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men’s Bodies, Britain, and the Great War*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). The scholarship in these oft-cited works expose how intricately the process of gender is tied to the process of nation building, and the construction of hegemony.

⁸¹Daniel Bell, “Interpretations of American Politics”, in *The Radical Right*. (New York: Transaction Books, 1964), p. 67-70.

⁸²Tanzimat novels are novels written during the reform period 1839-1876, which critically examine the cultural transformations in the society introduced by the attempts to modernize the Ottoman Empire. During the Meşrutiyet period between 1876-1908 (First Constitutional Period), a similar literary interest kept examining the Westernized elites. With the culmination

When approached with such a gender-conscious agenda, it can be seen that immanent motifs of masculinity are the hidden principles of the organization of the March 12 novels. Masculinity turns into a powerful metaphor in the literature of March 12. Previous criticisms of March 12 novels say little about masculinity, as the remarks mentioned in the previous section indicate, but it seems that the critics show an awareness that March 12 novels have been dealing with the “toughness” of political action. They circle around the issue of masculinity without directly addressing it. In this sense, it is possible to say that the critical discussion of masculinity in the March 12 novels was seen before but ignored, or worse, denied.

March 12 novels constitute a “history of the present” of 1970s Turkey.⁸³ There is no doubt that they are useful sources for understanding the social struggles and political aura of the military period since they are, to a large extent, products of them. It is, however, nothing but truism to say that the novelists of March 12 have dealt with the social and political concerns of their times and that these concerns were central to their fiction. An analytical approach to March 12 novels should recognize gender as a constitutive category while exploring the stark split between the “oppressor” and the “oppressed” because March 12 novels are deeply embedded in a critique of gender roles since, under the repressive “hyper-masculinity” of the military state, members of both camps were fatigued by male anxieties to restore power and authority.

The military intervention caused gender to surface as a destructive field of struggle inherent to the war of ideologies in Turkey. Gender became an explosive topic in the fierce fight for monopoly on power between local patriarchies themselves both in the left and in the right, as well as the fight between them and the state. The clash between the classes of men and women and, more importantly, between classes of some men and some others, which attempt to allocate their statuses in the power hierarchy, became a key question in this atmosphere. This perspective does not necessarily challenge the previously mentioned statement that March 12 novels deal with a certain period in Turkish history and they initiate strong links with the sociopolitical climate of the country in the period

of nationalistic ideologies throughout the non-Muslim and non-Turkish peoples of the Ottoman Empire, however, the nature of the paradox of identity in literature drastically changed. Balkan wars fueled a quest for a “national” literature.

⁸³Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. (New York: Vintage, 1979), p. 31.

of military rule between 1971-1973. But it underlines that, in their approach to “the history of the present,” March 12 novels do not attempt to build a record of the important incidents to the exclusion of everything else. At the same time and maybe more squarely, they attempt to intervene in the social and psychological history of people, who were influenced by the very incidents. Individual memory, a psychological process, makes its appearance in the novels as much as collective memory, which is a sociological, political, and historical process.

Male subjects appear as the dominant and active principals of March 12 novels, in which women have a limited presence as “the sexual component or counterpart.”⁸⁴ This is not surprising at all, because men were the primary actors in politics—of the military, the state, the paramilitary right-wing gangs, and the revolutionary rebellion—and they were the leading players in the street clashes. Hence, their experiences were more consequential in the stories of March 12 novels, even in the works written by women writers. After a preliminary reading of the corpus, it is possible to identify that women in March 12 novels appear mostly in supportive roles, and facilitate the ties between the males. A scarce number of female protagonists appear in the narratives (mostly in novels written by women) and they are often characterized by an anxiety of adopting traditionally male roles.

Since gender and sexuality were primarily (re)produced in terms of the discourse of male sexuality in March 12 novels, I decided to make masculinity and male sexuality the major scope of this project’s focus. But in choosing masculinity as a specific research topic, I was also motivated by the fact that the issue of gender studies in Turkey is still relatively unexplored, especially in terms of masculinities. “A decade or two ago,” Judith Butler reminds, “gender discrimination applied tacitly to women [but] that no longer serves as the exclusive framework for understanding its contemporary usage.”⁸⁵ However, in Turkey, the subject of gender studies is still overwhelmingly the kind of scholarship synonymous with studying women and issues related to them, and “gender trouble” principally refers to female gender trouble. There is plenty of criticism of men, but hardly any concerted empirical study, except some minor debates, which were spun off from feminist debates.

⁸⁴Teresa de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 160.

⁸⁵Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 6.

Feminist research in Turkey has notoriously dealt with the cultural aspects of the transition from an Islamic Ottoman Empire to a secular Turkish Republic, the Kemalist period during which the institutionalization of secularism manifested itself in radical reforms (such as the abolition of the Caliphate, religious law, and Islamic educational institutions) and modernization attempts targeted several peculiarities from language to dress codes. There has been intensive critical attention focused on the Westernization of women.⁸⁶ Although the assumption of gender as a binary category is evident in most of these works, men hardly became a salient field of study. The question of women is posed in a variety of forms, by Kemalist, Islamist, leftist, and nationalist feminisms, and the fear of dissolving gender boundaries is marked. However, masculinity is hardly made an explicit target as a social construction, when questioning the ways men behave as they do. The contours of patriarchy have insistently focused on women.

It is unfortunate that, although the relationship of nation-building to patriarchy has been widely studied by feminists in Turkey, conflicts where the nation falls into internal crises or disintegrates have attracted scarce attention. When the liberal aura of the 1960s shook the predominantly traditional patriarchal society, issues related to women became more easily discussed but, as political engagements superseded other aspects of personal agency in the registrar of the politically polarized culture of the 1970s, feminism quickly became labeled as an unworthy project. After the re-emergence of the women's movements powerfully and with more radical perspectives in the political vacuum created by the devastating military intervention of September 12, 1980, novel perspectives emerged in feminism. Many post-1980 feminists were affiliated by the socialist movement before the September 12 coup. Therefore, the legacy of the politically engaged women of the 1970s is crucial to the feminist perspectives' gaining their due recognition in Turkey in the post-1980 period. The September 12 military intervention placed pressure on every kind of political attachment. It left a vacuum for feminism to define itself and formulate its priorities on its own.⁸⁷

⁸⁶Deniz Kandiyoti, "Gendering the Modern: On Missing Dimensions in the Study of Turkish Modernity," in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), Ayşe Durakbaşı, "Kemalism as Identity Politics in Turkey," in *Deconstructing Images of the Turkish Women*. (New York: St.Martin's Press, 1998), Nükhet Sirman, "Feminism in Turkey: A Short History," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 3, no. 1 (1989).

⁸⁷Şirin Tekeli, "Emergence of the Feminist Movement in Turkey," in *The New Womens Movement*. (London: Sage, 1986); Yeşim Arat, "Women's Movement of the 1980s in Turkey: Radical Outcome of Liberal Kemalism?", in *Reconstructing Gender in the Middle East Through Voice and Experience*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 100-113.

Since the post-1980s, there has been a vigorous effort in literary criticism as well, to interpret how women's gender struggles are reflected in and nurtured by literature. One article followed another in addressing issues about the portrayal of women in literary works and the discussion of female sexuality. A good deal of critical work was produced, which focused on contentious matters related to male domination, familial honor, virginity, and the subordination of women in the family and the society, characterizing the popular approach to the controversial problem of gender.⁸⁸ A rich collection of critical articles that deals with the works of female writers who are associated with the literary crusade of March 12 also exists. Several scholars questioned how women writers of 1970s approached gender, and treated issues related to women and their sexuality.⁸⁹ Feminist readings of several women writers, including those associated with March 12, gave way to a discussion of various facets of the representation of sexuality in the literary domains of the 1970s. However, male identity has inadvertently been kept out of the question in critical studies, and gender trouble in terms of masculinity has remained largely uncharted territory.

Stephen Whitehead writes that "critical interrogation of men and masculinities is a relatively recent phenomenon, emerging out of the second-wave feminism of the 1970s and 1980s."⁹⁰ This phenomenon was replicated with a ten-year time lag in Turkey. Only very recently researchers have turned seriously to masculinity. Masculinity became visible as a significant research topic by the 1990s along with the discussion of some controversial issues in Turkish culture and history.⁹¹ It is

⁸⁸Deniz Kandiyoti, "Slave Girls, Tempresses and Comrades: Images of Women in the Turkish Novel," *Feminist Issues* 8, no. 1 (1988); Nühket Sirman, "Gender Construction and Nationalist Discourse: Dethroning the Father in the Early Turkish Novel," in *Gender and Identity Construction: Women of Central Asia, the Caucasus and Turkey* (Boston: Brill, 2000).

⁸⁹Dilek Cindoğlu, "Women Writers and Women's Fiction in the 1970-1985 Period of Turkey," Master's thesis, Boğaziçi University. (September 1986); Sibel Erol, "Sexual Discourse in Turkish Fiction: Return of the Repressed Female Identity," *Edebiyat* 6 (1995); Saliha Paker, "Unmuffled Voices in the Shade and Beyond: Women's Writing in Turkish," in Helena Frsas Scott, ed., *Textual Liberation: European Feminist Writing in the Twentieth Century*. (New York: Routledge, 1991).

⁹⁰Stephen Whitehead, "Man: The Invisible Gendered Subject?," in *The Masculinities Reader*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), p. 355.

⁹¹For some works that discuss masculinity in the Turkish context see Andrew Finkel and Nühket Sirman, "State, Village and Gender in Western Turkey," in *Turkish State, Turkish Society* (London: Routledge, 1990); Deniz Kandiyoti, "The Paradoxes of Masculinity: Some Thoughts on Segregated Societies," in *Dislocating Masculinity: Comparative Ethnographies* (London: Routledge, 1994); Elif Şafak, "An Analysis of Turkish Modernity Through Discourses of Masculinities," Ph.D thesis, Middle East Technical University. (October 2004). Prominent social sciences journal *Toplum ve Bilim* (Society and Science) published a special issue dedi-

now a burgeoning field of enquiry. Plenty of the recent studies that allude to a questioning of masculinity in Turkey also occupy themselves with the discussion of the intricate issue of the military. *Voices from the Front* (2005) (*Mehmed'in Kitabı* in Turkish, 1998) by Nadire Mater, a collection of interviews with soldiers who fought in southeast Turkey was one of the pioneering studies in this area. Emma Sinclair-Webb's "Our Bülent is Now Commando: Military Service and Manhood in Turkey" and Ayşe Gül Altınay's *The Myth of the Military Nation: The Militarism, Gender and Education in Turkey* (2004) elaborated on how a specific form of masculinity superior to civilians is developed within the image of the military. Altınay clearly illustrated how "the power of military in the civilian life, politics, economics and people's self-understandings" has been normalized in Turkey by a variety of discourses that make the institution of the military synonymous with the Turkish national identity.⁹²

A thrilling account of convergence between the politically polarized male subjects of March 12 is exposed in Ayşe Saraçgil's book, which focuses on the changing images of masculinity in the literature of Turkey. Originally published in Italian in 2001, it became recently available in Turkish in 2005 with the title *Bukalemun Erkek* (Chameleon Man). This thought-provoking book spares a confined space to the images of masculinity in the socialist movement. Saraçgil deals with the subject in the light of a diversity of many texts.⁹³ She does not pay specific attention to the March 12 novels as a whole, but comments on the violence experienced during the period with a haunting remark that, similar to Ayşe Gül Altınay's, draws attention to the dominance of a military version of masculinity in the Turkish cultural repertoire.⁹⁴

Despite these challenging efforts, men's studies in Turkey still denotes an unexplored area. The reason for this limited interest in masculinity despite the vast number of articles that allude to the dominantly masculine culture of Turkey, can be explained by several factors. First, there is a hesitance to treat masculinity

cated to research on masculinities in 1994, contributing to the attempt to make masculinity a fundamental part of gender studies in Turkey.

⁹²Ayşe Gül Altınay, *The Myth of the Military-Nation: The Militarism, Gender and Education in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 2.

⁹³Saraçgil comments on Nâzım Hikmet's poetry, Samim Kocagöz's famous novel *İzmir'in İçinde* (Inside İzmir, 1975) which deals with the memories of the first military coup in 1960, Kemal Tahir's *Kurt Kanunu* (Wolf Rule, 1969), Sevgi Soysal's *Yenişehir'de Bir Öğle Vakti* (Noontime in Yenişehir, 1973), *Yıldırım Bölge Kadınlar Koğuşu* (Yıldırım Area Women's Ward, 1976) and *Şafak* (The Dawn, 1973), and Füzûzan's *47'liler* (The Generation of 1947, 1974).

⁹⁴Ayşe Saraçgil, *Bukalemun Erkek*. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005), p. 34.

studies as a separate field. As noted by several scholars of masculinity, some feminist researchers tend to establish a quick link between “masculinity studies” and “masculinist perspectives.”⁹⁵ Many see it as a way of hijacking feminism. Second, there are cultural and political difficulties in dealing with masculinities. Certain cultural codes of manliness are so neutralized that questioning them is a challenge in itself. Turkey is one of the few countries where military service for men is not optional, and criticisms of militaristic masculinity immediately find themselves on slippery ground because of the mythic image of man as soldier in the predominantly traditional Turkish culture. For researchers who insist on the importance of having masculinity as the explicit focus of critical studies, comes another difficulty: to challenge the premise that masculine gender is already the norm in many fields of research, against which women are gendered. Studying men’s collusion with power, however, makes it clear that this implicit subject is far from being a rigid and stable identity.

As sociologist Michael Kimmel cogently suggests in his introduction to *Changing Men*, masculinity studies opens up a space that “attempts to treat masculinity not as the normative referent against which standards are assessed but as a problematic gender construct.”⁹⁶ This perspective illuminates the project of this dissertation. I consider masculinity as a problematic construct within a gender system that subjugates men, just as it subjugates women. Masculinity is an essential element in the study of the historical period of upheavals in 1970s Turkey and the literature born of the traumas and memories of this period. It is necessary that the above-mentioned pioneering studies of masculinity be followed with extensions, for gender study in Turkey to stop being solely a study of female subjects, and extend its limits. Studying masculinity in March 12 novels will be beneficial not only because it will take a step toward such an extension, but also because it will provide a fresh look at a group of novels taken for granted for a prolonged period of time. The next section will present the theoretical foundations of this study and the critics, philosophers, and scholars, whose work inspired and informed it.

⁹⁵Rachel Adams and David Savran, “Introduction”, in *The Masculinity Studies Reader*. (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), p. 1-8.

⁹⁶Michael Kimmel, *Changing Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity*. (California: Sage Publications, 1987), p. 10.

Theoretical foundations of my reading

The project to look askew into canonical texts and relate them to the social practices of their day qualifies as a “New Historicist” approach. “New Historicism” and its British variant “Cultural Materialism” were in development in the United States and in Europe in the 1970s but, in the throes of the political deadlocks, they had little effect on the literary circles of Turkey during that period. Trapped in the historical conditions of their times, the critics of 1970s Turkey failed to respond to the March 12 novels as cultural artifacts or as a social force. Although the critics of the 1970s cannot be blamed for not focusing their critical energy on such challenging examinations of literary texts, a similar excuse is not easy to formulate for their followers. The suffering of leftist revolutionaries may be the leading literary theme of many examples of the March 12 novels, but little has been done to analyze the fictionalization of these sufferings, taking into consideration the wrestling of March 12 novels with issues of power, and their approach to the fears of solipsism, anxieties of conformity, and hierarchies of gender.

Given the diversity of the work labeled New Historicist and the diverse strands of the project itself, it is hard to give a clear-cut explanation of New Historicism. But, I will provide some brief information on New Historicism to make clear in which ways the project of this dissertation is new in its approach to March 12 novels. In *Shakespearean Negotiations*, one of the cornerstone works of New Historicism, Stephen Greenblatt explores theatrical texts of the Renaissance period with help from historical, non-literary documents. In his search, there is an attempt to link literature to history and to see to what extent “characters (and the problems which they represent) are the products of social, historical values and conventions.”⁹⁷ In this framework, the human subjectivity is taken as a construct, an effect of a given historical, social, and political coordinate. This is an interpretation built on post-structuralist understandings of self, also reflected in Louis Althusser’s theory of ideological interpellation and Michel Foucault’s subjectivation. With such an idea of subjectivity as an initial starting point, Greenblatt revisits the Renaissance theater and evaluates texts taking into account the colonial politics of the period. In a sense, there is a similar effort in Edward Said’s *Orientalism* and Fredric Jameson’s *The Political Unconscious*. Said reads Joseph

⁹⁷Pieters, Moments of Negotiation: The New Historicism of Stephen Greenblatt. (as in n. 50), p. 12.

Conrad and Rudyard Kipling and links their representations of “the East” to the idea of imperialism and Jameson constructs a model for literary-historical analysis that explores literature’s role in ideology production.

New Historicism is a blend of political and historical analysis with literary criticism. It is not a theory, but a set of critical positions of looking at texts, which emerged from the contradictions between “formalist” and “old historicist” agendas. As acknowledged by various critics, there is “the shadowy figure” of Michel Foucault behind New Historicism, who established, in Richard Lehan’s words, “the foundation of postmodern history by challenging a fixed order, as well as an authority, human or divine, that will give history meaning.”⁹⁸ Although people seem to agree that Foucault had an influence on New Historicism, the degree of this influence is subject to debate.⁹⁹ Foucault’s *Madness and Civilization* (1961), *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963), *The Order of Things* (1966), and *The Archeology of Knowledge* (1969) offer a new way of thinking about “writing” history and his *Discipline and Punish* (1975), *The History of Sexuality* (1975), and *Power/Knowledge* (1980) offer potential avenues for conceiving how power shapes our lives. New Historicists adopted Foucault’s critical glance at history and power, and turned to literary texts to inspect the narrativization of power relationships.

Some critics see New Historicists as the followers of Foucault not only in his “innovations,” but also in his “faults.”¹⁰⁰ Frank Lentricchia argues in his critique of Stephen Greenblatt’s *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, that Greenblatt reduces history to power struggles just as Foucault does. Jürgen Pieters accepts the convergence between Foucauldian and New Historicist insistence on power, but he challenges the accusations of Foucault (and Greenblatt) for seeing power solely as repressive, noting that Lentricchia’s reading of Foucault’s theory of power

⁹⁸Geoffrey Galt Harpham, “Foucault and the New Historicism,” *American Literary History* 3, no. 2 (1991), p. 369; Richard Lehan, “The Theoretical Limits of the New Historicism,” *New Literary History* 21, no. 3 (1990), p. 538.

⁹⁹Louis Montrose outlines the continuities between Foucault and New Historicist practice, see Louise Montrose, “New Historicisms,” in *Redrawing the Boundaries: The Transformation of English and American Literary Studies*. (New York: MLA, 1992); Suzanne Gearhart argues that New Historicists owe to Foucault, but they borrow from his work selectively, see Suzanne Gearhart, “The Taming of Michel Foucault: New Historicism, Psychoanalysis, and the Subversion of Power,” *New Literary History* 28, no. 3 (1997). Also see “A Response to Suzanne Gearhart” and “Reply to Stephen Greenblatt” in the same issue.

¹⁰⁰Frank Lentricchia, “Foucault’s Legacy: A New Historicism?,” in *The New Historicism*. (New York and London: Routledge, 1989), p. 231-242.

is based exclusively on *Discipline and Punish*, a book that has been criticized by Foucault himself for entertaining a repressive theory of power.¹⁰¹

One of the major assumptions of New Historicism, which borrows from Foucault's critical theory, is "that there is no trans-historical or universal human essence and that human subjectivity is constructed by cultural codes which position and limit all of us in various and divided ways."¹⁰² The New Historicists' past, in line with Foucault's approach to history, consists of "diverse configurations of beliefs, values and trends often coming into conflict and contradiction with each other."¹⁰³ Since the facts about the past are not "out there" anymore, it must be recognized that historical explanations are crafted forms that depend on selective data collection and mediated accounts of history. It is, therefore, necessary to speak of the "textuality of history" and also the "historicity of texts."¹⁰⁴ This vision, not only challenged the theory behind the universally accepted historical "facts," but also punctuated the link that literary texts establish with the social-historical-cultural realm, by which they are surrounded with. Challenging the sense of history as context and literature as text, New Historicism transformed the relationship between literature and history into a dynamic one.¹⁰⁵

Literature, in the New Historicist sense, does not reflect, but it represents and mediates. In literary analysis, therefore, it becomes important to detect the way things are described, and also to explore the reasons behind the use of such descriptions among other alternatives. "The whole point" of the New Historicist enterprise, Jean Howard says, "is to grasp the terms of the discourse which made it possible [for contemporaries] to see the facts [of their own time] in a particular way indeed, made it possible to see certain phenomena as *facts* at all."¹⁰⁶ This is a way of looking at events, inherited from Clifford Geertz's idea of thick description.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹Jürgen Pieters, "Past, Present and Future: New Historicism versus Cultural Materialism," *Postmodern Culture* 10, no. 2 (2000).

¹⁰²Judith Newton, "History as Usual?: Feminism and the New Historicism," *Cultural Critique* 9 (1988), p. 88.

¹⁰³Brannigan (as in n. 75), pp. 12, 27.

¹⁰⁴Louise Montrose, "Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture," in *The New Historicism*. (New York and London: Routledge, 1989), p. 15-36.

¹⁰⁵Claire Colebrook explains the dynamic link as follows: "not only is history itself only accessible as text, text itself is also the result of non-discursive forces." See Claire Colebrook, *New Literary Histories: New Historicism and Contemporary Criticism*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 26.

¹⁰⁶Jean Howard, "The New Historicism in Renaissance Studies," *English Literary Renaissance* 16 (1986), p. 27.

¹⁰⁷See Alan Liu, "The Power of Formalism: The New Historicism," *ELH* 56, no. 4 (1989), p. 370; Anton Kaes, "New Historicism and the Study of German Literature," *German Quar-*

Geertz's thick description explains the context of the practices and discourses within a society. It is a key term for New Historicism because in its approach to literature, New Historicism asserts that literary texts reveal a variety of cultural codes.

Similar to New Historicism, the study of masculinity also rises on the idea that human practices and behaviors are constructs, which are formed through intricate cultural processes. There are further inspirations from structural anthropology in the foundations of this project, because of the special focus on masculinity and the patriarchal power attributed to it. Another major cornerstone of this dissertation in this sense is Claude Lévi Strauss's definition of marriage as a relationship of exchange between men of women as gifts. Lévi Strauss defines exogamous marriage as an exchange of women between male dominated groups to become connected in bonds of kinship. This diplomacy, he argues, is the fundamental feature in the organization of the society.¹⁰⁸ A variety of critics have built on this argument, such as Gayle Rubin, Luce Irigaray, Heidi Hartmann, Theresa de Lauretis, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. Their arguments, as a whole, provide a convenient point of entry for this dissertation to enter into the complex problem of masculinity. In her oft-cited essay entitled "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex," (1975) Gayle Rubin suggests that male-to-male bonds provide the foundations of the integral part of human associations.¹⁰⁹ She shows how a politics of gender asymmetry is formed in the diplomacy of exchanging women, and how it relegated women to a subordinate position in their relations with men.

Projecting this asymmetry to Freudian explanations of gender, Rubin reveals a deep structure in the oppression of women. Traffic in women, she argues, makes a woman "the conduit of a relationship rather than a partner to it" and this pattern is transmitted in time, to form different visions that devalue women as exchange objects, as seen in Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex.¹¹⁰ In her

terly 62, no. 2 (1989), p. 211; Meyer Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), p. 249; Raman Selden, *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1989), p. 108-9; Aram Veesser, *The New Historicism*. (New York and London: Routledge, 1989), p. xi.

¹⁰⁸Claude Lévi Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 115.

¹⁰⁹Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex," in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), p. 157.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 174.

“The Sex Which is not One” (1977), Luce Irigaray says that hom(m)osexuality describes the system of exchange under patriarchy, which make women function as conduits. Along the same lines, in her seminal essay “The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism” (1979), Heidi Hartman defines patriarchy as a social and economic structure in which men “are united in their shared relationship of dominance over their women.”¹¹¹ Elaborating on the idea of women’s passive position in a realm that provides men with the activity, Theresa de Lauretis suggests in *Alice Doesn’t: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (1984), that the subject of classical narrative is masculine. The masculine hero is capable of progressing and changing, while the feminine constitute “the space” of his desire. Focusing on male bondings over women, Eve Sedgwick argues in her *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985) that, through their competition for the female, two male rivals bond homosocially, establishing and ensuring the structures for maintaining and transmitting patriarchal power.¹¹²

The dark atmosphere of the military intervention that took place on 12 March 1971 illustrates a crisis of power. This makes the New Historicist reading of masculinity an analytical method through which to approach the novels of March 12. Written in the thick of political battles, March 12 novels look at a profound crisis of power, not only in the political domain, but also in the personal domain. Whether satiric or realistic, March 12 novels elaborate the ways in which masculinities and femininities settled in the traumatized power hierarchy of the period. They portray how prescribed ideals became sources of anxiety for individuals. Gender is one of the principal hermeneutic manifolds to understand the dynamics of the period, not only because both of the political discourses (revolutionary-left and ultra-nationalist-right) were caught in the ruses of patriarchy, but also because the boasting of the military produced subjects that were traumatized in their gendered identities.

To overcome the trauma, there is an escape to fantasies of power and masquerades of bravado in the March 12 novels. This makes the performative nature of gender a central issue in the theoretical web of this project. The major theoretical inspiration in this sense is Judith Butler, who thinks the male and female

¹¹¹Heidi Hartmann, “The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union.”, in *The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: A Debate on Class and Patriarchy*. (London: Polity Press, 1986), p. 14.

¹¹²Eve Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 25.

binary is illusory. Butler argues that the polarized gender distinction recognized in contemporary cultures is produced by discourses of law, politics, science, and language. Applying the idea of performativity behind the speech act theory to the gender order, Butler writes that “there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; identity is performatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its results.”¹¹³ Butler’s idea of performativity contests the presence of an essentially “gendered” subject in performance. This provocative look at gender has been a torchlight in this study because of the fluctuating images of masculinity in March 12 novels.¹¹⁴ I am particularly interested in the things that make a man “a man,” and the fluidity of gender constructions.

Two other terms that are of pivotal importance for the project of this dissertation are “hypermasculinity” and “hegemonic masculinity.” Hypermasculinity is a term first used by Ashis Nandy in the study of colonial contexts.¹¹⁵ By hypermasculinity, Nandy refers to an exaggeration of traditionally masculine traits such as aggression and competition, to justify power relations. Hypermasculinity is an operational term for this study since the history of March 12 abounds with destructive masculine images, not only because of the homogeneity forced by the March 12 regime and its agents, but also because of the backwardness/forwardness ground on which the rival political camps clash with each other. The conservative reaction against the revolutionary insurgency rises on an attempt to protect the country from destructive influences of ideas imported from “the West,” and this “nationalistic” stance brings us closer to the power monopoly in colonial contexts, which found its utmost expression in the term “hypermasculinity.”

Hegemonic masculinity is a notion mainly associated with the work of Raewyn Connell.¹¹⁶ It relies on the adaptation of the Gramscian perspective of the term

¹¹³Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. (as in n. 85), p.25 Speech acts are acts of communication that display different aspects of the intentions of the speaker. The first systematic account of speech acts comes from Austin, J. L. (1962) *How to Do Things with Words* Cambridge: Harvard University Press. John Searle *Speech Acts* Cambridge University Press 1969 provides a more detailed definition of the structures of speech acts.

¹¹⁴I am aware that such a use of Judith Butler means simplifying her idea of linguistic performativity as performance, in other words, as stage drama. Butler argues that gender identity is a sequence of acts, but she refutes the idea of a pre-existing performer behind the performance. In this sense, this is a post-Butler critique of essentialist construction of gendered bodies that treat gender as parody.

¹¹⁵Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: The Psychology of Colonialism*. (Delhi: Oxford, 1988), p. 9.

¹¹⁶Connell’s work is available in Turkish but very limitedly. *Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics* is her only work translated into Turkish (*Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve İktidar*. İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 1998).

hegemony as the legitimization and naturalization of the interests of the powerful to the gender order. Challenging essentialist gender theories, Connell, et al., argued in their pioneering article of men's studies "Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity" (1985) that being a man is a dynamic process, and it should be analyzed in connection to social power relations, considering class and race, and the interplay of power relations "with a division of labor and with patterns of emotional attachment."¹¹⁷ In Connell's words, the term hegemonic masculinity suggests that "at any given time, one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted."¹¹⁸ This opens a new perspective through which to look at the overall power dynamics of gender, because it makes visible the hierarchy between men and, therefore, the complex framework of patriarchy. Some scholars prefer to speak of "hegemonic masculinities," arguing that the singular use of the term suggests homogeneity. But, in their vision too, the meaning attributed to the term hegemonic displays a culture of hierarchy between men.¹¹⁹ The dynamics of this hierarchy are important for the project of this dissertation since, in March 12 novels there is a salient war of power between masculinities.¹²⁰

Masculinity as an institution is also an important focus of interest in this study. I turned to analyses of state, bureaucracy, prison, and military solidarity to constitute the theoretical path of institutionalized masculinities. Several works provided me with critical avenues to delineate the narratives of the masculinity of state, its agents, and the rebels in the context of March 12 fiction. Among many other studies, it was George Mosse's depiction of the modern masculine ideal as a combination of certain values in his *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* and his insistence on women's presence in the "own self-image" of the men, which was primarily thought provoking for me.¹²¹ Mosse's analysis of fascism in relation to the masculine ideal offered a novel way of looking at

¹¹⁷Tim Carrigan Robert Connell and John Lee, "Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity", in Rachel Adams and David Savran, eds., *The Masculinity Studies Reader*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), p. 112.

¹¹⁸Robert Connell, *Masculinities*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), p. 77.

¹¹⁹Jeff Hearn, "From Hegemonic Masculinity to the Hegemony of Men.", *Feminist Theory* 5, no. 1 (2004).

¹²⁰Works of scholars like John Beynon and Stephen Whitehead, which offer analytical tools to treat masculinity as an intricate register, has also been helpful to bring together the masculine identities of March 12 novels under scrutiny. John Beynon, *Masculinities and Culture*. (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2002); Stephen Whitehead, *Men and Masculinities*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002).

¹²¹George Mosse, *The Image of Man: the Creation of Modern Masculinity*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 53.

the masculine heroes (especially the right-wing greywolves) elaborated in March 12 fiction. In a similar vein, Klaus Theweleit's discussion of the proto-fascist male psyche, its phobic resistances against femininity, and misogyny in *Male Fantasies* evoked challenging ideas about the fascist rhetoric that dominates a certain number of novels in the targeted corpus.

The idea of women as objects of exchange, forced definitions of gender, performative acts to fulfill these forced definitions, and problems about hegemony, hegemonic masculinity, and male homosocial bonding to keep patriarchal power in hand in various types of solidarity and institutions are all at work in March 12 novels. Although definitions of "gender" and "power" reflect lack of consensus within and between disciplines, their primacy in the social sciences is an established fact. By assuming a connection between gender and power, or between gender and authoritarian or destructive personal and political structures, I am situating my analysis within the work of a wide range of theorists who attempt to link the incorporation of gender relations and theories on power. The controversies related to gender and sexuality in the March 12 fiction, which surface in a polarized discourse shaped by the fierce conflict of the Turkish left and the right, have the whole history of Turkish modernization as the primary part of their enigma, hence discourses of masculinity and femininity in the novels themselves are crucial objects of thick description. In the last section of this introductory chapter, I will describe the March 12 novels more precisely, by providing the genealogy of the genre and making a preliminary introduction to the novels that will be analyzed in the following chapters.

The March 12 novel revisited

March 12 novels are not only social evidence or individual testimonies, but also cultural repositories in a process of public narrativizing, which comprise different faces of "the hegemonic". Inspired by a socialist ethos, some examples of the corpus situate the struggles of individuals in a capitalist society, surrounded with money-hungry and destructive figures and structures. Some situate a Hegelian master and slave dynamic in the atmosphere of the *coup d'état* and discuss how the two competing rivals for power (the military and the intelligentsia) recognize their own existence in a mutual struggle for power. They show how "the mas-

ter” needs “the slave” in order to legitimate his comparative privilege.¹²² Some follow a hesitant line that trespasses the borders of political propaganda and, in some sense, some of them are agitprop works. Certain general contours of isolation, sexual-emotional frustration, and a traumatic solitude and alienation can be drawn considering the corpus, which is rich in images of men and women craving for power.

To declare March 12 fiction as comprised of politically engaged novels full of clichés, heroic figures, and brutal villains, I suggest, is to reduce these complex works to their non-significant common denominators. The discussions in the following chapters will show that the previously established “canon” of March 12 fiction does not reflect the diversity of the corpus, which actually covers a number of different types of narrations. The readings offered by this dissertation will challenge the previous view of the March 12 fiction, and show that the novels are deeply embedded in the discussion of socio-cultural problems and individual anxieties, as strongly and dedicatedly as the political struggles of the period. The simplicity of the stories of victimization by the powerful, which is a common theme in the corpus, masks complex and troubling questions. How does being deprived of power constitute gender roles? Why does it initiate the tormenting anxiety of being less masculine in the eyes of the others? Can the pride born out of sacrifice for common good be the same as deriving masochistic pleasure from victimization? And then, is it possible to be good outside of the culturally constructed paradigms of the society? It is important for this study to make it explicit that the protagonists of March 12 novels are often in despair and of two minds between the patriarchal paradigms of “the real man” and “the sissy,” as well as “the virgin” and “the whore,” negotiating the positive and negative models available to men and women, and trying to judge values constituting the norms of masculinity and femininity. Their tragedy lies in the fact that they are as much defined by the culture as alienated from it through their own desires.

The shortsightedness of previous critics in their approach to March 12 novels and their insistence on interpreting these texts only through the lens of politics and class struggles have produced a carbon copy interpretation of March 12 novels so far. The somehow orthodox insistence to turn to struggles anchored in the “properly” economic realm, not only denied the heterogeneity of the corpus but also limited the ways that can be followed to approach it. Gender is not recog-

¹²²G.W.F Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 61.

nized as an analytically productive lens through which to look at those novels on the grounds that economical dynamics provide a better perspective for settling conflicts in the wider world. It is, however, important to see that material or political blindness does not automatically become part of a research agenda just because the research focuses on gender or sexual identities.

There have been scholars critical of gender and queer studies who argue that desire and sexuality-laden perspectives of some research often tend to neglect material conditions.¹²³ Terry Eagleton raises a similar concern about the eclipse of more important questions by “sexy” questions of pop-culture in his “The Politics of Amnesia,” by humorously saying that students of the humanities are now “at work on sensationalist subjects like vampirism and eye-gouging, cyborgs and porno movies.”¹²⁴ I totally agree that there is a change in the questions that people in the humanities consider important and it is impossible not to see that the replacement of the “transformative” old questions with the “entertaining” new ones is a political matter as much as a cultural problem of intellectual bankruptcy. But, instead of giving up on the “sexy” questions, it may be a better idea to pull them into “the greater problem.”

This study’s attempt to introduce gender and sexuality into the study of March 12 novels is not out of an expectation of joy, but rather out of an attempt to seek the possibility of exploring gender without being politically illiterate. Masculinity can indeed be analyzed by studying its changing faces in the hegemonical order, which are dependent on the political and economical realms themselves. I consider alternative readings of the March 12 fiction, those that would attempt to deal with issues such as gender, sexuality, agency, self-sacrifice, etc. crucial to a more thorough understanding of class struggles and political world-views staged in the narrations. Alternative readings will not downplay the importance of political engagements or class struggles that these novels deal with, but they will make them more comprehensive, by making explicit the worlds of the politically engaged individuals of a developing society.

In terms of their subject matter, March 12 novels are all incontrovertibly related. They deal with the exploitation of individuals at the hands of more powerful

¹²³Rosemary Hennessey, “Queer Visibility in Commodity Culture,” *Cultural Critique* 29 (1994); Donald Morton, *The Material Queer: A LesbianGay Cultural Studies Reader*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996)

¹²⁴Terry Eagleton, *After Theory*. (London: Basic Books, 2003), p. 3.

people, bureaucratic institutions or events over which they ultimately have no precise control. However, despite their overlapping stories, March 12 novels should not be reduced to a single political perspective or aesthetic strategy. Most of the March 12 novels have stories constructed on politically engaged characters that confront the repressions of the military state and struggle against the hypocrisies and the absorbing power of the modern bourgeois society. Some of these texts attempt to build a counter-history of the period and challenge the military-state oriented grand-narrative of the period under military rule, whereas some others illustrate abstract stories that do not provide any temporal or spatial information at all. In the big picture, there are novels that side with the officially perpetuated historiography as well. These works argue for the legitimacy of the intervention by reason of the paramilitarization of politically engaged individuals and thereby the civil war conditions of the late 1960s. There are also some novels that conceal their criticism in satire and sarcasm, and draw in surrealist atmospheres. Some March 12 novels not only examine and question the past, but also attempt to wed their criticism to a political ideology and a cultural program. In this attempt, a number of writers employ a propagandist and didactic discourse, but such a characteristic cannot be generalized to the entire corpus.

Although it is acknowledged as a genre associated with the military intervention, the first example of the March 12 novels defies this contention, since it was published a year before the military intervention took place. That opens a path for not regarding March 12 fiction solely as “a product” of the military coup. This first novel was Melih Cevdet Anday’s *Gizli Emir* (Secret Command, 1970), an unsettling tale featuring the psychological terror of the overpowering institutions on individuals. *Gizli Emir* illustrates a group of artists waiting in an anonymous time and setting, to hear that some enigmatic command has finally been ordered by some secret powers. It satirizes military rule by showing the struggles of people in a city under the rule of an institution called AYOT (Asayışı Yerleştirme Olağanüstü Teşkilatı [The Extraordinary Institution for Securing Public Order]). The institution decides what time people should get up or go to bed, and, for their well being, it controls the entire city with unusual and irrational measures.¹²⁵ Critics acknowledge this novel as the pioneering example of the March 12 novels, since it successfully ventures into the atmosphere of fear

¹²⁵Melih Cevdet Anday, *Gizli Emir*. (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2007).

and paranoia under the surveillance of some repressive powers, an atmosphere that became visible following the military intervention of 1971.

After *Gizli Emir* opened a literary discourse critically engaged with issues related to state power, bureaucracy, agency, surveillance, and control, several other novels followed. The first examples of the literary crusade of March 12 were novels written as an immediate reaction by the eye-witnesses, who experienced a trauma as “the state,” which is supposed to serve people, became a means to accumulate power in the hands of the powerful. These first examples chronicled the experience of physical, emotional, and intellectual deprivation of people during the immediate accounts of the military intervention. Despite their common hot temper, these initial works were diverse in terms of their aesthetic strategies. Some were characterized with historical testimonial voices with a realist perspective, whereas others were satirical works, which revealed the violent struggle for power without any explicit reference to historical events and figures. Existentialism, as a philosophical practice, was explicit in the prominent examples of those pioneering novels in a sense of alienation and pessimism.

Through the second half of the 1970s, two significant changes took place. First, the right-wing writers began publishing novels that depicted their side of the story and offered an alternative genealogy of the military coup. These works attempted to challenge the leftist connotations of the victim/witness role providing the accounts of how the anti-communist youth, the “greywolves,” experienced the coup period. Second, the tormenting accounts of the intervention raised the problem of writing critically in a period when revolution itself fell apart. In the novels of writers that sympathize with a leftist worldview, a more sophisticated political self-criticism began to emerge, one that, although dominated with pessimism, was part of an endeavor to transcend it. Themes such as paranoia, blacklisting, and torture kept a certain significance, but new horizons opened up as well. As individual traumas were narrativized at a social level and bridged by means of literature, the cultural trauma of March 12 became more and more visible. Leftist women’s writings promoted alternative perspectives. Some women writers, in these later works, began to shed a critical eye on “oppression” in a broader sense and made the gendered aspects of identity a powerful center of gravity.

As the lists of novels in Table A.1 (on page 303) and Table B.1 (on page 313) shows, March 12 military intervention inspired numerous works, not only

during the nine-year period between the two successive military interventions of 1971 and 1980, but also in the post-1980s. In the post-1980 novels, which recall the memories of the military intervention, a more sophisticated diversity can be observed in terms of political and aesthetic realms, and in terms of the use of the coup atmosphere. Writers of different political backgrounds kept dealing with the legacy of the March 12 coup and returned in their works to the influences of the military rule. In the March 12 novels published in the post-1980s, military rule was not employed as the real-time atmosphere of the stories but, rather was transformed into a caustic motif for brute power. The seizure of power by the military on September 12, 1980, pushed masses of people into piercing struggles in a more heavy-handed manner than the March 12 intervention, and imposed a fierce social alienation and de-politicization on the society. Scholars began turning to the March 12 intervention to explore representations of oppression, in order to find ways to deal with the legacy of the September 12 intervention.

To abstract a few books from a body of tens and hundreds is, in a sense, problematic. I preferred to limit my critical reading to March 12 novels published between 1971-1980, and to those in which the events of the period are a dominant force in their narrations. The criterion that has governed my choice of novels is the attempt to avoid interference with the echoes of the last coup Turkey experienced on September 12, 1980, and the totally different social dynamic of the literary atmosphere of the post-1980s. There are young writers who produced second-hand accounts of March 12 in the 1980s and I, by no means, deny the artistic merit of their work. I limited my focus to the first-hand eyewitness accounts and memory work in order to be able to link the literature of March 12 to its immediate history. While compiling the corpus, I tried to assure that the selected works represent the diversity of March 12 fiction as extensively as possible. I included works of writers who belong to the revolutionary-left as well as those of the radical-right, and the surreal novels as well as the realistic ones. On the whole, I deliberately paid attention to choosing the books that are particularly representative of the chaotic atmosphere of March 12. The books I have selected constitute a group that assembles examples of different strains of March 12 fiction, which illustrates diverse points of this historical rupture.

This study focuses on nine March 12 novels. Four of the selected nine novels are by women writers. The novels selected for analysis run along chronologically parallel lines. The time frame marked by the selected works begins in 1972 and

ends in 1979. In this seven-year trajectory, the influences of literary schools of realism, modernism, and post-modernism are manifest. Given the selection and the intentions outlined above, this study takes the following novels as its explicit focus: *Büyük Gözaltı* (Extreme Surveillance, 1972) by Çetin Altan (b.1927), *Yaralınsın* (You Are Wounded, 1974) by Erdal Öz (1935-2006), *İsa'nın Güncesi* (The Diary of Jesus, 1974) by Melih Cevdet Anday (1915-2002), *Şafak* (The Dawn, 1975) by Sevgi Soysal (1936-1976), *Sanıcı* (Stitch, 1975) by Emine Işınsu (b. 1938), *Yarın Yarın* (Tomorrow Tomorrow, 1976) by Pınar Kür (b.1943), *Zor* (Hard, 1977) by Sevinç Çokum (b.1943), *Gençliğim Eyvah* (Alas! My Youth, 1979) by Tarık Buğra (1918-1994), and *Bir Düğün Gecesi* (A Wedding Night, 1979) by Adalet Ağaoğlu (b.1929).

Johan Soenen fairly observes that, after 1971, media attention to Turkey increased and a new generation of writers became of interest to translators, those who “had at some stage been political prisoners and/or had seen their work banned in their homeland as a result of their critical attitude towards the state, police, and armed forces.”¹²⁶ Despite this interest, only a scarce number of March 12 novels are available in non-Turkish languages. So far only two of the novels, *Büyük Gözaltı* and *Yaralınsın*, have been translated into some major European languages. Çetin Altan, the writer of some stunning political fables of Turkey, has all of his novels in translation into French, whereas *Yaralınsın* has been the only novel of Erdal Öz in translation, a writer who deserves to be more widely known than solely in the Turkish literary circles to which he was limited. Melih Cevdet Anday, the renowned name of Turkish poetry, who had a prize-rich literary career of more than sixty years, has plenty of his poems translated into major European languages in collections of Turkish poetry. Works of prolific female writers such as Sevgi Soysal, Pınar Kür, and Adalet Ağaoğlu have been cited, quoted at length, and analyzed in critical essays considering the rise of feminist concerns in contemporary Turkish fiction. These writers also have some of their works in translation, but their above-mentioned novels have not yet appeared in any European language. Works of the conservative-right wing writers such as Emine Işınsu, Sevinç Çokum, and Tarık Buğra have captivated a certain readership in Turkey, but their works are not known to non-Turkish readership at all.

¹²⁶ Johan Soenen, “The Image of Turkish Literature in Flanders.”, in Nedret Kuran Burçoğlu, ed., *The Image of the Turk in Europe from the Declaration of the Republic in 1923 to the 1990s* (İstanbul: Isis Press, 2000), p. 42.

This thesis is organized into three chapters. The novels are organized in chronological order to deal better with their position at the historical moment that marks the development of March 12 fiction. Prologues to the chapters include an overview of the literary aura of the period and help to position the selected novels in the historical context. Chapter one develops a reading of three distinguished novels of Turkish literature that were published immediately after the military intervention: *Büyük Gözaltı* (Extreme Surveillance, 1972), *Yaralıyım* (You Are Wounded, 1974) and *İsa'nın Güncesi* (The Diary of Jesus, 1974). Chapter two focuses on the works of the female writers who, in their novels, broadened discussions of the period by critically dealing with male subject positions and develops readings of *Şafak* (The Dawn, 1974), *Sanrı* (Stitch, 1975), *Yarın Yarın* (Tomorrow Tomorrow, 1976), and *Zor* (Hard, 1977). Finally, chapter three explores two novels that were published in 1979, at the outset of the third and the most devastating military intervention of September 12, 1980: *Gençliğim Eyvah* (Alas! My Youth, 1979) and *Bir Düğün Gecesi* (A Wedding Night, 1979). An inventory of novels published in the ten-year period between 1970-1980 (Table A.1 on page 303), a selected list that consists of post-1980 novel dealing with the memories of the March 12 coup (Table B.1 on page 313), and a historical scrapbook of March 12 are included in the Appendices.

CHAPTER 1

Under the Hammer Victimized Men as a Stable Ground (1972-1974)

I consider the efforts to produce a literature that deals with the memories of March 12 primarily as an attempt to come to terms with the pains of the military intervention. The urge to respond to the catastrophic events of the period is especially manifest in the initial examples of the March 12 novels. In addition to facing the “traumatic experiences” of March 12, there is also the desperate need, in those early novels, to challenge the domineering “historical narrative” propagated by the political winners of the day. A few weeks after an interim government was formed under the leadership of Nihat Erim, Erim declared in a radio broadcast that the precautions taken by the government “will land on their [the radicals’] heads like a hammer”. The oppressive actions taken by the state worked just like a hammer, indeed. This hammer not only shaped the accounts of the initial March 12 novels, but also incontrovertibly marked all of the novels that followed. Yet, it is not possible to downgrade March 12 novels to an act of recording or an attempt at reflection of the events of March 12. There is a more productive role for this literature. The political encounter with the agents

of power in the settings of a *coup d'état* is not what March 12 fiction is all about. The discussion in the novels about dominance and hegemony broadens its limits from the political to the social, sexual, and psychological. Considering that the first novel associated with the March 12 canon was published a year before the military intervention took place, it may be better to locate these novels in a broader context of a struggle with power.

March 12 novels are texts at the meeting point of “the testimonial” and “the traumatic,” which, as literary critic Cathy Caruth argues, signifies a meeting where there is an attempt to access things only partially known and understood. Caruth writes that:

The pathology [of post-traumatic stress disorder] cannot be defined either by the event itself which may or may not be catastrophic, and may not traumatize everyone equally nor can it be defined in terms of a distortion of the event, achieving its haunting power as a result of distorting personal significances attached to it. The pathology consists, rather, solely in the structure of its experience or reception: the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of the one who experiences it. Poetry, in the pure form of experience, makes then a significant contribution to a healing process.¹

It is critically important to recognize that not every bad experience is “traumatic.” Ernst van Alphen cogently states that trauma is “an experience that has not come about and that shows negatively symptoms of the discursivity that defines ‘successful’ experience.”² There is, in other words, a difficulty in fully experiencing and discursively stating what has happened, within the very definition of trauma. This difficulty opens a path to discuss the rhetorical mode of the March 12 novels.

After the government was overthrown on March 12, 1971, the military did not tolerate any power center other than itself. During the stabilization period of military rule, oppressive measures of the state were aimed at some powerful role models of the period and pushed the rest of the society into silence with their victimized images. Characterized by the attempt “to hunt down and eradicate truths that threaten the stability of” the regime, this brute monopoly of power

¹Cathy Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), p. 11.

²Ernst van Alphen, “Symptoms of Discursivity: Experience, Memory and Trauma”, in *Narrative Theory: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*. (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 109.

made everyday life for ordinary people subject to uncertainty and intimidation, especially when in contact with officialdom.³ Widespread abuses of personal liberty occurred and hundreds of people were taken into custody for reading certain books, being members of labor organizations, or carrying the leaflets of oppositional civil meetings. Those taken into custody were often held incommunicado and subjected to beatings and torture by agents with official sanction. Many literary figures witnessed and experienced the strict measures of the military rule first-hand.

In her book *Turkey: Torture and Political Persecution*, Jane Cousins provides a chronicle of the military intervention of March 12, and records the accounts of maltreatment during the junta regime, with the help of survivors' testimonials.⁴ Local media were under severe control and censorship in Turkey, so only journalists from abroad were able to break the silence about the accounts of military rule. Fiction was another tool used to oppose the silence. Prominent literary figures of the country responded to the trauma with testimonial novels and supplemented the attempts to chronicle and question what "really" happened. In the immediate aftermath of the March 12 coup, testimonial accounts of the prison experiences of leftist writers inspired a variety of novels. Since mass media coverage of human rights abuses was extremely limited under the censorship of the authorities, literature during that period of turmoil came to be seen as a gateway to "the truth" and an alternate way to express a history, which was contradictory to the official one. Testimony during this period emerged as an "authenticating apparatus" for people to recover their subjectivity against the structures of power.⁵

In such a period of rapid change and in the face of pressure, a detachment from personal experiences to work on refined fictional discourses was not possible. Therefore, the first examples of the March 12 novel emerged as literary texts heavily built on personal accounts. Beneath the intellectuals' reaction to the coup, there was a vulnerable loss and a severe trauma, provoked by the besiegement of their political agency. Rather than a powerful counter-attack, a tone of disappointment and self-questioning was dominant in the initial March 12 novels. The quasi-autobiographical engagement of literary figures with the March 12 regime resulted in a chain of books, gaining wide-scale attention soon after publication.

³Page DuBois, *Torture and Truth*. (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 152.

⁴Jane Cousins, *Turkey: Torture and Political Persecution*. (London: Pluto Press, 1973).

⁵Barbara Foley, *Telling the Truth: Practice of Documentary Fiction*. (New York: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 243.

In 1972, Çetin Altan, a recognized journalist and an ex-member of parliament, published *Büyük Gözaltı* (Extreme Surveillance), a novel commemorating his experiences of imprisonment immediately after the military takeover. Because of Altan's reputation as an ex-MP and an oppositional pen caustically criticizing the government and its policies, the book quickly became popular. *Büyük Gözaltı* is a political satire centered on an anonymous individual's abstract story of custody. Altan combines the insecurity that comes with being imprisoned on some unknown ground with the murky atmosphere of an oppressive police state. The story unfolds amid an unidentified time and setting but, as the protagonist of the novel recollects his childhood in İstanbul, it becomes clear that the story is an allusion to the tyrannies Altan encountered because of his political orientation.

Similar novels leaning on the first-hand experiences of writers followed each other in short order. Recognized short story writer Erdal Öz serialized his first novel *Yaralımsın* (You Are Wounded), which makes vivid use of some disturbingly painful memories of custody and prison, in the daily *Cumhuriyet* during 1973 and published it in book form in 1974. Detailing the brutality inflicted upon political prisoners, Öz's *Yaralımsın* narrates a piercing story of torture, depicting how people's lives were scarred by brute officers and their associates, during the heydays of military rule. This grotesque story is said to borrow from the prison diaries of Deniz Gezmiş and his friends Yusuf Aslan and Hüseyin İnan (see fig. C.5 on page 318), who were leading figures in the student movements. Öz interviewed them in prison and blended their experiences with fiction, resulting in *Yaralımsın* and two additional memoir-novels *Gülünün Solduğu Akşam* (The Night His Rose Wilted, 1987) and *Defterimde Kuş Sesleri* (Cries of Birds in My Notebook, 2003). *Yaralımsın* became a cult book in the 1970s, emblematic of a generation engaged in changing the world. Although it is not quite as popular today as it once was, the novel is still the most popular March 12 narrative. It is known even by the younger generation which is either unfamiliar with the history of the military intervention or has vague memories of it.

How to respond to oppression was a challenging question for the pioneering novelists of March 12. Writers questioned the manners of a correct political action, a genuine ideological dedication, and a respectable individual agency. While dealing with the symbols of political devotion, they also questioned the "death for a cause" discourses. In 1974, prominent writer Tarık Dursun K. (Kakıncı) published *Gün Döndü* (The Day Turned, 1974) and dramatized the struggles of a

leftist revolutionary student turned in to the security forces by his father.⁶ *Gün Döndü* punctuated the war of self-sacrifice between young activists and called attention to the sacrifices of a father, who attempts to keep his son alive during a period of false heroism. Acclaimed short story writer Füzûzan [Selçuk] contributed to this surge with a novel that touches upon the repressive atmosphere of the period and provided a look at the struggles of the young leftist activists in a chilling narrative that explores torture and its emotional burden. She published *47'liler* (The Generation of 1947, 1974), a novel that exclusively depicts youngsters who, in their early 20s, became involved with the leftist revolutionary movement.⁷ That same year, another stunning book came from the recognized poet Melih Cevdet Anday. Anday published *İsa'nın Güncesi* (The Diary of Jesus), a dark story of the military-flavored bureaucracy, that contests the ways in which the aggressive state apparatus of March 12 erased people's self-conceptualization and traumatized their identities.

Büyük Gözaltı, *Yaralı* and *İsa'nın Güncesi* are the novels I will explore more comprehensively in this chapter, since these three grim tales of deprivation deal, more squarely than the others mentioned, with a crisis of masculinity initiated by the terrors of violent power abuse. They grant an ideological priority to the “womanish” man deprived of power. Power abuse was an overwhelming reality for the society during the events of March 12. Hence, it is an essential and characteristic attribute in almost all examples of the corpus. However, in these three novels, we explicitly find the terror described as being built on “castrating” state power. The “new Bihruz bey” of these novels is the alienated individual explored in his anxieties of strength. Management of fear makes an appearance in these examples of the March 12 novel as a defining theme, underlining the fragility of individuals and also questioning the attitudes and discourses necessary for a man to be identified as a “man.”

In each novel, the male hero is positioned in a state of ambiguity, trying to understand the reasons for being oppressed and victimized by the system and its brutal agents, and attempting to find a proper way in which to answer the oppression. These three novels present a full and largely sympathetic account of men's reactions to fear. Contending that masculinity turns into a tiresome performance when under pressure, they suggest that anxiety associated with gender identity

⁶Tarık Dursun Kakinç, *Gün Döndü*. (İstanbul: Köprü Yayınları, 1974).

⁷Füzûzan Selçuk, *47'liler*. (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1974).

may be fundamental to the human condition.

Büyük Gözaltı, *Yaralısn* and *İsa'nın Güncesi* introduce a gendered notion of "state," which rules in favor of a class or a bloc of classes via institutions that have dominant masculine patterns at their very core. The novels stage ordinary men, who find themselves suddenly heaved into the mechanism of a repressive power network. They focus on the trials that those men must face before they prove themselves worthy of a code of courage and honor. The suspense of their stories benefits from the "red scare" that influenced the period. Although they do not make explicit references to the historical facts and political waves caused by the military intervention, these novels successfully deal with the fear of escalating military bureaucracies and the heavy-handed use of power. They illustrate a vivid picture of the weight of tradition upon the shoulders of a rebelling hero, who not only fights against a corrupt system, but also struggles against norms imposed upon him as an adult male.

Framed through the visual logic of their male protagonist's recollections, *Büyük Gözaltı*, *Yaralısn* and *İsa'nın Güncesi* engage issues related to identity formation within a broader and more complex exploration of the human condition that has affinities with existentialism. The protagonists fall into a questioning of the meaning of life and the secrets of existence, and attempt to reach some deeper level of being. These texts are suggestive of the powerful clash of competing cultural values of gender and politics, and they question the challenge to the natural order of things. The literal meanings of the satirical tale of *Büyük Gözaltı*, the testimonial tale of *Yaralısn*, and the allegorical tale of *İsa'nın Güncesi* predominantly allude to the manners in which adult masculinity is achieved. Protagonists demonstrate and sometimes discuss modes of masculine behavior that involve toughening, fortitude, and bravery. The authoritarian male figure is compared and contrasted with a range of masculinities, some of which are fractured and traumatized under oppression. The power and potency of the authoritarian male are ruefully acknowledged as the primary features contributing to its hegemonic role.

In discussing the title of *Taking it Like a Man*, David Savran, underlines that even men must act "like a man," which means that manhood is not an essential feature and can only be approximated.⁸ *Büyük Gözaltı*, *Yaralısn*, and *İsa'nın Güncesi* give voice to the frightened, harassed, and imprisoned men, and

⁸David Savran, *Taking It Like a Man: White Masculinity, Masochism, and Contemporary American Culture*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998).

explore this very approximation. The images of victimized men serve as a stable ground for all three narrations, but their creative energy does not result in an unreasonable attempt to make heroes out of destroyed men. Rather, they carry a wry accent while conducting an ironic exploration of these men and their not being able to masquerade as “tough men” despite all their efforts. This chapter will show that the established belief that March 12 novels produced images of men who are idealized for their courage, outstanding achievements, and noble qualities is simply not true.⁹ If all that March 12 literature does is to create heroes whose images grow larger through their violent encounters with torture, why do we find these people in psychological and physical crises?

⁹See Fethi Naci’s famous remark that March 12 novels were “novels of torture and heroism” until Adalet Ağaoğlu’s 1979 novel, on page 20.

1.1 *Büyük Gözaltı*

Büyük Gözaltı (Extreme Surveillance) is the chronicle of a grievous imprisonment in a custody cell and a troublesome life under pressure in a persecutory culture.¹⁰ When Çetin Altan was taken into custody after the military intervention in 1971, he was one of the pioneering figures of the leftist opposition outside parliament.¹¹ Immediately after his release, *Büyük Gözaltı* was on the desk of his publisher. The novel was published in 1972 by Bilgi Yayınevi and, a year later, it received the Orhan Kemal Novel Award, one of the most prestigious national literary prizes of Turkish literature. When his novel won this award, Altan had already been sent back to prison, this time on different charges.¹² The French translation of *Büyük Gözaltı* was published by the prestigious publishing company Flammarion in 1975, when the novel was in its fifth edition in Turkey¹³.

This novel does not make any direct references to the March 12, 1971 military intervention. It anonymously illustrates the instances of fear and trouble experienced by individuals under the monitoring of some tyrannical powers. A desperate man in custody speaks directly to the readers. In the narration, surveillance is a state that exceeds the physical environment of the custody cell, which constitutes the major setting. It is used as a striking metaphor to delineate the troublesome accounts of becoming a man in a traditional society. *Büyük Gözaltı* provides the opportunity to examine expressions of male anxieties, because it fictionalizes deprivation by linking gender anxieties to political struggles under

¹⁰Çetin Altan, *Büyük Gözaltı*. (İstanbul: İnkılâp Kitabevi, 1999).

¹¹Çetin Altan is born in İstanbul in 1927. He graduated from the Galatasaray lycee and the Faculty of Law at Ankara University. He preferred working as a journalist to being an attorney. His career in journalism started in *Ulus* and in 1959, he transferred to *Milliyet*, in which he still writes a column. Between 1965-1969, Altan served in the parliament as MP of Turkish Workers' Party (Türkiye İşçi Partisi, TİP). In his writing career of more than fifty years, Altan had to face more than three hundred lawsuits because of his ideas. In 1972, he is kept under custody for fifteen days, although the limit was 24 hours. Altan is a renowned columnist and playwright, as well as an acclaimed novelist. He has published many volumes of his essays, memoirs and travel notes. Major plays: *Mor Defter* (Purple Notebook, 1965), *Suçlular* (The Guilty, 1965), *Dilekçe* (Petition, 1966), *Tahtırevalli* (The See-Saw, 1966). Novels: *Büyük Gözaltı* (Grand Surveillance, 1973 Orhan Kemal Novel Award), *Bir Avuç Gökyüzü* (A Handful of Sky, 1974), *Viski* (Whiskey, 1975), *Küçük Bahçe* (The Small Garden, 1978).

¹²The online version of Solmaz Kamuran's biography of Çetin Altan entitled *İpek Böceği Cinayeti* (The Silkworm Murder) draws a summary of Altan's lifelong troubles with the ruling power as a writer. This biography (in Turkish) is available online at <http://www.perspektif.org/ibc>

¹³Çetin Altan's *Étroite Surveillance*, *Whisky*, *Une poigne de ciel* and *Ixe enseveli, ou, Le petit jardin* were reissued by Flammarion in 1992.

the repressive measures of an authoritarian culture. Being in custody initiates a discussion about the brutal aspects of incarceration. It also raises questions about the notion of a free self. Nurtured by Altan's memories of imprisonment in the heydays of March 12, the novel depicts the spectacular story of a man fighting oppressive measures, not only against his captors while in custody, but also through his entire life against the restrictions of the society.

The novel opens as the 44-year-old anonymous protagonist/narrator of the novel finds himself in a cell charged with murder in some unidentified time and setting. He says that he is waiting for a formal hearing, similar to Franz Kafka's famous character Joseph K. of *The Trial*. Later, when he refers to his memories, it becomes clear that the narrator recollects a childhood in İstanbul. Charged with some sort of terrible though unspecified murder, the protagonist helplessly recalls the memories of times past and tries to recall a death for which he may be held responsible. One immediate childhood memory shapes the primary focus of his imaginary death toll. The protagonist recalls his lonely childhood in an unexceptional nuclear family cohabitating with the paternal grandmother, which was traumatized because of the tense relationship between his parents. He remembers how his father, obsessed with his own elderly mother's demands for respect and attention, turned his mother into an unhappy and angry woman. He recognizes that, in a moment of extreme anger and anguish around the age of three, he once had wished his parents and grandmother dead, and he convinces himself that this symbolic murder may be the one that landed him in the custody cell. Yet, when interrupted by the brutal attitudes of the guards, who keep pressing for an answer, the protagonist decides that he cannot provide a convincing story with this first childhood murder and reaches back into his memory to find some others.

A series of flashbacks intervene in the main plot of the novel and provide a history of the protagonist, beginning with his early childhood. These memories illustrate the protagonist's preoccupation with the onset of puberty, his boarding school experiences, and his years of adolescence, and conclude with the death of his father. His father's death symbolizes an important step that concludes the protagonist's rite of passage to masculinity. The plot of flashback memories begins with the struggles of a pre-Oedipal child stuck in the tensions of family life and narrates the protagonist's construction of his sense of male confidence and sexual identity. The plot also contains some comic episodes that occasionally provide release from the oppressive atmosphere of the custody cell. While he is kept

incomunicado, listening to the sounds of people being beaten and tortured in other cells, the protagonist recalls numerous imaginary murders from memories of his past. Trying to decide which of them is the most convincing, he vigilantly passes into a mood of paranoia, since the guards keep asking him the same questions over and over. He recognizes the upsetting fact that even a genuine answer will not stop them from doing the things they have already decided to do.

In the meantime, the harsh questioning turns out to be a delusion as a relatively friendlier officer visits the protagonist in his cell and insists that his interrogation has not yet officially begun. He argues that no guard has yet interrogated him. Soon, another officer provides the detainee with a notice, which says that no further legal action will be taken on his case and makes him sign the notice. Desperately waiting for immediate release, the protagonist finds himself unable to sleep, captivated by pessimism, stress, and anger. Although the future, and even his present state, seem gloomily pessimistic to him in custody, he does not give up on more optimistic alternatives. His hopeful waiting in the custody cell constitutes the main dramatic axis of the narration, during which the protagonist entertains a “freedom of mind” and travels in time, symbolically emphasizing the impossibility of holding thoughts prisoner by forcing bodies into custody cells.

While figuring out his imaginary list of murders, the protagonist dives into several webs of relationships from his past to locate his drastic encounters with power. The subplots constructed upon the autobiographical memories of the protagonist about his mother’s tendency toward physical punishment, the disciplinary anger of his maternal grandfather, the oppressive atmosphere of the boarding school, and ever-present pressure in society makes him recognize that he has already been under strict surveillance outside the custody cell as well. The flashbacks of the protagonist’s sexual awakenings as a little boy, the ongoing discussion in boarding school about sex, and some of his later involvement in sexual relationships reveal the anxieties attached to “becoming a man” under this severe monitoring. The protagonist thinks back on the sense of guilt and feelings of shame, which overwhelmed his first sexual awakenings. All of the symbolic occasions of repression represented by boarding school memories, reminiscences of puberty and adolescence etc., finally collapse into his factual imprisonment in the custody cell. When the protagonist finally asks one of the guards about the notice he signed, the guard replies saying that those papers were his release papers and that his case was closed. The novel ends as the protagonist realizes, in a moment of epiphany,

that no one can prove he is being kept prisoner after he confirmed his release with his own signature.

Büyük Gözaltı stages the troublesome accounts of “growing into a man” in the midst of the strictures of a predominantly conservative society and “being a man” under the tensions of another form of oppressive power, represented by the state of imprisonment and the brutal guards. The novel exhibits a great interest in the concept of free will. With a series of instances from the life of a four-year-old and many others from the adolescent and adult life, it emphasizes the gap between what one “desires to do” and is “allowed to do.” The endeavor for the displacement of parental authority is made analogous to the rite of passage experienced in a custody cell. This links the protagonist’s revolt to his political opposition, building on the concept of the state as an institutionalized patriarchy. The ability to act at one’s own discretion links separate themes such as discipline, pre-puberty, societal pressures, and political engagements, etc., to one another. Two metaphors, surveillance and imprisonment, attach flashbulb memories to the main plot. The in-home education sessions, boarding school experiences of the protagonist, and further episodes of his life in which he encountered the agents of superior powers, constitute metaphorical imprisonments that monitor and suppress the free will of the boy growing into a man.

Repeatedly referring to networks hidden in and enhanced by the culture, the protagonist of *Büyük Gözaltı* channels a sociopolitical critique of power. Power oppresses and victimizes the protagonist from childhood, but it also makes him the stark oppositional figure he is. Altan directs his social criticism toward great targets like the family, school, and society. More particularly, the narration also reveals the Foucauldian argument that “the body becomes the site on which disciplinary power plays itself out” in parallel to this social critique.¹⁴ How the realm of male psyche is influenced from the surveillance and control of his body, settles at the center of the narration as the main discussion. Featuring the discoveries of a post-Freudian child in the onset of puberty, the novel offers an articulate map of the territory of prepubescent sexuality, an area rarely traversed and seldom properly documented in Turkish literature.

Although it does not deal with the custody experience in its historical reality, and rather represents it as a fantastic incident that the protagonist is drawn into,

¹⁴Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), p. 48.

Büyük Gözaltı is a novel that gained much of its reputation due to the real-life custody experience of its writer. A careful reading of Altan's life story not only catches similarities between his actual state of imprisonment during the throes of the military rule and the one depicted in the novel, but also recognizes haunting parallels between Altan's life story and the coming-of-age narrative of the protagonist.¹⁵ *Büyük Gözaltı* therefore, is a novel that incorporates autobiographical accounts of Altan's memories of his life and imprisonment, with the social and psychological accounts of being a victim of power, making the latter more explicit with sarcastic humor. The trauma of being imprisoned has attracted the attention of some of the novel's critics, whereas the drama hidden in the sinful discovery of male sexuality has mostly been overlooked in the critical analyses of *Büyük Gözaltı*. Critics turned to "more important" issues mentioned in the novel, such as incarceration without evidence, maltreatment, etc., but they did not pay much attention to the male anxieties during childhood and puberty. The male anxieties in the novel actually suggest that there is an organic link between Turkish society's affinity with power and the reoccurring military regimes.

By shedding light upon the intricate link of power to the "essence" of masculinity, Altan tries to say that the problem is incorrectly conceived as just a question of the "military." The real problem, he suggests, is that people's support tend to go with power and autocratic views, which implies approval of a specific notion of "masculinity." His critique of the inclination toward power and love of discipline targets the security of traditional authoritarianism. Some literary critics have criticized Altan for unnecessarily making excessive reference to sexuality. He is blamed for using a disturbingly explicit discourse when talking about sex.¹⁶ However, I argue that the sexual dimension of the novel is an important pillar of the story. It is made explicit in order to punctuate the fact that the critical target of the novel is not solely military, but a specific notion of masculinity approved and supported by the masses. It would therefore be more productive in yielding new and challenging insights to read the novel alternatively as an example of the ways in which surveillance, repression and control interact with male sexuality.

Büyük Gözaltı is a novel that frankly talks about male sexuality in pre-puberty

¹⁵Several individuals and incidents mentioned in *Büyük Gözaltı* also appear in Altan's memoirs of his childhood and youth. See Çetin Altan, *Kavak Yelleri ve Kasırgalar*. (İstanbul: İnkılâp Kitabevi, 2004).

¹⁶Konur Ertop, *Türk Edebiyatında Seks*. (İstanbul: Seçme Kitaplar Yayınevi, 1977), p. 317-321.

and puberty without being prim or salacious. Contrary to the short-sighted criticism that automatically considered it as some sort of “novel with political agenda” because of Altan’s real life experiences in politics and in prison, *Büyük Gözaltı* is ultimately a haunting tale that transcends political clichés. It vividly depicts a little boy in his dreadful field of battle, captured in the tensions of his family and his burgeoning sexuality who later, in his adult life, fights similar battles under the oppression of some greater powers. In what follows, I will approach the novel with an alternative filter that neither neglects the political accent of the incarceration story nor overlooks the dauntless discussion of sexuality, which settles at the heart of the narration. Focusing on the plot of his memories, I will first deal with the memoirs of repression that dominate the childhood of the protagonist, which makes him clearly recognize the traumatization of his masculinity during his custody. I will then comment on the explicit crisis of power and masculinity experienced by the protagonist in the real-time axis and in the custody cell.

What happens in *Büyük Gözaltı* in the custody cell can be read as an indicator of the oppression that takes place in the outside world. *Büyük Gözaltı* engages with the Foucauldian discussion of the rise of disciplinary power focusing on the struggles of a political prisoner and enhances it with observations about the foundations of a disciplinary society, via the testimonials of the prisoner about his past. To understand March 12, the work of French theorist Michel Foucault particularly offers promising insights because it immerses us in the procedures of discipline, which target elements that do not conform to the ideal forms. There is, however, the problem of Eurocentricity of Foucault, which makes it hard for a study of Turkish case to embrace his views thoroughly. In his *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault provides an account of the rise of disciplinary power and the development of the modern penitentiary system. Although the idea that state power constitutes its ideal citizens through complicated social processes makes common sense, there are differences in the processes followed, a point that Foucault does not explore in detail. Michel Foucault, while contrasting two forms of penalty, the public torture during the 18th century and prison during the 19th century, argues that in contemporary times, torture is replaced by legal punishment, discipline, and the internalization of control: “we are now far away from the country of tortures, dotted with wheels, gibbets, gallows, pillories.”¹⁷ In her

¹⁷ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. (New York: Vintage, 1979), p. 307.

Torture and Truth Page DuBois mentions that, by the time Foucault was writing these lines, torture was a devastating reality in many parts of the world.¹⁸ One of these “many parts of the world” was Turkey, considering that Foucault published *Discipline and Punish* in 1975.

In *Büyük Gözaltı*, therefore, there is both a vindication of Foucault and a challenge to his views. *Büyük Gözaltı* transposes the Oedipal struggle in the household into the much broader context of citizenship in an oppressive state and delineates some painful webs of relationships, in which individuals’ engagement with the owners of power are defined. In this rather broad and elaborate story of “the law of the father,” the novel draws a stunning picture of the tactless psychological torture of a prisoner and also successfully sheds a critical eye on the tensions of the masculine role that rages against the hypocrisy of society. The novel also offers a broad discussion of the arsenal of surveillance techniques and the way surveillance operates in culture.

The plot, which is constructed upon the recollections of the protagonist of peculiar events in his past and his thoughts and feelings about them, provides a unique perspective of the history of a middle-class İstanbulite family. The protagonist comments on his nuclear family, relatives, and the residential servants whom he befriended and with whom he shared most of his actual time. Starting from around the age of four, he recalls the memories of his household and social interactions, which formed the backdrop for his educational glimpses of gender, power, and money and placed him on a search for his own identity. The flashbacks of his childhood provide trails of the autobiographical memory of the protagonist and portray his development into a class-conscious adult man in time. The protagonist recalls how he discovered himself through his encounters with repression, experiences of love, and troubles with the strictures of adult life.

