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

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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 Düğün 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 Işınsu'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 Düğün 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 Düğün 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 Düğün 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 Düğün 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 Düğün 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 Düğün Gecesi* present their readers with different

[1] See 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 Düğün 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

[2]Tarık Buğra, *Gençliğim Eyvah.* (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2002).

[3]Tarık 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 Blossemed, 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).

[4]Buğra 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 Sıdıka. 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 Sıdıka/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 oblational 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?

[5] In 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.

[6] Fethi 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

[7] O ineklerin ölümle oynayışlarını kıskandın değil mi? Ölümden 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 1930s[11] 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

[8] Buğra (as in n. 2), p. 32-34.
[9] George Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe.* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985), p. 16.
[10] Buğra (as in n. 2), p. 12.
[11] Ibid., p. 36.
[12] Ibid., p. 42-50.
[13] Ibid., p. 66.
[14] Ibid., 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 warmness [Aşka benzerdi Delikanlı'ya karşı beslediği sevgi. Daha doğrusu, içindeki tek yumuşaklıktı, 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

[15] The phrase "Gençliğim Eyvah" is the tag line of the famous folk song inspired by the pains of the War of Dardanelles.
[16] Buğra (as in n. 2), p. 23-25.
[17] Ibid., 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 özenti 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

[18] Buğra (as in n. 2), p. 48.
[19] Ibid., 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

[21] Buğra (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

[22] Buğra (as in n. 2), p. 32.

Lamborghini'yi değerlendirişi]."[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

[23] Buğra (as in n. 2), p. 83.
[24] Ibid., 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

[25] Kızın "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,

[26] Buğra (as in n. 2), p. 147.

[27] Bir buçuk ay öncesine kadar, bu kofana veya palamut veya istavrit veya hamsi cızırtıları ile kokuları, yalnız ağzındakileri 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 kalleş daha başına buyruk bir şeydi. Ibid., p. 146-7.

[28] Anthony 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

[29] Jean Paul Sartre, "Preface to Frantz Fanons Wretched of the Earth.", in *Wretched of the Earth.* (New York: Grove Press, 1963), p. 20.
[30] Buğra (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 Düğün 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 Düğün 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

[34]Aysel 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 Düğün Gecesi*, which continues to explore Aysel's alienation.

[35]Robert 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 Ayşen'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 Düğün 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 witnesses 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, loosing 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 Düğün 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 an other, *Bir Düğün 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 Ayşen'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 anothers' 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 Düğün 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

[37] Hele 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.

[38] Connell (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).

[39] Ağaoğlu, 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 chose 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:

[41] Önünde sonunda demezler mi, şu koskoca İlhan Dereli'nin kardeşine bak? İstanbul'da herkes tanır 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 hanim 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

[42] Annen 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.

[43] Her şeyim var çok şükür. İlhan tek tek her şeyimi yaptı. Kızına da güzel bir düğün. Daha ne yapsın? Memleketin bir çok insanı burda. Çok şükür, eşe dosta, memleketlimize mahçup 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 çıkarcı suratını görmek zorunda mıyım? Fırsatçı sen de! [...] Bir bunu öğrenmişsin. En yakınlarına bile boyun eğdirmeyi. Eğmediler mi edepsizleşiyorsun. [...] Yaptıklarını üstelik bir de onaylamalıyız ki için rahat olsun değil mi? Onaylamıyorum işte! Onaylamadığımı biliyorsun. Yarın çok sıkışırsanız 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 soluğunu tutarak, oldukları yerde, ayaklarını birbirlerine birleştirmiş, karınlarını içeri çekmiş, avurtlarındaki küçük köfteleri, sosisleri, börekleri yutmakla yutmamak arasında kalakalıyor. Ağaoğlu, Bir Düğün Gecesi. (as in n. 31), p. 186-7.

in, as though they were some privates who will be inspected by a high general. Ağaoğlu 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 Özkan, 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 Rıfat 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 Düğün 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] Ağaoğlu, Bir Düğün 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 savaş arkadaşlarımı, erinden en yüksek rütbeli subayına kadar her zaman çok sevmiş ve saymışımdır. Onlar çukulatalar, enfes soğuk 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 seviniyorum. Ağaoğlu, Bir Düğün Gecesi. (as in n. 31), p. 214.

[50] Kaja 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? Zayıfmışız. 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. Thecontradiction 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 Düğün 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

[53] Ağaoğlu, Bir Düğün 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 Düğün Gecesi* tends to question

[54] Ben 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 Düğün 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

[55] Şimdi de hiç ezilip büzülmeyebilirdi. Bana şu açıklamayı yapma gereğini duymayabilirdi 'Yıldız'la çok sevdik birbirimizi... Çok da seviyoruz hocam...' Aşkın devrimciliğe gölge düşüreceğini sanırdı. Bunu kazıdı altından Yıldız çıktı. Onu da kazısa... Ama bunu yapmak kolay değil. Kazınan şeyin altından belki de aklının ucundan bile geçirmediğini sandığı bir şey çıkar. İnsan hali... Hiç belli olmaz ki. Ağaoğlu, Bir Düğün 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 healthy[57].

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. Ağzını yüzünü iyice sabunladı. Beni bile sapasağlam olduğumdan kuşkuya düşürecek kerte çok sabunladı ağzını, her yanını. 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 rakı[62].

[59] Ağaoğlu, Bir Düğün Gecesi. (as in n. 31), p. 293.
[60] Ibid., p. 305.
[61] Ibid., p. 306.
[62] "Paşa niye öfkelendi 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 Düğün 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 Düğün 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. Tezer'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 Düğün 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 Düğün 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.