

To the memory of Pınar Besen (1965-2013)

**SUBVERSIVE WOMEN WRITERS:  
TURKISH FEMALE GOTHIC 1920-1958**

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences  
of  
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

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THE DEPARTMENT OF  
TURKISH LITERATURE  
İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BİLKENT UNIVERSITY  
ANKARA

December 2021

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Turkish Literature.

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## **ABSTRACT**

**SUBVERSIVE WOMEN WRITERS:  
TURKISH FEMALE GOTHIC 1920-1958**

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December 2021

Even with the increasing interest in Turkish Gothic literature, the number of studies is still limited due to realistic literature being at the center of literary production, and literary criticism generally overlooking the originality of the Gothic genre. This dissertation intends to be the first to focus solely on Turkish female Gothic with the aim to investigate why certain female writers have written novels in the Gothic convention. To this end, the scope of the study is limited to the Gothic novels published as books between 1920-1958 by Suat Derviş, Nezihe Muhiddin, Peride Celal, and Kerime Nadir who have been considered as women writers in the same period by various literary circles. Contrary to the general hesitation in the Turkish

academia to relate the Gothic mechanisms in novels to historical contextualizations, these writers' works are analyzed with reference to paratexts and intertexts situated in socio-cultural contexts. The textual analyses in this study show that women have written in the Gothic genre for its plurality of meaning, discreetly subverting orders established in private and public spaces. In an attempt to illustrate the originality of this genre, this study thus puts forth an analysis of the interaction between instances of the Turkish female experience and Gothic literature via subversive readings of themes of Romanticism, incest, necrophilia, live burial, and the female vampire.

Keywords: female gothic, gender, Gothic literature, Turkish literature, women writers

## ÖZET

DÜZENLERİ TERS YÜZ EDEN KADIN YAZARLAR:

TÜRK EDEBİYATINDA KADIN GOTİĞİ 1920-1958

Yeşil, Nilüfer

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Türkçe Gotik edebiyatına duyulan ilgi artmış olmakla birlikte, bu konuda yapılmış olan çalışmalar hâlâ sınırlıdır. Bu durum, gerçekçi edebiyat geleneğinin edebiyat üretiminin merkezinde olmasıyla açıklanabileceği gibi, Gotik türünün özgünlüğünü değerlendirmemekten de kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu tez, sadece Türkçe kadın gotiğini ele alacak ilk çalışma olmak niyetiyle, bazı kadın yazarların neden Gotik yapıt ürettiğini araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmada 1920-1958 yılları arasında edebî çevrelerde kadın yazarlar arasında adları sayılan Suat Derviş, Nezihe Muhiddin, Peride Celal ve Kerime Nadir'in Gotik romanları incelenmektedir. Türkçe Gotik yapıt eleştirilerinde Gotik mekanizmaları tarihsel bağlamda değerlendirmek

konusunda görülen genel çekimsizliğin aksine, buradaki metinleri çözümleyen yanmetinlere ve arametinlere sosyokültürel bağlamları ışığında başvurulmaktadır. Buradaki metin analizleri, kadın yazarların Gotik edebiyat geleneğiyle çokanlamlı yapıtlar yazarak, özel ve kamusal alanlarının düzenlerini dikkat çekmeden eleştirebildiklerini göstermektedir. Bu çalışmada, türün özgünlüğünü göstermek çabasıyla, bu romanların Romantizm, ensest, ölüsevicilik, diri diri gömülme ve kadın vampir temaları üzerinden, kurulu düzenleri ters yüz eden okumaları yapılır. Böylelikle, belirtilen dönemde Türkiye’de kadın deneyiminin Gotik edebiyatla etkileşimini açığa çıkaran bir analiz yapılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gotik edebiyat, kadın gotiği, kadın yazar, toplumsal cinsiyet, Türk edebiyatı

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b>	iii
<b>ÖZET</b>	v
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b>	vii
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	ix
<b>CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION</b>	1
1.1 The Visibility of Female Gothic in Turkish Literature	2
1.2 Reviewing the Literature: Preliminary Discussions on Turkish Female Gothic Writers	23
<b>CHAPTER II: “TILL DEATH DO US PART”: THE UNROMANTIC VOWS OF ROMANTIC DWELLINGS IN SUAT DERVİŞ’S NOVELS (1920-1924)</b>	45
2.1 The Heroine’s Silent Cry for Help in <i>Kara Kitap</i> and <i>Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...</i>	46
2.2 Haunted by Dehumanizing Beauty in <i>Buhran Gecesi</i> and <i>Fatma’nın Günahı</i>	71
<b>CHAPTER III: TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT:</b>	

<b>THE PURSUIT OF LOVE IN NEZİHE MUHİDDİN'S NOVELS (1929-1944)</b>	92
3.1 The Incestuous Marriage of Concubines: When It Happens in the Family, Does It Stay in the Family?	93
3.2 The Story of Women Looking for Their Prince: Encountering a Necrophiliac in <i>İstanbul'da Bir Landru</i>	112
<b>CHAPTER IV: BURIED ALIVE: THE CALL FOR DUTY IN PERİDE CELAL'S <i>YILDIZ TEPE</i> (1945)</b>	129
4.1 The Coming of Age of the Lone Child-Woman	133
4.2 Gothic Law: In Limbo Between the Traditional and the Modern	149
<b>CHAPTER V: A LOOK INTO THE FEMALE EXPERIENCE WITH KERİME NADİR: A FEMALE VAMPIRE'S BATTLE FOR BLOOD AND GLORY IN <i>DEHŞET GECESİ</i> (1958)</b>	168
5.1 The Shapeshifting Vampire's ASL	172
5.2 Dames in Distress Go Trick-or-Treating	187
<b>CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION</b>	208
<b>REFERENCES</b>	232

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Following V. Özge Yücesoy's MA thesis on the general features of Gothic literature and its examples in Turkish literature in 2007 and Nilüfer Yeşil's MA thesis on Nezihe Muhiddin and female Gothic in 2009, the interest in Turkish Gothic literature in academia has gradually increased. Apart from Tuğçe Keleş's MA thesis *Children and Gothic in Gülsen Dayıoğlu's Novels* submitted in 2016, the interest in Turkish Gothic literature can be partly linked to the transcription and republishing of a collection of Suat Derviş's Gothic novels by İthaki Yayınları in 2014 under the title of *Kara Kitap*. Four years later, Bilcan Tunçtan wrote an MA thesis on S. Derviş's Gothic novels and Tuğçe Bıçakçı Syed defended her PhD dissertation on Turkish Gothic novels and cinema, with a chapter on Turkish female Gothic and S. Derviş. Even with this surge of attention to Turkish Gothic literature, the number of studies is still limited due to realistic literature being at the center of literary production, and literary criticism generally overlooking the originality of the Gothic genre.

This dissertation intends to be the first to focus solely on Turkish female Gothic with the aim to investigate why certain female writers have written novels in the Gothic

convention. To this end, the scope of the study is limited to the Gothic novels published as books between 1920-1958 by Suat Derviş, Nezihe Muhiddin, Peride Celal, and Kerime Nadir, who have been considered among women writers in the same period by various literary circles. Contrary to the general hesitation in Turkish academia to relate the Gothic mechanisms in novels to historical contextualizations, these writers' works are analyzed with reference to paratexts written by or about these writers in particular, as well as other Gothic novels that these writers have referred to either explicitly or implicitly. Studies on gender issues or the socio-cultural conditions in general have also shed light on the situating of these texts within historical context. The textual analyses in this study show that women have written Gothic novels as a genre open to multiple readings, discreetly subverting the orders established in private and public spaces. In an attempt to illustrate the originality of this genre, this study thus puts forth an analysis of the interaction between instances of the Turkish female experience and Gothic literature through subversive readings of the apparent themes of political Romanticism, incest, necrophilia, live burial, and the female vampire.

### **1.1 The Visibility of Female Gothic in Turkish Literature<sup>1</sup>**

The number of studies in Turkish Gothic literature is still considerably limited due to the center of literary production being realistic, shaping the prevailing expectations of literary criticism accordingly. A. Ömer Türkeş, in his article titled “Korkuyu Çok Sevdik Ama Az Ürettik” (“We Loved Reading Gothic More than Writing It”),<sup>2</sup> points out at the few Gothic works written in Turkish literature, a situation that he

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<sup>1</sup> Section 1.1 revises the general framework of Gothic literature given in Nilüfer Yeşil's unpublished MA thesis on Nezihe Muhiddin and the female Gothic in *Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadın Gotiği ve Gotik Kahramanlar* (2009, İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent U).

explains with the genre being an unrealistic one (16). According to T rke , Turkish writers generally prefer realistic literature due to the sense of duty associated with the ideals of Enlightenment, and the responsibilities of being a writer, of writing a novel (16). He later elaborates on this preference for realistic literature in another article titled “Korku T r nde  nsana  zg   ok  ey Bulmak M mk n” (“There’s So Much Humanity in the Gothic Genre”), stating that for the first writers of the novel in Turkish literature folk narratives like “Layla and Majnun” were deemed as backward, whereas European literature and novels were considered as the sign of civilization (118). It is for this reason that writers such as Namık Kemal, Ahmet Midhat, and  emsettin Sami regarded the shift from the older form of story to the novel as the move away from the imaginary, the immature, and the primitive, in the attempt to get closer to rationality, maturity, and civilization (118). This approach is clearly articulated in Namık Kemal’s “Mukaddime-i Cel l” (“Preface to Celaleddin Harzem ah”) published in 1888, a text in which the writer explains the reformation of literature. Writers like N. Kemal considered those stories of the past that were far from realism to be more like an old woman’s tale (39). The expectations from literature to be realist have thus begun before the Republican ideals of Enlightenment, as an issue discussed by those writers who have tried to reform literature.

Those literary criticisms that neglect the originality of the Gothic genre are another reason why discussions have remained limited. For instance, in his article titled “Korkuyu  ok Sevdik Ama Az  rettik,” T rke  argues that not many Gothic novels were written in Turkish literature in the Republican period for political reasons:

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<sup>2</sup> All translations, except for the titles of the master’s theses and PhD dissertations and some suggested book titles, belong to Nil fer Ye il. The Turkish quotes are given in footnotes.

“Following the declaration of the Republic, the mobilization for reconstruction in every area, including literature, and perhaps the emphasis laid on Enlightenment brought an end mostly to the Gothic genre that was inspired from mystic, fantastic, in short, irrational sources” (16).<sup>3</sup> A similar approach is taken up by Kaya Özkaracalar, in his article titled “Türkiye’de Gotik” (“Gothic in Turkey”), where other than Kenan Hulusi Koray’s *Bahar Hikâyeleri* (*Stories of Spring*, 1939) and Kerime Nadir’s *Dehşet Gecesi* (included in this dissertation), he refers to Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar’s *Mezarından Kalkan Şehit* (*The Martyr Rising from His Grave*, 1928) as a Gothic novel with its Gothic atmosphere created in the descriptions of the haunted mansion and the graveyard (62). In a controversial way, Özkaracalar claims that the novel steers away from the Gothic genre, considering that a rational explanation is given to the rise of the martyr from his grave and the protagonist expresses his disbelief in the supernatural (62).<sup>4</sup> Thus, in some criticisms of the genre, the Republican ideology favoring Enlightenment has been given as the reason for a limited number of Gothic works, with rationality in Gothic novels said to dilute the genre’s effect.

Another study that relegates the Gothic genre to an even more “invisible” genre when compared to the fantastic novel is Pelin Aslan Ayar’s book titled *Türkçe Edebiyatta Varla Yok Arası Bir Tür: Fantastik Roman (1876-1960)* (*An Almost Invisible Genre in Turkish Literature: The Fantastic Novel, 1876-1960*). In this study, Aslan Ayar regards many of the Gothic works included in this study, namely *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...; Buhran Gecesi; Yıldız Tepe; and Dehşet Gecesi*, as

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<sup>3</sup> “Cumhuriyet’in ilanından sonra edebiyatı da kapsayacak biçimde her alanda yürütülen yeniden inşa seferberliği, belki de aydınlanmaya yapılan vurgu, en çok mistik, fantastik, kısacası irrasyonel kaynaklardan beslenen korku türünün sonunu getirdi” (Türkes, “Korkuyu Çok Sevdik” 16).

<sup>4</sup> cf. Emine Tuğcu’s article “Türk Romanında Korkunun İzlerini Sürerken” (*Varlık*, no. 1213, October 2008, pp. 3-7). Contrary to claims by Türkes and Özkaracalar, Tuğcu legitimately claims that the use

somewhere between the Gothic and the adventure narratives, with the fantastic aspect bearing no purpose other than literature itself, claiming it has no social function (246). Aslan Ayar clearly slights the function of the fantastic in the Gothic genre as she states:

[T]hese novels have not been considered among “high literature” and have been neglected because instead of functioning to help internalize social norms and to unite the nation by presenting common experiences, they vow the reader to live experiences that are different, extraordinary, and marginal experiences; they aim to subvert social agreement and rules; and they do not conform to the conventions of the realistic novel. (312)<sup>5</sup>

The Gothic genre, precisely in the way it does not conform to the realistic convention, presents a common experience of certain groups, whose experience is a question that awaits different readings. It is in this sense that Aslan Ayar’s description of the fantastic function in the Gothic genre, continues the discrediting of the genre’s function and its readership:

Interesting as they may be for creating characters and stories as an alternative to the national canon, these novels have not used the fantastic like the Joker in the card deck to question the individual’s perception of the world, the relationship between good and bad, or other and self. Instead, they have used the Joker to intensify the appeal of exotic spaces, love, sensation, and crime.

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of Gothic conventions in these novels is not only to ridicule the public’s belief in supernatural beings, but a matter of integrating the author’s political views into the novel (6).

<sup>5</sup> “[B]u romanlar toplumsal normları içselleştirmeye, ortak deneyimler sunarak milleti birleştirmeye hizmet etmek yerine, okura bambaşka, sıra dışı ve marjinal deneyimler yaşatmayı en azından vaat ettiklerinden, toplumsal uzlaşmayı ve kuralları altüst etmeye niyetlendiklerinden, gerçekçi romanın konvansiyonlarına uymadıklarından ‘yüksek edebiyattan’ sayılmamış, görmezden gelinmiştir” (Aslan Ayar 312).



In this way, they have not been aware of the power of this card in the deck and have not conveyed this power to its readers. (312)<sup>6</sup>

This situation arises from Aslan Ayar's defining the fantastic with having a social function of discussing the ideologies and philosophies of oppositions between imagination and reality, and/or positivism and mysticism in a way that reveals the superiority of one side to the other (333-34). When the fantastic is used only to intensify the appeal of popular literature, as in with Gothic literature, the narrative is not fantastic fiction, according to Aslan Ayar (333). Such an approach to the fantastic indeed limits the content and the function of Gothic literature: A similar content in Gothic is expected to fit a predetermined definition of fantastic or else it is just popular literature in which the fantastic element has no social function but is merely an object of consumption (333). It is in this respect that the definition of fantastic in Aslan Ayar's study limits Gothic content and function, whereas definitions that enhance the understanding of the Gothic genre would serve to give due value to its originality.

By referring to the originality of the Gothic genre in Turkish literature, this study puts emphasis on the investigation of the social and political contexts of the novels to elicit subversive readings of Gothic mechanisms that reveal the anxieties of the time. The reason for such an emphasis can be explained with the development and popularity of the genre being generally associated with periods when repression has come along with its ambiguities —a situation that can be related to the shift from the imaginary towards the realistic in the Turkish literary canon, as well as to the

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<sup>6</sup> "Ulusal kanona alternatif karakterler ve hikâyeler üretmesi bakımından ilginç olan bu romanlar, fantastiği kişinin dünyayı kavrayışını, iyilik ve kötülükle, ötekiyle, kendi benliğiyle kurduğu ilişkiye dair sorgulayıcı bir joker gibi kullanmak yerine, egzotik mekânların, aşkın, gerilimin ve polisiyenin

political and social developments unfolding ambivalent tendencies towards modernization prior to and following the establishment of the Turkish Republic. Rather than seeing rationalism and realism as impediments to the production of the Turkish Gothic novel, this study makes use of such expectations as central to the flourishing of the genre in Turkish literature at the beginning of the twentieth century, particularly through the subversiveness of Gothic mechanisms that may appear to reinforce rationalism or realism, only to create an opposite effect. Such subversiveness is primarily embedded in the plurality of meaning linked to the Gothic genre and its conventions throughout different periods and several geographies. For this study, the recourse to paratexts and intertexts is essential to look into readings that shed light on the subversiveness conducive to expressing social and political anxieties related to the oppression created by systems that align themselves with the rational and the realistic. It is within this framework that this study sets out to do justice to the originality of the genre that has been overlooked and misinterpreted.

The difficulty in giving a definition of “Gothic” has been acknowledged in many studies and yet this has not held scholars from enriching the subject area with their own attempt at describing this literary convention. Fred Botting explains the reason for this constraint with the wide use of Gothic features having been used in various texts and different historical periods (14), in different literature one may add. In his study, Botting notes several sources that have inspired the Gothic, revealing that the convention transcends genres and categories: “Medieval romances, supernatural, Faustian and fairy tales, Renaissance drama, sentimental, picaresque and

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çekiciliğini daha da arttırmak için kullanmış, elindeki jokerin asıl gücünü kavrayamamış ve okura da kavratamamıştır” (Aslan Ayar 312).

confessional narratives” and graveyard poetry with its ruins, gravestones, and night fears (14). Though these sources have been used in diverse text-types and several historical periods in world literature, they bear a common feature with their use to express and remember social anxieties (2). Botting’s description of the most common feature of eighteenth-century Gothic can clearly be associated with the Gothic works to be analyzed in this dissertation: Fragmented narratives about mysterious incidents, with images and pursuits that horrify the reader (2). As for the figures that frequent Gothic spaces, he lists “specters, monsters, demons, corpses, skeletons, evil aristocrats, [...] fainting heroines and bandits” (2), many of which are visible in Turkish female Gothic works. For nineteenth-century Gothic, Botting adds scientists, fathers, husbands, the insane, criminals, and the double to this inventory of Gothic characters (2). To further elucidate that the works that will be studied in this dissertation can be clearly labeled as “Gothic”, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s list of Gothic themes is also quite comprehensive: The monastery, sleep and death, live burial, doubled images, the revelation of secret familial relations, the similarities between narratives and the art of paintings, the likelihood of incest, sounds and silences that are not natural, writing that does not make sense, the unspeakable, the repercussions of guiltiness, dark spaces and dreams, specters from times past, figures that resemble Faust or the Wandering Jew, revolutions and conflagrations, the morgue and the asylum (9-10). Besides these inventories of Gothic themes, Cannon Schmitt indicates the dangers that come with the attempts to define the Gothic genre. She states that labeling certain texts as Gothic can, in the end, lead to the exclusion of those texts that do not bear the general features (6). Nevertheless, this difficulty in defining the Gothic convention does not amount to the total neglect of the literary genre: overlooking the genre makes it impossible to analyze the interaction of texts

(6), a danger this study wishes to overcome by articulating an awareness regarding there being a possibility of writers that relate to other gender constructs having similar motives of the female Gothic writers of Turkish literature in 1920-1958. According to Schmitt, the general conventions of the genre can help group texts to determine the varying relations between them (8). It is to this end that this dissertation compares such lists of Gothic figures and motifs with those themes that are apparent in Turkish Gothic literature by women writers.

Having given references to a number of general inventories of Gothic themes with a view to describe some of the general features of the Gothic genre, the context of female Gothic can be further detailed for this study by looking into the general effect of the use of such themes in the Gothic novel. In his book titled *Gothic: Four Hundred Years of Excess, Horror, Evil and Ruin*, Richard Davenport-Hines explains the relation between the Gothic and the past by emphasizing the plurality of meaning in the discourse as it is used to express the fears of subsequent historical periods (12). The multiple interpretations of Gothic literature can be related to Botting's view of the popularity of Gothic literature being at its peak in the decade following the French Revolution (5). Ambiguities related to "power, law, society, family and sexuality" that were associated with Gothic works reveal opposing political positions in that period (5). Reflecting the political interests of various groups that range from revolutionary mobs and the radicals of the Enlightenment to those who favored tyrannical and feudal values (5), the multiple meanings embraced by the genre is evident. Furthermore, pertinent to this discussion is the literal meaning of "Gothic" as it displays different political engagements that have been connected to the genre: The term "Gothic" was linked to the northern Germanic peoples to refer to their

faithfulness to freedom and democracy (5). Botting relates how the Germanic tribes in Northern Europe were thought to have brought an end to the Roman Empire, as peoples who stood against tyranny and slavery (5). This account of the Gothic tribes is particularly of significance, considering that in the context where Roman tyranny was equated with the Catholic Church, the Gothic novel came to produce an anti-Catholic meaning in Northern European Protestant countries (5). Nonetheless, contrary to this democratizing meaning ascribed to the genre, Schmitt holds that the genre lost its popularity at beginning of the 1800s since the Gothic was praising the individual when the English deemed such praise as a feature that corresponded to their fear of the French Revolution (5), a fear of the outside. The Gothic genre's ability to express opposing political interests such as the anti-Catholic and the counter-revolutionary brings into question such interpretations of Gothic novels as texts that render an "absolute reading", as for instance, Nükhet Sirman has indicated for N. Muhiddin's novels (xvii).