Büyük Gözaltı constitutes a plot of coming-of-age intertwined with a plot of loss-of-innocence, which casts the novel as an example of *bildungsroman*, one that chronicles the shaping of an individual in a continuous negotiation between individual desires and the requirements of society. As the protagonist repositions himself among the memories of his childhood, he immerses the reader in his vision of his nuclear family, which consists of “a miserable elderly paternal grandmother that wanders in the house in her bed clothes and with her amber prayer beads

¹⁸DuBois (as in n. 3), p. 154-155.

in her hands, a father that isolates himself in a room with her for hours, and every now and then attempts to kiss her hands and feet, and an ill-tempered young woman that keeps slamming the doors for not having the attention she had been expecting.”¹⁹ The household represents a metaphorical prison for the protagonist, an inquisitive boy with a rich fantasy life. His thinking back on this metaphorical prison provides an opening to the first encounters of a little child with power. The protagonist moves through a sequence of uncertainties to resolve the troubles he encountered as a helpless object of brutality during his childhood and, meanwhile, he remembers how he discovered the privileged signs and prerogatives of masculinity.

Domestic enclosure is a metaphorical prison, not only for the protagonist, but also for his psychotic mother. The protagonist recalls his mother as a physically abusive symbol of discipline at home, who does not refrain from employing methods of physical punishment against him, even when he was very little. She is an angry woman, who often slaps the protagonist to make him subscribe to more obedient and tranquil behavior. The mother is presented in the novel as the principal figure of the “authoritative other,” to the eyes of whom the protagonist attempts to provide a meaningful identity. As a free-spirited child, the protagonist tries to make himself recognized as a person rather than property but, at the same time, he occasionally feels a desperate need to belong to someone more powerful than himself. He recalls his efforts to obtain the attention and parental love of his mother, who often appeared to be in the midst of a nervous breakdown, as she found herself alone against the alliance of her husband with his elderly mother. Central to his drama, the protagonist confesses to himself, was a desire for recognition, which made him side respectively with both camps, his mother on the one side and his father and grandmother on the other, when a disagreement occurs in the family.²⁰ With a desire to be noticed by the agents of power in the household, the protagonist also recalls finding himself seeking a personal masculine identification with his father, a weak, over-indulgent, and suppressed figure, who is “manned” by his wife.

¹⁹Elinde kehribar tespîhi, evde gecelik entarisi ile dolaşan ve yüzü hiç gülmeyen bir ihtiyar babaanne ile saatlerce bir odaya kapanıp ikide birde onun elini ayağını öpmeye kalkan bir adamla, kendisine beklendiği önem verilmediği için, kapıları çarparak dolaşan hırçın, genç bir kadın. Altan, *Büyük Gözaltı*. (as in n. 10), p. 55.

²⁰Ibid., p. 36.

As the protagonist's memories of his father unfold, a striking opposition surfaces: in contrast to the patronizing attitudes of his mother, the protagonist fails to identify his father in his memories as a patriarchal "master" in his own home. The novel establishes the beginnings of a critique of masculinity with the slavish image of the father, and the protagonist's confusion about the real "master" in the household. He fails to perceive his father as a "real man who possesses strength and power," from whom he should "learn to value and embody the masculine characteristics" and for whom he should "demonstrate his masculinity."²¹ The story deepens the critique of masculinity pointing at the sharp difference between the identity of the father in the workplace and at home. The workplace, which characterizes the basics of the gender binary, indicates how male identity came to be configured through work, in the eyes of a small child. Within the sphere of his workplace, the protagonist recalls his father as the breadwinner who subscribes to a mature masculine role, in the hierarchical and competitive conditions of the organizational network of his workplace. He remembers his father as an authority figure who swears at some superior bureaucrats and his colleagues with an aggressive vocabulary.²² Whereas, at home, the protagonist recalls finding himself confused, observing his father as a subservient figure, who ritually kisses his elderly mother's "cheeks, hands and bends down to kiss her feet."²³

The need for gender identification constitutes the main motive of the protagonist's boyhood experiences. *Büyük Gözaltı* successfully delineates the entrance of a little child into the complicated world of gender, with the compound image of two oppositional masculinities displayed by the father figure and the contradictions raised by his mother's aggressiveness, which shadow her caregiver role. With a female performer of male roles as a key character, the narration indicates that performances of masculinity can be detached from male bodies. This supports the Butlerian argument that gender is not something people own, but "the terms that make up one's own gender are from the start, outside oneself, beyond oneself, in a sociality that has no single author."²⁴ But to resolve the dilemma of gender, Altan turns to biology: the discoveries of the protagonist about the gendered power dynamics of the household go hand in hand with an uncovering

²¹Stephen Bergman, "Men's Psychological Development: A Relational Perspective", in Ronald Levant and William Pollack, eds., *Men's Psychological Development: A New Psychology of Men*. (New York: Basic Books, 1995), p. 68-90.

²²Altan, *Büyük Gözaltı*. (as in n. 10), p. 40.

²³Ibid., p. 7.

²⁴Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender*. (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 1.

of his burgeoning sexuality. He recalls their household servant Fatma as his first playmate in the game of sex.²⁵ Fatma, the poor orphan girl taken into the household to facilitate domestic work and for her protection, emerges from the mists of the past as the primordial love object with whom the protagonist satisfies his desires.

The protagonist recalls Fatma acting as a devoted mother would, caressing the protagonist, feeding him, and accompanying him in toilet training. The memory of her touching and kissing his genitals, takes the protagonist back to his preliminary anxieties about sexual desire.²⁶ Deflected from his actual mother onto Fatma as the mother-figure-turned-lover, the protagonist recalls how his desires were transferred into an unrequited love, which Fatma regarded as the infantile attraction of a small child. Their secret games turn into informative lessons, in which Fatma provides the protagonist with his very first lessons of sex, such as that “males have penises and females do not,” and “men put their penises in women.”²⁷ This consolidates Fatma, in the memories of the protagonist’s past, as the only member of the household interested in his senses, feelings, and curiosity. He recalls her as the only person in the house, who sees him as a human being rather than property. As an uneducated girl, probably of rural origin, Fatma’s tenderness carries a critique of the false virtues of the upper-class urban family life and comprises a preliminary class-gender debate. Lower classes, symbolized by the affectionate image of the orphan housemaid, are argued to have more intense and explicit emotional patterns in their relationships while higher classes define their emotional bonding in material terms and treat each other as property.

When his mother feels that she cannot cope with his disruptive behavior any more and takes the protagonist temporarily to her family’s pavilion, where he was born, the gender problematic becomes more complex. In the house of his maternal grandfather, the protagonist observes an alternative version of masculinity, which is constructed on the oppression of others, “the non-man.” The grandfather Paşa Dede, diminishes the breadwinner masculinity of the protagonist’s father by his wealth and also invalidates him as an authority figure with his tyrannical personality. The erect posture of Paşa, his past as an athletic ex-cavalier and a fierce figure of authority in his own household, stages a violent masculine performance

²⁵ Altan, *Büyük Gözaltı*. (as in n. 10), p. 19.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 21-22.

for the protagonist, one which he feels afraid of, but enjoys challenging. This temporary visit also turns into a repressive experience, as the brutal grandfather forces the protagonist to accept his superior authority. He orders him around at the dinner table, makes him force down the food he hates, and pushes him to memorize the multiplication table. The protagonist recalls how hard he tried to subscribe to the orders of his grandfather, trying to be accepted by him.

The narration shows the protagonist choosing to learn masculinity from the values represented by the grandfather, since he feels that he can beat him only by being like him. Yet, no matter how hard he tries, he fails to gain acceptance. His indifference to the Paşa grandfather's love of mathematics, eventually lands the protagonist in a chamber arrest, another symbolic incarceration.²⁸ The memories of the pavilion also elaborate on the class discussion. Another orphan maid replaces Fatma as a surrogate mother figure in the compound: Fehime becomes a close companion and provides both a taste of camaraderie and love to the protagonist. Fehime and the protagonist engage in a warm relationship until her sudden dismissal from the pavilion with an accusation of theft on false grounds, which causes a traumatic break-up for the protagonist and leaves the little boy alone, once more, with the loss of his love object. The protagonist recognizes that Fehime's being from the servant-class is what left her helpless in the compound at the first place. He acknowledges, at quite a young age, that class status and financial wealth provide people with power for dominating others.²⁹ He remembers observing class inequality as a reality being taken for granted by the members of his family and recalls Fehime's dismissal as a tragic incident that brought him in close contact with the class-based strictures of life as a small child.

From an underdeveloped problem of class struggle, the problem of mastery and domination extends to the realms of gender. In his encounter with rituals of aggressively patriarchal masculinity performed by his grandfather, the protagonist experiences repression and violence. Even a simple dinner sequence turns into a quarrel and a battle for power:

Grandma this time did not fill my plate but put only a spoonful of offal
stew. Bending to my ear slowly she was saying once more:
–Believe me, Pasha will kill you this time, eat this for once...
[...]

²⁸ Altan, *Büyük Gözaltı*. (as in n. 10), p. 64.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 119.

The juicy pieces of lung were so big. I took a forkful once more. But it was impossible for me to swallow. Paşa was gazing at me rolling his blue eyes.

And his voice tinkled in the room:

–Eeeeat!

I did.

Making me swallow a piece of lung was leaving the triumph to Paşa.³⁰

The disciplining masculine power and its authoritarian threats depicted in the image of the ex-cavalier grandfather who shouts commands are chilling metaphors that symbolize a country's being ruled by aggressive military figures for its own safety and well-being. In the authoritarian figure of his grandfather, the protagonist distinguishes domination as a masculine trait. He also discovers that he must identify with the role of a dominator, in order to challenge his powerlessness and exert his own authority in life. This inserts the protagonist, irreversibly, into a rite of passage toward adult masculinity.

In parallel to his discoveries, the narration also develops the protagonist's growing anxiety about becoming a proper male. He recognizes that Fatma's plain explanations had shown him only a limited part of the story, as the guests of his grandmother intimidate the protagonist about his belated circumcision. The protagonist feels content about discovering the necessary rites of passage for him to become a real man, but he cannot avoid the feeling of terror. He finds himself looking forward to the irreversible mark that will make him an appropriate male, but terrorized because of the pain that the operation on the foreskin will give him. In the eyes of the protagonist, circumcision stands for a rite of passage, terrorizing and elevating at the same time, which will install masculinity in his body. He, however, understands that he will have to reinstate his masculinity and prove it every now and then, when he is sent to a boarding school exclusively for boys and finds himself surrounded by a system organizing the masculinities into a hierarchy of types, topped by a masculinity that tyrannizes the weak.

³⁰Bu kez cicianne tabağımı doldurmamış, sadece bir kaşık koymuştu ciğer yahnisinden. Kulağıma eğilip usulca yine:

–Vallahi öldürecek Paşa seni, artık bunu ye... diyordu.

[...]

Öyle büyük duruyordu ki sulu ciğer parçaları. Bir çatal yine aldım. İmkânı yok yutamıyordum. Paşa baba mavi gözlerini devirerek bana bakıyordu. Ve yine çın çın öttü oda:

–Yuut!

Yuttum.

Ciğer yahnisini yutturmakla zafer Paşa'da kalmıştı. Altan, *Büyük Gözaltı*. (as in n. 10), p. 79.

Like the chamber arrest by the grandfather, the boarding school is another symbolic incarceration that is intended to link the protagonist's childhood sufferings with power to his actual state of imprisonment in the custody cell. The memories of the boarding school further dramatize the feeling of helplessness under repression. The protagonist recalls how a disciplinary authority, similar to his grandfather's, welcomed him at school with orders about meals, bed timings etc.³¹ The protagonist's boarding school memories draw a captivating picture of the hidden tensions beneath male socialization and show how seeking connection and independence at the same time became a "source of conflict" in young male lives.³² In this "boy culture," we find an endless round of competition: the protagonist recalls how he started to gain more knowledge about being a man, about sex and masturbation in the boarding school. He remembers how he immediately began lying about his "performance" to his friends, with an urge to construct an invulnerable masculinity.³³ The accounts of his attempts to prove his masculinity to the friends at school, makes the protagonist think of his experiencing sexual awareness as a two-edged sword, that provided him with pleasure and a masculine authority, but also filled him with anxiety and a sense of guilt.

Recalling the boy's collective masturbation, especially during the lectures of a female teacher, the protagonist testifies to himself his learned and imitated masculinity: he thinks back on how he discovered his body, under the pressures of the information that it is "manly" to be aroused when gazing at women and fantasizing about them, rather than being really aroused.³⁴ The competence among the boys for being accepted as men, invites bullying as the primary pattern of relationship and also forces them to create innovative stories of fictional relationships with the opposite sex. Torn between masculine pursuits, the arousal offered by masturbation, and the accompanying sense of guilt, the young male continues his discovery of adult masculinity. The protagonist also remembers how he attempted to seduce women out of calculation rather than sentiment, to turn some fictions of lovemaking into reality. He tries to initiate sexual intercourse first with the household servant of the house, while accommodated during the weekends as a guest of his father's friend and, after that, with the skinny daughter of the neighbor near his maternal grandmother's new house. Each of these nerve-wracking

³¹ Altan, *Büyük Gözaltı*. (as in n. 10), p. 184.

³² Bergman (as in n. 21), p. 68-90.

³³ Altan, *Büyük Gözaltı*. (as in n. 10), p. 190-191.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

attempts fail, but produce similar stories of success to be told to friends at the boarding school.

The memories of his awkward attempts at initiating a sexual relationship make the protagonist think, in the uncanny custody cell, that he used to evaluate sex as a battle. He discovers about his destructive habit of despising the emotional. As he recalls the scene of his desperate waiting to meet the skinny girl in some sheltered place to have sex, the protagonist compares himself to a “spider waiting for flies.”³⁵ Toward the end of the novel, the memories of the protagonist’s first sexual intercourse in a brothel with some prostitute resembling Fatma, mixes with the memories of his first kiss with some “respectable” girl at a ball. The odyssey is finalized with the sudden death of the protagonist’s father.³⁶ Eventually, the Oedipal plot is completed as the father dies and the battle ends with the victory of the protagonist celebrating his triumph of becoming a real man by “having” women. The fear of not being manly enough, caused by the weak image of his father is resolved as the protagonist beats his rivals and affirms his Oedipal victory by his “success” with women.

The battle illustrated in this coming-of-age/loss-of-innocence plot shares several common points with the battle illustrated in the plot of incarceration. The custody story delineates another fierce struggle against “the law of the father.” In this struggle, the state and its agents become substitute images for the powerful father image. The Oedipal struggle becomes a metaphor for the political rebellion of an individual against the state policies, in his attempt to win “the love of the motherland.” The custody plot introduces the narrator/protagonist as an adult man. He explores the difficulties inherent in solitary confinement and the quotidian details of life in a cell, and attempts to solve the mystery behind the unruly penal practices that victimized him.

The mechanical aspects of prison are communicated with the metallic bareness of the custody cell. The protagonist finds himself trapped within walls surrounding “an iron bed, a table, an iron chair.”³⁷ The search of his personal belongings and the seizure of certain items constitute the regimenting of prison life with assaults on individual agency and privacy. After a quick search, the guards confiscate the protagonist’s razor as a measure to prevent him from harming himself

³⁵Altan, *Büyük Gözaltı*. (as in n. 10), p. 265.

³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 270-272.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 5.

and leave him with the painful idea of suicide. With the repressive and callous attitudes of the guards, the custody cell becomes a piercing site of emasculation. Exposing himself to the scrutiny of other men and their proprietary gazes, the protagonist experiences his position as a feminized one, surrounded by anxieties about the deprivation of power. He feels like a property means by which the guards assert their positions. The feeling of being a property under some higher agency's command is intensified as the protagonist learns of his custody.

Although absent from his vision, torture is made implicitly evident to the protagonist, by the sounds of people in other cells. The protagonist feels depressed and finds himself imagining being violently beaten and tortured. These fantasies of violence indicate the protagonist's attempts at being toughened in his soul and body, to prepare himself for his encounter with the guards. Captivated by the fear that the guards will eventually employ brute force to make him confess his crimes, a force that includes torture and sexually-oriented violence, the protagonist begins questioning his limits:

In the end, they will eventually make me confess the murder, I knew... First they will beat me, rip my nails off, then they will undress me, tie my hands and feet and connect electric pods to my testicles.

This evening or next, or the following, they will eventually rush into my room all together.

How far could I possibly resist? Maybe until one of them grasps my testicles...³⁸

Fighting with the fear of torture and death, the protagonist becomes stripped of power and turns into a fragile bodily corporality, to flesh, blood and bone. Helplessly waiting in the cell, with a loss of agency, he becomes reduced to a weak and vulnerable individual. Alone in the cell, the protagonist lacks the comforting feeling of camaraderie shared between people who occupy similar positions. His solitary confinement enhances his solitude and helplessness.

The link between the guards and the protagonist indicates a relationship of domination similar to the ones constructed around the figures of the mother and

³⁸Biliyordum, sonunda nasıl olsa söyleteceklerdi kimi öldürdüğümü... Önce dövecekler, sonra çınlıplak soyarak ellerimi ayaklarımı bağlayacaklar ve hayalarımın elektrik akımı geçireceklerdi.

Bu akşam, yahut yarın akşam, yahut öbür akşam hep birlikte girivereceklerdi odaya. Ne kadar dayanabilirdim ki söylememek için? Belki hayalarımın el atıncaya kadar...Altan, Büyük Gözaltı. (as in n. 10), p. 12.

the grandfather in the plot comprised of memories. The protagonist tries to get prepared to sacrifice his body in order to encounter this battle. His attempts at toughening links the circumcision anxiety, which was narrated in the intervening plot of memories, to the castration anxiety that emerges as a serious panic in the real-time custody plot. It is as though, the experience of being in custody and under sexually-oriented threats marks a threshold to be exceeded, a gap to be jumped over, a war to be waged in order to be a “manly-man,” similar to circumcision. It is another education in masculinity. As George Mosse states in his seminal work *Fallen Soldiers*, this myth of war to be waged, “helps to overcome the fear of death and dying.”³⁹ Incarceration not only symbolizes the loss of freedom for a man, but it also alludes at the traumatization of his “masculine agency.” Just like incarceration, torture is a means to “unmake subjectivity” and “unmake masculinity.”

Attached to anxieties about power and male sexuality, the terror of being imprisoned raises the tension of the story in an uncanny manner because of the inconsistent behaviors of the guardians. The guardians appear in the narration anonymously, defined by adjectives assigned to them by the protagonist such as “young and podgy one with a fat ass [tombul kış bodur herif],” “tall one with greyish blue eyes [uzun boylu çakır gözlü],” and “shrunked one slim as pencil [kurşun kalem gibi ince].”⁴⁰ They deepen the mystery of the unidentified murder that placed the protagonist in this custody cell by increasing the feelings of insecurity. First, they patronize the protagonist with cruel and senseless looks in the eye, then some become friendly to comfort and console him. While the “young and podgy one with a fat ass,” and the “tall one with greyish blue eyes,” terrorize the protagonist, the “shrunked one” invalidates their power by telling the protagonist that his interrogation will be done by some higher authority. Over the course of the story, the conflicting attitudes of the guardians become a major tool of psychological torture. The trustworthy quality of the protagonist as a narrator becomes questionable, as guardians do not accept his versions of the facts and insist upon theirs. Prescribing unreliability to the narrator, Altan makes it dark whether what we have in front of our eyes is in fact a brutal interrogation carried out by the infamous good cop/bad cop method, or some casual dialogues of a man beset by delusions in isolation. Feeling perplexed, the protagonist finds

³⁹ George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 78.

⁴⁰ Altan, *Büyük Gözaltı*. (as in n. 10), pp. 12, 24, 48.

himself doubting his own consciousness and fails to construct a clear idea of what has really been happening.

The absurd situation of being in custody on unidentified murder charges based on some unknown grounds twists the reality so fruitfully that the protagonist begins blaming himself for anonymous homicides and with the death of his father's brothers, an incident which took place long before his birth.⁴¹ In a prolonged wait for a formal interrogation, the protagonist becomes captivated by delusions. He begins hearing voices from his illusionary victims, each forcing him to testify to his/her significant murder. In torment, he creates a long list of murders and falls in profound pain. Although it is surrounded by a dark vision, the novel does not exclude the notion of resistance. The state of being a slavish victim, which is further emphasized by gate watchers and torturous acts such as beatings and sleep deprivation, at some point, produces a reaction for self-protection and the protagonist tries to subscribe to a different role. He does not explicitly challenge the routine of custody, but by making it seem less disturbing, he turns it into a role-playing game to avoid the sense of despair.

The protagonist eventually transforms his captivity into a one-man show, by distorting reality and transferring his position from a victim to a man who claims a similar agency with his "gazers." Behind the toilet door, he demotes the soldier accompanying him to an object:

The door was kept open always, even during when I defecate. The soldier was waiting next to me. And he was watching. At first it was very difficult for me to defecate like this. Then I started to neglect him. He was watching me and I was straining, keeping half an eye on him.⁴²

In this new vision, it becomes ambiguous who is watching whom. Due to the indefinite period ahead of him, the protagonist attempts to hold on to such a reconstructed vision; yet deep inside, conscious of his misery, he still feels sure of his innocence and never stops expecting release from this unreasonable custody. While even the "tree next to the window" laughs at his desperate expectation of release, he fills in application forms to be sent to the authorities as motions about his situation.⁴³

⁴¹ Altan, *Büyük Gözaltı*. (as in n. 10), p. 47.

⁴² *Büyük abdest ederken de apteshanenin kapısı açık kalıyordu. Süngülü karşımda bekliyordu. Ve beni seyrediyordu. Önce çok zor gelmişti böyle abdest etmek. Sonra aldırmamaya başlamıştım. O bana bakıyor, ben de ona baka baka ıkınıyordum.* Ibid., p. 100-101.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 123.

These exercises of toughening, however, are traumatized by a major challenge. As the guards eventually force him out of the cell in a ceremonious manner, the protagonist believes he will be executed. The narration adopts a sneer tone as the protagonist attempts to formulate a noble last sentence, in order to make himself one of the unforgettable figures in history just before his death. He finds himself in sheer anxiety, searching for the proper words in a suspended period of time.⁴⁴ When the idea of death suddenly imposes a deep impotency, it makes finding a phenomenal saying unimportant. The protagonist, walking along the long corridor accompanied by armed soldiers, realizes the seriousness of his situation. He feels himself as vulnerable as he was while waiting for his mother's sudden slap on his face, or for his grandfather's brutal reactions, a man who dangled his infantile body from the window when he became angry at him.⁴⁵

A psychic splitting takes place after this moment, where the patriarchal discipline of angry parents meets the authoritarian state's brutal education. The protagonist recognizes that a part of him wants to beg for mercy and yet another part wants everything to come to a quick end, sickened by the thought of such a scene.⁴⁶ The ultimate crisis of masculinity surfaces, clarifying two alternative modes of behavior in the midst of fear: to laugh at death like a real "manly-man," or to cry and become devastated by the fear of it like a "non-man." It is at this bewildering moment that pain shifts to pleasure along gender lines. Masochism, a female trait *per se* in the Freudian lexicon, becomes one of the definitions of being a real man, as it advocates a pleasure out of death.⁴⁷ This ironical twist is communicated in the narration by the illusionary images of the protagonist's grandparents, who criticize him for not behaving manly enough. As the protagonist collapses emotionally and begins to cry, his paternal grandmother appears in a vision looking down on him, and grilling his current behavior. The maternal grandfather, Paşa grandfather, follows her in another vision, swearing at the killers dauntlessly, as a "real man" would do.⁴⁸ Finding himself unable to fulfill neither such an aggressive role, nor one that embodies a noble pleasure in death, the protagonist feels a deep shame about himself.

⁴⁴Altan, *Büyük Gözaltı*. (as in n. 10), p. 152.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 153.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 154.

⁴⁷Sigmund Freud, "The Economic Problem of Masochism.", in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. Vol.19* (London: Hogarth, 1961), p. 159-170.

⁴⁸Altan, *Büyük Gözaltı*. (as in n. 10), p. 155.

The melodrama of the protagonist's reassertion of his dignity is interlaced with comedy, when he is sent back to his cell after moments of humiliation at the hands of the soldiers. In the "comfort" of his custody cell the protagonist swiftly subscribes to a more firm masculinity. He embraces his voice as a phallic symbol and attempts to prove himself masculine, by yelling at the guards:

I walked toward the door, there were watchman waiting with guns turned inside the cell, standing. In an authoritarian voice I wouldn't expect from myself, I said:

—Bring a barber to me.

I was hoping them to move toward me and shoot or something like that.

But in a gentle voice, they said:

—Our shift will end in a quarter mister. We shall take care of this then.

An "allright" not as bossy as my previous words came out of my mouth.

And I started wandering in the cell all over again.⁴⁹

The faked anger neatly underscores the artificiality of the masculine masquerade. The protagonist's swinging between the emasculated position of a helpless man in custody and the tough position of a man dicing with death, expresses that masculinity resembles "a role" to be subscribed, rather than an intrinsic feature of a male body.

In addition to serving as a mouthpiece for a man under repression and in fear, the narration also makes a humorous critique of the imprisoned male, especially touching his anxieties about being masculine enough under attack or in a near-death position. In the novel, the elements of physical brutality and torture are reflected in the fantasies of the protagonist, instead of his acute experiences. Still, they powerfully communicate the pains of being subjected to oppression and violence. In his efforts at toughening, as well as in the breakdown that follows, the emotional paralysis of the protagonist and his innate compulsion for begging for his life when faced with death, draw a "honest" picture of a man, who fails to be a hero.

⁴⁹Kapıya yürüdüm, kapıda nöbetçiler tomsonları içeri dönük duruyorlardı. Beklemediğim bir sertlikte:

—Berber çağırın bana ulan, dedim.

Üstüme yürüsünler ateş etsinler falan istiyordum. Oysa gayet yumuşak bir sesle:

—Nöbetin bitmesine bir çeyrek var bey, o zaman söyleriz, dediler.

Demincek ki kadar sert olmayan bir:

—Peki, çıktı ağzımdan.

Ve yine başladım dolaşmaya. Altan, Büyük Gözaltı. (as in n. 10), p. 155.

Limiting the critical interpretations of this novel solely to the struggles of political prisoners during the military rule of March 12 allows *Büyük Gözaltı* to be appreciated only in one dimension of the drama it stages. The novel, in my opinion, draws a retrospective history of an individual's attempts at becoming masculine, and keep being one, inherent to the "being taken into custody" narrative. The strong pyramidal hierarchy of the Turkish society, where oppression and violence help the layers of the pyramid to maintain their places, is dramatically shown by means of the patriarchal power dynamics that govern the social relationships. This dimension of the novel movingly shows how submission to some superior powers, whether in familial and educational realms or in any other sense, causes disturbances and how being in jail, under domination, makes a man "less manly." Being manly, embraces the state of being a figure of rebellion to domination but, in the long run, it also embraces a pleasure in death, which ostensibly has non-manly implications. This superposition is the linchpin of *Büyük Gözaltı*. The precariousness of being in the grey area between the "manly-man" and the "non-manly" serves as a culmination point in the narration.

Büyük Gözaltı posits a world with numerous metaphorical prisons. It replaces the conjugal by the custodial. As mentioned earlier, the novel does not portray the state of being in custody as a result of some politically oppositional act in the settings of 1970s Turkey. Hence, unless any link is established with the life story of its writer, *Büyük Gözaltı* stages simply some unidentified oppression, which victimizes an ordinary man. The "life as a prison" metaphor in the novel illustrates that, even before the civil war conditions of the 1970s and the incident of the March 12 military intervention, Turkish society was an authoritarian surveillance society, which employed fractured forms of massive social surveillance and attempted to keep the individual under control. In linking parents watching over children and teachers watching over students, to guards watching over prisoners, *Büyük Gözaltı* explicitly suggests that, when the anti-communist military-state assumed the role of authoritarian power to make individuals express loyalty to the regime, it was in fact depending very much on an authoritarian culture, which perpetuates such expectations of loyalty to the norms and values that settle at the very center of the society. The novel may be positioned in the domain of *reelpolitik* with supportive arguments outside the text, but the "war for power" that *Büyük Gözaltı* aims to criticize is definitely not limited to the political boasting of the military during the events of the March 12.

The memories of the protagonist, I would rather argue that, show how the strictures of “becoming a man” are connected to the issues of hegemony and domination. The plot comprised of memories indicate how the paternal form of patriarchy produces a form of domination exercised between men. In this sense, it is not coincidental that *Büyük Gözaltı* repeatedly makes references to a masquerade of masculinity. It compellingly shows that masculine toughness is built on role-playing and pretending. The novel illustrates how tropes of masculinity are marshaled by a man under domination, maltreatment, and pressure, to question a “manhood” that tries to reign over its kingdom. Resisting society’s laws and norms, and trying to free himself from the constraints of the law of “the father,” where the throne of the father is embodied by his aggressive mother, maternal grandfather, and teacher respectively, the protagonist poses a challenge not only to the paternalistic authority exercising power on his individuality, but also to the rules of the society. This makes it possible to see *Büyük Gözaltı* not only as a painful representation of the life of man in a culture over-determined by a rigid patriarchal tradition, but also as a condemnation of that culture and of its destructive effects. When placed next to the esteemed political rebellion narrated in the novel, this cultural rebellion may seem less important and even “perverse” to some eyes, but it is, after all, what provides the keys to solving the dynamics of admiration felt for power in a country with a rich history of military interventions.

1.2 *Yaralısn*

Terrie Schauer points out that the “triumph over the ‘prison-as-machine’ requires a certain kind of hero” and indicates that “the narrative ‘answer’ to the problem posed by prison” is often a hegemonically masculine protagonist.⁵⁰ In *Büyük Gözaltı*, the narrative answer of the novel to the problem of incarceration was definitely not a hegemonically masculine protagonist. In *Yaralısn* (You are Wounded), the answer is not a hegemonically masculine protagonist either. *Yaralısn* is a retrospective self-judgment of a leftist revolutionary intellectual with documentary accounts of torture and it reveals how violent power becomes an indispensable tool for men to define themselves, even when they are victims to it. This novel is among the leading examples of protest novels that resist the “official” historical narrative of March 12, which situate the seizure of power by the military as an attempt to put the country back on a tranquil track.⁵¹ It is one of the most prominent and bitter examples of the novels that recount torture and political imprisonment, with an attempt to open people’s eyes to some great miscarriages of justice during the *coup d’état*.

After being serialized in the daily *Cumhuriyet* in 1973, *Yaralısn* was issued as a book in 1974. In 1975, it received the Orhan Kemal Novel Award and later, in the 1980s, its translations were published in the Netherlands (Ambo 1988), Germany, Hungary, Syria and Macedonia. *Yaralısn* borrows heavily from the experiences of the writer Erdal Öz, who was among the intellectuals who experienced the intimidating measures of the military rule in the first place.⁵² It is also said to borrow from the prison diaries of the famous student leader Deniz Gezmiş and his friends (see fig. C.5 and fig. C.6 on page 318), who were punished with death penalty in 1972. It reveals the ill treatment of political prisoners with arresting

⁵⁰Terrie Schauer, “Masculinity Incarcerated: Insurrectionary Speech and Masculinities in Prison Fiction.”, *Journal for Crime, Conflict and the Media* 1, no. 3 (2004), p. 33.

⁵¹Erdal Öz, *Yaralısn*. (İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 1999).

⁵²Born in Sivas, Erdal Öz (1935-2006) had to travel a lot because of his father’s job. He went to primary school in Muğla, finished his secondary education in Antalya and graduated from high school in Tokat. He got enrolled in the Faculty of Law of İstanbul University but graduated the same faculty of Ankara University in 1969. In the throes of 12 March 1971, he got arrested thrice. He established the prestigious publishing house Can Yayınları in 1981 and managed it until the end of his life. With his warm and effective style and vivid characterizations, he became one of the foremost writers of his generation. Short story collections: *Yorgunlar* (The Weary, 1960), *Kanayan* (Bleeding, 1973), *Havada Kar Sesi Var* (Sound of Snow in the Air, 1987). Novels: *Odalarda* (In the Rooms, 1960), *Yaralısn* (You Are Maimed, 1974). Memoirs: *Deniz Gezmiş Anlatıyor* (Deniz Gezmiş Recounts, 1976), *Gülünün Solduğu Akşam* (The Night His Rose Wilted, 1987), *Defterimde Kuş Sesleri* (Cries of Birds in My Notebook, 2003).

material details and successfully attains the realistic effect of a documentary. The narration does not attempt to make a great impression on the reader stylistically. But the raw power of many lines, which speak the extremity of the March 12 experiences, gives *Yaralısm* its sensational effect.

Yaralısm chronicles the violent harassment of an individual during the inter-regnum. The protagonist finds himself under the pressure of the repressive state apparatus, which is represented by the police and other agents of the military-state that assumed the political power. The novel assigns to state agents a hatred of a variety of religious, political, and sexual identities. Their aggressiveness constitutes the terrorized ground upon which revolutionary utopias, the struggle between emotion and reason, and quests for justice are discussed in *Yaralısm*. This discussion propagates in a manner intertwined with a questioning of masculinity. As an individual who rejects and resists the dominant state ideology, the protagonist becomes a target and experiences a violent “interpellation” which, through beatings and torture, forces him to identify with certain conventions.

This brutal education, which portrays a helpless individual turning into a victim under the pressures of the powerful, constitutes the backbone of the novel. Nevertheless, the novel does not lean solely on documentary accounts of the junta’s interrogation methods. Next to the chronicle of organized brutality, torture and the great emotional cost one pays for it, *Yaralısm* also sheds a critical eye on the dynamics of power relationships in groups consisting of males, making the strong sense of community and solidarity among prisoners a primary locus of attention in the narration. When he is sent to prison after the clandestine interrogation, the protagonist discovers that violence and hunger for power are also central to the lives of those, who were already pushed into a subaltern position by the repressive measures of the state apparatus. Hence with the prison dimension, the power problematic becomes divorced from the military/civil dichotomy and settles into a broader discussion of masculinity. By means of some shocking scenes of torture and brutality, *Yaralısm* reveals how psychological relatedness and the sense of connectedness it assumes make males identify with other males, and how the lack of it produces a sense of isolation and alienation. Intermale or homosocial connections, in other words, have the leading role in this novel and it is this questioning of “group masculinity” that made *Yaralısm* an important center of gravity in this study.

Yaralısin begins with an interior monologue in which the protagonist/narrator provides snapshot images of the old, dirty, and over-crowded cell of the detention center and specifies his failure to subscribe to the conditions and to his cellmates. The novel is set in the first 24 hours of the protagonist in prison, as the only political detainee in a common cell full of criminals. The narration covers the protagonist's arrest and interrogation with flashbacks. With a lack of ability to speak for himself, the narrator of *Yaralısin* uses the second person singular pronoun "you" to refer to himself, at the same time, problematizing both the subjective commentarism of the first person singular and the reportorial objectiveness of the third person singular narrative voices. The mist around his hesitance to use the word "I" disappears, as the protagonist recalls the raid of police officers on his home, the violent search of his personal library for some forbidden literature and finally, his transportation to a secret compound, handcuffed and blindfolded, for a clandestine interrogation. The memory of the brutal questioning illustrates how the ability of the protagonist to speak for himself was destroyed and how his existential worldview was distorted. Devastating scenes of mutilation and torture, all of which were characterized by excessive violence, make it clear how the protagonist found himself as a helpless "slave", who was forced to betray his friends at the hands of his "master"s.

The memories of his ill treatment unfold from the protagonist's mind and interfere with his thoughts every now and then. The memories of the clandestine interrogation become manifest in thrilling daydreams, depression, and nightmares, and strengthen the physical pain from the wounds. The plot constructed on the prison experience of the protagonist broodingly surfaces his post-torture trauma. Captivated in a social withdrawal, depression, and impaired emotional processing, the protagonist tries to behave as though torture has not happened. Striving to act as an ordinary prisoner, he seeks recognition from his cellmates, pickpockets, burglars, usurpers and drug dealers, all of whom he mentions to have the same name: "Nuri." Senior Nuri, blonde Nuri, little Nuri, Nuri of Yozgat, Gilay Nuri, gentleman Nuri, Nuri the King and rifle Nuri supplement the narration with their individual stories, which reveal the reasons for their nicknames. The protagonist observes that most of the "Nuri"s, some of whom are long-term prisoners accustomed to jail routine, try to keep themselves away from him, after learning that he is a political prisoner. He discovers that his intellectual agency is not appreciated by them as a major tool of "manly" power. He talks to a few cellmates, learns

about their stories but fails to explain his own to them, thinking they will neither understand nor appreciate his wills and sacrifices.

Although his fellows make him feel privileged as the only political prisoner in the cell, the protagonist feels alienated and finds himself seeking acceptance and company. Observing his inmates as men of different social, cultural, and class origins, he has trouble situating himself as a member of the prison cell population. Meanwhile, he interrogates himself, questioning his political beliefs, values and engagements. Aside from trying to understand other prisoners and identifying with them, the protagonist also tries to figure out the reasons for his lack of success as a revolutionary leftist intellectual and the defeat of the revolutionary movement in general. He painfully recognizes the profoundness of the gap between intellectuals and ordinary people. The earnest debate of the protagonist of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary acts, and the struggles of the revolutionary movement to attract mass support, embraces a discussion of the clash between two diverse masculinities, one of which assumes brute force and the other of which attempts to disdain the use of it. The protagonist questions the possibility of him being a committed revolutionary, even among a prison cell full of criminals, who consider his intellectual resistance to a corrupt and violent political system simply as “sissy stuff”.

Toward the end of his first 24 hours in prison, the protagonist finds himself relatively subscribed to common life in the cell. He recognizes that he does not mind the noise and the feeling of being trapped as much as he did in the morning. At the same time, he finds himself becoming an attraction for those who feel curious about reasons for his being there and begins enjoying his privileges. When his name is called for the first time, by one of the fellow prisoners who seems a little more concerned with his story than the rest of the crowd, the protagonist succumbs and says that his name is “Nuri”. It is only at the end of the novel, after his first 24 hours in prison, that the protagonist, who experienced a brutal interrogation under custody, says his name to the fellow prisoners, with an hesitant attempt to face with the memories of what has happened. By saying his name, he rediscovers his autonomy, individual identity, and power of self-actualization, which were traumatized by torture. Whether he will succeed or fail in healing himself from the post-torture trauma is left as an unanswered question in the novel. Yet his anxious first step towards re-adopting a first person singular voice at the end of the novel and his flourishing will for socialization, reveals optimist

expectations.

Yaralısn illustrates how manhood became a national preoccupation under the tensions of the military rule and turned into a destructive tool to annihilate politically oppositional figures. The machismo and its means of distributing power between masculinities, becomes a striking metaphor in this novel for the military's seizure of power and its political boasting. The novel delineates how ordinary people were rousted out of their routine by the heavy-handed actions of the military. It juxtaposes horrific images of torture and humiliation against an intransigent optimism. Against such a backdrop, the novel evocatively asks if the violent versions of hegemonic masculinity, which are symbolized by the agents of the military-state and ordinary prisoners, could have been challenged by moral fortitude and genius of another type of masculinity, which is symbolized by Nuri, the leftist revolutionary intellectual. In this sense, the novel provocatively characterizes the political clash of the 1970s as a clash of masculinities, in which alternative masculinities were engaged in a battle for power as rivals. Nuri's prison life adds to the narration a vivid dimension of struggle, experienced among physically/intellectually different, yet similarly power-hungry masculinities. *Yaralısn* suggests that, the will for power and control can be observed in a number of media, whether civil, institutional, or militaristic and attempts to question the rigid roles implied by binary oppositions.

The title of the novel suggests a two-fold pain. On one level, it refers to the physical wounds of the tortured body. On the other, it signifies a deeper wound in the soul of the protagonist, for being undervalued and ignored by the people in the name of whom he has been fighting against a corrupt and unfair system. Through the prison experience, Nuri the leftist intellectual discovers that his intellectual resistance remains an alien concept to ordinary men. He recognizes that the ideology he embraced is confined to a metaphysical space in a culture that appreciates violence and the use of physical power as the real problem solvers. Since the discussion of power and hegemony that the novel aims at is not limited to a military-civil dichotomy, it would not do justice to label *Yaralısn* as just an anti-militarist piece or a politically utopian, anti-state narration. Actually, this is what has been done to the novel so far. On the book jacket of the short story collection *Kanayan* (Bleeding), Erdal Öz complains about the criticisms of *Yaralısn*, which take the reactionary political stance of the novel at face value, saying that:

Both *Bleeding* and *You are Wounded* were among the first books of the March 12. Both of my books received much criticism. Unfortunately all of the compliments and the negative criticism were from a perspective of contemporaneity and politics. It is overlooked that both of my books were works of literature rather than contemporary political writings. I had however aimed—assuming my books are to be translated and read in some other part of the world—to awake humane and artistic quakes in the hearts of the readers.⁵³

Previous interpretations of the novel have prioritized the oppositional and anti-militaristic political accent of it and labeled *Yaralınsın* as a documentary of torture and a requiem for the collapse of revolutionary utopias.⁵⁴ As a challenge to them, this section will present an alternative reading, which treats the novel as the story of a clash of masculinities that can be traced through Nuri's sufferings under torture and his struggles with his cellmates in prison.

To resolve the masculine monopoly of power that *Yaralınsın* discusses, I will first shed an eye on the military-state power that dominates the narration with its oppressive atmosphere and closely look at some particular forms of identity inspired by its competency. Focusing on the plot settled in the current time of narration, I will then investigate the power dynamics of the detention center to which Nuri is sent. The two central male role binaries, Nuri versus the policemen and Nuri versus the regular prisoners, "Nuris", represent opposing political registers and conflicting class identities as well as contrasting masculinities, the clash of which I argue is central in *Yaralınsın* as a subtext. I will discuss the monopoly of power that alienates Nuri as a subversive figure and comment on his deprivation of power as a deprivation of manhood and the recovery of social competence as a recovery of manhood. Focusing on the prison plot, I will then demonstrate that the novel functions as a critique of authoritarian masculinity linked to the identity obtained through violence and abuse, beneath its overtly political cover that posits the main struggle against fascism and oppressive measures of the military-state.

⁵³ *Kanayan* da, *Yaralınsın* da 12 Mart'ta oluşmuş kitaplar arasında ilk yayımlananlardı. Her iki kitabım da pek çok eleştiri aldı. Ne yazık ki yapılan bütün övgüler de, bütün yergiler de güncellik açısından ve politik yönden yapıldı. Her iki kitabımın da, güncel ve politik birer yazı değil de, birer edebiyat yapıtı oluşları gözlerden kaçtı. Oysa ben bu kitaplarımda, diyelim çevirilip dünyanın bir başka ucunda bile okunsa, okuyanın yüreğinde insancıl ve sanatsal sarsıntılar yaratabilmeyi de amaçlamıştım.

⁵⁴ See Berna Moran, *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış III*. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1994), p. 14 and Murat Belge, *Edebiyat Üstüne Yazılar*. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1998), p. 130-134.

It is in the oppressive atmosphere of a fierce blacklisting, frequent police raids, and house-searches that the readers get to know about the protagonist of *Yaralısm*. A middle-aged leftist intellectual appears in a fearful mood of paranoia, waiting for his turn in “the communist-hunt.” Under the emotional burden of the defeat of the revolutionary movement, he is already in a terrorized and victimized position. Captivated by fear, he tries to classify his books, to separate the “dangerous” ones aside and burn them. The novel does not initiate any link to the history of its protagonist’s becoming a politically engaged individual, but with the forbidden literature in his library and his fearful state of waiting, it is hinted that he is somehow related to the revolutionary movement. While some literary critics argue that the lack of such a history decreases the credibility of the novel, I believe that the lack of the protagonist’s political history paves the way for the feeling of absolute triviality that the novel aims toward.⁵⁵ The protagonist is meant to be an ordinary face in the crowd, even maybe just a sympathizer of the leftist movements so that the absolute power of state in *Yaralısm* can be communicated through an aura of submissiveness that powerfully surrounded every single individual during the military rule.

The narrator/protagonist directly addressing himself via second person “you” constructions throughout the novel, such as “you are the newcomer,” “you feel surprised,” and “you looked around” also interpellates the reader.⁵⁶ The reader faces an “‘irreducible oscillation’ between the intimate voice of a ‘first-person’ narration limited in the breadth of knowledge it can have access to, and the distant, omniscient voice of a ‘third-person’ narration, simultaneously inviting and precluding identification with other pronominal voices.”⁵⁷ The novel catches a dramatic cathexis with the engagement suggested by this interplay. It causes readers to situate themselves as the active participants in incidents, rather than solely as observers of them. In the course of the novel, as the protagonist reflects on his terrible experiences, it becomes clear that the second person address can also be a result of the splitting of the protagonist’s self, a futile exercise for him to ascribe his memories to somebody else. By refusing to provide the reader

⁵⁵Murat Belge argues that the lack of information about the political past of the protagonist introduces “a Kafkaesque atmosphere” to the narration. See Belge, *Edebiyat Üstüne Yazılar*. (as in n. 54), p. 131.

⁵⁶Öz (as in n. 51), pp. 16, 61, 100.

⁵⁷Brian Richardson, “The Poetics and Politics of Second Person Narrative.”, *Genre* 24, no. 3 (1991), p. 313.

with the name of the protagonist until the end of the novel, Öz emphasizes the fact that the protagonist can be defined by his trivial existence. He is just an anonymous individual, who could have been anybody. He can even be replaced by anyone reading the narration. As an individual acted upon and dominated, the protagonist surfaces as an icon, symbolizing the deprivation of power that several individuals had to encounter in the settings of the 1970s.

The visible accent of his pre-given powerlessness, makes a fearful and emasculated subject out of the protagonist, even before the knock on his door by the police officers. The undercover police agents, who appear all of a sudden at the doorway, stage a complete opposition to this passivity. They are fearless men of action, exemplary figures of fearless men-of-deeds, what David Gilmore suggests as fundamental to the category of “real man” in Mediterranean cultures.⁵⁸ From the very first instances of his being taken into custody in his house, to the moments of being transported to a secret building for interrogation, the protagonist encounters tormenting and intimidating behaviors that bruise his self-esteem and position him as a powerless victim, a fragile and obedient subaltern subject. The agents break into his house, repeatedly harass him, destroy his library and private possessions, and threaten him with violent object lessons. Police agents appear as authoritarian personalities, who carry a fierce accent of aggression and destructive male power. To the protagonist, they are everything he is not: courageous, forceful, commanding, and totally in control.

Similar to the guards in Çetin Altan’s *Büyük Gözaltı*, the policemen in *Yaralımsın* appear more like a united body rather than individuals committed to a specific goal. They have no names in the novel.⁵⁹ Given no names to identify them as human beings, the police agents symbolize a primeval and instinctive brutality. In the view of the protagonist, the policemen differ only in terms of their physical appearance—scars, eye-glasses, baldness etc.—, smell and harshness of their attitudes, both in this long-awaited first meeting and the following period⁶⁰. Hardly

⁵⁸David Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity*. (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 41.

⁵⁹In his forewords to *Yaralımsın*, famous novelist Yaşar Kemal likens them to the “teeth of a grinding machinery [bir makinenin dişlileri gibi]”: abrasive and all identical. See Yaşar Kemal, “*Yaralımsın* Romanımızın Unutulmazları Arasına Girecek.”, in *Yaralımsın*. (İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 1999), p. 6.

⁶⁰There is a possibility that the anonymity of the state agents is not an invented metaphor to emphasize the united state power but a fact on its own, since the torturers tended to use nicknames during the interrogations so that their victims would not know their true identity.

any detail is provided of the private lives of the police agents. None of them is presented with any psychological depth, hence no evidence of a particular psychological disorder, a lack of confidence or dearth of inner security about self-esteem can be traced in their consciousness, to comment on the reasons of aggression in individual terms. It is explicitly mentioned with such uniform images that, what brings these men together is a military-state manufactured and violent version of nationalism, which assumes a grave threat to national security due to the rise of leftism in the society. The ultimate justification for their aggression, the anti-communist standpoint of the military-state, makes the policemen confident that their acts of destroying supporters and sympathizers of leftist ideologies serve a high purpose. Although the policemen stand for a quasi-judicial authority, trying to obtain information by making some suspected person to confess, it is intended that there are elements of pleasure in their watching another man's agony.

The "state" in *Yaralısn* subsumes the disciplinary anger of a father and carries the accent of an aggressive and authoritarian masculinity. The sovereignty of the policemen associates them in a single masculine body of power (an extension to the paternalistic masculinity of the father state), adorned with characteristics of a violent version of hegemonic masculinity. In this specific model of masculinity, a wide range of attitudes is staged: aggressiveness and violence surface as prominent characteristics, among a collection of intolerant attitudes and a rigid way of thinking. In the construction of the unitary power of the policemen, a discriminative vocabulary, which demonizes and alienates the leftist persona, plays the major role. It is manifestly expressed that the protagonist is an "other" for the policemen from the very beginning, not only on political grounds for his revolutionary leftism, but also on a scale of masculinity. The intimidating accounts of the violent search of the protagonist's library and his being taken away for interrogation are accompanied by the emasculating addressing of him with nicknames such as "my fair [güzelim],"⁶¹ and rebukes for his not being able to fulfill the given orders quickly and befittingly, as a real man would be expected to do.⁶²

The silent observations of the protagonist during the policemen's show of arrogance and their abusive performance of masculinity in his house indicate his alienated otherness. His fastidious eyes detect some details about the policemen's lack of hygiene. While they push him from one room to another, the protagonist

⁶¹Öz (as in n. 51), p. 23.

⁶²Ibid., p. 47.

feels sickened by the sharp smell of sweat of the man who acts as the leader of the group and also catches a big stain of oil on his suit:

He came and stood right in front of you. A whiteness passed over his blonde face. He may have creaked his teeth as well. He stretched out his hand. His other hand was crooked to his back. You thought he will hit, avoided your face; but he did not hit. He caught your chin and gripped it in his palm. A sharp smell of sweat, a smell of animal shed settled on your nose.

[...]

He was in front of you. There was a wide stain of oil on the right leg of his trousers. The heavy smell of sweat spread by his body was overwhelming you.⁶³

These material details of dirt appear repeatedly in the novel to emphasize the animal-like primordial condition of the perpetrators of tyranny. As the story develops, details of dirt also become visible in passages describing people being tortured to death and sharing the inhumane conditions of the penitentiary. While the dirt of the people being tortured and jailed carry an accent of triviality, the dirt of the policemen gains and holds symbolic meanings that signify their animality, characterized by lack of hygiene, a violent and unreasonable hatred, and a lack of pity.

Dirt is an essential metaphor for the monstrous humanity and the underdeveloped state of mind of the policemen in the view of the protagonist. His immediate recognition of the lack of hygiene, not only initiates a connection between the protagonist and some previous controversial icons of modernism in the Turkish novel but also makes the reader sense the “effeminate” characteristics projected upon him, who just like a “woman”, pays an overwhelming amount of attention to physical appearance and cosmetic details, in opposition to the conventions of the “manly” values represented by the policemen⁶⁴. In these illustrations, aggressive

⁶³Geldi tam önünde durdu. Sarışın yüzünde bir beyazlık indi çıktı. Dişlerini de gıcırdatmış olabilir. Elini uzattı. Öbür eli arkasındaydı. Vuracak sandın, sakındın yüzünü; vurmadı. Çeneni yakaladı, avcunun içinde sıkı. Ağır ter kokusu, bir ahır kokusu burnuna geldi oturdu.
[...]

Önündeydi. Pantolonunun sağ bacağında yaygın bir yağ lekesi vardı. Gövdesinden yayılan ağır ter kokusu burnunu eziyordu. Öz (as in n. 51), p. 23-24.

⁶⁴The intersection of hygiene with modernity and a civilized self is familiar from as far back as prominent Kemalist novelist Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu's *Yaban* (The Outlander, 1922), which focuses on the struggles of a veteran and narrates the attempt to establish an intellectual climate in a small Anatolian village against the less educated, underdeveloped and disturbingly dirty masses. His irritation due to bad smell and dirt marks the protagonist of *Yaralı* as an

power and lack of hygiene gender the police agents as sturdy and masculinized, while the protagonist is gendered as small and feminized. The tone of aggressiveness of the policemen increases as the protagonist is taken away to a secret compound. The oppressive manly power of the policemen triggers a disciplinary self-inspection, a “disturbing self-examination” which constructs a mechanism of internalized surveillance and causes the protagonist to attempt to discipline and reorganize himself to resist the pressures.⁶⁵ The loss of inner security about maleness manifests itself in the protagonist’s attempts to avoid certain behavioral patterns produced by fear and sentimentality. He tries to keep his erect posture, act strong, etc., making efforts to restore his masculine identity.⁶⁶

The tension exposes the crisis of masculinity encountered by the protagonist. He becomes his own overseer and exercises a strict surveillance of himself. Besides all the maltreatment, it is torture that brings this crisis to a climax. As the protagonist resists betraying his friends and providing his interrogators with any names, the aggressiveness of the policemen reaches a new level of intensity and gives way to a chain of bloodthirsty tormenting acts. Since the conflict between the protagonist and the policemen is mainly staged as a political one, the aggression of the policemen seems, at first, to be bound up primarily with political factors. Yet, in the course of the clandestine interrogation, their hatred targets sexual and religious identities as well. The guards assault him not only by treating him as less manly, but also by intimidating him with questions about his “religious sect” and “the five pillars of Islam”:

- Are you not Muslim?
- I am Muslim.
- Say thank God!
- Thank God.
- How many common rules of Islam are there?
- Five.
- Explain!

You explain, in a cold and shivering voice.

outlander, similar to the Kemalist intellectual of the novel *Yaban*, who within an authoritarian top-to-bottom attempt to modernize the nation, tried to resolve the ties of tradition and overcome the animalistic “backwardness” of the rural masses. *Yaralınsın* contains similar animal images that haunt *Yaban*.

⁶⁵Jonathan Rutherford, *Men’s Silences: Predicaments of Masculinity*. (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 12.

⁶⁶Stephen Whitehead, *Men and Masculinities*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), p. 165.

[...]

– Are you a Kızılbaş?

– No, I am not.

– What did you say?

– No, I am not a Kızılbaş.

This time he does not hit.⁶⁷

In custody, the body of the protagonist becomes the exemplary site of “subversiveness” for the policemen.⁶⁸ Torture manifests itself in the novel not only as a method to gain information, but it also becomes salient as a ceremonial tool to annihilate its objects physically, intellectually, and mentally. It appears in the novel as a vital part of the performance of power and of masculinity, which pierces the protagonist’s body through physical punishment and bruises his soul even more violently.

Elaine Scarry, who in her acclaimed book *The Body in Pain* discusses how pain marks the body, argues that torturers literally “unmake” the world of their victims by gradually reducing them to a state in which they are unable to speak, experience or imagine any reality outside their pain.⁶⁹ Under torture, the protagonist passes into such a mood and finds himself devastated by the pain torture

⁶⁷– Müslüman değil misin len?

– Müslümanım.

– Elhamdülillah de!

– Elhamdülillah.

– İslamın şartı kaç?

– Beş.

– Say!

Sayıyorsun, soğuk, titreyen sesinle.

[...]

– Kızılbaş mısın yoksa len?

– Değilim.

– Ne dedin?

– Kızılbaş değilim.

Vurmuyor bu kez. Öz (as in n. 51), p. 165-166.

⁶⁸Kızılbaş is the name given to the nomadic counterparts of the Bektashi order in the Ottoman documents of the 15th century, because of their red headdress. Here it refers to the heterodox Alevite identity, a religious community that constitutes almost twenty percent of the population in Turkey. The nature of Alevi faith and practices varies, but in all versions, a philosophy of universal humanism remains. Alevites constitute a politically conscious community and in 1970s, most of their young members were active in the leftist revolutionary movement. See Irene Melikoff, “Bektashi/ Kızılbaş: Historical Bipartition and Its Consequences.”, in *Alevi Identity: Cultural, Religious and Social Perspectives*. (İstanbul: Swedish Research Institute, 1998); Joost Jongeren and Paul White, *Turkey’s Alevi Enigma: A Comprehensive Overview*. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2003).

⁶⁹Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 60.

inflicts on his body. The narration successfully portrays a dramatic questioning of the notion of “strength,” by pitting the protagonist’s silent resistance against the violent behavior of the policemen. During his days of torture, the protagonist remains a passive subject in his painful resistance. He is emasculated by the intimidating manners of the guards who swear at him with an exaggeratedly masculine vocabulary of offensive words ranging from “bugger [ibne]” to “son of a bitch [orospu çocuğu],” and assert their masculine potency against their “less manly” prisoner.⁷⁰ No matter how savagely he is destroyed, the protagonist gains heroic overtones with his dedication to silence. Although he considers it to be a “primordial thought”, he cannot help repeating to himself that screaming his agony will make him seem less manly and so he tries to endure the pain.⁷¹ Having been beaten on the soles of his feet with a stick for days while not uttering a word, he then becomes subjected to a more sophisticated version of torture, conducted by electric prods connected to his body and penis. The harassment inflicted on him, eventually turns out to be an ordeal testing the limits of his self-image, against the feminizing threat of castration.

The male monopoly on power finds its utmost expression in this brutal test. With the excruciating pain it introduces, the attempt at castration makes the protagonist feel a complete loss of power. It reveals his hidden anxieties: a fear of not being a “real man” again strikes forcefully. The act of castration itself and the fear of the protagonist of being castrated, emphasizes virility as the essence of masculinity, a feature through which the real men distinguish themselves and are distinguished from other men. While the contrast between his torturers’ strong and erect posture and his collapsed body symbolizes an already lost war of virility, the protagonist happily discovers in a “childish enthusiasm” after the session of interrogation that the torturers could not succeed in turning him into an impotent man:

You walk from one wall to the other in the depth of the cell. In concealment, you rub your penis. It grows, you move your hand up and down, short of breath. All of a sudden-. Amid an increasing heartbeat you hold on to the wall. You come. It hurts, burns inside, but you find yourself captivated by a childish enthusiasm, discovering that they did not succeed in castrating

⁷⁰Öz (as in n. 51), pp. 130, 197.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 196-197.

you. Your knees hardly carry you in this relief.⁷²

The question of virility is further dramatized in the narration by the protagonist's subjugation to sexually-oriented torture in the following session, which involves pushing and twisting a wooden stick in the rectum, symbolically making a passive homosexual out of him.⁷³ This act of sodomization, turns him directly into a sexual object of amusement and stigmatizes his shame.

When the interrogation finally ends, the protagonist, lying half-dead and wallowing in his blood, sees an old woman with cleaning equipment entering the room in a mechanized manner. She turns a blind eye to him and disappears without a word after sweeping and wiping the floor.⁷⁴ He watches her, as she cleans the traces of blood, picks up pieces of his torn clothing, and leaves the room while trying to prevent the spillage of drops of blood from the clothes onto the recently wiped floor, by putting one of her hands under the lump of filthy clothes. The attentiveness of the cleaning lady to the wiped floor and her inattentiveness to the tortured body of the protagonist, points toward the moral dissoluteness that torture propagates. The cleaning lady's ignorance makes the protagonist lose all his integrity and he breaks down both physically and mentally.⁷⁵ Glancing at his wounded body, the protagonist feels disintegrated yet he wishes not to heal at all, in order not to be destroyed from the very beginning.⁷⁶

In *The Politics of Cruelty: An Essay on the Literature of Political Imprisonment*, Kate Millett argues that "under torture one is first reduced to a woman, then to a child, and as the torture creates a woman out of any human material being tortured, he also creates a child, the citizen as child, frightened before the great, all-powerful state."⁷⁷ The protagonist's state of inferiority is composed of

⁷²Karşılıklı iki duvar arasında gidip geliyorsun boyuna. Belli etmemeye çalışarak bir elinle kamışını ovuyorsun. Büyüyor, soluk soluğa bir aşağı bir yukarı kaydırıyorsun elini. Birden. Yüreğinin hızlanan patırtıları arasında duvara tutunuyorsun. İçin boşalıyor. Acı veriyor, yanıyor içi, ama iğdiş edemediklerini anlayınca çocukça bir sevince kapılıyorsun. Dizlerin bu rahatlama içinde daha da güç taşıyor seni. Öz (as in n. 51), p. 167.

⁷³Ibid., p. 207.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 207-208.

⁷⁵As one of the few female figures of the novel (in addition to the woman that the protagonist is asked about during interrogation and the typewriter girl present in his trial) the cleaning lady symbolizes the reinforcement that the military and violent versions of masculinity obtain from women. Her ignorance of the protagonist's tortured body, indicates how women take their share in the production of social codes and discourses related to masculinity and military, although they are excluded from the both sides.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 238.

⁷⁷Kate Millett, *Politics of Cruelty: An Essay on the Literature of Political Imprisonment*. (New York and London: W.W.Norton, 1994), p. 190.

a variety of positions of “non-manliness,” just as explained by Millett. It is with his rape, that the suffering body is gendered the most and the loss of manhood is suggested in its most definite manner. The protagonist’s resistance resolves completely after this brute attack and he passes out. The torture plot, as a whole, communicates devastating pain, caused by gratuitous brutality and violence. The scenes of sexually oriented torture indicate a tormenting emasculation and also depict how the protagonist passes through castration anxiety to a deeper existential confrontation with oblivion and “nothingness”, in which existence seems futile. He loses the trace of time and cries for the first time.⁷⁸ The dirt he is pushed into, the blood, shit, and vomit he has to encompass, dramatically represents the inequity of power staged in the torture room, building the terror adjunctly on the protagonist’s previously quoted dislike of dirt. Once feeling uneasy because of the smell of sweat of other people, he now finds himself in a more disgusting situation, surrounded by primordially dirty conditions.

By showing its oppressive methods meticulously, Erdal Öz conducts a terrorizing and paralyzing narration of torture. The tortured body certainly provides a nexus for the political investigation of the 1970 coup. By no means do I overlook the sentient fact that this novel is, on one level, about physical torture. Still, I argue that, with the prison plot, the text carries the unspeakable and tormenting accounts of the protagonist’s pain further, into a discussion of the masculine hunger for power. It is notable that through the prison plot, the novel shifts to an ethnography and delineates different masculinities from the eyes of its protagonist. As he experiences a 24-hour period in a crowded prison cell, it becomes clear that the protagonist is placed in a position of inferiority and made an “other,” not only by militaristic agents of the state, but also by ordinary people.

The protagonist goes to prison as the victimized and alienated actor of a violent spectacle: a man who cannot walk, sit, or lie properly in the absolute reality of an enormous physical pain. The reiteration of the moments of torture insistently intrudes his thoughts. Shame, mistrust, anxiety and insomnia mark his very first moments in prison. He is alienated and angry, apart from being politically and socially impotent. Eschewing the details that would link the narration to the historical facts of the *coup d’état*, *Yaralısn* dramatically chronicles the dynamics of prison life, which shapes the demeanor of its chief subject. Positioned as

⁷⁸Öz (as in n. 51), p. 242.

a newcomer at the lowest rank of the prison hierarchy, the protagonist finds himself hostage to another fierce monopoly of power. The “head” of the cell, gives orders to him, assuming the power of the guardians. Observing his “overwhelming attempts to look down to the others,” the protagonist starts to discover the power dynamics of the confined space.⁷⁹ Captivated in a traumatic a loss of agency, he characterizes himself with a lack of pride and dignity in his first moments in the cell. He considers himself to be a tormenting metamorphosis, turning, in a Kafkaesque manner, into a bug to be stepped on. He likens himself to a “deserter bug exposed to sunlight with the sudden removal of a stone, which tries to find a hiding place [ansızın kaldırılan taşın altından birden gün ışığına çıkan, gizlenecek kovuk arayan kaçak bir böcek].”⁸⁰ As time passes, he gets to know his cellmates one by one, with their various stories of crime and detention on false grounds. Senior Nuri the head of the cell, blonde Nuri, little Nuri, Nuri of Yozgat, Gılay Nuri, gentleman Nuri, Nuri the King and rifle Nuri, all of whom are prisoners for non-political reasons, intensify the protagonist’s loneliness further, as they blatantly show having reservations about him.

The cell and its disciplinary rules of military spirit, the wake-up call, the roll call, the bedtime call, meal timings etc. symbolize a new form of life to which the protagonist feels himself alien. The prison plot of *Yaralısm* enhances the potentially radical political energy of the interrogation plot. Once again, the masculinity of the protagonist becomes a dramatic question since he fails to be like “the others,” figures of “conventional” masculinity. He replies to the good night call of the head of the cell with a thankful, quiet and gentle “good night,” while the crowd all together screams a loud and well-disciplined “Thanks! (Sağol!)” as they go to their beds making fun of him.⁸¹ His concerns for not making noise on his first night also appear as a version of “female interest” in details, a dandy sensitivity. The door to the toilets, to which he pays a careful attention to open and close without making noise at night, becomes another symbol of his alien position.⁸² Toward the end of the novel, when he becomes accustomed to the cell, he shuts the door like the others, even at nights, ignoring the disturbing sound it makes in the silence of the cell.⁸³

⁷⁹Öz (as in n. 51), p. 15.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 30.

⁸²Ibid., p. 58.

⁸³Ibid., p. 266.

A sudden fight takes place before the eyes of the protagonist immediately after his entrance to the cell, while he is waiting to be guided to his bed. “Kıdemli” (head of the cell) initiates a fight with “Yozgatlı” (Nuri of Yozgat).⁸⁴ The reason for this fight becomes clear shortly after another newcomer arrives late that day and Kıdemli slaps him in the face for not answering his questions quickly and loudly.⁸⁵ When he learns that this is a ritualistic greeting for newcomers, the protagonist wonders why he himself missed it. Gilay Nuri makes him recognize that senior Nuri initiated that fight with Nuri of Yozgat to show the protagonist his power as the head of the cell and make him accept his authority. He tells him that he was not hit by senior Nuri because he is a political prisoner.⁸⁶ Similar to the police agents, the cellmates of the protagonist appear to be individuals, who associate masculine virility with physical power rather than intellect. They do not show a nationalistic jingoism similar to the policemen, but embrace a macho posturing in line with theirs. They are vivid examples of how the idea of the “tough guy” is embraced as the authentic definition of masculinity.

In prison, his cellmates came to be the marker against which the protagonist is measured. They shun him as a political prisoner but also as a man at a different level. Gilay Nuri, who says he is named after the legendary boxer Muhammed Ali Clay, positions regular crimes such as burglary, homicide, and other violent acts in a masculine domain while leaving the protagonist and his political resistance to the system out, in the fringes. It is no coincidence that he is the one who intimidates the protagonist due to the fragility of his body, exposing his athletic and tattooed figure, and asking him about his wounds.⁸⁷ The equation of athleticism, masculinity, and normality symbolized by Gilay and Gilay’s diversification of the protagonist from the manliness symbolized by the crowd, positions the masculinity of the protagonist, against its tough, muscular and athletic alternative. By refusing to talk about his wounds, the protagonist attempts to show that he is tough and adult enough to handle his pain. Meanwhile, he also questions himself and attempts to rationalize his earlier actions within political contexts.

Although his status as a political prisoner is emphasized as a less manly situation, this pre-given difference is challenged to some extent, as the protagonist learns more about his inmates and discovers their peculiar habits and idiosyn-

⁸⁴Öz (as in n. 51), p. 26.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 173.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 175.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 88.

crasies. He learns that Nuri of Yozgat is in prison because of a false statement just like rifle Nuri. It becomes clear that Gilay is the only one with a record of violence, but his blind love for his ex-wife Gül becomes the excuse in his story. As he becomes closer to his fellows toward the end of the day, the protagonist secures access to the poetry diary of Blonde Nuri, which is being circulated in the cell. The childishly rhymed phrases and the sentimental prose hidden in the notebook, points to the fragility concealed behind the gestural system of manliness that is being staged by the “tough” cellmates. The poetry book raises the protagonist, for the first time through out the novel, to a position of adult authority:

Pages adorned with drawings of flowers.

[...]

You read audibly:

Please pay a little attention/Do not make my notebook dirty/The poems I wrote/Are my life in misery.

With bigger fonts underneath: “Written by Nuri”

[...]

You leave, grabbing under your arm, the notebook filled with elementary poems written by the rationale of a seven or eight year old⁸⁸.

After reading the notebook, the protagonist discovers many wounds in the souls of his cellmates beneath their “tough guy” cover, which makes him identify with them as a subaltern subject.⁸⁹ Developing a paternalistic vision, in which he positions his cellmates as immature boys, he grasps his intellectual superiority as an adult feature. However, the protagonist cannot enjoy his “adult authority” for long. He hears the violent oaths of Nuri of Yozgat to chase the owner of the false statement after his release from prison. Then rifle Nuri comes along with plans to kill the landlord who sent him there with a slander to take his wife away from him. Gilay exercises with his switchblade, how best to hurt his ex-wife Gül’s body, who abandoned him after he was imprisoned. These men make the protagonist

⁸⁸Sayfalar çiçekli süslerle çevrelenmiş.

[...]

Sesli okuyorsun:

Lütfen biraz dikkat et/Kirlenmesin defterim/Yazdığım bu şiirler/Gamlı hayatım benim.

Altında da kocaman bir yazıyla: “Bunu yazan Nuri”

[...]

Yedi sekiz yaşlarda bir çocuk saflığı içinde yazılmış ilkel şiirlerle dolu defteri kolunun altına sıkıştırıp çıkıyorsun. Öz (as in n. 51), p. 211-212.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 210-219.

find himself truly alone in his intellectual elite world, pushed into the position of a child who tries to understand the violence surrounding him.

Their hunger for power, will to risk danger and death, and the joy they find in violence in the name of revenge, position his cellmates on a similar level with the agents of torture in the protagonist's vision. He recognizes that their masculinity too, marks him as an "other". When the protagonist says he cannot sit like the others do because of his wounds and tries to find himself a comfortable position on the bed during a friendly chat, Gılay Nuri says that they are accustomed to "sissies [hanım evlatları]."⁹⁰ Gılay's unfortunate remark quickly turns into an apology, as he leans on the feet of the protagonist to make himself comfortable on the bed. The protagonist screams in pain and Gılay realizes that Nuri's lack of comfort is because of his wounds from torture:

You are trying to smile.

—"Sorry, I didn't know," says Nuri.

The poor guy doesn't know how to react.

Pain diminishes slowly. After sometime Nuri says:

—"I got it now. The rumors are true then. Wow! I now understood the wounds on your wrists as well."

Nuri suddenly understands everything.

—"Forget it," you say.⁹¹

Gılay, who for a second feels sorry and gives up overlooking the protagonist, quickly restores his masculine voice and starts talking to him about his plans for stabbing his ex-wife Gül, after giving her the divorce she has been requesting for a long time. He mimics taking a knife out of his pocket and demonstrates an attack. When the protagonist reacts critically to his intentions, he stops him saying "We are manly men my friend! [delikanlı adamız biz arkadaşım!]"⁹² Gılay's escape to a collective discourse of "we", illustrates the fear of people to come to terms with the harm inflicted on tortured bodies. It also points out at Gılay's fear to

⁹⁰Öz (as in n. 51), p. 247.

⁹¹Gülmeye çalışıyorsun.

—"Kusura bakma, bilemedim" diyor.

Ne yapacağımı bilemiyor zavalılık.

Acı gittikçe azalıyor. Neden sonra,

—"Çaktım arkadaşım," diyor. "Demek kulağımıza gelenler doğruymuş. Vay be. Kollarındaki yaraları da çaktım."

Nuri birdenbire her şeyi anlıyor.

—"Boşver," diyorsun. Ibid., p. 248.

⁹²Ibid., p. 247.

appear “feminine” in a state full of pity, in his encounter with the bruised body of the protagonist. Just like the cleaning lady, who did her job without so much as a glance at the protagonist’s tortured body in the secret compound, Gilay hesitates to examine the body of his friend more closely and ask him more about the incidents.