Similar to the binary opposition between the inside and outside as the subject matter of the Gothic genre, articulating xenophobia on the levels of nations and races (Schmitt 13), the sadistic male and victimized female opposition has been taken up as an issue in female Gothic, a term first used by Ellen Moers in her book titled *Literary Women* in 1976 (10).<sup>7</sup> As a term that is attributed to the works of Ann Radcliffe and writers like herself, it has been utilized to indicate that female subjectivity is being expressed in these Gothic works, that is to say, women are studied with the view of a woman (10). Diana Wallace and Andrew Smith, in their article on defining the term, define the genre as "politically subversive" meaning that

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<sup>7</sup> This is the correct date of the coinage of the term, which was written incorrectly as 1963 in Nilüfer Yeşil's MA thesis (20).

it “articulat[es] women’s dissatisfactions with patriarchal structures and offer[s] a coded expression of their fears of entrapment within the domestic and the female body” (2). In this context, it is relevant to mention that Schmitt refers to Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* published in 1979 to indicate that when studying the women writers of the nineteenth century, these two critics started off their studies with the madwoman in the attic as the typical Gothic figure (11). It is with this study by Gilbert and Gubar that the Gothic has been regarded as the paradigm for women’s anxieties and possibilities (11). In the entry written for “Female Gothic” for *The Encyclopedia of the Gothic*, Diana Wallace also refers to Gilbert and Gubar’s work, stating that “Identifying an anxiety of authorship common to women writers, they argue that this is expressed through mad, monstrous, and fiercely independent figures who act as the author’s double within the text, articulating their repressed desire to escape from male houses and male texts.” Nevertheless, according to Schmitt, the critics who explored the phenomena of women’s lives in Gothic literature noticed the threat of violence towards women in this literary genre, and yet, by taking the Gothic heroine as a figure implying women were in danger, they have overlooked the metaphorical nature of women and that feminine male characters can also be in agony in these texts (11), a possibility this dissertation intends to take into account. The history of female Gothic proving that definitions critical to the genre need to be “revisited and retested” (Wallace and Smith 5), this study tries to avoid universalist interpretations, favoring historicist readings that benefit from paratexts and intertexts,<sup>8</sup> along with documents and

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<sup>8</sup> In this study, paratexts are used in the sense used by Gérard Genette in *Palimpsestes* (1982) and rearticulated in Richard Macksey’s “Foreword” to *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. Paratexts are those devices and conventions that “mediate the book to the readers” either through peritexts within the book (such as titles, pseudonyms, forewords, dedications, prefaces, epilogues) and epitexts

studies that can be related to gender issues or the socio-cultural contexts in general. Within the historical meaning of women's writing to be established in this study, the list of authors can be expanded to include feminine writers, though marginalizing feminist politics in the female Gothic genre may become another issue. In an attempt to include femininity, this dissertation aims to look into the conflicts embraced by the hero-villain in order to overcome such neglected areas in the novels written by the female Gothic writers included in this study.<sup>9</sup>

The identification of the Gothic convention with femininity has often been justified with the genre's opposition to realism. Schmitt mentions this by referring to George Levine's book titled *The Realistic Imagination: English Fiction from Frankenstein to Lady Chatterley* where it is stated that throughout the nineteenth century the Gothic was the "feminized and derided antithesis of the realist novel" (7). With reference to Michel Foucault's "repressive theory," Schmitt emphasizes that through subversion the Gothic novel negates power that "forbids, controls, [and] represses" (9).<sup>10</sup> Such subversion is achieved by the invasion, the breaking in of the repressed, be it sexuality, chaos, confusion, or terror (9). This way subversion unsettles authoritative systems such as "rationalism, capitalism, patriarchy, or the realist novel" (9). In his study titled *The Gothic Heroine and the Nature of the Gothic Novel*, Raymond W.

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outside the book (either from the writer, privately or publicly, or the publisher) (xviii). As for intertexts, in his entry to *The Encyclopedia of the Gothic*, Anthony Mandall describes their variety as intrinsic to Gothic novels, listing forms such as "references and allusions to antecedent works, pastiche or parody of literary traditions, and the use of stylistic and structural mechanisms, such as interpolated documents, discovered manuscripts, letters, and diegetic apparatus." Other than literary texts and devices, intertexts also include "eclectic discourses" in religion, science, law, art, and music, not to mention references to folklore and mythology.

<sup>9</sup> When discussing İlyas Pasha's femininity in Nezihe Muhiddin's *Sus Kalbim Sus!*, Yeşil refers to Hoeveler's indication of the heroine's need for a feminine hero to be able to trust him; such heroes commonly do not have any emotional or sexual expectations from the heroine (Hoeveler in Yeşil, *Nezihe Muhiddin* 76-77, 90-91).

<sup>10</sup> Richard Davenport-Hines refers to the inversion of the interdependence of the master and the slave as a Gothic theme (9). Also, Hoeveler states that "one way to understand the female Gothic is to

Mise articulates a counter-argument to this claim contending that, in the general development of the English novel, the Gothic novel is often perceived as escapist and as a deviation (32). Mise then refutes this view through his reference to Robert B. Heilman's argument in his article titled "Charlotte Brontë's 'New' Gothic": "In the novel it was the function of Gothic to open horizons beyond social patterns, rational decisions, and institutionally approved emotions; in a word, to enlarge the sense of reality and its impact on the human being" (cited in Mise 36). Identified with femininity and creating a broader conception of reality with its effect on the human being, the Gothic genre creates a context in which dominant power structures can be subverted particularly in female Gothic literature.

In his article "Korkuyu Çok Sevdik Ama Az Ürettik," Türkeş gives a list of Turkish Gothic novels (16), which has provided an outlook on the genre for this dissertation. According to this list that includes the Gothic novels published between 1923-2005, there are 38 novels with only 9 of them written by women writers. Curiously, the first 10 novels on the list were published between 1923-62, with the other 28 being published in the last ten years between 1995-2005. Among the novels published between 1923-62, only 3 novels are written by female writers: *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...* (1923) by Suat Derviş, *Yıldız Tepe* (1945) by Peride Celal, and *Dehşet Gecesi* (1958) by Kerime Nadir. Regarding Türkeş's list, one aspect that this dissertation aims to highlight is the fact that apparently there are at least 6 more novels written by women writers: 3 of these novels were written by Suat Derviş between 1920-1924 along with *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...*, as republished by İthaki Yayınları in 2014. This addition to the list brings *Kara Kitap* to the fore as the first

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understand projection and introjection. The genre expresses not what it claims to assert but the exact opposite" (57).



Turkish Gothic novel. 3 more novels written by Nezihe Muhiddin published between 1929-1944 have also been added to the list with Yeşil's MA thesis on the writer's Gothic novels in 2009. A second aspect with respect to Türkeş's list that this dissertation intends to draw attention to is the dwelling on the possible reasons for the production of Turkish Gothic novels between 1920-1962. The initial assumption of this study about the single-party rule in Turkey between 1923-46 as reason for the political and social anxieties subverted in the Turkish Gothic novel has paved the way towards the focus on female Gothic, with the consideration that such anxieties may be easier to trace in the works of the relatively repressed gender of the period.

To explore the possibilities for a subverted, enlarged reality, the scope of the study is limited to Gothic novels published as books in 1920-1958 by Suat Derviş (1905-1972), Nezihe Muhiddin (1889-1958), Peride Celal (1916-2013), and Kerime Nadir (1917-1984), who have been considered as women writers in the same period in literary circles. Sadri Ertem, for instance, in his article on the fifteen years of mastering the art of writing novels and stories following the foundation of the Republic, published in *Yarım Ay* in 1938, makes note of the general tendency towards writing with a sense of realism, without concerns of style (21), such concerns of style inserting a distance with realism in this context. He regards this sense of reality as a sign of liberation from "lousy romance and a feeble sentimentalism" (21).<sup>11</sup> A writer with a sense of reality has an objective image of the world (21). According to Ertem, rather than a primitive person, it is a person who has reached the peak of evolution who is able to perceive nature as it is, that is, objectively: "Compared to a creature who lives in a forest, surrounded with djinns,

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<sup>11</sup> "kötü romantizm ve beceriksiz bir sentimentalizm" (Ertem 21).

fairies, and taboos, it is the human in the laboratory who is closer to nature” (21).<sup>12</sup> Then, in the article titled “Türk Edebiyatında Kadın Romancılar” (“Women Writers in Turkish Literature”), which was written as an introduction to a series of articles on the topic in *Yarım Ay* between 1939-1941, Enver Naci Gökşen states that over seven hundred novels have been written over sixty-seven years, and that 150 of these novels have been written by women writers (8). Enver Naci apologetically explains why the readers should understand why the women writers have written subjectively on issues that circle around feminism:

We see that the women writers’ first works are subjective and full of grievances. Women have been degraded by men legally, materially, and morally for centuries, and suddenly appearing in the publishing market it is only natural and reasonable or acceptable for *them* to articulate the agonies and grievances of the female sex. This is why feminism has been and still is at the heart of their works. (emphasis added, 8)<sup>13</sup>

These two fractions that can be traced in literary circles, regarding how reality should be written of in novels appear to describe whose reality the critics are expecting to read in the novels, or whose reality should be discerned as reasonable.

Apart from the gendered approach to reality in literary circles, there is also a contention regarding the gender of the writing profession. In the issue of *Yarım Ay* published on March 1, 1943, the editor of the magazine refers to an essay written by Mahmut Yesari in one of the daily papers, where the writer states that writing is a

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<sup>12</sup> “Etrafı cinlerle, perilerle, tabularla çevrilmiş; fakat ormanda yaş[a]yan mahlûka nazaran l[a]boratuvarında yaş[a]yan insan daha çok tabiata yakındır” (Ertem 21).

<sup>13</sup> “Kadın romancılarımızın ilk eserlerinin subjektif ve isyan dolu olduğunu görüyoruz. Yıllarca hukukî, madd[î] ve manevî erkek zilleti altında kalmış kadınların birdenbire neşriyat sahasında görünürmelerini asırlarda[n] b]eri he[mc]inslerinin çektikleri ıstıraplarına, inlemelerine tercüman olmalarını gayet tabiî ve makul bulmak, karşılamak gerektir. Bu sebeptendir ki feminisme onların

man's job, expressing his disapproval of the women writers (no. 168, p. 3). *Yarım Ay*'s editor Sabahattin Osman gives a full list of the women writers that M. Yesari refers to in his essay (vol. 168, p. 3).<sup>14</sup> Among these thirty-five writers are the four writers that have been included as writers of the Gothic genre in this study. S. Osman, feeling that he is not in the place to reply to this essay, expresses his wish to see the women writers' reactions (no. 168, p. 3). In the editorial published fifteen days later, however, S. Osman states that none of these writers have wished to write in response to M. Yesari's censure (no. 169, p. 3). S. Osman cites Mahmut Yesari's claim that the style women writers use to write about romantic issues is sought by newspaper owners and book publishers but for M. Yesari such a style is, in fact, nonsense. Mahmut Yesari has expressed his disapproval of this style by referring to the sensual scent of the wisteria and the voluptuous laughter in one of these women writers' novels (no. 169, p. 3). This controversy between M. Yesari and women writers is mentioned once more, one and a half months later, with Mükerrerrem Kâmil Su saying that Mahmut Yesari is an eminent writer in Turkish literature and that his criticism of women writers may have arisen from his frustration with his publisher (no. 172, p. 3). With M. Yesari's name appearing in a repeated ad for a compilation of "Aşk Hikâyeleri" ("Romantic Stories") in issue no. 171-72 of *Yarım Ay*, along with names of other women writers such as Mükerrerrem Kâmil Su, Rebia Şakir, Atiye Demirci, and Mebrure Karaca, it is possible that the reader's demand and the competition between writers have led to such reproach against women writers.

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eserlerinin merkez[i] sıkletini teşkil etti ve ediyor" (Gökşen, "Türk Edebiyatında Kadın Romancılar" 8).

<sup>14</sup> "Asude Zeybekoğlu, Atiye Demirci, Efzayış Yusuf, Fakıhe Öğmen, Güzide Sabri, Halide Edip, Halide Nusret, Hayriye Melek Tunç, İffet Halim Oruz, İlhan Tanar, Jale Garan, Kerime Nadir, Leman Ahıskal, Mebrure Sami Koray, Muazzez Kaptanoğlu, Muazzez Tahsin Berkant, Mükerrerrem Kâmil Su, Neriman H[i]kmet, Nezihe Muhi[dd]in, Necibe Kızılay, Nihâl Yalaza, Nimet Nino, Peride Cel[a]l, Perihan Ömer, Rebia Şakir, Rebia Tevfik Başokçu, Rezzan Emin Yalman, Sabiha Özsoy, Sabiha Göknil, Sabiha Zekeriya Sertel, Safiye Erol, Sevim Sertel, Sua[t] Derviş, Şaziye Berrin, Şükûfe Nihâl" (Sabahattin Osman, "15 Günden 15 Güne", no. 168, p. 3).

Interestingly, in an essay titled “Tanrı’ya Sığıalım” (“God Forgive Us”) published in 1981, though she does not write his name explicitly, Kerime Nadir writes her reply to the deceased Mahmut Yesari she condemns for having said that writing is not a woman’s job (206). M. Yesari has accused her of not knowing Turkish well, for her conceitedness, and for stealing the money out of others’ hands with all of her books on the market (207). The paratexts related to this controversy indicate that women writers have appealed to the readership in a way that there has been an instance of a publisher suggesting a male writer to try and write more like them.

Enver Naci Gökşen’s series of articles on women writers in Turkish literature can be considered as another indication of the recognition of these four writers as female writers —research for this dissertation showing there being an article on three of the writers in this study, with the exception of Peride Celal.<sup>15</sup> In his article on Nezihe Muhiddin, Enver Naci states that though there are instances of awkward content in her novels, some of her works have a value of reality and conform to morals (2), revealing his expectations from a women writer. For Suat Derviş, the critic states that the writer’s first works were written under the influence of impressionism, hinting at its subjective quality, but that today she is a realistic writer with the way she analyzes national and local incidents and movements at their sources and within their course of progression (15). The earlier works by S. Derviş have been written at a young age without knowing the realities of life, Enver Naci again apologetically explains, a criticism that has often been voiced against female writers. Contrarily, in his article on Kerime Nadir, the family’s pressure on the writer, prohibiting her from writing at

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<sup>15</sup> This series of articles in *Yarım Ay* (no. 108-34), published between 1939-1941, have focused on the following women writers in this order, with Enver Naci stating that the order is only based on the time needed to prepare the articles (no. 118, 1940, p. 16): Şükûfe Nihal, Nezihe Muhi[dd]in Tepedelenligil,

such a young age, and the publishing market's high regard for famous writers are given as reasons that have created difficulty in her becoming a writer (17, 23). Yet, the individuality and the romantic emotions in the writer's novels are construed as issues of her age (23). The critic articulates his expectation that novels on more comprehensive, more social issues can be expected from K. Nadir as she ages (23). In spite of such expectations from female authorship, the individual is related to the social by the fourth woman writer in this study, Peride Celal, in an interview with her published in 1989, titled "Esas Kızın Romanı" ("The Story of the Real Heroine"). The writer tells Tülay Bilginer that she wrote about the identity crisis of the Turkish woman during the "intermediary period," implying the years of WWII, when the urban women of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's generation were not able to find an identity due to their unawareness of what the founder of the Republic had given them (1), a statement that is given in retrospect. In this interview, P. Celal both expresses her appreciation of the women writers of the day, although she has some hesitations about the term, expressing her opinion that both sexes should be taken in unity, and their problems together (1). Whereas Enver Naci's articles disclose the expectations from the content written by female authors, depending on their age, the interview with Peride Celal indicates how the issues of the individual and the social, the female and the male should be taken together. These paratexts reveal an ambivalent approach to the term "women writer" as well as to the content and the sense of reality that is expected from them. The male critic's tendency to associate the individual with emotions and immaturity, rather than to broader social issues may well be indicating the patriarchal ideology underlining such expectations. Again, one may say that his aversion to the immature individual's emotions hints at the

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Mebrure Sami, Suat Derviş, Güzide Sabri, Kerime Nadir, Halide Edip, Halide Nusret, and Cahit Uçuk.

preference of a literary convention that praises the ways of reaching an “objective” realism and distances itself from Romantic imagination. On the other hand, the female Gothic writer’s hesitation about indicating her sex, as well as her wish to reveal the social and political through her focus on the individual, and her tendency to take female and male issues together may be the tools of a subversive writer.

The exchange between literature holds relevance for understanding how some of the Gothic works of the women writers included in this study have been translated into other languages and how these writers have translated or read translations from the Gothic genre. To exemplify, in “Türk Edebiyatında Kadın Romancılar: Suat Derviş” (“Women Writers in Turkish Literature: Suat Derviş”), Enver Naci Gökşen writes that S. Derviş’s stories and essays have been translated into German, Hungarian, Russian, Greek, Bulgarian, and French (15). Suat Derviş has also translated two novels by Marcel Prévost: *Bir Kadının Sonbaharı* (possibly *L’automne d’une femme*) and *Metresim ve Ben* (possibly *Sa maitresse et moi*) (23).<sup>16</sup> In another article by Enver Naci on Nezihe Muhiddin, it is written that the writer has a translation titled *Amuk* (2) —this translation probably being her rendering of Stefan Zweig’s *Amok* (1922). Again, in his an article on N. Muhiddin, Ferit Ragıp Tuncor writes that her novel *Benliğim Benimdir!* has been translated into German (21). Moreover, a translation of Edgar Allan Poe’s short story “Bir Tablo” (possibly “The Oval Portrait”), published in 1934 in the journal *Resimli Şark*, is listed among Nezihe Muhiddin’s works in *Nezihe Muhiddin Bütün Eserleri 1 (The Complete Works of Nezihe Muhiddin 1)* (xiii). The translations titled “Kara Kedi” and “Deliler Arasında,” also listed among Nezihe Muhiddin’s works (xiii), may be Poe’s “The

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<sup>16</sup> For more details about S. Derviş’s translated works see “Behçet Necatigil’e Mektup” in *Suat Derviş: Anılar, Paramparça* (Istanbul, İthaki, 2017, pp. 243-49).

Black Cat” and “The Man of the Crowd,” a question worth considering in this context. English not being mentioned as one of N. Muhiddin’s foreign languages brings to mind the circulation of Gothic literature in Europe. P. Celal in her interview with Tülay Bilginer, tells her that before her switch to realist literature with her novel *Üç Kadın* (*Three Women*) in 1954, she was in Switzerland and that she was a reader of French literature (1). In Enver Naci’s article on Kerime Nadir, the critic writes on how K. Nadir has read books from Western literature, including Jules Verne’s science fiction novels (17). Such data as an indication of the Turkish female writers’ experience with Western literature, both as translators and readers, opens the possibility of foreign influences in their Gothic novels, revealing the need for comparative studies in Gothic literature.

The effects of globalization on the Gothic genre were recognized by scholars such as Terry Hale who, in her article titled “French and German Gothic: The Beginnings,” highlights the value of comparative studies in Gothic literature, stating that literary texts need to be grouped to be related with genres in different cultures: Literary genres are not created overnight and their production does not take place in an environment that has no interaction with other cultures, the same situation applying to Gothic texts (63). For instance, the English Gothic, as literary production that is generally started off from Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) and concluded some time after Charles Maturin’s *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), has from the very start borrowed from literary, aesthetic, and scientific resources, both from within and without of the culture (63). With reference to English Gothic, Hale mentions how the genre has borrowed from French and German literature: The sentimental adventure stories that were produced in French literature since the 1730s

was to provide a background for the *roman noir* at the end of the eighteenth century and the *roman frénétique* at the start of the nineteenth century (63). Similarly, when the Gothic genre's popularity culminated in the English culture, the stories about knights, thieves, and specters were in demand in German literature, to the extent that these stories would later inspire the *Ritterroman*, *Rauberroman*, and *Schauerroman* (63). The sources of Gothic literature from around the globe need to be taken into account when analyzing the Turkish Gothic novels written by the female writers included in this study, who have evidently interacted with world literature. In this context, scholars of comparative literature are called upon to bear in mind that the translation of Turkish female Gothic works, for instance, the translation of N. Muhiddin's *Benliğim Benimdir!*, may have also had an effect on the receiving literature(s).<sup>17</sup> Glennis Byron, in her introduction to the book titled *GlobalGothic*, stresses the need to take into account "multidirectional exchanges" of Gothic manifestations, and not a globalization that is centered on Americanisation or Westernization (3).<sup>18</sup> According to Byron, such exchanges through globalization include "anxieties about such issues as the stability of local or national identities and cultures, about the impact of transnational capitalism or the workings of technology" (5). Consequently, comparative studies that contribute to the investigation of the multidirections of such exchange can create a comprehensive understanding of the global production and reception of female Gothic works.

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<sup>17</sup> cf. *Kelimelerin Kiyısında: Türkiye'de Kadın Çevirmenler* edited by Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar. This study also articulates the need to study those female translators in the early Republican period that await investigation, such as Suat Derviş (11).

<sup>18</sup> To read into the investigation of such multidirectional exchanges of Gothic literary production between Turkish literature and world literature, cf. Tuğçe Bıçakçı Syed's aforementioned PhD dissertation, and Nilay Kaya's article on the reading of Ali Rıza Seyfi's *Kazıklı Voyvoda* (1928) as the localization of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) (*Kün: Edebiyat ve Kültür Araştırmaları Dergisi*, vol. 1, no. 1, August 2021, pp. 28-41).



This dissertation is comprised of six chapters, with four of the chapters focusing on one of the aforementioned Turkish women writers that have written Gothic novels between 1920-1958. Chapter 1, as the introduction, has set forth to present the motivation of the research, with a view to explain the topic and context, as well as the focus and scope of the research. This chapter also puts forth the relevance and importance of the study, along with the questions and objectives it intends to find answers to. The second chapter investigates how Suat Derviş uses the influences of Turkish political Romanticism to depict the predicament of the woman infantilized and objectified in the confinements of her dwellings, left without a voice and haunted by dehumanizing beauty, for her books published in the years between 1920-1924 that have witnessed the end of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Turkish Republic. Chapter 3, as a revised and expanded study of Nezihe Muhiddin following the unpublished MA thesis on the writer, looks into the writer's novels published between 1929-1944 to analyze the incestuous marriages of concubines and love for a necrophiliac man in her Gothic novels to portray the impossibility of love between sexes after the declaration of the Republic. The fourth chapter on Peride Celal interrogates how the burden of citizenship duties following World War II in 1945 has buried the woman alive in a Gothic novel, expecting her to attain civilization and to instill patriotism as a child-woman on her own in a misogynistic environment where the law is in a Gothic limbo between the Traditional and the Modern. Chapter 5 delves into Kerime Nadir's utilization of the genre in 1958 to create a shapeshifting female vampire that avenges opportunist men to fictionalize her experience as a woman writer. The final chapter of this dissertation is the conclusion where the answers to the questions put forth in the introduction shall be put together with implications for further research that can be done.

## 1.2 Reviewing the Literature: Preliminary Discussions on Turkish Female

### Gothic Writers

In his anthology of the Turkish popular novel published in 2019, Erol Üyepazarcı refers to three female writers included in this dissertation, with the exception of Peride Celal.<sup>19</sup> For Suat Derviş, Üyepazarcı writes of how the writer lived in Germany between 1927-1932, briefly attending lectures on literature and philosophy in a university in Berlin during her first year, before she started to work as a journalist and novelist like she had in Istanbul (vol. 1, p. 370).<sup>20</sup> The critic also gives information on how the writer was put on trial for her articles in *Yeni Edebiyat* in 1941, ending with the journal being shut down and the writer being freed without charges (374). Üyepazarcı indicates that the days of WWII were difficult for S. Derviş, with her husband Reşat Fuat Baraner, the general secretary of the Communist Party of Turkey (*Türkiye Komünist Partisi*, TKP), avoiding military service, and S. Derviş labeled as a communist (374). Following the termination of TKP's activities in 1944, her husband was imprisoned till 1960, and S. Derviş moved abroad in 1953 where she worked as a journalist and a translator with her knowledge of German and French for nearly ten years (374-75). Üyepazarcı also makes note of the translations and installations before Suat Derviş moves abroad, indicating that she translated Agatha Christie's *The Body in the Library*, and four English detective novels written by Edgar Wallace (375), from French or German since S. Derviş did not know

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<sup>19</sup> For further biographical information on these writers cf. Saliha Paker and Zehra Toska's article "Yazan, Yazılan, Silinen ve Yeniden Yazılan Özne: Suat Derviş'in Kimlikleri" and Çimen Günay's MA thesis *Toplumcu Gerçekçi Türk Edebiyatında Suat Derviş'in Yeri* (pp. 1-16); Yaprak Zihnioğlu's book *Kadınsız İnkılap: Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği* (pp. 35-41); Tahir Zorkul's PhD dissertation *Peride Celal'in Hayatı ve Eserleri Üzerine Bir Araştırma* (pp. 20-24); and H. Nilüfer Günay's MA thesis *Kerime Nadir Romanlarında Toplumsal Cinsiyet Rollerinin İnşası* (pp. 1-25), if not Kerime Nadir's autobiographical *Romancının Dünyası*.

English. According to the critic, translating Wallace, who was the creator of *King Kong* and an avid defender of British imperialism, was probably a tragedy for Suat Derviş (375), a statement that needs to be reconsidered with respect to the subversive nature of Gothic.<sup>21</sup> The critic ends the biography by stating that following her husband's death, she was mostly forgotten. As for Nezihe Muhiddin, again in the first volume of the anthology, the critic gives a biography of N. Muhiddin, including mention of how the writer was pacified after 1927 due to her political stance, and that following a period of writing popular novels between 1933-1944, the writer passed away in an asylum in 1958. In the second volume of his anthology, Üyepazarcı seeks to give back K. Nadir the credibility she deserves for he says: "Kerime Nadir is a writer whom critics never attach any importance to in studies that deal with Turkish literature. The only thing she has been worth of mention for is that she is the main reason for the vilification of popular literature" (742).<sup>22</sup> He also makes mention of *Dehşet Gecesi* as the first Gothic novel in Turkish literature (745), a claim that gives more credibility to the writer than what is due. This recent anthology reveals that the female writers of Turkish Gothic novels have been marginalized either due to their gender, their political views, their literary production, or for another reason that can be related to all three of these factors: for writing in the female Gothic tradition.

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<sup>20</sup> Çimen Günay Erkol, referring to Necatigil's article "Dünya Kadın Yılında Suat Derviş Üstüne Notlar" (1977), indicates that S. Derviş attended this university for three years during her stay in Berlin and that she returned in 1933 upon her father's death (68).

<sup>21</sup> cf. "The atavistic descents into the primitive experienced by fictional categories seem often to be allegories of the larger regressive movement of civilization, British progress transformed into British backsliding" (Brantlinger 229).

<sup>22</sup> "Aslında Kerime Nadir, Türk Edebiyatı'nı konu alan incelemelerde hiçbir zaman önemsenmeyen bir yazardır; tek önemsendiği nokta, popüler edebiyatın aşağılanması başat rolün ona verilmesinde yatar" (Üyepazarcı, vol. 2, p. 742).

Chapter 2 focuses on the Gothic novels written by Suat Derviş published as books between 1920-1924. Fatmagül Berktaş, in her article titled “Yıldızları Özgürce Seyretmek İsteyen Bir Yazar: Suat Derviş” (“A Writer Who Wants to Watch Freely the Stars Above: Suat Derviş”) published in 1996, puts emphasis on the writer’s pride in being a female and a writer, quoting the writer’s remark from 1936: “I am not ashamed of being a woman and I take pride in being a writer. Being a writer is my only fortune, my one source of pride, my livelihood” (205).<sup>23</sup> Referring to the novels included in this dissertation, Berktaş maintains that S. Derviş’s first novels are psychological novels that focus on women (210). She indicates that, in these novels, the writer distances herself from the Republican / nationalist ideology which is claimed to be a political mold defending a progressive way of life (210-11), the idea of progressiveness is positioned in opposition to the concentration on the individual woman’s psychology. In their article on Suat Derviş’s personas published in 1997, Saliha Paker and Zehra Toska, in line with Behçet Necatigil’s *Edebiyatımızda İsimler Sözlüğü* (*The Dictionary of Names in Our Literature*, 1979), stress the need to look into the novels of the writer’s early career between 1920-1930 (21). S. Derviş expresses her own contempt for these novels, leading to the general exclusion of these works from the history of literature (21). In an interview done with her in 1937, the writer says: “I have no claim of the works that have been published as books under my name to this day. [...] I regard these works as experiences of my childhood. If only my readers would think of them in this way and would read them with tolerance” (“Sua[t] Derviş Diyor Ki” 308).<sup>24</sup> The writer identifies with her

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<sup>23</sup> “[K]adın olmaktan utanmıyorum, yazar olmakla da iftihar ediyorum. O unvan benim yegâne servetim, biricik iftiharım ve ekmeğimdir” (S. Derviş cited in Berktaş 205).

<sup>24</sup> “Bugüne kadar kitap şeklinde çıkmış eserlerimin hi[çb]iri üzerinde iddiam yoktur. [...] Kitap halindeki eserlerime ben çocukluk tecrübelerim diyorum. Ve n[e k]adar isterdim ki okuyucularım da onlara o gözlerle baksınlar ve onları müsamaha ile okusunlar” (S. Derviş, “Sua[t] Derviş Diyor Ki” 308).

gender, yet not with the Gothic genre —her choice of genre being one of the factors in their exclusion.

Subsequent to “The 3rd Women Writers Symposium: The Literature of Suat Derviş” organized by Istanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University in 2013, İthaki Yayınları published the transcription of S. Derviş’s Gothic novels (1920-1924) in 2014, along with a collection of the symposium papers edited by Günseli Sönmez İşçi in 2015. The symposium papers have raised several issues that have led to and are still prompting further investigation of Suat Derviş’s works: For instance, in her article, Nazan Aksoy contends that S. Derviş is not an oppositional writer (p. 65), whereas this argument is open to discussion for the writer’s Gothic novels. Hazel Melek Akdik and Ferya Saygılıgil, in their papers, look into the Gothic mechanisms of *Kara Kitap* (*Black Book*, 1920), both critics claiming that the novel ends with the heroine’s death (pp. 212, 221), rather than a death-like nightmare. Akdik takes note of the Gothic mechanisms in Suat Derviş’s first three novels: In *Kara Kitap*, there are Gothic themes such as the fear of incest, Hasan as a grotesque figure, and confinement to a dark space (220-22). The Gothic themes in *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...* (*Not a Sound... Not a Breath...*, 1923) are listed as Osman’s spiritualism, his supernatural power of reincarnation, and the confinement of the heroine into the past and a secluded house (222-23); nevertheless, the reading of these themes can be further enriched by taking into consideration the writer’s motive to subvert expectations regarding the identity of the murderer(s). For S. Derviş’s third novel *Buhran Gecesi* (*Night of Torment*, 1923), the critic takes note of Gothic themes such as the woman in white, the Devil, and nightmares (223-24); however, there is no mention of the significance of the story being narrated by a male narrator. According to Akdik, the

Gothic spaces and atmosphere in these novels are created in accordance with the Gothic convention of pacified women confined to men's space of power (226). The critic acknowledges the genre's conflict with the values of modernity with reference to scholars who have worked on Gothic literature (219-20), and yet these conflicts are not related to any particular external reality, other than "expressions that reflect the past and reveal an interest in it" (220). As for Saygılıgil, her indication of the family as a metaphor in the novel is of significance for this dissertation, but the association of this metaphor to the writer's motive for writing *Kara Kitap* is limited. Fatma Topdaş's article contributes to analyses on *Kara Kitap* in the way it lays emphasis on the togetherness of life and death, the inconceivability of death, and death's metaphysical ontological state (230-31, 233), and these themes are in the novel to express the individual and universal meanings of death (239), the critic not mentioning Suat Derviş's historical and social motives.

Following İthaki's publications, Bilcan Tunçtan, in her MA thesis completed in 2018, looks into the Gothic aspects of S. Derviş's novels, giving a quite detailed list of the themes without mention of the conditions in which these novels were produced. Hence, to no surprise, she repeats Türkeş's view of the emphasis on rationalization in the Republican period hindering the production of the Gothic genre (127). Tunçtan includes two more Gothic novels to her study, which have both been published in newspapers through installments: *Onları Ben Öldürdüm (I Murdered Them, 1933)* and *Onu Bekliyorum (Waiting, 1935)*.<sup>25</sup> These novels were not included in this study with the view that the selection of novels here are sufficient to put forth how women writers have subversively used Gothic mechanisms to indicate woman's

predicament in a variety of spheres, the dissertation focusing on the novels published in the form of books between 1920-1924.

Reading Suat Derviş's novels with feminist concerns has also been a debatable issue with respect to the different definitions of feminism adopted. For instance, Çimen Günay, in her MA thesis on the socialist realist aspect of S. Derviş's novels questions the applicability of the term "feminism" for a period when women cannot actively participate in politics. With reference to Fatmagül Berktay, she indicates that mere citizenship has relegated Turkish women to the status of a "sign," a "symbol" of a nation-state (24). Günay contends that a political solution needs to be offered in feminism (20), a statement that becomes relatable to Serdar Demircan's analysis of the fourth novel by Suat Derviş to be included here in this dissertation study, *Fatma'nın Günahı* (*Fatma's Sin*, 1924): According to Demircan, S. Derviş portrays women's issues but she does not offer a solution (273), a claim that calls for reconsideration with regard to the cause and effects of woman's association with dehumanizing beauty which is socially constructed. Demircan also claims that although female characters are at the center of most of the writer's novels, these women do not resemble each other (273). The only common aspect of her novels is the importance attached to women by the narrator (273), a statement that is questionable when the narrator is a male. Emek Yılmaz, however, in her MA thesis on the women characters in Suat Derviş's novels, argues that it is through the family structure, love affairs, and marriages that women learn to question their status and to resist it (232). Yılmaz is aware that the novels included in this dissertation are Gothic novels but gives only a limited analysis of the Gothic mechanisms. Despite the

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<sup>25</sup> Looking at the list of novels published as installments given in Üyepazarcı's anthology (vol. 1, p. 379), *Dirilen Mumya* (*The Rising Mummy*) published in *Son Posta* in 1934 also strikes the eye as a

dangers of generalizing women as feminists, and thus overlooking women's individual will and their decision-making capacities, Diane Long Hoeveler has argued for a different definition of feminism in Gothic novels that involves an awareness of individual will when it is concealed: Gothic feminism. In her study titled *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës*, Hoeveler defends "professional femininity" which she describes as "a cultivated pose, a masquerade of docility, passivity, wise passiveness, and tightly controlled emotions[,] in an attempt to understand how female Gothic novelists helped to popularize and promulgate a newly defined and increasingly powerful species of bourgeois female sensibility and subjectivity" (xv). Chapter 2 particularly has recourse to this theory to explain the subversive nature of silence when the heroine is under threat.

Aslan Ayar, in her book on the fantastic novel, takes particularly two novels by Suat Derviş as excluded from the use of the fantastic aspect in Turkish literature due to an alleged lack of social function. For *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...*, despite the apparent discussions of the fantastic novel—which, according to Aslan Ayar, focus on two axes, between imagination and reality, and/or mysticism and positivism, the critic claims that the novel has no purpose other than literature, bearing no social functionality (246). She holds that the theme of reincarnation in this novel is nothing but the rambling of a delusional man (246). As for the Devil in *Buhran Gecesi*, though modern fantasies fictionalize this character as a metaphor for this world, in Suat Derviş's novel the Devil only refers to himself, to evilness (250). Aslan Ayar, however, needs to clarify what is meant by the social functionality of these novels:

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title for a Gothic novel.



On the one hand, the critic acknowledges that these novels by S. Derviş create an alternative to the “rational, scientific, and progressive” discourse related to instructional, realistic texts, and still, they are considered the initial steps towards the modern fantasy that, she claims, does not associate any kind of function to the genre (310). These claims are considered as arguable in this dissertation on the premise that Suat Derviş’s Gothic novels function to problematize the themes of Turkish political Romanticism with respect to the women’s predicament in the novels.

In his analysis of *Fatma’nın Günahı* (*Fatma’s Sin*), Demircan assigns Suat Derviş the label of “socialist realist” and claims that secularity stands out in the writer’s novels: “There is no religious sensitivity in any of her novels which are totally constructed on materialist reality and the mundane” (268).<sup>26</sup> Enver Naci Gökşen in his article on Suat Derviş published in 1941 quotes the writer who says that she completely changed after 1930 and that she feels like a complete stranger to her former self (15). S. Derviş explains this change by saying that she used to be religious, whereas she no longer is so (15). This piece of information regarding Suat Derviş also brings into question Tuğçe Bıçakçı Syed’s analysis of *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...* in her PhD dissertation completed in 2018. According to Bıçakçı Syed, the novel can be read as the Turkish nation trapped between two patriarchal regimes (94), with Osman as a “sick man” implying the Ottoman Empire and his son Kemal signifying the modern and secular views of the new Republic (98). In her interpretation of the Gothic novel, Bıçakçı Syed draws a parallel between the Gothic mechanism of the curtain/veil and the veiling of women:

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<sup>26</sup> “Tamamen maddesel gerçeklik ve dünyevilik ile örülmüş romanlarının bir tanesinde bile din[î] duyarlılık söz konusu edilmemiştir” (Demircan 268).

In other words, the Turkish nation becomes a veiled woman who is not allowed to meddle in the Sultan's decisions or who is blind to the fact that the Empire is monstrous. When the curtain is opened, and Osman's monstrosity is revealed, Zeliha's terrified state perhaps echoes the tragic end that the Turkish nation will face if she lets the sick Empire destroy the hope of freedom, reform and modernity. (102)

This reading becomes problematic particularly considering that the curtain/veil mechanism is used several times in different contexts throughout the novel, that need clarification. For instance, further analysis is needed to be able to relate Zeliha as the veiled Turkish nation (Bıçakçı Syed 102) to the thick veil used to portray the unconcealable happiness of Bihter, Osman's first wife, when she gets divorced and leaves the house (S. Derviş, *Ne Bir Ses* 39). Furthermore, if Kemal signifies freedom, reform, and modernity, Zeliha is not looking forward to betraying her husband, the only tragic end in the novel is men being carried away with their obsessions of possession. This reading consequently raises doubts about Bıçakçı Syed's idea of secularism and its geographies as stated in the dissertation's aim of "manifest[ing] the nation's anxieties concerning the in-betweenness of Turkish national identity and its ideological repercussions as being either Western and secular or Eastern and conservative" (2). Thus, the paratexts, intertexts, and socio-cultural references used in Chapter 2 aim to elicit the eclectic atmosphere of the intellectual and political tendencies with regard to secularity and conservatism.

The literature review for Chapter 3 largely makes use of Nilüfer Yeşil's research for her MA thesis on Nezihe Muhiddin. In this thesis, a critical review of three studies is given to reveal a common understanding in Turkish academia regarding Nezihe

Muhiddin's literary works. The first of these studies is Türkân Erdoğan's MA thesis on the women and social transformation in N. Muhiddin's novels, which claims that the novels problematize the wrong implementation of Westernization, criticizing "the actress, the ballroom woman, and the Western woman" so as to convey the writer's support for "the educated, professional woman" (iii). In another MA thesis on the influence of feminism on Nezihe Muhiddin's literary works, Seda Coşar maintains that along with three other novels written by Nezihe Muhiddin, in *Benliğim Benimdir!* the writer intends to give a message to the readers (71), by using evil female characters that confront established social practices (106-07). Hüseyin Güç's PhD dissertation on N. Muhiddin's life and novels claims that the writer's novels deal with themes related to the individual, rather than the social or political structures (128). These three studies are crucial to demonstrate the conflicts that can be associated with the women's movement and Westernization in Turkey, with such implications crucial to the interpretation of the three novels written by Nezihe Muhiddin that are to be discussed in Chapter 3: *Benliğim Benimdir!* (*My Self is Mine!*, 1929), *Sus Kalbim Sus!* (*Hush, My Heart, Hush!*, 1944), and *İstanbul'da Bir Landru* (*A Landru in Istanbul*, 1934). Tuba Dik in her MA thesis on the transformation of *ressentiment* from the Tanzimat to the Republican periods, uses this critical review of studies on N. Muhiddin's works to stress the need to read *Benliğim Benimdir!*, among other novels, with reference to the notion of *ressentiment* in the theories developed by Max Scheler and René Girard. *Ressentiment* can briefly be described as the repression of certain emotions to the extent that they poison the mind as a desire to take revenge, through hate, ill-intentions, jealousy, or vilification (22). Though such emotions definitely do contribute to a Gothic atmosphere, the urge to end *ressentiment* and the active relief of such emotions in *Benliğim Benimdir!*, as

expressed by Dik (89), is debatable with the reading of the novel as a Gothic literary work, Gothic writing often implying multiple readings, in this case, a feature that adds to the functioning of Gothic mechanisms as political allegory. Furthermore, in the first volume to his anthology of the writers of Turkish popular novels, published in 2019, Üyepazarcı indicates how the writer has written about violence against her women characters in her novels, with reference to Nükhet Sirman (253-54).