The fact that Gilay finds his violent revenge natural and accepts the protagonist’s wounded body as something ordinary, makes it clear that brute force and being subjected to it are trivial parts of the collective discourse of the “tough guys.” This simple account of the cultural construction of masculinity leaves the protagonist in the peripheries of the picture. The protagonist’s masculinity, which is constructed on a vulnerable body guided by will power and determination, unlike more conventional forms of athletic and heroic masculinity, is marked as a subversive version. Although he becomes accustomed to his uncomfortable bed, to talking aloud and slamming the doors toward the end of his first 24 hours in prison, having become a little “Nurified,” it becomes evident through his reaction to the violent plans of his cell-mates that the protagonist of *Yaralısin* still has obstacles to overcome in accepting the violent version of masculinity and identify with his fellow prisoners within such a masculine role.⁹³

Considering the protagonist’s desperate attempts to associate himself with the regular prisoners and his finally saying that his name is “Nuri,” some critics of the novel argue that the protagonist accepts his lost intellectual war in the end. They argue that the protagonist takes the name Nuri, a nickname which he sarcastically assigned to other prisoners on his first day at the penitentiary, as his real name because he accepts that he should overcome his “otherness” and decides to be like the majority.⁹⁴ It is important to note that another interpretation of this ending is also possible. I think *Yaralısin* plays with irony in a similar manner as Jean Paul Sartre’s short story entitled “The Wall [Le Mur]” (1939) does. Elaine Scarry cites this story in *The Body in Pain*: a political prisoner of the fascist government in Spain submits false testimony to his interrogators about the whereabouts of a rebel leader and, while waiting for his execution, he woefully learns that the sentence is temporarily reversed since the man was captured in the spot he made up.⁹⁵ *Yaralısin* draws a similar sense of arbitrariness and absurdity as a conclusion.

⁹³Öz (as in n. 51), p. 230.

⁹⁴Belge, Edebiyat Üstüne Yazılar. (as in n. 54), p. 131; Ayhan Yalçınkaya, *Eğer'den Meğer'e: Ütopya Karşısında Türk Romanı*. (Ankara: Phoenix Yayınevi, 2004), p. 274.

⁹⁵Scarry (as in n. 69), p. 30.

When at the end of the novel, the protagonist finally explains that his name is “Nuri”, it is not because he feels like one of his fellow prisoners or involuntarily accepts their sovereignty, but because his real name is Nuri and his assigning this name to his cell-mates was nothing but a desperate will to believe in the existence of some other people like him, at a time when his relationship to the outer world and his ability to talk were traumatized by torture. The assignment of a single name by the protagonist to all of the prisoners seems, at the first glance, as a symbolic unification of the outside forces in the mind of an individual, who was in a state of severe post-torture trauma when he was sent to prison. Yet, considering his prolonged disgust of violence, I find it hard to believe that the protagonist gives up his values at the end of his first day in the penitentiary. It may be a better idea to consider the choice of assigning the name “Nuri” to the others as an attempt of the protagonist to restore his sense of being, by creating people like him, numerous Nuri’s who were pushed into some subaltern positions in various contexts. This is what Nuri tries to do during the whole day, he tries to identify himself with the others. Hiding the name of the protagonist until the end, the narration concludes with a crushing realization of the arbitrariness of life. It indicates that the repressive network of power creates scenarios in which individual selves are made irrelevant.

If the protagonist’s saying his name is Nuri is taken as a final *coup de grace* of his victimization, rather than a sign of recuperation, then the novel may be said to reinstate the violent masculine intent. Despite the struggle it stages against violent versions of masculinity, it is possible to argue that *Yaralınsın* fails to challenge the existing hierarchical organization of masculinities, but rather symbolically confirms it along with the superiority of “mascishmo,” since the victimized and helpless image of Nuri reproduces the eminence of such role models. Still, if one allows for the fact that Nuri keeps telling his story in a second person narrative voice until the end of the novel, when he says that his name is Nuri as his last words, it becomes plausible to argue that *Yaralınsın* makes an optimistic opening to a “wounded” yet more peaceful future of coexistence of masculinities in the end, despite the powerful feeling of impotency symbolized by Nuri. Then, *Yaralınsın*’s paralyzing delineation of torture moves away from the chronicle of a disastrous victimization and becomes the story of Nuri’s efforts to stand on his dignity.

Yaralınsın suggests a need for renewed gender roles as well as renewed national political ones. The first half of the novel portrays corrupt state politics, whereas

the second half portrays corrupt gender politics. The novel attempts to challenge the conventional norms of “being a man,” with an alternative version of masculinity, a subversive one in the mainstream sense, which while rejecting the aggressive and violent forms of masculinity still attempts to express itself in the masculine domain. It evinces suspicion about what society has declared natural for men. It confronts the reader with the dark side of the guardianship metaphor, which is often used to define the role of military and nationalistic agendas in Turkish politics, and also with the dark sides of the prevailing masculinity. The novel elaborates how challenges to authority of the father-state are pacified in line with the premises of the aggressive masculinity. It shows how a specific type of male power became the governing power of the military-state of March 12 and asks, challengingly between the lines, if this aggressive accent of domination and governance may be inherent to the lives of those who reject the violent versions of masculinity or become subjected to its dominance.

Yaralısm identifies the military-state of March 12 as an institution constructed upon the subordination of certain subjects in terms of their class origins, political engagements, and gender identities. As “the ultimate act of state power,” torture links the violent aspects of masculinity to the authority of the state.⁹⁶ With all the connotations of physical strength, emotional invulnerability, and courage, *Yaralısm* not only places those who assume power in the March 12 atmosphere in confrontation with their victims, but also sheds a critical eye on how people organize themselves into power hierarchies, even under conditions where they all are victims of power. Although the violent masculinity of state agents in the settings of the military coup settle at the center of the narration, it should not be overlooked that the novel targets a broader set of masculinities that transcend the military/civil divide. With numerous Nuris in a prison cell, *Yaralısm* suggests the coexistence of a set of individualities within the role of masculinity. Readopting a first person voice in the end, the protagonist stages a plea for the approval of the existence of various masculinities and the right of people to be individuals in their own right, with all their peculiar characteristics and political world views.

⁹⁶Millett (as in n. 77), p. 17.

1.3 *İsa'nın Güncesi*

Similar to *Büyük Gözaltı* and *Yaralımsın*, victimization is central to the story of *İsa'nın Güncesi* (The Diary of Jesus).⁹⁷ This novel, too, is a narration of deprivation and lack of freedom, but it deals with repressive measures, brutality, and torture allegorically. In contrast with his contemporaries, who were concerned with constructing a literary framework through which the physical experiences of March 12 were communicated, Melih Cevdet Anday deals with this contentious period with an implicit political agenda.⁹⁸ *İsa'nın Güncesi* does not rely on a prison metaphor to chronicle the effects of the military rule in connection with a broader theme of repression, as *Büyük Gözaltı* and *Yaralımsın* do. Rather, it utilizes bureaucracy as a symbolic repressive regime. Anday chronicles the transformation of a man of induced freedom, with no specific intentions and beset by erotic thoughts, into a rebellious individual. Once a man henpecked by his wife at home and by his superiors at the office, this mysterious man finds himself in pursuit of reasoning the events in his life when he discovers himself to be a toy of some unidentified superior powers. Anday masterfully plays with the idea of performativity and shows that all cultural definitions including gender, power, agency, and sacrifice are constructs.

İsa'nın Güncesi is a thrilling novel inspired by the intellectual perspectives of critique of modern, repressive and Kafkaesque networks of power as seen in several contemporary works of fiction. It illustrates an indispensable warning about the crude and abusive use of power. It is the story of a man of quite ordinary talents, characterized by an existentialist sarcasm and a desperate sexual striving. At the heart of the story is an enigmatic bureaucracy that has emerged through a combination of military and political power. This bureaucracy perpetuates itself by consuming the rights of the people it was designed to serve. It transforms itself

⁹⁷ Melih Cevdet Anday, *İsa'nın Güncesi*. (İstanbul: Adam Yayınları, 1991).

⁹⁸ Born in İstanbul, Melih Cevdet Anday (1915-2002) graduated Ankara Gazi High School. In 1938, he went Belgium to study sociology funded by a state scholarship, but because of the Second World War he is called back to Turkey. He has been a prominent figure in the Turkish literary scene since 1940. In 1971, UNESCO honored him as one of the world's major literary figures. Major poetry collections: *Garip* (Strange –co-authored with Orhan Veli and Oktay Rıfat, 1941), *Rahatı Kaçan Ağaç* (Restless Tree, 1946), *Kolları Bağlı Odysseus* (Odysseus Bound, 1963), *Göçebe Denizin Üstünde* (On the Nomad Sea, 1970), *Teknenin Ölümü* (Death of the Boat, 1975), *Ölümsüzlük Ardında Gulgamış* (Gilgamesh in Pursuit of Immortality, 1981), *Sözcükler* (Words, 1978 Sedat Simavi Literature Award). Novels: *Aylaklar* (Loafers, 1965), *Gizli Emir* (Secret Order, 1970 –winner of the 1970 TRT Achievement Award for Fiction), *İsa'nın Güncesi* (The Diary of Jesus, 1974).

into an unseen evil. The novel is a humorous exploration of an ordinary man who becomes a victim to this evil bureaucracy. Similar to Çetin Altan's *Büyük Gözaltı*, Melih Cevdet Anday's *İsa'nın Güncesi* produces an allegoric story of the obscene acts performed by the agents of power under the guise of "national security" during the military rule. The protagonist falls into a mysterious web of events that makes a prisoner out of him. In his endeavor to shift his vision from "seeing" to "knowing," the protagonist not only learns about the actual personalities of his colleagues, friends, and family, but he also undergoes a philosophical search of his self and agency. The importance of *İsa'nın Güncesi* to the project of this study comes from this painful acknowledgment of an existentialism akin to the trouble with authority and masculinity.

The novel opens as a realistic narration traced through the diary of a man whose wife nicknamed İsa, a Turkish synonym for Jesus, and evolves to a *mise en abyme*, in which it becomes increasingly difficult to determine what is "real" and what is not. İsa records the incidents surrounding his life and offers commentaries on the background of the events and the characteristics of the people around him. From a testimonial memoir that records daily events, *İsa'nın Güncesi* gradually turns into an inarticulate text of stream of consciousness. The novel is rich in metaphors, obscure symbols, uncanny and extraordinary events. As the story unfolds, key existentialist themes such as "freedom," "choice," and "responsibility" surface. Anday makes use of "absurdity" as a tool to express the struggles of modern man and also elaborates on the problem of hegemonic masculinity.

The characters taking part in İsa'nın Güncesi consist of İsa, his wife, his lover, his wife's sister and her husband, and the staff of İsa's workplaces. The complex intersections of the characters can be summarized as follows: One of İsa's friends gets married and after continuous counseling, makes him agree to marry his wife's sister. After the marriage, this friend, now İsa's brother-in-law, often intervenes in their lives and keeps telling him about how he can make his delirious and bossy wife happy. İsa, who voyeuristically became engaged in a love affair before marriage, secretly continues having a purely sexual relationship with his lover, who owns a fashion atelier. In his recursive visits to the atelier after work, İsa has sex with his lover almost mechanically, without any affection. He often pays a visit to his brother-in-law's house to discuss issues related to his work and marriage, and swiftly sleeps with his wife as well, every time when they secure privacy.

Suddenly one day, İsa's routine is interrupted. The novel opens with this sinister interruption and İsa recounts the events that placed him in the current dreadful condition. He narrates how the former manager of accounts of his firm, the Gas Ovens Limited, suddenly came back to the office six months after his leave and offered him a new post in the Export Storehouses and International Electronics Union Corporation, in a patronizing monologue, which İsa only partly understood because of his chronic loss of hearing. İsa fails to make up his mind about the offer. He tries to figure out how his brother-in-law, the decision maker of his life, would respond to such a proposal and answers with an ambiguous "Yes." Afterward, İsa's candid memoir recounts the absurd events that followed. As they go to the office of the manager for İsa to bid a farewell, İsa surprisingly recognizes that the former manager of accounts, who offered him the new job, in an unfriendly mood, extends a soldier's greeting to the manager and with an urgent haste, signals İsa with his head that they should leave quickly.

Accompanied by the former manager of accounts, İsa rushes to his new office, situated in some colossal and enigmatic bureaucratic compound. Although he does not understand the nature of his new job, he hesitates to ask questions, as everyone except him seems to know what is going on in the compound. He is introduced to his new manager, whom he nicknames Birdface at first sight, and Birdface tells İsa to have his first day off, leaving him with an anxiety to face this absolute freedom. Disturbed by the sudden change of his routine, İsa decides to visit his lover's atelier, but this visit does not alleviate his tension, as several other unusual incidents follow him there. When he arrives at his lover's fashion atelier, İsa meets a man at the doorstep, whom he nicknames Adamsapple, asking if his wife's costume is ready. Saying the costume was due the other day, İsa's lover gets rid of him. In a hurry, İsa sleeps with his lover and, on his way out, he finds Adamsapple waiting at the doorstep with puzzling questions, such as whether or not he believes in God. Bored and disquieted, İsa takes a bus to visit his brother-in-law's apartment to tell him about his new job. Surrounded by the noise of construction work "descending" the building to a seventh floor, he tells him about the new job and his brother-in-law rebukes him for acting on his own. Another loss of hearing interrupts his brother-in-law's angry monologue and before desperately leaving for home, İsa asks one of the construction workers if his name is Solnes.

The next day, İsa rushes to work and his new routine. As usual, he visits his

lover and his brother-in-law after work. His lover tells İsa that she has obtained some information about Adamsapple and it seems that he had nothing to do with the costume in question. At work, after a certain period, Birdface celebrates İsa for successfully completing the trial period and takes him to an office on the fourth floor. İsa finds himself assigned to a room with a desk, a chair, and a big safe-deposit box. Birdface, who in one of their previous encounters at the office strangely appeared with a "bandolier" around his chest, in no time adopts an inferior position and begins acting like a personal assistant to İsa. In the mysterious building with inanimate and stiff workers, bizarre elevators and invisible levels, İsa tries to find out why he did so. In boredom, he opens the safe deposit box stationed in his office and discovers some documents in foreign languages.

Following this discovery, the attitudes of his colleagues change completely and İsa finds himself heaved into a serious interrogation, conducted by some strange figures. His world turns into a double bind where one reality competes with another one. Making a new routine out of this extraordinary situation, İsa begins making compulsory visits to some superiors' offices, to be interrogated by one manager after another, in the accompany of an androgynous woman in a military uniform. Each interrogation widens the secrecy. We never discover what he is guilty of doing, and this increases the tantalizing character of the narration. İsa realizes that he is being followed by some anonymous people on his way home and during his trips to his lover. He finds himself alone in an unraveling world, being stalked by strangers and going slightly mad. In one of his trips to his brother-in-law's house, İsa learns from his wife's sister that a police officer has paid a visit and asked about a man called Solnes. He tells his wife's sister about the famous Henrik Ibsen play "The Master Builder," which revolves around a character called Solness, sleeps with her and sets off for home. Every stranger İsa has met in the streets eventually turns out to be an interrogator who works in collaboration with the strange managers of the mysterious bureaucratic compound. His interrogators insistently ask İsa what the papers were about, how many copies he made of the papers, and who else knew about them. They blame him for the loss of a "fifth paper."

İsa'nın Güncesi guides the reader gently into a world where realism is gradually replaced by the surreal and logic yields to illogicality. With a slow revelation of terror, İsa recognizes that he is under the control of some high-handed authority.

The anonymous Solnes soon becomes a part of the interrogation. İsa tries to explain that Solnes is a fictional character of Henrik Ibsen, but this attempt does nothing more than make Ibsen himself a part of the interrogation. İsa finally finds himself before an absurd court of puppets and masked men in the mysterious building, which force him to sign an affidavit. He insists on his innocence, refuses to sign and leaves the building. However, as he tries to turn back to his life, İsa sees that his wife, lover, and brother-in law turn their backs on him one by one. When he goes to his brother-in-law's house, İsa finds him to be a total stranger. İsa searches for solace in his lover, but she angrily tells him to leave, saying she will be getting married to someone else soon. İsa then hopelessly runs to his wife, but he meets some foreign man at the door of his house, arguing to be the new owner of the apartment. In the end, he returns to his lunatic asylum, his office in the mysterious building, which is the only place left for him to go.

İsa'nın Güncesi should not be taken at face value as an allegorical political criticism of March 12, since in addition to its abstract critique, the novel is also a dark tale of the destruction of an individual. It is a novel that explores the fear of escalating military bureaucracies through the eyes of an ordinary citizen and it successfully brings the issues of power and hegemony to the fore, in a manner delicately linked to gender. Structured on the struggles of an exemplary white-collar worker in his workplace and private life, the novel develops the theme of an average man mistakenly having his ordinary life thrown upside down, with a dark story. Combining surrealism with a suspenseful noir and psychological insecurity, Anday successfully depicts a middling man, who finds himself raging against a network of power. *İsa'nın Güncesi* not only chronicles a tale of this encounter, but also raises existentialist questions about the self and human agency, and also alludes to the infinite versions of reality through the breakdown of communication between the characters. The interrogators never wholeheartedly listen to İsa. They mistake famous fictional characters for real people and attempt to situate them as cooperators in the absurd plot of the crime that they are trying to manufacture. In this havoc, İsa's wife struggles because of her unidentified illness and two miscarriages, his stylist lover yearns melancholically for her sex-based relationship with İsa, and his brother-in-law continually attempts to interrupt some awkward moments of decision. All of them ignore the challenge İsa encounters with the unidentified powers and their inattention makes him utterly embrace his misery in the end.

Despite the fact that it portrays an uncanny atmosphere of oppression that symbolically alludes to the military coup of 1971, Anday's concern in the novel about the corruptibility of power is not rigidly connected to a military/civil dichotomy. His concern is rather transhistorical and transgender. The powerful dominates the weak, regardless of gender differences. In İsa's image, we witness submission as a way of life: he takes orders from his superiors and also from his wife and brother-in-law, and does what needs to be done. Even when he gradually recognizes that he is becoming part of a bigger drama in his new job in the mysterious bureaucratic compound, İsa continues his dedication to his "routine"s. Just like his work, İsa's personal life is based on routines. However, in his affair, İsa surprisingly projects the image of a "macho." The extraordinary appeal of *İsa'nın Güncesi* is that, it suggests that the weak may be triumphant, even when they are victims of constant surveillance, overwhelming pressure, and tactless domination.

On one hand, the novel deals with an individual's voluntary self-sacrifice of his agency in life and, on the other, it illustrates a symbolic sacrifice of an innocent figure by agents of an unidentified power network. The illogicality in the novel underplays social norms, values, and conventions, and makes the reader wonder about the meaning of life, in a state where faith in opposites such as "good and evil," and "real and illusory" are lost, and it is not possible to have the genuine information about the ultimate reality. It is not a deliberate choice that the protagonist of the novel is named after Jesus Christ. With the connotations of his name, İsa symbolizes a broad and universal account of victimization and suffering, and an unconventional state of "maleness." *İsa'nın Güncesi* epitomizes the paradoxical gender specificity of sacrifice and sarcastically deals with the male sacrificial position as a heroic role that culminates during periods of upheaval, trauma, or war, in which men are expected to sacrifice themselves without blinking. The novel skillfully discusses the gendered concept of sacrificial thinking and questions issues related to power, agency, and control, by juxtaposing gender identities. I will elucidate the masculine gender trouble attached to the subordination and victimization of the protagonist, by focusing on the sexual encounters that permeate the novel.

İsa'nın Güncesi opens with a sentence that hints at a sinister event in the past: "the incident started on a Wednesday, in my new office [olay bir Çarşamba

günü başladı, iş yerimdeki yeni çalışma odamda].”⁹⁹ İsa presents himself as a person who is coincidentally alive, and who believes life is something that takes place outside himself.¹⁰⁰ His status as an exemplar of modern white-collar man, working in an office, doing “feminine” work and celebrating managerial authority is illustrated by İsa’s calling himself a “tiny screw [küçük bir vida]” in a vast machine and a man of “no harm [zararsız bir adam].”¹⁰¹ While his flaccid masculinity is defined by his menial job and lack of capital, İsa also exhibits certain symptoms of alienation. The memories noted in his diary emphasize a sense of estrangement from other people, a basic feature of Existentialism, most evidently seen in the novel *The Stranger* (1942) by Albert Camus. The opening passages of his diary characterize İsa as a docile man who embraces the trivial nature of his existence and his extreme isolation. He is presented as a flabby figure: statements such as “I cannot find a way other than accepting life as a series of coincidences [yaşamı bir rastlantılar dizisi saymaktan başka yol bulamıyorum],” “I am a silent person, a frugal man. I have never had great intentions [sessiz bir insanımdır, bana verilenle yetinirim, hiçbir büyük amacım olmadı],” “I see incidents as they are: coincidental and without a specific aim [olayları olduğu gibi görürüm, rastlantısal ve amaçsız],” and “life means to die every second [yaşam her an ölmek demektir]” are axioms, which illustrate İsa’s introverted and passive character, and reiterate his engagement with an existentialist feeling of “nothingness.”¹⁰²

İsa’s extreme isolation and his light, boring, and unskilled job emasculate him. His body is inescapably masculine while his passive nature is purposefully feminine. More than masculine or feminine, he is always both masculine and feminine. This complexity symbolizes the shifts in the gender ideology of 1970s Turkey, also alluding to the fact that it is hard to understand the subject of men or women in “stable or abiding terms.”¹⁰³ Through out the narration, İsa often becomes abstracted from the incidents surrounding his life and functions as a screen upon which a discussion of existentialist masculinity is projected. He emphasizes, every now and then, the absurdity of life and indicates that humans are the sum of dual negations such as “life” and “death”. From the moment

⁹⁹ Anday, İsa’nın Güncesi. (as in n. 97), p. 7.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 9, 10.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 15, 16.

¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 9, 10, 15, 24.

¹⁰³ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 1.

when he introduces himself as a man of conceit, who lacks a competitive ambition and ability to potentiate his own destiny, and feels patient in his routine, until the disturbance and finally the destruction of this routine, İsa pompously relates to the readers from a trivial and alienated view of life. His continuous state of impotence portrays İsa as a social eunuch drawn in isolation and fearful of making decisions or taking risks. İsa repeatedly argues in his writings that the process of perceiving and knowing the world is fundamentally limited by one's vision and truth is what one makes of the incidents surrounding his existence. He presents himself grimly as a man of others' command and control, who with an annihilated sense of importance, embraces the present moment as the only meaningful sequence of life.¹⁰⁴

In the allegorical system of the novel, İsa's denial of agency and acceptance of himself as an object of other people's will, stages a power crisis, a fatigue and dislike of masculine control and agency, which symbolically refers to an intellectual fatigue felt against the repressive politics of the military period. This model of masculinity stages a transcendence between different existential modes of being. In İsa's existence, three modes of being postulated by Sartre in *Being and Nothingness* (1943), namely conscious being "being-for-itself" (être pour-soi), the existence of mere things "being-in-itself" (être en-soi), and "being-for-others" meet in a complicated cohesion. On the one hand, İsa characterizes a position of "being-in-itself" since he considers everything as it is and denies the existence of a genuine reality: "we are not in direct contact with reality, and we will never be. We are surrounded with a web of a very different use, or swimming in a liquid that we cannot get out of."¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, he embraces a position of "being-for-others" since he follows other people's decisions and orders in his personal life. İsa's "being-for-others" also includes an ignorance of people and denial of genuine relationships with them. He acts as though he is alone in the world.

İsa's struggle for the position of "being-for-itself," which yields the opportunity to chose and determine, is dramatized by the enigmatic job offer that initiates the series of unreasonable events. Following the sudden re-appearance of the former manager of accounts in his workplace with an offer of a new job mystically spared

¹⁰⁴ Anday, İsa'nın Güncesi. (as in n. 97), pp. 19, 42.

¹⁰⁵ Biz gerçeklerle doğrudan doğruya ilişkide değiliz, hiçbir zaman da olmayacağız. Bambaşka bir iş gören bir ağla çevriliyiz biz, ya da dışına çıkma olanağından yoksun bulunduğumuz bir sıvı içinde yüzüyoruz. Ibid., p. 19.

for İsa, a moment of decision is suggested, which positions İsa in the role of a decision-maker. However, he fails to make a quick decision, gets stuck, and finds it easier to mimic the former manager. He follows him like an infant to the office of his boss for a farewell. With the militaristic greeting staged by the former manager of accounts, it is hinted that the question of existence as “a tiny screw” in the vast machine of a capitalist bureaucracy is further complicated by the question of being subjected to the dominance of a superior military authority. Yet, at the beginning of the novel, this unexpected soldier’s greeting is just another absurd event. The military theme does not intervene in the plot until the later parts of the story, when İsa opens the safe deposit box and finds himself in a deadlock.

The problem of his chronic loss of hearing and his playful and immature character mark İsa as a highly unreliable narrator/protagonist. İsa’s observations of some abnormal events are mystified with his unreliability. Anday nurtures the tension of the story by not making it clear if the highly unreliable narrator is a radically alienated individual suffering from a psychological disorder such as schizophrenia or whether he is capable of recording the events correctly. Although İsa shows some hallmark symptoms associated with schizophrenia, such as lack of personal agency, delusions of control and thought withdrawal, and experiences his role in his actions as a supporting one, it is never explicitly stated in the narration that İsa can be characterized as a man of pathologies. The irony Anday creates through the eyes of the somehow problematic İsa, therefore, is an “unstable” irony, which Wayne Booth defines as an irony that does not attempt to restore the truth, but rather radically “undermines knowing itself.”¹⁰⁶

His relationships with women insert İsa irrevocably into a narrative of potency and agency. In contrast with the vulnerable figure of İsa, his wife appears as an individual empowered at the expense of her passive male partner. Her behavior contributes to a feeling of disorientation in the conventional gender hierarchy that accepts men’s supremacy over women. İsa’s recollections of his routine in his diary show that he obeys his wife’s orders and counseling, even when taking simple actions. We read how his wife arranges İsa’s wake-up time, his lunch, and leisure activities, and insists that he should take some time out with his friends, in order to be a “real man”:

She had arranged my wake-up time in the mornings. To keep the routine

¹⁰⁶Wayne Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 1-86.

going, she put an alarm clock next to the bed. I had to get up everyday when the alarm clock buzzes including the weekends. [...] On my way to the office, she was giving me my lunch packet. After lunch, in case the weather was fine, she was counseling that I should take a walk in the garden. [...] The time I should return home was also precise. But she was tolerant about that.

–“What kind of behavior is that to come home back directly from work?” she used to say. “A man, meets a friend for a cup of tea, coffee; there should be things he wants to talk about.”¹⁰⁷

İsa’s wife is a woman who has gained power over him, to the extent that she is able to lecture him about being “manly” enough. His wife traumatizes İsa’s masculinity by treating him with utter contempt. She blames him for her inability to conceive, although the doctors tell her that she is the one with problems.¹⁰⁸ Giving all authority over his life to a dominant woman, who will protect, guide, and nourish him, İsa nullifies his self and erases his personality.

In the figure of İsa, Anday brings to the fore the issue of subjectivation of an individual, by virtue of being subject to a regulatory practice, a critical position widely explored by Foucault¹⁰⁹. We witness how İsa’s submission to the governing moral discourses summoned up by his wife involves “behavioral [modification] and forms of subjectivation.”¹¹⁰ Given the episodes dealing with his relationship to his wife, İsa emerges as a man who craves discipline, strict routine, and continuous ordering. His diary describes İsa as a man living under a superfluous surveillance. Orders dominate his most intimate moments with his wife as well. İsa mentions that his wife does not let him kiss her lips during sex, because she keeps uttering remarks “to organize [his] actions, and prevent [his] mistakes [hareketlerimi düzenleyecek, yanlışlarımı önleyecek sözler].”¹¹¹ The drama of being hideously

¹⁰⁷Sabahları yataktan kalkma saatlerimi ayarlamıştı. Bunun aksamaması için başucuma bir çalar saat koyardı. Tatil günleri de dahil olmak üzere, her gün saat çalınca yataktan fırlamak zorunda idim. [...] İşyerime giderken elime öğle yemeği paketimi verirdi. Öğleyin yemeğimi yedikten sonra, hava güzelse, işyerimin bahçesinde dolaşmamı öğütlerdi [...] Akşamları eve gelmem gereken saat de belirli olurdu. Ama bu konuda hoşgörülü davranırdı.

–“Nedir o öyle, işten çıkar çıkmaz eve damlamak,” derdi. “Erkek dediğin, bir arkadaş ile buluşup bir yerde çay, kahve içer; konuşacağı şeyler vardır.” Anday, İsa’nın Güncesi. (as in n. 97), p. 58.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 131.

¹⁰⁹Foucault’s interest in the formation of subjectivity dates back to his earlier works. See “What Is an Author?” in Donald F. Bouchard, ed., *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell, 1977).

¹¹⁰Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality Vol.2* (New York: Random House, 1990), p. 29.

¹¹¹Anday, İsa’nın Güncesi. (as in n. 97), p. 61.

commanded in all of his actions by a higher authority, envelopes İsa with a certain degree of submissiveness, but when the commander-in-chief happens to be the wife, this also constitutes an insult to his masculinity. There is, however, one extraordinary award that İsa receives in return: his wife nicknames him after Jesus Christ and attributes to him the role of a heroic savior.

The quotidian details about their marriage indicate that İsa's wife is a suicidal woman, who lives in a sincere depression. Her mood makes the narration oscillate between life and death, introducing to it some uncanny proportions. But İsa mentions his wife's situation lightheartedly. It is clear that he just does not care. İsa notes that it was a moment of delirium that caused his wife to initiate a mystical link between Jesus Christ and him:

First let me say that my name is not İsa. My wife used this name first in a note she left for me on this door a short time ago. I don't know why, I couldn't learn, as I did not ask her. [...] In the past, I had found similar papers twice in the same place, when I entered the house. [...] But in the first one, the deadly farewell was not clear; if I'm not mistaken it was saying shortly "İsa, forget me". In the second one the writing became a bit longer: "İsa, wouldn't my end come eventually? There is no need to prolong. Let's end it here and be relieved."¹¹²

Hallowed by his wife, İsa begins turning himself into a figure of Jesus Christ for no apparent reason. He admits getting used to the name in no time and beginning to find similarities between Jesus Christ and himself. The principal similarity he finds is the ability to tolerate.¹¹³

This wisdom confirms and incontrovertibly consolidates İsa's non-domineering masculinity, which is tender and gentle, and positions him in a controversial state of agency. The figure of Jesus Christ summons up a masculine agency that is brave and heroic as well as tender and gentle. This paradox crystallizes as the key question of the novel, as İsa's encounters in life often leave him in torment, trying to make a synthesis of the two opposite masculinities. With the sacrifici-

¹¹²Önce şunu söyleyeyim, benim adım İsa değildir. Karım ilk kez gene bu kapıya kısa bir süre önce astığı bir kağıtta kullandı bu adı, benim için. Nedenini bilmiyorum, kendisine sormadığım için de öğrenemedim. [...] Bundan önce iki akşam daha bulmuştum böyle bir kağıt, eve girer girmez, aynı yerde. [...] Ama o ilk kağıtta ölüm vedaı açık seçik değildi; yanlış hatırlamıyorsam, kısaca "İsa beni unut!" yazılı idi. İkincisinde biraz daha uzadı yazı: "İsa bir gün nasıl olsa sonum gelmeyecek miydi? Bunu uzatmanın hiç anlamı yok. Burada bitsin kurtulalım." Anday, İsa'nın Güncesi. (as in n. 97), p. 66-67.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 67-68.

cial act of Jesus Christ in its baggage, the type of masculinity screened on İsa gently consolidates as the controversial role of an ascetic, who sacrifices his self, and practices an abstention from life in denial of indulgence. As a domineering female figure that bosses her husband and repeatedly reminds him of his worthlessness, İsa's overpowering wife challenges the power distribution over the traditional masculine/feminine binary. She offers a new way of thinking about the concepts of power and domination over the problem of gender. The mocking depiction of İsa's wife as a witty masculinized figure indicates that oppressive power is not essentially a masculine trait, although it has been concomitantly accepted as a prerogative of masculinity. The image of his wife collapses the "natural" attribution of femininity to the female body and masculinity to the male body, and makes it clear that gender is "a free-floating artifice radically independent of sex."¹¹⁴ The presence of such a demanding woman, a powerful image of virago in other words, surfaces as a threat of "castration" of İsa's masculinity.

Although he surfaces in the initial passages of the story as a man who embodies a less valued masculinity by virtue of being passive and performing menial labor, İsa is not totally emasculated. He tries to prove himself potent by sleeping with multiple women, all physically alike and resembling his wife, which, in his view, deprives İsa of accusations of adultery.¹¹⁵ The performative and protean nature of gender becomes more clear when İsa surfaces as a totally different man in another relationship. As the memories of İsa's affair with his lover unfold, it becomes clear that they've been voyeuristically involved in an affair, after a series of glances at each others' silhouettes through windows. His recollections record that İsa's affair with his lover is framed by a set of rules quite the opposite of the one that defines his marriage. In his affair, it is İsa who decides what to do. He visits his lover's fashion atelier only when he feels like it and has quick intercourse with the young woman. The atelier surfaces as the bastion of İsa's hegemonic masculinity, where he becomes an aggressive and threatening "manly man."

Gender, *İsa'nın Güncesi* argues, is a matter of becoming. Exhausted of her blatant role as a sexual instrument of İsa's voyeuristic pleasures, his lover too asks İsa to do certain things for her but he simply ignores her requests. In the passages that record this affair, the emphasis is on İsa's physical pleasure. İsa comments on his lover's body and sexuality in a dispassionate manner, portraying her as a

¹¹⁴Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. (as in n. 103), p. 12.

¹¹⁵Anday, *İsa'nın Güncesi*. (as in n. 97), p. 134.

passive object of his desires and just another routine in his life: "I think we never loved each other. Maybe during our first night we drifted into such a feeling. This should be more because of excitement. Excitement mostly replaces love in the same way that it replaces some other feelings."¹¹⁶

In his relationship with his lover, İsa appears as an egotistical male figure, who exemplifies normative ideals of masculinity and sexuality. He chooses deeds over words, and avoids passivity and indecision. While women characters serve as sex objects to satisfy İsa's desires, they also challenge male superiority by humiliating its sexual potency. His wife blames İsa for the miscarriages, she calls him a "non-male."¹¹⁷ His lover blames him for getting stuck in the memories of their voyeuristic first gazes and forces İsa to return to the actual time.¹¹⁸ İsa's wife and his lover both mirror the reactions and values of İsa. They confirm who he is and articulate his different faces. Therefore, İsa's sexual relationships actually serve as keyholes through which his real character can be seen. Informed and inspired by the legacy of the masculinity of Jesus Christ, the janus-faced masculinity staged in the novel indicates that İsa is, in fact, characterized by a fusion of submissive and hegemonic characteristics. İsa is fragile, weakling, and drawn to nihilism, but he is also pushy and vigorous when he feels it necessary, which makes him a figure attractive to women.

As the story unfolds, İsa surfaces as a man contemptuous of his wife and lover, and it becomes clear that the only truth of emotion or understanding is arrogated to himself. The bizarre crescendo of İsa's love affairs reaches a climax as we learn that he is also involved in a sexual relationship with his brother-in-law's wife. This affair mockingly provides a fresh look at another plot of dominance established over İsa, as it shows how İsa fools the agents of authority around him: the brother-in-law who, in the beginning of the novel, happens to be the counselor to İsa and the decision-maker of his life, is transformed into a cuckold, a figure unaware of the incidents surrounding his own life, a victim in the chain of events governed by İsa. While, in the beginning, his brother-in-law seems to "castrate" his manliness by pushing İsa about his decisions, it becomes clear that İsa, in fact, invalidates his agency behind his back, by sleeping with his wife.

¹¹⁶Birbirimizi hiçbir zaman sevmedik sanıyorum. İlk yattığımız gece belki öyle bir duyguya kapılmışızdır. Bu heyecandan doğmuş olmalı daha çok. Heyecan başka duyguların olduğu gibi aşkın da yerini tutar çoğu zaman." Anday, İsa'nın Güncesi. (as in n. 97), p.37.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 131.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 42.

Charged with a dark sardonicism, his ambiguous affairs hint at an unorthodoxy about İsa's submissiveness. İsa's obeying orders, but then writing about them in his diary with wry comments, alerts the reader about his playfulness. But it is only after İsa faces his interrogators in the mysterious building that the true nature of the victim position is revealed. The second sacrificial scenario of the novel elaborates the story of İsa's transformation from a man of hedonistic everydayness, dominated by cynicism and pleasure seeking, into a man who struggles for his freedom. This transformation illustrates İsa's turning into a figure of Jesus Christ, following a violent story of scapegoating. Almost identical to a pagan blood sacrifice, a group of people chose İsa as a target and they single him out as a victim of some superior power. İsa then subscribes to a chivalric fight to exculpate himself, in which he confronts the chauvinistic masculinity of his sacrificers and attempts to challenge their rigid way of thinking. In this fight, İsa becomes a Camusian hero, who accepts the absurdity of life yet resists getting lost in it. Similar to the mythological figure to whom Albert Camus's famous *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (The Myth of Sisyphus) owes its name, who was condemned to rolling a boulder up the side of a mountain to its summit by the gods, a boulder which will eventually roll down and reach its first position, İsa becomes a man captured in a vicious circle in the heart of bureaucracy. Camus suggests that Sisyphus can overcome the absurdity of his fate by choosing to face his struggle and pushing the rock despite its futility. İsa follows a similar path.

In his first days at his new office, İsa attempts to ask a few questions about the incidents he encountered in the mysterious building. Nevertheless, he obtains nothing but uncanny replies characterized by the fear of some unidentified superior authority. When İsa anxiously tries to learn why his former manager began acting like one of his employees, Birdface says, "If you excuse me, I consider myself responsible for duties assigned to me. I am not the one to question the reasons for these. Our superiors should have thought that this was the right thing to do."¹¹⁹ Birdface's loyalty makes İsa feel safe, until the hidden network of superior powers becomes the main locus of fear for him as well. After İsa finds the documents hidden in the self-deposit box, his colleagues identify as a group, in opposition to and dominant over him. The institute turns into a place shaped

¹¹⁹Müsade ederseniz, ben sadece bana verilen işleri yapmakla görevli sayarım kendimi. Bunların nedenleri üzerinde durmak bana düşmez. Büyüklerimiz herhalde böylesini doğru bulmuş olacaktırlar." Anday, İsa'nın Güncesi. (as in n. 97), p. 78.

by conflict and rivalry for power. İsa sees the papers left in the safe deposit box but he is only aware of “seeing” them. He does not understand what is written on the papers and assumes the text is in some foreign language, but he fails to convince his interrogators that he is not able to read the papers he has found. The workplace enshrines the masculine values of power and dominance more explicitly after İsa’s discovery. The authoritarian attributes of the managers surface and the hierarchical chain of command becomes more clearly visible. From a harmless misunderstanding and a misdemeanor, the issue about the documents turns into an enigmatic unlawful act that places İsa in a desperate search for potency.

The rigid way of thinking of the members of the institute, is a metaphor for the conditions of the state power during the military period. Their stiff and unemotional attitudes vividly send the message that “fascism” is not human. As the managers of the mysterious institution settle in chauvinistic and hegemonic subject positions following the discovery of the documents, İsa attempts to subscribe a heroic suffering, which will reinstitute his masculinity. After his discovery, İsa is taken under a strict surveillance by the authorities and he starts making compulsory trips to the invisible levels of the building to be interrogated by several section managers, in the accompany of a bizarre woman dressed in a military uniform.¹²⁰ İsa fantasizes about the woman. He vigilantly inspects her body in the elevator and even gently touches her hips but surprisingly finds out that the woman does not respond.¹²¹ Cold and cruel, the androgynous woman in the military uniform is only a minor character in the story, but she is emblematic of the author’s intricate game of gender roles and the concept of performativity.

With such an inanimate image, the unidentified superior powers and the mysterious building become associated with the terrifying idea of death. It is expressed, explicitly for the first time throughout the narration, that the institute somehow has a militaristic chain of command. The woman takes İsa to the upper levels of the building where he is subjected to a preposterous interrogation:

Hunchback asked:

–“Where did you find those papers?”

–“Your honor” I said, “I was brought to my new room only yesterday.”

[...]

–“Which new room?” he said.

¹²⁰ Anday, *İsa'nın Güncesi*. (as in n. 97), p. 88.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 98.

[...]

–“The one on the fourth floor” I continued. “Yesterday by noon. It was raining and I got wet while passing through the garden.”

What irrelevant words!

Hunchback asked:

–“Which garden?”

I made a wave by my hand trying to show the next building.

[...]

Hunchback said:

–“Yes?”

–“Yes,” I said. “I sat in the office casually until evening. This morning upon my arrival, I opened the safe deposit box.”

Hunchback asked:

–“Which safe deposit box?”¹²²

This dialogue complicates the plausibility of İsa’s sense of reality, since Hunchback’s placing his questions one after another with a surprised tone, as though there was no garden, no room and no deposit box at all, hints at a totally different reality. Two more obligatory trips to offices in the mysterious building take place, each of which deepens the mystery. In one of the offices, İsa is interrogated by two similar puppets and, in another one, he encounters two men short of breath and two whips on the ground.¹²³ He considers them to be sportsmen of the institute rehearsing for a match and leaves the room when one of them tells İsa that it is early for him to come to their office.

¹²²Kambur:

–“Nereden buldunuz o kağıtları?” diye sordu.

–“Efendim” dedim, “ben yeni odama dün getirildim.”

[...]

–“Hangi yeni oda?” dedi.

[...]

–“Dördüncü kattaki odama” diye sürdürdüm sözümü. “Dün öğleye doğru. Hava yağmurluydu, bahçeden geçerken ıslanmışım.”

Ne gereksiz sözler!

Kambur:

–“Hangi bahçeden?” dedi

Elimle yandaki yapıyı göstermek ister gibi bir işaret yaptım.

[...]

Kambur:

–“Evet?” dedi.

–“Evet,” dedim. “Akşama kadar boş oturdum. Bu sabah gelince yanımdaki çelik kasayı açtım”

Kambur:

–“Hangi çelik kasayı?” diye sordu. Anday, İsa’nın Güncesi. (as in n. 97), p. 90.

¹²³Ibid., p. 99.

This postponed threat of physical attack increases the terror and the messianic theme of the novel surfaces more visibly while İsa's position as a victim crystallizes. The members of the institute more explicitly acquire the authoritarian status of destructive male power and intolerance. İsa keeps pretending that nothing is wrong and it is now his job to travel from one office to another, to be interrogated by his superiors. Between the positions of an innocent rebel and an insane person who lives an alternative reality, İsa subscribes to a role of someone fanatically tolerant. In this dramatic act of tolerance, he reproduces the biblical figure of Jesus Christ, as he accepts his faith, instead of screaming his agony at the hands of the oppressive powers. His mind and body become a field of combat but, in an ascetic sense, İsa celebrates this. With the transformation of his victimization into an alternative truth of heroism, İsa surfaces as a quixotic hero, who makes his own reality and resists yielding to the authority of the unidentified powers.

The managers, however, challenge this heroic subject position by outrageously reminding İsa of his submissiveness. İsa finds himself forced into a certain subservient loyalty to the unidentified powers of the institute, when one of the managers angrily dictates how he should behave:

You want to learn about everything mister. Behave yourself! Managers on top floors, managers on bottom floors, the depot, the wall... All of it, all of it! Are you not aware that you are crossing the line? How come you take the elevator on your own? How on earth does such a thing happen? Every place has some managerial rules and people who work there should obey them carefully. But you want to live as you like [...] They do not let this happen mister!¹²⁴

Hesitant and clearly uncomfortable, İsa cannot answer. This reminder makes him fully grasp his powerlessness against the network of power situated in the institute. Despite the overwhelming knowledge of his lack of power and agency, İsa fights to prove his innocence.

¹²⁴Her şeyi öğrenmek istiyorsun efendi. Kendine gel! Yukarıdaki şefleri aşağıdaki şefleri, ambarı, duvarı... Her şeyi, her şeyi. Fazla ileri gittiğinin farkında değil misin? Kendi başına asansöre binip aşağı inmeye ne hakkın var? Dünyada görülmüş şey mi bu? Her yerin belli bir yönetimi vardır. Orada çalışanlar bu yönetime ayak uydurmak zorundadırlar. Oysa sen başına buyruk yaşamak istiyorsun. [...] Yaşatmazlar adamı efendi! Anday, İsa'nın Güncesi. (as in n. 97), p. 103-104.

The novel satirizes the workplace as an arena of technical rationality. It is only İsa who fails to understand what is going on and, therefore, is left out of the circle of inanimate colleagues. Only when he finally finds himself before an absurd court, which decides that İsa should sign a statement saying he had “read one or all of the four papers, made copies and gave them to some places and people [dört kağıdı ya da onlardan birini okudun, kopyasını çıkardın ve birtakım yerlere ve kişilere verdin]” İsa understands the seriousness of his situation.¹²⁵ The terror grows as İsa rushes to his brother-in-law’s house, when finally dismissed from the interrogation, and finds people waiting for him. Some agents question İsa and his brother-in-law about *Solnes the Masterbuilder*, a play that İsa borrowed from his brother-in-law’s library. They attempt to make İsa confess his co-operation with his brother-in-law, Solnes and İbsen in the conspiracy they are building. His brother-in-law denies any knowledge of İbsen or Solnes and leaves İsa alone in his desperate attempt to persuade the interrogators that İbsen is a drama writer and Solnes is a fictional character. With a mordent sense of humor, this scene communicates a fight between the intellectual power of submissive masculinity and the physical power, which is gained at the cost of a lack of intelligence, of hegemonic masculinity. It also grippingly illustrates how individuals turn their back on each other when in danger, with an urge to protect themselves. As his brother-in-law stabs him in the back, it becomes increasingly difficult for İsa to understand the situation.

The narration reveals the unorthodoxy of İsa’s victim position in a point of climax following this moment of epiphany: İsa unexpectedly celebrates his powerlessness as a form of power and argues that his enthusiasm for sacrificing his agency and letting people decide for him was in fact a conscious and voluntary choice. After a long catalogue of oppression and victimization that İsa happily tolerates, the narration turns to declare that none of those could actually destroy him, since his slavishness was a conscious choice and his surrender was an exulting act of self-sacrifice. İsa argues that it is, in fact, he himself, who “directs his directors” in his slavish position:

I have always lived alone, like everyone else. My only difference from the others is consciously tolerating such relationships and games. Do they want to direct me? Let them do so. What difference does it make? Nothing. I have directed those who have been directing me, as a slave. Take my wife,

¹²⁵ Anday, İsa’nın Güncesi. (as in n. 97), p. 115.

for instance. Her character is defined by the urge to dominate me. It is all because of me, her illness, misery, unhappiness. How could she find herself without these?¹²⁶

The idea that it becomes easy to manipulate events and people, by making oneself appear as a sacrificial victim, offers a sudden change of perspective and indicates that things may be quite the opposite of how they seem. With the transference of İsa's sacrifice of his free will and agency from a nihilist belief to a maneuver, and a reactionary attempt to cling to the current conditions, the discrepancies between the incidents and individuals' accounts of them are expressed.

İsa argues that his submissiveness was for others' amusement rather than serious and he expects gratification in return for his submission. After he announces himself as the real power holder, the border between the sacrificer and the sacrificed, the oppressor and the victim, the superior and the inferior becomes blurred. The mysterious events in the institute happen to force İsa to take a step toward greater self-realization and reclaim his agency but, at the same time, they ultimately happen to lead him to self-destruction. When İsa realizes that no one will support him in his fight, he makes his way back to the enigmatic institute, to spend the rest of his life. İsa announces himself as the real power holder but he slavishly returns to his office in the end. With such an ending, the real power holder is left anonymous in the clash of sacrificial masculinity with a masculinity characterized by chauvinism, independence, and control. As İsa refuses to chose among alternative masculine images, it is expressed that he is actually a sum of them. The image of Jesus Christ is operational in this sense, not only because it links İsa's struggles to a conscious suffering, but also because it challenges the macho type of masculinity with the potential that sacrificial thinking yields for positive cultural revival.

With the performative nature of İsa's masculine acts, it is vehemently expressed that the appropriate concept of "the masculine self" is a constant negotiation between taking the part of contrasting subject positions in the power hierarchy. Anday treats power as genderless and gender as a set of cultural norms,

¹²⁶Ben hep tek başıma yaşadım, herkes gibi. Benim başkalarından tek ayrımım, bu gibi ilişkilere, oyunlara bilerek katlanmamdır. Beni yönetmek mi istiyorlar? Peki yönetsinler. Neyi değiştirir bu? Hiçbir şeyi değiştirmez. Ben köle olarak yönettim beni yönetenleri. Şu benim karımı alalım ele. Onun bütün kişiliği, beni baskı altında tutmak hevesinden, isteğinden belirlenmiştir. Hastalığı, umutsuzluğu, mutsuzluğu hep benim yüzümdendir. Anday, İsa'nın Güncesi. (as in n. 97), p. 159.

which men and women are expected to live up to and guide their behavior by. He focuses on strategies to destabilize the dichotomy between man and woman, masculine and feminine. The associations man/masculinity and woman/femininity are denaturalized in the novel by contrasting images of femininity and masculinity. Man-as-sinner/man-as-martyr stereotypes are utilized for cultural critique. *İsa'nın Güncesi* does not involve a criticism of repression symbolized by the mysterious building and the inanimate officials. It rather invites the reader to ravish the humility of its protagonist and his acceptance of the situation. The protagonist fights his feelings of paranoia and also struggles against the laws and norms dictated by the powerful to return to his previous life. The writer does not sympathize with his victimized protagonist and this is one of this novel's real strengths.

The main accent of absurdity in *İsa'nın Güncesi* focuses on the incongruity between what people pretend their lives to be and what they actually are. The strange militaristic mimics and equipment recorded by İsa at the beginnings of his odyssey, suggest that he may actually be pretending his being taken into custody to be a promotion offer for a new job. His chronic loss of hearing paves the way for İsa to make his own reality, all by himself. The mysterious bureaucratic compound that İsa enthusiastically rushes to, stands most probably for one of the clandestine interrogation centers situated in some deserted areas, to which many people were taken during the military rule. It is perhaps, one of the major local police stations. Yet, within two distinct narratives of the same events, the narration hardly gives credence to a specific one. The absurd intensifies with the unreasonable acts of the interrogators and other characters. No one except the members of the secret building understands what is going on, yet they quickly get used to it and do not question much. The novel successfully reveals the primordial thirst of the powerful for blood, in a story of modern times, constructed upon the janus faced nature of gender and the act of sacrifice. It develops a skeptical perspective on truth by observing how people engage differently with the events that surround their everyday lives. All incidents and relationships staged are threaded with a cynical belief that there is a hidden truth somewhere.

İsa'nın Güncesi constructs a place where nothing is as it seems and paranoia rules. It deals with a heightened environment of surveillance, suspicion, and accusation in some unidentified time and setting, where the realistic setting of contemporary city life clashes with an absurd world. In an allegorical and abstract

story, the novel makes a bitter critique of a life dominated by military bureaucracy and points out at the infinite versions of “the reality” through the breakdown in communication between the characters. *İsa'nın Güncesi* is a remarkable allegorical representation of the political aura of 1970s Turkey: it successfully depicts the maelstrom of March 12, in which a considerable number of people were captivated by paranoia and a state of fear, questioning the illegitimate logic of incidents that made them victims of a heavy-handed militaristic bureaucracy. The humor of the narration is moving, but for all the laughs, the ultimate message is serious: *İsa'nın Güncesi* challengingly asks if the revolutionaries victimized by the heavy-handed actions of agents with official sanction during the military period were actually martyrs to a misguided virtue of sacrifice and suffering. Is it possible for them to claim themselves as the real power holder, just like the quixotic İsa? Is it noble to find happiness in pain, under repression and maltreatment? Or is it just absurd?

Those familiar with the social history of the March 12 will immediately recognize this dilemma as a major trope of several texts born out of the memories of the coup. Not only the fictional works but also the testimonial accounts nurtured by the incidents of this period question the piercing problem of self-sacrifice, and the nobility in “death for a cause”. Although it has mostly been undervalued as a genuine example of March 12 novels because of its abstract and allegorical nature, *İsa'nın Güncesi* engages, for better or worse, in a critique of dominant values of the modern individual in Turkey during the upheavals of the coup period. İsa's “performance” of courage, power, and agency, his virtuous appreciation of his misery, his political rationalization of his slavishness and his return to the enigmatic institute at the end of the novel stage a dynamic and transgressing notion of identity, which also blurs gender as a static category. In this sense, Anday's *İsa'nın Güncesi* conveys a Butlerian critique of gender and invalidates rigid clusters that define gender identity. It conceptualizes identity as a continually fluctuating series of choices and in this way, the novel also poses a challenge to the idea of a clearly drawn and fixed identity.

CHAPTER 2

Masculinity is in the Eye of the Beholder Women Writers' March 12 (1975-1977)

The previous chapter spelled out the discourses of masculinity portrayed in *Büyük Gözaltı*, *Yaralısn*, and *İsa'nın Güncesi*. With stories that illustrate how people were hurt under it, these novels challenge the “righteousness” of the military regime. Their stories illustrate the profound pessimism of the intelligentsia subjected to ill treatment and pressure. All three novels delineate a struggle with oppression and deal with a traumatic sense of solitude that arises from the submissive position of their protagonists. The main problematic of these novels is their protagonists' inability to fashion themselves as powerful male subjects. They bring a protagonist in solitude to the fore and show how the overall supervision and control of an individual creates an oppressed self that becomes quotidian. Psychological and physical accounts of surveillance, incarceration, and torture are revealed, examining the pain and trauma from different perspectives. The narrations expose gender attitudes as intricate problems and criticize, sometimes with a wry accent, the attempt to subscribe to a macho posturing in response to oppression from the position of a victim of it.

This second chapter aims to broaden the discussion of masculinities in March 12 novels, by focusing on four novels written by women writers and published during the period 1975-1977. This was a period of gestation, in the sense that after the return to democracy in 1973, both the left and right were trying to consolidate their positions. Works published in this epoch ushered in a wave of women writers who explored the production of “hypermasculinity” reciprocally by focusing on “hyperfemininity”. The originality of the novels published by women writers during this period lays in their introduction of women into the fictional frame of March 12. Despite their momentarily presence, women were absent in Altan’s, Öz’s and Anday’s narratives. Women writers explore gender differences and question the existing givens of masculinity and femininity in their generation. They pay specific attention to young people’s rejection of traditional patriarchal family values in the atmosphere of March 12, when there was a revolt against the images of authority. Testimonial accounts of the coup are again an important center of gravity in the narrations published during this period but the accounts of repression vary. From maltreatment in custody and in prison, several novels published during this period move into themes of political exile and alienation.

My interest in novels by women writers of March 12 concentrates on their challenge to the previously established “victimization” stories. The novels discussed in the first chapter use victimized men as a stable ground. However, novels at the focus of this chapter shake this ground. The challenge takes different forms in novels by left-wing and right-wing women writers. The left-wing writers illustrate men’s collusion with power, even from the position of a victim. They problematize the male subject position emphasizing that “within Marxism men remain strangely unproblematic.”¹ They make a second iteration of the act of challenging the mainstream history of March 12 and refer to a domain of masculine authority over women, where authority is claimed by men deprived of power in political action. They examine how masculine power is constructed despite traumatic experiences that attempt to demolish it and in which ways this traumatized masculinity turns into an oppressive/productive part of women’s existence. Right-wing writers, on the other hand, argue that those trying to have their victimization recognized are the real ones to blame for the chaos of March 12. While left-wing writers direct their main critical focus to the patriarchal culture,

¹Jeff Hearn, *The Gender of Oppression: Men, Masculinity and the Critique of Marxism*. (Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books, 1997), p. 22.

which along with the “subjection of women,” brings the “fraternity of men” into the picture, right-wing writers insistently carry problems related to power, domination, and destruction into the world of the leftists.² They see the disturbing faces of masculinity and the violent exercise of male authority only in there.

Left-wing women writers of this period are especially important because some of their legacies helped the feminist perspective to gain its due recognition in Turkey toward the end of the 1970s³. The rising political consciousness in the 1970s elevated the gender trouble discussions to a new level and women writers began offering competitive forms of political thinking. The question of women gained substantial importance in literature in parallel to the widespread attention paid to the power dynamics in social structures. The complications of women’s participation in political movements were critically analyzed by means of discourses challenging the liberal and emancipatory view of the male-oriented political accumulations. In a sense, left-wing women writers of March 12 are the pioneers of feminist historicizing, which triggered the urge to look askew at mainstream narratives of history.

Left-wing women writers of March 12 shed a critical eye on the germ of hegemonic masculinity, and explore processes that serve to maintain patriarchy. They reveal that these processes are complex since hegemonic codes are fluid and full of contradictions.⁴ They show keen interest in linking the history of March 12 to many other phenomena such as the patriarchal structure of the culture and its control on men and women, and other cultural formations. This attempt is a process of deconstructing a “thick description” in itself, because it corresponds with revealing the variety of cultural codes present beneath seemingly simple structures.⁵

In her influential paper entitled “Sexual Discourse in Turkish Fiction: Return

²Carol Pateman, “The Fraternal-Social Contract.”, in *Civil Society and the State*. (London: Verso, 1988), p. 101-128, John Remy, “Patriarchy and Fratriarchy as Forms of Androcracy.”, in *Men, Masculinities, and Social Theory*. (London: Routledge and Unwin Hyman, 1990).

³Mediha Göbenli, “Zeitgenössische Türkische Frauenliteratur: Eine Vergleichende Literaturanalyse Ausgewählter Werke von Leyla Erbil, Füzûzan, Pınar Kür und Aysel Özakin.”, Ph. D thesis, Hamburg University. (Hamburg, October 1999), (URL: http://www.sub.uni-hamburg.de/opus/volltexte/1999/111/pdf/M_Goebenli.pdf), Priska Furrer, *Das erzählerische Werk der türkischen Autorin Sevgi Soysal (1936-1976)*. (Berlin: Schwarz, 1992)

⁴Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995), p. 7, Robert Connell, *Masculinities*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), p. 19.

⁵Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture.”, in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 3-30.

of the Repressed Female Identity,” Sibel Erol explores how the female writers dominating the literary scene of the 1970s experienced male domination and articulated a specific discourse on sexuality “which treats the body as the locus of selfhood.”⁶ One example of such novels that focus on the female body is Sevgi Soysal’s *Şafak* (The Dawn, 1975), a sensational book, which later came to be acknowledged as one of the highlights of the March 12 fiction. In *Şafak*, Soysal links capitalism to patriarchy in a thrilling story of political exile and represents sites of capitalist/patriarchal power, in the settings of cities under martial law. Soysal’s two other books *Yenişehirde Bir Öğle Vakti* (Noontime in Yenişehir, 1974) and *Yıldırım Bölge Kadınlar Koğuşu* (Yıldırım Area Women’s Ward, 1976) also revolve around her experiences during the March 12 period.

Enhanced by the physical and psychological tensions of Sevgi Soysal’s exile to Adana as a revolutionary leftist writer, *Şafak* provides accounts of the intellectual loneliness of a woman of city-origin with refreshing maturity and a profound sense of compassion. Passages of sharply observed realistic descriptions record and protest the oppressiveness of life under military rule, while acknowledging the predicament of individuals, who became fragile victims of power. Soysal’s critical glance targets the process of victimization with sheer attention, but she also explores the psychological dynamics of accepting the status of victim. In addition to its vivid examination of the feudal culture in Adana, the novel is also a self-questioning of a leftist revolutionary intellectual about the merits of her political devotion. The protagonist of *Şafak* immerses the reader into the uncertainties and self-doubts of an intellectual woman, who painfully recognizes the gap between the people of Adana and herself.

During the second half of 1970s, as the increasing popularity of the leftist testimonial “*faction*” triggered an attempt within the right wing to tell “the other side of the story,” a new set of March 12 novels began to emerge. The works of the right wing provided a mirror image of March 12. These novels attempted to construct stories addressing the superiority of conservative national and cultural values. They emphasized the power of repressive mechanisms within the leftist groups that leave individuals to the mercy of forceful ideologies and attempted to undermine the emancipation claimed by the leftist worldview. Emine Işınsu (Okçu) published *Sançı* (Stitch) in 1975. In her novel, Işınsu fictionalized the

⁶Sibel Erol, “Sexual Discourse in Turkish Fiction: Return of the Repressed Female Identity.”, *Edebiyat* 6 (1995), p. 187.

life story of Ertuğrul Dursun Önkuzu, “a martyr” of the right wing, focusing on the skirmishes that erupted between armed paramilitary groups of the left and the right. She claimed witness status for the members of the “idealists,” the anti-communist youth, who sacrificed their lives in order to protect the nation against “destructive” Western ideological imports. The novel stigmatizes leftist revolutionaries with essentialist discourses and brings anti-communist youth to the fore as the real heroes.

Another right-wing writer Sevinç Çokum made her contribution with *Zor* (Hard) in 1977. Similar to Emine Işınsu’s *Sanıcı*, Sevinç Çokum’s *Zor* focuses on the life of a boy of village origin, who comes to the city and struggles with subscribing to new manners and lifestyles. Çokum turns to the slums of İstanbul and describes how the disintegration of the family as a social formation contributed to the polarization of the political atmosphere. Both Işınsu’s *Sanıcı* and Çokum’s *Zor* challenge the previously established victim role by illustrating leftist revolutionary characters with a false consciousness and confronting them with self-conscious and patriotic characters. These novels are not only a conservative reaction to revolutionary leftism, but also they are a reaction to the emerging youth culture, and the contemporary identity politics that was flourishing in the oppositional movement. Işınsu and Çokum rely on the equation of woman and nation, which is a major premise of nationalist rhetoric and literature, and take sides with the official historiography by showing the chaos of March 12 exclusively as the result of a left-wing anarchism.

In the late 1970s, some major books of Turkist ideology were reprinted to support the task of challenging the leftist versions of solidarity and martyrdom. The most important of them were *Bozkurtların Ölümü* (The Death of Greywolves) and *Bozkurtlar Diriliyor* (The Greywolves Resurrection), two popular novels by Nihal Atsız, a leading ideologue of Pan-Turkism⁷. Atsız’s discussion of “models of heroic self-sacrifice and courage” echoes most visibly in Işınsu’s novel, because Işınsu constructs her story on a hero who falls in love with a woman from the enemy camp, but who “heroically” fights with his feelings.⁸ Çokum does not provide

⁷See Umut Üzer, “Racism in Turkey: The Case of Hüseyin Nihal Atsız,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 22, no. 1 (2002), p. 119-130 and Cenk Saraçoğlu “Nihal Atsız’s World-View and Its Influences on the Shared Symbols, Rituals, Myths and Practices of the Ülkücü Movement.” at <http://www.let.leidenuniv.nl/tcimo/tulp/Research/cs.pdf>

⁸Jacob Landau, “Ultra-Nationalist Literature in the Turkish Republic: A Note on the Novels of Hüseyin Nihal Atsız,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 39, no. 2 (2003), p. 207.

illustrations of a heroic patriotism but she borrows something equally characteristic of Turkist discourses from Atsız: the discussion of Turkishness and "its valued traditions."⁹ Işın and Çokum attempt to demystify leftist connotations of self-sacrifice by showing how "alienated" the leftist were from their genuine national identity.

In 1976, five novels discussing the trauma of the military intervention through different accounts followed: Samim Kocagöz's *Tartışma* (Discussion), Demirtaş Ceyhun's *Yağmur Sıcağı* (Rain Fever), Demir Özlü's *Bir Uzun Sonbahar* (A Long Autumn), Oktay Rıfat's *Bir Kadının Penceresinden* (From the Window of a Woman) and Pınar Kür's *Yarın Yarın* (Tomorrow Tomorrow). In *Tartışma*, Kocagöz recalls the memories of his imprisonment in Davutpaşa¹⁰. Ceyhun, in *Yağmur Sıcağı*, explores the inner struggles of politically engaged individuals, in a story that borrows from his life and is told through monologues¹¹. Özlü's *Bir Uzun Sonbahar* is a thinly disguised novel of his life, also built upon intellectual self-questioning and self-criticism¹². Oktay Rıfat's *Bir Kadının Penceresinden* paints the portrait of Turkey revolving around the lives of middle-class intellectuals. Each of these writers were engaged with different strains of leftist politics, and they provide varying accounts of the transformation of the political polarization into a wave of violence in the society, in the wake of the March 12 intervention. They provide accounts of the intellectual struggles of men and women, trying to understand the incidents surrounding them.

In her debut novel *Yarın Yarın*, Pınar Kür shifts the focus of this questioning considerably, by choosing a woman as her protagonist. *Yarın Yarın* explores the little bourgeois settings in 1970s İstanbul, with a keen interest in women's struggles to be subjects in their own lives and asks if women could become liberated through sexual liberties. Another puzzling question that appears in the novel asks whether a man of opposite class or ideology can be loved or allied. Beset by the idea that Marxism under-theorizes the distinctiveness of male power, Pınar Kür deals with love, freedom, and subservience, and negotiates women's chances to live their own lives, on their own terms. The novel asks whether women should

⁹Landau, *Ultra-Nationalist Literature in the Turkish Republic: A Note on the Novels of Hüseyin Nihal Atsız*. (as in n. 8), p. 204.

¹⁰Samim Kocagöz, *Tartışma*. (İstanbul: Okar Yayınları, 1976). In his last novel *Eski Toprak* (Old Soil, 1988) Kocagöz elaborates on the sociopolitical conditions that brought a military intervention on March 12.

¹¹Demirtaş Ceyhun, *Yağmur Sıcağı*. (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1978).

¹²Demir Özlü, *Bir Uzun Sonbahar*. (İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 1976).

emphasize their differences from men or strive to demonstrate their similarities. Pınar Kür constructs a gripping story with psychologically well-founded characters that invite empathy.

This chapter will focus on *Şafak*, *Sancı*, *Yarın Yarın*, and *Zor*, because these four novels have the “non-man” at the center of their stories as pivots in a war of hegemony between men. All of the novels except *Zor* have female protagonists and writers use their in-betweenness, confusion, and struggling in the violent atmosphere of a male-stream fight, to comment on the grip of ideologies, and the individuals’ desperate need for connection. *Zor* has a child worker as its focus, a boy, which just like a woman, exists in a realm of oppression by men. These novels deal with the fierce encounter between the left and right in 1970s Turkey within the framework of personal relationships. They approach the problem of love and domination, by means of women and men of different classes and rival camps, who become attracted to each other. They deal with the definition of man and woman in a capitalist culture and question the power that comes with financial wealth. In these novels, female characters are obsessive targets of masculine evaluation and judgment, and the novels achieve success in meshing gender issues with the political upheavals of the period. The discourse of effeminacy, sheds light on the fluctuations and vulnerabilities of male power and places contemporary “Bihruz bey”s under the inspection of their female counterparts.

Şafak and *Yarın Yarın* critically engage with women’s share of the distribution of power. They immerse the reader in the stories of women cloistered in the clutches of patriarchy. They question if people can renounce their social class and change sides, and whether men can give up their gender privileges and unite with women in their fight for liberation. Those are challenging questions, considering that the revolutionary leftist movement in Turkey was overwhelmingly male and lacked an established proletarian class. The novels are interested in the parallels between patriarchy and political domineering, and between patriarchy and capitalism. An important question asked by Michel Foucault, echoes in these narrations. In his introduction to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus*, Foucault asks “How does one keep from being fascist, even (especially) when one believes oneself to be a revolutionary militant? How do we rid our speech and our acts, our hearts and our pleasures, of fascism? How do we ferret out the fascism

that is ingrained in our behavior?"¹³ From this very Foucauldian point, these novels challenge the image of the victimized men presented by the pioneering March 12 novels and show that although there is a systematic "unmanning" of some men by superior powers, there is also a realm for their "remanning" themselves by oppressing the women and "the less manly".

While *Şafak* and *Yarın Yarın* negotiate the highlights of change and of women's liberation sympathetically, *Sanrı* and *Zor* approach their vision of a new world critically. They rehearse representations of Turkish nationalists of rural origin and position these images against the despondency of urban and bourgeois-turned revolutionaries, who attempt to challenge the so-called "traditions." Both novels are influenced by right-wing bigotry and while doing the ideological work of national consolidation, they mark a political perspective that considers dialectical materialism and class-struggle as "heresy." *Sanrı* is a narrative of persuasion, which attempts to introduce the "greywolves" as the misjudged beasts of March 12. It voices an elegy for the losses of the "ülküçü" movement, members of which clashed with revolutionary leftists in the streets, risking their lives. Although *Zor* does not surrender to the propagandistic stereotypes of "barbaric revolutionaries," it too leans on a Manichean characterization, which represents the political conflict in terms of "being responsible citizens" and "being traitors." *Zor* shifts the focus from women's struggles in men's world to a boy's rite of passage to manhood. This is a book comprised of poignant collections of individual experiences that create a panoramic picture of 1970s Turkey, and it draws a picture of city life to negotiate the contrasting ideologies. In *Zor*, not all revolutionaries are violent, but they are either idle or decadent, and money hungry. The novel attempts to install hope for a rescue in God, by means of its young protagonist's recollections of his religious grandmother. A motivating question for this chapter is whether women writers employed more challenging discourses to explicate the masquerade of masculinity, and to explore men's insecurity and inadequacy. Did they succeed in mining through the political rivalry that coated the struggle for power in the atmosphere of March 12?

¹³Michel Foucault, "Introduction.", in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), p. xiii.

2.1 *Şafak*

Şafak is a story of power abuse, which is built upon the struggles of a political prisoner and develops in a different state of deprivation: in exile.¹⁴ Similar to Çetin Altan's *Büyük Gözaltı* and Erdal Öz's *Yaralımsın*, Sevgi Soysal's *Şafak* (The Dawn) is a novel that borrows arresting details from the life of its writer.¹⁵ Soysal was one of the foremost intellectuals who encountered the brutal face of the military rule immediately after the intervention. Some of Soysal's books were banned by the military state because of "obscenity" and she was sent to prison on charges of promoting communism.¹⁶ Her struggles as a political prisoner provide the fodder for this largely autobiographical novel. Details of Soysal's biography suggest that the questions she raises in *Şafak* about gender may also have figured prominently in her own life.

Soysal not only recounts her personal experiences in *Şafak* but also dramatically examines the dehumanization caused by tyranny during the martial law period. She masterfully depicts the gender anxiety of an educated and urban-raised woman in the local settings of the so-called "macho" town of Adana, a provincial city in Eastern Anatolia, where Soysal herself was sent for a two-and-a-half months of exile after the military take-over. She weaves the development of those anxieties into a stunning self-inspection. The self-inspection of the novel's protagonist begins as a questioning of the truths hidden behind her political engagements, but it expands to a broader questioning of gender and exploitation. What we have, in this omniscient narrative, is an economy in which a stunning look is taken at the consequences of police brutality, community segregation, and economic disparity, while an examination of the meanings of oppression and ex-

¹⁴Sevgi Soysal, *Şafak*. (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınları, 1985).

¹⁵Sevgi Soysal (1936-1976) was born in İstanbul. She graduated from Ankara Girl's Lycee and started her university education in the Department of Classical Philosophy at Ankara University. After that, Soysal studied archaeology and drama in Germany. She worked for various organizations, including the Turkish State Radio and Television. Soysal emerged as a major fiction writer in the 1970s. She gained widespread reputation as an ardent critic of social injustice and gender inequality. In the heydays of the political upheavals she is jailed with the accusation of insulting the Turkish Armed Forces. Her early death curtailed a promising literary career. Short Story collections: *Tutkulu Perçem* (Passionate Bangs, 1962), *Tante Rosa* (Tante Rosa, 1968), *Barış Adlı Çocuk* (The Boy Named Barış, 1976). Novels: *Yürümek* (To Walk, 1970), *Yenişehir'de Bir Öğle Vakti* (Noon-Time in Yenişehir, 1974 Orhan Kemal Novel Award), *Şafak* (Dawn, 1975), *Yıldırım Bölge Kadınlar Koğuşu* (Yıldırım Area Women's Ward, 1976). Soysal left behind an incomplete novel, *Hoşgeldin Ölüm* (Welcome Death).

¹⁶Erdal Doğan narrates Soysal's struggles in a poignant biography. See Erdal Doğan, *Sevgi Soysal: Yaşasaydı Aşık Olurdum*. (İstanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2003).

ploitation is carried out. From material exploitation/oppression, the narration moves to a discussion of sexual and political exploitation/oppression and Soysal does not let the "unhappy marriage of Marxism to feminism" go without comment.¹⁷ The gender ambiguity that pervades the novel points to a discomfort with gender as an organizing category, which segregates the individuals and positions them in two separate universes in the predominantly traditional culture of Turkey.