According to Üyepazarcı, in novels like *Benliğim Benimdir!*, the violence arises from lives in the mansions and the influence of old traditions, whereas the source of violence in the novels that are set in the Republican period is the Westernization of the characters (254). As for *İstanbul'da Bir Landru*, the critic regards it as an ordinary novel without any message (254). A critical review of the literature on Nezihe Muhiddin's literary works thus shows that the assessments regarding social and political issues, namely the Westernization of characters and *ressentiment* can be disputed with the analyses of the writer's Gothic novels.

Apart from her literary works, Nezihe Muhiddin's political identity and her non-fiction works have also been studied in Turkish academia. One of these studies focuses primarily on N. Muhiddin's non-fiction works written in *Kadın Yolu*, a women's magazine published between 1925-27 with the writer's editorship. In the MA thesis on Nezihe Muhiddin and *Turkish Woman's Path*, Nesli Özkay claims that this magazine has gathered those writers that are not extremists in feminism (177), for as stated by N. Muhiddin in 1925, the magazine aims to steer clear away from "the meaningless suffragette movement" (cited by Özkay 177). This conclusion becomes highly contestable with respect to Yaprak Zihnioğlu's findings, as laid out in her book titled *Kadınsız İnkılap. Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın*

*Birliđi* (*A Revolution Without the Women. Nezihe Muhiddin, the Women's People's Party, the Women's Union*), asserting that N. Muhiddin is the central figure of the women's movement in Turkey in the early 1920s (22). Leading the suffragette activists and pressure groups on behalf of the Women's People's Party (*Kadınlar Halk Fırkası*) and the Women's Union (*Kadın Birliđi*), Nezihe Muhiddin has struggled for women's participation and cultivation in the Republic through the initiation of women, rather than being handed rights from the patriarchal Kemalist single-party regime (22). According to Zihniođlu, the feminist struggle has been subdued by the womanless regime that has rejected the establishment of the Women's People's Party in 1923 (149), and which has temporarily closed down the Women's Union in 1927, removing N. Muhiddin from the leadership of the Union (234). Following her being charged with fraud, and later being condoned through the Amnesty Law in 1929, Nezihe Muhiddin wrote *Türk Kadını* in 1931 as a defense of her actions, a book that has been regarded as the end to her political activism (247). Her considering the suffragette movement as meaningless in 1925, as underlined by Özkay (177), in fact, can be considered the writer's way of continuing her opposition without destabilizing her relations with the governing Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası*) (Zihniođlu 186). Evidently, Zihniođlu's analysis of the writer's acts as subverting the expectations imposed on the Republican woman is crucial to the reading of the writer's Gothic novels. The political implications of the Gothic novels also raise the question of whether or not Nezihe Muhiddin's activism is limited to her struggles in the Women's People's Party and the Women's Union.

Laurent Mignon, in his book titled *Uncoupling Language and Literature: An Exploration into the Margins of Turkish Literature* published in 2021, further looks

into the possibilities that Nezihe Muhiddin's choice of genre brings up. With reference to Yeşil's MA thesis,<sup>27</sup> Mignon points at the strategy of the female Gothic genre in *Sus Kalbim Sus!* to subvert religious oppression. According to Mignon, *İstanbul'da Bir Landru* also reveals a search for spirituality that becomes apparent in the characters' wish to sacrifice themselves for something even beyond religion: "no God." Mignon thus positions N. Muhiddin among other writers with reference to this search for spirituality that is unveiled with the uncoupling of Turkish and Islam:

[...] Nezihe Muhiddin's approach is a reminder that the heirs of Beşir Fuat were not the only ones to stand against monotheism. From Ahmet Haşim's interest in Pan and Lucifer, to Yahya Kemal and Yakup Kadri's [...] fascination with neo-pagan ideals while conceptualizing their own brand of "neo-Hellenism," to the attention Halide Edip gave the Buddha, there is extensive evidence that authors in the early twentieth century were looking at ways of *re-enchanting* the world and literature in Turkish by looking beyond the Abrahamic traditions.

With regard to the period of 1920-1958, an analysis of the Gothic novels included in this study perhaps shows a similar search for spirituality as suggested by Mignon. This brings to mind Şerif Mardin's assessment regarding how Kemalism failed to create a value system (Arıcıoğlu 17).<sup>28</sup> In her MA thesis on spiritism in Turkey between 1936-69, Hatice Sena Arıcıoğlu states: "While some perceived this as a moral gap and crisis [...] or as the inability to create a new modern identity based on reason [...], others conceptualized it as a cultural or spiritual void born out of socio-

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<sup>27</sup> cf. Hayriyem Zeynep Altan's "'Karanlıktakiler'de Gotiğin Fısıltıları ve Kadınlığın Negatif Kuruluşu'" to read how Yeşil's analysis of Nezihe Muhiddin's Gothic works is used as a reference in the analysis of Çağan Irmak's film "Karanlıktakiler" (204). Also, cf. Hazel Melek Akdik's article on the Gothic elements in Suat Derviş's first novels to read how the critic has referred to Yeşil's analysis (219-20).

cultural dislocation resulting from severing ties with the tradition in a radical way.”<sup>29</sup>

In the article titled “Undercurrents of European Modernity and the Foundations of Modern Turkish Conservatism: Bergsonism in Retrospect,” which Arıcıoğlu also gives reference to above, Nazım İrem points out to how “spiritualism, romanticism, and Bergsonism” were debated among the Ottoman intellectuals, particularly after the destruction of WWI, against the “decadent, immoral, and materialistic” aspects of European modernity (87-88). Consequently, Mignon’s analyses regarding the search to re-enchant the world and literature in Turkish in the early twentieth century can thus be read in relation with Mardin’s indication of Kemalism’s failure to create a value system, this context of lacking and searching for a value system being imbued with ambivalence which was conducive to the development of the Gothic genre.

Chapter 4 once more brings into question the probable functions of woman’s writing when writing for women or for the market have become issues looked down on. A female writer who claims to take her writing lightly may as well be signaling to how her writing has often been perceived with respect to the genre she has dealt with.

Peride Celal, in her interview with İleri in 1996, states that “I never thought much of my writing. I never took my writing seriously. I am an average writer” (cited in İleri “Peride Celal’le Söyleşi” 47).<sup>30</sup> In his PhD dissertation on the life and works of

Peride Celal, Tahir Zorkul asserts that the psychological novels the writer has written

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<sup>28</sup> cf. Şerif Mardin’s “Ideology and Religion in the Turkish Revolution” in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 2., no. 3, 1971, pp. 197-211, with its translation in *Türkiye’de Din ve Siyaset* (pp. 145-67).

<sup>29</sup> cf. sources indicated by Arıcıoğlu as: T. Demirel’s “Cumhuriyet Dönemin Alternatif Batılılaşma Arayışları: 1946 Sonrası Muhafazakar Modernleşmecî Eğilimler Üzerine Bazı Değİnİmeler” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce*, vol. 3; E.F. Keyman’s “Şerif Mardin’i Okumak: Modernleşme, Yorumbilgisel Yaklaşım ve Türkiye” in *Şerif Mardin’e Armağan*; N. İrem’s “Undercurrents of European Modernity and the Foundations of Modern Turkish Conservatism: Bergsonism in Retrospect” in *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 40, no. 4; and O. Kafadar’s “Cumhuriyet Dönemi Eğitim Tartışmaları” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce*, vol. 3.

after 1950 were written as realistic novels, proving that she is not an average writer as she has claimed to be in her interview with Selim İleri (31). Zorkul's idea of average writers writing unrealistic novels may be reflecting the same perception that has made P. Celal consider herself as average. In the dissertation, the novels the writer has written between 1938-1949 are labeled as "works written for the market that are easy to read and that prioritize love" (6).<sup>31</sup> For Zorkul, the writer will be able to write realistically only after 1954 with her use of observation and psychological analyses (6). It is noteworthy that the extensive readership is acknowledged for her allegedly unrealistic literary works (6), and yet her style is perceived as one that is used by average writers. To no surprise, Peride Celal articulates that she is not against being reviewed by critics, but against being looked down upon (cited in Zorkul 33).<sup>32</sup> Her statement expresses her reaction to those critics who belittle her writing, be it for the so-called unrealistic novels she has written, or for the readership that has generally been associated with this mode of fiction. Hence, as stated in Sümeyye Çakallı's MA thesis on the female characters in the writer's novels, in Peride Celal's response to a review of her book of short stories, she regards those remarks considering her as a "ladies' writer" and "writer for the market" as insults to her identity as a novelist (cited in Çakallı 2),<sup>33</sup> disclosing how female writers have been disparaged by critics.

Çakallı also refers to two reviews in 1996 by Selim İleri and Zeki Coşkun who emphasize how P. Celal's literary works have educated her readers. According to

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<sup>30</sup> "Ben hiç bir zaman kendimi yukarılarda bir yerde görmedim. Hiçbir zaman önemsemedim yazdıklarımı. Ben vasat bir yazarım" (P. Celal cited in İleri, "Peride Celal'le Söyleşi" 47).

<sup>31</sup> "kolay okunan ve aşkı önceleyen piyasa romanları" (Zorkul 6).

<sup>32</sup> "[Y]azılarından çok[,] kişiliğine saldırıldığı ve birtakım saçma sapan yargılarla küçük düşürülmek istendiğinde de yazarın eleştirmene karşı saygısını yitirmesi ve kendisini savunmaya geçmesi doğaldır" (P. Celal, "*Bir Hanımefendinin Ölümü Üzerine*" 68).



İleri, the first novels that she has written as a young writer, were apologetically written for the market and have helped to educate the reader along with the writer herself: “If one were to carefully read these first novels written as a young writer to earn a living, they would see that they have [not] sufficed with educating the reader with imagined worlds and captivating pages, and that they also prepared a significant writer” (cited in Çakallı 1-2).<sup>34</sup> Coşkun in his review of P. Celal’s works mentions how the writer’s popular works hold value beyond them being educational tools; however, the value is again attached to their instructional aspect: “First and foremost, they are invaluable for creating and educating readers without being didactic” (Coşkun cited in Çakallı 2).<sup>35</sup> The chapter on Peride Celal aims to dwell how *Yıldız Tepe* (*Star Hill*) can be reviewed as a Gothic literary work that is written within the context of the realities of Turkey in 1945, problematizing whether *Yıldız Tepe* is written to educate solely the female reader or whether it gives insight into the call for duty for both the woman in particular, and the citizen in general, despite the novel being written in a period which the writer’s works have generally been considered as unrealistic.

Pelin Aslan Ayar in her study on the fantastic novel gives an analysis of *Yıldız Tepe* as a novel that can be categorized as a suspense-Gothic novel that loses its fantastic aspect when a rational explanation is given for the supernatural regarding Cemile’s hallucinations (283-84). This categorization raises the question with respect to why Suat Derviş’s *Fatma’nın Günahı* or Nezihe Muhiddin’s *İstanbul’da Bir Landru* were

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<sup>33</sup> “küçük hanım romancısı,” “piyasa yazarı” (P. Celal, “*Bir Hanımefendinin Ölümü Üzerine*” 68).

<sup>34</sup> “[Y]azarının deyişiyle, ‘ekmek parasını çıkarmak uğruna’ yazılmış gençlik verimi romanlar, bugün dikkatle okunsa, yalnız havaî dünyalarıyla, sürükleyici sayfalarıyla roman okurunu eğitmekle yetinmemişler, bir yandan da önemli bir romancıyı hazırlamışlar” (İleri, “‘Roman’ Yazan Romancı” 141).

not included in this study, both novels bearing instances of uncanniness brought through hallucinations. Despite the problematic categorization of the novel as one that is not fully fantastic and its disregard of any social function (246), this study has particularly two noteworthy contributions to the literature: Firstly, the use of metafiction has been acknowledged, indicating that, despite the narrator's wish to write about the incidents from the start (P. Celal 3-4), there are points in the novel where the narrator leaps into the future or writes her comments as if the incidents have come to an end (Aslan Ayar 281). Secondly, the writer briefly mentions the themes of fear of those who live in the province or city (282-83). Peculiarly, the Gothic themes of woman's writing and space are not connected to any social function, casting doubt on Aslan Ayar's description of those works that supposedly fall short of being fantastic.

Relating her witnessing of Turkey's history in 1951, P. Celal gives her account of the political atmosphere that persecuted Nâzım Hikmet and his wife Münevver Andaç. Following his release from prison in 1950, the police kept the couple under surveillance, a situation that Peride Celal witnesses as a close friend of Münevver Andaç: "Those days were fearful but memorable. [...] Throughout my life, I have met two remarkable people: One is Münevver Andaç, and the other is Nâzım Hikmet" (*Türkiye'nin Çıplak Tarihi* 48).<sup>35</sup> The novel *Yıldız Tepe* (1945) being dedicated to Münevver Andaç at the beginning of the novel is notable within this context. This paratext along with the writer's statements regarding her witnessing of the history of 1951 are evidence that P. Celal makes mention of her affinity to both

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<sup>35</sup> "Herşeyden önce eğiticiliğe-öğreticiliğe kalkmadan okur ürettiği, eğittiği için değerlidir!" (Coşkun in İleri 167).

<sup>36</sup> "Korkulu, ama güzel günlerdi. [...] İki olağanüstü insan tanıdım yaşamımda: Biri Münevver Andaç, öbürü Nâzım Hikmet" (P. Celal, *Türkiye'nin Çıplak Tarihi* 48).

Münevver Andaç and Nâzım Hikmet, a reference that can be linked to the situation of the militant citizen of that period. In her article titled “Citizenship and Individuation in Turkey: The Triumph of Will over Reason,” Ayşe Kadioğlu refers to the civic-republican tradition that has given shape to citizenship after the establishment of the Republic. This sense of citizenship is revealed through an understanding of “duties and/or obligations to a community” (32). With reference to Adrian Oldfield, Kadioğlu states that in the civic-republican tradition, the individuals do not come before the society (32), and following this sense of citizenship, “Turkish citizenship is based more on ‘duties’ than on ‘rights’” (33). Kadioğlu gives reference to Füsun Üstel’s article titled “Cumhuriyet’ten Bu Yana Yurttaş Profili” (“The Citizen Profile Since the Republic”) to specify the two objectives of citizenship education in the Republican era: “the achievement of civilization and the inculcation of patriotism” (33). The two sections of Chapter 4 focus on both of these objectives put forth by Üstel so as to pave the way for a reading of *Yıldız Tepe* problematizing the Gothic heroine’s plight in the attainment of civilization and the citizen’s vulnerability before the law with respect to the indoctrination of patriotism.

Limited or no reference to Kerime Nadir’s *Dehşet Gecesi* (*Night of Horror*, 1958) in the graduate theses written in Turkey clearly indicates that the novel has not received much scholarly attention in Turkish academia. In H. Nilüfer Günay’s MA thesis on the construction of gender roles in K. Nadir’s novels, the only reference to the sequel novel is its year of publication in 1958 as installations to *Yeni Gazete* as mentioned in the list of the writer’s works (24). Although the thesis does not make any other mention of *Dehşet Gecesi* the thesis writer’s claim in the conclusion of the study is quite controversial: “In her novels, Kerime Nadir questions women’s societal role

and uses male characters to criticize the non-Western understanding, the patriarchal structure” (82).<sup>37</sup> Günay’s remark on the use of male characters to criticize women’s societal role bears significance for an analysis of *Dehşet Gecesi*, as well.

Nevertheless, the way the thesis writer takes the “non-Western” as “patriarchal” is open to doubt, especially with regard to how *Dehşet Gecesi* can bring into question a geography of patriarchy. In another MA thesis on the representations of women in the popular romances in the Republican period, Gamze Polat asserts that Kemalism’s modernization project had a restricted influence owing to the fact that modernist laws could not overcome the power of religion and traditions (120). This statement is questionable in the sense that Kemalism and patriarchal structures such as religion are taken as completely two opposing sides, whereas İsmail Kara, in his article titled “Din ile Olmuyor Dinsiz de Olmuyor! Cumhuriyet Devri Din Politikaları” (“Neither With nor Without Religion! Politics on Religion in the Republican Period”), mentions that the Republican government has never sought a secularity that completely separates religion and state affairs (91). Another problematical conclusive remark stated in Polat’s thesis is about how the modernization project is regarded as separate from the heterosexual male-female love affair: “Even though Kerime Nadir does not oppose the Republican regime, evidently rather than taking up the issue of the modernization of women in her novels, she brings the male-female relationship to the fore” (122).<sup>38</sup> The above-mentioned two MA theses show that a more detailed evaluation, especially one taking *Dehşet Gecesi* into account is essential to understand how patriarchy is not bound to a certain geography, nor to a particular religion. Such approaches to patriarchy need to dwell on the fact that

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<sup>37</sup> “Kerime Nadir, romanlarında toplumda kadının yerini sorgulamakta[,] Batılı olmayan anlayışı, ataerkil yapıyı özellikle erkek kahramanlar üzerinden eleştirmektedir” (Günay 82).

considering the Kemalist modernization project as Western-oriented and secular does not free it from its patriarchal concerns, let those concerns be linked solely to limit the power of religion or to the wish to maintain harmony between different patriarchal structures for the benefit of the regime. One way to shed light on this problem is to look at the dynamics of how love is portrayed in K. Nadir's novels, *Dehşet Gecesi* providing insight into how a monolithic notion of patriarchy can be questioned. This approach becomes particularly relevant with regard to how Kerime Nadir is known to have written romance novels and *Dehşet Gecesi* has not been regarded as a novel on the theme of romance. Similar to Pınar Yeşilyurt's MA thesis on romance in K. Nadir's novels (5), Aslan Ayar, too, asserts that the novel is not about romance (300), although the critic thinks that the erotic scenes in the novel distinguish it from previous works, a claim that is arguable in the context of this dissertation. Nonetheless, Aslan Ayar does acknowledge that in this Gothic novel, the damsel in distress is replaced by a dame in distress (306), a view also relevant to section 5.2 "Dames in Distress Go Trick-or-Treating" in Chapter 5.

Although there is no reference to Kerime Nadir's *Dehşet Gecesi* in Eren Yıldırım's PhD dissertation on bandits in the Turkish novel (1950-1980), Nusret Yılmaz in his PhD dissertation on East Anatolia in the Turkish novel maintains that there is not much mention in the novel of the local people who live in the region (218). According to Yılmaz, the bandits are the only locals (218), and yet there actually is reference to the locals who do or do not believe in the male characters' stories. For Yılmaz, in this fantastic story, the love story in the novel only relates to the region in terms of setting (74). Kaya Özkarakalar contends that the novel depicts aspects of

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<sup>38</sup> "Kerime Nadir'inse Cumhuriyet'e karşı olmamasına rağmen, romanlarında kadının modernleştirilmesine yer vermekten ziyade, erkek-kadın ilişkilerini öne çıkardığı ortaya çıkmıştır"

affairs related to the Kurdish in Turkey, as well as those issues revealed on an axis between Turkishness and Ottomanism, portraying an other, an Orientalism within (74-75), even though such otherization is not clarified with textual or paratextual justifications. Similarly, in her MA thesis, V. Özge Yücesoy explains the use of the region and the bandits in the novel with historically how the bureaucrats feared losing their power to lower classes and foreign investors during the administration of the Democrat Party (80). This study is significant in its attempt to contextualize the Gothic novel, as opposed to those analyses that plainly give a list of Gothic mechanisms that are not related to any external reality, eliminating discussions on the motives of the genre. Yet, Yücesoy's reading can be further detailed in eliciting the reasons why the female vampire as a foreign investor is the victor at the end of the novel and why the Alevis have killed the husband of this Iraqi Princess. Şima İmşir Parker, in her article titled "Reality Hidden Within: An Analysis of Kerime Nadir's *Dehşet Gecesi*" published in 2014, indicates that K. Nadir has re-written Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) and claims that this novel is the first Turkish Gothic novel to be written by a female writer (75),<sup>39</sup> this argument needing further distinction with the novel's references to the serpent-like Shahmaran, an octopus reminiscent of Medusa, and a bird like Lilith in the male writer Cengiz's imagination as outcasts of patriarchal structures, not to mention the need to acknowledge the works written in the Gothic convention by female writers before Kerime Nadir.<sup>40</sup> İmşir Parker agrees with Yücesoy's reading of this Gothic novel as an implication of the Western cities' fears of the Eastern life in the country, leading to the death of the bandits in a pool of

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(Polat 122).

<sup>39</sup> According to Aslan Ayar, the characterization of a female vampire in this novel is a female writer's attempt to subvert the conventions of the classical vampire stories, "challenging" male writers (306).

<sup>40</sup> cf. Nilay Kaya claims that Ali Rıza Seyfi's *Kazıklı Voyvoda* (1928) is the first Turkish Gothic novel to use the vampire figure as the protagonist (11), a claim that is arguable with respect to the use of vampire folklore by Suat Derviş.

oil at the end of the novel (78), a pool that belongs to the Iraqi aristocrats. The Iraqi Princess's husband killed by the Alevis, İmşir Parker claims that Princess Ruzihayâl is also "a victim of Easterners and non-Turks" (79), a point that calls for further justification along with Yücesoy's reading of the novel.

These preliminary discussions on Turkish female Gothic writers show that there are a number of problem areas that this dissertation can shed light onto. One of the issues that call for attention in academia is that all of these writers need to be recognized as writers that have written female Gothic works of literature, there being a tendency to leave one or two writers out without any mention. This situation generally arises from the neglect of the originality of Gothic literature, if not the dismissal of some women writers. The neglect of female Gothic can be explained with how the genre and women's writing have been associated with a subjective reality as opposed to the objective reality of realistic novels, an understanding that has led some writers like Suat Derviş to disown the books written in the Gothic genre. Moreover, some writers' names have been ignored, either due to their political background, a problem that may apply for all writers particularly when the personal is regarded as political, or as in the instance of Nezihe Muhiddin, due to the choice of allegedly awkward content. Another reason why certain names have not been taken into consideration seems to be the writer's own reservations about being regarded as a women's writer, as one can observe in Peride Celal's perhaps preferred absence or her explicit statements given in retrospect. In an attempt to provide a sound insight into Turkish female Gothic and these writers' motives to use this genre, this dissertation intends to focus on essential aspects of such a study: The analyses of subversion contextualized via paratexts and intertexts.

## CHAPTER II

### “TILL DEATH DO US PART”:

### THE UNROMANTIC VOWS OF ROMANTIC DWELLINGS

### IN SUAT DERViŞ’S NOVELS (1920-1924)

The young woman treated like a child by the Gothic family has often been assumed to be indicative of gender politics. Dani Cavallaro points to the infantilization of women in Gothic fiction through their confinement to the bourgeois home in the name of comfort, privacy, and control (142). It is in this respect that the bourgeois home becomes the locus where new regimes have prolonged the old notorieties of former establishments (142). Gender politics is problematized through women being treated as infants and dehumanized objects of beauty held under control in Suat Derviş’s Gothic novels, especially in a way that can be related to a number of themes pertinent to Turkish political Romanticism. Hasan Aksakal, in his book titled *Türk Politik Kültüründe Romantizm (Romanticism in Turkish Political Culture)*, lists the most prominent themes in Turkish Romanticism as “romanticization of youth; curiosity for the Middle Ages; envisagement of Rousseau’s Social Contract; the significance of translation; melancholy, the past, and dreams; and lack of an anti-



capitalist attitude” (46-65). These themes that are also significantly visible in Suat Derviş’s Gothic novels illustrate how Romantic dwellings lead to the heroines’ victimization, indicating the possibilities of awakening when authoritative systems perpetuate their oppression. Bound to such Gothic spaces, the young woman being treated as a child due to sickness in *Kara Kitap* (*Black Book*, 1920) or her commodification as the wife in *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...* (*Not a Sound... Not a Breath...*, 1923), together bring up the problem of the heroine’s voice remaining unheard behind the walls of the house. The heroines in *Buhran Gecesi* (*Night of Torment*, 1923) and *Fatma’nın Günahı* (*Fatma’s Sin*, 1924) turn into victims of objectification as they are haunted by a dehumanizing, socially constructed sense of beauty, leading to detachment from sisterhood and society at large. As put by Cavallaro, “[women] seem to have no choice but to come to terms with those walls that encircle them, to learn to negotiate the crimes and traumas they secrete” (143). This chapter thus aims to look into how the heroines in S. Derviş’s Gothic novels are forced into an everlasting bond with their Romantic dwellings, either held within confinement or eliminated from a sense of solidarity.

## **2.1 The Heroines’ Silent Cry for Help in *Kara Kitap* and *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...***

In her essay titled “Ben Öldükten Sonra Dirileceğimize İnananlardanım!..” (“I, Too, Believe in Life after Death”) published in 1935, Suat Derviş depicts the marvel of how human spirits have miraculously come back to life throughout history: “The reincarnated dead springs from the ground. Arms open, heart in the open, drunk with the blood that flows from the veins to the head, the dead joins life only with the need to love and hold someone. [...] This is the miracle of April that is written on your

calendars” (13).<sup>41</sup> Using the Gothic theme of the afterlife to convey how emotions lead to action, it is no surprise to see the reappearance of this literary style after the writer has previously written on disease to problematize agency in *Kara Kitap* (*Black Book*) published in 1920. Ayşegül Utku Günaydın, in her book on modernization in the novels by Ottoman woman writers, pinpoints the use of melancholy and hysteria in the characters of the novels written by women writers in the pre-Republican Period (128). Günaydın claims that, in these novels, melancholy often signifies feminine reaction and resistance, whereas hysteria is identified as an emotion common among male characters, usually implying that the character cannot handle the situation that he has encountered: The level of maturity and awareness is what distinguishes these two emotions (142). This analysis of emotions, which is also related to *Kara Kitap* in Günaydın’s study, deserves further inquiry particularly regarding hysteria in women and the Gothic ending of the novel. With melancholy and hysteria generally being used as the metaphors of tuberculosis (TB), as indicated in Susan Sontag’s *Illness as Metaphor*, the issues of maturity and individual awareness can be further problematized in a female writer’s Gothic novel that brings into question the agency of the diseased: the heroine suffering from a TB-like illness and the hero-villain afflicted with dwarfism and kyphosis.

Upon the death of her father in Istanbul, Şadan moves to her late grandfather's house with her mother and elder brother Necdet. Şadan is debilitated with her illness and is forced to stay home, while she longs to go outside and mingle with the other young girls. One day, Necdet takes her out of the house and she runs off to join the girls at play. This short break from infirmity ends up with Şadan passing out and being

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<sup>41</sup> “Canlanan ölü yerinden fırlar. Kolları açık, kalbi açık, damarlarından başına yükselen kanın harareti[y]le sarhoş, yalnız okşamak, sevmek, sarılmak ihtiyac[ıyla] hayata atılır. [...] Bu mucizeyi

brought back home. Şadan's cousin Hasan, with his hunched back and his height compared to a midget, wishes to avoid people and does not leave the house much either. He becomes quite fond of Şadan and reveals his feelings but she sees him only as a brother. In the library at home, Şadan sees the painting of Hasan's dead brother and is fascinated with it. She resorts to the books and the painting in the library to get an answer about what death is, to help her overcome her fears. Hearing Hasan's laughter one night, she finds him burning his poetry. His feelings being rejected by his cousin, he runs away from home and his dead body is found out in the cold by Şadan and the household's black cat. Following this devastating incident, Şadan becomes bedridden and the novel ends with Hasan's spirit choking Şadan and her cry for help with no one to rescue her.

With the patients being caught between life and death, the in-betweenness of the diseases in *Kara Kitap* can be explained with “liminality” that Victor Turner defines as “a ‘threshold’, or space of ‘midtransition’, a condition of being ‘be-twixt and between established states,’” as cited in Taryn Tavener-Smith's MA thesis titled *The Gothic and Liminality in Three Contemporary British Novels* (20).<sup>42</sup> Tavener-Smith refers to Turner's theory of liminality to look into specters, the insane, and vampires as liminal elements of the Gothic. The liminal figures “evade ordinary cognitive classification [...] for they are not this or that, here or there, one thing or the other” (Turner cited in Tavener-Smith 20). Liminality in this novel does not only arise from how life and death are welded in the evident diseases, but how the members of the house are described with physical attributes that can be related with metaphors that

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yapan: bugün takviminizde okuduğunuz N[isan]'dır” (S. Derviş, “Ben Öldükten Sonra” 13).

<sup>42</sup> cf. Arnold van Gennep's works where the term has been initially proposed in the sense that “all human subjects experience a liminal period of transition [...] before full integration into the community at large” (Katie Garner in Hughes et al.)

have been used to define disease, as well. To clarify, in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the definition given for cancer's figurative meaning is stated as: "Anything that frets, corrodes, corrupts, or consumes slowly and secretly" (cited in Sontag 10). At the beginning of the novel, Şadan complains about how dark the house is, whereupon Hasan adds to her remark how dull the people who reside in the house are: The complexion of Şadan's mother is faint, she being consumed with the grief of having lost her husband, whereas Hasan's father, with his weary body, is absorbed in his thoughts and faiths that belong to the past as he studies in his library infected with mold (101). Hasan also deems his physical appearance as a situation that aggravates the dullness ascribed to the people who reside in this house: "As for me, once someone catches a glimpse of me they avert their eyes for I am just plain ugly, with my red hair, my green eyes without any lashes, and my stunted height.." (101).<sup>43</sup> The darkness and dullness of the house are associated with the household's being consumed, be it either by mourning, by a search in vain for truth in old books, or in Hasan's situation by poetry that Şadan describes as "stormy" and "thundering" with deep thoughts (105).<sup>44</sup> Şadan's brother Necdet playing the piano is the only sound that disrupts the silence in this house (102) —without these melodies, no one would believe that the people living in this house were alive (103). Nevertheless, despite these melodies which are regarded by Şadan as evidence of life, there are dark circles around her brother's eyes (103). The physical traits of the household members function as metaphors of liminality where emotions and thoughts considered as fretful, corroding, and consuming are on the edge of darkness, dullness, and silence, where life blends with death.

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<sup>43</sup> "[B]ense yalnız bir kere bakıldıktan sonra göz çevrilecek bir çirkinlik, kırmızı saçları, yeşil kirpiksiz gözleri, kısacık boyu..." (S. Derviş, *Kara Kitap* 101).

Şadan's situation deteriorates as her body is confined to where her late grandfather used to live. This decline in her health can be related to how the environment was thought to lead to TB in those years. The causes of TB which are given in a standard textbook of medicine published in 1881 are listed as "hereditary disposition, unfavorable climate, sedentary indoor life, defective ventilation, deficiency of light, and 'depressing emotions'" (cited in Sontag 54). Sontag states that these causes maintained their credibility for many years despite the discovery of the tubercle bacillus in 1882 (54). Despite Sontag's analysis of TB as a disease that was considered to occur in damp and cold cities (15), the house located outside of Istanbul and next to a grove of trees only serves to show Şadan how her agency is limited by her illness and her doting mother. When her brother Necdet tells Şadan that she is childishly exaggerating her condition, she voices her awareness of how this mysterious illness is depriving her of the ability to do things like her brother can: "If we open the window to get some fresh air, I am covered in blankets; I can't eat, sleep or wake up as I please. [...] I guess since you can do the simplest things, you do not understand that being able to run, to get tired, or even to grow cold is but a pleasure!" (104).<sup>45</sup> Şadan is forced to live in the dark and wet confines of the house with its moldy library (101) and damp rooms (114), only leading to a deterioration in her situation. Although a change of environment, as Sontag suggests, was thought to improve the health of TB patients (15), Şadan does not have the power to alter her situation.

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<sup>44</sup> "[S]onra da fırtınalı, şimşekli, derin fikirlerin var" (S. Derviş, *Kara Kitap* 105).

<sup>45</sup> "Biraz hava almak için pencereyi açsak üstüme kat kat örtüler konuyor; istediğim saatte yemek, yatmak, kalkmak elimde değil. [...] Galiba sizler her şeyi yapmaya mezun bulunduğunuz için benim kadar en adi şeyleri, koşmanın, yorulmanın, hatta üşümenin bile bir zevk olduğunu duymuyorsunuz" (S. Derviş, *Kara Kitap* 104).

Hasan's dwarfism and kyphosis may be interpreted as degenerationism which Kelly Hurley in her book titled *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle* identifies with "a terrible regression, a downward spiral into madness, chaos, and extinction" (66). Such an interpretation is in line with Günaydın's analysis of hysteria common in male characters in the novels written by women writers in the pre-Republican Period in that it results from the inability to cope with falling apart with the love object, a situation that leads to the loss of will power, the break from rationality, and the disintegration of the self (129). However, it can also be claimed that as a man afflicted with visible diseases and yet invisible in the eyes of others, Hasan develops an awareness that awards him a sense of agency, a sense of freedom. Bjorn Thomassen in his book titled *Liminality and the Modern. Living Through the In-Between* explains liminality as an unsettling, in-between situation "in which nothing really matters, in which hierarchies and norms disappear, in which sacred symbols are mocked at and ridiculed, in which authority in any form is questioned, taken apart and subverted" (1). Hasan's liminality is perceived in how he expresses his detest for those who can say that Şadan is ill but cannot even articulate that his height is like a midget (102). For Hasan, people are "primitive" as they are unaware that he is not to blame for his condition but is the unfairness of creation that has made the others comely and perfect (102).<sup>46</sup> His liminality thus not only subverts the authority of a creator but the supremacy of the body when compared to spirit: "When these personalities in their pleasant bodies leave their pretty figures aside, will they not be so disabled and disgusting that they will have to retreat before my hunched back?" (102).<sup>47</sup> Hasan tells her that he used to look for a

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<sup>46</sup> "iptidai" (S. Derviş, *Kara Kitap* 102).

<sup>47</sup> "Acaba onların güzel vücutlarının içindeki şahsiyet, o güzel mahfazasından çıktığı zaman, benim kamburluğumun karşısında ricat edecek kadar sakat ve iğrenç olmayacak mıdır?" (S. Derviş, *Kara Kitap* 102).

woman who would love him for who he was and that he would be distressed when all of his efforts to find such a woman were in vain (108). This futile search has come to an end: “I have recovered from that illness. I no longer am searching for such a woman and so this useless search cannot upset me. I know well that there are no higher people that have eyes that see deeper into self-adornment and appearance” (108).<sup>48</sup> Still, he expresses his love to his cousin, though he is aware that they are like brother and sister (119), implying an incestuous tendency in his feelings. The only way he can possess her is the afterlife where her bones will be his gods (111), reminiscent of the ending of Victor Hugo’s *Notre-Dame de Paris* (*The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*) with the dead body of Quasimodo, as another grotesque literary figure, found in a grave, hugging Esmeralda’s corpse. Though Hasan is excluded from human interaction, his regression empowers him in the attempt to subvert the authority of religion, familial bonds, and the significance attached to appearance. He acts to change this situation by escaping the house, even if he runs to his death, seemingly freeing himself from the agony of the material world.

Şadan’s material existence causes her distress, but unlike Hasan, she can do nothing to change this situation: “My youth and beauty are passing away in these damp rooms, these beds, with the effects of these medications, and in the end, one day, I will wear away without saying ‘I, too, have lived. I have also been fancied. What a pity!’” (114).<sup>49</sup> The young girl’s fear of remaining in the confines of the house can be related to an essay written by S. Derviş in 1935, taking up this issue. In this essay

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<sup>48</sup> “O hastalıktan kurtuldum. Şimdi ne arıyor ne de bulamadığım için meyus oluyorum. Çünkü şimdi gösterişten, şekilden daha derinlere nüfuz edecek gözlere malik yüksek insanların olmadığını pek iyi biliyorum” (S. Derviş, *Kara Kitap* 108).

<sup>49</sup> “Gençliğim ve güzelliğim bu nemli odalarda, bu yataklarda, bu ilaç kuvvetleri içinde geçiyor ve nihayet bir gün ben de yaşadım, ben de beğenildim diyemeden soyup, kırılp gideceğim. Ne yazık!” (S. Derviş, *Kara Kitap* 114).

titled “Kızlar Neden Evlenirler?” (“Why Do Young Women Get Married?”), Suat Derviş returns to this issue of why young women are inclined to get married and the reason for this is explained as their fear of staying in the family home as an unmarried woman or their fear that others might think this is the situation (11). This fear is described as “There is one thing that the woman-nation [...] fears more than the plague: [...] that thing is to not be fancied and this situation to be known by others!.. This is why when every young woman reaches the age to get married she starts to fear: ‘What if I can’t find a husband or what if no one wants to marry me?’” (11).<sup>50</sup> Şadan’s condition only gives her pain, having to watch her beauty wither away without receiving the admiration she thinks she deserves (115). The day she goes outside with her brother, she tells him about what she will be wearing once she gets back to Istanbul, about her veil and shoes, her silk stockings, and her leather gloves (110), showing her interest in self-adornment. When she leaves her brother’s side to join the other girls, she faints and is then brought back home in her brother’s arms (110). Her desire to live fully (114) only aggravates her health condition.

Referring to her illness as an “unknown force” and “unseen adversity” in a way that it can be identified with death (104),<sup>51</sup> she wishes to look for consolation and answers. Though at the beginning of the novel, the melancholic moonlight and the prayer-like verses in the translation of Alphonse de Lamartine’s *Méditations poétiques* (*Poetic Meditations*) soothe her soul (105),<sup>52</sup> this melancholy serves to

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<sup>50</sup> “Halbuki [...] kadın ulusu, vebadan daha fazla bir şeyden korkar: [...] bir tek şeyden: beğenilmemek ve beğenilmemiş bilinmekten!.. Ve bunun için evlenme çağına gelen bir genç kızın içine, yani tahteşşuuruna bir korkudur düşer: ‘Ya koca bulamazsam, ya kimse beni istemezse’” (S. Derviş, “Kızlar Neden Evlenirler?” 11).

<sup>51</sup> “meçhul bir kuvvet” and “o gizli musibet” (S. Derviş, *Kara Kitap* 104).

<sup>52</sup> This collection of French romantic poetry is often referred to with its focus on “the theme of love, the awareness of the fleeting nature of time, the belief that we are but ‘exiles’ on this earth, the use of external nature to reflect the interior state of the poet, and [...] the search for the infinite which is ultimately the search for God” (Dorschell 406).



develop an awareness to seek an answer about the truth about life and death. In her uncle's library, she looks at the books written in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Persian, and Arabic, and she is ashamed of her boldness, feeling like a speck of dust before these geniuses and scholars (116). Her quest for the truth about life and death makes her roam the rooms like a spirit, and yet, like Hasan's search for love, it is in vain; hence the title of the novel "Black Book" (116). This hidden truth is not only inaccessible for Şadan, but also for her uncle and her late grandfather (112-13), hinting that it is beyond the comprehension of the living. In the library, Şadan seeks help from the portrait of Hasan's deceased brother, the portrait about to come back to life with the brother's once youthful, healthy, and strong appearance (113). Şadan thinks that he looks like "a legendary warrior," "a knight from the Middle Ages" (113),<sup>53</sup> that can be considered as a Romantic symbol that commonly embraces the wish to escape from the failure of modernity (Aksakal 48-49). Similarly, the effect of medicine which aims to be progressive fails to console Şadan: When she has a fit following Hasan's death, she sees the spirits of her two dead cousins, a sight she claims that can only be seen by those who are close to death (122). The doctor's injection induces a nightmarish sleep paralysis, a death-like experience where Hasan comes to haunt her and the family members unable to hear her, think she is dying (124-26).<sup>54</sup> To explain what melancholy and sentimentalism mean for the Romantic heroes, Aksakal states that, by dying, they seem to put an end to their agony of being separated from what they hold dear, be it someone beloved or a sacred cause (58). In Şadan's nightmare, the only thing her cousins have to offer her is an unromantic vow of death, with Hasan, resembling a vampire,<sup>55</sup> trying to choke Şadan, as he tells her

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<sup>53</sup> "esatiri cengâverleri" and "kurun-ı vusta şövalyeleri" (S. Derviş, *Kara Kitap* 113).