Safak is a rich source for the analysis of gender discourses coded into representation of different political engagements. In the panoramic view of Adana, the novel describes a revolutionary-leftist woman writer in exile, who becomes stuck in the alien world of men of local workers, leftists, nationalist rightists, privileged capitalists, and also men with official and bureaucratic sanction. It is the comparison of these masculinities through the eyes of the novel's alienated female protagonist, what makes this novel an important node in the project of this study. The novel revolves around Oya Ertem, the exiled woman writer, whose narrative voice occasionally mixes with that of the narrator. Much of the novel's poignancy is derived from Oya's helplessness and her thinking of the limitations imposed on her by gender. Her solitude and alienation constitute the fulcrums of the narration. Oya's ordeal of adjustment to the repressive conditions of Adana is the central story. The novel primarily explores Oya's struggles but it also sheds light on the toll taken on those who endured similar political ordeals.

Safak opens with a chapter entitled "Raid," which portrays the storm of police agents on a shack in the slums of Adana, in a mild autumn evening. Describing the moments just before the police raid, the narrator provides information about those meeting at the shack for a casual dinner. We learn that Oya is an intellectual of city origin exiled to Adana. She attracts the immediate attention of the townspeople as she checks in to the main hotel of Adana, where she is obliged to stay for a certain time and will be checked on a regular basis. Oya makes friends with a few revolutionary leftist people in the city, Hüseyin a lawyer and his cousin Mustafa, a teacher, and she comes to the shack of their uncle Ali upon their invitation. At the dinner, Oya gets to know Mustafa and Hüseyin better, and she also meets Ali's wife Gülşah, her sister Ziyne and Ziyne's fiancée Zekeriya. Gülşah

¹⁷Heidi Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union.", in *The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: A Debate on Class and Patriarchy*. (London: Polity Press, 1986), p. 1-41.

is a woman devoted to her household duties. She makes Oya feel like an alien. Oya is surprised by the low treatment of women during the dinner and she also realizes that Gülşah and Ziyne, who unconsciously treat her like a man, seem to accept such treatment.

Oya's gender conflict in the novel provides a parallel drama to its central one of political oppression. With their objectified images, Gülşah and Ziyne provide means for Oya to influence our opinion of the men she has been accompanying at the dinner table. They also motivate her toward a comparison of gender discourses of her revolutionary leftism and the patriarchal conditions of rural Adana. As the memories of his arrest and now destroyed marriage unfolds, it becomes clear that one of the guests, Mustafa, also has a history of activism and arrest, similar to Oya. Mustafa's recollections indicate how he found himself struggling between revolutionary ideals and the male privileges offered to him by the feudal culture. Mustafa's memoirs of his relationships with his ex-wife and his cousin Hüseyin develop the discussion on the patriarchal bonds between the male members of the family.

A second chapter entitled "Interrogation" covers the rest of the evening. The casual dinner party warms up with political discussions, in a manner alluding to the political tension in the society. The police invade the house and the pleasant night ends at the local police station with Oya's being taken into custody together with the male members of the household. Learning that some revolutionary activists are prosecuted, security officer Zekai leaves his inveterate bridge party with the businessmen of Adana and proudly makes his way to the police station. Zekai's sidekick Abdullah beats Ali, while Zekai condescendingly interrogates Oya. After a litany of questions, Ali, Hüseyin and Mustafa are taken to a custody cell, but Oya finds herself in a prolonged dispute with Zekai. Taking his lead from Oya's accompanying men at the dinner table as a companion, Zekai insinuates that Oya is a sexually available and promiscuous woman. As she is brutally reminded of her inferior gender and fragile female body, Oya recognizes her helplessness and lack of power. Zekai's aggressive masculinity challenges the erasure of Oya's body and her sexual situation within the revolutionary movement. In terror, she finds herself perplexed, trying hard to find a way to subscribe to ideals such as courage and tenacity. Despite her fear, Oya challenges Zekai with exceptional courage. Yet in this encounter, she also becomes critical of her posing and stiffness as a male performance.

The officers keep Oya, Ali, Hüseyin and Mustafa at the station without any explanation. They force them to write testimonials and confess that the casual dinner party was, in fact, a secret political meeting. Left in a room to write her testimonial, Oya finds herself terrified by the feelings nurtured by a billy intentionally left on the desk by Abdullah. The billy takes Oya back to memories of the days she spent in prison before she was sent to Adana. Characterized with the ill treatment of political prisoners, which includes beatings and rape of women with billies, these flashback memories depict a riveting expression of the dark legacy of the coup. As Oya harkens back to the chilling conditions of the prison and remembers her inmates one by one, another vivid ethnography about women's ward becomes the major narration. We follow a different cluster of individual stories including those of political prisoners such as Sema, a victim of rape during interrogation and Çiğdem, who threw herself from the window thinking her interrogators will eventually kill her. There are also regular prisoners such as Menekşe, Güllü, Firdevs, low class and undereducated women used for smuggling drugs or forced to co-operate in murder. These women are unaware of the political clash that influence the country, lack an ideological consciousness themselves, and fail to understand and appreciate the fight of the political prisoners. These memories haunt Oya's attempts to self-sustain her courage at the police station. She feels that it is being a woman that victimizes her in the first place. Chilled by the memories of violence she witnessed and the alienation she experienced, Oya unconsciously writes "BILLY" on the paper as her testimonial.

Meanwhile, in the custody cell, Ali, Hüseyin, Mustafa, and Zekeriya assault each other concerning their political engagements. The custody cell turns into a space for self-confession, regret, and harsh questioning of the abusiveness of state power, where a probe into masculinity and being "a real man" also becomes a part of the quarrel. The two Kurdish men, Teberdar and Veysi, who are brought to the custody cell late at night, complicate the problem of police brutality that the novel engages with, by introducing another dimension to this complex question. Through their stories, ethnicity rises as another important point of gravity to judge the reasons of oppression.

The chapter "Dawn" brings the novel to an end, as Zekai is ordered by his superiors to release all the detainees the next day, early in the morning. With the release, the possibility of accessing a new life opens up for the characters. Hüseyin and Mustafa go in opposite directions. Ali makes his way back to the

factory where he works, but the owner of the factory sends him off, after learning his whereabouts during the night. In the dawn of Adana, Oya observes the daily routine of the people going on and incisively realizes that her sufferings are of little importance to ordinary people. Unable to concoct a plan, she grasps that, as a revolutionary leftist woman, she has a troublesome future awaiting her.

In *Şafak*, Soysal touchingly illustrates the settings that make women the “exiled gender” in Adana and explores how the household turns into another territorial locus of slavery, even in revolutionary working class homes. She observes how men and women actually share similar characteristics but fail to acknowledge it. The narration challengingly indicates that, even when they unite for similar goals, there is a hierarchy between men and women, which makes masculinity the privileged gender. It is important to note that Soysal does not draw an essentialist and static image of the masculine, although she directs her gaze primarily at women’s oppressions. In the narration, class and political engagements can be said to serve as homogenous identity sites, where people are subjected to domination or oppression. Yet, gender is not similarly homogeneous as an identity site. Although Soysal evaluates women as the major targets of male domination and oppression, the narration enhances the context by situating men at subaltern positions, as well as women. Soysal successfully shows that oppression is not only experienced by women of different class origins, but that men also struggle against the prevailing definitions of power and manliness. *Şafak* illustrates emasculated revolutionary men, as well as counter revolutionary figures, who subscribe to oppressive masculine roles, threatened by the power of oppositional politics.

The brutal masculinity of the police officers stunningly emphasizes the motto of the novel “power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely”. *Şafak* makes a major difference among its contemporaries, for exposing the agents of power, who perpetuate beatings and torture, as identifiable figures rather than dealing with them anonymously. The police officer Zekai and his assistant Abdullah come to the fore as violent police officers, who violate the basic dignity of human beings. Soysal also sheds a critical eye on women’s engagement with power and includes a female guard, Zafer, as well, alluding to the fact that gender identities do not form in isolation but “are produced together, in the process that makes a gender order.”¹⁸ The narration also portrays them as ordinary officers

¹⁸R. W Connell, *The Men and the Boys*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 40.

under higher orders, who must comply with the commands of their superiors. Following such a way, Soysal compellingly shows that what makes a torturer is nothing more than an order. Zekai and Abdullah stage a theater of power against each other in their daily routine as well. This masquerade humorously illustrates the abusiveness of power and how an obsession for it easily permeates people's lives.

Throughout the narration, a broad set of individualities, gender identities, and revolutionary strategies are questioned. Soysal's thesis is that the decentralization of political power hardly guarantees an end to the tyrannies that push women into subaltern positions. The narration discusses, although pessimistically, a means of a reform centered on reconstructing gender roles in counter-revolutionary circles, as well as the working-class home and the revolutionary leftist movement. With an already shaken belief in the erosion of gender differences by the end of class struggles, Oya realizes the profound gap between theory and practice, and recognizes that the local conditions do not comply with theories at all. She recognizes that, what she calls a theory is actually a sum of things that she has extrapolated from her own condition to the rest of womankind. In stunning self-inspection, she discovers her engagement with a masculinized gender role and becomes critical of her masculinization, while she also begins questioning her revolutionary ideals.

The political oppression represented by the sudden police raid on a casual dinner meeting in Adana reaches into every corner of life in the novel. Human relationships are also shown to be boasting and imprisoning. Soysal articulates her observations of the social order and the power networks enhanced by the society through a gender conscious lens. She critically engages with the notions of machismo and bourgeois feminism as well as the masculinization of women. The relationship among the state power, masculinity, and violence is one of the modes of address of the narration. Capturing overlap of her prison experience with her exile, Soysal dramatically describes the struggles of an intellectual who witnessed tortured and raped victims while in prison, and whose psychological exile as a traumatized individual is further complicated by the dynamics of a real exile to a city she barely knows. The novel catches dramatic climaxes at points where Soysal pays a specific attention to the social sexing that is latent in the act of rape of the female political prisoners.

The epistemological perspective of *Şafak* is informed by the intricate problem of gender and the discourses that have emerged from the Marxist analysis of it. Oya's struggles in Adana successfully illustrate that a Marxist woman in the settings of 1970s Turkey had to wage a war on two fronts, one against the exploitative economical system and its political supporters, and the other against the sexual oppression of established powers. The novel explicitly focuses on Oya's tiresome quest for a strategy for personal survival in the context of chauvinistic male oppression in Adana, surrounded by the feeling of alienation that the condition of being in exile connotes. She feels the hegemony of police state and also the hegemony of feudalism.

The accounts of abuse validate Oya's position as a mouthpiece for those who have lost their ability to speak. Oya faces the contradictory motives of her socialism in the custody cell and interrogates herself about the values that plagued her thinking. The narration gives evidence for her conscious vindication of class dynamics, but it also depicts Oya as a woman who considers herself a bourgeois individual motivated by self-interest rather than the greater common good. Oya surfaces as a lonely woman who struggles to find meaning and place in her splintered world. As an intellectual, she attempts to challenge the "sex as destiny" discourses but in the end, she finds herself helpless and in extreme isolation. In what follows, I will first explore the patriarchal masculinities of the participants in the dinner party and then turn to masculinities that enact a militarized collective punishment of those brutally hounded.

Şafak opens with an intriguing *mis en scène* that sets the tone for the book as a whole. Right at the start, the narrator offers snapshots that describe a poor suburb and sketch a mild autumn evening in Adana. With the preliminary introduction of the setting of the shack, it becomes clear that the narrative has a strong conscious content of class struggles and material exploitation, because the narrator defines the place by a lack of privilege and positions it in contrast with the center of Adana, which is rich in "villas, heaven-like gardens, perfectly luxurious and comfortable buildings [villalar cennet benzeri bahçeler, tam lüks ve tam konforlu apartmanlar]."¹⁹ Characterized with tussles in the streets, beaten men and women, and regular raids by the narcotics police, the poor neighborhood crystallizes as a place for the underprivileged. The narrator describes the setting with the presence of a communal life characterized by "spoons dipped together

¹⁹Soysal (as in n. 14), p. 7.

to the pot, gross bits of bread plucked (...) mattresses next to each other on the floor [tencereye ortaklaşa uzanan kaşıklar, büyük büyük koparılan ekmekler ... yan yana serilen yer yatakları],” and also emphasizes the tension in the streets due to the routine violation of civil liberties under martial rule, by ruefully acknowledging that “in those days in Adana, people being taken from their houses in the middle of the night had already turned into a routine, almost like a regular service of the municipality [o günlerde Adana’da, gece yarıları evlerin basılıp insanların bir yerlere götürülmesi belediye hizmeti gibi olağanlaşmıştı].”²⁰ With a sudden turn, a crude kick delivered to one of the doors gives a new twist to the story and the narrator follows a group of police officers and secret agents into one of the shacks. After the intrusion of the police into the house, the narrator ceases to map the social landscape and turns to the individuals in the shack. As their stories unfold one by one, we come to know who they are and why they came together.

Overlapping histories sketch the backgrounds of those gathered at the shack for dinner in bits and pieces of flashback, and provide information about Ali, the owner of the shack, his wife Gülşah and her sister Ziyne, his nephews Hüseyin and Mustafa both of whom are leftists from different fractions, Ziyne’s husband Zekeriya who is a mechanic and a Greywolf, Ali’s neighbor Ekrem, a worker (once a *gastarbeider* in Germany) who attempts to climb to upper classes, and Oya Ertem, “the famous woman exile of Adana [Adana’nın ünlü kadın sürgünü].”²¹ In the atmosphere of a casual evening dinner, we follow through the conversations how men came to be breadwinners and property owners, while women settle in this patriarchal picture as their familial property. The episodic histories set some important terms for the characters’ understanding of class, politics, and life in general, and portray the consanguineous bonds between the male members of the family. A cluster of graphic personal histories describes the lack of wealth in the quarter, while readers are lured into the male dominated culture of the working class home. The crisis of working class masculine identity is introduced through familial tropes of work and capital, which are swiftly connected to the specific historical and political context of the March 12 period characterized by the upheavals.

The scene of the “opening of the door by a crude kick” is repeated in the minor histories of the characters told by the narrator, serving as a leitmotiv underlining

²⁰ Soysal (as in n. 14), p. 7,31.

²¹ Ibid., p. 32.

the fear caused by the intrusion of the officers into the house. Within the minor histories, the narrator tells how sons came to be seen as the privileged siblings in the feudal culture and explains why they are expected to get proper jobs and improve the family's quality of life, by referring to the primordial feelings embedded in the ties of kinship and blood relations. Kinship provides the means to allude to the nature of the strong male bonding that characterizes the men gathered in the shack and sheds light on the hierarchies of gender beneath these bonds. We are given a clear picture of feudal allegiances that will control the protagonist's actions at every step. We learn that Ali helped his nephews Hüseyin and Mustafa to graduate at the expense of his own daughter's education. Soysal emphasizes that this is apparently a homosocial organization, a structure for maintaining and transmitting power between men in and through male bondings.²²

The narrator discloses Hüseyin's dreams of becoming an indispensable, life-saving attorney and also explains the anxieties behind this dream, making references to Hüseyin's frustration for not being able to repay his uncle yet. Mustafa's memories develop further the story of boys' close links to the relatives. Similar to Hüseyin, Mustafa feels that he owes his uncle Ali for taking care of his education expenses and regrets not being able to return the favor in time and compensate Ali for his son Hasan's education expenses. Both men feel frustrated by not being able to be proper breadwinners and disappointing the men of the family at a time when their financial power is needed.

The narration sets a stage of multiple but equally power-loving masculinities by describing the relationships of the men in the shack to women. It also demonstrates the sex and age specificity of patriarchy. We follow Mustafa, Hüseyin, Ali, Zekeriya and Ekrem in their intimate thoughts, and learn about their hidden anxieties. The narrator notes that Hüseyin defines Mustafa and himself as "sons that broke the vicious circle of a family of rural workers and laborers, who moved from Maraş to Adana with the hope of having a portion of Çukurova's wealth [Maraş'tan kopup Çukurova bereketinden pay almak umuduyla Adana'ya yerleşmiş bir ırğatlar işçiler sülalesinin çemberi kırılmış iki çocuğu]." ²³ Hüseyin and Mustafa's becoming wage-laborers suggests a discontinuation of the family tradition of becoming rural workers, but the narrator implicitly notes the continuation

²²Eve Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

²³Soysal (as in n. 14), p. 9.

of feudal cultural patterns by means of Mustafa's troublesome history. Trying to alleviate his not being able to get settled as a proper wage earner, Mustafa recollects his arrest and prison life. His memories open up an opportunity to see how women are treated in this perfervid network of adult masculinities.

Throughout his memories, we learn that Mustafa met his ex-wife Güler when both were students engaged with the revolutionary movement at the university in İstanbul. The narrator recalls Güler as a "friendly girl with manly manners, whom other boys respected and trusted [öteki oğlanların saygı gösterip güvendikleri arkadaş canlısı bir kız]," and sketches a picture of the couple in which sexual desire was not erased, but was sublimated into revolutionary passion and fervor.²⁴ After marriage, Güler quits school and moves to Urfa with Mustafa, who graduates and is appointed to a high school. Once a man who worked hand in hand with Güler for revolutionary purposes and married her on the basis of similarity of their characters and political accord, Mustafa turns into a patriarch in the course of their marriage and gradually pushes Güler into the position of a slavish housewife. He does not allow her to be informed about his connections with other revolutionary people and demarcates Güler by care giving. Güler's story, which reveals the transformation of an intellectually challenging woman into a dependent housewife, sets the stage for Mustafa's struggles with his perspective of masculinity, cultural roots, and political engagements. With the accounts of Güler being appreciated only as a maid-like figure for household duties in marriage, it is vividly pointed out that Mustafa struggles between the residual feudal values of his family, which compose the requisites of rural adult masculinity, and his revolutionary political consciousness.

His memories convey Mustafa's struggles under the heavy burden of the tradition he is supposed to carry. They, at the same time, illustrate how police brutality became the dominant form of social control during the *coup d'état* and victimized masses of people. As Mustafa mourns for his mistakes and dwells into his memories, we learn that out of fear, he made his wife Güler, who was pregnant at that time, open the door when the police came to arrest him. His suffering makes Mustafa revisit that moment. Terrorized on account of the ridicule that such an "unmanly" move would bring upon him if learned by others, Mustafa begins questioning his masculinity. The "hiding behind a pregnant woman" scene

²⁴Soysal (as in n. 14), p. 14.

is further dramatized by Mustafa's supplicatory attempts to convince the major at the door of his innocence, to avoid arrest:

"Major, you see it is a false denunciation... Can I now go to work major? My wife is pregnant major." He does not want to think at all, why he told him the phrase "my wife is pregnant". Güler had glanced at him. Silently. Güler had not spoken a word to the major, neither a "come in" nor anything else. But he had talked, unnecessarily. Hiding his rage for the raid. Even respectfully, thinking he will be dismissed.²⁵

Attempting to justify his fright at that moment, Mustafa also recalls the days he has spent under interrogation and torture, and reveals how he gradually lost contact with Güler and his daughter after he found himself in prison. Mustafa's self-induced criticism includes a questioning of ideal masculine qualities such as rationality and impersonality and, at the same time, conducts a discussion of traits such as vulnerability and fear, which have often been associated with femininity. Mustafa's regret underscores the utterly negative social weight of acting unmanly. More important than that, it shows that feudal images of manly power and courage are not remote at all, even in the enlightened view of the revolutionary leftists.

Soysal reveals the potentially destructive and disabling side of the feudal culture, in a manner that also seems to understand the ambiguous nature of manhood. In deference to masculinity, she delicately shows how the culture insists on one quality while ideologies insist on opposite ones, leaving people amidst a welter of anxieties. Mustafa's absence from his torn family suggests wounded masculine pride and a repressed anxiety about his "less manly" position in the house of his uncle, due to him being abandoned by his wife and without any financial means. Trying to comfort him and the other guests, Ali's wife Gülşah and her sister Ziyneet make vigorous efforts during dinner. Both women come to the fore as a patriarchal allegory of female duty, as figures banished from other areas of knowledge and power. The narrator caricatures their will to serve by the almost masochistic race they pushed themselves into through the morning of the dinner, trying to complete household chores:

²⁵ "Binbaşım görüyorsunuz ki ihbar asılsızmış... İşime gidebilir miyim Binbaşım? Karım gebe Binbaşım". Evet, hele o, "karım gebe" sözcüğünü niçin söylediğini düşünmek bile istemiyordu. Güler şöyle bir bakmıştı Mustafa'ya. Sessizce. Binbaşıya hiçbir şey dememişti Güler. Ne "buyrun" ne başka bir söz. Hiçbir şey. Oysa kendi, gereksizce konuşmuştu işte. Baskına duyduğu nefreti gizleyerek... Hatta saygılı. Brakılacağı umuduyla. Soysal (as in n. 14), p. 21.

"I will cook for Zekeriya everyday" Ziyne had said.

"Do it, do it! So that he will be horny and puff your belly up every year"

[...]

It was Gülşah's backlog of experience in cleaning onions, peeling potatoes, preparing çiğ köfte and doughs talking.

[...]

Gülşah was not able to care even for the pain that moves from her belly to her knees and from her knees to her brain. She wiped the floor moaning, shook out the rugs. She got angry at Ziyne's supposed-to-be help, her doing everything superficially and not giving full attention to work.²⁶

Defining the shack in feudal class terms, where males are the privileged gender that appropriates female surplus labor, and illustrating women's acceptance of servitude in ways that are destructive to them, Soysal positions the household as the main site where gender inequality is produced.

The sexually cloven quality of the household is further expressed in Oya's observation that she is taken as "a man" at the dinner by the other women, Gülşah and Ziyne, who serve to the men at the table but do not sit and eat with them. The narrator notes that Oya feels herself alien and chilled due to the women's acceptance of their subordination: "Oya is neither female nor male, in their eyes she is an extension of the men they serve. [...] She is suffering like a creature stuck in the atmosphere of the chitchat at the dinner table. For a moment, she wanted to get up and be next to Gülşah and Ziyne, then she hoped that she could make them sit with them at the table, but she backed off, thinking that neither move would be appropriate."²⁷ Her astonishment indicates that Oya does not fit very well the image of the domesticated woman, who is necessary to sustain culture. As she downheartedly observes that women are meant neither to

²⁶ "Zekeriya'ya her gün taze yemek yapacağım" demişti Ziyne.

"Aman yap yap! Yap da daşsağı azsın, hut dağı gibi her yıl şişirsin karnını"

[...]

Yıllardır ayıkladığı soğanların, soyduğu patateslerin, yoğurduğu çiğ köftelerin, açtığı hamurların birikimiydi Gülşah'ı söyleten.

[...]

Gülşah belinden dizine, dizinden beynine, çektikçe uzayan sancısını bile umursayamıyor. Yer taşlarını inleye inleye bir güzel sildi, yaygıları silkti. Sözde yardım eden Ziyne'in her işi yarım yamalak yapmasına, aklını işe komamasına bozuldu. Soysal (as in n. 14), p. 46.

²⁷ Oya ne kadın, ne erkek, sadece hizmet ettikleri erkeklerin bir uzantısı onların gözünde. [...] Sohbetin, sofranın havasında sıkışıp kalmış yarı kadın yarı erkek bir yaratık gibi acı çekiyor. Bir an kalkıp Gülşah'la Ziyne'in yanına gitmek istedi, sonra onların da sofraya oturmalarını sağlamayı umdu, ama iki davranışın da sırtacağı korkusuyla vazgeçti. Ibid., p. 26.

be seen nor to be heard, but expected to serve and fulfill the requests of the men, Oya feels terrorized. The narrator marks her pitiful observation as the trigger that drags Oya into a negotiation of the moral landscape within which she lives as a compulsory and temporary resident. This observation ignites Oya's relentless exploration of her gender, ambitions, emotional and intellectual capacities.

The "other-centered" femininities of the women become more visible through their critical look at their relations to other male characters. To move forward into the issue of women's sexual subordination, the narrator utilizes Zekeriya's nationalistic and male chauvinistic masculinity. Similar to Hüseyin and Mustafa, the history of Ziyne's husband Zekeriya alludes to poverty and lack of privileges. However, Zekeriya's past contrastingly directs the reader to a story of becoming a follower of the anti-communist greywolves. The narrator has the versatility to enter the male consciousnesses of Hüseyin and Mustafa, but the narrator does not engage with Zekeriya and speaks rather unsympathetically of him. In the passages that illustrate Zekeriya's brief history, kernels of both overlooking and pity become salient. A criticism directed at the followers of the Greywolves, who engage in ultranationalist politics without doing much thinking about the philosophy of the movement or the possible consequences of following such a path, is visible. Along similar lines of Klaus Theweleit's analysis of men who found themselves to be SS soldiers without any in-depth knowledge about the political ideology of National Socialism, Soysal emphasizes that most men engage with anti-communism only because they feel attracted to ideals of solidarity and strength advocated by the Greywolves.²⁸

Zekeriya is characterized as a man who treats his wife more like a commodity. While narrating how sex fits into the life of Ziyne, the narrator mockingly draws attention to her dutiful mood and expresses how virginity had been a major issue on the couple's first night:

On their first night Zekeriya did not even disrobe Ziyne. He uncouthly pinched her in there and then with thrust he instantaneously ejaculated. After that he pushed her saying "move away a bit" and inspected the blood on the sheets. Understanding that the thing called sex has just ended, Ziyne did not pay attention to Zekeriya because of the pain between her legs. She was not used to thinking deeply about incidents. But when she woke up in the middle of the night because of Zekeriya's snores, she thought

²⁸Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989).

that she should get used to it and blushed as if she thought of something inappropriate.²⁹

More than any other scene in the novel, this humorous narration of the quick intercourse paints a clear picture of women's status in the men's world in Adana. Symbolically linking sexual inequality to social oppression, this scene successfully illustrates how sex becomes the ultimate triumph of men over women in the feudal culture and how it emerges as a part of a larger drama. Zekeriya's embodiment of his feudal masculine privileges resonates with the gender conceptions of his political engagement. As a member of the greywolves, Zekeriya lacks a proper class-consciousness, he accepts inequalities as given and therefore perpetuates manners that help them to continue.

Turning to the other male characters, the narrator confirms the interconnect-edness of social morals and political beliefs. Ali's patriarchal potential is softened by means of his gentleness and sensitivity, which are implicitly linked to his non-partisan leftist tendencies. While he acts like a tender host and responsible family man who tries to comfort his guests, the money-hungry Ekrem attempts to boast to people at the dinner table about his way of life and experiences in Germany. Ekrem tries, at the same time, to judge what kind of woman Oya is. Taking his lead from Oya's accompanying foreign men at night in a place she has not been before, Ekrem thinks that she may be looking for company or shelter and that she is sexually available.

A thematically significant point of the story development takes place when the policemen intervene in the pleasant dinner atmosphere. This haughty intrusion constitutes the major trajectory for the novel's main political theme. As the characters are hounded by the police, even the most boastful figures of feudal masculinity become deprived of power and turn into "feminized" victims. In the interrogation plot, the discussion of power inequality along gender lines shifts to another dimension where both genders turn into oppressed figures.

²⁹İlk gece Ziynet'i soymamıştı bile Zekeriya. Önce orasını kabaca çimdiklemiş, sonra zorlamasıyla boşalması bir olmuştu. Ardından "az yana çekil kız" diye Ziynet'i iteleyip çarşıftaki kanı incelemişti. Sevişme denen şeyin böylece başlayıp bitmiş olduğunu kavrayan Ziynet, apış arasının sızısıyla durmamıştı üstünde. Olayları öyle enine boyuna kurcalama alışkanlığı da yoktu. Yalnız, gece yarısı Zekeriya'nın horultusuyla uyandığında, erkek horultusuna alışmam gerek, diye düşünmüş, sanki ayıp bir şey düşünmüş gibi alev alev yanıyordu yanakları. Soysal (as in n. 14), p. 54.

The interrogation at the police station provides a more detailed profile of the protagonist of *Şafak*. As she answers the questions of the police officer Zekai, we learn that Oya arrived in Adana leaving a husband and child behind. The husband and child have been mysteriously absent in the novel, contributing to the overwhelming feeling of loneliness and alienation Oya experiences in this city. Enduring police interrogation constitutes an important test of courage in Oya's ordeal. She encounters this interrogation as a gendered experience. The custody plot animates a discussion of female masculinity, in which Oya questions her existence as a woman and examines her endurance to aggression in the police station as a forced role of masculinity. The interrogation plot also undergoes the troublesome task of representing the personality of the cruel officers and asking whether the logic of a police officer can be a proper justice system.

To reach a more personal, relatable level with the broad theme of being victim to superior powers and to mirror the dreadful unity of power and abuse, Soysal uses Oya's inner turmoil in her trial of adjustment in Adana. Held in custody in a city governed by martial law, Oya's gender trouble turns into deeper and more destroying victimization. Left in a cold and dirty cell, Oya engages with a stunning self-inspection and questions contradictory motives of her socialism while at the same time, attempting to reason the violence targeted at her. In addition to illustrating Oya's recollections of her prison experiences in the past, the custody plot also ridicules the theater of authoritarianism staged by the officers and sheds a critical eye on the men's cell where Ali, Hüseyin, Mustafa, Zekeriya and Ekrem engage with different patterns of valor and fear. In her sustained effort to confront the legacy of the corruption of power, Soysal utilizes plain but chillingly explicit observations and initiates a bold look at the incidents.

Oya's confrontation with the police officer Zekai constitutes the climax of the novel. The encounter between Oya the leftist revolutionary intellectual and Zekai the aggressive anti-communist officer indicates that the roots of individual aggression are deep and complex, and violence actually has many tangled roots. The position of women in the overall framework of male hierarchy that governs the narration becomes salient as Oya enters the room of Zekai and encounters an overlooking and angry "master." Zekai slights Oya's status as a married woman and berates her with questions about her whereabouts. He deems her a bad wife and mother, who abandoned her family and child for a life of radicalism and immorality. Oya finds herself powerless like a child trying to endure intolerance

by proving that there is no wrongdoing:

"How can you explain missus, that a married woman, a married woman with child, gets together with men whom she does not know at all for drinks?"

The word missus bangs like a filthy slap.

"I was not drinking."

Oya blushes. I could have drunk as well. [...] My god, what does this have to do with this custody?

[...]

"You were drinking, we know everything."

"I can drink or prefer not to, that is none of your business."

[...]

"Why were you with men?"

"There were women too"

Oya feels angry at herself for taking defensive positions. These bourgeois morals in our heads. We are trying to protect them everywhere, although we don't like them at all. Oya blushes again and she decides to break up with all the familiar, known, unreasonable shames. With a deep breath she discharges them and shouts with a strengthened voice:

"Are you an ethics patrol?"

Zekai is now angry because of the dissolution of the game.

"So it was a late night work you say you were on?"

"Are you a police officer or a sex maniac?"³⁰

Trying not to make a public display of her grief, Oya does not accept any fault in

³⁰ "Evli bir kadının, hem de çocuklu bir kadının, alemin herifleriyle içki içmesini nasıl açıklarsınız hanımefendi?"

Hanımefendi sözcüğü pis bir şamar gibi şaklıyor.

"İçki içmiyordum ben."

Oya kızarıyor. Hay Allah, içerim içmem.[...] İçkinin bütün bu olan bitenle ilgisi ne?

[...]

"İçiyormuşsunuz. Biz her şeyi biliriz!"

"İçerim içmem. Sizi ilgilendirmez."

[...]

"Ne işiniz var onca erkek arasında?"

"Kadınlar da vardı."

Yine savunmaya giriştiğine kızıyor Oya. Kafamıza sinmiş bir burjuva namus anlayışıyla. Her yerde korumaya çalışıyoruz bu anlayışı, istemesek de. Yanakları yeniden kızarıyor Oya'nın. Alışıldık, bildik, anlamsız utanmalardan sıyrılmaya karar veriyor yeniden. Büyük bir solukla dışarı atıyor bunları. Güçlenen bir sesle bağırıyor:

"Ahlak zabıtası mısınız yoksa?"

Zekai bey oyunun bozulmasından öfkeli.

"Akşam akşam orospuluğa ha?"

"Polis misiniz yoksa seksomanyak mı?" Soysal (as in n. 14), p. 76.

her thinking or actions, which pushes Zekai into a frenzy of anger. He slaps her in the face, grips her hair, hits Oya's head to the walls and vows violent threats. Nevertheless, he fails to obtain either a testimony or any information about the gathering of the people at the shack that night and eventually sends Oya back to her cell.

When Zekai's assistant Abdullah takes Oya to another room, to make her write her dictated testimonial, the narration takes a turn to Oya's immediate past and sketches the piercing memories of her prison experiences. An important feature of these memories is that they both illustrate violent masculinities and victimized femininities and, at the same time, dissolve the quick equation of violence to masculinity. Oya recalls the female guard of their ward in prison, Zafer, who was accustomed to abusing her power similar to her male counterparts. In a dramatic scene, she remembers Zafer's entering the ward with a gun and a billy, ordering the prisoners to form a line and intimidating Çiğdem, who fails to follow Zafer's orders because of her plastered arm, which she broke by throwing herself from the window of the interrogation room in fear.³¹

The capacity of violence in women and the capacity of tenderness in men is further questioned in the novel by aggressive police officer Zekai's image as a loving father "devoted to his daughter."³² He is positioned as a man who married for wealth following the counseling of his mother and became stuck in an unhappy marriage. The novel does not plunge the reader into the life of Zekai, but makes mocking swipes at it and thereby criticizes the bourgeois monogamous marriage while at the same time, drawing attention to the complicated coexistence of tenderness and violence in the human psyche. By adding Zekai's unhappy marriage to the picture, Soysal suggests an ambiguous link between the oppressor and the oppressed, which is developed further in the course of the novel with references to the greater powers that manage individuals.

The possibility that Zekai is in fact a humane person, who is forced by obligation of his position as a police officer to oppress people is, however, quickly renounced. Zekai is split into two contrasting masculinities. His contrasting faces show that the border between the good/tender and the bad/violent defines a narrow space, which can easily be traversed. One moment Zekai remembers he promised crayons to his daughter and the next, he notices a stain of blood on the

³¹Soysal (as in n. 14), p. 97.

³²Ibid., p. 113.

chair and becomes aroused discovering that Oya is having her period. When Oya suspects earlier in the custody cell that she may be having her period, she finds herself ultimately helpless, thinking such a condition will prove her vulnerability and inferior position to her interrogators. Although she criticizes herself for being alienated to her body and carrying it as "something mysterious and something to be ashamed of," she finds herself drawn into panic.³³ Zekai recognizes the situation after Oya has left his room and confirms his vigorous superiority with the stain of blood left on the seat:

He stood up distorted by rage. He paced up and down in the room. He stopped in front of the seat in which Oya has sat. There was a blood stain on the seat. He panicked for a moment. Did she... stealthily... her wrists? But she seemed fine, as healthy as a pig. He suddenly grasped. Smiled. Felt a twitch in his belly. Hooker! She sat next to me defying... You will take this type, grasp them by the hair... He uneasily suppressed his lust. Before turning back to his seat he rang the bell, told the caretaker to wipe the seat.

"Tell Abdullah to bring the teacher here!"³⁴

Oya's menstruation embodies gender so swiftly and so manifestly than any other feature of the body could ever do. Emphasizing Oya's fragile body, this scene communicates an already lost war of gender and expresses that there are things that Oya cannot and never will be able to escape, although she subscribes to a masculine role and succeeds in encountering violent masculinities valiantly.

After Oya, Zekai interrogates Mustafa. Mustafa's interrogation begins with a sudden slap on the face and continues as a soul-wrenching rite of passage. Zekai lectures him on patriotism, realism, love for the people and the country, but fails to make Mustafa "confess" that they were gathered in the shack for a meeting to organize workers for a revolution. Every time Zekai insults Oya calling her as a hooker to tease Mustafa, Mustafa becomes frustrated, thinking that Zekai insults his wife Güler as well.³⁵ Such a quickly established link between Oya

³³Soysal (as in n. 14), p. 72.

³⁴Hışım la kalktı koltuğundan. Odada bir iki gezindi. Az önce Oya'nın oturduğu koltuğun üzerinde durakladı. Kan lekesi vardı koltukta. Bir an korktu. Yoksa bileğini falan gizliden. Yok canım turp gibi, domuz gibiydi. Hemen ne olduğunu kavrayıverdi. Sırıttı. Sonra karnında bir kıpırtı duydu. Orosu! Oturmuş bir de karşımda... Alacaksın böylesini, tutacaksın saçlarından... İçinde kabaaran şehveti güçlölle bastırdı. Koltuğa yeniden oturmadan zili çaldı. İçeri giren hademeye koltuğu silmesini söyledi.

"Söyle Abdullah'a öğretmeni getirsin!" Ibid., p. 113.

³⁵Ibid., p. 123.

and Güler hints at Mustafa's self-sustained role as the guardian and rescuer of women, which alludes to his feudal vanities as well as the heroic aggrandizement inherent in revolutionary masculinity. Showing that Mustafa conforms to the pattern of any ordinary man in Adana, who would hardly tolerate another man's insulting his wife sexually, this small detail carries strong critical connotations of the intellectual construction of revolutionary masculinity.

To give a compound image of power dynamics in Adana, Soysal turns to some secondary characters, who are absent from the police station, but who heavily influence the events. These characters make visible the chain-of-command that links the male agents of power to one another. The narrator reveals how the police officer Zekai once was expelled from a bridge party with Turgut Sabuncu and Mr. Muzaffer, notable businessmen of the city, after a heated argument and how he alleviated his shame and sense of inferiority by bawling out the police officers under his command and beating a man of Arabic origin, who was brought to the police station under the charge of smuggling. This piece of flashback memory suggests that Zekai is a tool of some larger power and illustrates how he compensates for this inferior position by abusing other people of more subaltern positions. The picture, with wealthy businessmen at the top, waged officers in the middle and working poor or lay people at the bottom, depicts the interaction of capitalism with patriarchy and facilitates Soysal's criticisms in the novel in the realms of socialist feminism.

Grappling with the paradoxes of power and sexual emancipation, the narrator also turns to the other males waiting in the custody cells of the police station. When Abdullah comes to the custody cell populated by the males picked up from the shack and tells Ekrem that he is released, Zekeriya, the dedicated greywolf, feels terrified about being assumed to be a leftist. He seeks cooperation with Abdullah saying that he does not belong to the revolutionaries. His speech mirrors Mustafa's earlier begging the police agent at his doorstep and illustrates how the "manly man" greywolf subscribes to the fearful role of a small child in his encounter with the police officer Abdullah:

"Brother, did you ask him about me brother? You know I have just arrived from İskenderun today, brother. You can just tell him that I don't have a clue about these incidents. I don't approve Mustafa, brother. He is not my relative he is my wife's family. I did not say a word during dinner because I know about his anarchism."

[...]

Because of hunger, anxiety, fatigue, and Zekeriya's speech, Mustafa feels sick. If they asked, he would now give the testimonial he earlier refused to write as follows: "Zekeriya, Ekrem and I decided to establish an organization. Our aim was to make workers of Adana Marxist-Leninist." Fullstop.³⁶

While Ali is kept apart in another cell, half blind because of the beatings, the others discuss the possible consequences of their custody. Mustafa tries to endure the pain of the beatings by Zekai. Hüseyin finds himself captivated by fear while waiting for his turn at interrogation. The narrator maintains a dim view of Hüseyin, who is unable to keep his fear under control. On the one hand, Hüseyin fears interrogation but on the other, he wants to be interrogated, violently if possible, thinking that this will prove to Mustafa and the others, his importance as a revolutionary figure. Mustafa thinks "even torture would not suit him" for it is a rite of passage only some people can succeed at and because Hüseyin most probably would make a big deal out of it. In this way, he defines a heroic masculinity that has silent suffering as its main trope.³⁷

It is interesting to note that both the stereotyped figures of the macho and the weakling are presented in a negative light. Not only the custody cell, but also the police bureau becomes a repository of gendered anxieties. Zekai's assistant Abdullah appears to be another anxious man, for he feels insecure about his boss's reactions about his performance of brutality. He knows he is supposed to harass those in custody, but when it comes to Mustafa-the-teacher, Abdullah remembers how his teacher used to beat him at school and becomes immobilized. Recalling Abdullah's earlier experiences of harassment and intimidation while in military service, and linking those memories to his current condition under the command of another aggressive and violent man such as Zekai, the novel asks if it may be possible to think of tyrannical and authoritarian acts as "masquerade." Abdullah's memories hauntingly show that asserting strength and violence are inherent

³⁶ "Ağbi, beni sordun mu ağbi? Ben bu akşam İskenderun'dan geldim biliyorsun ağbi. Bir şeyden habarım olmadığını diyiverirdin. Ben bu Mustafa'yı tasvip falan etmem ağbi. Benim hismım değil, karımın hismı. Anarşikliğini bildiğimden ağzımı bile açmadım yemekte."

[...]

Açlıktan, sinirden, yorgunluktan ve biraz da Zekeriya'nın konuşmasından midesi bulanıyor Mustafa'nın. Yazmadığı ifadeyi şöyle yazacak şimdi isteseler: "Ben, Zekeriya ve Ekrem bir örgüt kurmaya karar verdik. Amacımız Adana işçilerini Marksist-Leninist yapmaktır." Nokta. Soysal (as in n. 14), p. 134.

³⁷Ibid., p. 143.

to the acts of teaching and disciplining in the culture of traditionalist Turkish society. His immobilization, however, suggests that although individuals engage with such prototypical violence subconsciously and normalize it as a natural part of their lives, they still carry with them the tenacity to negotiate and refuse such physical abuse of power.

Early the next morning, the detainees are released after a climatic ride to some deserted parts of the city, which terrorize them with the fear of being killed and dumped in some clandestine place. The novel ends while, in hindsight, Oya captures her inferiority first as a woman and then as a revolutionary woman, after one of the locals intimidates her on the street in the very first moments of her freedom. The irony is startling, particularly when seen in relation to the breakdown Oya experiences. Having witnessed how women's bodies and lives are traditionally valued as commodities in Adana, and having been recently released from the world of authoritarian and aggressive police masculinities to another world of less powerful but equally intimidating civil masculinities, Oya decides that the road to salvation for women has not yet been built. The recognition of gender as a significant political category seems a distant ideal to her. If it is considered that her release also stands for a shift from the police station, an anticommunist chamber, to the streets of Adana, a setting where people do not care about anything other than making a living and saving their day, this utopian idea of salvation also implies to her revolutionary ideals. The abstract vision of the future symbolized by the breaking dawn carries hesitant overtones, as Oya decides that it is not yet the time for women's rise or for a socialist revolution.

Şafak is a specific attempt to bring the intricate unity of sexual and political oppression to analytic attention. The criticisms of gender politics uttered by Oya target bourgeois morals as well as feudal and working-class ones. Men in general appear as perpetrators of a massive system of injustice in the novel. The narrator finesses Ali and exonerates him as the only male individual who, under the burden of bread winning masculinity, tries to make a living for his family. The others, the capitalist factory owners, the local workers, and even the leftist revolutionary intellectuals born to the feudal culture of the region such as Mustafa, assemble in a pact of masculine privileges against women. Connected in terms of their unhappy marriages, Mustafa and Oya illustrate the struggles of revolutionary leftist individuals within different gender registers and class perspectives. Their encounters with Zekai sketch both a political oppression and an ambiguity against

the cultural prerogatives of their interrogator. The disjunction between Oya and Mustafa, however, marks women's condition as a site of tension. While Oya attempts to transcend the bourgeois morals hidden deep in her psyche and free herself from moral strictures, Mustafa appears captured in the temptation to save and redeem, reproducing male superiority together with traditional masculine traits such as honor, both of which are embedded in the feudal vision.

Soysal examines the issue of police abuse without hysteria or hyperbole. She dramatically shows how the abuse of power creates violent beasts. However, with the clumsy and anxious image of Abdullah, Soysal also shows that she is concerned with the question of whether subordinate officers can be made to pay for the crimes that they have been ordered to pursue by their superiors. Oya's custody experience, her having her period and being vulnerable to beatings suggests that the dissimilarity of genders is hard to be escaped because of biological differences. In the struggle for life, those who are already victims of an unjust economical and political system attempt to compensate for their inferiority by establishing superiority over others. Rich local businessmen and agents of the military are positioned at the top of the masculine power hierarchy, while ordinary people, the working class of various political engagements fall victim to them. Women settle at the very bottom point of this hierarchy, where they appear inferior to all other masculine subjects.

Oya's struggle originates from her observations about this unjust power tree. As a revolutionary leftist intellectual of city origin, she links the female gender problem to a greater drama of harassment and oppression, while negotiating deep inside her mind, the difficulty of obtaining a peaceful equality of genders by dissolving the observable political and economical struggles. Soysal makes it salient that it is hard for women to meet men happily on a progressive and common agenda, in case little attention is paid to the underlying contradictions and conflicts about gender. The end of the novel positions being woman in a state accompanied by feelings of helplessness although it tries to claim the upsetting experiences it produces as worthy.

2.2 *Sancı*

Emine Işınsu (Öksüz)'s *Sancı* (The Stitch) revisits the feudal masculinity lampooned by Sevgi Soysal's *Şafak* and explores the negotiation for power in the social structures of March 12 within the framework of a triangle that leaves a girl between men of different political camps.³⁸ The book delivers an intimate account of the life of Ertuğrul Dursun Önkuzu, a member of the "ölkücü" movement, who lost his life in the throes of the political clashes that paralyzed the society in the early 1970s.³⁹ Taking her lead from the real life experiences of Önkuzu, Işınsu deals with the escalation of polarization and violence among young people. She, in particular, explores the powerful dedication of youngsters to ideologies and their sacrificing themselves for political causes. In her analysis, she negotiates the idea of "collective soul," in line with the popular discourses of Turkish nationalism, and discusses the value of individual service to public interest.

This novel is set on the intricate dynamics of imagining oneself as part of what Benedict Anderson describes as a "deep, horizontal comradeship" that constitutes the national psyche.⁴⁰ It questions trust in fellow citizens and "complete confidence in their steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity" within the context of the civil war atmosphere of March 12.⁴¹ The novel's heroic rhetoric draws its power from combining two key discourses: Islam and Turkishness. It blends the language of patriotic and religious sacrifice. *Sancı*'s discovery of moral wisdom along the fascist lines of this nationalistic imagination occupied the critical attention of this project, because in her attempt to challenge leftist's discourses of victimization by the state power during the uprisings, Işınsu visibly turns to the issue of masculinity. She especially focuses on the fraternities formed in the up-

³⁸Emine Işınsu, *Sancı*. (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 1998).

³⁹Emine Işınsu (b.1938) is the daughter of the famous novelist Halide Nusret Zorlutuna. She studied English literature, philosophy, management and law for short periods. She gained recognition as a writer after having received the Novel Award of the Ministry of Tourism and Publicity in 1961. Plays: *Bir Yürek Satıldı* (A Heart is Sold, 1966), *Bir Milyon İğne* (A Million Needles, 1967), *Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyene* (What Pride to Say I'm Turk, 1969), *Adsız Kahramanlar* (Anonymous Heroes, 1975). Novels: *Küçük Dünya* (Small World, 1966), *Azap Toprakları* (Pain Lands, 1969), *Ak Topraklar* (White Lands, 1971), *Tutsak* (Detainee, 1975), *Sancı* (Stitch, 1975), *Çiçekler Büyür* (Flowers Grow, 1979), *Cambaz* (Rope-walker, 1982), *Atlı Karınca* (Carousel, 1993), *Cumhuriyet Türküsü* (Republic Song, 1993), *Bir Gece Yıldızlarla* (A Night with Stars, 1995), *Nisan Yağmuru* (April Rain, 1998), *Havva* (Eve, 1998), *Bir Ben Vardır Benden İçeri* (There is an I inside Me, 2002), *Bukağı* (Fetter, 2004).

⁴⁰Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. (London: Verso, 1991), p. 7.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 2.

heavals of March 12 and argues that leftist revolutionaries have no monopoly on the claim of being virtuous sufferers of the period. These “nationalistic” fraternities, successfully bring to the fore, the homosocial form of male-to-male bonding behind nationalism.⁴²

Sanrı illustrates how the rival political movements organized themselves into brotherhoods on the political scene of the early 1970s and engaged in a violent fight with each other because of their contrasting agendas of how to “save” the country. Despite its overwhelming political burden, the narration succeeds in providing a vivid panorama of the period and a poignant story of male anxieties. What makes *Sanrı* different from the March 12 narratives analyzed so far is that the novel refers to an “emasculated state power,” and talks about how in the vacuum of political stability, “angry patriots” had to organize themselves into fighters. The novel attempts to draw a complete picture of the political positions available to individuals in the atmosphere of March 12. In such an effort, İşınsu not only talks about the leftists and the rightists, but also makes Kemalists a part of the political clash and speculates that they hide behind pacifism and neutralism in the atmosphere of upheavals, as a position from which they wish to emerge as the real political winners. *Sanrı* also makes a difference by registering the dramatic historical personages of 1970s. Figures such as Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel (see fig. C.2 on page 316), the nationalist politician Dündar Taşer, who was the second man of the radical-right Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP) after Alparslan Türkeş (see fig. C.4 on page 317), and several well-known figures of the “ölkücü” movement who lost their lives in the civil war atmosphere of the clashes such as Süleyman Özmen, Yusuf İmamoglu, Coşkun Karakaya etc., appear in the narration.

Travails of the “ölkücü” movement prevail in the novel. Some verbatim quotes from politicians of the time are also reproduced. The reader encounters some of the sentences that constitute symbolic marks in the collective memory of March 12, such as Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel’s famous remark “Walking does not erode the streets [yollar yürümekle aşınmaz],” which was his answer to a delegate of his party who asked for a ban on street riots in the Ankara Congress of the Justice Party, on November 8, 1968. The narrative strategy of combining

⁴²In their introduction to *Nationalism and Sexualities* Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer, and Patricia Yaeger allude to the homosocial bonds inherent in the nationalism discussed in Benedict Anderson’s work. See Andrew et al Parker, *Nationalisms and Sexualities*. (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 1-21.

historical figures with fictional characters increases the sense of realism. The narration emphasizes that the experiences of this novel's characters mirror the historic and political events of the time. Keeping the biographical details of Ertuğrul Dursun Önkuzu complete except changing the dates of certain important happenings in the life of Önkuzu, and pushing the central drama forward through invented characters, Işınsu constructs a narrative, which is expected to be read as "a true story."

In such an approach to March 12, there is also the feeling that any biographical account actually holds the power to record and to witness more firmly than any other type of witnessing. Biography as a genre purports to rest on factual grounds and voices a claim of truthfulness. Işınsu tries to make this truth claim appeal to the readers and convince them that her novel delivers a more reliable account of March 12. Although some other novelists of March 12 also used their personal experiences of the period in their work, Işınsu's *Sancı* stands on a relatively more undefined border between fact and fiction, because of the novel's attempt to establish solid links with the historical realities of the period and its insistent call to be read as the true story of a life (and a death) of heroic proportions.

At the novel's heart is a lament for the days of violence that traumatized the country. The opening scene of pushes the readers straightaway into the midst of street clashes, which plunged Turkey into a civil war. *Sancı* begins with a scene depicting one of the ferocious confrontations of revolutionaries with the greywolves in the streets of Ankara, which left several people from both sides injured. The protagonist of the novel, Dursun, is introduced as a member of the greywolves. This scene fictionalizes the murder of an Ankara University student, Süleyman Özmen, by gunshot, while trying to transport supplies to his friends, who had fallen hostage to the revolutionaries in a school building. The story develops as the severely injured Süleyman dies. At the funeral, Dündar Taşer, a mentor of the anti-communist youth and an important figure in the Nationalist Action Party of the time, delivers a speech that pushes Dursun into an interrogation of his individual role in the political upheavals.

While Dursun dwells into questions and grief, Işınsu introduces the readers to a bridge party, which includes Saadettin Koç, who is a Kemalist professor at the university, his wife Sabiha Hanım and their guests. A family squabble follows after the guests leave and Saadettin Bey has a fight with her daughter Leyla late

that night, implicitly introducing the story of Leyla becoming involved in some unidentified revolutionary-leftist group as a challenge to her father's overestimation of her potential. Leyla attempts to challenge her family's political neutralism with fierce debates, but Saaddettin bey defends neutralism in such a period of simmering, saying that he considers the safety of his family. After the introduction of Saaddettin Koç and his family in their comfortable and modern middle-class situation, the narrator turns to a meeting at the faculty building, which introduces Turgut, another member of the secret revolutionary clique to which Leyla belongs. Turgut courts Leyla but, when she leaves the room, we witness him spying on her while on the phone with a mysterious superior. The narrator records the date as 25th of March in 1970 by means of a newspaper Turgut reads.

Leyla's little brother Ali, who happens to have found nationalism as the proper political ground upon which to express himself and who, by that time, is negotiating his eligibility for the greywolves as a young boy, serves as the proxy which links the independent stories of Dursun and Leyla. Dursun meets Ali during one of the anti-communist riots. He later comes across with him in the street, while Ali is waiting for his sister. When Leyla finally arrives, she arrogantly gazes at Dursun from head to toe and intimidates him for being a member of the counter-revolutionaries. They have a tense chat that invades Dursun's thoughts all day long and sincerely attaches him to Leyla. Impressed by her beauty and self-confidence, and threatened by her vigorous attack, Dursun discovers that he lacks the necessary self-esteem to defend his political position, when the person he is talking to happens to be a woman of city origin.

In parallel to Dursun's questioning his paralyzing lack of experience with women, the narration takes a twist and turns to Dursun's underprivileged childhood. Born and raised in Zile-Tokat, a provincial town in the Black Sea region, Dursun's memories of his childhood indicate a life dominated by poverty and hard work, and also by a will to challenge the unjust world. His childhood is described as a period of sufferings, the boundaries of which overlap the adult world. Dursun's enthusiasm to escape his poor conditions to save others that experience similar troubles shapes his image as a heroic mixture of love for the people and love for the country. The narrator discloses how he developed a responsibility against humanity and how he even assumed objects as items to be cared for and protected, under the illusion of a self-imposed guardianship. His heroic image is further elaborated upon in a dramatic scene at the hospital, where Dursun is

confined for a short time for the treatment of a minor injury. While the nurses avoid their duties, we find Dursun taking care of the patients. He talks to a few elderly patients who are veterans of the First World War, reads the newspapers to them, even fulfills some of the medical duties as a voluntary nurse. The narration does not reveal a detailed history of Dursun's development of a "nationalistic consciousness" by showing how he moved from a passionate attachment to his country and people and insistent negotiation of everyday struggles to an ardent supporter of anti-communism. But, by means of the narrator's recollections of his childhood, it hints at a legendary savior representation at the intersection of the generic paradigm of love for the people and patriotism.

In another episode, Leyla meets Turgut at his house and they discuss the possible ways to achieve revolution in Turkey. The meeting swiftly turns into a negotiation of the premises of revolution and whether love is a bourgeois term. Turgut criticizes Leyla's aversion to being ordered by superiors and tries to convince her to stay within the alleged boundaries of the revolutionary movement. Leyla confesses that her beliefs contradict the theory at some points and that she is tired of parroting the sentences, which are not allowed to be criticized. The tension of the debate suddenly abates when Seyhan, another member of their underground group, appears at the door. Seyhan sends Turgut away to fulfill some secret duty but before he leaves, he makes him leave his gun on the table, which terrorizes Turgut with the possibility of Seyhan killing Leyla and making him seem the murderer. Albeit involuntarily, Turgut leaves. Seyhan then asks Leyla to sleep with him and he does not take "no" for an answer. Rape is only existent by implication, but its terror speaks through Leyla's nervous breakdown. Back at home late that night, Leyla mutters in her sleep and attracts the attention of her brother Ali. Remembering his sister's arrogant attack of Dursun earlier, Ali suspects that Dursun and his greywolf friends may have threatened and frightened his sister.

The next morning, when Ali insistently asks what happened, Leyla guesses his suspicions and, to pull her brother back from the counter-revolutionist camp, she blames Dursun for her nervous breakdown. Ali goes to the head office of *Devlet*, the popular nationalist journal of the time, to talk to Dursun, but he learns that Dursun has been out of town for a week. There, he gets help from Dursun's friends, who had been monitoring the members of the revolutionary clique in which Leyla was involved, and connects Leyla's delirium with her being left alone

with Seyhan in Turgut's house. He begins putting pressure on his sister to make her quit the revolutionary group. The tension of the story increases as Leyla becomes aware of her instrumental status in the revolutionary movement and convinces herself to leave permanently. She realizes, as İşinsu hopes her readers will realize as well, that leftist revolutionism was only an irresponsible adventure. She decides to separate from the revolutionaries, but fails to take action, fearing she will be stigmatized by her comrades. After she learns that the superiors of the revolutionary group killed Turgut, Leyla finally makes up her mind. The violence of the street clashes increases day by day and Saadettin Bey decides to take his family to the United States. The narration reaches a climax when Leyla accepts a last assignment from the leaders of the revolutionary movement, during which she thinks they will somehow have her killed. She, however, manages to leave the country safely with her family. The novel ends, as Dursun is captured and murdered by the "communists" in another fierce clash.

İşinsu constructs a specific set of victims to the conditions of March 12, which consists of poor young men from provincial towns, who hold on to Turkish traditions and Islam and who are ready to fight for the well-being of their country. Around these men, she creates a political orientation that defies easy placement along a single axis. The novel attempts to promote a heroic yet sensible greywolf masculinity with the images of the death of these men at a young age. İşinsu demonizes the revolutionaries by linking the collectivism involved in socialism to tyrannies and sexual exploitation, and she whitewashes the counter-revolutionary violence as a position of self-defense. The novel moulds the stories of leftist revolutionaries that appear as sexually repressed and out of control men into narratives of brutality and victimization and, in this way, it confirms and supports the counter-revolutionaries' struggle alongside the state forces against "the communism threat." The novel is rife with long and angry speeches of criticism and accusation against the revolutionary left, which is identified with shady characters. It seeks to reinstate the greywolves as the real victims of March 12, by challenging the dominant stories of humiliation, mistreatment, torture, rape, etc., all of which have leftist revolutionaries as victims in the mainstream narratives concentrated on the period. *Sancı* undergoes the ambivalent task of arguing that the previously published novels of March 12, which mobilized victim narratives with leftist revolutionary characters at the center, were seldom cases of "truth-telling." It suggests another victim narrative, which tells a totally different story.

İşinsu explores the diverse range of experiences of subscribing to ideologies and heroically sacrificing for the common good. The shadow of politics is evident all through the narration and at some points, it is allowed to dominate. The valorization of greywolves and the repudiation of leftist revolutionaries both take form through the discussion of the ambivalent term “sacrifice.” From İşinsu’s perspective, leftist revolutionism exploits people’s will to sacrifice, whereas it is counter-revolutionism that demands sacrifice for novel purposes, for the well-being of the nation. *Sancı* provides us with the drama of a young woman who links the destructive leftist revolutionary masculinities symbolized by Turgut, Seyhan, and other “comrades” to the puritan masculinity of Dursun the greywolf.

The historiography of *Sancı* is narrowly selective in the elements of Turkish nationalism on which it focuses. With the simple magician’s trick of misdirection, it diverts our attention away from “*ülküçü*”s that killed, to “*ülküçü*”s that were murdered. It ignores the violence perpetuated by the members of the fascist “*ülküçü*” militia in the 1970s and equates the movement *tout court* to a naive guardianship metaphor. In its portrayal of both “the communist” and “the anti-communist” identities, the novel makes it explicit that men organize themselves into brotherhoods and choose to defend their political positions within these bastions of masculinity. I will attempt to go inside those bastions and explore the images of revolutionary masculinity and greywolf masculinity respectively.

Sancı is a novel that works on several levels. On the surface, it is framed as the story of Dursun Önkuzu. However, by mixing the autobiographical details of Önkuzu with real life incidents, İşinsu actually draws a panoramic portrait of contrasting ideologies in the atmosphere of the 1970s. The events are structured around two central characters, Dursun the peasant boy and Leyla the urban girl. The emotional tension is constructed on the young and liberated Leyla’s effect on Dursun. The conservative political imaginary of *Sancı* delegitimizes the forms of leftist revolutionary political action, which formed one of the major challenges of the late 1960s. In the novel, leftist revolutionaries are blood-thirsty aggressors of violent confrontations. Dursun Önkuzu is introduced in one such confrontation as a precarious young man trying to help the counter-revolutionists, who attempt to take their wounded friend Süleyman Özmen to the hospital. Although *Sancı* traces a more panoramic historical canvas, İşinsu marks the narration time with two dramatic “real” deaths. Starting with the death of Süleyman Özmen, the novel explicitly covers a nine month period, which comes to an end with the death

of Dursun Önkuzu.⁴³ The murder and funeral of Süleyman Özmen serves as an introduction to the atmosphere of *Sancı's* March 12. There is an ill-disguised state authority that watches the polarization to escalate, a police force that consoles revolutionary organizations that fuel the violence, and an indigenous group of young and brave heroes, who are dedicated to nationalistic causes, and are ready to die to fight this corruption back.

Sancı constructs the revolutionaries not as the victimized, but as the privileged class. They are no longer some men under cruel treatment by state agents on false grounds or virtuous freedom fighters. In this novel, greywolves are argued to constitute the underprivileged, while leftist revolutionism is treated as the leisure activity of the intrepid children of bourgeois families. Fencing the idea of revolution with bourgeois-turned activists, *Sancı* attempts to point out what the writer thinks is the major inconsistency of the leftist revolutionary movement in Turkey. People attached to revolutionary ideals are often members of privileged classes and, therefore, they are actually far from understanding the struggles of the working class. This gap becomes the proof for the argument that their agitative working class rhetoric is just an intellectual imitation. Introducing Leyla, a young woman adrift in politics, who is hungry for attention and prone to jump into political action just because it is in vogue to do so, *Sancı* opens the imitation card in the beginning of the novel. Leyla's fight with her father Saadettin bey, crystallizes the narrow world of the middle-class intelligentsia that is populated with self-centered and outrageously materialistic individuals. As a symbol of the political quietism and passivity of "the center," Saadettin bey refuses to take sides with any one of the political counterparts that ferociously fight with each other in the streets. Leyla's motivation for participating in revolutionary political action is not only to conform to the latest trend, but also it is the unfolding of a power conflict with her father. Her fight with her father depicts Leyla's refutation of being a decorative object of the house and "the little princess" of Saadettin bey. We witness her claiming power by means of her political engagement, addressing herself as a dedicated rescuer of "the poor, exploited people [şu fakir sömürülen halk]" of her country.⁴⁴

Leyla differs distinctively from the other female figures of the novel. She is characterized with an ambivalent masculine agency, arrogance and rebellion

⁴³Süleyman Özmen died on 21 March 1970, Dursun Önkuzu died on 23 November 1970.

⁴⁴İşinsu (as in n. 38), p. 42.

against authority. She deliberately uses rude speech “like a man,” and acts in an awkward manner. Her independent and aggressive character raises questions about her actions. The narrator equates Leyla’s assumed revolutionism to anxiety about adopting male roles. Her “manly” attitudes serve both as features of attraction and repulsion. She puzzles the men around her. In their first encounter, Leyla interpellates Dursun with the savage connotations of the words “commando” and “greywolf,” both of which were nicknames used for the anti-communist “ülküçü”s. This first encounter makes the gender problematic of the novel visible by consolidating Leyla’s position in the men’s world as a challenge and emphasizing Dursun’s introverted character. Leyla’s objectifying gaze paralyzes Dursun and prevents him from expressing himself, when she arrogantly treats him like a savage animal:

- “See you later, Ali!”

The little sparrow flapped and clinked its wings when he attempted to leave.

- “Just a moment, hold on, are you one of those Ali’s commando brothers?”

[...]

- “Nice to meet you. I am Ali’s sister. Unfortunately, -she laughed- I am not a commando.”

[...]

- “No, no please, don’t leave. I haven’t seen any commando in my life. Not a greywolf either.”

Dursun murmured with an inaudible voice:

- “Go to a zoo then!”⁴⁵

Dursun feels both attracted to Leyla and, at the same time, intimidated by her because of Leyla’s unconventional manners. He avoids Leyla’s eyes during this short talk and later criticizes himself for doing so. He questions why he is weak and insecure, and why he shows such a deeply rooted fear of women.

This fear reveals the secrets of the masculinity of Dursun. In her foreword to Klaus Theweleit’s seminal *Male Fantasies*, Barbara Ehrenreich highlights the fear

⁴⁵- “Eyvallah, Ali!” Yürüyordu ki küçük serçe tekrar kanat çırpı, hem şıkır şıkır:

- “Bir dakika, bir dakika, yoksa siz Ali’nin o meşhur komanda ağabeylerinden misiniz?”

[...]

- “Memnun oldum, ben de Ali’nin ablasıyım -güldü- fakat komanda değilim.”

[...]

- “Yo, yo durun gitmeyin. Ben... şimdiye kadar hiç komanda görmedim. Bozkurt da görmedim.”

Dursun belli belirsiz bir sesle mırıldandı:

- “Hayvanat bahçesine gidin öyleyse!” Işınsu (as in n. 38), p. 58-59.

"of being swallowed, engulfed, annihilated" by women, as the major anxiety of fascist male identity. Dursun's retreat is built on a similar fear. He is a village boy where gender segregation has been the rule for a very long time, so he does not know women well and feels threatened by them gaining power. This rigid image of masculinity resembles those found by Klaus Theweleit in the writings of German Freikorps, the volunteer pro-fascist armies of the Second World War. Theweleit writes that "the most urgent task of the man of steel is to pursue, to dam in, and to subdue any force that threatens to transform him back into the horribly disorganized jumble of flesh, hair, skin, bones, intestines and feelings that calls itself human."⁴⁶ This "steeling" actually is due to men's refusal to acknowledge their hidden emotional dependence on women. Theweleit underlines that the refusal makes the Freikorps see the feminine as the transformative medium to ego dissolution. Dursun's retreat too, is built on such a fear of ego-dissolution. He is afraid of Leyla but at the same time, he wants to transcend his fears. When compared to the high self-esteem of Leyla, his shyness and reticence indicate a discrepancy between their manners and the socially expected gender role behaviors from a man and a woman.

Leyla's eccentric behaviors, her expansiveness and assertiveness make her a marginal figure in the revolutionary group as well. Turgut, a comrade, finds her arrogance attractive and courts her. He, at the same time, spies on her. After witnessing Turgut's double-crossing, we readers are invited to become critically engaged with the events of the novel in a way that Leyla does not. Turgut's submissive but anxious manners signal a disturbingly authoritarian atmosphere within the group. In an inorganic episode, which follows the informative call of Turgut to his superiors about Leyla, the narrator registers Turgut's flashback recollection of his mother having sex with men for money. Turgut remembers the "pink and pig-like greasy face [domuz eti gibi pembe yağlı suratı]" of a customer of his mother, who appeared every once in a while with his "smoothly shaved face [sinekkağıdı traşlı]" and "golden teeth [altın dişli]."⁴⁷ This sudden hit of the past to Turgut, is just another version of Leyla's improper fight with her father for power. Turgut's morbid dislike of rich men symbolizes another fight, this time with the mother, in the absence of a father image. The narrator surrounds

⁴⁶Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p.160.

⁴⁷İşimsu (as in n. 38), p. 53.

Turgut's engagement to revolutionary movement with a pathological hatred of "the capital," and attempts to make the reader suspicious of the authenticity of his social projects.⁴⁸

İşinsu keeps populating the revolutionary movement with pathologies, making sexual deviance a staple of revolutionism. A meeting in Turgut's house consolidates the idea that love, as an emotional term, is absent from the dictionary of the revolutionaries. In "the revolutionary world," personal travails are secondary to collective struggles and love has been replaced by a convoluted masculine solidarity, which makes use of women in every possible way. Leyla's so-called "comrades" cooperate in making this young woman learn the weighty lesson that she is only an object in their hands. Leyla's transformation from a subject, who directs her gaze to men and intimidates them, to an object and a powerless victim, happens through an unpleasant experience of having sex with one of the superiors of the revolutionary group, Seyhan, under duress. Before he leaves Seyhan and Leyla alone in his house, Turgut recalls how Seyhan used to talk about his fantasy of having sex with a recently dead female body.⁴⁹ His terror emphasizes Seyhan's love for destruction and the reference to necrophilia introduces a chilling atmosphere.⁵⁰ When Seyhan confesses his love to Leyla, he says he thinks of her all the time, while killing people "in that hole, in the mountain, right when firing at the man in the bank [o delikte, dağda tam bankadaki adamı çivilerken]." ⁵¹ He, however, does not let his obsessive "love" make him obey Leyla's objections to having sex. The moral tone beneath the violent act is clear. Rape follows from Leyla's arrogance as a punishment. The narrator does not challenge the implicit tone, which hints that she is the guilty party. Seyhan rapes Leyla and later reads her an article written by Turgut about revolution with the help of the military, as if nothing has happened. The narrator records Leyla's plans to manipulate Seyhan and escape but after a brief pause, we find Leyla biting her lips in order not to cry and Seyhan trying to criticize the theoretical foundations of an article.

The elision of the act of rape is telling, in the sense that by the absence of any particular detail of the incident, it is left in the dark whether Leyla actually

⁴⁸İşinsu (as in n. 38), p. 53.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 83.

⁵⁰The desire to be with corpses is an ultimate symbol for a desire to own, to control and to govern. Erich Fromm, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*. (New York: Holt, 1992), p. 362-411.

⁵¹İşinsu (as in n. 38), p. 88.

had resisted “enough”. The details appear only later in the novel, when Leyla experiences a nervous breakdown back at home, in her room. Leyla’s breakdown explicitly defines the act as rape. A nightmare communicates that it was her first sexual intercourse and we learn that she actually had resisted.⁵² Leyla tries to draw the image of a girl that distinguishes herself from her virginity; but, she is in fact thoroughly influenced by her combat with her rapist. The narrator explains Leyla’s earlier inaction against Seyhan’s violence with her subscription to the role “of a bully” in order not to bring harm to the “macho role she used to play since her childhood, and that ridiculous pride of hers [küçüklüğünden beri takındığı kabadayılık pozu, o saçma sapan gururu].”⁵³ This masculine bullying causes Leyla to present herself as a fearless and even senseless person, and it also causes her to look down upon the damage done to her. She acts like an “iron girl”. She acts as though she does not care at all about her loss of her virginity because she is confident that virginity does not mean anything, and her life style does not lean on a definition of virtue built on chastity. The narrator emphasizes this cold rationale of Leyla’s to argue that it may not be considered as rape, because Leyla did not break down that powerfully. Rape actually makes Leyla grasp that she is only a young girl at the intersection of some fields of male violence and passion. She, however, does not adopt a victim role and insists on imagining herself as a powerful agent, who influences the flow of events.

In another pivotal scene, when he recalls Leyla’s resistance to him with ambiguous discourses, Seyhan suggests that the girl might have viscerally “enjoyed” the timely consummation, as the final result of her charisma. This scene also shows the extremes of Seyhan’s behaviors. We witness that Seyhan is a man who has no control over himself. He is a violent aggressor in the political domain as well as in the sexual domain:

“You are in love with me, yes you are.”

The girl had said it like that. Seyhan was having vodka and looking at the photographs, then he closed his eyes: her milk-white body! One should scratch it little by little, so that tiny strains of blood would leak out. Without getting scattered, they should go down on their track. A shivering took the young man’s body, he threw himself on the sofa and writhed. He took his pocketknife and started scratching the photographs. ‘She was twisted...

⁵²Işinsu (as in n. 38), p. 121.

⁵³Ibid., p. 133.

She was moaning and swearing’.

[...]

He held his pocketknife tightly in his hand, lowered his pants and jabbed it into the buttocks.

[...]

Lying prone on the ground, he started to cry.⁵⁴

Işınsu seduces the reader into a questioning of Seyhan’s sanity and the general saneness of a political movement that keeps him in charge. Leyla’s dark figure also contributes to the inauspicious image of revolutionaries. The narrator leaves it uncertain whether Leyla talked of love back then, because she was trying to appeal to Seyhan’s feelings in order to avoid having sex with him or if she was, as a matter of fact, fond of her effect on the man. The fluidity of Leyla’s image between an innocent victim and a *femme fatale* makes it difficult for readers to take sides with her.

Although there is room for Leyla to break up with “the beast” and transfer herself to “the good side” no salvation is foreseen for the male revolutionaries. The line drawn between political violence and psychopathic violence indicates that the motivation for political aggression is traceable to the individual psyches of the revolutionary men. The brutality is assumed to be endemic. Just like Seyhan, other revolutionary “superiors” introduced during the course of the novel are abusive men, who insult Leyla and make her feel like nothing but an instrument. Their intimidating gaze at her body provides the reader with a comparison between their “exploitive masculinity” and Dursun’s “chivalric masculinity.” While Dursun cannot eye Leyla at all, revolutionaries gaze at her body every now and then. They therefore stand for masculinities for reverse identification of Dursun. Leyla’s answer to being an object of erotic desire continues to be ambivalent, which makes the revolutionary spirit to gain another minus point.