<sup>54</sup> Nil Sakman also contends that at the end of the novel Şadan has not died yet (209).

<sup>55</sup> Salim Fikret Kırgı, in his book *Osmanlı Vampirleri: Söylenceler, Etkiler, Tepkiler* indicates that the possible reason for the belief in folkloric vampires choking their victims can be a tuberculosis

to give him her heart back (125-26), and his brother only signaling her to join him (124), not able to speak to her.<sup>56</sup> The unwillingness of the heroine to join either brother appears to be Suat Derviş's rendering of Matthias Claudius's poem "Der Tod und das Mädchen" ("Death and the Maiden", 1774) set to music by Schubert (1817), a possible implication when one considers S. Derviş's background in music, being initially sent to a conservatoire in Berlin (Necatigil cited in Günay 7), and a reference explicitly given to Schubert's lied "Erlkönig" ("King of the Alders") in another Gothic novel included in this section *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...* Moreover, the Gothic ending of *Kara Kitap* brings into question whether S. Derviş full-heartedly agrees with the Romantic view that spiritual salvation could only be attained by death putting an end to the torment of searching for elusive happiness, as stated in Delane J. Boyd's master's thesis *Uncanny Conversations: Depictions of the Supernatural in Dialogue Lieder of the Nineteenth Century* (12). With the emotional bond between Şadan and her mother (124), a bond that Hasan does not have, Suat Derviş may have her doubts about the Romantic "representation of death as a gentle, compassionate force that offered a soothing release from life's struggles" (Boyd 12). Consolation in death remains as an unknown to Şadan, an unknown that she has to learn to face.

Hysteria leads to different consequences for the two disabled characters of the novel, calling into question Günaydın's claim regarding the difference between melancholy and hysteria being the level of maturity (142). Contrary to Şadan, Hasan musters the

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epidemic, people escaping villages to save their lives (108). This may imply that the vision of Hasan choking Şadan may be a TB fit.

<sup>56</sup> Özgür Türesay, in his article, refers to Kisedârzâde İsmail Fethi's two books against spiritism published in 1910, *Alem-i latîfin mevcûdiyeti yâhûd manyetizm ve ispiritezmin mâhiyeti* and *Hayat-ı ebedi yâhûd felsefe-i ervâh* where he writes of Islam's arguments against spiritism with mention of

strength to put an end to his predicament, a choice that Sandra M. Gilbert suggests can be taken into consideration as a rational solution with reference to Emile Durkheim (253). However, the reason for Hasan's resemblance to the folkloric vampire can be explained with how he still has an incompleting task from when he was alive (Kırgı 25), as he tells Şadan to give him his heart back. Şadan's reluctance to suicide can signify her dismay of returning from the dead to fulfill her dreams of a young woman or it may reflect fear of divine punishment (Kırgı 86, 113). Till now, Şadan has only been able to leave the house under her brother's supervision so it is no surprise that she says: "I can't run away from this house even to die far away from here, let alone to stay alive" (125).<sup>57</sup> Her condition leaves her without the capacity to leave the house and, even worse, the doctor's injection renders her unable to speak. At the end of the novel, she wants to ask her mother for water but she tells the reader: "I can't succeed to do so. I cannot utter a sound" (125). As Hasan's spirit approaches her, she wants to tell him to go away, and yet all she can do is inadvertently move her jaw (125). Ultimately, Şadan is incapacitated in and in-between both realms, leading to an infantilization that seeks the solution not from within but from without. The difference between Hasan and Şadan's reactions to being bound to the house due to their illnesses can be explained through how Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik distinguish the female *Bildungsroman* in their book titled *Landscapes of Desire: Metaphors in Modern Woman's Fiction* with reference to Jean E. Kennard: The female *Bildungsroman* is about the protagonist "awakening to limitations" (15). *Kara Kitap* ends with Şadan being confined to her bed, caught in the liminality of her disease, not able to have her voice heard by the living or the dead, a situation in

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"Human spirits can communicate with humans but only when one is asleep" (189), a possible indication of Şadan not being dead yet.

<sup>57</sup> "Bu evden artık yaşamak için değil, hatta uzakta ölmek için bile kaçamayacağım" (S. Derviş, *Kara Kitap* 125).

which she finds no spiritual or rational consolation. The Gothic ending of the novel, be it with Şadan's sleep paralysis or approaching death due to TB, allows for the awakening of the heroine to face her fears on her own, without any prior knowledge or guidance. Contrary to the romanticization of youth embracing the ideals of men, with the traditional hero as a man of patriotism and the demonic poet as a man of love, the young woman lacks a cause beyond material limits, a cause worth dying for, and to this end, she must be her own heroine or her own demon.

*Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes... (Not a Sound... Not a Breath..., 1923)* also brings up the issue of female silence in a way that exposes women's reaction to tensions building up in that period, a situation that clearly exposes itself through conflicts between and within spiritualism and materialism. Diane Long Hoeveler, in her book titled *Gothic Feminism*, maintains that the feminist Gothic tradition has become a mode of expression for concealed reaction to the family as a patriarchal institution (188). This is why the female Gothic novel often resorts to "incest, matricide, patricide, intense sibling rivalry, symbolically cannibalistic tendencies in the parents, and dreams of escape by pursued and persecuted children" (188). Likewise, the themes in this novel centering on the fears of incest, rivalry, prolicide, and patricide lead to an atmosphere where the heroine is forced to silence as her sole chance for empowerment. With the concept of "professionalization of gender," Hoeveler explains how the female Gothic heroine can outsmart the patriarchal institution through a cultivated pose by which emotions are tightly controlled (xv). The professionalization of gender can serve as a tool to investigate how the heroine resorts to silence as an indication of the control of emotions when she encounters men struggling for power, a struggle that evokes fears of revolution.

Zeliha is a young woman who spends most of her time at home embroidering or playing the piano if she is not simply bored in her marriage to Osman. Her husband's son, Kemal, moves into the house following his mother's death, twenty-five years after the divorce of his parents. Osman is jealous of his wife and thinks that she does not love him. One day Zeliha eavesdrops on Osman's talk with his friend İrfan Behçet about whether existence amounts to that of matter or spirit. İrfan Behçet ridicules the way Osman believes in the supernatural, saying that he ought to be either sick or a child to think he has been reincarnated. Osman then tells his wife and son that he knows who they used to be in the past and what they will do in secret behind his back. Bored at home, Zeliha begins to read Osman's diary to learn the secret that is bothering him. In his diary, Osman has written about his nightmare of a handsome young man stabbing him with a dagger. Voices in his nightmare tell Osman that it is his coffin that he sees in his dream and that the woman next to his coffin is his wife. Osman has taken note in his diary of the day Kemal returns home and he remembers who the murderer in his nightmare is the moment he sees his son. He also believes that he knew Kemal even before his return home, for Kemal was his murderer from three and a half or four centuries ago. In the memories he puts down in his diary, the physical description of the wife who cheats on him in his nightmare is quite similar to Zeliha's appearance. Osman's fear of death frightens Zeliha and she is terrified when Kemal buys his father an antique knife. Kemal also reads his father's diary and finds about his father's nightmare. One night Zeliha, afraid in her room that the nightmare will come true, hears the sound of men fighting in the room next to hers. Osman comes to Zeliha with blood on his hands and tells her that now she loves him.

On February 22, 1923, in the newspaper titled *Akşam* (no. 1588), Ahmet Haşım's review of *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...* is published under the title: "Bir Genç Kızın Eseri" ("A Young Girl and Her New Work") (S. Derviş, *Ne Bir Ses* 3).<sup>58</sup> The eminent poet describes his mood as follows: "As I close the book to write these words, like someone Chinese who awakes from a nightmare after sniffing opium, I am all nerves with a strange and indescribable scent, and my eyes only see a sweet and deep glare as if I have looked for hours at shiny and glittering dark fabrics" (3).<sup>59</sup> This description creates an irony with how he later states that one does not find "cannabis smokers" and "people sniffing opium from a child's skull" in her work (6), nor does one find "crows, owls, specters, and skeletons" (6). More than being a matter of figures and props in the work, it is the effect created that A. Haşım tries to draw attention to. It is in this context that the critic states that Suat Derviş's work is only Gothic in the way it arouses awe (*haşyet*) (6), and it is in this aspect her work resembles the work of eminent literary figures that have contributed to world literature through Symbolism, Transcendentalism, and Decadence such as Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849), Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867), Auguste Villiers de L'Isle-Adam (1838-1889), Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949) (6).<sup>60</sup> Apart from these writers, A. Haşım regards S. Derviş to be from the descent of Babylonian, Assyrian, Egyptian, and Phoenician "magicians" (6),

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<sup>58</sup> The 1946 edition of *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...* is only referred to in this paragraph to engage with considerations of the possible functions of Ahmet Haşım's review titled "Bir Genç Kızın Eseri" (pp. 3-7) and the ending added to this edition. Otherwise, all references are from İthaki's collection of Suat Derviş's four Gothic novels published under the title *Kara Kitap* in 2014.

<sup>59</sup> "Bu satırları yazmak için kitabı kapatırken, bir afyon kâbusundan uyanan Çinli gibi, asabım garip, anlatılmaz bir kokunun ürpermeleri içindedir ve gözlerim, parlak sırmalı karanlık kumaşlara uzun uzun bakmış gibi tatlı ve derin kamaşmalarla doludur" (A. Haşım 3).

<sup>60</sup> How these literary figures have problematized feminine characters in their works and their influence on S. Derviş's works both deserve further scrutiny. For instance, cf. Matthew Gibson's entry on Baudelaire to read how the poet has regarded evil as desirable when compared to ennui, with

magic having to do again with creating awe in the reader. A. Haşim's review thus provides a context to read the symbols and scenes in the text beyond props and figures that may tire the reader in time, and even induce laughter (5-6). More strikingly, this review has been added to the 1946 edition of the novel, an edition where a number of sentences have been added to the end of the novel, Zeliha saying: "This is terrible. They killed him. This had a terrible effect on my nerves that were already a wreck. I want to cry all day" (86).<sup>61</sup> These sentences create ambiguity about who is, in fact, murdered and who may be the murderer(s), for as Osman approaches Zeliha in the end, she says: "I look at him like a dead object" (85)<sup>62</sup> and "Two warm and wet hands hold me from my shoulders. A hot liquid wets the arms of my nightshirt" (86)<sup>63</sup>. Osman can only mumble that now his wife loves him, and his wet hands try to get a hold of her hands (86). The warmth and flow of blood from Osman's hands make the reader question whether it is really Osman who has murdered his son, as claimed by most scholars, the struggle ending with several possibilities when one considers the genre and there being not a sound, not a breath around Zeliha she can ask help for at the very end of the novel. A. Haşim's review and the added ending in the 1946 edition, published following WWII, may function to subvert the reader's expectations regarding the final scene and its effect.

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"imagination as a vital stimulant that could turn the dullness of life into moments of horror and terror" (61).

<sup>61</sup> "Çok fena! Onu öldürdüler. Bu benim bozuk olan asabımın üzerinde çok fena tesir yaptı. Bugün hep ağlamak istiyorum" published in the 1946 edition (S. Derviş, *Ne Bir Ses* 86).

<sup>62</sup> cf. "[...] bir cismi camit gibi hareketsizce ona bakıyorum" (S. Derviş, *Ne Bir Ses* p. 85 in the 1946 edition and p. 122 in the 1923 edition) and "[...] bir cism-i camit gibi ona bakıyorum" (S. Derviş, *Ne Bir Ses* p. 99 in the 2014 edition).

<sup>63</sup> cf. "[...] omuzlarımı iki sıcak ve ıslak el tutuyor. Sıcak bir kan geceliğinin kollarını ıslatıyor" (S. Derviş, *Ne Bir Ses* p. 86 in the 1946 edition) and "[...] omuzlarımı iki sıcak ve ıslak el tutuyor. Sıcak bir mai geceliğimin kollarını ıslatıyor" (S. Derviş, *Ne Bir Ses* p. 100 in the 2014 edition and p. 122 in the 1923 edition).

The Romantic themes of “melancholy, the past, and dreams” and “the curiosity for the Middle Ages” once again arise in Suat Derviş’s second novel. With reference to Tanpınar’s statement that “Romanticism is a literature of dreams,”<sup>64</sup> Aksakal puts emphasis on how Romanticism has often been said to fictionalize the ideals of the future or the days gone by (59). In S. Derviş’s Gothic novel, these ideals are inverted to reveal Osman’s fears that his son shall kill him to possess his wife, a woman who wears clothes from the middle of the sixteenth century (*Ne Bir Ses* 47). He says that he remembers who Kemal was from three and a half or four centuries ago, before he was his son (52). This reference to the Middle Ages in the novel is apparently used to fictionalize patriarchy’s constant struggle to maintain possession and control of women. A similar reference is given in Suat Derviş’s essay titled “Kıskançlık” (“Jealousy”) published in 1935:

“The appearance of jealousy has changed over time. In the Middle Ages, the noblemen would punish their unfaithful wives by confining them to a convent, or locking them up in a cell of a castle, closing the entrance with a brick wall, and they would bury her alive. Again in these ages, [...] the lovers would shoot each other to pieces in duels. Since then, for jealousy, there have been different periods such as jealousy with knives, jealousy with guns, [...]” (18)<sup>65</sup>

It is a similar sense of jealousy that leads to Osman’s wish that no one else sees the beauty of his wife (62), making one wonder if this is why her complexion is so pale (34). Following the fight between the jealous lovers, father and son, Osman enters

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<sup>64</sup> “Romantizm bir rüya edebiyatıdır” (Tanpınar cited in Aksakal 59).

<sup>65</sup> “Zaman zaman kıskançlığın tezahüratı da değişiyor. Orta kurunda eski asilzadeler ihanet eden karılarını, ceza olmak üzere ya bir manastıra kapatırlar, yahut [d]a şatonun bir hücreğine hapsedip üzerine duvar ördürürlerdi; ve onu diri diri gömerlerdi. Yine o devirlerde vefasız kadın böyle tecziye edilirken, diğer taraftan [â]şıklar birbirlerini düelloda parçalarlardı. O zamandan beri dünyada hançerli



Zeliha's room with blood dripping from a dagger (99), this gift given to the father by his son who knows his curiosity for antiques (74). This interest in antiques brings to mind the commodification of the wife that looks as if she is from the Middle Ages, a wife he does not wish to touch but whose beauty he only wants to watch from a distance (62). Reference to the Middle Ages in *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...* thus reveals the jealousy between generations, that has been lasting for centuries, as an emotion men have made use of to maintain their control over women.

Osman referring to Zeliha as "little one" (16),<sup>66</sup> her coming to terms with her infantilization can be interpreted as part of the strategies she has recourse to in the professionalization of her gender. When Osman sees that she is crying and asks her whether she loves him or not, she tells him she wishes she could make him happy, if only she were older: "Maybe I'm too young, too little and you are much older than I am. I don't know how to handle you or how to please you. I told you before, I am so feeble, like a child" (31).<sup>67</sup> Osman's constant questions to Zeliha and the answers he demands to hear from her result in her choice to remain silent. At the beginning of the novel, Osman asks Zeliha whether she is bored or not. When she replies that she is not, Osman expresses his disbelief (14), and this time he asks her whether there is any need for deceit (15). Similar to how Osman does not believe Zeliha is not bored, he doubts that she loves him. He forces her to reassure him by saying that she loves him, a demand that Zeliha complies with although her reply does not seem enough for her husband (16-17). Zeliha learns that her survival depends on her conformity to

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kıskançlık, tabancalı kıskançlık[, kezaıplı kıskançlık, tırnaklı kıskançlık, tokatlı kıskançlık, gözyaş(ı)lı kıskançlık] devirleri olmuştur" (S. Derviş, "Kıskançlık" 18).

<sup>66</sup> "küçük" (S. Derviş, *Ne Bir Ses* 45).

<sup>67</sup> "Belki çok genç, çok küçüğüm ve sen çok büyüksün. Seni nasıl ele almak, seni nasıl mesut etmek lazım geldiğini bilmiyorum. Sana söyledim ya, çok beceriksiz ve çocuğum" (S. Derviş, *Ne Bir Ses* 31).

her husband's expectations that brings along the need to lie. In an essay Suat Derviş writes in 1935, titled "Yalan Nedir?" ("What Is a Lie?"), she refers to the need for lying in one's private relationship to maintain order in society: "There would not be love without lies. There would not be politics either. Social and political ideals exist because of lies. [...] Lies are forces that influence our existence, our social structure, our civility, our lives. All of this social order would come to an end if it weren't for lies" (19).<sup>68</sup>

In his book titled *Images of Fear: How Horror Stories Helped Shape Modern Culture (1818-1918)*, Martin Tropp gives reference to the "discovery scene" as a typical feature of the Gothic story: The curious heroine draws aside a veil to encounter a tableau of horror in the dark room she enters (78). One of the discovery scenes in *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...* takes place when Kemal tells Zeliha about his feelings for her, and Zeliha warns him that he is forgetting everything (83), maybe referring to what both of them have read about Osman's dreams in his diary (46, 76) or the fact that she is his father's wife (73). Zeliha and Kemal hear something fall inside, and Zeliha runs to open the curtain, finding a porcelain doll with its arms and head broken off (83). She wonders who broke the doll (83), and she later learns that it is İrfan Behçet as she overhears him telling the incident to his friend Osman (95)—this instance showing that İrfan could have been in the house, even during the final brawl. This discovery scene can help the reader understand Zeliha's reservation at the end of the novel. Hearing the fight of the two men, this time she cannot run to the curtain to open it like she did in the previous scene: "On my arms and knees, I crawl and try to reach the door that separates Osman's room from mine. [...] Now I am in

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<sup>68</sup> "Yalan olmasa aşk olmazdı. Yalan olmasa siyaset olmazdı. Yalan olmasa içtimaî ve siyasî akideler olmazdı. [...] Yalan, bizim bütün varlığımıza, sosyal bünyemize, terbiyemize, hayatımıza işlenmiş bir

front of the curtain. I hold the curtain with my shaking hands but I cannot find the courage to open it” (99).<sup>69</sup> It is her fear of ending like the broken doll that keeps Zeliha from opening the curtain, the doll being a symbol that is also used in *Buhran Gecesi* and *Fatma'nın Günahı* in a way that is in line with how Suat Derviş says she has created dolls<sup>70</sup> in her first books and has named them Zehra, Fatma, and Zeliha (“Sua[t] Derviş Diyor Ki” 308).<sup>71</sup> Interestingly, the learned fear in these scenes is in opposition with the scenes where Osman draws the curtain aside. In the first scene that is written into his diary as a dream, Osman writes of how he pulls aside the curtains that separated his room from Zeliha’s (45): A wind in his room blows out the candle. As he draws these curtains that have a “captivating spell,”<sup>72</sup> he continues to hold them in his hand. He cannot hear a sound in this dark room where he cannot see Zeliha’s bed either. In the room, the only thing he can sense is strong scents like that of a spring garden (45), scents that agitate him and make him feel sick (46). The source of these scents in his dream is unknown: They can be from the open window of his room, or sensual scents of womanhood or of a betrayal. In his diary, Osman writes that he had similar nightmares as a child which would make him wake up with tears (46), yet he does not know why he is so agitated this time (46), a possible implication being the fear of losing his mother in his childhood turning into the fear of losing his wife. At the end of the novel, it is not Zeliha but Osman who will draw

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kuv[v]ettir. Yalan olmazsa, bütün bu sosyal düzen bir anda bozulur” (S. Derviş, “Yalan Nedir?” 19).

<sup>69</sup> “Dizlerimle, kollarımla sürünerek Osman’ın odasıyla benim odamın arasındaki kapıya yaklaşmaya uğraşıyorum. [...] Şimdi perdenin önündeyim. Titreyen ellerimle perdeyi tutuyorum. Fakat onu açmaya cesaret edemiyorum” (S. Derviş, *Ne Bir Ses* 99).

<sup>70</sup> cf. Susan M. Bentley’s PhD dissertation (2009) on Friedrich Schiller’s theory of play: “Schiller’s goal of ensuring human freedom required a play that opened up our potential as human beings. [...] Of all playing, only one kind of play was associated with human development, however; our play can and should include interaction with beauty, the sensate ideal. [...] ‘Spiel’ carried the meaning of an act, a theatrical piece, the execution of (an artwork), role-playing, and it had hefty infusions of chance, as in gambling and card-playing” (37-44).