⁵⁴ “Aşıksın bana, aşıksın”

Böyle söylemişti kız. Seyhan votka içiyor ve fotoğraflara bakıyordu, sonra gözlerini kapattı: Süt aklığında, beyaz vücudu! İnce ince çizmeli, incecik kan sızmalıydı, hiç dağılmadan yol yol inmeliydi kanlar. Genç adamın bütün bedenini bir titreme aldı, kendini divana attı, kıvrandı. Cebinden çakısını çıkardı, açtı fotoğrafları çizmeye başladı. “Kız kıvrım kıvrımdı... İnliyordu. Küfrediyordu.”

[...]

Çakısını sıkı sıkı tuttu elinde, pantolonunu indirdi, kaba etine sapladı.

[...]

Yüzükoyun yatıp ağlamaya başladı. Işınsu (as in n. 38), p. 167.

The narrator is derisive in the presentation of Leyla, even when she is falling apart from her revolutionary ambitions and trying to place some distance between herself and her prurient "comrades." Her "masculinity" signifies how confused gender roles give rise to struggles and pain. The accent accumulates in Leyla's attempt to override gender boundaries, but the narrator criticizes Leyla's attempt to escape her class identity as well, warning the reader that she is inescapably a princess: "she was someone set off to find her twin, someone alone and weak but who tries to camouflage both of these features with her pride, someone who suffocates because of this attempt and acts unreasonably, and then suffocates more, and acts more unreasonably. She is a... a princess!"⁵⁵

In Leyla's discussions with Turgut, Seyhan, and later with Adnan, and Mr. Bakof, the masterminds of the revolutionary movement, the novel calls attention to the inconsistencies in leftist thought of the time, by making references to the split between the supporters of armed struggle against state power, defenders of political fight in or outside the parliament, and advocates of the famous National Democratic Revolution movement (Milli Demokratik Devrim, MDD) which sought help from a left-oriented military intervention to achieve a revolutionary state order.⁵⁶ İşinsu's narrator lambasts the opinionated members of revolutionary thought and argues that their roots are outside. The cursory presence of Mr. Bakof in the narration is served as a proof for alien control of the revolutionary group. Mr. Bakof too, supports the idea that members of the revolutionary movement are inherently sexually perverse individuals with his unremittingly arrogant voyeurism. During their short talk, he strips Leyla with his looks and reinstates her position as an erotic object. The presence of Mr. Bakof articulates another figurative rape. The narrator posits his presence as the sign of the penetration of national boundaries with alien ideologies. Portraying "the communists" in treason, and mystifying "the anti-communists" as the real guardians of the nation, İşinsu configures a contemporary war of national freedom in the atmosphere of the 1970s.

⁵⁵Kız çiftini aramak için yollara düşen, yalnız ve aciz ve iki özelliğini de gururu ile örtmeye çalışan, bu yüzden bunalıp saçmalayan, sonra daha da çok bunalan, daha çok saçmalayan bir... bir prenses! İşinsu (as in n. 38), p. 213.

⁵⁶Murat Belge, under the pseudonym Ahmet Samim, summarizes the MDD project as follows: "[s]tudents would agitate, officers would strike, and a national junta would take power." See Ahmet Samim, "The Tragedy of the Turkish Left.", *New Left Review* 126 (1981), p. 79.

Its reduction of political positions to stark dichotomies deprives *Sancı* of artistic quality and turns this work into a politically overloaded saga of utterly propagandist epic proportions. It is hard to say that the epitomes of revolutionism are fleshed out enough as characters in themselves. They are shown as men filled with criminal elements prone to bloody fighting. They appear as the doers of the ill deeds and form the dark atmosphere, which Dursun and his friends try to illuminate. As epitomes of heresy and treason, revolutionaries polish the patriotic political causes represented with the images of the rival camp, namely the “ülküci”s. The decadence of revolutionaries raises the profile of those working to eradicate the threats of the leftist agenda. Revolutionary men are keenly dressed with pathologies and sexually perverse manners. In combining a dark tale of rape, which is burdened with moral lessons, with the specific historical and political moment of the March 12 atmosphere, Işınsoy tries to show that it was the revolutionaries, who initiated the violence of the 1970s and caused it to escalate. There is a revolutionary ideal with a “human mask,” *Sancı* argues, and some brave men try to remove the mask to make clear what is beneath.

Dursun’s heroism is, therefore, built on the seriousness of the “communism threat.” The militant nationalist rhetoric of Dündar Taşer’s farewell speech to Süleyman Özmen at the funeral highlights the grave threat. This talk also sets the tone of the narration, in the opening pages of the novel, as a lament for those who sacrificed themselves to the national cause. In his speech, Taşer narrates the conditions that leave the members of the greywolves helpless. He complains about the position of “neutrality” in which most of the officials take refuge and laments, in an epic voice, the tragic death of Süleyman Özmen at a young age:

He is a martyr and his place is special in heaven. But we will not die anymore. We will not die anymore, on this trembling land that suffers the spasms of the new and powerful Turkey’s birth. Süleyman is the last martyr of the idealists. We will not die anymore.⁵⁷

The word “şehid/martyr” provides an excellent summary of how fascism, combines two key discourses, religion and militarism, as suggested by Georges Bataille.⁵⁸

⁵⁷O şehittir, yeri şüheda katıdır. Fakat biz artık ölmeyeceğiz, bu sallanan topraklar üzerinde, doğum sancısı, yeni, güçlü, büyük Türkiye’nin sancısını çeken bu topraklar üzerinde biz artık ölmeyeceğiz. Süleyman ülkücülerin son şehididir, biz artık ölmeyeceğiz! Işınsoy (as in n. 38), p. 22.

⁵⁸Georges Bataille, “The Psychological Structure of Fascism”, in Carl R. Lovitt, ed., *Visions of Excess*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 137.

Listening to these words, Dursun negotiates his position in the movement and the currency of death absorbed into a political cause. He finds himself suspecting Taşer's words, but tries not to critically engage with the generic political slogans.

Sad and despondent, Dursun feels sorry for washing Süleyman's blood off his clothes in a hurry and pushes himself into a discussion of the personal versus the collective. The question whether he would sacrifice one of his sisters' lives to have his "ülkü" brother Süleyman back, hits him powerfully.⁵⁹ In a pivotal fantasy, he replaces Süleyman and imagines dying in his place. When he starts crying, a friend backs him up, reminding him that "crying is not good for men," and tries to motivate Dursun to keep up listening to the speech.⁶⁰ This brotherly interference, signals the nature of the homosocial form of male bonding in the "ülkücü" group: there is a group of young men engaged in a passionate fraternity, who try to police the "femininity" in them. The friendship in this exclusively masculine group, provides us with a specific model of masculinity that both attracts and intimidates the protagonist of the novel. His fellowmen, just like Dursun, are children of poor and rural working class families. Beneath their tough and emotionally cauterized masculine postures, they exhibit many forms of a loving and caring brotherhood, a solidarity that gives them something to hang onto in the midst of violent clashes.

In his "Theater of War: Combat, the Military, and Masculinities," David Morgan defines military life as one of the most traditionally masculine domains, where aggression, violence, self-sacrifice, physical dominance and emotional control became central to masculinity.⁶¹ Although Dursun not being able to sacrifice his sisters, even hypothetically, draws the image of a warm and loving brother, his willingness to die himself instead, shows us that he is firmly connected to a self-sacrificial pro-military masculinity. Dursun is ready to die for the well being of his country.

Dursun ascetically celebrates death for the country and for the nation, but he calls the society into question as well. He is well aware that, for most of the people the murder of Süleyman will be just another headline in the newspapers. Earlier, during the event that ended with the death of Süleyman Özmen, the

⁵⁹İşimsu (as in n. 38), p. 22.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 23.

⁶¹David Morgan, "Theater of War: Combat, the Military, and Masculinities.", in *Theorizing Masculinities*. (California: Sage, 1994), p. 2.

narrator records in a low voice that ordinary people stay a considerable distance from both of the political rivals, which fight in the streets, and that they fail to understand their motives. The taxi driver, for example, who reluctantly takes the bleeding Süleyman to the hospital, asks them “why they keep fighting as hungry jackals in the middle of snow.”⁶² After the funeral, the narrator swiftly records Dursun’s anger at this self-imposed neutralism. To his disappointment, nobody actually cares about the deaths:

People were passing by him. Women, children, the elderly and the young...
He wants to stop them all and say ‘Süleyman is dead, you know?’ To say
‘You idiots! Süleyman died for you, for your children’...⁶³

Although his anger shows that Dursun is, in fact, haunted by his doubts about what his sacrificial death will mean to masses of people, in the course of the story, we see him develop incontrovertibly, through a self-presentation that draws variously on a heroic guardianship and a sense of leading the masses.

The turn to Dursun’s childhood memoirs sheds light on the growth of a vulnerable child into a self-motivated hero. Romanticizing the notions of traditional and pre-modern structures, the narration introduces the reader to the lives of the rural working classes. This episode is important because it presents a picture of fascism’s close ties with the impoverished classes. Bourgeois capitalism appears as an enemy, not as the result of a political rejection of the capitalist system, but rather as a romantic reaction against mechanization and the modern. We are introduced first to Dursun’s family through the struggles of which the injustices of the capitalist society are expressed. Details of the poverty in Dursun’s hometown place Dursun’s political aspirations in their material context. The lack of wealth in the family despite hard and wearisome work is presented as the experience that inspired Dursun toward fighting for the nationalist cause. The appealing poverty of his family makes Dursun meet people of similar class origins, not in the leftist camp, but rather in the greywolves, since the leftist camp, the narrator expresses, is populated with children of rich families. Some epic proportions intrude on the plot and illustrate a story of a shepherd’s search for the meaning of his life in the house of worship of the dervishes. Told as a local folk story of Zile, this epic story

⁶²İşinsu (as in n. 38), p. 6.

⁶³İki yanından insanlar geçiyor. Kadınlar, çocuklar, yaşlılar, gençler... Hepsini durdurmak ‘biliyor musunuz Süleyman öldü’ demek... ‘Heyy, avanaklar, Süleyman sizler için, sizin çocuklarınız için öldü’ demek... Ibid., p. 27.

gives the shepherd the nickname Kuzu İmam in the end, which indicates that he is an ancestor of the Önkuzu family, maybe Dursun's grandfather. Suggesting an epic continuity between his ancestors and Dursun, the narration gradually builds its hero.

The hospital, where the adolescent Dursun had spend some time for the treatment of a minor injury, amplifies the story of Dursun's mystic sensibility and the utopia of his will to save the poor. İşinsu portrays Dursun as a boy of compassion and self-sacrificial giving. The hospital ward provides a community through which Dursun displays his human feelings and proffers his help to the needy. An ambivalent concept of manhood is evoked by means of Dursun's attempts to comfort people around him since hospital work is often associated with the females. This episode also links Dursun to a nurse, Nurten, whom he encounters as another slavish member of the revolutionists, years later in İstanbul. The explanation of Nurten's attachment to revolution is simple; a rich doctor had dumped her after a romance of several years and she is now yearning for revenge. The revenge she requests illustrates another disturbed psychology, because Nurten argues that she will be happy "when all the bourgeoisie is destroyed and the sister of that doctor is 'done' by comrades [bütün burjuvalar mahvolduğu zaman, o doktorun kızkardeşini de bizimkiler becerdiği zaman]."⁶⁴ Nurten consolidates the moral bankruptcy of leftist revolutionary political ideology in the novel. Dursun grasps that her passion for revolution is totally out of context and that her promotion of the principles of leftist revolutionism into moral values is inaccurate. He learns that Nurten contrastingly places her body in the service of her male comrades, although what made her a revolutionary in the first place was the fact that she had been sexually used by a rich doctor. Dursun shows her inconsistencies to Nurten but she refuses to think about them.

His insistence on dialogue, even with those who find themselves adamant that revolutionists are the right ones to take sides with, positions Dursun as an unconventional greywolf. He is supposed to intrigue the readers as an atypical figure of masculinity, because he chooses talking over fighting. Dursun personifies an ambivalent masculinity not only because he does not embrace simple acts of masculine bravado, but also because of his ambivalent dread of women in the public arena, as symbolized by his flight from Leyla, and his contrastingly easy adoption of the motherly role of a nurse. His grandmother complicates the story comparing

⁶⁴İşinsu (as in n. 38), p. 267.

him to a girl.⁶⁵ This intensive emasculation is worth examining, because it is not a conventional motive to build “heroism” on a sissy’s allure. İşinsu associates Dursun with positions of weakness but, paradoxically, the narration claims heroic titles for its protagonist. This is, in a way, a reproduction of the glorification of the persecuted revolutionary individuals in their silence during violent interrogations, as seen in Erdal Öz’s *Yaralısun*. Although the protagonist is in a subordinate position in terms of his masculinity, he is “the real hero.”

While some members of the “ülküçü” movement champion the macho ethos to fight the violent attacks of the revolutionaries back properly, Dursun rejects acting on the basis of brute strength. He is prepared to resort to violence, but only to protect himself and his loved ones. Despite the fact that he is coded with soldierly charms, we find Dursun to be a “commando” who never fired a gun. Books are central to his heroism, not weapons.⁶⁶ The narration highlights a sense of masculinity derived from intellectual sources. Dursun makes his political position clear, explaining it as an extension of the patriotic heroism born in the 1920s to the struggles for national liberation. On his account, he is defending his country against Western ideological imports.

Dursun is a conqueror on the ideological level, but a pacifier on the level of physical action. The mute romance that develops through his reminiscences of Leyla emphasizes a striking account of inaction. Dursun cannot resist remembering Leyla every now and then, similar to Seyhan. He thinks about her and how their dialogue went awry in their first meeting. However, his hesitance over Leyla is complicated by the fact that Leyla is from the rival political camp. Since all the sexual undercurrents throughout the novel have been mobilized in the presence of pathetic leftist revolutionaries, Dursun’s attraction to Leyla is never expressed in the domains of an erotic attraction. It rather stays in the realm of fantasy, since Dursun forces himself to resist the bodily temptations of the world. Dursun’s image as a celibate, boyish figure trying to repress his desires for Leyla, inadvertently brings to mind the established link between sexual repression and fascism.⁶⁷ Dursun, in his combat against Leyla’s charms, not only struggles because of an urban lifestyle and mindset that is unfamiliar to him, but also fights with his own desires.

⁶⁵İşinsu (as in n. 38), p. 339.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 371.

⁶⁷In his seminal book *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich categorizes fascism as a symptom of sexual repression.

Pathetically eroticizing the leftists and depriving her greywolf protagonist of a healthily fulfilled erotic desire, İşinsu mobilizes the *cliché* that sees repressed erotic desires beneath the rise of fascism. Dursun's inability to cope with women, being intimidated by them and his sexual conservatism reproduce a mirror image of the "sexual decadence" of the revolutionaries who advocate sexual liberation. Although Dursun's self-imposed celibacy is emphasized in the novel by his extremely sensible nature, the narration also makes it clear that his political engagement presupposes a fraternity, which considers friendship among men as superior to heterosexual love since it is "based upon reason rather than senses."⁶⁸

Given the novel's insistence on Dursun's exceptional heroism, his naivete, sensibility, and dislike of violence, which draw a hypomasculine image, gain significance. In the image of Dursun, the novel ironically juxtaposes the cultural stereotypes of manliness. Dursun not only invalidates the corrupt masculinity of the revolutionaries but, also he appears to be an unconventional image of masculinity against the "manly" greywolves of *Sanca*. Dursun's feminine anti-war image may seem to convey a broader critique of the armed political clashes as a false definition of masculinity. However, it is important not to miss the fact that İşinsu actually builds a romanticized view of masculine solidarity in arms which, in turn, advocates fighting for nationalist causes, by fleshing the "ülküciü" movement with young men who care about their "comrades" and their country. These men, just like as Klaus Theweleit has provocatively written about the Nazi Freikorps, connect with each other on the grounds of a fear of the feminine.⁶⁹ Dursun appears in the novel as an alternative representation of masculine courage and patriotism that should not be shunned. His retreat from violence only serves to demonize the masculinity of the rival political camp more powerfully because, no matter how strongly he resists to the violent use of power, Dursun dies a violent death. He falls prey to a group of brute revolutionaries, is questioned, tortured, and finally murdered. Dursun's critical approach to political violence challenges neither the broad picture of street clashes nor the war of "ülküciü"s over the revolutionaries, but it puts some extremely sorrowful proportions upon his death.

The movement of the novel is toward Leyla's realization that she has been an instrument of the revolutionary movement. İşinsu uses Leyla's "progress" to

⁶⁸George Mosse, *The Image of Man: the Creation of Modern Masculinity*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 68.

⁶⁹Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*. (as in n. 28).

undermine the Kemalist politics of his father as well as the revolutionary politics of her comrades, both of whom attempt to keep her in the magnetism of their own political field. Although Leyla gradually falls away from her comrades, the narration does not give her the chance to self-govern. Having finally realized that she has been tainted by revolutionism, Leyla pulls herself from the magnetism of leftist thought back to the neutral center and to the safety of being the “little princess” of a Kemalist father. In the end, she is inescapably an object of some other man’s future plans.

The violent street clashes of the 1970s constitute a watershed in the collective memory of the March 12 period. Making the political organization of the young men into paramilitary groups the major axis of her narration, İşınsu chooses to deal with a number of delicate issues such as individuality, solidarity, violence etc. She however fails to explore these tropes in detail, as the novel spends all its energy on stigmatizing and demonizing revolutionaries with superficial and essentialist discourses. Except a few spotty anecdotes about the violent use of power by the “ülküci” movement, *Sanca* offers revolutionism as an emblem of brutality and of a vulgar and irresponsible culture distinguished by sexual pathologies. The novel lacks penetration into the inner lives of the characters. We do not read of the private triumphs, the intimate frustrations, and the difficulties of the characters but rather follow them acting upon some ideologies and being criticized by the narrator. The narrator’s voice is hardly the voice of an objective reporter. The narrator formulates critical conclusions, theories, and moral statements to digest. The critical look of the novel at authoritarianism of the left fails to be a genuinely critical approach, for another authoritarianism of national spirit easily replaces the condemned ideas.

Nowhere in the novel is there a defense of the virtues of intellectual freedom. Although Dursun tries to claim some at the funeral the defeat of his hesitation about generic political slogans of nationalism and his submissive acceptance of his superiors in the movement is portrayed as a noble act. A sense of repetitiveness pervades the novel, because both Dursun and the narrator reiterate similar points touched upon the speech of Dündar Taşer, at the beginning of the novel. Reiteration of similar points by many suddenly becomes powerful proof of “the truth”, contradicting the novel’s earlier criticism of leftist ideological “parroting”. Dursun’s masculinity shows the shortcomings of revolutionary masculinities and also tests the sustainability of nationalist masculine images. The unbending loyalty of

the "ülküçü"s to the nationalist causes colors them with the shades of national heroes. They are the holy crusaders against communism. The fight they engage in is not only a political war, but also a moral confrontation against atheism.

Sanrı is tainted with the right's project to win victim status and, ironically, it relies on the same kind of gratification that it tries to debunk. It praises the predominantly lower middle class, conservative, and reactionary counter-revolutionary masculinities in the same way that some leftist writers tend to praise revolutionaries. İşinsu writes with an urge to warn the pliant young people about the "spurious claims" and "decadent manners" of leftist revolutionary thought, which seems to advocate freedom but, in fact, has on its agenda only to make masses of young people the instruments of an ambivalent aim of "revolution." She finds the nationalist causes betrayed by them and also by the cowardice and political complacency of the so-called neutrals. The novel does not detail the broader context in which the events take place. Rather than greater masses of people affected by violence, *Sanrı* shows an exclusive preoccupation with the combatants and in this preoccupation, it pursues an essentialist character-building discourse. The novel ignores the emotional unhinging created by the state of chaos in the country. It lightheartedly overlooks the backdrop of sufferings constructed by the violence committed by anti-communist paramilitary groups since the early 1970s and the harsh measures of the military coup that followed. It sees the pressures of totalitarianism only in the revolutionary leftist movement and fails to critique the totalitarian logic that underlies almost all factions of conventional politics. It chooses to talk about a litany of murders committed by the revolutionaries, all of whom are depicted as marginal people.

In light of the vulgar essentialism employed in the novel and the fairy-tale characterization of "the goods" and "the evils," it will not be an oversimplification to say that the principal characters who symbolize the "malaise" of revolutionism are derived from extremes and pathologies, in order to stigmatize leftist ideology. But the thing that really distinguishes *Sanrı* from the other novels explored so far is that it is a practical threat to the reader. Instead of saying "neither-nor," *Sanrı* argues that everybody must recognize a political "either-or" and take one stand or the other. The disdainful voice of the narrator, who finds hypocrisy even in the fears of ordinary people afraid of being left in a crossfire between the revolutionaries and the "ülküçü"s, makes one think that anybody who is not willing to fight side by side with the counter-revolutionaries against

the “malaise” is considered an enemy to this collective soul. There is a public rendered powerless by vicious forms of repression, but *Sanci* ignores this and blames people for inaction and not paying enough attention to political causes. It argues that remaining a patriot is possible only by serving the country in a certain destructive way, in the atmosphere of the civil war. Within the lament *Sanci* voices, therefore, is an intriguing, though quiescent, set of “ideal”s that can assume a volatile political character.

2.3 *Yarın Yarın*

Pınar Kür's *Yarın Yarın* (Tomorrow Tomorrow) subsumes the politically chaotic atmosphere of the 1970s as a canvas and paints an illicit love affair on it, which makes a young woman grow into political consciousness.⁷⁰ The novel is built on an affair that blossoms on revolutionary grounds and attempts to answer how love and sexuality can be managed as part of a revolutionary life. Kür reflects on the real historical events associated with the political movements of 1970 and, similar to Emine İşinsu, she deals with the intricate problems of political action and political quietism⁷¹. But, while doing so, she keeps a significant distance from experiences due to the abusiveness of state power and rather chooses to stay in the area of personal relationships. The novel focuses on the relationships between individuals of different backgrounds. It explores the dynamics of domination and subjugation in erotic relationships and questions the capacity of men and women to make liberating decisions. *Yarın Yarın* is important to this project, because in its exploration of the economy of personal relationships, the novel vividly shows that power hierarchies are inherent in human relationships without any particular reference to ideologies. Women in the novel appear as "means of alliance between men," and Kür asks if it is possible to challenge such a system.⁷²

Yarın Yarın draws a parallel between self-discovery and the awakening of political consciousness by means of an implicit analogy between the personal turmoil of sexual awakening and the collective turmoil of the events of 1970s Turkey. It portrays the social forces and institutions surrounding the individuals, their power to influence the lives of men and women, and the overall ambivalent interaction of the individual with others in collective identities. *Yarın Yarın*

⁷⁰Pınar Kür, *Yarın Yarın*. (İstanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2004).

⁷¹Pınar Kür and Emine İşinsu are the cousins on their mothers' side, who found themselves, by the time March 12 arrived, already at the opposite sites of the political clash. Pınar Kür (b.1943) was born in Bursa. She completed her high-school education in New York and graduated from the Department of Comparative Literature at Boğaziçi University. She holds a Ph.D. from Sorbonne University. She worked for the State Theater as a drama consultant and has translated many works of fiction and drama from English and French into Turkish. Short story collections: *Bir Deli Ağaç* (Demented Tree, 1981), *Akışı Olmayan Sular* (Waters That Flow Nowhere, 1983 Sait Faik Short Story Award), *Hayalet Hikayeleri* (Ghost Stories, 2004). Novels: *Yarın Yarın* (Tomorrow Tomorrow, 1976), *Küçük Oyuncu* (The Petty Player, 1977), *Asılacak Kadın* (A Woman to Be Hanged, 1979), *Bitmeyen Aşk* (Unending Love, 1986), *Bir Cinayet Romanı* (Story of a Murder, 1989), *Sonuncu Sonbahar* (Final Fall, 1992), *Beşpeşe* (Fivesome, 2004).

⁷²Claude Lévi Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 65.

has autobiographical overtones, but with a gender twist; in a recent interview book, Kür explained how critics responded to this novel with sarcastic remarks implying that the novel was autobiographical and she herself is the infidel woman character of *Yarın Yarın*. She replies to these hasty remarks saying that, in contrast, it is more the young man with whom the infidel woman falls in love that carries autobiographical overtones from her life, her studentship at the Sorbonne, and her political transformation induced there, after witnessing the 1968 student uprisings.⁷³

The novel focuses on the love affair between Selim Ersoylu, a revolutionary student, who takes a break from his graduate education in Paris and returns to Turkey to join his comrades in the wake of the 1970s, and Seyda Caner, an unhappy wife and mother, who feels trapped in the web of her husband's little-bourgeois friends. The major narration of *Yarın Yarın* is set in İstanbul, but the novel takes swipes at Selim's former life in Paris and his apolitical graduate education at the university. The environments depicted in the first parts of the novel are typical of those that often accompany wealthy people's little bourgeois lives, such as city clubs, pavilions, mansions, hotels etc., but the story opens with contrasting scenery, where Selim observes a poor neighborhood in İstanbul, in his first days back in his home town. This opening scene divides the setting of the novel clearly into two different worlds. The safe houses of the privileged and the wilds of the poor. Standing by the seaside and surrounded by the impoverished children, who work in the streets, Selim weighs his thoughts about life and its privileges. When the narrator dramatically turns the focus to the other "coast" and begins recording a totally different way of life, readers are introduced to Seyda, enjoying her daily cruise in a speedboat with her son Gil. In another episode, the narrator voyeuristically follows Seyda's husband Oktay, the promising businessman, meeting his mistress, the famous actress Aysel Alsan, in a hotel room. We learn that Aysel Alsan happens to have a controversial reputation because of the "customers" she entertains in hotels and Oktay cannot escape being a prisoner to his quenchless lust for this woman, although he feels embarrassed about her lowly attitudes.

When all these characters meet in a club for dinner late at night, the narrator delves into their personal histories. Selim is a distant relative of Oktay, who

⁷³Mine Söğüt, *Aşkın Sonu Cinayettir: Pınar Kür ile Hayat ve Edebiyat*. (İstanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2004), p. 176.

has seen neither him nor Seyda since their wedding ceremony, which was the last gathering of the whole family five years ago. The narrator recalls Selim's earlier crush on Seyda, introducing into their meeting at the club the tensions of a long-withstanding and unfulfilled affection. Selim and Seyda exchange a few looks and dance for a while, but do not talk much that night. Their meeting is rather eclipsed by Seyda's disgust with false virtues of little bourgeois life and her self-imposed solitude thereof, in the middle of a crowded group of friends and colleagues of her husband. As episodes of personal histories, in which the characters appear along with some highlights of their pasts, intervene in the main plot, we get to know these characters better.

Following Aysel Alsan backward in time from her appearance in the hall of fame, we learn how, in her teenage years, she participated in a beauty contest, was rejected and abandoned by her conservative family when she appeared in the headlines, and took shelter with a young stylist named Haluk. Haluk and his gay partner sell Aysel to a wealthy businessman from Adana, who is ready to pay a fortune in order to have sex with a virgin. After she is violently raped by the vulgar businessman, Aysel begins a new life. She decides to work as a call girl and she earns a considerable reputation in a short time.

Seyda's memoirs of how she became attracted to her husband Oktay opens up a new story. In her memories, young Seyda leads the readers through her adolescent struggles, providing the intimate details of her getting to know her womanhood. Born to a Kemalist family of teachers, Seyda enjoys a well-disciplined childhood, during which she was introduced to several opportunities and was motivated toward higher education. After meeting Oktay at a casual bachelor party, Seyda reformulates her priorities. Under the illusion of her bodily hunger, she chooses marriage over her education at an early age, which deeply disappoints her parents. As she gradually discovers that her marriage had noticeably turned into a self-imposed exile, Seyda begins regretting her choice. However, she recognizes that in her accustomed prison, she is now already a slave to her controversial decision. The marriage turns into a powerful exhaustor that slowly empties Seyda. She finds herself with a total lack of power, which reduces her position in life to that of an observer, and deprives her of any kind of excitement. Prevented from expressing agency in any domain, Seyda slowly turns into a silent household object.

In another episode of memories, Selim's strong attraction to a young French girl becomes the focus of the narration which, through some romantic scenes from the May 1968 riots in Paris, sketches an additional story of transformation. Selim meets Josette, a first-year philosophy student, at a cheap cafeteria in Paris and finds himself orbiting her, astonished by Josette's spirited dedication to the idea of revolution. The young girl fixes Selim, in the sense that she lodges the concept of class struggle in his mind and educates him about material exploitation, imperialism, and revolution. Under Josette's guidance and assistance, Selim not only experiences a kind of sexual pleasure new to him, but also learns what being a leftist revolutionary means. He more fully grasps his third-world roots and begins to develop a distaste of his wealthy little bourgeois family. Through her, Selim grows to spiritual and political consciousness, and develops a serious interest in returning back to İstanbul. With these interlaced memories scattered throughout the entire body of the novel, *Yarın Yarın* constructs a world in which the fates of the characters depend on one another.

After the club dinner, Selim and Seyda become closer and find themselves in the magnetism of a love affair. Following a series of meetings, they create a world of their own and a complicated trope on their sexuality. Selim attempts to provoke leftist ideas in Seyda's mind, which in the course of their relationship, coincide with a bodily revolution that shakes the institutions of family and marriage. Although she understands and supports the premises of Selim's revolutionism, Seyda resists to such a transformation, because she feels too frightened to escape her prison. She champions a revolution against accepted notions of identity and of one's relationship to others, but hesitates to celebrate a class-based revolutionary ideal. She attempts to challenge Selim's Marxism with a childish Freudianism, arguing that the idea of revolt is related to a pathological desire for patricide. Seyda, nevertheless, transforms despite her will. She begins translating key political texts for publication in some fanzines of Selim's taste. She becomes interested in recent political debates and subscribes to a more politically engaged role. Finding herself more and more alienated from her former little bourgeois friends, their club meetings, etc., Seyda develops a controversial revolutionary consciousness in Selim's shadow.

Meanwhile, Selim initiates contact with some leftist clique and gets involved in a plan to kidnap the son of the recognized businessman Sulhi Gebzeli, another loyal customer of Aysel Alsan, for ransom, which will then be used to support the

comrades sent to the Palestinian guerilla camps for training. The plan works out and the group succeeds in kidnapping Çetin. They obtain the ransom as well. When some members of the group argue that Seyda and Oktay's three-year-old son Gil may be their next target to kidnap, Selim reacts ferociously, finding himself troubled within the perplexing grip between his revolutionary ideals and love for Seyda. Selim's hostile reaction initiates a discussion in the group about him being the descendent of a wealthy little-bourgeois family and his revolutionary prospects.

Visiting a working-class friend at his house after the long debate, Selim faces the disturbing fact that he is different. He observes Memet's exaggerated efforts to comfort him in the simple settings of his shack and finds himself alerted to his marginal position in the group. With their unconditional love, common agenda, and solidarity in overcoming the economical hardships, Memet and his wife Kadriye suggest to Selim that working-class life rests on higher values than his life. Impressed by the image of femininity represented by Kadriye, Selim finds himself as a child, fantasizing about Kadriye as his mother and imagining himself taking refuge in her calm, secure, and tender love.

Seyda never discovers Selim's political connections, although she suspects that he is involved in some unlawful acts. When the military seizes power, everything changes overnight. Learning that a member of his revolutionary clique is an informant, Selim decides to flee from İstanbul. He disappears after a last visit to Seyda, leaving her terrified and tormented by curiosity. In a few weeks, Seyda and Oktay see a photograph of Selim's dead body in the newspaper, which announces Aysel Alsan's marriage to Sulhi Gebzeli in the headlines. Seyda experiences an emotional breakdown in front of her husband. She becomes hospitalized and Oktay is taken into custody late that night by a group of officers that invade the house looking for Seyda and some documents that will prove her link to Selim. At the police station, Oktay denies having any information about either Selim's connections to the underground groups or his intimate relationship with Seyda. When released, he takes Seyda and their son to Switzerland and they return to Turkey years after. In the end, Seyda finds herself in the same old web of relationships with people whose company she previously disdained, trying to manage to living with her psychic trauma.

Yarın Yarın is an intriguing novel that portrays women's struggle not to be

defined and limited by the expectations of others and their desperate need for recognition. While immersing its readers first in the patriarchal oppression of a woman in her unhappy marriage and then her submission to a man, who draws her into a passionate love affair, *Yarın Yarın* explores the grounds for sexual, political, and social liberation. The love triangle leads to a bizarre confrontation between the objectifying husband Oktay and the seemingly emancipating lover Selim. Following the two bourgeois women Seyda and Aysel through their interconnected web of relationships and adding the working-class wife Kadriye to the picture, Kür principally examines the difficulties inherent in self-definition in women's experiences.

Pınar Kür challenges that are taken for granted about sexual moralities, marriage, and the family, and provocatively inserts certain elements of sexual liberation into the leftist agenda. *Yarın Yarın* presents a story that discusses the cultural significance of adultery and the purpose of the much-vaunted fidelity that lies at the foundation of the institution of marriage. And while doing this, it includes graphic sex scenes from the female protagonist's point of view. Kür's desire to challenge the male monopoly of writing about sex and relationships in such explicit discourses, was certainly unique in the political climate of the 1970s. Although she apparently was motivated by more than a desire to titillate, her challenge later had far-reaching consequences.⁷⁴ While examining the consequences of sexual awakening and the nascent rite of passage to adulthood, the novel also sheds a critical eye on the infrastructure of being in a political turmoil, in which men and women search for love and recognition, in spite of the struggles surrounding them.

Described in unabashed and explicit detail, Seyda's youthful curiosity about sex and her first sexual awakenings with her husband Oktay illustrate the transformative power of erotic desire. Seyda rediscovering herself with Selim constitutes another level of transformation. Her love for Selim makes Seyda a different person. It emancipates her from a destructive marriage by inducing powerful sexual desire and a will to renewal. Kür makes a difference among the March 12 novelists by letting "the wife" of the leftist revolutionary speak. In contrast to the writers, who depict the turmoils of the period with little reference to the family relations of the individuals engaged in militant political action, Kür turns to the intimate

⁷⁴At the height of the September 12 coup in 1980, *Yarın Yarın* is banned for four years on the grounds of obscenity.

relationships of the households. She gives voice to a woman, who finds her orderly world turned upside down by the passions that rise between a young leftist revolutionary and her. The lovers' emotional as well as political struggles propel the book along: Seyda's extraordinary loneliness is transformed into growing political awareness, but it fails to catch sheer individualism. In what follows, I will first shed a critical eye on the little bourgeois masculinities of *Yarın Yarın* and their revolutionary counterparts.

As compared with the novels analyzed so far, *Yarın Yarın* makes little bourgeois life a part of its detailed observations of the March 12 atmosphere. The novel offers an insightful consideration of the bourgeois upper-middle to upper-class lives, which are economically privileged and bereft of any hardships caused by the troublesome conditions of the politically and economically strenuous period. It is deftly illustrated, by means of the opening scene of the novel, which records Selim's heightened sensibilities about children working in the streets to assist with the expenses of their families, that the worlds of the privileged and the underprivileged are made distinct and the border is easily recognizable. Selim's little trip into the dark alleys of Beyoğlu confirms this rigid border. Locals do not show eagerness to talk to him. They force him to recognize that he is considered a foreigner, when they ultimately respond to Selim's attempts to initiate contact. Selim sits in a decent teahouse and tries to become a member of the underclass by not caring about hygiene and having a "drink that could have been contaminated by any type of fly and filth [içine her türlü sineğin, pisliğin bulaşmış olabileceği bir içecek]." ⁷⁵ Irritation as a consequence of dirt makes a noteworthy appearance in *Yarın Yarın*, just as it did in Erdal Öz's *Yaralsın*, and emphasizes Selim's class-difference. ⁷⁶

One of the locals asks Selim if he has come from İstanbul: "They asked him only one question. Did you come from İstanbul? This was a question similar to 'Are you from Europe, or America?' or even 'Are you from the moon?' How is it that somewhere that near to Beyoğlu can be so excessively far from İstanbul? In order not to increase the gap between the men and him, he decided not to ask the name of the quarter. He said 'I was wandering around'." ⁷⁷ This remarkable

⁷⁵Kür (as in n. 70), p. 19.

⁷⁶See Erdal Öz's use of hygiene as an index of forwardness/backwardness in his *Yaralsın*, on page 85.

⁷⁷Bir tek soru sormuşlardı ona: 'İstanbul'dan mı geldiniz?' Avrupa'dan, Amerika'dan hatta Ay'dan mı geldinizcesine bir soruydu bu. Peki ama Beyoğlu'nun bunca yakınında bulunduğu

question makes Selim think that no matter how much he rejects his privileges and tries to adjust himself to the conditions of the lower-class lives, he may not be able to escape being considered as a bourgeois, an alien by-passer. He grasps that he is already an “other” to the people surrounding him, who populate the central districts of İstanbul, but lack the economical privileges of their wealthy neighbors.

Later that evening, at the club, Selim does not feel at home either. The club dinner scene makes more clear what “privileged” means. We witness how the bourgeoisie keeps the joy of entertaining its privileges. The city club provides a meeting point for two separate stories that advance in different directions, letting us follow, on one hand, Seyda’s and Oktay’s alienation and Seyda’s becoming attracted to Selim and on the other, Aysel Alsan’s controversial fame and Oktay’s strong attraction to her which, at the end of the novel, is terminated by Aysel’s marriage to another rich businessman. Through the first plot, Oktay’s bourgeois upper-middle class masculinity is examined and contrasted to Selim’s politically engaged revolutionary masculinity. This is a symbolic clash of economic classes as well as a clash of masculinities. Through the second, the masculinities of Aysel’s oppressive and violent father, her greedy “customers,” her later boss Haluk, the famous gay *haute couture* stylist and his misogynist partner come to the fore. In terms of their relationships with women and other men, these masculinities illustrate the climate of social interactions between genders in the Turkish society of 1970s. Their tastes, manners, collective words, and misconceived standards of masculinity sketch how they built their senses of self through an arrogant negotiation of “the feminine.”

The dinner, which is set in the first parts of the novel, depicts lives experiencing another reality in the chaotic times of the country and draws a stunning picture of the “people of pleasures.” *Yarın Yarın* is not a dramatic vehicle for a position of overt critical commentary about the superiority of the social and economic status populated by the bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, a disdainful tone accompanies the observations of the narrator in the club atmosphere, who observes the peaceful and happy lives of people enamored of their superiority. The narrator discloses how rich families unite in a world of shallowness and luxury, in the minefield of great economic inequality. The accent accumulates on the corruptness of the little

bu yer İstanbul’dan böylesine uzak mıydı ki? Aradaki yabancılığı daha da çoğaltmamak için mahallenin adını sormaktan kaçınmıştı. ‘Dolaşıyordum da’ demişti. Kür (as in n. 70), p. 20.

bourgeois life, both in terms of their irresponsible consumption habits and also in terms of their deceit:

Seeing this picture, it is hard to believe to people who argue that these individuals yearn to eat and swallow each other, that they do not miss any chance to coerce and hurt each other, and that they writhe in sorts of jealousy and depressions. One hesitates to believe that the woman over there is not secretly sleeping with the man on whose arm she leans, but with the man opposing her; that the woman in blue is insanely jealous of the woman in green's hairstyle at whom she looks smiling; that this grey haired handsome man, just a few days ago, defrauded the fat man who lights his cigarette, of hundreds of thousands.⁷⁸

The narrator broaches the hypocrisy and moral blindness of the bourgeoisie, without voicing a didactic criticism. The moral decadence rather serves as a decor for the broken marriage of Seyda and Oktay, which is to be introduced to the readers, in the settings of the club through the strong mutual repulsion between them.

The decadence of this financially secure world of men and women provides hints about Seyda and Oktay's relationship. Oktay is a businessman, who is the descendent of a wealthy family. He represents a very traditional model of masculinity: he is the provider and, therefore, the owner. His wife Seyda is a woman bound in opulent inaction, who lives on Oktay's resources, because of a stale marriage contract. As a couple in denial that cater to the ideologies of bourgeois sexual respectability and try to keep their estrangement from each other as a secret in public, they fit perfectly to the web of deceit illustrated by the club dinner. Since Oktay's mistress Aysel Alsan is introduced in a brief episode, which precedes the club dinner, it is known that the stale marriage has already led to an extra-marital affair. The atmosphere of the dinner party implies that finding exciting antidotes to stale marriages is normal and Seyda too will not be judged, in case she decides to end her silent and undefined longing, and transgressed her wedding vow. The narrator astutely notes how Seyda does not move away, when the man sitting next to her attempts to get closer and closer, and hints at the

⁷⁸Bu kişilerin birbirlerini yemek yutmak için can attıklarını, birbirlerini ezmek, kırmak için hiçbir fırsatı kaçırmadıklarını, türlü kıskançlıklar, bunalımlar içinde kıvrandıklarını söyleyenlere inanmak öylesine zor ki bu görünüm karşısında. Şu kadının koluna yaslandığı adamın değil de karşısındakinin metresi olduğuna, şu mavinin gülümseyerek baktığı yeşilli kadının saç biçimini delice kıskandığına, şu kır saçlı yakışıklı adamın, sigarasını yakan şişko heriften daha birkaç gün önce yüz binler dolandırdığına inanması gelmiyor kişinin. Kür (as in n. 70), p. 30.

likelihood of Seyda to becoming unfaithful. Seyda's silence encourages the men courting her, although she does not explicitly exhibit flirting tendencies. Her ambivalence indicates that Seyda is, in a sense, part of this world, although she is somehow disturbed by the corruption of the people surrounding her.

After this context has been set, *Yarın Yarın* continues with the inner thoughts, feelings and introspections of its characters. Anxiously waiting for his mistress to arrive at the party, Oktay observes Seyda's ignorance of the men interested in her. His controlling gaze unveils the scopic regime of patriarchy and shows how Oktay relegates his wife to the status of a property. In Oktay's view, a Lévi-Straussian definition of marriage becomes salient. Marriage, according to this view, "is not established between a man and a woman, where each owes and receives something, but between two groups of men, and the woman figures only as one of the objects in the exchange, not as one of the partners between whom the exchange takes place."⁷⁹ Although already alienated from Seyda, Oktay keeps an eye on his wife as though she is an object owned and therefore should be protected by him:

He turned his eyes to the men sitting on both sides of Seyda. Filled with loathing, he examined each one of them. He knew very well the filth flowing through the minds of these men, with whom he used to go school and chase women. Does Seyda not really recognize how these bastards look at her, how they grin at her flippantly? Why does she not furrow her brows-she certainly knew how to frown-and end all these impudence? Who does she think will take her spectacle of not understanding, not knowing, being unaware of her environment?⁸⁰

The illustrated scopic regime shows that Seyda is seen as an object of the male gaze, a spectacle with an erotic effect. Kür portrays "the male gaze," as Laura Mulvey first theorized it, as a virtual hegemony.⁸¹ Oktay is an ogling subject who sees Seyda as a property, granting himself the role of the owner, who is expected to decide the fate of the property. Having the destructive nature of the male

⁷⁹Strauss (as in n. 72), p. 115.

⁸⁰Gözlerini Seyda'nın iki yanında oturan adamlara çevirdi. İğrenerek onları süzdü birer birer. Birlikte okuduğu, zamanında birlikte çapkınlığa çıkmış olduğu bu adamların kafasından geçen pislikleri kendi kafasının içindekilerce iyi bilirdi. Heriflerin kendisine nasıl baktıklarını, nasıl sulu sulu güldüklerini gerçekten görmüyor muydu Seyda? Neden kaşlarını çatıp da-peki iyi bilirdi kaşlarını çatmasını- bir son vermiyordu bu yalıtkanlıklara? Kime yutturuyordu yani, o hiçbir şey anlamaz, bilmez, çevresinden habersiz görünüşünü? Kür (as in n. 70), p. 38.

⁸¹See Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" originally published in *Screen* 16 no. 3 (autumn 1975), reprinted in *Feminism and Film Theory*, edited by Constance Penley (New York: Routledge, 1988), 57–68.

gaze questioned by a man, who knows how other men are looking at his wife, and who is bound to measure his own masculinity by his reaction to his wife being an object of desire of other men, Kür positions how masculinity settles in a double bind.

Paradoxically, Oktay confirms Seyda's position as an object but, at the same time, he expects his wife to be a volitional and acting subject, disdaining and refusing the men who approach her. Oktay claiming ownership of Seyda, by which the intimate power hierarchy in their broken marriage contract is communicated, is explained in the novel primarily by Oktay's superior wealth. Taking her lead from the materialist base-superstructure model, Kür shows how capital fashions a subject. Passages that register Oktay's past are abundantly filled with images of wealth such as his bachelor apartment, sports car, American bar, etc., which contribute to his charismatic masculinity.⁸² It is clear that his wealth is what makes Oktay predestined to occupy the role of the owner/master. We learn that, while hastily marrying him, Seyda was lured as much by his wealth as by any feelings for Oktay. That alerts us to Seyda's identity, the ambivalence and uncertainty of which obscures a single definition of her aims in being married to Oktay. Seyda, as she recollects herself, was once astonished by Oktay's very peculiarities that she now dislikes. As her love for Oktay gradually leads to her subjugation, Seyda remembers that she accepted the subservient position of wife-mother and that she turned into a frail and dependent woman, who devises her reason for existence as the bearing of her son Gil.

Although he does not love her anymore, Oktay is vulnerable to the possibility that Seyda may claim power at some point in her life and leave him. Oktay's terror illustrates an anxiety about masculinity, because he is fully aware that a promiscuous wife will make him a cuckold. The narrator records how his anxiety grows as Oktay sees the development of Seyda's scopic subjectivity:

Oktay was to ask Aysel for a dance again when he recognized that his wife was looking at something above his left shoulder, totally fascinated. He was startled. That was the first time he saw Seyda looking at something in such an engrossed, admiring, spellbound manner. He felt quite frightened. A woman like Seyda could only look in this manner at a bomb to be exploded or a savage animal ready to attack or... He swiftly turned his head. Looked

⁸²Kür (as in n. 70), pp. 23, 92.

back over his left shoulder. At the same time, he recognized some other people also turned to that way and a silence dominated the table.⁸³

The mysterious guest who approaches the table smiling at Seyda is Selim. Selim engages in conversation with Oktay, without taking his eyes away from Seyda. He somehow interrupts the Mulveyian economy of the male gaze, where men identify with a patronizing look and degrade women. His look is tender, attentive and inviting, rather than objectifying. By means of his challenge to the established economy of the male gaze, Selim is introduced as an unconventional man, who despises a social system that makes powerless objects of women.

After this first meeting, the narrator turns into a critical purveyor of other power hungry male stereotypes and shifts the discussion to Aysel Alsan's encounter with masculine power. Family as an institution becomes a key discussion in Aysel's story. The patriarchal tyranny in the household indicates how the institution of family hinders the individuals' search for self-identity. Verbal and physical violence characterizes the image of Aysel Alsan's father, Dündar efendi, who is a retired gendarmerie officer that assumes his home to be a precinct. Dündar efendi claims a destructive power at home. He manages his wife and three girls from the position of an aggressive king. Aysel recalls her troublesome adolescent years and remembers how being exposed to violence was common for herself and her sisters. Battering in the household was never considered a crime, and what to do and when to do it were totally under the control of Dündar efendi. After her beauty contest affair is discovered, her father beats Aysel to death and sends her away. Aysel finds herself abandoned in the streets. She takes shelter in the house of the photographer, Ali Alsan, who helped her to enter the contest, and waits for the results trying, in the meantime, to avoid Ali's expectancy of sex in return for what he has done. From domestic violence, Aysel's story develops into sexual abuse. Haluk, a promising haute couture designer, discovers her and directs Aysel toward a new career.

⁸³Oktay Aysel'i ikinci kez dansa kaldırmaya hazırlanmaktaydı ki, karısının ağzı açık ayran buldalası gibi, kendi sol omzunun üstünden bir yerlere bakmakta olduğunu gördü. İrkildi. Seyda'nın böyle dalgın, böyle hayran, böyle büyülenmiş gibi baktığını ilk kez görüyordu. Korktu bayağı. Seyda gibi bir kadın ancak patlamak üzere olan bir bombaya bu türlü bakabilirdi, ya da saldırmak üzere olan yırtıcı bir hayvana, ya da... Hızla çevirdi başını. Sol omzunun üstünden arkaya baktı. Aynı anda birkaç kişinin daha o yana döndüğünü ve sofradaki seslerin sustuğunu ayımsadı. Kür (as in n. 70), p. 51.

Haluk accommodates Aysel in the house that he shares with his partner Tarık, who feels no need to disguise his hatred of women. The gay couple sells Aysel's virginity to a rich businessman from Adana. This reckless sale indicates that their peripheral status in the power hierarchy as gay men does not make Haluk and Tarık supporters of women's causes. They do not constitute an exception from regarding females as commodities. The businessman symbolizes the power of capital to reduce everything and everyone to exchange value. The violent encounter of Aysel with the Adana guy is a symbolic representation of the rampant consumerism and self-interest of capitalism that turns women, just like everything else, into commodities. The businessman's being from Adana carries another social commentary. This provincial town, famous for its feudal social order, which is proficiently illustrated in Sevgi Soysal's *Şafak*, appears as a *dystopia* for women and a realm of macho masculinity.⁸⁴ The "Adana guy," the epitome of rich but mannerless men, brings with himself an entire economical history that produced local men of power, who worship money and who define their power with their money. In the novel, he is the personification of the inequalities created over years of ruthless capitalism.

Aysel's night with the businessman depicts a sorrowful rite of passage characterized by violence. It is not only a representation of a young girl being harassed and raped, but also a presentation of destructive and vulgar masculinity, which is suggested to exist beneath the capitalist system. In the image of the "Adana guy," violence and rape are shown as the inevitable associations of the feudal-minded men's horizons:

Aysel tumbled supine on the bed. Afterward, it was a nightmare-much much more than a nightmare, a sequence of deepest sufferings. Because the lights were on. And Aysel was deprived of the cloud of sleep, which, even in the worst nightmare, reminds one to be somewhere outside of a plausible reality. Because the lights were on. And Aysel was deprived of the possibility of taking refuge in a protecting, veiling, concealing, and warm darkness when she opened her tightly closed eyes. The lights were on. Because the Adana guy, whether a nightmare or a sweet one, was not in favor of living the night as a dream. He was trying to own the little and crisp girl under him with all his senses, and to exploit the concrete reality until the last drop. [...] The man, goes crazy after he sees the blood. [...] A moment comes

⁸⁴See Sevgi Soysal's look at men of Adana in her *Şafak*, on page 139.

when Aysel believes her vagina is filled with broken glass. Every time the Adana guy enters her, the pieces of glass cut her deeper... [...] Suddenly, unconscious of her acts and screaming, she shouts like an insane person: “Enough! Enough, I am dying!”⁸⁵

After this night, recovery for Aysel takes the form of a controlled response to the pain. She tries to rationalize rape by thinking that such a rite was necessary for her emancipation. She quickly becomes accustomed to the rules of the game and accepts being a commodity for mafia millionaires and hypocritical little bourgeois businessmen.

Kür does not delve into Aysel’s transformation in detail and chooses to leave the young girl’s ambivalent psychology in darkness. This renders the rape narrative to a climactic episode used for political purposes. Although the rape is a defining moment in her life and her experience transforms her in profound ways, Aysel does not subscribe to the role of a victim. She avoids the language of trauma and accepts rape in the least psychologically damaging way possible. Enacting an exorcism of her deep disgust for her father from the memories of her family, Aysel steps beyond the concerns of family life and seeks freedom in giving her body for male sexual satisfaction. By turning her abuse into a job with a promising salary, Aysel obtains her agency and claims power. Embracing the patriarchal image of a submissive woman is, in fact, part of Aysel’s hidden agenda to pursue her narrow interests for upward mobility. The poor girl from the slums of İstanbul climbs the steps to wealth and power one by one, and becomes an acclaimed actress. As she learns to appropriate the emotional burden of her experience, it becomes easier to disavow victimhood. Aysel creates a world of denial of her abuse, concerning herself only with the immediate future awaiting her. She creates a new woman out of herself, one who is almost immune to any kind of tragedy. She reevaluates

⁸⁵Yatağa sırtüstü yuvarlandı Aysel. Ondan sonrası korkulu bir düş- korkulu düştten de öte, çok öte, çok daha derinden duyulan bir acılar dizisiydi, bitmek bilmeyen. Işıklar yanıyordu çünkü. Ve Aysel en korkulu düşte bile kişiye elle tutulur gerçeğin dışında bir yerde bulunduğunu unutturmayan uyku bulutundan yoksundu. Işıklar yanıyordu çünkü. Ve Aysel sıkı sıkı kapadığı gözlerini açışlarında koruyucu, örtüp saklayıcı, sıcak bir karanlığa sığınmak olanağından yoksundu. Işıklar yanıyordu. Çünkü Adanalı, ister korkulu olsun, ister güzel, bir düş gibi yaşanmasından yana değildi gecenin. Elle tutulur gerçeği, altındaki ufacık, körpecik kızı yani, tüm duyularını kullanarak kendine mal etmek, son damlasına dek sömürmek çabasındaydı. [...] Adam, hele kanı gördükten sonra çılgına dönüyor sanki. [...] Bir an geliyor, Aysel, döl yolunun cam kırıklarıyla dolu olduğuna inanıyor. Adanalı’nın her girip çıkışında biraz daha derine batıyor bu cam kırıkları... [...] Birden, ne yaptığını bilemeden, avaz avaz bağırıldığını bile fark etmeden hatta, tam bir deli gibi haykırıyor. “Yeter, yeter artık! Ölüyorum!” Kür (as in n. 70), p. 220-223.

her role as victim by acknowledging her own power to hurt, a power that is a point of connection for Aysel to her father's powerful and destructive image.

The main emphasis of the stories of Aysel and Seyda is placed on how the senses of masculine identities exuded by Seyda's husband Oktay, Aysel's father, the wealthy Adana guy, and the gay couple Haluk-Tarık find their utmost expression in an ownership/mastership/leadership role. The male domination at home and the possibility of buying virgin girls with one's money, suggests an intrinsic link between patriarchy and capitalism. Kür adds a third dimension to this link. She questions the position of leftist revolutionary men with liberal tendencies for gender-equality, in a world ruled by the cooperation of patriarchy with capitalism. The revolutionary figures of *Yarın Yarın* are, in some ways, different from the bourgeois and feudal men characterized by their obscenities. But the revolutionaries have the ownership/mastership/leadership role in common with them. This leaves the reader with the challenge of differentiating between domination as a class dependent ideological issue and as a gender issue.

In *Yarın Yarın*'s panorama of masculinities, two men appear as extraordinary images: Selim the bourgeois-turned-revolutionary and Memet, the worker who happens to become the epitome of revolutionary masculinity in Selim's view. These men are among the "enlightened" figures of the novel, who notice the current situation that guarantees the economic comfort of a small minority over the poverty and suffering of the vast majority. In addition to their political consciousness, Selim and Memet also seem to differ from other men in their treatment of women. They are different, because they believe that women should be strong, politically conscious, and self-governing, or so they seem to believe at first glance.

With these images of leftist revolutionary males, *Yarın Yarın* questions if adapting socialism is a panacea for the unequal distribution of power in the male-female binary and whether it can challenge the ownership/mastership, which seems to be a feature almost naturally present in the image of masculinity. In contrast with other male figures of the narration, both Selim and Memet make their first appearances as men who treat women as "subjects." However, ironically, we follow how they end up entertaining their construction and appropriation of women. With Selim, Kür personifies a special cult of revolutionary masculinity with chivalric charms, but the idea of a chivalric man as the protector of women is always presented with some irony. In the overall picture, what she does is de-

mythologizing the leftist revolutionary hero, without debasing him. Kür credits the attempt to transform the country into a site for social justice, but does not let Selim's manufactured revolutionism go unnoticed.

Having grown up in the petty-bourgeois environment of a Kemalist family of teachers, Seyda remains in the secure world of having mainstream ideas and a mediocre life until she meets Selim, and becomes enmeshed into an affair with him.⁸⁶ She gradually turns into a woman, who exists only through her love, who is happy only when she is with her lover. While her relationship with Selim changes Seyda's life, she feels that it is far from perfect. Through the development of their affair, Seyda acquiesces to Selim's ideas, but she resists turning into a woman who sacrifices herself for the ideals of revolution. Her attitude toward the revolutionary movement is ambivalent; in the beginning, she ignores the possibility of active politics but, during the course of her relationship with Selim, Seyda learns about political responsibility and defines an arena of action for herself beyond the domestic sphere. She begins to articulate her own position expressing a political awareness. Her "education," her moving into a new identity, is a symbolic illustration of how political myths appealed to people in the protest world of the 1970s and placed them in collective action, making them "the political and social myths they accept."⁸⁷

At the beginnings of their affair, Seyda resists Selim's revolutionism, because she considers his devoted attachment to politics an obstacle to their intimacy. Her anxiety presents the ultimate conflict born of the problematic meeting of "the personal" and "the sexual" with "the social" and "the political." Seyda's dramatic attempt to occupy Selim's thoughts exclusively, draws another evocative picture of bourgeois ownership. Seyda tries to "own" Selim, because this is the only manner of attachment available to her. Selim, however, shows her that another way of love and life is possible. Next to the petty bourgeois family life associated with Seyda, Selim brings a state of permanent adolescence, which celebrates an unrestricted freedom.

⁸⁶The Kemalist parents symbolize Kemalism's serving as the guardian ideology of Turkey. Similar to Leyla in Emine İşinsu's *Sancı*, *Yarın Yarın*'s Seyda comes to the fore as a young woman attempting to break the protective shield covering her, and claim power and agency by means of a political choice that goes beyond Kemalism. Both novels place Kemalist fathers as the ground zero in a ternary scale and explore the negative and positive states for their heroines.

⁸⁷Michael McGee, "In Search of the People: A Rhetorical Alternative," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 61 (1975), p. 235-249.

Selim is a man living on the border between the privileges of the bourgeois class and dedication to revolutionary movement. He represents a bifurcation of a struggling kind. Dislike of consumerism becomes a characteristic of Selim after he learns from the young Josette in Paris to live like “a true revolutionary.” He then refuses the comfortability of the modern upper-middle class and builds a new life for himself. Selim voluntarily engages with the change ignited by Josette and he begins challenging his family’s political position, which has ignored the reality of class struggles. When unrest erupts among the workers in his father’s factory during one of his visits to İstanbul, Selim organizes a strike, which eventually achieves an improvement in working conditions as well as an increase in pay.⁸⁸ He later is dismissed from the factory and from the house by his father, and eventually begins living on his own resources, rejecting his family socially and economically. Nobility turned to common good defines Selim’s wit and humanity, and also constructs his masculinity with heroic overtones.

Heroism is further reinforced by Selim’s attachment to truthfulness. When he finds that Josette is someone else’s lover back in Paris, Selim is tolerant. His tolerance conveys the idea that the now-revolutionary Selim does not see women as objects belonging to him. His tolerance challenges the traditional concept of “fidelity” and the perceptual confines that it imposes. While describing the events to Seyda in one of their trysts, he applauds Josette for being truthful:

I could never learn where she went. We met months later, but then I didn’t ask. Speaking of why she left, she left because, no wonder, she had found somebody else. [...] If she wanted somebody else, just because I had been in her life earlier... How should I say? Should she have given priority to me? In any case, the real disgrace would be her waiting for me, although she desired somebody else... You know, it would be lying then.⁸⁹

As a woman who loves a man but continues to live with another, Seyda feels terrified about perfectly fitting to the description of “the real disgrace”. However, Selim does not recognize the influence of his words at all and keeps tutoring Seyda about his experiences in Paris.

⁸⁸Kür (as in n. 70), p. 191.

⁸⁹Nereye gittiğini hiç öğrenemedim. Aylar sonra yeniden karşılaştık ama sormadım o zaman. [...] Canı başkasını çektiyse, sırf ben eskiden vardım diye bana... Nasıl diyeyim? Öncelik hakkı mı tanınmalıydı yani? Başkasını istediği halde beni beklemesi ayıp, ayıp olurdu herhalde... Yani yalancılık olurdu. Ibid., p. 197.

Selim's tutorial provides a negotiation of moral uprightness, muscle work, and self-discipline. We learn how he decided to construct his life on truthfulness, how he tried to earn his living by working as a porter in Paris, and how he had to abstain from going to restaurants and cinemas because he was living on a very limited amount of money. This new vision changes Selim's view of women as well; he says to Seyda that he loved her "without paying attention to her beauty [güzelliğine hiç dikkat etmeden]."⁹⁰ Clearly, the new Selim interprets aesthetics as a realm of bourgeois decadence. He tries to repress love and other sentiments of so-called bourgeois individualism.

Ironically, he does not hesitate leaning on another bourgeois moral a few seconds later. Before he leaves, Selim refers to Seyda as his "wife," and tells her how she should behave from now on.⁹¹ He enjoys Seyda's finding joy in being upgraded to the position of a "wife," because it gives him a sense of dominance. Kür delicately shows how Selim fluctuates between different sets of morals. As a man who repudiates fascism politically, but who embraces authoritarianism, Selim personifies a contradictory masculinity. In flux, Selim's idea of himself introduces anxiety into his relationships. His romantic farewell draws Seyda into a world of illusions. Kür makes the reader feel as though Selim's resistance to own and his tolerant state of mind about sexual freedoms is being haunted by a desire to own and dominate, in the course of his attachment to Seyda.

Selim's bourgeois past is further expressed through his struggle for recognition in revolutionary circles. Inspired by the actualities of the conflicting fractions of the leftist revolutionary movement of the times, Kür fictionalizes the debate on the authenticity of revolutionaries of bourgeois descent. The disagreement in the leftist clique about the plan of kidnapping little children not only stages a clash of different class identities, but also gives rise to a negotiation of different manners. During the fierce debate, it becomes clear that some members of the leftist clique are eager to subscribe to a new set of ethics and destructive politics. The divide between word-centered ethical vocations and deed-centered activities, a recurring theme in the discussion of masculinities in March 12 novels, becomes visible in this clash. Kür draws attention to the ambivalent case that what is often referred to as someone's politicization may rest upon a sacrifice of that person's self to the demands of a particular ideology. Selim's struggle for recognition in

⁹⁰Kür (as in n. 70), p. 199.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 208.

the leftist clique introduces to the story two very important questions, namely what politicization is, and through which ways it would appropriately be reached. Backed up by Doğan and Memet, against those blaming him for belonging to the bourgeoisie, Selim defends himself as a devoted comrade. However, he cannot help being seen as a class traitor.

When he invites Selim to his shack for dinner after the meeting, Memet tells him how he met his wife as a young girl free of politics at the factory during the strikes. Their story reveals another transformation toward political consciousness, which once again positions a man as the guide of a woman to a higher state of mind. Memet strongly opposes Kadriye's loyalty to feudal morals and her attempts to hide herself from men. He imposes new morals with an angry voice:

How come you think that men will sit at the table and you will serve, have your dinner in the kitchen like servants? You are a member of this house... We share our life, we share everything. Why not share our table, our friends? If I bring guests to this house, they are guests of us both... You also have things to say to them, and things to hear and learn from them...⁹²

Women sitting at the same dinner table with men is a familiar metaphor used by women writers of March 12 to illustrate the challenge posed by women to feudal ways of thinking in provincial households.⁹³ Memet has a revolutionary vision and his affirmation of an equality of genders at the dinner table is tightly connected to this vision. Kür, however, shows that this is indeed an imitation of respectable manners and that Memet is not eager to give up his role as a leader.

Kadriye, who was once a 'traditional' type of woman that tries to seclude herself when among men, changes with the counseling of Memet. Later, when Memet prides himself on this transformation, his words shed light on his degrading view of women. Using his wife Kadriye as an example, Memet argues that socialism is possible because there is a chance that its premises will be understood "in case things are told in a certain way even to the most ignorant, the most silly person [en bilgisizine, en akli ermezine bile yolu yordamıyla bir şeyler anlatılırsa]."⁹⁴

⁹²Ne demek erkekler oturacak da sen hizmet edeceksin? Yanaşmalar gibi mutfakta karnını doyuracaksın? Bu evin bir kişisinin sen de...Yaşamımızı her şeyimizi paylaşıyoruz, soframızı neden paylaşmayalım? Arkadaşlarımızı neden paylaşmayalım? Ben eve konuk getiriyorsam, ikimizin de konduğu bunlar... Senin de onlara söyleyecek sözün , onlardan işiteceklerin, öğreneceklerin var... Kür (as in n. 70), p. 273.

⁹³See how Sevgi Soysal in *Şafak* depicts gender-based divisions in Adana with a similar problematic, on page 140.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 274.

Memet's emphasis on his wife's "learned" capacity to imagine, think, and decide, makes an ambivalent revolutionary out of Kadriye. Memet feels proud of his wife but he uses her as an example of being able to understand the premises of socialism from the position of ignorance and foolishness. This is another version of not being able to achieve absolute freedom from one's roots. It echoes the ambivalence that cloaks other characters of the novel with inconsistencies. The Adana guy becomes a businessman and earns vast amounts of money, but he lacks cultural maturation and continues to be a violent feudal man. Selim attempts to subscribe to a revolutionary masculinity but he carries with himself the burden of being of bourgeois descent and tastes. Seyda regrets being a wife owned by Oktay, but she enthusiastically celebrates being a wife owned and appropriated by Selim. Kür rambles through the same maze-like paths again and again, and sends the message that people's realities are composed of contradictions.

Being apolitical is treated in the novel as a feature that introduces a threat to the platform of understanding, since it motivates people to think individualistically. However, it is also the case that blind devotion to any political cause can easily turn someone into a prisoner of ideological conditioning. *Yarın Yarın* does not advocate class alliances or revolution, but it dramatizes the capitalism-driven life, negotiating the possible ways of understanding between people of different class identities and political engagements. The novel also does not mean to resolve the dilemma of gender inequality in favor of the male or female. It rather aims to develop a critical practice that is mindful of both.

Although Kür makes extensive use of the romantic tradition of hatred of bourgeoisie, she also shows that such hatred turns into a false key in the case of Turkish socialism, where the revolutionary movement is populated principally by people of the upper classes, as symbolized by Selim's struggles. The narration genders the feudalism and the bourgeoisie with a decadent masculinity, which sees women as objects, and is characterized by sexual hunger and violence. Both Oktay and the Adana guy use women to achieve and retain their sense of superiority. The novel genders the revolutionaries with an alternative masculinity, which views women as companions, but makes it manifest that the companionship rests on a leadership ethos, if not on an ownership ethos.

In *Yarın Yarın*, Kür draws various images of masculinity, all of which somehow embrace the idea of the male as the constructor of the female. Oktay, the decadent

bourgeois man, is captured in erotic thoughts and corrupt sexual affairs, while Memet emerges as the ideal working-class man, who works and takes care of his family and carries the responsibility of being the “head” of the household. Paradoxically, both men are introduced as the creators of their wives. Selim symbolizes a state of transition between these two images of masculinity. On one hand, he has a wealthy little-bourgeois past like Seyda’s husband Oktay and, on the other, he tries to become a working-class revolutionary like Memet.

Yarın Yarın is a powerful and gripping story that reaches behind the relationships of love, the institution of marriage, and a group of people attached to changing the world, who find themselves in a complicated war in the chaotic atmosphere of March 12. It is an exploration of the faculty of decision and of the idea of love as a liberator from social oppressions. The novel reflects tensions felt both in love and in ideologies and does not advocate one over the other or argue for a particular solution. Pınar Kür examines adultery, while questioning the possibility of a “new world” in which the superiority of passion as a source of moral behavior over the formal rules of the society and religion is acknowledged by the people. The array of masculinities marshaled in the novel as “superior” powers, indicates that the relationships of women to men are defined by bonds of dominance and subordination. The novel skillfully documents that Seyda’s relationship with Selim eventually settles into a power hierarchy. It shows elegantly that revolutionary men too, attempt to appropriate women. In this sense, Pınar Kür’s *Yarın Yarın*, can be considered as an extension of Sevgi Soysal’s *Şafak*, which questions if leftist revolutionary masculinities can automatically be positioned as anti-authoritarian allies of women in the fierce fight with fascism.

Yarın Yarın yields different stories of transformation that negotiate gender and mobility. Gender appears in the novel as a feature closely linked to the specificities of other axes of identity. Unlike some male novelists of the March 12, who focus on the traumatized relationship of the male revolutionary to the state, and depict a crisis of masculinity in the position of being victim to an repressive state power, Kür points to a crisis of masculinity already inherent in the social relationships of men. She shows that, in every act, men negotiate their position in the power hierarchy. The critique embedded in the tensions of an illicit love affair targets institutions such as family and monogamy, challenging their accepted meanings. *Yarın Yarın* is primarily concerned with analyzing the exercise of masculine power, but Kür also occupies herself with analyzing women’s apparent

acquiescence to it. She sheds a critical eye on the complicity of so-called “victims” of domination in their own victimization. Illustrating the female appropriation of domination, oppression, and pain, *Yarın Yarın* shows that it is necessary to consider individuals within their complicated network of relationships, to fully grasp the reasons behind their tendencies to become dominant over others.

2.4 *Zor*

Sevinç Çöküm's Dünder Taşer novel award winner *Zor* (Hard) revolves around the voices of a group of people, a miniscule portion of the society, who are mirrors of the political clashes and of the martial law period at the outskirts of the March 12 coup.⁹⁵ In contrast with Emine Işınsu, Çöküm does not limit her characters to rival political camps.⁹⁶ With a more careful political balancing, she gives voice to people whose lives cut across regional, class, and religious lines. Although it is labeled as a novel, *Zor* is rather a hybrid form of the genres of novel and short story. It neither presents the reader with a single main story of a well-developed character that guides the whole narration nor introduces individual stories that are self-contained. Through the pathway signaled by the story that opens the book, the focus of the narration shifts from one person to another and one story grows out of another. Çöküm deftly handles the cacophony and lets different stories link to each other to form a whole. *Zor*'s importance to this project lays in its attempt to reach behind the political upheavals of March 12, taking its lead from the intersection of discourses of masculinity with provincial, class and generational identities. Aside from political clashes that characterize the 1970s, the novel emphasizes another kind of a civil war. A clash of rural and urban cultures by focusing on a child worker's attempts to obtain a place in men's networks in the city. It also carries the critique of bohemian revolutionism as baggage in its narrative.

Zor begins with the story of a child worker, who searches wealth and freedom in the city. It attempts to shed light on the lives of ordinary people and explore the development of a boy of peasant origin into adolescence in an atmosphere bounded by financial troubles. The novel opens with a casual dinner scene in an unidentified village in Anatolia. It introduces the elderly Zühre Nine, his son, daughter-in-law,

⁹⁵Sevinç Çöküm, *Zor*. (İstanbul: Türk Edebiyatı Vakfı Yayınları, 1978).

⁹⁶Sevinç Çöküm (b.1943) graduated from the Turkish Language and Literature Department at İstanbul University. She is chiefly known for her short stories that depict the plight of the poor living in large cities. Short story collections: *Eğik Ağaçlar* (Stooping Trees, 1972), *Bölüşmek* (Sharing, 1974), *Makina* (Machine, 1976), *Derin Yara* (Deep Cut, 1984), *Onlardan Kalan* (Left From Them, 1987), *Rozalya Ana* (Mother Rozalya, 1993). Novels: *Zor* (Hard, 1977 Dünder Taşer Novel Award), *Bizim Diyar* (Our Place, 1978), *Hilal Görününce* (When The Moon Rises, 1984 Writers' Association of Turkey Novelist of the Year Award, National Culture of Turkey Foundation Literature Award), *Ağustos Başağı* (August Grain, 1989), *Gülüzlüm* (My Rose Faced, 1989), *Çırpıntılar* (Flurries, 1991), *Gece Rüzgarları* (Night Winds, 2004), *Tren Buradan Geçmiyor* (Train Does not Pass from Here, 2007).

and grandson Kerim, and quickly moves into the family's decision to send Kerim to İstanbul, to be apprenticed to skilled work, a move which is expected to help him find a future job that pays a living wage. After a dramatic farewell from his mother, unhappily wed sister Sırma, and grandmother, Kerim arrives in İstanbul. He takes shelter in the house of his aunt Hatice, who contacts a few friends to secure him a temporary job in an iron atelier. Although the narration begins with Kerim's story, it soon makes a turn and provides brief episodes from the lives of some other people whom Kerim comes across in İstanbul. These people allow Kerim's dilemma of struggling for acceptance in the urban masculinity that both fascinates and intimidates him, to be revealed. Kerim becomes a secondary character at times when the plot shifts to track their struggles. Cameos of some other minor characters also interfere. These stories do not link but rather depict a variety of versions of the events that characterize a specific historical period from diverse perspectives.