<sup>71</sup> In the same interview, Suat Derviş tells Neriman Hikmet that she did not know about the realities of life (“Sua[t] Derviş Diyor Ki” 308), similar to how Kerime Nadir describes her early years of writing (*Romancının Dünyası* 25). According to S. Derviş, she used to write about dreams and these dolls, as shadows of her imagination, did not have to do with life, reality, and her surroundings (308).

open the curtains between their rooms, ending with Zeliha's discovery of the horrifying end of their struggle (99), and Osman's muttered assurance that he no longer needs to fear of losing Zeliha (100). Such interpretations of these discovery scenes in the novel, to a large extent, call into question those readings of Zeliha as a symbol of the Turkish nation as a veiled woman.

Osman's nightmares of his being betrayed and murdered in the Middle Ages can be analyzed in the context of the curiosity for this period in history as a feature of Turkish political Romanticism. According to Hasan Aksakal, such curiosity reveals the wish to escape from the failure of modernity (48-49), along with the spirit of history that defends evolution, rather than revolution, so as to protect the order of society, as expressed in the ideal "a future rooted in the past" (60).<sup>72</sup> Osman's belief in his reincarnation may not be the mere delusion of a sick man, or as expressed by some scholars, a sick Empire, inasmuch as human reincarnation embraces evolution and progression of history, as stated in Özgür Türesay's article "Between Science and Religion: Spiritism in the Ottoman Empire (1850s-1910s)" (169). Türesay maintains that there were two spheres that strongly reacted to spiritism: "the religious sphere and the scientific or intellectual sphere" (170), casting doubt on the equating of Osman's belief in spiritism with a religious sphere in opposition to modern values. Osman writes in his diary of how İrfan Behçet is childish, naive, and primitive in the way he reacts to his ideas regarding reincarnation (44),<sup>74</sup> and how he envies the certainty in İrfan Behçet's "belief" in matter and nature for "Seeing how much he

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<sup>72</sup> "kavrayıcı bir füsün" (S. Derviş, *Ne Bir Ses* 45).

<sup>73</sup> "kökü mazide olan âti" (Aksakal 60).

<sup>74</sup> Şeyma Afacan's article maintains that Ottoman materialism in the late nineteenth century has been conceptualized in relation to "spiritism, naturalism, idealism, and evolutionism" (5).

believes that there is no supernatural, is it still right to call this a thought?” (45).<sup>75</sup>

Nonetheless, Türesay also indicates the need for hesitation about equating spiritism in the Empire in the 1850s-1910s with secularization due to official Islam, popular Islam, and Islamic mysticism having taken into account the supernatural (199).

Şeyma Afacan also acknowledges this in her article “Idle Souls, Regulated Emotions of a Mind Industry: A New Look at Ottoman Materialism”:

Much of the difficulty in speaking about spiritualism, and concepts of the spirit and the soul, lies in the different interpretations of and changing relationships between science and religion through time. [...] However, drawing on the most recent literature on different forms of spiritualism, it does seem safe to assert that the equation of spiritualism with religion, and its placement as inherently opposed to science, would be narrow and incomplete.

(5)

The ambivalent situation between and within spiritualism and materialism thus intensifies the Gothic atmosphere in the novel. Osman writes of how İrfan Behçet believes in matter and nature (45), and yet İrfan Behçet tells Zeliha about his disbelief in existence: “I do not believe in the existence of anything in the world, not even in my own existence, but I cannot help but have faith in your domestic bliss” (22),<sup>76</sup> indicating a nihilism that falls short when encountering such an instance of idealism. In another instance, Osman fears the approaching disaster that his son is going to murder him (25) with a sense of fatalism. He believes that spirits cannot be held responsible (65), and out of jealousy, out of the desire “to use, to govern, to

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<sup>75</sup> “Fevk-at-tabiatın mevcut olmadığını bu kadar iman ettikten sonra ona fikir demek doğru olacak mı?” (S. Derviş, *Ne Bir Ses* 45).

<sup>76</sup> “Belki dünyada hiçbir şeyin mevcudiyetine, hatta kendi mevcudiyetime bile inanmam, sizin evinizdeki saadete iman etmemek elden gelmiyor” (S. Derviş, *Ne Bir Ses* 22).

rule,”<sup>77</sup> he decides to change his fate (67). Similar to how at the end of the novel Zeliha chooses not to be like the broken porcelain doll she has earlier revealed behind a curtain, Osman decides not to be a “toy” in the hands of fate (67), casting his faith in reincarnation and fatalism aside and bringing to mind an ambiguity regarding free will or the possibility of biological determinism that can be traced between the father and the son.

Anne K. Mellor, in her book *Romanticism and Gender*, refers to Edmund Burke’s monumental text *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757) to explain how Burke’s classification of beautiful has contributed to the hegemonic politics of sexes (108). For Burke, beautiful, to a large extent, was associated with the sex that was smaller, stating “it is usual to add the endearing name ‘little’ to everything we love” (cited in Mellor 108), an aspect that adds on to the infantilization of the woman in S. Derviş’s Gothic novels analyzed in this chapter. Interestingly, Mellor contends that according to Burke, beauty can be associated with the mother that nurtures and “the erotic love-object,” the “possessible beloved” (108), further clarifying Osman’s nightmares that entailed discovery scenes. The sexual politics related to beauty which Mellor tries to analyze is again simply put through this citation from Burke’s work: “We submit to what we admire, but we love what submits to us” (cited in Mellor 108). Although Mellor relates this to the common idea of female masochism in Gothic novels, it can clearly be related to Hoeveler’s idea of Gothic feminism. To clarify, Osman says that he wants Zeliha to love him as much as he loves him (49). His description of his wife illustrates how Zeliha can be associated with Burke’s sense of beauty: “She doesn’t know anything

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<sup>77</sup> “kullanmak, idare etmek, hükmetmek” (S. Derviş, *Ne Bir Ses* 67).

and she is afraid of everything. She submits all of her warm and pleasant existence to me with all of her confidence. From me, she expects everything, happiness, comfort, calmness. Zeliha, little Zeliha!" (49).<sup>78</sup> Burke's idea of beauty endowed with calmness can be interpreted in the context of what Mellor pinpoints as a subjectivity constructed in the ethic of care, with reference to Carol Gilligan (3). Though Mellor is aware of the need to refine such generalizations to reveal the distinctions among the woman writers of the Romantic period, she maintains that female writers generally "grounded their notion of community on a cooperative rather than possessive interaction with Nature troped as female friend or sister, and promoted a politics of gradual rather than violent social change, a social change that extends the value of domesticity into the public realm" (3).<sup>79</sup> This introductory statement regarding the differences between female and male writers of the Romantic period can help explain Zeliha's horror with the degeneration of Osman, who claiming to have lived every moment possible, believes he is a perfectly completed human (52), and intends to become a violent murderer of his son.<sup>80</sup>

Fearing the tension between the father and the son, Zeliha plays her rendering of Schubert's "Erlkönig" ("King of the Alders"), the composition for Goethe's poem "Der Erlkönig" (1782) (Gibbs 115, 118), translating the poem for Osman to ask for

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<sup>78</sup> "Bir şey bilmiyor ve her şeyden korkuyor. Sıcak ve sevimli mevcudiyetini bütün emniyetle bana teslim ediyor. Her şeyi, saadeti, rahatı ve sükûtu benden bekliyor. Zeliha'cık, küçücük Zeliha!" (S. Derviş, *Ne Bir Ses* 49).

<sup>79</sup> The mediating role of the woman as nurse/sister who soothes the agony of belligerent men has been stated in S. Derviş's essay titled "Siz Beni Bir Şeytan Mı Sandınız?" ("Did You Think I Am a Devil?") published in 1935: "Kadın, bin türlü fena hırslarla kuduran erkek kitleleri, birbirleri[y]le boğuştukları zaman, arkalarından sadık bir köpek gibi ce[p]heden ce[p]heye koşan... yaraları saran, acıları gideren ve şefkat ve teselli sunan bir hemşiredir" (5).

<sup>80</sup> In her book titled *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle*, Kelly Hurley states that degenerationism "revers[es] the direction of ameliorist versions of evolutionism, which proposed natural history as inevitable progression towards 'higher' and more complex forms, and human history as an inevitable progression towards a higher and more rarefied state of civilization" (65).

his protection from the fear of his delusions that his son will stab him (89-92).

Rooted in Herder's ballad "Erlkönigs Töchter" as the translation of a Danish folk song (Gibbs 118), the story is set in a sublime atmosphere on a stormy night where the father on his horse rides his sick son home (Boyd 25). The child fears that the Erlking who is trying to lure him with his promises is going to abduct him, and asks for the protection of his father who dismisses his fear by saying that what he sees is but lights and shadows (25). Unable to see the Erlking, the father does not believe in his son who ends up dead in his arms when they reach home (25-26). Zeliha explicitly tells Osman that she bears resemblance to the son in this poem and that she could rid her fears if someone protected her (92). At the end of the novel, there is a reference to the sublime nature Zeliha sees out of her window, before the two men are caught up in their fight: "And the tall pine trees seem as if they are wearing fur coats, grand like magnificent rulers."<sup>81</sup> There is no movement, no wind, no breath, no sound around me" (98).<sup>82</sup> The perception of nature is, as Mellor indicates, "gendered" in the way it is opposed to beauty in Burke's line of thought, as a notion that is related to "an experience of male empowerment" (85). The sublime in *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...*, as indicative of obscurity due to the ambivalence of boundaries (Mellor 85), is transformed into the house at the end of the novel through the repetition of the same depiction of sublime nature following Osman's entrance to Zeliha's room with his bloody hands (100). For Burke, experiencing the sublime, the human mind faces a sense of horror that turns into "astonishment, admiration, reverence, and respect" (Mellor 86), a notion that appears to set the guidelines for

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<sup>81</sup> cf. Charles H. Hinnant's article "Schiller and the Political Sublime: Two Perspectives" and his reference to Burkean sublime: "According to Burke, 'the power which arises from institution in kings and commanders has the same connection with terror' as natural power. 'Sovereigns are frequently addressed with the title of dread majesty'" (128).

<sup>82</sup> "Ve büyük çam ağaçları ermin mantolar giymiş, harikulade hükümdarlar gibi heybetli. Etrafımda ne bir hareket ne bir rüzgar ne bir nefes ne bir ses var" (S. Derviş, *Ne Bir Ses* 98).



women professionalizing gender. Though Burkean sublime is identified with “the experience of male empowerment” (91), *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...* subverts this conception with Gothic feminism. When the sublime arises from man, more than nature, in female Gothic, as ascribed to the novels of Ann Radcliffe (1764-1832) by Kate Ferguson Ellis (Mellor 93), the professionalization of gender, be it through deception or silence, seems to be the easy way through, if not out in this Gothic novel.<sup>83</sup> In line with Ellis’s argument in her book *The Contested Castle: Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology* with regard to the horrors of the sublime from the outside transgressing its borders to enter the private home of the bourgeoisie, Mellor states “The home may be a man’s castle, but women are no more secure there than in the savage wilds of nature where *banditti* roam freely” (94). Zeliha has no other choice but to play the role of what is expected from her, confined to the house where men are fighting over their possession of her, to overcome her fear of ending up like another broken porcelain doll.

With their focus on the female heroine’s voice that remains unheard behind the walls of the house as the romantic dwelling, *Kara Kitap* and *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...* look into the possibilities of female empowerment. The woman, either infantilized through disease or commodified as wife, awakens to her limitations and considers those strategies that can help her overcome the fears of victimization. Reading *Kara Kitap* and *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...* with reference to themes common in Turkish political Romanticism creates a context that problematizes the subjectivity of the heroine, particularly regarding the romanticization of youth; curiosity for the Middle

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<sup>83</sup> Suat Derviş writes of how men strangle the voice of women who articulate their grievances, in her essay “Siz Beni Bir Şeytan Mı Sandınız?” (“Did You Think I Am a Devil?”) published in 1935: “Kadının en küçük bir hakkını müdafaa için yükselttiği şikâyet sesini, nasırlı parmaklarınız arasında boğan siz değil misiniz?” (5).

Ages; the significance of translation; and melancholy, the past, and dreams. Caught in the fears of revolution and degeneration, along with the tensions between and within notions of spiritualism and materialism in the given period, the heroine encounters the oppressions of confinement, facing the reality that being her own demon or her heroine entails self-destruction or negotiating with what goes behind these walls.

## **2.2 Haunted by Dehumanizing Beauty in *Buhran Gecesi* and *Fatma'nın Günahı*:**

Suat Derviş, in her essay titled “Kadının Silahı?..” (“Woman’s Weapon?”) published in *Yarım Ay* in 1936, refers to how nature has equipped woman with weapons to fight against man’s power (10). Her first weapon is her eyes that the writer associates with seduction, naivety, love, and sentimentality (10-11). Nature has given woman a second weapon, which is her tongue, her power of speaking, compared to a dagger (11). The correlation of the woman’s body parts to a weapon reveal how the perception of women has become dehumanized, objectified, and even mechanized, this relation again visible in S. Derviş’s comparison of the woman’s tongue to advanced weaponry of the period: “The woman’s tongue is a weapon that is never exhausted. Automatic guns, the mechanisms of machine guns that can fire who knows how many rounds per minute cannot compare to what her tongue is worth” (11).<sup>84</sup> Though such associations in this essay may intend to give women a sense of security and power, they still serve to indicate that Suat Derviş was aware of such dehumanization and mechanization related to the woman’s body. Such an awareness is also present in Turkey in the Republican period as stated by Nazım İrem in his article “Turkish Conservative Modernism” where he mentions that “alienation,

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<sup>84</sup> “Kadın dili yorulmak bilmez bir silâhtır. Otomatik tabancalar, mitralyözlerin dakikada bilmem n[e k]adar atan tertibatı onun yanında hiçbir kıymet değildir” (S. Derviş, “Kadının Silahı?..” 11).

isolation and selfishness” were linked to liberalism: "The republican-conservative intellectuals argued that the hedonist individualism of classical liberalism [...] stimulated the growth of materialistic fetishism that eventually dehumanized the individual and society" (105). According to İrem, the liberal philosophy was viewed by the conservative Republicans as inadequate for the people's emotional and spiritual needs (105). This inadequacy resulted from culture being “deteriorated” to the extent that people had turned into consumers with a new sense of ethics: “the principle of utility” (105). The relegation of humans to objects and consumers is central to analyzing how beauty haunts women in *Buhran Gecesi* (*Night of Torment*, 1923) and *Fatma'nın Günahı* (*Fatma's Sin*, 1924) turning them into victims of such dehumanized objectification. Being a victim results in detachment whereby the woman haunted by socially constructed beauty is not able to relate to either her sisters or society.

In the novel *Buhran Gecesi*, upon Zehra's death, Nedim leaves the city and comes to the countryside because he is the only heir to his cousin's mansion. He has a constant headache and wishes to find some relaxation there, smoking cannabis. Nedim wants to learn about the secrets of Zehra's life and how she has died. He is fascinated with Zehra's portrait and the old maid warns him, telling him that since the death of his uncle's son, they have been finding the pillows warm and wet with tears every morning. Sitting before the window on moonlit nights, he sees a white shadow that begs for his help. The shadow belongs to Zehra, often referred to in the novel as the woman in white, and she tells him that she will be here until her sin is forgiven, until she can give back a heart to the one whose life she has stolen, implying her husband. Nedim gives an account of how Zehra tells him her story starting with how she and

her husband moved to the countryside to be away from the envy of others, a story that leads to the night she ripped out her husband's heart. The only way Nedim can save her from her distress is by giving his heart to her so that she can place it into her husband's chest. They run to her husband's grave and start to dig out the soil only to find the bones of his body. Zehra understands that she will not be able to find peace and she urges Nedim to follow her back to the mansion where she asks him to write all of this down so he can read her story to people and they can pray for her. She wants to be forgiven, to be able to rest in peace. Nedim writes her story and she leaves, thanking him. He wakes up in his bed, where he has been lying unconsciously for fifteen days. Nedim has been found on the floor with pieces of paper clenched in his fists. There were locks of hair and a bracelet on the floor and white lace in his hands. The morning they found him, somebody has dug up the grave of Zehra's husband. Nedim is told that what he remembers has a logical reason, and all that has happened is because of his health condition. He cannot read Zehra's story to anyone like she has asked him to because they will not believe in it, being in the twentieth century.

Monique Marie LaRocque, in her dissertation titled *Decadent Desire: The Dream of Disembodiment in A Rebours, The Picture of Dorian Gray and L'Eve Future*, makes mention of similar tensions between notions of materialism and spiritualism as creating the atmosphere for Decadent literature. LaRocque claims that, although Decadence has generally been regarded as a period that counters the values of the bourgeoisie and the capitalist society, in fact, they have a common approach to women and nature: "Decadents' love of artifice and patriarchal negation of women is consistent with a capitalist bourgeois agenda that seeks independence from both

women and nature” (2-3). A fondness of artifice and the oppression of women by the patriarchy is particularly visible in the construction of a dehumanized sense of beauty in S. Derviş’s *Buhran Gecesi*, haunting the heroine that is confined to a Romantic dwelling outside of the city. This is evident at the start of the novel when Nedim arrives at the mansion of his late cousin and relates a detailed description of the objects in the living room. Nedim senses “beauty, order, and poetry” here (128), a beauty that is reminiscent of Edmund Burke’s category of beautiful in his *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757).<sup>85</sup> Although Nedim as the beneficiary of patriarchy is the only heir of this property (128), at the beginning of the novel he says that he has not dared to change a thing in the mansion, everything remaining just like Zehra left it (127). In fact, this creates a contrast with him telling his friend that he is willing to sell the mansion if he does not like it there (129). Beauty is not only associated with the feminine but also with the other, the foreigner, “the dream of the cannabis smoker,” “the Oriental fairy tale” (127). Scattered around the living room, there are porcelain statuettes of dancers, Amazons, marchionesses, hunters, dogs, and monkeys (130). In this room, there are also vases with portrayals of gods and goddesses, women and men (13). There is a parrot in her golden cage with feathers that remind one of the “Oriental gardens in the legends” (130). On the Chinese and Japanese tapestry, there are foreign women, along with birds that look like men, the kinds one would see in their dreams (130). A mysterious Buddha statue is again another object that adds to the sense of foreignness in this living room (131). It is this sense of the other that arouses

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<sup>85</sup> In Mellor’s *Romanticism and Gender*, Burkean beauty is described as “First, to be comparatively small. Secondly, to be smooth. Thirdly, to have a variety in the direction of the parts; but, fourthly, to have those parts not angular, but melted as it were into each other. Fifthly, to be of a delicate frame without any remarkable appearance of strength. Sixthly, to have its colours clear and bright, but not very strong and glaring. Seventhly, or if it should have any glaring colour, to have it diversified with others” (Burke cited in Mellor 86).

Nedim's curiosity. These curiosities, particularly of an uncanny nature for the inanimate, are alive (131), and yet objectified in the setting of the house that is regarded as a feminine order aimed to beautify for man, as echoed in Nedim's observation: "All of the objects inside this mansion say that a woman wants to prepare and beautify this house for a man that is loved, that a woman tends to the house only for this reason" (137).<sup>86</sup>

Marianna Papastephanou, in her book titled *Toward New Philosophical Explorations of the Epistemic Desire to Know: Just Curious about Curiosity*, mentions how the curious man in Romantic and Gothic literature becomes the indication of the dangers related to male heroes who are driven by "the lust to know and own" (74). Such lust is also visible in the collector who "sink[s] natural human impulses for love and procreation into objects, and thus for both materialism and self-indulgence" (75). One image that signifies the lust of the curious man in *Buhran Gecesi* is the beauty framed in the painting in the mansion's living-room. Reminiscent of Oscar Wilde's Decadent work *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) with the way "the picture commands aesthetic dominion over the natural body" (LaRocque 7), Nedim expresses that he is hypnotized by the painting, as if he has no will of his own (130). He describes Zehra with sublime beauty with dark bushy hair lit by lips like fire, and eyes deep as two cliffs (131), a fascinating beauty of the female head resemblant of Medusa, "the object of the Romantics and the Decadents" (Mario Praz cited in Munford 72). According to the Roman poet Ovid, Medusa was cursed by the virgin goddess Athena for being seduced by Poseidon in one of Athena's temples, or in another story Athena cursed Medusa as she deemed her as a rival to her beauty (Hard

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<sup>86</sup> "İçindeki eşyanın hepsi seven bir kadının, sevilen bir erkek için bu evi hazırladığını, güzelleştirmek istediğini, sade bu emel için bu evde uğraştığını söylüyor" (S. Derviş, *Buhran Gecesi* 137).