The story unfolds during an anonymous time marked with street tussles and chaos, until the narrator hints at the current time of the narration by means of an extra-diegetic event: the murder of an "ülküçü" student, Yusuf İmamoğlu, who is murdered by gunshot at the University of İstanbul, on June 8, 1970. *Zor* maintains the tradition of registering the dramatic historical events of the 1970s as a tactic to reinforce the reality effect of the narration. Another such reference is the kidnapping of Ephraim Elrom, the Israeli Consul General of İstanbul in May 1971. In the narration, references to such specific events punctuate the atmosphere of fear and chaos that had laid siege to many cities by 1970s. Except these two references, there is no other detail that can help the reader to establish an objective chronology for the text. Although the narration attempts to achieve a higher degree of realism by means of such references, it is rather stingy with details about time and place.

The iron atelier provides an opening to the story of Kazım, a worker who, during the course of the story, emerges as a controversial role model for Kerim in İstanbul with his rebellious ways. They become good friends and spend time together, until Kazım explains to Kerim his plan to threaten his rich uncle to obtain some money from him. Kazım believes that workers are exploited and he argues, rather prematurely, that their boss militates against them having their portion of the wealth. He complains about the toiling working class lifestyle and argues that they should not be confined to such dehumanizing conditions.

Kazım speaks out for the struggles of the working class people, but throughout the narration he continues to be a stranger to the readers. The narrator does not let us learn more about him or his rich uncle and, toward the end, when he emerges with his fraudulent plan, he turns into a villain without much narrative effort. His hunger for money conveys the idea of a world in which everything can be seen in terms of an obscene struggle for profit. When Kerim pays a visit to his aunt Hatice's brother-in-law İsmail Ağa, who works in İzzet Bey's villa, İzzet Bey becomes the major focus of the narration. Kerim and İsmail Ağa witness İzzet Bey's quarrel with Hakan, a mysterious guest hiding in the villa. Following İzzet Bey's reminiscences, we learn about his unsuccessful marriage, his mother's interference in his life and his brother Cevdet's troubles. İzzet bey's memoirs tell about Cevdet's being married to a woman of lower class, Nesrin, and having a son, Ertuğrul, who happens to become a dilettante crusader in search of revolutionary prospects, by the time the period of martial law arrives in 1970. As İzzet Bey contemplates Ertuğrul's leaving home and taking shelter at his maternal aunt Devrim hanım's house, the point of gravity of the narration shifts once more and becomes fixed on Devrim hanım.

The narrator informs the reader about Ertuğrul's maternal aunt, who is identified by the unconventional name Devrim, which means "revolution" in Turkish. Devrim hanım's past is illustrated by the gloomy portrait of a broken-apart family with a mother, about whom people speculate to have worked in brothels and a father, who began acting like a devoted Muslim in his later years and even went on a pilgrimage to Mecca in order to increase his profit. Raised by her stepmother Neriman, Devrim grows into a woman in search of solidarity and relentless attachment. She eventually finds herself as a revolutionary leftist. Devrim's memories about her troubled childhood serve as an explanation for her "destructive" ideological attachment. As she becomes the focal point of a deepening story, the narrator fixes the attention on her skills, lifestyle, way of thinking etc. Frequented by a group of young bohemian revolutionaries, Devrim's house introduces the reader to some other "decadent" lives as well: we meet Birgül the actress, Tamer the Maoist, and Nazan the dancer. All of these individuals give countenance to Ertuğrul and his aunt's images as radical people, with their eccentric thoughts and behaviors. The girls are self-determined and promiscuous, and Tamer is a domineering atheist.

When Kerim's sister Sirma flees from her brute husband, who harasses her

because she cannot conceive, and goes to İstanbul, she becomes a maid to Devrim hanım, without much explanation of how such unconnected figures happened to come together. In Sirma's naiveté, the narration makes manifest her inability to question the ubiquity of violence inflicted upon her. Sirma describes his husband to Devrim hanım with a sexually charged discourse of virility as though she considers being beaten to be a positive sign of her husband's masculinity. The narrator does not make a greater story of Sirma's experiences, but moves more squarely toward the characteristics of the frequent guests in Devrim hanım's apartment. The view of the group of young people that meet in Devrim's apartment is derogatory. They are described as a collection of misfits, who identify with a superficial rebellion against authority. They take their radicalism from a counterculture that speaks of freedom, but limits itself only to sexual freedom, which in fact means unrestricted sexual relations. The narrator expresses that these youngsters are, in fact, some bohemian children of rich families, who try to present themselves as revolutionaries. They are individuals born to privileged families that provided them with a relatively safe starting point in life. They are members of the upper classes of society. They are idle and irresponsible.

With such a background, the narrator enthusiastically supports the idea that it is impossible for the revolutionaries to understand the struggles of lay people. Their oppositional stand against their own families and traditions of Turkish culture does not grow out of their appraisal of the conditions of the country and the struggles of its people, but out of intellectual boredom. Revolution is, therefore, nothing but a kind of game for them. Similar to Kazım, the worker-turned-thief, Devrim's guests cannot escape being one-dimensional. The narrator reads their minds and quotes their words, but hardly informs the reader about their pasts or lets them speak about themselves in a detailed manner. Their denial of values carried by older generations is the only common characteristic attributed to these people and the narrator imposes the idea that this denial is not an attempt to find a unique new voice, but a tactic for the misfits to make themselves "recognized."

Revolution, in *Zor*, is a romantic predilection of upper-class intellectuals and youngsters, who desperately attempt to attract some attention by their reactionary attitudes to the old concepts of family, religion, sex, and society. The authoritarianism of the left is communicated by domineering male characters such as Tamer and the gender hierarchy that keeps women in low positions. The service

Ertuğrul entertains in Devrim's apartment by female comrades, is presented as a symbolic portrait of how genders meet in the revolutionary leftist agenda. Even in this supposedly liberated community there is still a gender hierarchy, which places women in the service of men, but women cannot complain because of the strict rules. After all, the narrator suggests, these women are not wise enough to doubt their lifestyle. As the narration progresses, the "traitor" profile of the revolutionaries is enhanced. Adultery also becomes a part of the stories of the revolutionaries and it underlines the lack of proper morals in their lives. Ertuğrul finds out that Birgül has been involved in an affair with his father and, toward the end of the book, we discover that Devrim hanım's beloved Ömer is also a married man.

A new story opens when, all of a sudden, Kerim decides to move to the house of his mother's sister-in-law, Nigar. The setting changes to another neighborhood in İstanbul, with similar stories of the urban poor. As the narrator delves into Kerim's experiences in his new home, the stories of Nigar, her son Nadir, daughter Enise and their tenant Cevriye hanım gain priority. In this new look at the city, Nadir emerges as an alternative image of masculinity for Kerim. He acts both like a brother and a father to him during his stay in their house. We witness Makbule, Enise's teacher, catching her students Enise, Aysel, and İlknur in the class, looking with admiration at the photograph of a handsome revolutionary student leader. Makbule's ambivalence in deciding how to respond to her students' pleasurable contemplation opens up another story, which draws the reader into the life of Enise's friend Aysel.

We learn that Aysel lives with her sister Cevher and mother Cavide in Enise's neighborhood. Enise's father does not let her keep company with them because of Cevher's image as a promiscuous girl. Jealous of her sister, Aysel attempts to attract some attention from boys, by behaving irresponsibly: she backs up the revolutionaries and does drugs. Makbule's struggle with the youngsters is further expressed by means of the problems she has with her nephew Güneş. Güneş lives with her aunt and during her short appearance in the novel, she remarkably challenges Makbule's awkward patriotism. Enise's brother Nadir, who falls in love with a singer Nesrin, and the tenant Cevriye hanım, who tries to learn about the current political situation by insistently asking Nadir funny questions, enhance the story, but they do not develop it further in a different direction by their experiences.

The novel reaches a climax as Kerim returns to his new home drunk after a night spent with Kazım “the revolutionist worker” and his friends. Nadir does not let Kerim in the house and leaves him out in the garden obviously not in control of himself and in tears. In the morning, when he rushes to work, Kerim has a fight with Kazım in the iron atelier and as their boss questions him, he exposes Kazım’s plan regarding his rich uncle. His boss makes Kerim understand that a lie animates Kazım’s vision. He explains to him that he is not wealthy at all and has no plan whatsoever to rob him of his material prosperity. Meanwhile, İzzet Bey meets Ertuğrul in Devrim hanım’s flat and tries to convince him to go back to his parent’s house. He supports Ertuğrul in his desire for autonomy, but reminds him of traditions and of the importance of love for the family. When she learns from İzzet Bey that his son finally agreed to talk to her, Nesrin makes her way to Ertuğrul but a driver hits her and flees after the accident. The novel ends with a beginning, as Kerim leaves Nigar’s house because of the embarrassment of his drunken night and settles in the slums of İstanbul together with his sister Sırma.

Zor features a simple plot with many separate lines and characters. It provides a set of parallel stories that moves along the same timeline. With a constant shifting of the ground, the narrative’s focus moves from one character to another. This shift also makes the political sympathies of the narration a little difficult to determine. However, the selection of the murder of Yusuf İmamoğlu in the beginning of the narration to illustrate the state of chaos in the city among many other murders, is telling. As the story develops, the crosscurrents in the narration more strongly indicate a dislike of class-based politics and a critique of sexual liberation. They punctuate the book with an aim of making visible the ambivalent premises of the revolutionary movement and alerting the readers to the revolutionary agenda.

The difficulty of forming a consistent whole on the basis of a group of people with different beliefs provides the novel with its central metaphor and title. There are multiple individualities in the book, gendered and classed, and the multivocality of the narration addresses the idea that it is hard to live together when individuals have different ideological orientations and beliefs. In the book, the character who voices such a difficulty is İzzet Bey, whose presence links Kerim’s story to Ertuğrul’s. Although it seems that the narrative viewpoint seeks to demystify the idea of an absolute truth by means of giving voice to a series of

different characters, this novel too has a certain tendency to stigmatize leftist revolutionism. In Kerim's struggle between the idea of being an insurgent and being a committed worker with trust in God's justice, another rivalry becomes apparent. Kerim finally chooses to stay within the safe boundaries of his family's traditions, but he feels tormented under the pressure of revolting against the unjust.

The narrator associates revolutionism with idle people, who subscribe to an ambivalent rebellion against traditions and authority in their search for compensating the pain caused by their troubled pasts. The discourses used by the narrator provide glimpses of hatred against sexual liberation. The will to control and discipline sexuality becomes manifest in the narrator's offensive remarks about the bohemian life style. Despite the presence of such clichés, there is also an attempt in the novel to register the sexual hunger of the lower classes. Instead of creating celibate characters who commit or sacrifice themselves to national causes and praising their blood sacrifices, as Emine İşinsu does in *Sanrı*, Çokum speaks of fantasies waiting to be fulfilled.

The logorrhea of characters takes the reader into a world of signs. The characters (a peasant boy, middle and upper-middle class intellectuals, workers, teachers, students, the urban poor) depict a broad picture of the common realities of the martial law period. There are all kinds of socializing forces present in the text, from sibling interaction to some other influences one encounters in relation to parents and the elderly, peers, and teachers. Relating events from their own points of view, each one of the characters provides implicit comments about the political polarization that paralyzed the society in the year 1970. *Zor* contains references to the worsening socio-political climate of İstanbul in between the successive minor plots that describe the characters' individual stories. People talk about crimes and kidnappings, about a certain type of anarchism that has taken the city hostage. Choosing to include certain real-life details and leaving certain others outside, *Zor* points toward violence born out of the irresponsible behaviors of leftist revolutionaries. I will first chart how rural and urban masculinities settle as opposites at the base of this novel. Then I will focus on the revolutionary masculinities and explore *Zor*'s treatment of relationships revolving around a dualism of commitment and betrayal.

Zor opens with the pressing demands of rural life expressed by Kerim's grandmother Zühre Nine. This elderly woman speaks of the hard times she experienced, of the wars and the material difficulties, which burdened her life in the village. Her recollections introduce the local context which has shaped young Kerim's masculinity. As a country boy, Kerim's struggles illustrate an agrarian life with limited resources, hard work, and poverty, which draw young men away from their villages into the big cities with a desire for mobility upward toward higher classes. Despite all the troubles it causes, the verdant village is romantically associated with peace and security. It provides images of a pre-industrial and glorified nature. The peaceful image of the village serves as a tool to illustrate what may be called "peasant virtues," which people of cities, who are characterized by a violent industrialism and a decadent culture, lack. "The city," on the other hand, is a place where the social ties are weakened, people are already alienated from each other, distrust hinders trust in relationships, and anarchy reigns.

In this brief introduction, gender differences also speak out. Introducing Kerim's unhappily wed sister Sirma, Çokum shows how young women, whose major duty is to give birth to successive children, are seen as slavish household workers within the conservative values of the village life. How gender defines rural life becomes visible in Sirma's troubles. Unable to conceive, Sirma finds herself useless in the village. She hopes to join Kerim in the city and begin a new life, surrounded with more productive economic opportunities. Her struggles indicate that there is an asymmetrical gendering directed toward men and women in the feudal conditions of village life. In Sirma's story, we witness how men come to the fore as superior agents of power. The narration describes that in the village, sexual division of labor is perceived as mainstream gender ideology and its violation means disrupting order.

Masculinity, however, is a burden as well as an asset. *Zor* quickly develops into a search for subjectivity, as Kerim sets off from his anonymous Anatolian village, which is only implicitly said to be somewhere on the north coast, and goes to İstanbul. This is a search for wealth and power, as well as a search for recognition. This major story of the novel opens an opportunity to discuss "identity production." Kerim's trip introduces the reader to questions about political and gender identity, and also social and organizational relationships between the sexes. When the setting changes from a provincial town to İstanbul, a whole set of values changes overnight. People in İstanbul are not like people in the provincial

towns. This pushes the story into an exploration of identities, whether they are determined by presupposed norms and values or in flux.

Kerim feels different in the city and recognizes his position as a second-class citizen who is looked down upon. To punctuate the urban-rural schism, Çokum utilizes the now-urbanized relatives of Kerim, in the house of whom he takes shelter. When Kerim's host, aunt Hatice, intimidates him about his clothes and belongings, the feeling of unfamiliarity in a dangerous jungle of big streets and high buildings mixes with fear and shame.⁹⁷ In an terrain unfamiliar to him, Kerim tries to begin a new life and much of the social commentary of the narration derives from Kerim's encounters with the urban society. Çokum portrays the city in decay and violence, and in a complete contrast with the peaceful village life. Besides the material hardships and the explosiveness of the political polarization that invades the streets, the depiction of city life introduces questions about the effects of the loss of tradition and the loosening of community ties. In their rural oasis, Kerim's family is presented as the epitome of the happy family. Other families that Kerim encounters in the city are overwhelmingly problematic. They are either loveless or broken apart.

Aunt Hatice's family exhibits a comfortable working class existence, at least for the grandchild Önder, if not for themselves. Kerim notices the exaggerated motherly care shown to Önder and compares himself with him, only to realize his underprivileged childhood. There is no explicit "discrimination" of Kerim, but airs of superiority linger. The narrative provides insight into the elements of contemporary life that influence the characters: aunt Hatice suspects that her presence as a co-habiter in her son's house may be a problem, her son suspects that accepting Kerim into the household may introduce new troubles. A weakening of social institutions and a loss of belief in solidarity echoes in these suspicions. Changes in manners and how these changes in fact reflect more profound changes in Turkish society are portrayed, with these city people's ambivalence about showing hospitality. After witnessing Kerim's paternal grandmother Zühre Nine, who is a happy co-habiter and respected member of the family in her son's house back in the village, the different dynamics of the city alert the reader to some other possible shortcomings of urban lifestyles. The problem of the loosening of family ties is further complicated with new forms of attachment that come with modern life. In the city, Kerim encounters a lifestyle that is utterly foreign to him and

⁹⁷Çokum (as in n. 95), p. 20.

this new lifestyle eventually becomes a test that measures his skills and capacity as a man.

The iron atelier to which he is sent, presents Kerim a new center of values and an alternate form of community that requires commitment. The first lesson for Kerim is that this is a masculine community. The atelier symbolizes an abrupt break with adolescence, since having a job is what will principally make Kerim leave boyhood behind. This rite of passage is punctuated by means of a difficult task assigned to Kerim in his first day at work. His boss tells him to cut a piece of steel, which he fails to do, and finds himself in shame: “he pulled down [the lever] lowering his body. His power did not suffice. His looks slid onto the faces of other children. They were laughing [Asıldı, gücü yetmedi. Bakışları çocukların yüzüne kaydı. Gülüyorlar].”⁹⁸ The intimidating performance of masculinity, before an impudent audience teaches Kerim that a male must suffer various kinds of pain in order to gain the status of a “man.” It is also a reminder to Kerim that his image as a man, very much depends on the opinions and reactions of others. The machismo of the workplace indicates that the atelier stands for skills that are culturally considered to be male prerogatives. Finally having accomplished the task, at the expense of some pain in his hands, Kerim passes the first test necessary for becoming a part of the working-class masculine world. A young worker in the atelier, Kazım, befriends Kerim. His knowledge about football clubs, cinemas, and popular songs of the day, introduces Kerim to a new world, in which he monitors and imitates Kazım to make himself comfortable.⁹⁹ This friendship opens the door to urban culture for Kerim, who is still innocent of the dangers of “modern” lifestyles.

Filling the canvas of Kerim’s growth from rural boyhood to urban manhood, the narrator makes references to the vast extremes of political upheavals that terrorize the city. In a visit to İsmail Ağa, aunt Hatice’s brother-in-law, Kerim is told about current unrest in the city. He learns that “anarchists” murder people, rob banks and explode dynamites. With this brief information, he moves one step further to becoming a genuine part of the city, making out of himself a citizen susceptible to what has been happening around.¹⁰⁰ This visit shifts the focus of the narration to İzzet bey, İsmail Ağa’s boss, whose reminiscences of

⁹⁸Çokum (as in n. 95), p. 30.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 36-37.

his childhood in İstanbul mix with a debate with Hakan, a guest in his villa. We learn that Hakan is one of the leftist revolutionaries, who participates in mass demonstrations and boycotts that prevent lectures at the universities. An authoritative speech follows, with an angry tone and by İzzet, about Lenin, Mao, and their hidden ambitions, leading Kerim, who happens to hear this lesson to Hakan in the next room, into questions.¹⁰¹ Listening to them, İsmail Ağa says to Kerim that Hakan's family was wealthy, and they should have better started their beloved "revolution" by distributing their wealth to the poor, instead of "getting engaged in clashes."¹⁰² This blatant attack on the bourgeois-turned-revolutionaries, which sarcastically indicates that they already have much less to gain and much more to lose from social equality of the classes, sets the moral tone of the novel. As the focus shifts from one character to another, several other individuals, all of whom have their own biases, attempt to challenge the grand narrative of class struggle with their personal interventions.

In a sudden turn, we find Kerim having decided to move from his aunt's house to the apartment of his mother's sister-in-law Nigar. Nigar's son Nadir, who happens to have extraordinary prestige although he does not have a job, appears as an alternative image of masculinity in Kerim's vision. Seeing him hiding a gun in his closet, Kerim associates Nadir with superior masculinity, which reminds him of rural images of men with guns.¹⁰³ Nadir explains that he needs a gun to protect himself in the communal fights:

Who knows, if I had tried hard, I could have become an engineer, perhaps. Would I be then in those fights? I don't know. I often ask my sister, "What will you do with all that education," I say. Diplomas, diplomas... This has no end. On the other hand, I think it is something favorable to learn. Did I make myself clear? I ask her, if she will become a student of boycotts after all this education. So... As I said before. One should make a place for him in the crowd. I don't even know which language this word boycott comes from.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹Çokum (as in n. 95), p. 46.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 102.

¹⁰⁴Ben sebat etseydim, mühendis falan olurum belki. Kimbilir... Şu kavgalara katılır mıydım bilmem. Kız kardeşime söylüyorum hep, okuyup da ne yapacaksın diyorum. Oku oku... Bu işin sonu yok. Bir yandan da düşünüyorum ki öğrenmek iyi bir şey. Anlatabildim mi? Sen de boykotçu mu olacaksın diyorum ona. İşte... dediğim gibi. Omuz vurup kendine bir yer açacaksın. Necedir bu boykot kelimesi, onu da bilmem. Ibid., p. 104.

Nadir's words about his struggle for power in the community to which he belongs makes it evident that there is already a fight going on in the streets, which is free from politics, yet still fueled with violence. By means of the suggested link between the mafioso hand-to-hand combat of uneducated men and the "political" street-fight of university students, *Zor* seems to argue for violence inherent to masculinity, instead of violence inherent to some particular ideology. However, the narrator makes the distinction between "violence as terror" and "violence as defense" in such a way that the story conveys the message that "not all violence is one and the same" and quickly legitimizes a specific set of masculinities, while criticizing some others.

The narrator treats Kerim with sympathy and gives voice to his search in the avenues of manhood. This search repeatedly challenges an essentialist notion of masculinity by drawing attention to Kerim's naiveté, to "the feminine" inside him. Surrounded by different figures of masculinity, as well as different ways of political engagement, Kerim tries to form a meaningful sum for himself. His search in the avenues of manhood is not free of erotics. The narrator sheds light on Kerim's experiences in adult movie theaters and his discovering himself as a man: "He is not used to salacious movies. An irritation, for some reason. He cannot put them out of his mind. Every now and then, the woman he saw in that last movie comes to his mind. In his spare times, or when he goes to the toilet in the atelier, he keeps fantasizing a naked shoulder seen through improperly drawn curtains."¹⁰⁵ Showing that sexual matters are limited to the realm of fantasies and dreams for Kerim, Çokum acknowledges a sexual hunger, which is expected to be inhibited. The narrator treats Kerim's innate sexuality as a dangerous instinct that should be repressed. It is as though sex is worthy of respect only when men are properly bound in bonds of marriage. Lust for women becomes a part of the story as a temptation that Kerim is expected to resist for the sake of ambivalent "nobility." As his desperate need for a private atmosphere makes having a place of his own an important goal in Kerim's life, we watch him engage, more closely, in a search for money.

The setting up of a separate household stands for another masculine task that Kerim encounters in İstanbul. After Kerim finds himself in pursuit of financial

¹⁰⁵ Açık saçık filmler tuhafına gidiyor. Bir huzursuzluk nedense. Aklından çıkaramıyor bir türlü. Son gördüğü filmdeki kadın, zamanlı zamansız takılıyor aklına. Boş kaldığı zaman, ya da atölyenin helasına girdiğinde açık bir perdeden görünen çıplak bir omuz hayal edip duruyor. Çokum (as in n. 95), p. 153.

support to build an autonomous life, Kazım's political engagements interfere with the story of Kerim much more visibly. Kazım argues that they constitute the exploited class as workers and asks Kerim's help to rip off his rich uncle. A more sophisticated explanation of work and capital comes from Bekir, another worker, who quickly widens the discussion of revolution to the matters related to God and religion. Bekir advises Kerim to give up being a theist and expecting the good from the heavens.¹⁰⁶ Wealth, he argues, should be obtained by force, if necessary. His fierce opinions about God and money, position workers' revolution as an attack aimed at destroying religion, confiscating private property, and creating a world in which the working class would govern. Although they principally seem to ask for a fair economical balance, Kazım and Bekir's display of frustration is coded as a rage against the rich, instead of a general account of inequalities. The narrator neither criticizes nor applauds the frustration and will to act, but makes it clear that to rip off the rich is not at all a chilling response to social injustice.

This maneuver makes the major scare tactic of the novel visible. Even if they begin with good intentions of justice, the narrator implies, people can undergo a change of heart and become violent thieves. What paves such a path is the lack of trust in God's justice. The presence of the author in the narrative becomes clearer as her ideology dominates. Against "atheist communism," Çöküm mobilizes folk Islam and uses Kerim to speak her mind. Kerim's reaction makes us see that he is formed by an unaffected belief in natural social hierarchy: "My grandmother Zühre says... But you do not know her. She says God is generous to one, as much as the generosity of one's heart. Without work, it is not possible to be an owner [Zühre ninem derdi ki... Ama siz bilmezsiniz onu. Allah herkesin gönlüne göre vermiş. Çalışmadan bir şey sahibi olunmazmış]." ¹⁰⁷ Kerim's "innocence" characterizes him as an outcast from the collective delusion of bringing social justice by force. Kerim tries to challenge Bekir's atheism with his grandmother's advice of "hard work" and "deserving" the money, but he recognizes that his words are taken as the naive beliefs of a child to the grown-up men around him. Kerim's fears of being looked down upon depicts how to be alone against a team of two brings with it a set of fears of being alienated and singled out. The political agreement between Kazım and Bekir makes Kerim feel like an outsider. Bekir refers to him as the "child of a corrupt system" and advises Kerim to forget

¹⁰⁶ Çöküm (as in n. 95), p. 158.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

about his Grandma Zühre, in case he “wants to live to the fullest.”¹⁰⁸

It frustrates Kerim that he is considered less manly by Bekir and Kazım, and that his trust in God’s justice seems infantile to them. When Bekir and Kazım put an end to this discussion with a plan to go out for a drink, heightening the difference between a boy and real men, Kerim hastily decides to join, in order to be a part of the adult male spirit and prove himself worthy of respect. Drinking appears as another test that Kerim finds himself obliged to take in order to prove his manhood. The narrator emphasizes the forces of conformity and underlines Kerim’s attempts to imitate Bekir and Kazım. Taking a step which will prove his manhood, Kerim spends the night drinking. The meeting, however, turns into an emasculating drama in the end, instead of making a man out of him. Later that night, back at the apartment, Nadir harasses him for coming home drunk and he does not let Kerim in.¹⁰⁹ Beatings, which are obviously late in instilling the necessary discipline in the boy, serve as a brutal reminder to Kerim of his responsibilities to his family. Nadir reminds Kerim that parental authority should be respected even if it means that dependence and, therefore, boyhood could last forever. Submitting to Nadir’s authority, Kerim accepts being “a boy” despite all his efforts to become “a man.” His troubles communicate how boys struggle hard with demands imposed upon them as sons and how they are made obliged to select from a range of masculine roles, making them both bread winning men and submissive boys at the same time.

When Kerim exposes Kazım’s plans to his boss the next morning in the atelier, he also insists that he wants to return to his village. The idea of leaving the city and going back connotes a lost war. It means that Kerim gives up his dreams of upward mobility and decides to follow his father as a farmer. His boss however, reacts to Kazım traitorous plans understandingly. He says he became a boss with hard work and suffered much in the meantime, suggesting that everyone who tries and works hard can make an adequate living in the country. Making “the boss” a part of the huge economic injustice, but only in the role of a victim, this explanation serves as a reaction to the class-hatred based politics symbolized in Kazım’s plans. Kerim’s dialogue with the boss ends in ambivalence, leaving in the dark whether he is fired or not, but at the end of the novel, we see him return

¹⁰⁸Çokum (as in n. 95), p. 159.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 161-162.

to the atelier instead of his village.¹¹⁰ He moves back to his aunt's and later he and Sirma find a place to live on their own. *Zor* ends, as Kerim pulls himself back into the track that will help him avoid the danger of being leavened with "communist" ideas. Recognizing his misdeeds, Kerim accepts his limited lot in life and goes back to the iron atelier. The story closes with Kerim's sister Sirma trying to figure out how to make a home out of their recently rented shack and dreaming of greater conquests to come. The end acknowledges that his striving to rise above the margins of poverty is only truly acceptable when he pays respect to his boss and keeps up the hard work.

Zor's exploration of revolutionary realms reveals stories of men, who challenge belief in hard work and respect for the morals of the society. Their challenge also highlights the novel's anxious focus on issues such as family and the limits of individuality. The novel abounds with insights concerning the nature of changing household relationships, as well as the possible consequences of individual remedies to unite individuals in "the happy home." The anti-authoritarian movement of the late 1960s, which made young people in Turkey begin to reject traditional patriarchal family values and duties, appears in the narration as a concomitant danger posed to family life. In *Zor's* conservative cant, it becomes a manner of corrupting young and innocent minds, and destroying society. Çokum attempts to construct a concept of revolution in crisis for seeing family as a self-restrained and oppressive institution, and rejecting family togetherness in the name of freedom. On the one hand, the narration shows that family is indeed a repressive institution. But on the other hand, it tries to redefine domestic alliance as a source of companionship and emotional solidarity.

In *Zor*, family functions as a powerful organizing force, which resolves the contradictions of the social forces. The well being of the family is taken as a critical element of the well being of society. This assumed relationship draws heavily on the tacit logic of traditionalism, which rises on the belief that moral values are passed on to younger generations by traditions learned and practiced in familial relationships. Looking at the period from such a perspective, *Zor* positions the political unrest of March 12 as a result of family degeneration. The drama of the overall story contains several tricky relationships within unhappy families, between sisters and brothers, and between parents and children. Despite cursory moments of warmth, it is more the moments of struggle within the families that

¹¹⁰Çokum (as in n. 95), p. 172.

give rise to the individual stories. *Zor* switches among different first person voices of opposing political positions. The narrative technique of the quilt-like story suggests a lack of cohesion which, in the end, is left as an unresolved question.

The story of Kerim's search for individuality in the big city coincides with the search for autonomy of the young leftist revolutionaries. Hakan's quarrel with İzzet bey at the villa, which Kerim witnesses, serves as the proxy that links the two independent stories about search for freedom. From Hakan's "irresponsible" image, the narrator shifts to the stories of Ertuğrul and Devrim Hanım, some other "comrades," whose common denominators are expressed, in between the lines, as an unhappy childhood and an adventurous nature. In parallel to İzzet bey's remembrance of his childhood, some details about these characters become more visible: Ertuğrul is İzzet bey's nephew, the son of his brother Cevdet, a doctor, who married Nesrin. Devrim Hanım is Nesrin's half-sister who works as a teacher. The omniscient narrator revisits İzzet and Cevdet's childhood and adolescence briefly, and also reviews Cevdet's marriage to Nesrin.

In this quick sketch, Devrim's troubled childhood also is revealed. Abandoned by her mother to a money hungry father who quickly remarries, Devrim experiences an uneasy adolescence, longing for a mother to whom she can be close. In a mood of dislike, Devrim recalls how her stepmother Neriman explained her about her mother's having worked in brothels and how she deliberately favored her daughter Nesrin over her. The unhappy childhood suggests that Devrim's visions, attitudes and achievements are influenced by the absence of a loving mother. The absence of a strong moral voice or spiritual value in Devrim's life is suggested by his father's exhibitionary pilgrimage to Mekke, to increase his reputation in the eyes of the others and to maximize his profit in business.¹¹¹ Later in her adult life, Devrim finds "the cold rationale of revolution" to be an almost natural extension of her grief-stricken and bewildering life.

In *Zor*, the agents of revolutionism are principally defined by an abundant material wealth. While Kerim must travel to cities unfamiliar to him to find a proper job and work in dangerous conditions to make a living, the revolutionaries Hakan, Ertuğrul, and the others kill time in boycotts and live on their rich families' resources. Since work is represented as the key dimension of Kerim's masculine identity, the revolutionaries settle in a cluster of subordinate masculin-

¹¹¹Çokum (as in n. 95), p. 111.

ity. Although they present themselves as the sufferers of the current political conditions, it is argued that they actually benefit from the student upheavals. The narrator reproaches the rebels for their failure to act upon a consistent political agenda. What these young people do, the narrator argues, is to gather in obscure places, memorize certain ideological premises, parrot them, and engage in a web of deceit to prove themselves marginal, considering the moral codes of the society. They have an exhaustive "party line" rhetoric, which they actually do not understand. They seem to deny the duty of the individual to serve society, but do not see any inconsistency in their slavish engagement to an ideology that likewise requires certain duties which, by means of the references to the anarchy in the city, is shown to be consisted of unreasonable "bombings" and "shootings."

The totalitarian style of the revolutionary group makes its obsession with freedom a problematic one. The stories of the revolutionaries are dominated by discourses that allude to a spiritual poverty gained at the cost of the so-called "freedom" search. It is vehemently expressed that identity manipulation characterizes the lives of revolutionaries: Hakan recalls Tamer's saying "Your God is Mao. You will always remember that! [Senin Allah'ın Mao'dur. Bunu unutmayacaksınız!]," illustrating how far this manipulation goes.¹¹² Devrim hanım invalidates grieving for the dead comrades saying "Of course some people among us will die [elbette ölenlerimiz olacak]" as though the principal premise of becoming a good revolutionary is to be stripped of any emotions.¹¹³ Working class revolutionaries, on the other hand, such as Bekir and Kazım, have more realistic problems. They negotiate to work hard but earn less when compared to their boss. Still, they are too, considered victims to the ceaseless flow of identity manipulations of demanding ideologies. Their complaints about class differences and exploitation of lower classes are quite easily transformed into a pernicious greed for money during the course of the narration, when Kazım emerges with the idea to obtain money from his rich uncle by brute force. This act transforms working-class masculinities into men seeking to advance their narrow self-interests.

Kerim is an epitome of rural-based masculinities. Bourgeois-turned-leftist revolutionary masculinities embody a new tradition, which is at odds with aspects of the lower classes, and appear to be an antithesis to Kerim. Kerim and Ertuğrul's stories coincide in a search for affirmation of individual agency. Both have a

¹¹²Çokum (as in n. 95), p. 47.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 107.

yearning desire to have a separate house, and rule their lives themselves. This search inextricably mixes with a search for masculine affirmation. In contrast with Kerim, Ertuğrul's struggles are principally intellectual: he is somehow a part of the revolutionary movement, but he hesitates to dedicate himself to it and rather prefers to live in a void directed by his pleasures. Kerim's story claims the virile attributes for working men. To work means to have dignity, to be capable and responsible. This vision pushes Ertuğrul, who is confined to Devrim's apartment, the household space in which men do not entirely belong, to the peripheries of masculinity.

Ertuğrul's life connotes a change in discourses of gender relations, but this change also contributes to the assumed loss of masculinity. Although he establishes an ambivalent authority over women in the domestic sphere, Ertuğrul is actually a lay-about, who is not under the burden of any kind of responsibility for the household. By positioning Ertuğrul in the feminine witnessing position without any genuine agency and will to act, *Zor* validates the argument that the qualities associated with manliness belong both to the domestic sphere of family life and the outdoor spheres of public life. Refusing marriage as the proper domain for sex, Ertuğrul escapes his potential responsibilities as a husband. Living on his family's resources, he also ignores the masculine responsibility of having a job and assuming agency in public life.

The fear of dissolution of traditional family values is expressed most vehemently by means of the sexual freedom attributed to the revolutionary leftists. Çokum shows sexual freedom as the key to, and criterion of, all other freedoms in the revolutionary vision. Ertuğrul forms a kind of commune in Devrim Hanım's apartment and allows some of the guests, those who please him most, to stay. Moving to Devrim's apartment in an effort to construct a life of his own with his own terms, her half-sister's son Ertuğrul becomes "the revenge" Devrim longed for her entire life. Devrim sees taking Ertuğrul away from his family as a victory against those who left her loveless and helpless. Ertuğrul's search for autonomy, his rebellious and disagreeable manners, show that the form and function of the family is in transformation. The family itself is no more than a set of personal relationships among people related to each other as if accidentally. Ertuğrul has a different set of values, beliefs, and engagements than his mother, as well as his father. He reacts to his parent's expectations of him to comply with tradition. With a disdainful tone, the narrator points out the shortcomings in Ertuğrul's

perception of his parents as outmoded people. He looks at his family members almost as items of consumption and the fact that he lives on their resources also attracts criticism.

The most striking episode, which communicates Ertuğrul's alienation from his family, comes at the end. When their maid phones to Devrim's apartment in order to inform Ertuğrul about the accident that caused his mother's death, he shows no sign of grief on the phone, but only asks if she has already died:

- "I am Pakize," the woman said.

[...]

- "Your mother had an accident my boy!"

Hanged down beneath the blanket, Nazan's first toe is moving. She is in the flabbiness of just having had sex.

- "Is she dead?"

- "Yes...My dear lady Nesrin passed away"

Nazan stood up. Her face turned pale.¹¹⁴

The scene attempts to tie Ertuğrul's radical individualism and his lack of human sensibilities to the so-called "sexual revolution" embedded in the leftist revolutionary vision, which caused young people to lose track of love and respect. This is not a sexual freedom that cherishes and respects the body and the soul, *Zor* argues, but one that abuses them.

To puncture the pretensions of such an abusive "freedom," Çöküm sheds a critical eye on the position of women in the revolutionary movement. In contrast with the institution of marriage, which has the capacity to build respectable forms of manliness and womanliness, the liberal partnerships build some decadent forms of manliness and womanliness. With a dramatic juxtaposition of female figures, the narrator argues that appropriating revolutionary ideals does not challenge women's oppression at all. Revolution as such, has no intention whatsoever of liberating women from their designated roles as housewives and mothers. On the contrary, it keeps women in the service of men. The proof comes with the

¹¹⁴- "Ben Pakize," diyordu kadın.

[...]

- "Annene araba çarptı oğlanım!"

Nazan'ın battaniyeden sarkmış ayağının başparmağı oynayıp duruyor. Az önceki birleşmenin gevşekliliği içinde.

- "Öldü mü?"

- "He ya...Getti benim Nesrin hanımım"

Nazan doğruldu. Yüzü solgunlaştı. Çöküm (as in n. 95), p. 215-216.

submissive manners of Ertuğrul's partner Nazan. We find the revolutionary leftist actress Nazan washing Ertuğrul's filthy underwear and obeying his orders. The submissive image of Nazan constitutes a stark contrast with the warrior image of Sırma, the unhappily-wed sister of Kerim, who abandons her husband and claws her way out of the village all by herself. The uneducated village girl makes her own "revolution" and becomes a maid to Devrim, in the city. Although we are not allowed to witness this major transformation in a detailed manner, we are invited to appreciate it as readers.

Sırma coming to the city and becoming a housemaid to Devrim, is not only a story of success. It is also a story of hypocrisy, because it presents Devrim's appropriation of cheap female labor in her house, which contrasts with her enthusiastic attachment to working class discourses. Devrim orders Sırma around in the house and then watches her tired body and dull skin with pity:

Seated on a couch, Devrim was filing her nails.

- Did you finish the carpets dear? Shall you wipe them once? Wipe them, will you? Add some vinegar to the water, to make them shine.

[...] She looks so old. A face that has never met a softening, moisturizing lotions. Her skin is crusted. It suddenly becomes red. She can be fifty, or twenty-five...

- How old are you?

Sırma replies without stopping, and raising her head.

- I am around twenty four.¹¹⁵

Devrim's bossy figure inspires the question of whether it is acceptable for a genuine supporter of worker's rights to be a bossy appropriator of female labor. *Zor* brings to light the problematic position of Devrim and the resulting conflicts for those caught in the middle, between bourgeois lifestyles and working class ideals.

Another gender role discussion comes to the fore with the terror of Makbule, the teacher, who finds her students circulating the photograph of a revolutionary leftist student leader. This mysterious student leader is probably Deniz Gezmiş,

¹¹⁵ Bir koltuğa oturmuş tırnaklarını törpülüyor Devrim hanım.

- Halılar bitti mi anam? Silsen mi bi kere? Siliver hadi? Son suyuna sirke kat, parlasın.

[...] Nasıl da yaşlı görünüyor. Yumuşatıcı, nemlendirici kremler görmemiş bir yüz. Kabalaşmış derisi. Bir çabuk kızarıyor. Yaşı elli de olabilir, yirmi beş de...

- Kaç yaşındasın sen?

Hiç durmadan, başını kaldırmadan cevaplıyor Sırma.

- Yirmi dört varımdır. Çokum (as in n. 95), p.119-120.

who not only became a controversial hero, but also a style icon in the 1970s.¹¹⁶ This episode probes into the youngster's continued infatuation with iconic figures. In Makbule's terror, the narration depicts the struggle to absorb new definitions of freedom. What terrifies her is not that the political clashes of the times produced their popular images, but that to be a leftist revolutionary causing anarchy has become hip. Girls' looking at the photograph of a man admiringly is threatening, not only because it suggests erotic identification with "the beast," but also because it implies a dangerous development of scopophilic pleasure in girls. Female gaze generates a resistance to patriarchal power, as it "destabilizes the fiction of [male] authorial intent and control."¹¹⁷ Once again, the revolutionary struggle meets the agenda of sexual revolution on some controversial ground. The shock value of girls' fascination with the image of some revolutionary-leftist student leader is that a single photo turns young female subjects, who are assumed to be sexually passive, into intently gazing onlookers. Çöküm treats this change as a threatening involvement of a radically different culture. She interprets pleasure seeking girls as women in men's clothing, which is not acceptable, and diverts attention to the phenomenon of revolutionary 'sympathizers' by the fact that the revolutionary leftists inspire sorrow and even sympathy in young people, who have not received political maturity.

The major thrust of *Zor* is Kerim going to İstanbul and his ambivalences concerning the morally and physically healthful influences of rural living, and the temptations of the city, which attempt to lure individuals away from familial pursuits. The unsettling feeling of displacement symbolized by Kerim's trip to the city, is a common emotional state for the modern subject. The novel portrays the urban youth culture that emerges from oppositional political movements as an assault on the established notions of femininity and masculinity. *Zor* accounts in some detail how the political fighting has exhausted people and made them bitter, but what it, in fact, tries to describe is the disintegration of the family as a social formation. It suggests that class discourses corrupt people and create beasts with a tendency to rob and kill. In the way the revolutionary characters are presented in the story, *Zor* has a strong resemblance to Emine İsmi's *Sancı*. It depicts the revolutionaries with negative characteristics and bemoans the death

¹¹⁶See Figure C.5, on page 318.

¹¹⁷Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: Race Femininity and Representation*. (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 20.

of the greywolves. By means of İzzet bey, the narration gives certain credence to a search for autonomy and voices a call for the transformation of authoritarian relationships to a new set of relationships constructed with patterns of mutual respect between generations. However, Kerim and Ertuğrul's respective searches for individuality receive criticism from the narrator when the two young men go beyond the limits and avoid their responsibilities to their families.

Clearly, the enemy which Çöküm opposes is a caricature of the revolutionary left, which does not see sexual freedom as tied to revolutionary outcomes, but sees it as tied to a sexual revolution. *Zor* attacks atheism and sexual liberation using scare tactics, and reviews the deeply rooted values of Turkish society, which are argued to be hospitality, and respect for the elderly, the family, and the God. A fear of radical social changes influences the narration, which mobilizes a retrogressive ideal and pushes family relations and traditions to the fore as crucial sites of cultural collectivity. The shaken confidence of people in their fellows takes on a threatening meaning in the context of the civil war conditions of İstanbul. *Zor's* insistent emphasis of the ills of class discourse seeks to pit people against each other by proclaiming that the enemy of the nation in the upheavals of March 12 is not external but internal. Anyone who struggles to accept his share of life and tends to rebel and revolutionize is a potential criminal, and a traitor. Even a moderate questioning of poor conditions is treated as an act with a hidden agenda to make communism palatable to the adolescents and young adults. The rehabilitation offered, is to trust God and wait for the good. *Zor* invalidates human choice and nullifies the possibility of changing history through conscious effort.

CHAPTER 3

Masculinities, Femininities, and the Military The Impossible Modus Vivendi (1979)

The previous chapter documented how masculinity was shaped in *Şafak*, *Sancı*, *Yarın Yarın* and *Zor*, four novels that reflect an intense national crisis of political identity, in which different political groups presented themselves as the real vanguards of a free Turkey. Women writers go outside the parameters of victimized men, and supplement the critique of earlier examples of the March 12 novel with a new analysis of patriarchy. Novels explored in the second chapter add to the radical critique of the novels analyzed in the first chapter of the conventions of male heroism, some firmly established remarks about the currency of gender conventions in general and conventions of masculinity in particular. There was a fear of being considered “less manly,” as a leitmotiv in the novels analyzed in the first chapter, which gave voice to the persecuted male. Novels analyzed in the second chapter show that the anxiety of being considered less manly by others is not limited to men under oppression. It is rather a natural part of masculinity and even subjugated masculinities may assume similar anxieties when they feel that their place in the power hierarchy is under threat.

After the boom in 1976, a profound silence fell on the March 12 novels. Toward the end of 1976, the atmosphere in the country tended to become tense again. When the May riots organized by the Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions (Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, DİSK) in 1977 ended in an ambush following the unidentified gunshots, political conjuncture led to more chaos. The specter of another military intervention dominated political discourses. In 1979, Ayla Kutlu published *Kaçış* (Escape), Pınar Kür published *Asılacak Kadın* (Woman to be Hanged), and Demir Özlü published *Bir Küçük Burjuvanın Gençlik Yılları* (Adolescent Years of A Petty Bourgeois). Kutlu's *Kaçış* is a novel that illustrates the end of the 1960s and the beginnings of March 12, with a specific interest in blind dedication to political aims and the burden such dedication brings to people's lives. This novel was, in a way, a suggestion to look back at the March 12 experience to understand what the current atmosphere may bring. Kür's *Asılacak Kadın* is built upon the silence of a woman accused of murder by the court. Although she does not link the story directly to the throes of March 12, Kür touches upon issues central to the March 12 experience and develops a discussion of the "justice" of a patriarchal culture in *Asılacak Kadın*. Özlü's *Bir Küçük Burjuvanın Gençlik Yılları* incorporates the same existentialist concerns that characterize his earlier work and conveys a critique of the modern individual during the turmoil of the political clashes in Turkey.

Two additional novels published in 1979 directed the attention back to the memories of March 12. Tarık Buğra published *Gençliğim Eyvah* (Alas! My Youth) and Adalet Ağaoğlu published *Bir Düğün Gecesi* (A Wedding Night). Tarık Buğra's *Gençliğim Eyvah* is a novel that revolves around the dangerous possibility of revolt against the leader of an underground group, the oppressive and predatory father figure. It focuses on a clandestine movement aiming at anarchy, the leader of which is a frenetic and demonic man. *Bir Düğün Gecesi* depicts a wedding party connecting the life of the daughter of a cutthroat capitalist, who rejected her family's political orientation to become a revolutionary militant, to the life of the son of a general, who is known to have obtained success through his role in achieving order during the events of March 12. The novel describes the inner struggles of the guests at the wedding party, who question their individual histories.

When another intervention took place on September 12, 1980, it silenced all mass opposition overnight. Turkey found herself in the midst of an oppressive

regime the destructiveness of which dwarfed that of March 12. Those who survived the March 12, 1971 coup as activists dissolved after the September 12, 1980 coup. This last intervention was so destructive that a liberal medium, which allows questioning of the regime, could flourish only years after the intervention and, by the time such an atmosphere had formed, there was no collective body of writers but individuals dealing with the memories of September 12 in their writings. September 12 impaired people's engagement with oppositional politics irreversibly, and distanced writers from dealing with political issues in their works. A collective literary interest, which challenges official history and mainstream politics, never formed again.

Gençliğim Eyvah and *Bir Dügün Gecesi* merit further attention in this study, because they offer a kind of epilogue to the March 12 novel, both by virtue of their chronological status, and also because they made March 12 part of a larger historical framework. They relate to the March 12 as a result of some continuing reflexes in Turkish modernization instead of an isolated event in Turkish history. This perspective illuminates how the "Bihruz bey syndrome," a syndrome diagnosed in the Ottoman literature of the 1890s can be a relevant key to understand March 12 novels published in the 1970s. The question that arises from such an approach to March 12 novels is whether hypermasculinity can be explained by a model of self-control embraced during the modernization process. Military-civil dichotomy is no longer pertinent as a theme in these novels, since it illustrates a climate in which people are already socialized into a culture of militarization. People, in other words, are now soldiers deep inside. The third chapter aims to elaborate on the masculinities in March 12 novels, by exploring these two narrations, which evaluate March 12 in a broader historical and cultural framework that intersects with the "despotism" inherent in human behavior against the weak.

Tarık Buğra employs the popular theme of the right-wing novelists of March 12 and evaluates the chaos of the period as a result of the revolutionary leftists' disseminating hatred. *Gençliğim Eyvah* illustrates how the leader of the clandestine underground group attracts innocent young students and uses them to achieve his political aims. The novel approaches March 12 as "a masquerade of masculinity," in which young men risk their lives to prove themselves worthy of attention. It does not, however, praise blood sacrifice such as Emine Işınsoy's *Sancı*. Tarık Buğra rather constructs a story of search around a young man's vulnerable working-class existence. Torn between his love and his responsibilities,

the young man reflects with anxiety on what makes him submissive to the woman he loves as well as to his mentor, the leader of the underground group, who sees him as his heir. In its exploration of young people finding allure in paramilitary groups, the novel convincingly asks on what basis a masculine heroic status will be won.

Adalet Ağaoğlu's *Bir Düşün Gecesi* suggests that the crisis of the military intervention continues to inform and shape the post-coup society. This novel is acknowledged as the *magnum opus* of the March 12 novels by several critics. *Bir Düşün Gecesi* is a successful synthesis of the postmodern novelistic techniques with the realistic and critical accounts of the military intervention, and the psychological state of the individuals in the aftermath of the violence. Ağaoğlu's panoramic look at the period through the consciousnesses of various characters during a wedding party, illustrates several points of view on the period. It is this polyphony which caused this novel to be considered a very successful artistic and critical epilogue to the March 12 experience.

Bir Düşün Gecesi backs Çetin Altan's *Büyük Gözaltı* in its assertion that the problem of March 12 is incorrectly conceived as a military question while the real problem is the tendency of people to go with power. In Çetin Altan's *Büyük Gözaltı*, the surveillance of the prison cell in which the protagonist finds himself was a symbolic expression of a wider social and cultural network of surveillance aiming to gain power and control over individuals.¹ Informed by similar concerns, Adalet Ağaoğlu shows how a wedding party becomes a miniature Turkey under the tensions of a similar monopoly of power. Ağaoğlu's *Bir Düşün Gecesi* tries to show that every individual is part of the wider social and cultural network of power, willingly or not. Shedding a critical eye upon marriage, family, and some other institutions the most important of which is the military, *Bir Düşün Gecesi* comments on the residual effects of March 12. Ağaoğlu's novel also touches the intricate issue of the masculinity of the military. Before Ağaoğlu, there were writers who dwelled on masculinities to explore the destructiveness of the police agents, interrogators with official sanction, stiff bureaucrats, etc., in the settings of the March 12, but for the first time, Ağaoğlu raises the question to the level of more powerful figures: the generals.

Gençliğim Eyvah and *Bir Düşün Gecesi* present their readers with different

¹See Section 2.1, on page 56.

dramas of oppression. They conjure up the still-fresh memories of the period and occupy themselves with the new forms of anxiety coalesced around the state of being alternative, different, and engaged in political action for changing the world. The politics surrounding the characters is complex and vividly illustrated. Both novels tackle political questions in a direct manner. They suggest that politics is not something people experience “next to” their personal affairs, but rather a web of experiences that make them construct and realize their inner selves. Men are at the intermediate point between potency and impotence, and beset by questions about their masculine agency. Both novels illustrate the complex and often contradictory ways in which men engage with their masculinity. Both discuss “the will to power” as inherent to human beings regardless of their gender, social class, or political engagements. Individuals try to empower themselves in the face of the escalating revenge between political rivals and the savage atmosphere of the March 12. This chapter will attempt to identify in where *Gençliğim Eyvah* and *Bir Düşün Gecesi* recognize the centrality of the masculinity.

3.1 *Gençliğim Eyvah*

Tarık Buğra's *Gençliğim Eyvah* (Alas! My Youth) depicts the sorrowful circumstances of a young man caught-up in a clandestine urban guerrilla group.² Buğra explores the young man's struggle for power in the underground clique and he makes his tense relationship with the mastermind of the group, who is a malevolent opinion-former of successive troubled periods in the history of Turkey, the explicit focus of the narration.³ The novel is about the journey of the young man toward self-discovery and his quandary between his individual desires and his duty to the society.⁴ *Gençliğim Eyvah*'s look at March 12 is important to this project because the novel attempts to evaluate the violent political clashes in the framework of a master-disciple relationship, which introduces a questioning of masculine maturation. With a young university student at the center of the narration, who desperately seems in need of masculine affirmation, *Gençliğim Eyvah* links the struggles of March 12 to a show of masculinity.

The novel begins with a prologue claiming *Gençliğim Eyvah* to be a documentary novel, a *roman á clef*. The prologue asserts that *Gençliğim Eyvah* is based on a true story and states that the events narrated therein emanated from the testimonials recorded by the writer, who had interviewed the protagonist years afterward. The note emphasizes the realism by arguing that there are also some documents, which prove the events at stake are accurate. The story, then, is developed from the end. The testimonials of the protagonist, who is referred to the novel as "Delikanlı" (youngster), uncover the story of an underground group aiming at anarchy, which was directed by a man called "İhtiyar" (the old man), a figure widely known as a prominent professor. The infamous İhtiyar is the main power behind the evil and terror that destroyed the county in the 1970s. Initial

²Tarık Buğra, *Gençliğim Eyvah*. (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2002).

³Tarık Buğra (1918-1994) studied medical sciences, law and literature at İstanbul University and left the university to work as a journalist. After having won the second prize in a literary contest of the daily *Cumhuriyet* with one of his short stories, he started publishing his literary works. Short stories: *Oğlumuz* (Our Son, 1949), *Yarın Diye Bir Şey Yoktur* (There is Nothing as Tomorrow, 1952), *İki Uyku Arasında* (Inbetween Two Dreams, 1954), *Hikayeler* (Stories, 1964). Plays: *Ayakta Durmak İstiyorum* (I Want to Stand Up, 1979), *Akümülatörlü Radyo* (Radio with Accu, 1979), *Yüzlerce Çiçek Birden Açtı* (Hundreds of Flowers Blossomed, 1979). Travel Notes: *Gagaringrad* (Moscow Trip, 1962). Novels: *Siyah Kehribar* (Black Amber, 1955), *Küçük Ağa* (Little Agha, 1964), *Küçük Ağa Ankara'da* (Little Agha is in Ankara, 1966), *İbiş'in Rüyası* (The Dream of İbiş, 1970), *Firavun İmanı* (The Faith of Pharaoh, 1976), *Gençliğim Eyvah* (Alas My Youth, 1979), *Dönemeçte* (At the Turnout, 1980), *Yalnızlar* (Lonelies, 1981), *Yağmur Beklerken* (Awaiting for Rain, 1981), *Osmancık* (Little Osman, 1983).

⁴Buğra collected the Turkish National Culture Foundation Award in 1979 with this novel.

parts of the novel introduce him as the epitome of evil. He is a savage, predatory, and pitiless man. His underground group arranges activities that are supposed to initiate political and ethnic uprisings.

İhtiyar's personal history holds together some controversial moments of Turkish political history, such as the collapse of the Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti), the 1926 İzmir conspiracy, and the controversial 1933 university reform. A lengthy description of İhtiyar's past establishes parallels to these controversial events and indicates that İhtiyar disseminated fear, hate, and unrest long before the 1970s as well. After this brief introduction, the narration is fixed upon the current time and setting of 1970s İstanbul. İhtiyar is now a prestigious man with lots of people secretly working for him. Almost like a religious sect, these people are stoically devoted to İhtiyar's causes. İhtiyar easily sacrifices people to his causes because he sees the alleged members of his clique as sub-human. He convenes them in his villa in Kandilli, which he has turned into a center for intelligence. He has a vested interest in political affairs. He manipulates the political atmosphere by publishing fierce articles in dailies, giving talks in certain public meetings, and delivering lectures at the university.

Delikanlı, whose name is later revealed to be Raşit, attends İhtiyar's lectures at the university, before he is forced to quit his studies because of financial reasons. İhtiyar becomes attracted to Raşit's self-esteem and brave attitudes. He orders his men to follow him, traces where he lives, and involves Raşit in his group, utilizing one of his "girls" nicknamed Güliz, whose real name is Sıdika. In a set-up, Güliz meets Raşit and introduces herself to him as a lonely woman, who lives with her adoptive father. The intellectual bond between İhtiyar and Raşit develops over the course of time, and Raşit realizes that he enjoys the company of this senescent man. İhtiyar, on the other hand, gradually becomes besotted with Raşit. He finds himself convinced that he has finally discovered his crown prince, who is to manage his secret organization after his demise.

The major thrust of the novel is about the influence of this controversial homosocial bond on Raşit. From a man with no blemish on his political record, Raşit turns into a violent urban guerilla. The novel retraces how İhtiyar formed his secret clique, showing us some of the routine tactics used by him on young people. In addition to the acute transformation of Raşit, *Gençliğim Eyvah* also deals with the profound change Sıdika/Güliz underwent after she had met İhtiyar.

The narration follows Sıdıka's troublesome life against the backdrop of the development of İhtiyar's attachment to Raşit. İhtiyar discovers Sıdıka, a nine-year-old girl, who lives with her alcoholic mother in the slums of İstanbul, on the ferry that she regularly takes for "business." He watches her trying to obtain money from the travelers by making them feel sorry for her poverty-stricken image. He fosters the beggar child and names her Güliz.

Güliz receives a makeover controlled by İhtiyar. He sends her to a private school and also arranges some special lessons in painting, drama, etc., to make Güliz more presentable. The intimacy between İhtiyar and Güliz, which resembles the irksome link between a jailer and his victim, helps the reader to understand İhtiyar's sadistic personality. İhtiyar erases the independent identity of Güliz and attempts to rule the young girl's entire life. He orders some of his men to befriend her and some others to tease and look down upon her. He encourages the girl's endless struggle to find her place in the world. Having grown up as an instrument for the play of İhtiyar's wit, Güliz turns into a woman beset by suspicion, who tries to stick to a cold rationale in order to keep her life under control.

The most remarkable characteristic shared by this İhtiyar-Güliz-Raşit trio is solitude. İhtiyar is a brute man, who is ready to sacrifice anyone around him for his wicked causes. As the narrator delves through the layers of the past, we learn that İhtiyar was arrested during one of his secret operations and later obtained a pardon for his crimes, following his wife's controversial sacrifice. When he learns that she saved his life by sleeping with his enemies, İhtiyar murders his then-pregnant wife, and chooses loneliness as his preeminent life style. As the details of İhtiyar's only custody experience are revealed, we learn that he is, in fact, betrayed by the husband of his wife's sister, who is often brought into İhtiyar's own service for trivial jobs in the presence of her husband. This metaphorical castration, the stripping of a man's power just for fun, introduces İhtiyar to his first real encounter with death. İhtiyar escapes a death sentence with his wife's collusion but, after he learns that she used her feminine charms to obtain a pardon for his crime, he poisons his wife and begins a new life purified of any warm and loving sentiment.

In a similar vein, Güliz is a lonely person bereft of warm sentiments. She is a problematic child, who descends from a long line of abuse and outrage, and who is unable to establish tenderhearted relationships, just like İhtiyar. She sees

everyone else as a rival to her share of the world. When she moves from the slums of İstanbul to the villa of İhtiyar, Güliz buries the memories of her alcoholic mother in the past, but she continues her life in an overbearing emotional isolation. The last member of the trio, Raşit, is the oldest son of a poor family with five children, who comes to İstanbul for his education. But he too initiates no contact with his family during the course of the events during which he finds himself a privileged member of İhtiyar's unlawful clique. With İhtiyar in the role of father, and Raşit and Güliz as his siblings bereft of familial protection, the trio stands for a convoluted form of intimacy.

Through out the novel, the narrator loads İhtiyar's attachment to Güliz with pedophiliac overtones, although an overt erotic attraction is not exposed in any clear way. The commodification of the girl by İhtiyar, however, suggests a sexual relation as well, because İhtiyar has viewed Güliz as a woman since her childhood and he has planned to use her sexuality to attract young men to his group. The narrator also suggests a metaphorical incest, by treating Raşit and Güliz's attraction to each other as a kind of brother-sister love, in this unconventional family. In a twisted sense, İhtiyar is the only capable and powerful "father" Güliz and Raşit could ever have; yet their struggle for self-definition makes him both a favorable and detestable figure to them.

The links between the three major characters of the novel make the oppressive atmosphere of the underground group plainly visible and alert the reader to İhtiyar's potentially malevolent intervention in the developing relationship between Raşit and Güliz. As rivals for the attention of the same woman, the master İhtiyar, and his disciple Raşit, engage in a passionate debate on controversial issues of a political and moral nature. Throughout their discussion, more of Raşit's and İhtiyar's attitudes and biographical details emerge. These details illuminate their attachment to each other and also their obsession with Güliz. With the overtones of a Freudian father-complex, the rivalry between them builds a detailed exploration of male weakness in the novel. Raşit fails to challenge İhtiyar's abusive power. He finds himself captured by a strong desire to be an authoritarian and all-powerful man like İhtiyar.

Although it is described as a testimonial story in the beginning, we do not share the subjective perspective of the protagonist Raşit in *Gençliğim Eyvah*. Rather, the omniscient narrator describes the events, comments on them, and delivers

some angry speeches about İhtiyar's thoughts. The narrator passes judgments on toward İhtiyar's opinions and acts as an arbiter of morals in the political domain. When the characters relate to things that pass through İhtiyar's mind, they often confirm each other's or the narrator's thoughts.⁵ In the abusive world of İhtiyar's tyranny, a mute love develops between Raşit and Güliz. Caught up in İhtiyar's political agenda, both Raşit and Güliz undergo a challenging questioning of themselves, while they also attempt to find a way out of İhtiyar's control. As their love grows, Güliz has startling effect on Raşit's attitude and personality. Raşit struggles between his feelings for Güliz and his principles. Acting out of character, the normally resolute Raşit finds himself in an acute change, turned into a man who tries to impress Güliz with a bristling masculinity.

As the young man's anxiety reaches its culmination, we find Raşit debating whether a man under the influence of irrationalities in his mood and feelings because of being in love, is still a "man." He feels like a man walking behind a woman, an image that defies patriarchal expectations, and finds his sense of self distorted by the oblatinal attachment required in a love relationship. The strange stoicism of a man in solitude emerges as a challenging philosophical discussion as Raşit pushes himself into an exploration of his masculinity. People's views of the image of the weak man and patriarchal expectations of maleness become major contributors to Raşit's anxious self-inspection. Raşit resists changing in order to win Güliz's love, but he transforms himself despite his will. In Raşit's reflections about the change he undergoes, the novel presents a challenging discussion of romantic love as a kind of the emasculation of the adult male.

En route to reclaiming their freedom from İhtiyar's political agenda, Raşit and Güliz also question their intimate attachment to each other. Despite her strong feelings for Raşit, Güliz keeps spying on him for İhtiyar, in line with İhtiyar's orders. This leaves unclear, until the very end of the novel, whether Güliz really loves Raşit or if she fools him by acting like a woman in love to fulfill her duties as an informant. The tension of the novel is built on Güliz's dangerous double crossing, which leaves the reader in doubt: will she break her vow of obedience and betray İhtiyar's secret clique for Raşit, or will she betray the man who is in love with her?

⁵In his article "Muhafazakâr Bir Romancı Olarak Tarık Buğra'yı Okumak [Reading Tarık Buğra as a Conservatist Writer]" Ali Serdar underlines the single-voiced narration of this novel as well. See Ali Serdar, "Muhafazakâr Bir Romancı Olarak Tarık Buğra'yı Okumak," *Pasaj* 3 (2006), p. 66.

The shadow of İhtiyar on their relationship undermines Raşit's love for Güliz with severe suspicions. He recognizes the indirect operation of İhtiyar's agenda in Güliz's acts and, in an unwarranted jealousy, he begins to act paranoiacally. It becomes a challenging task for Güliz to prove to Raşit that he is the one she loves but, since her attempts are already tainted with her double-crossing, it becomes hardly clear if her attempts are out of genuine love or for the sake of business. Well aware that she is a "trophy wife" for Raşit, who struggles for approval of his masculine prestige as an impoverished young man in the big city, innocent of high urban culture and high-class manners, Güliz struggles to convince herself of Raşit's love and find the power to challenge the orders of her master, İhtiyar.

Two dramatic murders coalesce in the novel's closing scene. Güliz decides to poison İhtiyar to prove her love to Raşit and to free Raşit and herself from İhtiyar's authority. She thinks murder is their last chance because İhtiyar would never let them break their link with him and pursue their own lives. She ventures to İhtiyar's well-protected villa in search of a new beginning. Raşit decides to interfere with Güliz's plan and comes to İhtiyar's villa as well. İhtiyar suspects Güliz's manners but he drinks the poisonous tea that she serves him. He somehow understands her ulterior motive and succeeds in shooting Güliz before she leaves the room. He also wounds Raşit, who arrives at the villa and, hearing the gunshot, rushes to the lifeless body of Güliz. Next to the corpse of the woman he loves, Raşit witnesses İhtiyar's painful striving against death. The novel ends as Raşit attends their funeral. Although he finds himself filled with remorse, Raşit knows that his personal agency is not enough for revival in the fortunes of the country. Surrounded by notables of academic life, bureaucrats, famous businessmen, and politicians together with hundreds and thousands of young people at the funeral ceremony, Raşit recognizes that İhtiyar is triumphant despite his demise, for his kingdom of anarchy will prevail as long as new servants are eager to take the place of those who leave.

In its dystopian analysis of political commitment, love, betrayal, and hypocrisy involving two men and a woman, *Gençliğim Eyvah* touches upon a series of questions about the stiff gender role of masculinity. The feminine side of man is a critical question throughout the story of the novel in the image of Raşit, who struggles both as an activist and as a lover. The novel is critical of the turn of young people to atheist and materialist communism, but it does not place all the blame on their innocent minds. Tarık Buğra finds the masterminds behind the

paramilitary activities, which created an atmosphere of chaos in the country, to be the real guilty party. The novel ensnares readers with its venomous discourses about conspiracies and the hidden agendas of those whom we think to be ordinary people.

Given the impression of honesty and verisimilitude by means of the note that opens the novel, *Gençliğim Eyvah* claims to be read as another “true story” of the March 12 experience, but it is hard to say that the novel succeeds to catch the distinctive quality of a documentary or even the taste of a realistic novel, because it is more like a patchwork of psychologically loaded interpretations and detailed descriptions of gestures with bursts of political debates. *Gençliğim Eyvah* shows how good can blend into evil with ideological manipulation and make unflinching guerrilla fighters out of ordinary people. I will explore Raşit’s struggles first as a “fighter” and then as a “lover” in order to comment on the novel’s appraisal of masculinity.

Fethi Naci calls *Gençliğim Eyvah* as a simple propaganda book fueled with anti-communism but it is equally important to see what is beneath this political cover.⁶ The story in *Gençliğim Eyvah* explicitly thematizes a close male friendship, which includes an overwhelmingly paternalistic and protective attachment, between two men in a militant underground group engaged in paramilitary acts. İhtiyar’s attachment to Raşit is a created father-son relationship. His interest in Raşit is suggestive of an aggressive father’s intimate attachment to his most-favored son, a link that swings between two extremes in Raşit’s eyes: reunion and patricide. In this relationship, it is “the father” that signifies the past, and “the son” that signifies the future, as the names İhtiyar (old man) and Delikanlı (youngster) also suggest. Reunion, therefore, means a continuation of the established state of affairs and values, whereas patricide means the construction of a new world by the new generation.

Within this framework, Buğra explores the frictions between two men of different generations, whose lives intersect in 1970s İstanbul, and discusses the concepts of community and belonging. The novel focuses on young individuals who try to find their place among contradictory political forces and discusses the filial subjectivity constructed in the shadows of the ethics and values passed on from “the father,” as the major representative of the knowledge of older generations.

⁶Fethi Naci, *Yüzyılın 100 Türk Romanı*. (İstanbul: Adam Yayınları, 2000), p. 364.

The father and son relationship helps to position the question of certain values passed on from one generation to another, as a question of masculinity, because the young protagonist's identity crisis stages an anxiety of being considered as an inappropriate man for refusing to continue the line of his "father."

The novel opens with a chapter entitled "The Beginning of the End" and introduces the reader to the three main characters of the novel. This introductory chapter presents a fierce fight between İhtiyar and Delikanlı in the villa in Kandilli, in which Delikanlı teases İhtiyar by challenging his ideas. We learn that Delikanlı wants to separate from İhtiyar's clique. At the end of the fight, Delikanlı accepts a last assignment from İhtiyar, the bombing of a Consulate, which will end their collaboration. Güliz is not present in the room, but the ways in which that the two men relate themselves to her make it clear that she is a major figure in their lives. The fight shows İhtiyar and Delikanlı standing at opposite poles in terms of their responses to the acts of political militancy and the function of anarchist action. At the same time, he wants to ensure that the acceptance of his fate to the point of martyrdom is recognized by İhtiyar, so that he will not be tainted as a man lacking courage.

İhtiyar responds to the situation with dispiriting reason and tries to convince Delikanlı that his death is never wanted, because it will not solve anything. He accuses Delikanlı of a false show of masculinity:

You are jealous about that imbeciles' play with death, aren't you? You will prove that you are not afraid of death, that you can pass the Bridge of Sırat running, and that you are a man. Did anybody ask for such proof, you idiot? Proof for whom? For Güliz?⁷

The narrator explains İhtiyar's desperate anger with his dedication to raise Raşit as his heir, an opinion-former and political manipulator who will lead his clique. Raşit, however, does not conform to this plan and insists on pursuing his own goals.

After this context has been set, the narrator turns to the past and introduces the reader to İhtiyar and his crimes. We learn that İhtiyar's general tendencies lean toward dishonesty, violence, and frenzy. İhtiyar is the only son of an Ottoman

⁷O ineklerin ölümle oynayırlarını kıskandın değil mi? Ölümünden korkmadığını ve Sırat köprüsünü koşarak geçebileceğini, ve erkekliğini ispatlayacaksın. Bunu senden isteyen mi oldu, aptal. Kime ispatlamak? Güliz'e mi? Buğra (as in n. 2), p. 18.

sheik, “a masculine beauty,” and a living “image of wealth.”⁸ İhtiyar’s depiction as a beautiful male image is bewildering because this imagery brings him to the fore as “a potentially homoerotic symbol.”⁹ The narrator describes him as a demon appropriate to the discourses of the Christian Middle Ages, “a devil, a mephisto” and uses a monstrous imagery through out the novel to illustrate İhtiyar.¹⁰

İhtiyar gains an extraordinary power and becomes the “state within the state.” in the 1930s¹¹ He starts a charity foundation devoted to the “protection and development of witlessness” and engages with the task of undermining the structures vital to a state. He causes disturbances at the universities, organizes conspiracies to assassinate notables, and keeps writing inflammatory articles in the dailies, during a period when death sentences come one after another and push the country into a dark atmosphere.¹² He stays anonymous, organizes his men into an underground group, and seeks new targets to satisfy his malice. In 1940s, we find İhtiyar to be the invisible hand beneath the propaganda campaign that attempts to equate communism and socialism with Russia, and corrode the premature democracy of the country.¹³

His cold rationale, brutality, and tenacity bring İhtiyar to the fore as a remorseless tyrant. His true nature becomes the subject of extended argument, as readers are introduced to the secrets of İhtiyar’s life. İhtiyar describes men working for him as “underclass [ayaktakımı]” and “erect reptiles [dik sürüngenler].”¹⁴ Throughout the novel, he delivers speeches that mock the zest for freedom, love of humankind, and compassion felt for nation and fatherland. He seems, at first glance, not to be representative of any particular political ideology but rather an agent of a doomed will to damage and destroy. However, during the course of the novel, İhtiyar’s speeches gradually assume a political character and we find him criticizing Marxism and revolutionary leftism.

For much of the novel, the narrator observes and records the drama of Delikanlı as a member of İhtiyar’s underground group. But from time to time, the

⁸Buğra (as in n. 2), p. 32-34.

⁹George Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe*. (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985), p. 16.

¹⁰Buğra (as in n. 2), p. 12.

¹¹Ibid., p. 36.

¹²Ibid., p. 42-50.

¹³Ibid., p. 66.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 25,45.

narrator mutely shares İhtiyar's political ideas and his distaste of class discourses, and, therefore, transcends the neutral position of an apolitical narrator. The title of the novel *Gençliğim Eyvah* (Alas, My Youth!) resonates with the destructiveness symbolized by İhtiyar and relates his will to destroy to the larger theme of harnessing young people's enthusiasm for destructive purposes.¹⁵ The novel explores issues of political action, through the father-son relationship that turns uncanny and tends to become an oppressive relationship similar to the link that "a creator" initiates with his "creature". As the novel takes its readers into the world of secret organizations that operate outside the normal world and outside the law, we witness how the metaphorical father-son relationship between İhtiyar and Delikanlı transforms itself from the friendly realm of a master-disciple bond to the treacherous territory between a monster/creator and a victim/creature.

İhtiyar talks about men's will to reproduce by having sons to continue their legacy and confesses that Delikanlı's presence in his life corresponds to such a will to exist in the future.¹⁶ He compares his tender love of Delikanlı with the 13th century sufi mystic Mevlana's love of his disciple Şems. This is a symbolism worthy of close examination. By utilizing the image of intimacy between two male sufi mystics, *Gençliğim Eyvah* suggests two things: first, there is a hierarchy similar to that of a religious sect in the underground group, and second, there is a homosocial link at stake between İhtiyar and Delikanlı, which suggests a convoluted intimacy. The narrator complicates the nature of their relationship, by referring to İhtiyar's attachment to Delikanlı as a link with erotic overtones: "His attachment to Delikanlı was a kind of passion. In fact, that was the only soft thing in him, the only warmth [Aşka benzerdi Delikanlı'ya karşı beslediği sevgi. Daha doğrusu, içindeki tek yumuşaklığı, biricik ısıydı o]." ¹⁷

İhtiyar's secret clique, an ambivalent mixture of religious order and a terrorist cadre, introduces the readers to the lore of anarchism within the framework of a homosocial bond, which carries the overwhelming tensions of the passionate fluctuation between love and rivalry. Masculinity is central to the interpretative strategy implemented in *Gençliğim Eyvah*: Raşit's need for masculine affirmation and his search for power intersects İhtiyar's need to continue his legacy, which stands for another search for masculine affirmation. Thinking of himself as a

¹⁵The phrase "Gençliğim Eyvah" is the tag line of the famous folk song inspired by the pains of the War of Dardanelles.

¹⁶Buğra (as in n. 2), p. 23-25.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 30.

sterile man because he has not fathered any sons, İhtiyar seeks the son who can make him feel like a real, virile, and powerful man. The father-son dyad in the novel is also a metaphor for the ambivalent relationship between intellect and brute force. The contrast between the views of İhtiyar and Delikanlı on the use of force, sharpens the bigotry of political action all the more.

While İhtiyar tries to create a son through his own efforts, Raşit attempts to solve the mysteries of the underground group. His beliefs and values are brought into question by İhtiyar, whose ideological tirades are often backed up by the narrator. İhtiyar defines his job to Raşit as to “create depression and discontent and deceit, to nurture, incite, grow, produce and derive the ones that already exist or have a tendency to exist [bunalımlar ve hoşnutsuzluklar ve kinler oluşturmak, olan ve olmak istidadında bulunan hoşnutsuzlukları, bunalımları, kinleri beslemek, körüklemek, azmanlaştırmak, üretmek, türetmek].”¹⁸ The narrator recounts how İhtiyar uses young people for the dirty work and saves prestigious brainwork for himself. İhtiyar both manipulates the elite politics of the parliament and the street politics of the society. He influences crowds of youngsters thronging the streets with his fierce speeches and articles. Once a young man among them, Raşit gradually recognizes that the people he respects are, in fact, players of a tricky game directed by İhtiyar.

İhtiyar offers a strong defense of his tactics. He argues that “foolishness, dizziness, mindlessness, cluelessness, immorality and gluttony quickly become subjects of imitation, get transmitted like an epidemic, and spread more quickly than any other vogue [budalalıklar, sersemlikler, aptallıklar, bilgisizlikler ve namussuzluklar ve oburluklar, çabucak özentî konusu olur, hızla bulaşır, bütün modalardan çabuk yayılır].”¹⁹ Using people’s weaknesses astutely, İhtiyar creates a political agenda that will outlive him, an agenda with disseminating hatred as its guiding political philosophy. Although he celebrates the wanton destruction carried out by his men, İhtiyar himself remains a political manipulator and never becomes personally engaged in physical action.

Raşit gradually realizes that İhtiyar’s secret clique is not an initiative of reform or revolution to ameliorate the political situation, but rather a physical organization, which actually harms people and feeds on chaos. He grasps that İhtiyar aims to destroy the infrastructures of the state and the society not to build something

¹⁸Buğra (as in n. 2), p. 48.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 51.

anew, but to please his urge to govern the brute destruction. This makes him recognize that he is a conduit for İhtiyar's opinions and ideologies. Raşit then feels the weight of his personal responsibility. He understands that the only way for him to seize his subjectivity is to confront and defeat İhtiyar. He decides to resist İhtiyar's influence on him and attempts to retain his own identity and ideology in the face of İhtiyar's overwhelming pressure.

Raşit finally decides to disobey İhtiyar's orders on his last assignment and to blow up another target. He throws the bomb, which he received in the beginning of the novel, into İhtiyar's favorite restaurant-club. This act stands for the re-construction of his masculinity as much as it stands for the re-formation of his damaged autonomy and agency. Raşit's negotiation of his act as a beginning of a new life with a new masculinity is punctuated by means of the scene, in which he overhears some children talking about being someone anew:

- "Did you ever," a boy walking to adolescence was uttering, "ever wanted to get out of yourself and become somebody else?"

[...]

Sitting, he was trying to get rid of the question brought there by the pearl white skinned boy. He was not eager to think of such things... in other words, of things that they remind: his greed for change after Güliz for example, his greed to become someone else. Honestly, he was not eager to think of the restaurant either. It suffices to see it. (Yes) As long as possible, it suffices to see it for a few more minutes. And (Yes) he was calm... As calm as to say "I am happy."²⁰

The fulfillment that comes with not doing what İhtiyar has ordered is a pleasure derived from self-actualization. Raşit restores his agency and builds himself a new self that will stand against the dehumanizing effects of İhtiyar's interference.

After Raşit's first real challenge to İhtiyar's orders, the novel goes into an uncanny mood. In a moment of epiphany, Raşit realizes that he has inside him the same hunger for power, which made İhtiyar a destructive tyrant. The narrator

²⁰- "Senin hiç," diyordu ergenliğe hazırlanan bir oğlan sesi, "hiç kendinden çıkıp da bir başkası olmak istediğin oldu mu?"

[...]

Otururken, o inci beyazı tenli çocuğun buraya kadar getirdiği sorusunu, kafasından silkip atmak istiyordu. Düşünmek istemiyordu öyle şeyleri... Daha doğrusu, hatırlatıklarını: Güliz'den sonraki değişim hırsını mesela. Aslında artık Gazino'yu da düşünmek istemiyordu. Görsün yeterdi. (Evet) Olabileceği kadar fazla, yani bir kaç dakika görsün yetişirdi. Ve (Evet) sakindi. "Mutluyum" diyebilecek kadar sakindi. Buğra (as in n. 2), p. 271.

diverts the plot of the narration from realism and begins referring to İhtiyar not as a real man, but as an abstract idea: “İhtiyar was not present, he was never present. He was a mental disorder, a pathology. He was Delikanlı himself. He was always in him and people alike; he was with them [İhtiyar yoktu, olmamıştı. Aslında bir akıl bozukluğu, bir dengesizlikti o. Delikanlı’nın kendisi idi o. Kendisinin ve benzerlerinin içinde idi hep].”²¹ The possibility that the sadistic, destructive and egregiously violent İhtiyar and naive, upstanding and loving Raşit are in fact two sides of the same personality, implies that the one who Raşit has been fighting, literally and figuratively, since the very beginning, was himself. Leaving the reader with the uncertainty of whether İhtiyar is a real person or not, the narration culminates the suspense, but it swiftly becomes clear that this peculiar twist does not reveal the true nature of the events. The narrator returns to the realistic mode and assures that İhtiyar is more than just a hallucination. The brief twist, however, communicates that, under the sly submission of Raşit, there is an equally flammable power-hungry masculinity that may assume brute power.

The frenetic and demonic figure of İhtiyar serves as a tool that animates the hidden hunger for power in ordinary people. His authoritarianism is a symbol for the tyrannical atmosphere in the political movements, which declare political pluralism and critique of the group’s political agenda a luxury. Together, these build a scary image of political devotion. Although it unmasks the demonic power responsible for the sufferings caused by the atmosphere of chaos on March 12, *Gençliğim Eyvah* refuses to dwell on it. The novel does not comment on the reasons beneath İhtiyar’s destructiveness, or provide the reader with a psychological inspection of this old man in depth. Tarık Buğra defines the beast with exaggerated discourses and religious motifs, and makes him bad in every possible way. In the course of the novel, Raşit’s revolt against İhtiyar moves away from being just an ordinary fight with authority and turns into a heroic fight with the bad, and its darkness. His fight makes Raşit a hero, but does not erase his suspicions that he has a similar beast in him.

Another axis of the story of *Gençliğim Eyvah*, in addition to the violent Oedipal rivalry with the father figure, is the love felt for the controversial sister figure. Using Raşit, Buğra links the pressures of an “abusive” father to the possibility of liberation that will come with the oppressive control of a woman, which will help a young boy achieve upward mobility in the hierarchy of masculinity. The

²¹Buğra (as in n. 2), p. 274.

insecure masculine identification of Raşit with İhtiyar, brings political consciousness to the fore as a gendered problem. Within the framework of his relationship with İhtiyar, Raşit negotiates political agency as a measure of self-esteem and also explores the merits of tough physical action. This introduces a discussion of masculinity as made of martial qualities to the narration.

When Raşit's attachment to Güliz diverts his attention away from political action, we find him becoming engaged in a self-transformation that will make his personality more attractive to Güliz. This plot brings questions about self-control and control of others as features of masculinity. Raşit attempts to be in style and popular, and he anxiously allows himself to be swallowed and defined by the beliefs and pleasures of Güliz. As the inevitable adolescent reaction to separation comes, and the father/mentor is defeated, the demand for love finds a more autonomous adult route to follow. Still, Raşit burdens himself with thinking whether he is a kind of "cultural prostitute," who sells himself to whatever the woman he loves may find acceptable.

The sexual tensions in the triangle composed of İhtiyar, Raşit and Güliz are hinted to the reader long before Raşit and Güliz get to know each other, by İhtiyar's controversial hypermasculinity. The brief history of İhtiyar, which explains his past accomplishments at the beginning of the novel, emphasize that he is an all-powerful masculine beauty and a remorseless man.²² İhtiyar's sadism with his first wife proves that he has no mercy even for the ones he loves. İhtiyar eludes the threat to his life with his wife's help, but even the grave danger he found himself in does not change him. The macho behavior prevails. He cold-bloodedly sends his wife to death. It is only after he meets Güliz, the young instrument of his ambivalent political ambitions, that İhtiyar questions his capacity "to feel" again.

The second chapter of the novel elaborates on the development of the intimate link between İhtiyar and Güliz. İhtiyar's obsession with the young Güliz suggests another controversial attachment. On one hand, İhtiyar transforms himself into a father figure and tries to offer the girl a shelter and good education. On the other, he occasionally gives away the tutelary spirit and acts as her platonic lover. What he feels, the narrator reminds us, is not love but an attraction that resembles the attraction of "an automobile admirer to a Lamborghini [bir araba delisinin

²²Buğra (as in n. 2), p. 32.

Lamborghini'yi değerlendiriş].”²³ He experiments with young girl's feelings and feels joy at signs of her weaknesses. Although he sees that his selfish games become emotional torture to Güliz, İhtiyar acts emotionally ambivalent to the girl and he does not stop. Güliz's hidden anger, which is concealed by her submissiveness, connects the sadist İhtiyar to her. He uses Güliz to bring politically innocent young men to his underground group, but he expects to be the only man to whom the young girl is intimately attached.

Güliz is not a very important character in relating the political implications that form the background of *Gençliğim Eyvah*. In the novel, she rather facilitates the entrance to İhtiyar's and Raşit's individual worlds and plays a central role in letting the reader get to know the male characters of the novel. Güliz serves as a plot device, which is used to introduce İhtiyar's evil of and Raşit's anxious masculinity, and the novel deploys her to illustrate the lack of self-confidence in Raşit, as much as it uses her to animate the sadism of İhtiyar. Her presence questions the capacity to trust and love in the moments of acute transformations. The narration briefly covers her childhood and suggests Güliz's inability to love properly. She feels close to Raşit, but not to whom he truly is, rather to the man she believes she can make him into. Her strong will to transform him, causes Raşit to experience love as a loss of agency and almost as a loss of his masculinity.

Before he gets to know Güliz, Raşit works for a journal as a page editor. We follow him on his daily routine, doing hard work but earning very little. The narrator emphasizes his hunger and anxiety about living on such a limited amount of money. His sequence of thoughts yields important clues as to what Raşit thinks of “a real man.” As Raşit thinks of his poverty, working class existence, and lack of capital, he introduces a new dimension to the problem of masculinity of the novel. He praises his low-profile life, and speaks highly of the working-class existence, presenting it as the only honorable alternative. Passing through the famous shopping district on İstiklal street during a lunch break, he observes the rich higher classes with rage. He thinks how disgusting “the shop windows, and people staring at the shop windows, people in nice suits, young-old-middle aged women and men [vitrinler, vitrinlere bakan güzel giyimli, genç, yaşlı, orta yaşlı kadınlar, erkekler]” seem to him.²⁴

Raşit's anger for the consumerist culture, the privileged, and the rich mixes

²³Buğra (as in n. 2), p. 83.

²⁴Ibid., p. 127.

with a distaste for Western imports. When a friend of his insists that they should check out the exhibition in some art gallery, Raşit unwillingly follows. The exhibition of abstract paintings is a metaphor for Turkey's skin-deep Westernism, which causes the elites of the country to imitate and appreciate Western values, ideals, and tastes. Raşit finds such art absurd and unnecessary, and makes fun of the paintings. Standing by each work, he talks about his favorite meals and desserts of Turkish cuisine using the art criticism lexicon. When his eyes meet Güliz at the gallery, however, he cannot continue this game. Hearing his culinary art criticism, the young woman approaches Raşit and challenges him.

The discussion continues in an elegant and stylish cafe, which is way beyond Raşit's financial means. His first meeting with Güliz, therefore, happens to be a brutal reminder to Raşit of his futile fight against poverty. It also becomes a brutal reminder of his subordinated masculinity when Güliz offers to pay:

The place where the girl said "Let's have something" was a luxurious restaurant looking over the Bosphorus, facing Kuzguncuk and Kandilli forests. Without any shame, not giving a damn, as if saying I am out of matches, he said:

- "I do not have any money."

Just like him, and as if saying I have some matches Güliz said:

- "I have money."

Raşit hesitated. He bit his lips once again.

- "If you like... I mean, if it will save your masculine pride, I will not pay, I will lend you money for you to pay."

She was laughing. But an extraordinary laughter.²⁵

Güliz's laughter both makes fun of the established position of men's obligation to be superior workers with higher wages, and also expresses Raşit's perceived powerlessness. This meeting defines a key moment in Raşit's life because as a man that does not represent a masculinity defined through relationships to cash

²⁵Kızın "oturalım biraz" dediği yer, Kuzguncuk ve Kandilli korularına bakan, Boğaz'ı ayaklar altına almış, lüks gazino idi. Ezilip büzülmeden, umursamadan, kibritim kalmamış der gibi:

- "Param yok."

Güliz de tıpkı onun gibi ve kibrit bende var dercesine:

- "Bende var."

Raşit durakladı. Dişleri dudaklarında yer değiştirdi.

- "İstersen... yani erkeklik gururunu kurtaracaksa, ısmarlamam, borç veririm."

Gülüyordu. Ama bambaşka bir gülüş. Buğra (as in n. 2), p.130.

and consumption, he recognizes that a relationship with Güliz, will require him to forge a new identity.

The change happens quickly but with complications. When İhtiyar arranges a better paying job for him, Raşit find himself in a questioning the rapid change of his standards. He compares and contrasts his poor life before Güliz with his new life dominated by “shop windows, luxurious restaurants, dining rooms that serve tea and spirits in a Western and modern way, patisseries, cafes [vitrinler, lüks lokantalar, Batılı ve çağdaş yöntemlerle çay veya içki servisi yapılan gazinolar, pasta salonlari, cafeler]”.²⁶ What filters through his remembrance of his previous life is a number of events, including his previous mood being directed principally by hunger. The change he undergoes, Raşit thinks, is not dictated by his established hunger after years-long poverty, but by something alien to him:

One and a half months ago, the sizzles and scents of kofana or bonito or horse mackerel or anchovy were stimulating not only the ones in his mouth but all of his secretory tissues, barbarically. But he used to have chin bones then... his nostrils used to have stretch caps that extend as if pulled by a pincer [...] What about now? That is to say, after Güliz? [...] Now what betrays him is not only his secretory tissues but something more treacherous more rebellious.²⁷

Raşit’s anxiety makes it apparent that such an abject submission is foreign to him. The alien pressure comes from falling in love and giving entire control to a woman. Buğra makes it clear that this pressure is shaped under the impetus of modernity and its concomitant ideology of romantic love, which are “imported” to Turkey. There is “a transformation of intimacy,” hidden in Turkey’s modernization and this is an emasculating change.²⁸

The discussion of Raşit’s struggles probes into a questioning of “colonial subordination,” tracing the changes in the cultural climate of Turkey along the lines of Westernization, with a specific emphasis on the struggle between stereotypes of the past and the present. Although Turkey is never colonized, in the literal sense,

²⁶Buğra (as in n. 2), p. 147.

²⁷Bir buçuk ay öncesine kadar, bu kofana veya palamut veya istavrit veya hamsi cızırtıları ile kokuları, yalnız ağızındakileri değil, bütün salgı bezlerini gaddarca tahrik ederdi. Ama çene kemikleri vardı o zaman... kerpetenle çekilmiş gibi gerilen kapakları vardı burun deliklerinin. [...] Peki ya şimdi? Yani Güliz’den sonra? [...] Şimdi ona ihanet eden yalnız salgı bezleri değildi, daha kalles daha başına buyruk bir şeydi. Ibid., p. 146-7.

²⁸Anthony Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

her Westernization qualifies as a case of “cultural colonization” because dramatic changes occurred in cultural patterns during the process of modernization. Buğra links Raşit’s transformation to this radical change and the split of Turkey between the past and the present. This link attaches the story to the “nervous condition” that lies beneath the colonized subject’s masculinity.²⁹ Buğra identifies Turkey’s modernization as a crucial moment in which normative categories of gender identity, have revealed themselves as problematic and the relationships between men and women have become strained.

Immersed in the world of Güliz, wondering endlessly and vaguely how to impress her, Raşit finds himself questioning his masculinity and whether such excessive concern for a woman is emasculating. He attempts to replace the homosocial bond of friendship and his debt to İhtiyar, with a heterosexual bond of responsibility over Güliz, since the acquisition of a woman, in his vision, serves as the indicator of masculine adulthood. However, the girl resists to being owned and ruled. As he recalls his former poor-but-proud masculinity and negotiates his current insecure masculinity in transition, Raşit falls into a crisis of power. We find him desperately trying to become a decision-maker. He intervenes in Güliz’s decisions about clothes and make-up, tells her what to wear and what not to wear, praises the beauty of simplicity and forces Güliz to comply with his tastes. As they get to know each other, Raşit puts aside his “lonely man pride,” and accepts Güliz in his life even with her extravagant style.³⁰

Meanwhile, Raşit also discovers that his old professor İhtiyar and Güliz’s mysterious adoptive father are the same person. This discovery changes the atmosphere completely. Obtaining bits and pieces of information about the underground group, Raşit slowly grasps that he is just an instrument in the hands of İhtiyar. He suspects his relationship to Güliz to be another game, a set up he was expected to fall into, which he did not notice at all. To challenge her image as a double-crosser in Raşit’s eyes, Güliz decides to kill İhtiyar. The interesting detail in this second murder plot of the novel is that, in a way, Raşit reproduces İhtiyar’s indifference to his wife, who sacrificed herself in order to save her husband from the death penalty: Güliz placing herself in danger resembles the sacrifice of İhtiyar’s wife and Raşit’s letting her go to pursue the murder, is in fact another

²⁹Jean Paul Sartre, “Preface to Frantz Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth*,” in *Wretched of the Earth*. (New York: Grove Press, 1963), p. 20.

³⁰Buğra (as in n. 2), p. 147.

version of İhtiyar's cold-blooded murder of his wife.

Once again, it becomes possible to think of Raşit and İhtiyar as the differently aged versions of the same person, who meet in a distinct period of history. The end of the novel consolidates the overlap. *Gençliğim Eyvah* ends in suspenseful mood, leaving the question whether Raşit and İhtiyar are the younger and older versions of each other or not, up in the air. Having witnessed the death of the woman he loves, Raşit is in great grief and pain during the funeral. After the ceremony, however, the narrator informs us that he decides to go İhtiyar's favorite restaurant. His return to the restaurant is an ambivalent act, which makes it possible that after losing Güliz, Raşit loses his joy for life and considers it reasonable to be a mastermind of destruction, just as İhtiyar intended him to be. His going back to the restaurant, suggests that he may be the new İhtiyar, the new brute leader of the underground group, the person he already was deep inside.

Set in the midst of political chaos, bombings, and killings, *Gençliğim Eyvah* claims to be a novel that does not reproduce a partisan political rhetoric. It seems as though it does not support any political claims, because İhtiyar talks about destruction as the only solution, no matter what is being destroyed. Rife with rage, however, Tarık Buğra often digresses from the story, cloaks himself as the narrator or İhtiyar, and speaks his mind about the state of chaos in the country and the premises of Marxism. That turns a lengthy part of the novel into an angry political monologue. *Gençliğim Eyvah* uses familiar themes from the works of other right-wing March 12 novelists, like leftists disseminating hatred and anarchy. The Oedipalization of March 12's political atmosphere and the insistence on ambivalent intimacies between the characters help to stigmatize the leftist revolutionaries, some of whom were organized in urban guerilla groups, and attempted to resist to the system by means of a destruction similar to the one it employs on its subjects. The political monologues, angry speeches, and recurrent elements such as the two plots of murder by poison, foreshadows the novel's successful exploration of a man's struggles related to militant political action. But still, Buğra succeeds in highlighting the confusion of his protagonist.

Gençliğim Eyvah is a dramatic portrait of the damage a father can do to his son. It discusses masculinity as a capacity to destroy, rule, and govern, and dramatizes the son's final insistence on following his own passion, instead of his father's. It is also the story of a sexual contest between the young and virile

Delikanlı and the old İhtiyar over a woman. The novel's discussion of masculine maturation in line with the struggles of emotionally scarred sons to come to terms with the abusive father figure brings individual agency to the fore as the principal masculine feature. The sexual contest over Güliz between an insecure young man and an effete old man punctuates the agency problem. The crisis of masculinity represented in the image of Raşit erupts as he recognizes his inability to be a decision-maker. As a man whose life was dominated by poverty before getting to know Güliz, Raşit's struggle with masculinity becomes intertwined with economical stability as well. An attempt for self-control, which also includes the control of a woman, is defined as masculinity by *Gençliğim Eyvah*. Although Fethi Naci's determination of the novel's anti-communism is accurate and well-reasoned considering the writer's political orientation and conservatism, it is also important to take into consideration that in *Gençliğim Eyvah*, the foremost figure İhtiyar, who criticizes Marxism and revolutionary leftism, is a diabolical and negative figure. This is a significant reminder, which points out that the political criticism in the novel should be evaluated carefully. *Gençliğim Eyvah* provides very important clues to the critics that propose the critical energy to move beyond political discussions in order to understand the real motives of the March 12 novels.

3.2 *Bir Düğün Gecesi*

Bir Düğün Gecesi (A Wedding Night) is the second book of Adalet Ağaoğlu's famous trilogy *Dar Zamanlar* (Narrow Times). It is a trailblazing novel that stands witness to the aftermath of the March 12 military intervention. *Bir Düğün Gecesi* discusses the upheavals of the period in the panoramic atmosphere of a wedding party, in an intentionally ironic way, leading a discussion of versions of facts instead of facts.³¹ It tries to engage with the decadence of the post-dictatorial period in a series of interlocking stories.³² It makes the reader think of the failures of Kemalism, leftist revolutionism, anarchism, and feminism within the overall framework of the March 12 experience with a sense of clarity and reappraisal. Although this appraisal is accompanied by detached irony and a bitter disillusion from time to time, its main object is to reason the psychological traces of the historical moment around March 12.³³ There is a compound narrative eye in the novel, which allows us to see through several perspectives at the same time. The past and the present are interlaced in the narration, instead of the strict linear narrative.

Moving away from the broad realist form developed by the majority of March 12 writers, who turned their eyewitness accounts into literary texts, Ağaoğlu engages with the memories of the military intervention in a postmodernist style. *Bir Düğün Gecesi* is a skillful combination of political concerns with aesthetic experimentation. The novel compiles the stories of men and women, who meet in a wedding party. In this novel, everything stated appears by reflection in the consciousness of the characters and in their sorrowful recovery of their pasts.

³¹ Adalet Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düğün Gecesi*. (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003).

³² Adalet Ağaoğlu (b.1929) graduated from the Department of French Literature at Ankara University and continued her studies in Paris. She worked for the Turkish State Radio and Television in the 1950s. She has written about the social upheavals of the Republican Era and known as a writer that stands out for her technical and formal innovations. Short story collections: *Yüksek Gerilim* (High Voltage, 1975 Sait Faik Short Story Award), *Sessizliğin İlk Sesi* (The First Sound of Silence, 1978), *Hadi Gidelim* (C'mon, Let's Go, 1982). Plays: *Evcilik Oyunu* (Marital Game, 1964), *Tombala* (Bingo, 1967), *Çatıdaki Çatlak* (Crack in the Roof, 1969), *Çok Uzak Fazla Yakın* (Very Far Too Near, 1991 İş Bankası Grand Award for the Theater). Novels: *Ölmeye Yatmak* (Lying Down to Die, 1973), *Fikrimin İnce Gülü* (Delicate Rose of My Mind, 1976), *Bir Düğün Gecesi* (A Wedding Night, 1979 Sedat Simavi Literature Award, 1980 Orhan Kemal Novel Award, and 1980 Madaralı Novel Award), *Yazsonu* (Summer's End, 1981), *Üç Beş Kişi* (Curfew, 1984), *Hayır* (No, 1987), *Ruh Üşümesi* (A Chill in the Soul, 1991), *Romantik Bir Viyana Yazı* (A Romantic Viennese Summer, 1993).

³³ *Bir Düğün Gecesi* received the Sedat Simavi prize, the Orhan Kemal Novel Award, and the 1980 Madaralı award.

With the application of the “stream of consciousness” technique, Ağaoğlu directs the readers through the thoughts and feelings flowing through the minds of her characters. Despite the continuity suggested by the term “stream,” *Bir Düşün Gecesi* succeeds in portraying the discontinuous nature of thought as well. A more fractured discourse appears in the narration toward the end of the party, when the influence of alcohol begins to be felt and the impaired mental skills make it hard to think. Ağaoğlu’s characters recreate their past and critically examine themselves in some silent testimonials. In between these silent testimonials, there is also a questioning of the constructed nature of experience and memory. The importance of *Bir Düşün Gecesi* to this study, lies in its broad and moving portrayal of the new realities of post-coup Turkey.

The wedding party in “the club Anatolia” is a sort of microcosm of Turkish middle and upper-middle class society in 1973. It is a symbolic representation of the union of the money hungry bourgeoisie with the destructive power of the military. Cutthroat capitalist İlhan’s daughter Ayşen, who has a past as a leftist revolutionary activist, is about to marry the son of a renowned general, Ercan. One of İlhan’s sisters, Tezel, is present at the wedding but the other sister, Aysel is absent.³⁴ Aysel’s husband Ömer, an Oxford graduate professor of economics, who was fired from his job after the coup and experienced a three-week detention during the martial law period, watches the crowd. High-ranking generals, recognized businessmen, friends and relatives of the couple form the happy audience. They seem secure and isolated from the uncanny atmosphere created by the intervention of the armed forces. The party is characterized by diversity, of ideologies, political engagements, and classes, which has already made members of the same family opponents to each other. Aysel’s absence from the wedding is explained by her strained relationship with her brother İlhan, who made a fortune by doing business in the shadows of powerful military figures, and who then turned his back on his sisters, and began blaming them for their attachment to leftism.

The novel begins with an inspection of Ömer, whose “gender vertigo” is central to the story.³⁵ From the corner in which he took refuge with Tezel, Ömer watches

³⁴Aysel is the protagonist of this trilogy’s first novel *Ölmeye Yatmak* (Lying Down to Die). She is an academician, a sociologist, who has an affair with one of her students, Engin, and who struggles with the idea of suicide after she finds herself helpless and alienated from people in her life. Her affair forms one of the main narrative threads in *Bir Düşün Gecesi*, which continues to explore Aysel’s alienation.

³⁵Robert Connell, *Masculinities*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), p.137.

the petty bourgeois audience of men and women, trying to prove themselves rich and important in some exaggerated costumes. In hushed voices, the two criticize the party. In possession of the prestige and wealth lacked by the many, the invitees embrace their values of privilege and tradition of luxury. Ömer's inner voice is heard over the delicate clinking of glasses of wine and whisky, and trolleys of canapés and pastries. Noticing Ömer's thoughts, we learn about the struggles of his prolonged marriage to Aysel, his fascination with the young bride Aysel's earlier attraction to him, which made him feel like a young man again in his forties, and his coming across to Tuncer at the very same wedding party, a former revolutionary student leader, who used to lead the boycott of lectures at the university at which Ömer was a professor. Ömer learns that Tuncer is now taking a Ph.D. in Lausanne, as the son-in-law of a recognized businessman. Seeing Tuncer makes Ömer think back on his years at the university and ruminate on the transformation of his revolutionary friends and students.

Ömer recalls the times when he was taken into custody during the heights of the military intervention and released shortly afterwards, making him seem like an informer in the eyes of his friends, and even in the eyes of his wife. Ömer relates his personal story of the March 12 with his witness accounts of the damage done to his colleagues, friends and students. In this painful rethinking of the past, he criticizes himself as well. He negotiates the possibility of reacting adequately to the trauma of others. He thinks how people, unable to compensate for their comrades' failing back in the mayhem, used to exacerbate each other's faults. Ömer also recalls Aysel confessing to him about her affair with her student Engin. This opens up another upsetting self-negotiation of agency, which forces Ömer to traverse the borders of his masculinity. He tries to cope with the memories of his aggressive reaction to his wife's confession.

The familial context links Ömer's various responses to the ups and downs of his marriage to the reflections of Tezel, who critically engages herself with her aggravated relationship she has with her sister Aysel. In the party, Tezel is also critical about everything she sees, just like Ömer. Following Tezel's thoughts, we enter into the history of her becoming engaged with revolutionary leftism and falling away from her family. Tezel recalls how she put an enormous effort into accessing the art academy, how much these efforts were underestimated by the members of her family—except her sister Aysel—and how she became engaged with revolutionary activist friends at the academy. Tezel first gets married to Mehmet,

a fellow student of her at the academy and then to Oktay, the son of a wealthy family, who lives on his father's resources. She gives birth to her son Kerem. As she thinks back on the times she was married to Oktay, Tezel recollects Oktay's ambivalent engagement with the revolutionary movement. She remembers how deeply her husband was connected to his little-bourgeois life style. Tezel also thinks back on how being in custody and being persecuted became markers of a higher devotion to the revolutionary movement among her friends, when the military government initiated a hunt for "communists" and began taking people from their homes one by one.

These recollections push Tezel into questioning of her history of political activism. She remembers how she underwent a change of mind about her political engagement when two young revolutionary activists showed up at her latest exhibition, attacked Tezel for not depicting the working class properly, and spitted into her face. The intolerance of warring factions and the shallow thinking of people around her distances Tezel from active engagement with the idea of revolution. This sudden break pushes her into a self-imposed exile in the world of alcohol. As she loses her faith in the revolutionary movement thoroughly, Tezel begins drinking to excess. She escapes to alcohol during the wedding party as well and, much more powerfully, she escapes to nihilism, to protect herself from the pressures of the crowd. Tezel's struggle with alcohol and nihilistic attitudes form an integral part of her story and symbolically represent the defeat of the revolutionary left. In her image, the social chaos of politically tired Turkey appears as an individual condition, a state of psychological anxiety and a lack of meaning.

Some other characters' inner reflections also become part of the story in tandem with the episodic recollections of Ömer and Tezel. Gönül, wife of the groom's uncle, speaks about the family's internal frictions and rivalries. From her confessions, we learn that the groom's brother Hakan is also a leftist revolutionary activist, who disdains his little bourgeois family. Hakan's protest of Ercan's relationship with Ayşen and his threatening his brother with shooting him in case a wedding takes place, makes Gönül think that Hakan has a crush on the bride. Another account comes from İnci, a friend of Tezel, who recalls how Ayşen resisted getting married to Ercan in the beginning. İlhan, his mother Fitnat, Ömer's former student Tuncer, and Ercan's mother Nuriye contribute to the story of *Bir Düşün Gecesi* with their accounts of the incidents: İlhan thinks back on Ayşen's militant past and tries to convince himself that he is saving his daughter's life

by forcing her into marriage with the son of a prestigious general. Fitnat recalls İlhan's and Aysel's political fight with sorrow and tries to understand her children's animosity toward each other. Ömer's former student Tuncer anxiously negotiates how his former professor may be thinking about his marriage to Yıldız and escape to Lausanne. Tuncer's recollections of his militant years introduce Ali Usta, a working-class character, who also appears in the first novel of the trilogy *Ölmeye Yatmak*. Ali Usta looks after two of his nephews, Ahmet and Murat. He sends Ahmet to the police academy, hoping that he will have a proper education, but the boy graduates as a violent and aggressive officer. Nuriye, casting her mind back on to the fight between his sons, Hakan and Ercan, tries to calculate the possible consequences of Hakan murdering his brother at the wedding party.

After Hakan's hostile threats are introduced, the vibrant atmosphere of the wedding party turns into an unsettling and intense atmosphere with airs of suspense. Taking her turn in the challenging task of self-inspection, the bride Ayşen begins questioning her ideals, past actions, and political motives. The reader becomes a witness to Ayşen's turning into a politically engaged figure. As she becomes a university student and finds herself surrounded by politically dedicated and active friends, Ayşen seeks to distance herself from her family. She recognizes that she is in fact disturbed by her parents' passionless marriage, her father's hunger for money and her mother's extravagant life-style. Ayşen decides to become a member of the revolutionary students, but she struggles to obtain acceptance. Her friends Uğur, Zehra, Gül, Tuncer, etc., look down upon Ayşen's revolutionism, since she is from a wealthy upper-class family. To gain their respect and make them accept her as a member of the group, Ayşen volunteers in some skirmish that includes burning the car of an American bureaucrat. She then finds herself in custody.

Learning of Ayşen's whereabouts devastates her family. Her parents consider her being taken into custody as a disgrace to the family name. Ercan's father Colonel Hayrettin contacts the local officials and using his prestige, he makes them release Ayşen. This makes Ayşen begin seeing Ercan, her long-time admirer, as her only real supporter. She then decides to act in accordance with Ercan's wishes and accepts his proposal of marriage. Ayşen's recollections also include a description of her feelings for her aunt's husband Ömer. Ayşen recalls her juvenile attraction to Ömer and thinks back upon her fascination for him. This critical look at the past interferes with Ömer's self-reflections. Ömer compares

and contrasts himself to his wife Aysel, who betrayed him, but immediately told him about her affair. He regards himself as weak for having feelings for Ayşen, but not being able to talk to his wife about them.

Toward the end, Ömer's reminiscences lend a new twist to the novel. When he is interrupted by Tezel and asked what he had been thinking about, Ömer tells her that he is writing a bad novel in his head. A chapter consisting of excerpts from the diary of the groom's Korean war veteran uncle, Ertürk, follows this episode. Ertürk notes in his diary his proud service in Korea, side by side with American soldiers, who consider him a secondary-class man. He recalls getting wounded, receiving treatment in a camp, and trying hard to get used to the low-quality food that they were being served. A few pages of the diary mention a trip to Tokyo, after this medical treatment and his encounter with a charming lady named Sumida. Later, Ömer recalls his trip to Tokyo to participate in an international conference, and mentions a river named Sumida, confessing that his mind played a trick on him and chose the name of the river as Ertürk's Japanese sweetheart. This metafictional twist, not only changes Ömer's position from one of the ordinary observers of the wedding party to the writer of the novel about this wedding party, but also brings with it, questions about the way memory works. Ömer's confession that his mind plays tricks on him, problematizes the entire body of recollections he made us follow in the atmosphere of this wedding party. It becomes hard to assign a truth-value to his conscious observations. More importantly, the idea of memory as a natural collection of trustworthy evidence gets challenged.

After this metafictional twist, we find Ömer drunk, losing control of his behavior. He intends to phone Aysel to confess that he has feelings for the young bride, Ayşen. Instead of making this confession, he insults his wife and makes her cry, when he finally remembers the phone number and completes the call he intended. He tries to leave the party, but fails to do, because he feels that he should see Ayşen for one last time. Tezel tries to make him calm down. The crowd, unaware of the struggles of Ömer and Tezel, continues enjoying its luxurious dinner, high-class music performed by celebrity singers, and the joys of dancing. Businessmen make their dirty agreements, bureaucrats calculate their shares, and the crowd proudly embraces them as the epitome of success. Shortly before the end of the wedding party, Tezel receives a call at the Club Anatolia from Aysel, who informs her sister that she is being taken into custody by some

policemen who invaded the house. In coded phrases, Aysel tells Tezel to warn Ömer that he should not make his way back home after the reception, in case he wants to avoid getting caught by the watchmen possibly waiting for him in the neighborhood. The novel ends as Ömer and Tezel leave club Anatolia and wander in the dark streets of Ankara. A gunshot echoes in the silence of the night and they hear people running for help. They finally decide to take a taxi to Tezel's house. By ending the novel in this way, closure is avoided and it is hinted that the next day will continue in a similarly uncanny atmosphere.

In *Bir Düşün Gecesi*, Ağaoğlu constructs time as a set of episodes. The novel's intricate structure interweaves the observations and thoughts of a set of people, who differ in their ways of life, political engagements, and beliefs. With a laconic style, Ağaoğlu allows her characters to speak directly to the reader. Placing their accounts side by side and shifting the focus of the narration from the viewpoint of one character to the viewpoint of another, *Bir Düşün Gecesi* compiles a set of fragmented memories and contrasting accounts of times past into a convoluted whole. The characters are unable to know the intensity of their transition and the effect of this transition on the people they love. With the contrasting accounts of the people who have witnessed the same events, a cross examination becomes possible, which brings into light, the full dimensions of the experiences at stake. Ömer is a witness to Tezel's struggles, Tezel is a witness to Ömer's anxieties. Both act as witnesses to Aysel's oscillation between militant political action and a safe life. By the same token, guests at the dinner party are observers and explorers of one another's lives. This produces different versions of facts, which contradict each other. Ağaoğlu uses these contradictions as a productive realm to understand the legacy of the March 12 intervention.

Bir Düşün Gecesi shows how March 12's maelstrom shattered families and destroyed lives, tortured ordinary people, and forced young people to betray one another. It is evident that the collapse of the leftist revolutionary movement gave Ağaoğlu a painful stimulus to create the drama, but there are some other factors at work as well. Her recently published diaries, *Damla Damla Günler* (Days Drop by Drop, 2004) indicate that a similar sister-brother political friction was present in Ağaoğlu's personal life.³⁶ In the context of the novel, Aysel emerges as an identifiable amalgam of a fictional social scientist and Ağaoğlu herself, while

³⁶ Adalet Ağaoğlu, *Damla Damla Günler*. (İstanbul: İş Bankası Yayınları, 2007).

Aysel's sister Tezel is another amalgam that borrows from Ağaoğlu's younger brother Güner Sümer, and Aysel's brother İlhan borrowing from Ağaoğlu's elder brother Ayhan Sümer. Hence, *Bir Düğün Gecesi* is a novel with autobiographical overtones, but Ağaoğlu inscribes these autobiographical overtones into the novel by means of references to contemporary life in Turkey.

In her diary, Adalet Ağaoğlu expresses her discontent with literary critic Fethi Naci overlooking that *Bir Düğün Gecesi*'s major criticism is of masculinity. She argues that Naci postpones dealing with "the wedding party's masculine side, the accounts of the general status, the armed forces, the Korea affair, the military education etc." in his criticism on *Bir Düğün Gecesi* and explains this retreat with a kind of established auto-censorship.³⁷ In the wedding party, there are men reduced to weak and vulnerable individuals, men who possess a destructive financial and political power, and women trying to fit themselves into masculine roles, in order not to be crushed. The association of the wedding party with the alliance of the military and bourgeoisie, reveals the frailty and diminished power of the intelligentsia in the specific settings of March 12. Ağaoğlu relates this diminished power as a diminished masculinity. This section is intended to fill the gap that Ağaoğlu marked in the criticism of her novel. I will explore the heightened masculinity of İlhan and the military figures and juxtapose it to the diminished masculinity of Ömer and the "female masculinity" of Tezel.

Robert Connell reminds that "masculinity and femininity are inherently relational concepts, which have meaning in relation to each other, as a social demarcation and a cultural opposition. This holds regardless of the changing content of the demarcation in different societies and periods of history."³⁸ To make visible this social demarcation and the polarized male/female binary, Ağaoğlu places a male and a female intellectual with similar histories together at the vantage point of her narration. The novel opens with Tezel's words "Let's drink unless we will commit suicide [intihar etmeyeceksek içelim bari]," and readers are introduced to the major male character Ömer by means of his exploration of her symptoms of alcoholism. Watching Tezel's shaking hands, Ömer thinks that he

³⁷Hele Fethi Naci'nin belki de çok haklı biçimde *Bir Düğün Gecesi*'nin eleştirisinde düğünün erkek yanı, orgenerallik, askerlik, Korelik, harbiyelik bahsine hiç el sürmemesine devamlı 'roman bunlardan ibaret değil kalanına sonra değineceğim' diyerek hiç değinememesine ne diyeceğim? Kendini de beni de korumuş bulunan çok deneyimden geçmiş otosansürüne teşekkürden başka. Ağaoğlu, Damla Damla Günler. (as in n. 36), p. 593.

³⁸Connell (as in n. 35), p. 44.

should be helping her as the “thoughtful son-in-law of the family [ailenin anlayışlı damadı].”³⁹ From his role in the family, Ömer’s mind follows up with the memories, which serve to illuminate what lies beneath the wedding party. His reminiscences transfer the narration from Club Anatolia to his professorship at the university during the student uprisings, his struggling relationship with his wife Aysel, and his falling into a mute love with the young bride Ayşen. Throughout these reminiscences, we follow Ömer checking unwelcome character traits in himself that will make him seem “less manly” or “underdeveloped” and trying to police others surrounding him. At intervals, Tezel’s thoughts intervene in Ömer’s. Overwhelmed by the weight of the tradition that comes with the wedding party, Tezel bitterly considers her place in such a traditional public spectacle and tries to judge her accomplishments in life. Tezel’s quest for self-determination allows the reader to follow the gap between the rhetoric and reality of marriage, family, and revolutionism.

The extravagant wedding party, first and foremost, speaks directly of the status of men: the fathers of the wedding couple. The quality of the party is an indicator of the status and masculine prestige of the fathers as breadwinners. The head of the household’s display of wealth emerges as an indicator of the family’s power. Erhan’s father, Hayrettin Özkan, who is a general, is only mentioned in the novel by his name and profession. But even this small amount of information automatically situates him as an epitome of power in the atmosphere of the wedding party because of the still-fresh memories of the harsh military intervention. Ayşen’s father, İlhan Dereli, does not speak to the reader directly either except in a short chapter where the writer allows us to follow his thoughts about the wedding. Except for this short chapter, we learn about İlhan through the reflections in Tezel’s, Ömer’s, and his daughter Ayşen’s minds. *Bir Düğün Gecesi* mocks the wedding as a metaphor for the cooperation of the bourgeoisie with the armed forces in overthrowing the government with a memorandum. The bourgeoisie (İlhan and Müjgan) leaves its “capital” (their daughter Ayşen) to the secure keeping of the armed forces (Erhan, the son of the General Hayrettin Özkan). This co-operation is intended to put an end to ideological militancy (Ayşen’s militant leftism) and normalize the political atmosphere (normalize Ayşen by means of the institution of marriage).

³⁹Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düğün Gecesi*. (as in n. 31), p. 7.

The wedding party is a vivid portrait of men “trafficking in women.”⁴⁰ Ağaoğlu depicts it as the building block of the belatedly capitalist Turkish society. The bride’s father İlhan is a satirical personification of capitalism. He thinks that he has successfully fulfilled his paternal responsibility by giving a luxurious wedding to his only daughter. His paternal status is an important pillar of the story, as İlhan is the only male and the oldest child of the family, who became the heir to the father after his demise and assumed an authoritarian role toward his sisters. İlhan becomes an oppressive and bossy father figure, a role which he enjoys because of the absolute power assigned to it. İlhan’s patriarchal will to own and govern meets his hunger for money and ideological tendency toward being a greedy capital owner, making things even worse for the other members of the household. Hyper-cash brings hyper-masculinity and İlhan does not hesitate to take political advantage of the opportunities that his wealth generates. He befriends notable bureaucrats and makes substantial economic gains using their connections. His mother, Fitnat hanım, praises his hard work, dedication, and persistence for trying to improve the living standards of the family, thankful for the protection offered by İlhan’s power and wealth in the absence of her husband. But the girls oppose the ways in which they are being treated, feeling that İlhan lacks a balanced combination of masculinity and maturity, and experiencing the unpleasant consequences of this lack. İlhan’s excessive masculine patronage distances his sisters, Aysel and Tezel, from him and their ideological clash gradually turns their relationship into a tense connection beset by a deeply rooted conflict.

The major tension in the wedding party grows out of this familial friction. Forced to choose between their family and revolutionary leftist political beliefs, both Aysel and Tezel experience hard times. The party gives a searing account of the family’s struggle to fight disintegration, showing brothers and sisters alienated from each other, yet missing the old days when they were close and looking for reconnection. Aysel’s absence from the party heats up the story of the prolonged tension in her relationship with her brother İlhan. Although İlhan is the very model of the money hungry bourgeois and the angry patriarch, he is at the same time, a man aware of his deeds. He recognizes that his daughter Ayşen hardly smiles since the planning of her wedding began. He also sees how his wife Müjgan, accustomed to their high-class life, eventually turned into a greedy woman, who

⁴⁰ Gayle Rubin, “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex.”, in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), p. 157.

bothers herself with calculating the party's potential capacity to establish new business connections for her husband. Ağaoğlu shows how İlhan finds himself under stress as the breadwinner son/husband. She does not mock the stress a man feels to provide for the family and build prestige, but rather implies that relentless hunger for more money and power can mistakenly seem as normal breadwinner stress because of the men's traditional roles of main wage earners.

Throughout the party, Tezel and Ömer drink and talk about the people around them. During their chat, they discuss İlhan's role in their lives. Tezel recalls how her brother made a fortune. She ruminates on him taking over lands and estates and then selling them off piece by piece. Thinking back on how they were never allowed to criticize his "business," Tezel remembers the numerous instances when İlhan ruthlessly criticized her choices in business and her personal life:

Wouldn't they say eventually, look at the great İhsan Dereli's sister? Everybody knows me in İstanbul. This does not suit our familial honor. [...] Does anybody tell you to paint? Come live in mum's house. Bring your son too, let him grow among us taking a proper moral education pertaining to the name of our family. [...] And what is your problem, you are getting married and divorced, married and divorced?⁴¹

İlhan's liberal thoughts on moneymaking and his conservative world view on everything else bring him to the fore as an ambivalent mixture of capitalism and patriarchy. He is the product of a world in which making money is a central masculine virtue.

Ömer's reminiscences complete the portrait of İlhan, the ultimate power holder. Ömer recalls his dialogue with Aysel, while he was trying to convince her to go to the wedding party. Similar to Tezel's lost war against İlhan, Aysel's situation implies a defeat. The family's strong dependence on İlhan's wealth places Aysel in a secondary position in the eyes of the family, in terms of her choices as a leftist academician with a low income. Ömer reminds her why his brother İlhan is the sweetheart:

⁴¹Önünde sonunda demezler mi, şu koskoca İlhan Dereli'nin kardeşine bak? İstanbul'da herkes tanıır beni canım. Aile ahlakımıza uymaz. [...] Sana resim yap diyen mi var? Gel annemin dizinin dibinde otur işte. Getir oğlunu da, ailemize yakışır bir terbiye alaraktan aramızda büyüsün gitsin işte. [...] Hem ne oluyor öyle, evlenip boşanıyorsun, evlenip boşanıyorsun? Ağaoğlu, Bir Düğün Gecesi. (as in n. 31), p. 48-9.

See, your mum is more proud of İlhan than she is proud of you. As if it was you who took into guarantee her elderly days. As if it was you who moved her from that stove-heated house. As if it was you who bought her a TV to keep her occupied during the nights while she is on her own.⁴²

Buying the love and respect of the family by providing for them, İlhan captures the distinguished position of a ruler, who knows what is best for whom, and who chauvinistically advocates for his truths, rejecting outright any other alternatives.

His mother Fitnat is the most ardent supporter of İlhan. Her thoughts reflect how some women accept/encourage hyper-masculinity in men and how they contribute to the subsequent mythologization of them as agents of masculinization. Fitnat praises İlhan's masculinity by applauding his wealth and the prestige that comes it:

I have everything thank God. İlhan built everything one by one. A nice wedding for her daughter. What else should he do? A lot of important people of the country are here. Thank God that İlhan did not embarrass us in the eyes of our family, friends, and the notables of our hometown.⁴³

Accounts of Fitnat not only reflect the deep motherly love felt for a first child, but also intricately show how, in Turkish culture, sons happen to be seen as substitute husbands, making them privileged over their sisters.

As Fitnat hanım recalls İlhan's and Aysel's greatest fight, it becomes clear that much of İlhan's anger is caused by his inability to govern Aysel's thoughts and police her acts. This despotic patriarchal role links İlhan to the military figures of the novel, who engage themselves in a masquerade of ultimate power and agency in the wedding party. Following Fitnat hanım's thoughts, we learn that her responsible breadwinner son sees the military figures of March 12 as the men who shouldered the burden of placing the country back on track. Although she is painfully aware that guns are not very nice things, Fitnat hanım too sides with his son in labeling the armed forces as the rescuer of the country: "My son is right, if they were not here for us, our lovely country would now be in ruins

⁴²Annen senden çok oğluyla övünüyor işte. Sanki sen mi güvence altına aldın kadının yaşlılık günlerini. Sanki sen mi kaldırıp taşıdın onu o sobalı evden? Sanki sen mi televizyon alıverdin ona, geceler boyunca canı sıkılmasın diye, yapayalnız? Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düğün Gecesi*. (as in n. 31), p. 92-3.

⁴³Her şeyim var çok şükür. İlhan tek tek her şeyimi yaptı. Kızına da güzel bir düğün. Daha ne yapısın? Memleketin bir çok insanı burda. Çok şükür, eşe dosta, memleketimize mahcup çıkarmadı İlhan bizi. *Ibid.*, p. 137.

[onlar başımızda olmasalar, oğlum haklı, cânım memleket mahvolup gitmişti].”⁴⁴ By placing individuals harassed by the military rule next to others who, despite being the harassed people’s close family members, evaluate the military’s powerful presence in the country as a favorable solution to the political deadlocks, Ağaoğlu critically shows that family as a social institution has lost its primacy in the atmosphere of terror.

In this new world, what matters now is money and the power it brings. Aysel’s burst of anger at her brother İlhan during a family dinner, which later turns into an unpleasant fight, speaks out loudly the covetous and grasping character of capitalism:

Do I have to see your greedy face just because we are born of the same mother? You are such an opportunist! [...] You know one single thing, to tyrannize people, even the ones closest to you. When they do not obey, you lose your control. [...] We should approve what you do, to make you feel better shouldn’t we? I do not approve, and you know that. Tomorrow, if you feel like it, I know that you won’t hesitate to buy the guns of the soldiers. Once one gets used to buy, then the whole country seems to him as a bunch of land with no record and no owner. Once you get used to confiscate, you buy the military as well, and point their barrels to your blood brothers and sisters!⁴⁵

Aysel’s thoughts reflect the crucial preoccupation of the novel, which is to illuminate the relationship between the military and money loving bourgeoisie. Her protest, however, does not turn into a flag weaved every now and then in the narration. Except her husband Ömer and sister Tezel who silently approve her reaction, members of the family discredit Aysel as a dissent voice.

The novel presents a mocking picture of the military figures, each intoxicated with his own importance and ready to fight “for the well-being of people,” a pretext that conceals their personal gains from their acts. Ağaoğlu shows that combat and military life represent the most traditionally masculine domains by

⁴⁴ Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düğün Gecesi*. (as in n. 31), p. 141.

⁴⁵ Aynı karından çıktık diye senin çıkarıcı suratını görmek zorunda mıyım? Fırsatçı sen de! [...] Bir bunu öğrenmişsin. En yakınlarına bile boyun eğdirmeyi. Eğmediler mi edepsizleşiyorsun. [...] Yaptıklarımı üstelik bir de onaylamalısınız ki için rahat olsun değil mi? Onaylamıyorum işte! Onaylamadığımı biliyorsunuz. Yarın çok sıkışsanız askerin silahını bile satın alırsınız siz. Her şeyi satın almaya bir kez alışınca, bu memleket sahipsiz, tapusuz bir toprak parçası çünkü, bir kez el koymaya başlayınca askeri de alırsınız ve namluların ucunu öz kardeşlerinize bile çevirirsiniz! *Ibid.*, p. 142.

showing the guests at the wedding party as having great respect for these figures. Mixed with fear, people try to honor and comfort the sole anti-victims of the military intervention. The relationship between the civil individuals and the military figures during the party allegorizes the submissive political atmosphere which people were heaved into, in the settings of the March 12. Ömer observes the moment when Erhan's best man, General Rıfat Paşa enters the Club Anatolia:

“Paşa has arrived, he has arrived.”

Paşa has arrived.

Someone from my right-hand side says the other next to him, “the best man of the groom is General Rıfat Paşa.”

[...]

İlhan moves two steps forward, extends his hand:

“My dear Paşa...”

Paşa enters the building. Following him his wife, and daughter-probably his daughter-enter. Following them his orderly, following him Hayrettin Özkan, İlhan, and following them everybody from the sides of the groom and the bride, who have been waiting for minutes according to the protocol, maybe for about an hour and a half, enter.

[...]

People inside, almost everybody who have been sitting are now standing up, almost everybody who are standing up are holding their breaths, in their spot, putting their feet together and drawing their abdomen in, trying to decide whether to swallow or not the small meatballs, sausages, böreks in their mouths.⁴⁶

The fear of the military creates submissive soldiers out of ordinary people in an instant. In their party dresses, people hold their breaths and draw their abdomens

⁴⁶ “Paşa geldi, Paşa geldi”

Paşa gelmiş.

Sağ yanımdan biri, yanındaki birine “damadın nikah tanığı Korgeneral Rıfat Paşa,” diyor.

[...]

İlhan iki adım öne çıkmış, elini içeriye doğru uzatıyor:

“Paşam...”

Paşa giriyor. Ardından karısı, kızı -herhalde kızı-, giriyorlar. Ardından emir subayı, ardından Hayrettin Özkan, İlhan, onların ardından da protokol sırasında dakikalardır, belki bir buçuk saate yakın bir süre bu anı bekleyen bütün oğlan ve kız yanı giriyor

[...]

İçerde herkes, oturmakta olan hemen herkes ayağa kalkmış, ayakta duran hemen herkes de soluşunu tutarak, oldukları yerde, ayaklarını birbirlerine birleştirmiş, karınlarını içeri çekmiş, avurtlarındaki küçük köfteleri, sosisleri, börekleri yutmakla yutmamak arasında kalakalıyor. Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düşün Gecesi*. (as in n. 31), p. 186-7.

in, as though they were some privates who will be inspected by a high general. Aġaoġlu ironically shows how people submit themselves to power, whether out of fear or hope for gains, and invite an authoritarian rule.

As a challenge to this almighty image of military figures, the novel explores the struggles and alienation of an ordinary soldier fighting at the fronts. The powerful image formed by military figures Hayrettin Özman, a notable general of March 12, who “achieved great success in the man hunt” of the military rule, and his son’s best man general Rifat Paşa, who thrills the crowd with his medal rich uniform is challenged by Ertürk, a Korea war veteran and the uncle of the groom.⁴⁷ The name Ertürk reveals a story in itself, because “er” means “private” in Turkish, the lowest ranking soldier.⁴⁸ The “private-Turk” Ertürk is an important figure because he brings the possibility of understanding military men’s role as oppressors as well as victims. *Bir Dügün Gecesi* gives voice to the war veteran through the notes in his diary. This section features the revelation of a young man’s painful days in some foreign land, to die for the victories of the big powers.

During his troublesome days at the front, Ertürk observes his secondary position as a soldier of a poor country, who is serving for the benefit of some more powerful country. He is wounded and befriends Tommy, the American, in the hospital ward, who dislikes the food served there. Ertürk records in his diary his response to Tommy’s diet in detail:

I loved and respected my American war-mates, from the private to the soldier of the highest rank. Jealousy never passed from my mind while they were eating chocolates, delicious cold meat, pies, desserts and drinking lots of beer. They deserve it. As children of a rich country, who extended their helping hand to poor countries like us, and mobilized every means to protect us from our enemies the communists, these people have the right to do whatever they like and they deserve everything they eat. [...] We finally found a good formula. We unite the eatable parts of the food served to us for Tommy to eat, and we unite the rest for me to eat. This way Tommy started to gain his strength back, which makes me happy.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Aġaoġlu, *Bir Dügün Gecesi*. (as in n. 31), p. 238 It is another ironic coincidence that the head of the September 12 junta that assumed power a year after the publication of this novel, General Kenan Evren, is also a Korea war veteran.

⁴⁸ “Er” means both “man” and “private” in Turkish. This word is the simplest explanation of the association of masculinity with the militaristic ethos in the Turkish culture. Every “man” is, by definition, a “private”.

⁴⁹ Ben Amerikalı savař arkadaşlarımı, erinden en yüksek rütbeli subayına kadar her zaman çok sevmiş ve saymışımdır. Onlar çukulatalar, enfes soġuk etler, çörekler, tatlılar yerlerken, bol bol

Ertürk experiences the horrors of the war and returns home embittered. The Korean war episode serves to illuminate the big picture about the way the military works and it also makes a biting criticism of the Turkish military's role in the global monopoly of power, by means of Ertürk's naive patriotism.

Ertürk's helplessness in Korea is a striking contrast to the generals' showing-off at the wedding party. *Bir Düğün Gecesi* uses these contrasting images to relativize the ultimate power attributed to the military and show how naive patriotism becomes a curtain before the eyes of a man dedicated to perform his duty for his country. Ertürk recognizes that he is not a subject but an object in some war, but he fails to accept this. A seductive tale of "serving to the nation for a high cause" constructs him as a hero, while in fact, his role is that of an ordinary man in pain, in the more complex realm of international relations. As a soldier, he has respect for generals but, as a civilian, he recognizes what lies beneath the thinly disguised fiction of heroism that is being inflicted upon him.

The pressure Ertürk feels to distance himself from pain, shame, and vulnerability introduces us to what Kaja Silverman calls the "dominant fiction" in male subjectivity, constructed upon men's cultural identification with the role of possessing "the phallus."⁵⁰ The theme of "inability to accept weakness" is elaborated by the accounts of Ömer, who negotiates his role as an idealist professor, a leftist intellectual, and a faithful husband. With his accounts, the discussion about weakness anxiety is liberated from being limited to the military sphere and moves into a much broader territory of masculinity. Ömer's reminiscences about his years at the university, being placed under arrest, and falling in love with Ayşen show how "strength" is seen as the major criterion of sexual difference, not only in physical terms but also in moral and emotional terms. Ömer's reflections bring the quintessences of masculinity to the fore as a major issue.

In the novel, Ömer's thoughts occasionally mix with Tezel's words. The two turn themselves into silent observers of the wedding party, and their mental escapades provide a panoramic view of the party, as well as some detailed informa-

biralar içerlerken kendilerini kıskanmak aklımın köşesinden geçmemiştir. Çünkü bunları yemek onların hakkıdır. Zengin bir memleketin çocukları oldukları halde bizim gibi fakir memleketlere yardım elini uzatmış, düşmanlarımız komünistlere karşı bizleri korumak için her şeylerini seferber etmiş bu insanlar ne yapsalar layık, ne yeseler haktır. [...] Şimdi aramızda iyi bir formül bulduk maamafih. Bize verilen yiyeceklerin en yenilebilir gibi olanlarını birleştiriyoruz, bunları Tommy yiyor. Kalanlarını da birleştiriyoruz, ben yiyorum. Böylelikle Tommy de biraz kuvvet kazanmaya başladı, bundan ötürü sevinyorum. Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düğün Gecesi*. (as in n. 31), p. 214.

⁵⁰Kaja Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*. (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 15.

tion about the personal histories of some of the guests. What brings Tezel and Ömer together, besides this witnessing position, is the problems they had experienced in the past, because of the orthodox leftist revolutionism of the younger generation. Hence, their reflections not only convey some other guest's ups and downs but also illuminate their ambivalent position and struggles as leftist intellectuals. While a myriad of doubts and uncertainties of her past and present assail her, Tezel asks herself: "How did we end up like this? They say we are weak. Of course we are weak! What else should we be? Torturers? [Nasıl böyle olduk? Zayıfımız. Zayıfız elbet! Ne olacaktık ya? İşkenceci mi?]"⁵¹ She thinks that leftist intellectuals turned anger into grief, rather than protest, as they were unable to answer oppression back by adopting a similar tyranny.

Ömer acknowledges to himself his personal failure as well, but he does not seem very enthusiastic about investigating the reasons for the failure: "I do not want to start all over again. Regret should not be allowed at all. It should not be asked where we went wrong [Benim yeniden başlamaya niyetim yok. Pişmanlıklara ise hiç izin verilmemeli. Nerde yanlış yapıldığının sorusu hiç sorulmamalı]." ⁵² The contrast between Tezel's relatively easy acceptance of defeat and "weakness," and Ömer's obstinate attempts to turn a blind eye to the past and the defects of the revolutionary movement, serves as a jumping-off point for *Bir Düğün Gecesi* to comment on the embodied norms of masculinity. The contradiction between Tezel's and Ömer's answers to "being defeated" by superior powers, opens up a moment for reflection on the limits of gender identity. Tezel's discourse on weakness and strength offers a glimpse at the revolutionary families, where men were emasculated and women were choosing masculine roles out of necessity. Although she accepts the defeat of the leftist revolutionary movement on the grounds of "a weakness," Tezel's accounts of the defeat relativizes the "femininity" attached to this weakness and submission to the more powerful.

There is a certain amount of masculinity tolerated in Tezel, who stands for an epitome of power all by herself, as a twice divorced single woman who makes a living on her own and drinks to excess. She is a manly woman, not domestic at all, but not masculine. Tezel's attitudes toward her ex-husbands and her son indicate that she is a woman who not only challenges the state of being "a wife," but also struggles with the definitions prescribed to being "a mother." Her un-

⁵¹ Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düğün Gecesi*. (as in n. 31), p. 73.

⁵² Ibid., p. 97.

conventional femininity, backed up by her sister Aysel's earlier attacks on their brother's patriarchal mastership, introduces into the narration a new dimension for gender discussions, for it makes one think that "masculinity" does not exclusively belong to men. It is not the exclusive range of experience of male bodies, but can be "performed" by women as well. The performance of masculinity by female characters is common in March 12 literature and *Bir Düşün Gecesi* shows that masculine performances becomes part of the agenda of women for survival in men's world.

Tezel's "masculinity" is connected to her courage. This is underlined in an episode of memories, which takes Tezel back in time to her aggressive reaction to a "revolutionary" couple that criticized her paintings for not being revolutionary enough. In her gruesome encounter in the art gallery with this vandal couple, Tezel first draws a tolerant image. She makes no objections to their rather impolite request of her painting "the working-class". When, however, challenged by the orthodox revolutionary youngsters with more severe verbal attacks, she asks indignantly if they perhaps recognize the shades of the struggles of working-class explicitly in the pieces she has painted. She expects them to appreciate her work and to recognize her status as a revolutionary painter. When this request is declined with insults, she turns herself into an arrogant defender: "I stretched and I contracted. Just like a loving mother, a brave soldier, I stretched my arms in front of my paintings. 'Fuck off, you two!' I was not used to utilizing such biting swear words until then [Gerildim, kasıldım. İyi bir ana, yiğit bir asker gibi gerdim kollarımı tablolarımın önüne 'Siktirolun be!' O zamana dek böyle keskin küfürler edemezdim]."⁵³ Instead of emotional talk and emphatic conversation, the couple responds to the language of violence and expression of verbal anger and leave the gallery.

By equating "a loving mother" with "a brave soldier," on the grounds of their courageous guardianship role, Ağaoğlu underlines the common human instinct to protect the loved ones and indicates that men do not have a monopoly on such a role. After the "masculinity" of the role of the protector is defeated, the "masculinity" disguised in the act of swearing becomes a focal point. Toward the end of the novel, when alcohol takes over on a more explicit level, we find Ömer hopelessly trying to find a swear word, a verbal formula to exert his masculinity. The alcohol unlocks Ömer's fears to face his secret fragility. Through Ömer's

⁵³Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düşün Gecesi*. (as in n. 31), p. 47.

mind, the reader is granted access to a masculine realm of intellect and power: as an Oxford graduate son of a diplomat, Ömer introduces to the narration the anxiety of conforming to the norms of masculinity in a predominantly traditional society. There is a strong emphasis on the importance and value of civilized behavior and emphatic thinking in Ömer's self-reflections. He appreciates the joy he has found in the love of the young Ayşen, but he fails to express his feelings to her. Trying to build a courageous man of agency in himself, he recalls his wife Aysel's testimony to him about her affair with Engin, a student of hers. He, however, cannot conceal that he became annoyed and angry, when Aysel came up with an emotional testimony of her affair. Well aware that his reaction will be a marker of the level of civilization of his "masculinity," Ömer plays the "understanding" betrayed husband.

Ömer confesses to himself that his kind hearted reaction and understanding of Aysel's testimony was a performance in itself, which is later invalidated by his jealous and intolerant acts. He remembers how he bitterly reacted to Aysel's happiness when she received a letter from Engin, from prison:

I am Westernized, that's it. So much Westernized that I try to hide Aysen's interest in me, from myself. So much Westernized that when Aysel said this evening that there was a letter from Engin, I replied, 'what a joy' in an ill-temper... That means there was rage hiding deep inside me for a long time. That high spiritedness was a performance, an abstractness or an act of pride.⁵⁴

As he learns about his wife's affair with a man younger than he, Ömer recognizes himself as a man of age. The emphasis on being Westernized, however, carries the accent from being a man of age to being a man of manners. This East-West cleavage brings a new dimension to the question of masculinity. Attitudes against women, settle in a bigger drama and reveal a greater cultural problem.

By positioning an intellectual man's anxiety for trying to hide his despotic anger into the cultural codes of the East-West dilemma, Ağaoğlu develops a different way of looking at the events. Similar to Tarık Buğra's discussion of self-control in *Gençliğim Eyvah*, Ağaoğlu's *Bir Düşün Gecesi* tends to question

⁵⁴Ben Batılıyım, bitti. Ayşen'in şimdi bana karşı duyduğu eğilimi kendimden bile gizlemeye yeltenecek kadar Batılı ama. Bu akşamüstü Aysel 'Engin'den mektup var' deyince 'bu ne sevinç' diye hırçınlaşabilecek kadar Batılı hem de... Kaç zamandır gizlenmiş bir öfke varmış demek ki içimde. O aşkınlık bir numaraymış, bir yapaylık, kendini beğenmişlik ya da. Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düşün Gecesi*. (as in n. 31), p. 102.

whether it is possible to argue for masculinity's cultural essences. Ömer's bursts of anger leave us with the difficult problem of understanding the transformation of "an Oxford graduate" into "a despotic husband". Ömer's sense of insufficiency is even more pronounced, when his reflections on Engin push him into self-questioning and brings him back to his years at the university. Ömer thinks about how he handled his students' militancy. He remembers Tuncer, a leading figure of the student revolts, who used to terrorize his classmates and force them to boycott the lectures. Their unexpected meeting at the party deepens Ömer's thoughts: Tuncer shows up at the party with his wife Yıldız, turning the party into a bruising encounter with political correctness for Ömer.

Ömer learns that Tuncer has married to Yıldız, the daughter of a rich businessman and member of parliament, and that he is now taking a Ph.D. in Lausanne. Tuncer's anxious attempts to explain his marriage and escape from Turkey, and trying to find excuses for his giving up the militancy he once adopted, makes Ömer feel angry:

He wouldn't need to feel sorry. He wouldn't feel the urge to make this explanation 'Yıldız and I, we loved each other very much... We still love'. He used to think that love shadows revolutionism. He erased this, and found Yıldız beneath. What if he erases Yıldız as well... But it is not an easy thing to do. One may find something he would never think of beneath the thing he erases. Life is like that... You never know...⁵⁵

Tuncer and his embrace of the capitalist ethic of liberal individualism in the end, brings to the fore the Gordian knot of the narration: the difficult choice between personal gain and collective benefit. Ömer painfully recognizes that people are no more interested in the collective good. He witnesses the libertarian credo of self-interest in Tuncer, which pushes him into deep pessimism.

In Ömer's reflections, we follow both Aysel's affair and Tuncer's conversion becoming major rites of passage. Ömer finds himself a cuckold in his personal life and by extension, a cuckold in his political attachments. He negotiates his propensity to violence after discovering his wife's sexual infidelity, ironically telling

⁵⁵Şimdi de hiç ezilip büzölmeyebilirdi. Bana şö açıklamayı yapma gereğini duymayabilirdi 'Yıldız'la çok sevdik birbirimizi... Çok da seviyoruz hocam...' Aşkın devrimciliğe gölge düşöreceğini sanırdı. Bunu kazıdı altından Yıldız çıktı. Onu da kazısı... Ama bunu yapmak kolay değil. Kazıman şeyin altından belki de aklının ucundan bile geçirmedüğünü sandığı bir şey çıkar. İnsan hali... Hiç belli olmaz ki. Ağaoğlu, *Bir Dügün Gecesi*. (as in n. 31), p. 149-150.

himself that he is too well-educated to commit a low-class murder.⁵⁶ Thinking back on the tightly woven masculine honor system, Ömer doubts if emotions are, in fact, the creations of cultural systems. He sees that he can belong to neither the proletariat nor the bourgeoisie: he feels disturbed by the extravagance and low cultural profile of the money hungry bourgeoisie but cannot situate himself well in the orthodoxy of the proletariat either.

As Ömer gradually recognizes himself a waif, he loses control of his thoughts. He recalls the painful memories of his release from prison and Aysel's skeptical remarks about his quick release:

"They say that those who took Ayşen out of trouble helped Ömer too..."
 [...]

What kind of face was that? Ostensibly, she trusts her husband. She trusts him fully. Ostensibly fully. How fully? [...]

So much fully that she could ask "Why did they release you? How come this quick?" "They say fungal infection is epidemic inside..."

I kiss her. Hug her, laughing.

She ran to the bathroom and soaped her mouth and face. She soaped herself so much that even I doubted that I am healthy⁵⁷.

Beset by the airs of suspicion that Ömer informed the authorities with names of other revolutionaries and, therefore, released immediately, Aysel treats her husband like a villain. Thrilled by her treatment, Ömer finds himself swearing at his wife, for the first time in his life, and becoming a man suited to the conventions of masculinity by virtue of this act.⁵⁸

On the verge of a nervous breakdown, Ömer works himself into a series of rages. He transforms himself into a rage-driven cuckold and decides to pay a call on Aysel. Ağaoğlu eloquently shows that this is a matter of "masculinity," because Ömer repeats to himself that he wants to see Aysel, for a brief moment, "utterly

⁵⁶ Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düğün Gecesi*. (as in n. 31), p. 101.

⁵⁷ "Ayşen'i kurtaranlar Ömer'i de kurtarmışlardır, deniyormuş]..."

[...]

Nasıl bir yüzdü o? Sözde kocasına güveniyor. Bu güven sonsuz. Sözde sonsuz. Ne kadar sonsuz? [...]

"Neden salıverdiler seni? Nasıl böyle çabuk?" diye sorabilecek kerte sonsuz. "İçerde mantar hastalığı yaygın diyorlar..."

Öpüyorum onu, ona sarılıyorum. Daha çok da, gülüyorum.

Koşarak banyoya kaçtı. Ağzımı yüzünü iyice sabunladı. Beni bile sapasağlam olduğumdan kuşkuyla düşürecek kerte çok sabunladı ağzımı, her yanımı. Ibid., p. 291.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

weak [iyice zayıf].”⁵⁹ Ömer evaluates the physical distance between him and his wife as a “failure” of his masculinity and tries to compensate this remoteness with young Ayşen’s emotional attraction to him. Half-drunk, he makes Aysel cry on the phone and takes this as a “victory” of his masculinity. The parade continues, as İlhan finds Ömer in a remote corner and takes him back to the cocktail lounge. Aloof from the public sphere, he parses the vibrant scene before him: people are singing the Officer March and doing the samba. Tezel hysterically laughs murmuring to herself “My dear country, my dear country! you are capable of what deeds! [Ey güzel Türkiyem! Ey güzel Türkiyem! Sen nelere kadirsin!]”⁶⁰

Beset by a feeling of inferiority and feeling that he is a man of age with no status in society and no respect, Ömer is paralyzed when he returns to the lounge. He sees Hayrettin Özkan, the groom’s father, “roaring” to his wife and her sister, when asked if he has heard from his younger son Hakan and whether he will be coming to the party.⁶¹ At the core of male peer pressure, he imitates the general’s masculinity:

“Why did the Paşa get angry my son, is there something wrong?”

The answer comes from Tezel:

“The orchestra does not play the march well enough mom!”

[...]

Then her motherly cries:

“It would be better if Aysel too had been here... If only she had come...

We would be all together in this happy day of ours.”

I am an Ömer sitting for a quarter of time next to a general. I am an Ömer influenced by the Paşa. I roar as well:

“Enough with this Aysel nonsense, please!”

After that, a quick shot of dry rakı⁶².

⁵⁹ Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düğün Gecesi*. (as in n. 31), p. 293.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 305.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 306.

⁶² “Paşa niye öfkeleni oğlum, bir şey mi var?”

Yanıtı Tezel’den:

“Orkestra marşı yeterince canlı çalmıyor da anne!”

[...]

Ardından bu kez de onun annelik inildemeleri:

“Aysel de oluverseydi... Ne olur sanki geliverseydi... Şöyle güzel bir günümüzde, hep birlikte.” Ne de olsa bir çeyrek saattir bir Paşa’nın yanında oturmaktayım. O Paşa’dan çok etkilenmiş bir Ömer’im. Kükrüyorum:

“Bırakın artık şu Aysel lafını, çok rica ederim!”

Ardından hızla büyük bir yudum susuz rakı. Ibid., p. 306-7.

The spectacle of bad manners, backed by alcohol, is a spectacle of masculinity for Ömer. Borrowing the authoritarianism of the general, Ömer tries to alleviate his wounded masculinity's loss of power. His hysterical imitation of the general is a witty representation of how gender roles are artificially determined by exterior pressures.

In the heights of alcohol, Ömer's memories of his arrest mixes with his observations in the lounge. He finds himself trying to wash a filthy toilet, with a guardian watching, and threatening Ömer with making him lick the floor. The guardian talks to a colonel. All of a sudden, the military's corruption of power comes to the fore with a chilling scene. It jolts the reader out of the lively atmosphere of the wedding party. By this flashback memory, which links the authoritarian general of the wedding to torturers who are trying to follow orders, *Bir Düşün Gecesi* reminds that in memory lie moral obligations that are difficult to ignore. To remember is necessary in order to keep alive the memory of the crimes committed and it is equally important that people should be awakened from the illusions of power. The allusive reference to the dark atmosphere of March 12, resurfaces the blistering polemic about the military's role in the country, which forms one of the major problems that lie in the foundations of the novel.

Bir Düşün Gecesi deals with the military as a problem of masculinity and patriarchy. The will to dominate and govern is discussed in the novel from different characters' points of view, and the satiric and faintly mocking dialogues between Tezel and Ömer reveal the other character's Janus-faced behavior. The novel also invalidates Tezel's and Ömer's greater claim to "the truth" for being leftist intellectual victims of the military intervention. Tezel's alcoholism and Ömer's deepening obsession with his agency and masculinity shed light on the damage done, but Ağaoğlu does not let her characters claim an ascetic victimization. She even lets a bitter criticism materialize: Ömer's increasingly futile attempts to overpower Aysel reveal to the readers an imitation of the aggressive power of the military, which tries to prove through brutality who has the paramount control and power. In this sense, Ağaoğlu suggests that even the victims of the military seem to depend on them as a role model, to construct an invulnerable self-image and claim agency. This is a direct and sound criticism of the malestream Turkish left and it encourages the reader to look beyond the given portrait and to imagine the mistakes of the revolutionary movement in Turkey. The fixation upon the patriarchal dynamics by means of Ömer's struggling masculinity and İlhan's ag-

gressive breadwinner status diverts attention from the greater oppression inflicted upon the society by the military forces but, in the end, all form a cumulative trauma bothering the country, the culture, and the people through strict definitions of masculinity, oppressive patriarchal rules, a hungry-eyed capitalism, and a militaristic ethos.

In *Bir Düşün Gecesi*, Ağaoğlu's criticism is not limited to the leftist orthodoxy. She also deals with the profound gaps between people because of class struggles. Between the lines, the novel brings a challenging question to the mind: What is the responsibility of the powerful toward the weak? The patriarchal system, the novel argues, is so diffused in the minds of the people that it controls their view of the events. They see oppression of the weak as natural. The novel underlines the need to challenge this view. The extravagant wedding party is an emblem of inequality since it illustrates the totemic value of money by showing the collusive military-industrialist capitalists, the unscrupulous businessmen and the like, in the atmosphere of a luxurious dinner. The dinner illustrates a new vision in which money has become an end in itself and moneymaking has become invested with value, no matter how unlawfully it is achieved. *Bir Düşün Gecesi* argues that even laissez-faire capitalism should have its rules. The project offered is to combat military, capitalism, and patriarchy all at once, which requires a civil-war with the destructiveness of oppressive power. There are political and philosophical implications to the monopoly of power symbolized by İlhan's, the Paşas', Ertürk's, and Ömer's hierarchical positions. By dint of these characters' anxieties, the novel links the obscure forms of psycho-emotional gratification of the rogue capitalists to the political boasting of the military and asks what is to be done with the painful memories of the March 12.

Conclusion

Turkish literature of the 1970s reflects a strong contribution of writers who explore struggles of the individuals with fragmented identities. Not only the March 12 novels, but also others published in the ten year period between 1970 and 1980 play a conspicuous role in the exploration of identity and its fluxes. As the Table A.1 on page 303 shows, March 12 novels form only a limited part of a vast body of literature. Many other novels listed in this table are imbued with the conflicts of the period as well, although they take a relatively distant approach to the history and memories of the military intervention, and the influence of this particular chapter of Turkish history in the cultural climate of the country. The period of upheaval in Turkey's political and cultural life during the 1970s was fictionalized in many different forms, and produced novels reflecting an awareness of those who were subjected to despotism, and abuse of justice. The writing of the period was heavily informed by social conflicts, but there were individuals with their own narrative projects as well: Oğuz Atay's tales of disconnectedness, Yusuf Atılgan's stories of alienation, Orhan Kemal's and Erol Toy's working-class sagas, Yaşar Kemal's Anatolian magical realism, Kemal Tahir's historiographical novels and, of course, women authors' work such as Leyla Erbil's exploration of women who resist being defenseless objects of male desire were also important pillars of the literature of the seventies. Few writers who published during this period are still productive today. Many of them disappeared from the literary

scene: some became blacklisted, while the names of others waned as time passed.

March 12 novels also faded away. They are not as popular as they once were. The youth of the 1970s, engaged in changing the world, today symbolizes a worn-out orthodoxy for many people. However, it is equally hard not to see that what happened on March 12 is still a crucial part of Turkey's present. It is a constant discussion in Turkey whether military interventions are necessary mechanisms for a stable, secular, and democratic Turkey or if the military's super-ego function does nothing but keep Turkey in a borderline disorder, which makes the country loose the control of her ego, fail to face her demons, and decide for herself on her own. This makes the history of military interventions a particularly useful subject to understand the cultural and political dynamics of the country, and it also makes paying attention to March 12 novels worthwhile. The putatively canonical body of March 12 novels is not a collection of stories of a few individuals alone, but of people, life, and a dark period of Turkish history. These novels take readers skillfully, and very intimately, into life in Turkey of the 1970s. Against the background of a revolutionary uprising and the conservative reaction it encountered, a whole society is presented through the ideas and actions of individuals. It is important to see that individuals do not, for the most part, become lost in this collectivity. They are given dimensions of development and growth, and portrayed with their sufferings, and ups and downs in life. Beneath the political burden, there is an arresting questioning of individuality in March 12 novels.

March 12 novels occupy a distinguished place in the history of contemporary fiction of Turkey because of their pioneering role in implementing eyewitness testimonies into literature. This aspect of the corpus cannot be denied or downgraded. Without the terror and memories of the events surrounding March 12, these novels would not be the same because the foundations of the significant realism of the texts are laid by the history of March 12. Although both the historical frame of reference and the internal time frame of most of the March 12 novels are littered with the events of the 1970s in Turkey, the March 12 novel is not simply a fallout from the military intervention. March 12 is definitely a vehicle that opens and closes the stories of the novels, but March 12 novels are also important in what they discuss in the meantime. Their look at the cultural transformations of the 1970s with a specific interest in the realms of gender is also new and innovative.

Gender has been a central issue for novelists ever since the novel was imported

from Europe to the Ottoman Empire as a new genre in the nineteenth century, but the eroticization of power and the sexual energy around which political and national identities are constructed were hardly discussed in explicit discourses until the emergence of March 12 as a distinct literary movement. Until the March 12 novels, there was hardly any collaborative effort to see gender clearly, without degrading sexuality to a footnote of the wider struggles or a by-product of something else. Themes such as puberty, homosexuality, necrophilia etc. rarely survived the self-censorship mechanism of writers who spent considerable time calculating the unpredictably disabling consequences of mentioning such themes, until the liberal aura of the 1970s. March 12 novels constructed a new narrative world, in which gender, sexuality, subjectivity, and ideology inform one another within and beyond a psychological perspective.

Previous arguments about the March 12 novel suffer from selective use of the novels published during the March 12 epoch. The multiplicity of the corpus has been denied in critical studies since the 1970s, because of the canonization of the literary accounts of March 12 in a manner privileging the left-wing realist novels. The gesture of outreach and expansionism proposed by this dissertation's call for opening the previously established canon of March 12 novels may seem problematic to those who were victim of abusive power as members of the revolutionary left. However, my call for opening the canon of March 12 novels is not an attempt to credit the fascist prerogatives. It is rather a call to have a complete picture of the object of study, before working on individual novels in detail. In giving space to right-wing novels, I have by no means let go the option to criticize the dark view of their "nationalism" and "guardianship" politically. It is impossible to ignore the fact that leftist writers mostly managed to sustain moral distance from the revolutionaries they created, and took a critical stance at their ferocity, while rightists were by no means critical of the right-wing violence. Pulling "other" novels into the picture (by "other" novels, I refer to allegorical novels that deal with abuse of power without real time references and novels that were written by the right-wing) makes it clear that the term "March 12 novel," symbolizes a mixture of different narrative strategies and political ideologies. Opening the canon makes us understand that March 12 novels have utterly been eclipsed by the infamous political polarization and escalating revenge between the rival groups in the specific settings of the 1970s.

In tones ranging from soulful to provocative, and from didactic to whimsical,

the nine novels that constitute the explicit object of study of this dissertation draw a stunning picture of the March 12 period. Some of them plead, while some others shock. In one way or another, they are political novels, which chose to comment on a specific set of realities and conceal or ignore the others. There is legitimate sociopolitical criticism in the March 12 novels. They convincingly capture the soul of a country under political violence and oppressive military rule, and paint a vivid and nuanced portrait of radicals and reactionaries tussling over political issues. Some novels reduce complicated conflicts to simple duels with a Manichean look at the events of March 12, while others avowedly confess the incommensurability of all the perspectives available to the people of 1970s Turkey. The crucial point in analyzing these novels is that, the they have different ideological sympathies and are differently positioned toward the events of March 12. What is remarkable about them, is that they make readers confront the questions produced by the historic events of March 12 and also push them toward a self-questioning about power and authority.

The novels' portrayal of the political struggles of the period, however, raises questions beyond those struggles, because they probe us on many levels. March 12 novels are concerned with different questions within the framework of their politically aware historicism: What is power? Why do people abuse it? What are the responsibilities of the strong toward the weak? What makes a man powerful? How can a man obtain power and protect it? Does masculinity automatically bring destructiveness? There are also questions posed by taking women's attachments to power: Are women, by definition, powerless? Do men have a monopoly on power? How do women gain power and what should they do to protect it? The novels further ask: How are power and masculinity tied together? How are hierarchies of class and status built around masculinity? Are these hierarchies static or in flux? These are not simple or easily answered questions. They are tied to all the philosophical, cultural, and political systems that preoccupy our contemporary world.

In a period defined by the political boasting of the military, when mass media were censored and selective in the content and quality of their coverage, March 12 novels were also, to some extent, doing media work. They were call-outs to people to open their eyes to the "truth." Some writers of March 12 may be said to find the most formidable means of criticism in novel. But novels should be read as novels. The caliber of a fictive work obviously cannot depend on the

extent to which it “correctly” refers to reality. I understand that to fend off fascist initiatives during the upheavals of the 1970s, priority was given to keeping political solidarity alive, which made, for the time, many different features of the March 12 novels uninteresting to literary critics. In the havoc, it was hard not to use the lens of politics as the primary means of approaching literature, which explains the accumulation of critics around Marxist terminology and their insistence on reading March 12 novels as texts that are inescapably subject to a question of truth.

Reading March 12 novels with an attempt to find how much of them represent the truth, however, misses several important features of these novels. It misses how these novels inscribe hierarchies of otherness, negotiate power, appeal for liberties and alternatives, discuss what love for the people and country means, and question the role of the modern individual in modern collectivities. The individual in March 12 novels is the very site of trauma, and the locus of power and collectivity at the same time. What previous interpretations fail to grasp is that a critique of gender identity, in particular masculine identity, is present at the heart of the March 12 novels’ view of the individual. Several critics and scholars of Turkish literature have noted, in broad terms, that the March 12 literature, chronicled the sufferings of victimized selves. But hardly anyone paid attention to the gender trouble that lies beneath the victimization at stake. Such a critical perspective was unsettling in the 1970s, when any interest outside *économie politique* was considered an implicit critique of Marxism. This set of values has left gender aside as a feature that does not offer an analytically critical position in the examination of literary texts. The politically polarized literary criticism of the 1970s has preferred to omit references to the March 12 novel’s inner dynamics and anxieties, and rather focused on the accuracy of the writer’s view of the events.

Peter Brooks, in *Reading for Plot*, indicates that his “dissatisfaction with the various formalisms that have dominated critical thinking about narrative” put him in engagement with the role of desire in narrative.⁶³ Similar dissatisfaction with the formalisms imposed on the approaches to the March 12 novel placed me in an attempt to revisit those texts with a different agenda. There is no doubt that these texts cannot be separated from their political context, but March 12 novels put a major question mark on the previous criticisms of them, because they

⁶³Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*. (New York: Knopf, 1984), p. 47.

do not fit into the picture put forward by critics. These novels can be characterized as class-conscious, political and historiographical fictions indeed, but it is important to see that they are precisely not hamstrung by either the “truths” of class, or those of politics and history. Looking at March 12 novels from the fringes of the established position that has evaluated them as politically motivated reflections of a dark period in Turkish history, gives us a chance to see their intricately woven inner structures. Those structures do not bring text and history together in a singular and monolithic way. Instead, there is a vindication and challenge at the same time, of history and of historically and culturally determined archetypes and definitions. The modern bourgeois idea of “the individual” is discussed next to the Marxist model of base-superstructure, and the existential idea of reaching to a deeper level of meaning about life. To alleviate the despair of tyrannies, many writers turn to the realm of the corporal, and attempt to restore dignity to the individuals through their material existence and bodily sensations. This liberationist discourse both situates individuals as a byproduct of historical accents of oppression and resistance, and also sees them as loci for power.

Once this complexity is recognized, it also becomes easy to understand March 12 novels’ influence on readers. Ideas about self, subjectivity, ideology etc. in March 12 novels do not merely reflect the historical and cultural circumstances from which they emerge, but also they influence them by destabilizing positions imposed on people by the historical, cultural, and political structures. The narratives possess contrasting truths and modes of thought, and they use them in a process of understanding the heterogeneous historical, cultural, and political reality of March 12 and raising people’s consciousness about it. There is a discussion in March 12 novels, of what people of rival political engagements, different generations, and varying classes should expect of one another, and also a projection of this vague discussion of democracy to the relationship between state and individuals, who happen to be citizens of a country reigned by a patriarchal, authoritarian and persecutory culture in the specific settings of March 12. These novels shape new models of subjectivity, paving the way for the recognition of narratives as a productive force capable of producing alternative power relationships.

Suspended in the historical throes of the *coup d’état*, these novels provide glimpses of a fractured, divided self, a much developed version of the one diagnosed in the first Ottoman-Turkish novels in men of two minds, between established traditions and an unfamiliar “modern” way of life. In “Conjectures on

World Literature,” Franco Moretti underlines the importance of this dilemma as a productive realm for the literature of the period, quoting Jale Parla’s evaluation of the Tanzimat novels. Parla says that “behind the inclination towards renovation, stood a dominant and dominating Ottoman ideology that recast the new ideas into a mould fit for the Ottoman society. The mould, however, was supposed to hold two different epistemologies that rested on irreconcilable axioms. It was inevitable that this mould would crack and literature, in one way or another, reflects the cracks.”⁶⁴ A projection of this encounter to the specific settings of the March 12, clarifies the problem as an anxiety of fitting the liberating ideas that came with the spirit of 1968 into the Turkish society, and it was inevitable for the March 12 novel too, indeed, to reflect the anxieties of change.

March 12 novels reveal this tension and concentrate on the border between “being oneself” and something else. They span the entire social hierarchy from the high and upper-middle class bourgeoisie to the child workers who settle at the very bottom. The scale of their lenses extends from the intimate links between nuclear families, lovers, “comrades,” and “greywolves,” to a panoramic view of the networks of links in a collection of diverse people. Their dramatic themes range from the position of the individual in society against an oppressive state power, to the political, social, and moral responsibility of individuals and their desperate need for recognition. The “red scare,” the student uprisings, the increase of ethnic tension, and gender tension function as plot lines of the texts, and they immerse the reader in questions about individuality. March 12 novels contain life stories that give rich evidence of the friction between the forces of the personal and the impersonal, and appear as vibrant and exciting catalogues of masculinities. These aspects of the March 12 novels did not figure prominently in their reception in Turkey.

March 12 novels provide a challenge to the predominantly traditionalist culture of Turkey, which had failed to recognize the plight of the broken-down man as anything other than cowardice. My interest in these texts focused on how the literary imagination has responded to and was shaped by masculinities offered by the time. It is only by infusing a gender-conscious analysis into the very heart of looking at the March 12 novels that a comprehensive “New Historicist” approach could best be established. This study has argued that gender is the overlooked center of gravity of March 12 novels. March 12 novels question pre-existing notions

⁶⁴Franco Moretti, “Conjectures on World Literature,” *New Left Review* 1 (2000), p. 62.

of masculinity under the historical burden that politicizes gender relations. The incendiary rhetoric of previous readings of March 12 novels underestimate their stake in gender. Closer examination shows that March 12 novels are a complex mixture of sexual-social-political critique with a testimonial historiography of the events surrounding March 12, 1971. Writers of March 12 novels use discourses of masculinity as a powerful means to represent a range of forms of power and oppression, in imagining the intricate and vividly rendered social world of their novels.

As a general remark, it can be said that the representations of masculinity in the novels are not monolithic but fluid, diverse and fraught with ambiguity. Evocation of manliness is largely anxious: masculinity is revived in the face of traumatic memories, of street clashes, torture, and incarceration, which symbolically constitute an abridged account of March 12. What we have in March 12 novels is an image of manhood that is unquestionably impaired, and there is a sinister rhetoric of gender under the impairment. Of the nine novels central to this study, it is Çetin Altan's *Büyük Gözaltı* that most simply links the patriarchal "law of the father" to the oppressive "law of the state." Based on a mechanism of remembrance moving back and forth in time, *Büyük Gözaltı* illustrates a young boy's growth into adulthood in a story intertwined with the story of a theatrical custody experienced for political causes, in his adulthood. This novel draws attention to the efforts of cultural "policing" inherent in social structures and institutions such as the family, the school, and the state. Prison is another institution that becomes part of the story, adding the specific shade of March 12, and bringing the issue of political persecution to the fore.

The theme of political persecution is elaborated upon more comprehensively in Erdal Öz's *Yaralısn* and Melih Cevdet Anday's *İsa'nın Güncesi*, both of which revolve around the problem of victimization as a spectacle, a public exhibition in which the persecuted constitute a direct warning example. With a brisk narrative style, Öz's novel illustrates a torture survivor trying to overcome his trauma. *Yaralısn* extends the war for power between the military and civilians to the struggle between all civil but power-hungry masculinities. *İsa'nın Güncesi* deals with brutality and torture allegorically, combining surrealism with a suspenseful noir and psychological insecurity. These novels place manhood under pressure and transform it. There are two contrasting masculinities in the novels, which relativize the state of being a man. With the complementary appearances of sec-

ondary characters, all three narratives raise a discussion of the problematic border between hyper-masculinity and hypo-masculinity. An arresting exploration of the human psyche and masculine virtues also accompany this discussion.

Büyük Gözaltı, *Yaralsın*, and *İsa'nın Güncesi* negotiate the potential of masquerades to challenge political and social reality. Their emphasis is not, as previous critics have suggested, in the heroes who grow larger in their violent encounter with oppression, but rather in the "feminization" of men under pressure and their struggle to deal with this situation. They critically deal with the terror of being crushed and rendered impotent by the more powerful, and illustrate how it becomes clear throughout the resolution of this fear that masculinity consists of essentially conditioned reflexes. What typifies most masculinity in these texts is the defensiveness taken in response to vulnerability. Enduring fear and pain are defined as proper masculine values, and the protagonists attempt to avoid gender insecurity by masquerades of masculinity when they feel weak. The protagonists show an unlikely willingness to discuss their unmanly lack of power. In this discussion, they implicitly suggest an alternative masculinity guided by intellect rather than muscle power which, alluding to the drama of the March 12 coup, symbolically stands for the cogent fight of the intelligentsia with the militaristic way of solving problems.

Men, regardless of their political orientation, obtain masculinity through engagement with some roles of "toughness." Such a role is neither particular to the period, nor confined to Turkey. However, in these initial examples of March 12 novels, it is closely connected to the heightened atmosphere of political clashes, and the oppressiveness of the military coup. "Toughness" and its alternative "intellect" settle into a complex superiority/inferiority framework in the novels. Men supportive of violence, who engage in destructive acts, are not hurt but the hesitation of the male characters to adopt the traditional role of "macho man" demonstrates that it is an inferior masculinity when compared to the masculinity that tries to solve problems with intellect. So intellectual men hesitate to embrace excessive destructive concerns while responding to the institutions that oppressed them, such as the police or the education system.

Women writers engage with this duality in a more detailed manner. They indeed mine through the historical-political narrative of March 12 and reach deeper levels in their search for the roots of the hunger for power. They desacralize

the victim position and explore the “macho” hidden in the male “victim.” Sevgi Soysal’s *Şafak*, deals with police brutality in its simple reality and also sheds a critical eye on the potentially destructive and disabling side of the feudal culture, in the settings of the martial law period. Similar to Sevgi Soysal’s exploration of human relationships as imprisoning power hierarchies in *Şafak*, Pınar Kür also critically engages with the abuse of power in her debut novel *Yarın Yarın*. Pınar Kür’s *Yarın Yarın*, delves into the female appropriation of domination, oppression and pain, illustrating the illicit love affair between a bourgeois man who dedicates himself to revolution and an unhappy woman who lives within a stale marriage contract. Both novels emphasize that the image of “the victimized revolutionary” may be a cover for a masculinity that pushes women into secondary positions. They explore how women must adopt traditionally male roles and struggle in denying their own desires for the sake of their ideological attachments. *Şafak* and *Yarın Yarın* challenge the association of women with the private sphere of home and family, and the association of men with the public sphere of politics. With a feminist perspective with Marxist overtones, they turn to bourgeois morality, patriarchal traditions, and the socio-economic structures as the sources of sexual repression. They, however, also draw attention to the fact that oppression cannot be adequately apprehended either within March 12’s dramatic military-civil dichotomy or within the conceptual limits of the Marxian theoretical framework.

The same traditional values, which *Şafak* and *Yarın Yarın* try to debunk, appear as valuables to be protected at the expense of losing certain freedoms in the novels of the right-wing women writers. While *Şafak* and *Yarın Yarın* view the events of March 12 from a perspective sympathetic to revolutionary leftism, *Sançı* and *Zor* display patterns of affiliation to conservatism and nationalism, and a profound distaste for class-based politics. Equating the confusion in gender roles with decadence, *Sançı*, and *Zor* turn to the moral misery that comes with what they present as “revolutionism.” Masculinities in these novels are simply divided into binary opposition: “the good” and “the beast.” They ignore the history of right-wing extremism, which mounted a violent campaign of intimidation aimed at destabilizing the rise of the leftist insurgency, and sketch the atmosphere of March 12 as the sole result of left-wing violence. Emine İşinsu’s *Sançı* argues that conventional femininity should be protected, since women in men’s clothes bring nothing but pain to their lives. The novel deals with the escalation of political violence among young people, because of the powerful dedication of youngsters to

ideologies and comments on them sacrificing themselves for political causes around the story of a tomboyish young girl's being trapped in an illegal revolutionary group. Sevinç Çokum's *Zor* also evaluates girls in roles traditionally associated with boys as an assault on traditional culture and argues that pseudo-families on an ideological basis, can never be a remedy for the disintegration of family ties in modern times. Çokum emphasizes the clash of rural and urban cultures as the main trouble beneath the clashes of March 12. The novel clearly shows that a boy's experience of gender is constituted by the place he occupies within the intersection of provincial, class, and generational categories.

It is interesting to note that writers on the right seem to agree as well that capitalism is exploiting people. Both Emine İşinsu's *Sancı* and Sevinç Çokum's *Zor* show that capitalism reduces everything and everyone to exchange value. The novels portray poor working-class men of rural origin, whose families struggle with economic problems. They combine tyrannies of economic inequalities to gender and show the hierarchy between wealthy men and poor fellows, but do not elaborate on the gendered oppressions of patriarchy very much. Although they engage in a parallel critique of the limits of capitalism, right-wing writers hesitate to search beyond those limits. The notion of difficulty to break away from circumstances underlies both novels and the stories advocate staying within pre-assigned boundaries as a better solution. Emine İşinsu and Sevinç Çokum write in a moral panic about the way the "revolutionary left" is corrupting Turkish culture. They voice a call to protect the gender status quo, "the God-given order of nature," and to stop trying to fit women between the lines of male tradition. They deal with issues of female empowerment, but fail to explore the psychological reactions of women to the domination forced upon them.

In *Şafak*, *Yarın Yarın*, *Sancı*, and *Zor*, there are men who are representative of great ideas and principles, and men who are vulnerable individuals with all their anxieties and contradictions. Women settle between two powerful poles of politics. They serve as the arena wherein the ideologies meet and clash. All four novels contain the concept of hegemony in triangles. We find the protagonists, three women and one child worker, in an ideological whirlpool, captured between two conflicting powers, which provide the readers a contrastive focus on masculinity. Different masculinities linked to rival political ideologies court the protagonists, while their fierce fight terrorizes them. The protagonists try to bind their fate with one of the camps, and they also question the internal hierarchies and rules

of belonging. Sometimes we find the protagonist already tilted toward one wing, but still questioning his/her belonging. Sometimes, the protagonist is courted and pressured at the same time, and the narration is built on his/her indecision between the camps. The conflicting interests of the rivaling political wings, vividly depict the throes of March 12, and this tripartite game illustrates the burden placed on individuals by the upheavals.

These novels underline that patriarchal culture is organized into hierarchies. In their analyses of the geometries of patriarchy, *Şafak*, *Yarın Yarın*, *Sancı*, and *Zor* expose the devious political ends of imitating and performance. The narrations shed a critical eye on women, who try to fit themselves into masculine performances, and also on men, who try to adjust themselves to the norms displayed by the models they imitate, in order to gain a more favorable position in the power hierarchy. The novels abound with observations that the gendered power hierarchy benefits men the most. However, there is also an effort in the texts to underline that imitating hegemonic models of masculinity brings higher chances of upward mobility in the power pyramid. In the stories of *Şafak* and *Sancı*, masculinization of women in the leftist revolutionary movement appears as an important axis of the narration. In *Yarın Yarın* and *Zor*, a dark atmosphere of masculine anxieties prevails, and introduces disturbing questions about being “manly”. Anxieties about complying with the standards of hegemonic masculinity strongly echo in the struggles of the male characters.

The last two novels analyzed in this study also circle around the anxieties of men. Tarık Buğra’s *Gençliğim Eyvah* explores a young man’s struggle for power, and tries to link the political aggression of the 1970s to a need for masculine affirmation. It discusses the credibility of an alternative masculinity at a time when a much different one was recognized as the norm. The search in *Gençliğim Eyvah* of the “true warrior” asks new questions about masculinity. Buğra introduces us to the working-class life of a young man, who torments himself asking if excessive concern for a woman is in itself emasculating. The narration also sheds a critical eye on the young man’s love for his hero, his role model, and examines the ties of conformity that make him sacrifice his individual identity and become an obedient and passive man. Adalet Ağaoğlu’s *Bir Düşün Gecesi* portrays the aftermath of the collapse of revolutionary utopias. It illustrates a wedding night where men and women of different classes meet and position themselves, even within the cozy atmosphere of the party, as subjects to be ordered by the military

figures attending the wedding. The father of the groom is a general whose masculinity defines the hierarchical chain of masculinities, in which men at the party try to find their respective positions. These novels provide a basis for rethinking the violent clashes of the period in terms of masculinity, because they evaluate the specific settings of March 12 as the crucible of masculinity. They critically explore men's group identity and expose how patterns of fraternities crisscross with a military ethos.

Gençliğim Eyvah and *Bir Düşün Gecesi* complement one another thematically, since both position March 12 on a historical and cultural continuum and relate it to the anxieties of modernization in Turkey. They recognize the centrality of masculinity in the cultural patterns which emerged in the course of Turkey's Westernization. They show how strongly the cultural production of masculinity is intertwined with an obsession with the definition of effeminacy, and in which ways this framework produces unstable images of male authority torn to pieces in the magnetism of ideologies. The debasement of the leftist youth and intellectuals, and their particular attempt to understand the reason for their being pushed to the peripheries of society has a central role in these two novels. *Gençliğim Eyvah* advocates for a genuinely Turkish masculinity, defining this identity with references to hard work, complicity with traditions, and being in total control. *Bir Düşün Gecesi* explicates these very premises to see how closely they match a militaristic ethos. The fragility of the male subject, as symbolized by the Bihruz bey of "the Bihruz bey syndrome," juxtaposes left leaning intellectual men with their more "manly" right-wing counterparts in the March 12 novel, and shows the close tie between cultural imperatives of masculinity and national prestige.⁶⁵

March 12 novels question blind commitment to a specific ideology along some pre-assigned rules, and explore the confusion that revolves around "believing" and "knowing." They conduct an exploration of the forces that bind people into groups and, at the same time, deal with their protagonists' perception of moral and emotional dilemmas. In the stories of March 12 novels, the questioning of allegiance is not limited to what the state means and how loyalty to it should be defined, but it includes thinking about every kind of oppressive authority, whether social or cultural, that makes toys out of people. This brings with it a questioning

⁶⁵Şerif Mardin, "Super Westernization in Urban Life in the Ottoman Empire in the Last Quarter of the Nineteenth Century," in *Turkey: Geographical and Social Perspectives*. (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1974).

of the male appetite for battle, as well. Images of men afraid of pain, as illustrated in the March 12 novels, indicate that there is a psychological cost of learning to oppress and destroy. They show that men do not have an essential monopoly on traditional masculine virtues of toughness, aggression, and the willingness to use force, but they learn and imitate such roles. March 12 novels reveal men's hesitation while asserting the injustices of the victimization of the less powerful, but they do not offer solutions to the problem. By showing the ambivalences of men against embracing violence, however, they throw an important doubt upon the association of manhood with violence and femininity with gentleness.

The duality between hyper-masculinity and hypo-masculinity defines the key avenue that this dissertation traversed in its analysis of the fictionalization of men and masculinity in March 12 novels. In these works, different constructions of masculinities meet each other. Images of masculinity in March 12 novels tread an uneasy line between occupying subject and object positions. There is a narrative of duality and emasculation in all of the novels. At focus is an opposition (capitalist/socialist or greywolf/revolutionary or urban/rural), which serves as a manner to juxtapose a failed masculinity with the successful and acceptable one. The macho is not "the acceptable masculinity," but neither is the weakling. The dissonance between the community's expectations and protagonist's behavior politicizes the intricate issue of freedom in the novels. It brings to the fore questions about manners to resist oppressive powers that attempt to set limits to it.

Along this quest, the problem of acting "manly" surfaces as an important question. The protagonists seek to sustain the virtues of "toughness," despite the fact that their commanders/torturers seem to celebrate the very same quality. Their dilemma surfaces the cultural schizophrenia of referring to masculinity both as a domain of opposition and a domain of oppression: a man who oppresses is "manly," but a man who opposes this oppression powerfully is "manly" as well. March 12 novels indicate that gender may emerge as powerful and repressive at some times while, at other times, it unleashes possibilities of a heroic resistance. The shifts in the patriarchal ideology of 1970s Turkey produce unstable masculinities, which find themselves between the state of embracing an impaired masculinity and the state of asserting potency against oppressors. Characters are split into these two states of masculinity, and the novels address the problems, which beset the attempt to form a unified and stable masculine identity.

Working on novels written by men and women respectively has enabled me to interpret the same phenomena from different perspectives. Men's approach to masculinity provides a deep glimpse into the inner psychological reality of manhood, while women's approach expands the concept beyond the narrow cultural confines. Both re-enact the oppressive aspects of the masculinity of their times, and look critically at a normative and essentialist masculinity. Female writers tackle better with men's and women's collusion with power. The female guard Zafer in Sevgi Soysal's *Şafak*, the inauspicious Leyla in Emine İşinsu's *Sancı*, and the tomboyish Seyda in Pınar Kür's *Yarın Yarın* indicate that men cannot monopolize the hegemonic masculine ethos. Women writer's view of the period shows that they recognize the women's plight under ostensibly different yet fundamentally similar oppressive masculinities, and that they also identify women's crucial role in the foundation of such a culture. A recognition that associations of men grow more powerful only with the support of women echoes in this view. There is an interesting cleavage here, because woman are seen as decision-making individuals even in their passive role as conduits of male exchange. While women writers engage with women's tendency to power critically, and use specific female figures to comment on this issue, male writers do not descry the destructive masculine figures in their fiction individually at all. Most of them prefer to leave them anonymous. It is women writers, again, who identify power abuse: men such as the police officer Zekeriya and his sidekick Abdullah in Sevgi Soysal's *Şafak* or the general Hayrettin Özkan and Korea war veteran Ertürk in Adalet Ağaoğlu's *Bir Düşün Gecesi* provide the reader with resolute images of hunger for power.

In their assessment of the ways masculinities come into existence, the writers of March 12 clarify a culture of gender difference, in which both men and women play their exclusive roles. The novels move beyond the conventional concept of a single and uniform masculinity that associates privilege and power with "maleness" in an unproblematic way. Recognition of the existence of multiple masculinities, however, also surfaces some common denominators between them. A discussion of hegemonic norms of masculinity prevails in the novels and male subjects critically look at their accomplishments, to see if they fit into the category of hegemonic masculinity. There is a destabilization of categories of gender as a result of this self-inspection. The protagonists struggle with the cultural meanings inscribed to their gender. Their anxiety about being considered a "non-man" because of a lack of power and an inability to perform masculinity brings the question of

masquerade to the foreground.

I want to conclude with Roland Barthes' famous adage that "a little formalism turns one away from history, but a lot brings one back to it"⁶⁶. Seeing gender as part of the picture in the analysis of March 12 novels, is like turning to history because of "a lot of formalism". Only with this turn does it become possible to see how historically and culturally constructed definitions of gender "naturalized" particular meanings of power and transformed our understanding of what it means to be a man and a woman. Gender is implicitly present within the seemingly-innocent definitions of cultural archetypes and it also influences how challenges to essentialist identity politics are figured out. March 12 novels introduce readers into a climactic episode where some men fail to be man enough, and some women push themselves into masculine performances. Oppressive figures of men and women complement the scenario, leaving the reader perplexed with the question of what counts as a representative characteristic of gender. Each of the novels explored in this study adds to the larger story of power and patriarchy in its particular fashion, and uses masculinity as a rhetorical device, a figure of speech for understanding social, political, and economic conflicts. In this dissertation, I tried to make a contribution to the study of March 12 fiction and to the newly developing field of masculinities in Turkey. It may be true that men and masculinity have been the implicit subjects of scholarly research and intellectual tradition for ages but, as long as these two concepts themselves do not become explicit subjects of analysis, it is hard to hope for a comprehensive critical analysis of a broad set of philosophical and political premises.

The military taking the political leadership of people into its own hands, and acting like an aggressive father, can be a common metaphor for numerous occasions of interventions worldwide. The idea of the state as a guardian watching over and chaperoning people is not limited either to the specific atmosphere of March 12 or to Turkey. There are writers all around the globe from nations that underwent military regimes or dictatorial periods and suffered under restricted civil liberties and human rights. Similarities such as an exhaustive questioning, a destabilization of mainstream values and beliefs, and a fascination with history and remembering can be found in many other examples. The distinctiveness of the March 12 novels, however, is that their stories are built upon the anxieties of a country, which was once a colonial Empire, and which turned her back on her his-

⁶⁶Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), p. 112.

tory in the name of modernity. Turkey's relationship with her history exhibits a unique account of remembrance, because of this specific history of modernization and mixed feelings about looking back. There are other countries that experienced modernity as a mode of forgetting and Westernization as well. However, Turkey often seeks pride in the same history that she tries to forget because of the Ottoman golden ages, and this paradox, what Turkey's Nobel writer Orhan Pamuk calls the post-Ottoman melancholia, brings ambivalences to people's relationship with history⁶⁷.

The real eyewitnesses of March 12 are the people who lost their lives. As Primo Levi cogently states, "the survivors are not the true witnesses" because "the complete witnesses, the ones whose deposition would have a general significance" are the ones who could not return to tell about their experiences or those who returned mute.⁶⁸ It is not possible to bring the dead back, but there is still hope that one day, the mute will begin speaking, not only about March 12, but also about the September 12 military intervention. While this dissertation was in development, several people who witnessed the upheavals of the 1970s put an end to their silence. In interview-books or autobiographies, they talked about their memories of the events in a detailed manner.⁶⁹ Memoirs of Nihat Erim, the president of the interim government of March 12, were decoded from tapes he had previously recorded and published in book form in 2007.⁷⁰ Previously classified documents related to US foreign policy regarding Turkey from 1969 to 1976 were recently made public by the authorities⁷¹. Some recent studies of oral history interested in witnesses of the events of 1970s began to broaden our knowledge about the upheavals of the period.⁷² Very recently, documentary TV dramas that touch upon the 1970s such as "Çemberimde Gül Oya" and "Hatırla Sevgili" became very popular. These accounts promise to break the silence about the memories of March 12 and attract attention to a chapter in the country's history, which was ignored for a long time. They are little cracks in a longstanding wall,

⁶⁷Orhan Pamuk, *İstanbul: Memories and the City*. (New York: Vintage, 2006).

⁶⁸Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*. (New York: Summit Books, 1988), p. 83-84.

⁶⁹Tuba Çandar, *Murat Belge: Bir Hayat*. (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2007); Mine Söğüt, *Aşkın Sonu Cinayettir: Pınar Kür ile Hayat ve Edebiyat*. (İstanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2004)

⁷⁰Nihat Erim, *12 Mart Anıları*. (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2007).

⁷¹See "Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1969-1976" Foreign Relations of the United States. Vol. XXX. United States Government Printing Office Washington (2007). Also available online at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/96610.pdf>

⁷²Serra Ciliv, "Between Belonging and Opposition: Life Story Narratives of Women from the Generation of '78.", Master's thesis, Sabancı University. (September 2002).

but the wall is made of glass and once it cracks, it will eventually shatter.

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APPENDIX A

Novels published in Turkey between 1970 and 1980

Appendix A consists of a list of novels published in Turkey in the ten year period between 1970 and 1980. The light gray highlighted are the novels that may be collected under the rubric “the March 12 novel,” and the dark gray highlighted are the March 12 novels analyzed in this dissertation. I would like to thank A. Ali Şahin for letting me use the preliminary list he prepared. I added some items to his list and also did some corrections in a few entries.

Table A.1: Novels published in Turkey between 1970 and 1980.

Year	Author	Title
1970	Anday, M. C.	Gizli Emir
1970	Azrak, K. N.	Güller ve Dikenler
1970	Baykurt, F.	Tırpan
1970	Bilbaşar, K.	Yeşil Gölge
1970	Buğra, T.	İbiş’in Rüyası
1970	Buyrukçu, M.	Bir Olayın Başlangıcı
1970	Ceyhun, D.	Asya
1970	Dağcı, C.	Badem Dalına Asılı Bebekler

1970	Günkut, T.	Yüzbaşı Selim Selimiyeli
1970	Hekimoğlu, İ.	Maznun
1970	Keskin, Y.	Korkunç ve Güzel
1970	Kocagöz, S.	Bir Çift Öküz
1970	Koray, Y.	Kola
1970	Okçu, E. I.	Azap Toprakları
1970	Kemal, O.	Kaçak
1970	Kemal, Y.	Ağrı Dağı Efsanesi
1970	Özdemir, M. N.	Varolmak Kavgası
1970	Özdeş, O.	Aşka Susayan Dudaklar
1970	Özdeş, O.	Reyhan
1970	Özdeş, O.	Şebnem
1970	Sayar, A.	Yılık Atı
1970	Seyda, M.	Nemrut Mustafa
1970	Seyda, M.	Süeda Hanım'ın Ortanca Kızı
1970	Seyda, M.	Yanartaş 1
1970	Seyda, M.	Yanartaş 2
1970	Soysal, S.	Yürümek
1970	Su, M. K.	Ben ve O
1970	Tahir, K.	Büyük Mal
1971	Coup d'état	Elections in 1973
1971	Atay, O.	Tutunamayanlar 1
1971	Atay, O.	Tutunamayanlar 2
1971	Azrak, K. N.	Zambaklar Açarken
1971	Berkant, M. T.	Işık Yağmuru
1971	Bilbaşar, K.	Yonca Kız
1971	Celal, P.	Evli Bir Kadının Günlüğünden
1971	Cumalı, N.	Zeliş
1971	Erbil, L.	Tuhaf Bir Kadın
1971	Erdem, S.	İhtiyar Gençlik
1971	Erdem, S.	Küçük Dünya
1971	Güney, Y.	Boynu Bükük Öldüler
1971	İzgü, M.	İlyas Efendi
1971	Kazancı, A. L.	Kaynana Münevver Hanım
1971	Kazancı, A. L.	Üvey Anne

1971	Kemal, Y.	Binboğalar Efsanesi
1971	Keskin, Y.	Maya
1971	Korcan, K.	İdamlıklar
1971	Okçu, E. I.	Ak Topraklar
1971	Sepetçioğlu, M.	Kilit
1971	Seyda, M.	İhtiyar Gençlik
1971	Tahir, K.	Yol Ayrımı
1971	Tuncer, C.	Kerkenez
1971	Verel, O.	Maksat Vatan Kurtulsun
1971	Yeşim, R. Ş.	Ovaya İnen Şahin
1971	Zorlutuna, H. N.	Büyükanne
1972	Adivar, H. E.	Çaresaz
1972	Altan, C.	Büyük Gözaltı
1972	Apaydın, T.	Define
1972	Apaydın, T.	Yoz Davar
1972	Azrak, K. N.	Karar Gecesi
1972	Bahadımlı, Y. Z.	Güllüce'yi Sel Aldı
1972	Baysal, F.	Drina'da Son Gün
1972	Berkant, M. T.	Bir Gün Sabah Olacak mı
1972	Berkant, M. T.	İki Kalp Arasında
1972	Bilbaşar, K.	Başka Olur Ağaların Düğünü
1972	Dağcı, C.	Üşüyen Sokak
1972	Dinamo, H. İ.	Kutsal Barış
1972	Erdem, S.	Kaybolan Dünya
1972	Günel, B.	Ökse
1972	Kaftancıoğlu, Ü.	Yelatan
1972	Kaleli, L.	Görgü
1972	Kaleli, L.	İstanbıllı Gardaşım
1972	Kazancı, A. L.	Bir Vicdan Uyanıyor
1972	Kemak, Y.	Çakırcalı Efe
1972	Özkan, H.	Taş
1972	Sayar, A.	Çelo
1973	Ağaoğlu, A.	Ölmeye Yatmak
1973	Atay, O.	Tehlikeli Oyunlar
1973	Atılğan, Y.	Anayurt Oteli

1973	Atsız, H. N.	Ruh Adam
1973	Ay, B.	Sis İçinde
1973	Azrak, K. N.	Dert Bende
1973	Azrak, K. N.	Karar Gecesi
1973	Baykurt, F.	Köygöçüren
1973	Birinci, N.	Sunguroğlu
1973	Büyükarkın, B.	Yoldaki Adam
1973	Cumalı, N.	Yağmurlar ve Topraklar
1973	Dinamo, H. İ.	Öksüz Musa
1973	Erdem, S.	Kaybolan Dünya
1973	Gürpınar, H. R.	Namumlu Kokotlar
1973	Gürpınar, H. R.	Ölüler Yaşıyor mu?
1973	Haksun, N.	Meyro
1973	İleri, S.	Destan Gönüller
1973	İlhan, A.	Bıçağın Ucu
1973	İzgü, M.	Halo Dayı
1973	Kemal, Y.	Demirciler Çarşısı Cinayeti
1973	Kocagöz, S.	İzmir'in İçinde
1973	Okçu, E. Işınso	Tutsak
1973	Özdeş, O.	Herkesten Uzak
1973	Özkan, H.	Sürtük
1973	Polat, Ö.	Mahmudo ile Hazel
1973	Sepetçioğlu, M.	Anahtar
1973	Sepetçioğlu, M.	Kapı
1973	Seyda, M.	İçe Dönük ve Atak
1973	Soysal, S.	Yenişehir'de Bir Öğle Vakti
1973	Tanpınar, A. H.	Sahnenin Dışındakiler
1973	Toprak, Ö. F.	Tuz ve Ekmek
1973	Toy, E.	Azap Ortakları 1,2
1973	Toy, E.	İmparator
1974	Adıvar, H. E.	Kerim Ustanın Oğlu
1974	Altan, C.	Bir Avuç Gökyüzü
1974	Anday, M. C.	İsa'nın Güncesi
1974	Apaydın, T.	Ortakçının Oğlu
1974	Apaydın, T.	Toz Duman İçinde

1974	Azrak, K. N.	Kaderin Sırrı
1974	Balı, L.	Fırtınalı Günler
1974	Birinci, N.	Bizans Saraylarında
1974	Birinci, N.	Buhara Yanıyor
1974	Cumalı, N.	Acı Tütün
1974	Çetin, C.	352. Sokak
1974	Dinamo, H. İ.	Musa'nın Mapushanesi
1974	Fürüzan	47'liler
1974	Günel, B.	Umut Zamamı
1974	İlgaz, R.	Karartma Geceleri
1974	İlhan, A.	Sırtlan Payı
1974	Kakıncı, T. D.	Gün Döndü
1974	Kaftancıoğlu, Ü.	Tüfekliler
1974	Kaleli, L.	Haşhaş
1974	Mehmet Kemal	Sürgün Alayı
1974	Nesin, A.	Tatlı Betüş
1974	Onur, N.	Arap Abdo
1974	Onur, N.	Kadın Daha Çok Sever
1974	Öz, E.	Yaralısın
1974	Özkişi, B.	Köse Kadı
1974	Polat, Ö.	Saragöl
1974	Sayar, A.	Can Şenliği
1974	Sepetçioğlu, M.	Çatı
1974	Sepetçioğlu, M.	Konak
1974	Tahir, K.	Karılar Koğuşu
1974	Tahir, K.	Namusçular
1974	Toy, E.	Kördüğüm
1974	Zorlutuna, H. N.	Aydınlık Kapı
1975	Akbal, O.	İnsan Bir Ormandır
1975	Akçam, D.	Kanlıdere'nin Kurtları
1975	Altan, C.	Viski
1975	Anday, M. C.	Raziye
1975	Apaydın, T.	Tütün Yorgunu
1975	Ay, B.	Sürgün
1975	Azrak, K. N.	Bir Çatı Altında

1975	Balcıoğlu, A. R.	Terleyen Duvarlar
1975	Baran, S.	Bir Solgun Adam
1975	Baykurt, F.	Keklik
1975	Birinci, N.	Elveda Buhara
1975	Birinci, N.	Sahipsiz Saltanat
1975	Birinci, N.	Turgut Alp
1975	Boyunağa, Y.	Denizler Ejderi
1975	Boyunğa, Y.	Kırık Hançer
1975	Coşkun, Z.	Haçın
1975	Cumalı, N.	Aşk da Gezer
1975	Dölek, S.	Korugan
1975	Güney, Y.	Sanık
1975	Gürbüz, Y.	Balkan Acısı
1975	Kayıhan, H.	Yoklar
1975	Kemal, Y.	Yusufçuk Yusuf
1975	Korcan, K.	Ter Adamları
1975	Miyasoğlu, M.	Kaybolmuş Günler
1975	Okcu, E. I.	Sancı
1975	Özakın, A.	Gurbet Yavrum
1975	Özkişi, B.	Sokakta
1975	Özkişi, B.	Uçtaki Adam
1975	Sepetçioğlu, M.	Üçler Yediler Kırklar
1975	Soysal, S.	Safak
1975	Tanpınar, A. H.	Mahur Beste
1975	Türkali, V.	Bir Gün Tek Başına
1975	Verel, O.	Aslan Gibi Eşekler
1975	Yücel, T.	Vatandaş
1976	Ağaoğlu, A.	Fikrimin İnce Gülü
1976	Ağralı, L.	Göçük
1976	Apaydın, T.	Dağdaki Kaynak
1976	Ayaşlı, M.	Pertev Beyin Torunları
1976	Birinci, N.	Çaka Bey
1976	Birinci, N.	Kırım Kan Ağlıyor
1976	Birinci, N.	Şehzade Selim
1976	Birinci, N.	Şirpençe

1976	Buğra, T.	Firavun İmanı
1976	Burdurlu, İ. Z.	Akdenizin İnsan Çiçekleri
1976	Cevdet Kudret	Karincayı Tanırsınız
1976	Ceyhun, D.	Yağmur Sıcağı
1976	Cokum, S.	Zor
1976	Dinamo, H. İ.	Koyun Baba
1976	Dinamo, H. İ.	Musa'nın Gecekondu
1976	Edgü, F.	Kimse
1976	Günel, B.	Yağmurla Giden
1976	İlgaz, R.	Sarı Yazma
1976	İleri, S.	Her Gece Bodrum
1976	Kaleli, L.	Kardeşlerin Kini
1976	Kayıhan, H.	Zincir
1976	Kemal, Y.	Al Gözüm Seyreyle Salih
1976	Kemal, Y.	Yılanı Öldürseler
1976	Kocaöz, S.	Tartışma
1976	Kür, P.	Yarın... Yarın...
1976	Mehmet Kemal	Pulsuz Tavla
1976	Mehmet, S.	Şehirde İnsan Yoktu
1976	Nesin, A.	Surname
1976	Oktay Rifat	Bir Kadının Penceresinden
1976	Onur, N.	Orospu
1976	Özkan, H.	Grevden Sonra
1976	Özlü, D.	Bir Uzun Sonbahar
1976	Polat, Ö.	Dilan
1976	Say, A.	Kocakurt
1976	Selimoğlu, Z.	Deprem
1976	Seyda, M.	Gerçek Dışı
1976	Tahir, K.	Hür Şehrin İnsanları 1
1976	Tahir, K.	Hür Şehrin İnsanları 2
1976	Toy, E.	Bal Tutanlar
1976	Toy, E.	Gözbağı
1976	Toy, E.	Son Seçim
1976	Yüce, A.	Şeytanistan
1977	Akçam, D.	Kan Çiçekleri

1977	Bahadınlı, Y. Z.	Gemileri Yakmak
1977	Baykurt, F.	Kara Ahmet Destanı
1977	Baykurt, F.	Yayla
1977	Bener, E.	Yalnızlar
1977	Celal, P.	Üç Yirmidört Saat
1977	Çetin, C.	Göçük
1977	Dal, G.	İş Sürgünleri
1977	Edgü, F.	O
1977	Erdinç, F.	Acı Lokma
1977	Güney, Y.	Soba, Pencere Camı, İki Ekmek İstiyoruz
1977	İlgaz, A.	Aşamalar
1977	İncesu, Y.	Süt Güğümündeki Kurbağalar
1977	Karadeniz, Z.	Yeğen
1977	Kayıhan, H.	Uyanmak
1977	Kemal, Y.	Filler Sultanı Kırmızı Sakallı Topal Karınca
1977	Kür, P.	Küçük Oyuncu
1977	Makal, T. K.	Meydan Dayağı
1977	Mehmet, S.	Sam Yeli
1977	Nesin, A.	Yaşar Ne Yaşar Ne Yaşamaz
1977	Niksarlı, M. Z.	Türkoğlu Cıvı Salih ile Acemoğlu Gaf- far
1977	Özdemir, M.	Çağımızın Aşıkları
1977	Sayar, A.	Dik Bayır
1977	Sepetçioğlu, M.	Bu Atlı Geçide Gider
1977	Sepetçioğlu, M.	Cevahir ile Sadık Çavuş'un Buğday Kamyonu
1977	Sümer, D.	Bozuk Bir Şey
1977	Tahir, K.	Damağası
1977	Tosuner, N.	Sancı... Sancı...
1977	Toy, E.	Doruktaki Öfke
1977	Yılmaz, D.	Aziz Sofi
1978	Altan, C.	Küçük Bahçe
1978	Başaran, M.	Memetçik Memet

1978	Bener, E.	Bürokratlar
1978	Bilbaşar, K.	Kölelik Dönemeci
1978	Celal, P.	Jaguar
1978	Eliçin, B.	Onlar Savaşırken
1978	Erdem, İ.	Sürgün Meyveye Durdu
1978	Gürman, O. N.	Kılıç Uykuda Vurulur
1978	İlhan, A.	Yaraya Tuz Basmak
1978	Kemal, Y.	Deniz Küstü
1978	Kemal, Y.	Kuşlar da Gitti
1978	Kıyafet, H.	Oy Pazarı
1978	Korcan, K.	Dimitrof Geçiyor
1978	Meriç, N.	Alagün Çocukları
1978	Nesin, A.	Yek Yol
1978	Okçu, E. I.	Çiçekler Büyür
1978	Özakın, A.	Alımda Mavi Kuşlar
1978	Tahir, K.	Bir Mülkiyet Kalesi 1
1978	Tahir	K.Bir Mülkiyet Kalesi 2
1978	Toy, E.	Kuzgunlar ve Leşler 1
1978	Turan, G.	Dalyan
1978	Yalçın, İ.	Genelevde Yas
1978	Yeşilova, M.	Kopo 1981 Karasu
1978	Yılmaz, D.	Fetva Yokuşu
1979	Ağaoğlu, A.	Bir Düğün Gecesi
1979	Alp, S.	Devran
1979	Buğra, T.	Gençliğim Eyvah
1979	Dal, G.	E-5
1979	Erdinç, F.	Ali'nin Biri
1979	Erdinç, F.	Kardeş Evi
1979	Girgin, N.	Gençlik Çıkmazı
1979	Günel, B.	Aksayan
1979	İleri, S.	Ölüm İlişkileri
1979	Kutlu, A.	Kaçış
1979	Kür, P.	Asılacak Kadın
1979	Özlü, D.	Bir Küçük Burjuvanın Gençlik Yılları
1979	Pultar, G.	Dünya Bir Atlı Karınca

1979	Serhan, F. İ.	Karagöl
1979	Serhan, F. İ.	Marziye
1979	Toy, E.	Kuzgunlar ve Leşler 2
1979	Yalçın, İ.	Ölümün Ağzı
1980	Coup d'état	Elections in 1983

APPENDIX B

Selected List of Post-1980 March 12 Novels

Appendix B consists of a selected list of post-1980 novels that touch upon the March 12 coup. These novels mostly illustrate second-hand memories of the atmosphere in 1970s or comment on the influences of the *coup d'état* on the second and third generation. I would like to thank Ömer Türkeş for sharing his list with me. I made some additions to his list.

Table B.1: Selected List of Post-1980 March 12 Novels.

Year	Author	Title
1980	İleri, S.	Cehennem Kraliçesi
1980	Rifat, O.	Danaburnu
1980	İleri, S.	Bir Akşam Alacası
1980	Özakın, A.	Genç Kız ve Ölüm
1982	Işımsu, E.	Canbaz
1982	Altan, A.	Dört Mevsim Sonbahar
1983	Kutlu, A.	Tutsaklar
1984	Eroğlu, M.	Issızlığın Ortası
1984	Eroğlu, M.	Geç Kalmış Ölü

1984	Ağaoğlu, A.	Üçbeş Kişi
1985	Altan, A.	Sudaki İz
1985	Günel, B.	O Güzel Kadının Çocukları
1986	Eroğlu, M.	Yarım Kalan Yürüyüş
1987	Yağcı, Ö.	Turnalar
1988	Işmsu, E.	Kaf Dağının Ardında
1988	Neyzi, A.	Mahir Bir Teröristin Yaşamöyküsü
1989	Kocagöz, S.	Eski Toprak
1989	Yağcı, Ö.	Gökyüzüne Akan Irmak
1989	Buğra, T.	Dünyanın En Pis Sokağı
1989	Eroğlu, M.	Adımı Unutan Adam
1989	Genc, N.	Dün Korkusu
1990	Özlü, D.	Bir Yaz Mevsimi Romansı
1991	Kutlu, İ.	Aşkım Deniz
1994	Kutlu, İ.	Sevgili Maraş
1995	Miyasoğlu, M.	Bir Aşk Serüveni
1995	Zileli, G.	Deniz Orada
1997	Bekir, K.	Kanlı Düğün
1998	Korat, G.	Ay Şarkısı
1999	Abacı, T.	İkinci Adım
1999	Atasü, E.	Gençliğin O Yakıcı Mevsimi
1999	Bayar, Z.	Sahte Uygarlık
2000	Ferit, A.	Plaj
2002	Doğan, A.	Islak Kaldırımlar
2002	Atasü, E.	Bir Yaşadönümü Rüyası
2003	Naci, M.	Cinnet Yurdum
2003	Ünver, M.	Pus
2005	Koç, H.	İyi Dilekler Ülkesi
2005	Yavuz, H.	İsyen Günleri
2005	Eroğlu, M.	Düş Kırgınları
2005	Turhan, N.	Yaşamak İçin Bir Neden Söyle
2005	Akengin, Y.	Aşka Verilmiş Muhtıra
2006	Yıldırım, İ.	Vatan Dersleri
2007	Çelikkol, A.	Suskun Türküler Zamanı

APPENDIX C

March 12 in Pictures

Appendix C is a historical scrapbook of March 12. It consists of photos of the key political figures of the period, snapshots of the student riots and demonstrations, and portraits of the writers whose work is analyzed in this dissertation. Figure C.2, Figure C.3, and Figure C.4 are copyrighted to Photo-journalists Association. Figure C.5 is copyrighted to Yüksel Hançerli. Figures C.1, C.6, C.20 are from newspapers. Figures C.7, and C.8 are from Çetin Altan's online biography at <http://www.perspektif.org/ibc/>. Figures C.11, C.15 and C.17 are from a graphic history project titled "A Cloud of Black Smoke" that focuses on the events of the March 12 and consists of a collection of photos courtesy of members of the 1968 movement, available at <http://www.halil.se/>. All the other figures are from the internet pages devoted to the writers and their work.



Figure C.1: Front page of *Cumhuriyet* on March 13, 1971.



Figure C.2: Prime Minister S6leyman Demirel of Justice Party.



Figure C.3: Street riots in 1970s.



Figure C.4: Ministers Necmettin Erbakan, Süleyman Demirel, and Alparslan Türkeş.



Figure C.5: Deniz Gezmiş going to the courtroom.



Figure C.6: Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan, and Hüseyin İnan.



Figure C.7: Çetin Altan (b.1927).



Figure C.8: Çetin Altan released from prison on December 27, 1973.

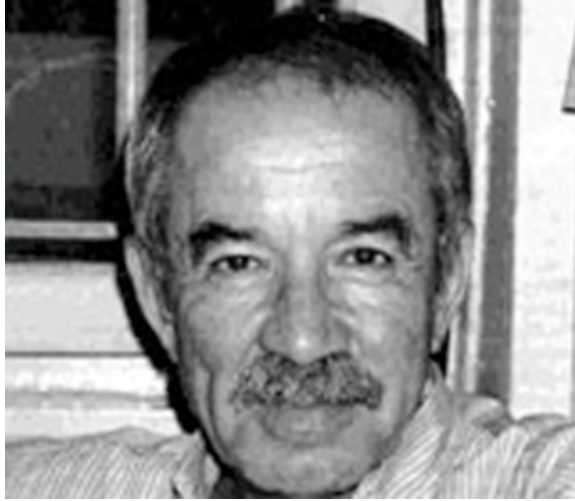


Figure C.9: Erdal Öz (1935-2006).



Figure C.10: Melih Cevdet Anday (1915-2002).



Figure C.11: Students clashing with the police. The graffiti criticizes the transfer of the state industry to private ownership: it reads “Industry must be state owned.”



Figure C.12: Sevgi Soysal (1936-1976) with her daughter.



Figure C.13: Emine Işınsu (b. 1938).



Figure C.14: Sevinç Çokum (b.1943).

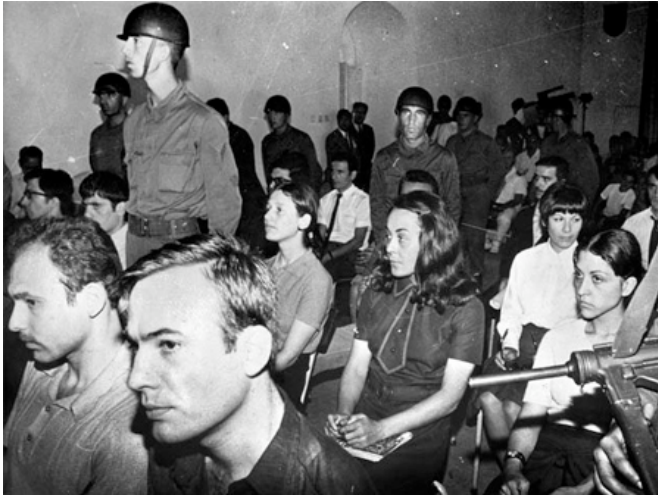


Figure C.15: March 12 was an era of overcrowded trials of students.



Figure C.16: Pınar Kür (b.1943).



Figure C.17: Street riots.



Figure C.18: Adalet Ağaoğlu (b.1929).



Figure C.19: Tarık Buğra (1918-1994).



Figure C.20: Front page of *Cumhuriyet* on May 2, 1977.

Summary

Koude Oorlogsconstructies van mannelijkheid in de Turkse literatuur: Een overzicht van de 12 maart-romans

Deze dissertatie richt zich op de zogenaamde 12 maart-romans, die bestaan uit getuigenissen over de militaire interventie op 12 maart 1971 die het post-1968 radicalisme in Turkije traumatiseerde. Hierbij wordt de geldende canon van de 12 maart-romans opnieuw bekeken, en wordt de vraag gesteld waarom de literatuurwetenschap in Turkije bij de vorming van een dergelijke canon aan sommige romans de voorkeur gaf boven andere. De romans in de marge van de canon worden centraal gesteld en herlezen. Deze lezing geschiedt op basis van een narratologische analyse met bijzondere aandacht voor het genderaspect, gevoed door het Nieuw Historicisme.

Mijn hypothese is, dat de 12 maart-romans een culturele kritiek van hypermannelijkheid uitdragen door het gebruik van excessieve mannelijkheid als een metafoor voor het misbruik van macht dat de maatschappij doordrong, en dat zij een hedendaagse interpretatie laten zien van het Bihruz bey syndroom, een syndroom door Şerif Mardin vernoemd naar de protagonist van Recaizade Ekrem's beroemde roman *Araba Sevdası* (De affaire met de auto, 1896).

Bihruz bey is een Osmaanse snob die vervreemd is van de culturele waarden van zijn land en verzot is geraakt op de Westerse cultuur. Hij wordt geportretteerd

als een onmannelijke man, met vrouwelijke interesses en manieren. Şerif Mardin beweert dat een dergelijke methode, om individuen die zich niet conformeren aan de normen van de samenleving tot zondebok te maken, terug te voeren is op de minachting voor socialisme in het Turkije van de zestiger jaren. Deze dissertatie onderzoekt de 12 maart-romans om uit te vinden hoe de concepten van mannelijkheid en verwijfdheid samenkomen in de vertellingen. De hoofddoelen van dit onderzoek zijn de volgende: Het analyseren en in kaart brengen van de aan mannelijkheid gerelateerde onderwerpen in de 12 maart-romans; van de wijze waarop dergelijke onderwerpen worden gepresenteerd en hoe de masculiniteiten worden geportretteerd in de verhalen; van hoe daarin mannelijkheid onlosmakelijk is verbonden met onderwerpen van macht, identiteit en overheersende ideologie; om ten slotte uit te vinden welke verschillen en overeenkomsten er bestaan in de benadering van mannelijke en vrouwelijke auteurs van de onderhavige periode, inzake de percepties van mannen en mannelijkheid in het Turkije van de jaren zeventig.

In hoofdstuk 1 worden drie in de Turkse literatuur vooraanstaande romans onder de loep genomen die direct na de militaire interventie werden gepubliceerd: *Büyük Gözaltı* (Extreme bewaking, 1972), *Yaralısn* (Je bent gewond, 1974) and *İsa'nın Güncesi* (Het dagboek van Jezus, 1974).

In hoofdstuk 2 wordt de discussie over mannelijkheid verbreed door vier romans van vrouwelijke auteurs te behandelen: *Şafak* (De dageraad, 1974), *Sancı* (De pijn, 1975), *Yarın Yarın* (Morgen morgen, 1976) and *Zor* (Zwaar, 1977).

In hoofdstuk 3 worden *Gençliğim Eyvah* (Helaas! Mijn jeugd, 1979) en *Düğün Gecesi* (Een huwelijksnacht, 1979) aan een lezing onderworpen, twee romans die werden gepubliceerd bij het begin van de militaire interventie van 12 september 1980.

De benadering door mannelijke auteurs van masculiniteit verschaft een inzicht in de innerlijke psychologische realiteit van mannelijkheid, terwijl de benadering door vrouwelijke auteurs het concept uit de nauwe culturele beperkingen haalt. Beiden voeren de onderdrukkende aspecten op van de mannelijkheidsconstructies van hun tijd, en kijken kritisch naar een normatieve en essentialistische mannelijkheid. Uit hun waardering van de manieren waarop vormen van mannelijkheid ontstaan, blijkt bij de auteurs van 12 maart een cultuur van gendersverschil, waarin zowel mannen als vrouwen hun exclusieve rol spelen. De romans bewegen

zich buiten het conventionele concept van een enkele en uniforme mannelijkheid-sconstructie, die privilege en macht op een onproblematische wijze associeert met mannelijkheid. Een discussie over hegemonistische normen van masculiniteit overheerst in de romans, en mannelijke subjecten bezien hun verworvenheden kritisch, om te bekijken of zij passen in de categorie van hegemonistische mannelijkheid.

De 12 maart-romans zijn tot nu toe gewaardeerd als historische catalogi of cijfers voor de politiek, eerder dan als een verzameling imaginaire verhalen over het lijden en de zorgen van individuen in het Turkije van de jaren zeventig. De extreme interesse van de 12 maart-romans in mannelijkheid, trekt de afgezaagde argumenten van dit tevoren vastgestelde beeld van het corpus in twijfel. Nader onderzoek wijst uit dat de 12 maart-roman een complexe mengeling is van sexueel-sociaal-politieke kritiek met een getuigenishistoriografie van de gebeurtenissen rond 12 maart 1971. Terwijl ze mannelijkheid als metafoor gebruiken, beweren de 12 maart-romans dat het probleem van 12 maart ten onrechte wordt beschouwd als een militaire kwestie, terwijl het werkelijke probleem is gelegen in de neiging van het volk om mee te gaan met de macht. Deze zienswijze herbevestigt de positie van de 12 maart-romans als dynamische bronnen voor het begrijpen van de verschuivende definitie van gender en seksualiteit binnen het radicale politieke discours van het Turkije in de jaren zeventig.

Curriculum Vitae



Çimen Günay-Erkol was born in Ankara on November 23, 1977. She developed a keen interest in literature and considered this for a career, but as was the custom then for students with good grades in Mathematics, she moved straight from high school to the engineering faculty of the Middle East Technical University. In 1998, she graduated from Middle East Technical University as a Mining Engineer, but opted to pursue a career in the humanities at Bilkent University, combining her academic interests with her engagement in contemporary Turkish literature. She attended Bilkent University's post-graduate program for Turkish literature and successfully earned her M.A. degree in 2001, upon submitting a thesis that discussed the role of Suat Derviş, a woman writer of late Ottoman times, in Turkish socialist realism. Working on Derviş's literature inspired Günay-Erkol for a critical examination of the discourses about the establishment of the Turkish nation-state and the construction of identities. As a controversial woman writer

whose life marked a period spanning from the late Ottoman period to the early 1970s, Derviş's almost-forgotten novels ushered Günay-Erkol to further studies on literature's relation to society, and its engagement with history and politics.

During her master's study, Günay-Erkol also became engaged with the rise of the women's movement in Turkey and the influence of this rise on literature. She started working on the issue of gender. This early research formed the basis for her later studies. In the academic year 2001-2002, Günay-Erkol attended Ph.D. courses at Bilkent University. She was also in charge of a Turkish course designed to introduce major texts of contemporary Turkish literature to freshman students. After completing her Ph.D. courses at Bilkent in 2002, she moved to the Netherlands to undertake a Ph.D. at Leiden University. The Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education provided support for Günay-Erkol's doctoral dissertation project with a 10-months HUYGENS grant in the period 2002-2003. During this period, in parallel to doing her doctoral work, Günay-Erkol worked on how literature is shaped by the tension between the individual and the community, and between authority and personal freedom. She analyzed the superposition of the roles of writer and politician, focusing on some prominent fiction writers who accessed the parliament of Turkey.

Power struggles and gender hierarchy constitute the foundation supporting much of Günay-Erkol's scholarly activity to date. Her research has ranged over a wide historical field including the study of different generations of writers and literary movements. Günay-Erkol now undertakes research on Japanese and Turkish literatures and analyzes comparatively how these different cultures treat their traumatic memories in literature, focusing on the post-WW2 literature.

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I received support and encouragement from numerous people during the years I have worked on this dissertation and I want to express my gratitude to them.

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Completing this work would have been all the more difficult without the support of my friends and family. I thank Canan and Fuat Erkol for their constant support and love. I am indebted to Gülşen Çulhaoğlu for being a great source of optimism and encouragement even during her ordeal with her own Ph.D. at Bilkent University. I am grateful to Cem Günhan for his support from far away. Special thanks go to my friends İpek Taşkın, Mine Ömürgönülşen, Burçak Çehreli, and Gizem Deligönül. They gave me unwavering support and the process of writing this dissertation was made less lonely by our chats. My special thanks are due to Burcu Karahan from Indiana University and Burcu Alkan from Manchester University for reading my manuscript and providing me with comments.

I thank my father, Süleyman Günay, for his support (and associated teasing) and mother, Şükran Günay, for her love and encouragement. They gave me the confidence to pursue my dreams. I also thank my brother Can for his support. Can is three and a half years younger than me and he enjoyed becoming a “doctor” before me. I can only find solace in the fact that he studied in the Faculty of Medicine.

My greatest debt is to my husband Güray Erkol. He shared all the difficulties that came with two Ph.D. studies’ being conducted in one home. His love and encouragement allowed me to finish this book. Güray already has my heart so I will just give him a heartfelt thanks. I thank him for having stood by me and it is to him that I dedicate this book.

The book cover art is courtesy of Prof. Hüsnü Dokak, I thank him for giving me the permission to use it.

There is one last “thank you” for a person without whom I would have quit the Ph.D. altogether and he knows who he is. Thank you.

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