54), suggesting how women have been fictionalized as enemies and rivals over centuries. Medusa's head portrayed on Athena's aegis, also reminds one how Suat Derviş associates female beauty with weapons in her abovementioned essay, particularly of significance in this context, as this objectified beauty "reflects and deflects the male gaze" as stated by Rebecca Munford in *Decadent Daughters and Monstrous Mothers* (72). This painting can be apprehended as the husband's wish to deflect male gaze, as Nedim, telling Zehra's story, mentions how the husband had wished to run away from those that might envy their happiness (147), or perhaps it may be Zehra who wants Nedim to avert his eyes. Nedim's self-indulgence with the painting can be regarded as a sign of his dehumanization of female beauty as the outcome of his curiosity to know and own such beauty that hypnotizes and leaves him without senses, like a stone, a situation that attains further meaning when one considers Nedim's headaches and his smoking cannabis.

As indications of perceived individual corruption, the old maid telling Nedim that he should stop looking at the painting (131), implying his over-indulgence, together with Nedim's succession of headaches and cannabis smoking create an atmosphere that problematizes degeneration in *Buhran Gecesi*. Victoria Margree and Bryony Randall, in their article titled "Fin-de-siècle Gothic," maintain that degeneration reveals itself in the fin-de-siècle Gothic with several topics such as "[c]rime, poverty, mental illness; the existence of the 'pervert', the homosexual, the New Woman; Decadent art and philosophy" (218). As an expression of such degeneration in *Buhran Gecesi*, necrophilia can be traced in the scene where Nedim visits his cousin's grave and says "I do not know the worth of a woman when she is next to me. A thousand living women do not mean anything to me. Then, a dead woman

who has never been seen or known by anyone before fills my heart with envy, an envy that has a sense of agony, unease, and suffering” (136).<sup>87</sup> This sexual regression can be associated with the disenchanted world, and the attempt to re-enchant it (Mignon), for as stated by Fred Botting, the instances of such individual excess indicated that spiritual passion was lacking in the rationalized order of the family and commerce (123-24). A lack of spiritual passion manifests itself in idleness that can be related to Afacan’s assessment regarding Ottoman materialism where the individual is imagined as “a producing unit whose soul was rendered idle and whose emotions were subjected to regulation” (37). Such idleness is expressed by Nedim in terms of his not loving someone and not being loved (135),<sup>88</sup> and his lacking the emotions that such love brings: “There are people who, just like when they are alive, are absolutely happy or heartbroken in their graves when they cease to exist, and then... and then there are those people who have lived for nothing, died for nothing, good for nothing, neither happy, nor heartbroken... those who could have never made someone else happy or heartbroken” (135).<sup>89</sup> Talking about emotions he feels like a child who dreams or a silly poet (135-36), and yet he feels a yearning and envy for a love like Zehra’s (137). With a heart that only functions to pump blood and to keep him alive, he asks himself “What am I devoted to? Do I have any duty, any responsibility? Do I have anything to do?” (136).<sup>90</sup> At the end of the novel, Nedim as a necrophilic producing unit, or an abhuman lacking emotions, wants to give his heart to his cousin with Zehra, and trying to open the grave, he repeats saying: “We

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<sup>87</sup> “Bir kadın yanımdayken kıymetini bilmiyorum. Bin yaşayan kadının nazarımda ehemmiyeti yok. Sonra bir görülmemiş, tanınmamış ölü kadın kalbime kıskançlık, adeta ıstırapı olan, asabı olan, elemi olan bir kıskançlık veriyor” (S. Derviş, *Buhran Gecesi* 136).

<sup>88</sup> Bengi Düşgör, in her article “Medusa’dan Mahpeyker’e Bir Aşk Nesnesi Olarak Kötü Kadın İmgesi,” refers to Medusa as a figure that has lost her ability to love and to be loved, turning those who gaze at her into stone (178).

<sup>89</sup> “Hayatta olduğu gibi mezarda ve ademde de muhakkak mesut ve bedbaht insanlar, bir de... bir de benim gibi beyhude yaşamış, beyhude ölmüş, bir şeye yaramamış... ne mesut, ne de bedbaht olmuş... ne mesut ne de bedbaht edebilmiş insanlar var” (S. Derviş, *Buhran Gecesi* 135).



are at work” (193).<sup>91</sup> Interestingly, Martin Tropp, in the book *Images of Fear*, refers to Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818) with regard to the dehumanization of the monster’s creator, revealed in his working tirelessly in the novel, as a result of the Industrial Revolution (33). Nedim’s wish to sacrifice his life for Zehra as the most beautiful woman in the world of non-existence is in vain (194), nature having taken its course and having transformed the body of the husband to bones.

Lynette Carpenter and Wendy K. Kolmar, in their book titled *Haunting the House of Fiction: Feminist Perspectives on Ghost Stories by American Women*, link the ghost story tradition to female Gothic in the way that writers have depicted what Kate Ferguson Ellis has termed as the “failed home” and that these writers have taken up issues that could not be openly discussed such as the dispossession of homes and property, the need to understand female history, and to create a connection between women, living and dead, as a means of their survival (10). This idea of rewriting of history is of particular significance in *Buhran Gecesi* when one considers how, at the beginning of the novel, the old maid tells Nedim that the villagers could not find Zehra’s body, and finding her black shawl next to the stream, they have assumed she is dead (133). With reference to Elisabeth Bronfen, Talairach-Veilmas points to the implications of the female body not being buried in the ghost story: “[F]emale bodies ‘not safely interred beneath the earth’ underlin[e] how the female corpse unsettles semiotic meaning and disseminates ambiguity through the narratives” (33). Nedim being called for from the city as the sole heir of the property, without finding Zehra’s body, brings to mind the possibility of injustice to Zehra. The way Nedim sees the ghost of Zehra, not in a black shawl, but as a woman in white is only one of the

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<sup>90</sup> “Neye bağıyım? Ne vazifem, ne mecburiyetim var? Ne işim var?” (S. Derviş, *Buhran Gecesi* 136).

<sup>91</sup> “Çalışıyoruz” (S. Derviş, *Buhran Gecesi* 193).

several signs of how the frame story finds its way into Nedim's hallucinations and dreams.<sup>92</sup> Ultimately, the reader reads Nedim's account of Zehra's story, and Zehra may be seeking forgiveness "from the creator, the user, the ruler" for killing her husband like Nedim tells the reader (196),<sup>93</sup> or his story may be subverting Zehra's unspoken story.<sup>94</sup>

Nedim's version, as a male's account of the events, raises doubt with several implications throughout his story. For instance, female curiosity in Zehra's story, as related to the reader by Nedim, is punished unlike male curiosity in the frame novel (152). Again, whereas Zehra resembling Medusa in the painting fascinates Nedim with her beauty, the Medusa in Zehra's tale gives beautiful women ugliness, old age, and diseases (178). More strikingly, in Zehra's story, Nedim tells the reader of how being objectified with beauty induces fear in the woman who will grow old and will possibly be forgotten, leading to the fear of rivalry among women and losing one's husband (178, 182). He does not make mention of how such fears cause anxieties about losing property, particularly when the female does not secure her position by giving birth to an heir. Zehra's wish to bear an heir and maintain her possession of the mansion is only implied in how Nedim recounts the night when the two dig up the husband's grave to give him his cousin's heart, and Zehra, seeing her husband's bones, screams like Isis at the sight of Osiris's corpse (194). In Egyptian mythology, the god Osiris is murdered by his brother Seth (Smith 2). When Isis finds her husband's corpse, she brings the body together by mummification and arouses Osiris

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<sup>92</sup> cf. Botting gives reference to Edgar Allan Poe's *Ligeia* (1838), with the character's imagination affected by loss and opium addiction, generating visions of a dead wife (122).

<sup>93</sup> "yaratandan, kullanandan, hükmedenden" (S. Derviş, *Buhran Gecesi* 145). cf. Osman deciding to change his fate with his favoring of the following verbs: "kullanmak, idare etmek, hükmetmek" (S. Derviş, *Ne Bir Ses* 67).

with spells to conceive the rightful heir Horus (2). Consequently, the story in *Buhran Gecesi* that appears to disclose the guilt of a woman who kills her husband out of jealousy is subverted to unfold the story of woman's insecure financial status in a society that objectifies her beauty as part of its collection. It becomes a story that humorously ends with the narrator Nedim's apology for not sharing the story with others as he has promised Zehra to, saying they would not believe in it anyway in the twentieth century: "I pray for your forgiveness. I bet you're happy with me!" (202).<sup>95</sup> Nedim's story of Zehra in *Buhran Gecesi* can thus be related to the need for female subversion as indicated in S. Derviş's essay titled "Siz Beni Bir Şeytan Mı Sandınız?" ("Did You Think I Was a Devil?") published in *Yarım Ay* in 1935. In this essay, she writes that women are being represented as a devil with her sinister, sly, persuasive, and deceitful ways (5). However, according to the writer, men have been slandering women since the very establishment of an order on Earth with women being held as slaves, and men abusing them financially and emotionally (5): "Men have been seeing women and showing them different than what they really are, that is, men are appearing as if they are seeing women differently. [...] No, Sirs! Woman is not the Devil. She is the victim" (5).<sup>96</sup>

Associated with the Gothic curse, the context of women being the victim of authoritative systems can also bring depth to Fatma's story in *Fatma'nın Günahı*. Fatma waits for her husband's return from the city, only to learn on his arrival that he was late to come home because he has been with his former lover. Fatma leaves the

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<sup>94</sup> cf. Sue Lonoff's article "Multiple Narratives and Relative Truths: A Study of *The Ring and The Book*, *The Woman in White*, and *The Moonstone*" to read an analysis of the use of multiple narratives in Wilkie Collin's *The Woman in White* (1859).

<sup>95</sup> "Senin affin için dua ediyorum. Benden memnunsun ya!" (S. Derviş, *Buhran Gecesi* 202).

house, losing her consciousness out on the street, she cannot remember why she escaped. A stranger with colorless eyes leads her to his home, a dark room. The stranger's name is Ali and he is an artist. Fatma agrees to model for his masterpiece. There she meets Ali's friends, other artists and intellectuals from the city. One day she gets drunk, having received a letter from Celal, telling her that they are divorced. Her sister Zeynep comes that day to get her and takes her back to her grandfather's mansion. Zeynep falls in love with Fatma's cousin Kamil who later breaks up with her. Similar to what Fatma feels with her loss of Celal, she tells her that death is the only constant in life. Zeynep cannot bear the pain and commits suicide to get rid of the emptiness inside. Fatma feels guilty like a sinner for not having helped Zeynep, trying to find comfort in her grandfather's presence.

In the introduction to *Gothic Landscapes: Changing Eras, Changing Cultures, Changing Anxieties*, Sharon Rose Yang and Kathleen Healey pinpoint to how landscapes are initially regarded as backdrops to set the stage for action in the Gothic work, whereas they are, in fact, central to the interpretation of the text as they provide “a means by which the political, psychological, social, and cultural ideals are laid bare, transmitted, and often critiqued” (1). Moreover, Michael Ferber, in his *Dictionary of Literary Symbols*, states that “all weather may be symbolic” in Romantic literature due to the connection generally established “between nature and subjective feelings” (237). Reading into these symbols with reference to their common usages in Romantic literature, as well as within the context of this novel and paratexts can prove to be fruitful to initiate discussion. As Fatma waits for her husband she fears the world outside her window. From the distance, the city looks

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<sup>96</sup> “Onları olduklarından daha başka bir türlü görmek ve göstermekte... daha doğrusu görür görünmektedirler. [...] Hayır Baylar!.. Kadınlar bir şeytan değil, bir kurbandır” (S. Derviş, “Siz Beni

like "melted lead" (203).<sup>97</sup> According to Ferber, lead points out to a time of heaviness and dullness, in comparison to the traditional ages associated with "gold, silver, bronze, and iron" (109). As for the immediate surrounding of the house outside of the city, Fatma is afraid of the large clouds "bearing the color of lead" (203).<sup>98</sup> This heaviness is associated with autumn, with the completion of summer and the expectation of winter, "it celebrates the harvest of crops and it mourns the death of the year" (Ferber 17). Edmund Spenser's description of Autumn holding a sickle in his hand (Ferber 17), can be read in the context of the images of "dead" leaves, the bare "skeleton" of trees, and "blood-red" soil in the description of the landscape in *Fatma'nın Günahı* (203).<sup>99</sup> Fatma is afraid of the large clouds bearing the color of lead "leaning against the skies with their suffocating weight" (203).<sup>100</sup> Outside Fatma's window, the sky is again grey, with large clouds, that one would usually expect to be weightless, descending with "grand steps as if they were crushing the mountain tops" (203).<sup>101</sup> These grand steps bring to mind the new faiths found to fill in the void in the dehumanized individuals and society, especially when these clouds can crush mountain tops often regarded with sublime infinity and obscurity, as "the locus of the divine" in the eighteenth century (Mellor 86). The suffocating, distressing clouds of Autumn can be read in this context, and yet other symbols can bring further depth to the Gothic atmosphere of the novel in a way that leads to multiple readings.

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Şeytan Mı Sandınız?" 5).

<sup>97</sup> "uzaktan bir küme erimiş kurşuna benzeyen [şehir]" (S. Derviş, *Fatma'nın Günahı* 203).

<sup>98</sup> "[Önünde] kurşun rengi bulutlarıyla [kurşundan yapılmış bir kasabaya benzeyen karanlık göklü, çıplak ve çamurlu bir kış uzanıyordu]" (S. Derviş, *Fatma'nın Günahı* 203).

<sup>99</sup> "ölü yapraklar," "ağaç iskeletleri," "kan rengi topraklı dağ yolları" (S. Derviş, *Fatma'nın Günahı* 203).

<sup>100</sup> "[Güzel Fatma,] göklere boğucu bir ağırlıkla yaslanmış bu iri bulutlardan korkuyordu" (S. Derviş, *Fatma'nın Günahı* 203).

Referring to Homer's *Iliad*, Ferber indicates that clouds are often related to death, just like light is associated with life (44). It is in this context which the mention of Homer's use of the phrase "cloud of war" in the *Iliad*, as stated by Ferber (44), can bring further depth to the reading of the landscape in the novel, for Suat Derviş writes of the season autumn in these words: "It was a cold and gloomy autumn's day where before the harsh and ruthless wind there were dead leaves that were crushed on the mountain roads of dirt the color of blood, drifting in yellow and haggard shades" (203).<sup>102</sup> When the symbol of leaves, on the blood-colored dirt road, suggests "the armies outside of Troy" in the *Iliad* (Ferber 44), the individual life, tired and drifting, can suggest one that is forsaken and used up for a common cause, if not one that is consumed by passion as suggested by the "wild wind"<sup>103</sup> in this landscape (203). Bearing the implication of "clouds of war" in mind, this cause can be related to one similar to the Trojan War, with lives sacrificed for the locus of the divine: The plans for this war were designed by Zeus through inciting a quarrel between Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite with an apple on which it was inscribed: "To the most beautiful" (Hard 454). Paris settled the dispute by handing the apple to Aphrodite in exchange for Helen as a wife (455), leading to the war breaking out. This context from the *Iliad* accentuates how symbols of clouds and leaves in *Fatma'nın Günahı* can be read to intensify the novel's problematization of beauty socially created by man, a construction that not only creates conflict among women, but also leads to war and bloodshed among men with the blame put on women.

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<sup>101</sup> "[Bulutlar k]üçük dağların tepelerine heybetli bir yürüyüşle ağır ağır iniyorlar, ezmek ister gibi onlara yerleşiyorlardı" (S. Derviş, *Fatma'nın Günahı* 203).

<sup>102</sup> "Ölü yaprakların kan rengi topraklı dağ yollarında çiğnendikleri sert, merhametsiz rüzgârın önünde, sarı ve bitkin süründükleri kederli ve soğuk bir sonbahar günü" (S. Derviş, *Fatma'nın Günahı* 203).

<sup>103</sup> "kudurmuş bir rüzgâr" (S. Derviş, *Fatma'nın Günahı* 203).

As Fatma waits for her husband, her anxieties create a landscape in her imagination where the sea symbolizes female beauty reminiscent of Aphrodite in Hesiod's account of her origin in his *Theogony* (Hard 27), foam alluding to the birth of the goddess: "the thirsty wind feverishly leap[s] into the white foamy arms of the Mediterranean Sea" (204).<sup>104</sup> The symbolization of wind in this sentence can be related to "passionate or tumultuous emotion" (Ferber 237), emotions that may suggest greed and selfishness, as indicated by Ferber: "Winds are fickle, they snatch things away" (236). Reference to wind again surfaces in the novel when Fatma feels crushed due to her inability to hear her husband Celal's car because of the wind, and Celal arrives home with his hair disheveled in the wind (203-05). The echoes of the wind, that is, of such passionate emotion creating a mysterious and secretive harmony (204),<sup>105</sup> can be read with the symbol of the Aeolian harp, which Ferber explains as follows: "[Percy Bysshe] Shelley explicitly likens man to an aeolian lyre, but adds 'there is a principle within the human being. . . which acts otherwise than in the lyre, and produces not melody, alone, but harmony, by an internal adjustment of the sounds or motions thus excited to the impressions which excite them'" (8). Waiting for her husband, Fatma is left in the darkness of the hour, and supernatural beings are lurking outside the house: "It was as if all the djinns, ghosts, spirits and devils were roaming the pasture, the air, the mountain skirts, under the window. They were fighting, dying, and crying" (204).<sup>106</sup> This is in line with how Ferber describes night as "the time of unseen dangers, 'night's black agents' (*Macbeth*)" (137). Supernatural beings can also be an indication of those excited by the harmony of the

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<sup>104</sup> "Marmara'nın beyaz köpüklü kollarına hummayla atlayan bu susamış rüzgâr" (S. Derviş, *Fatma'nın Günahı* 204).

<sup>105</sup> "Rüzgârın dağların eteklerinde yaptığı aks-i sedada birtakım esrarlı ve gizli ahenkler var gibiydi" (S. Derviş, *Fatma'nın Günahı* 204).

<sup>106</sup> "Sanki karanlıkların bütün cin, hortlak, ruh ve şeytanları kırdı, havada, dağların eteklerinde, pencerenin altında dolaşıyor, kavga ediyor, ölüyor, ağlıyordu" (S. Derviş, *Buhran Gecesi* 204).

Aeolian lyre, thus symbolizing envy.<sup>107</sup> Ferber describes “fame” in a way that can shed light on such envy: “‘What’s fame?’ [Alexander] Pope asks: ‘a fancy’d life in others’ breath’” (72), breath associated with the symbol of wind in Ferber’s dictionary (236) as indicated in this section. Despite Fatma’s fear regarding the consequences that such passions may bear on her marriage, she, herself, is said to have been created at a time when a storm, a hurricane, or a protest broke out (224). She is created with the fire of thunder (224), and the beauty of nature is like an ornament (222). These descriptions bring to mind the origin of Aphrodite in Homer’s account, as the daughter of Zeus, “the Cloudgatherer who throws a thunderbolt” (Ferber 236), and Dione (Hard 74-75). It seems as if Fatma fears her husband may be having an illicit affair with another Aphrodite, one whose origin is more common through Hesiod’s account (Hard 75), with her birth from Ouranus’s genitals (22). Woman’s fear of her own kind, in this context, arises from them being compared to each other based on a sense of beauty that is constructed in the poems of men, as well as from the apparent invisibility of the mother.

As Fatma waits for her husband Celal to return home from the city, she hears the buzz of a fly hitting its body to the windows and the walls of the house (204-05). The buzz of a fly is heard several times throughout the novel, signaling threatening situations and bringing back ominous memories, within the Romantic dwellings. For instance, once her husband Celal arrives, Fatma senses something has changed by the look of his eyes but she cannot tell what it is, the silence between them interrupted with a fly “complaining” with a buzz (206). This sound takes her back to the days of

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<sup>107</sup> Reading this novel together with *Buhran Gecesi* can help the reader think of the symbols in this landscape. In *Buhran Gecesi*, the Devil tries to end love by creating envy: “Dünyanın rüzgârıyla her tarafında koşuyor. Ecel gibi, felaket gibi dünyanın her rüzgârına karşı koşuyor. Şeytanın yardımcısı



her childhood when her mother lied on her deathbed, and the only sound that broke the silence was the buzz of the fly (216-17, 220). Having lost her father before she was born, Fatma remembers her mother, particularly how she sought consolation from her mother, holding her hand, as well as the memory of her medicine and jewelry (207, 214). She also remembers that, as her mother's condition grew worse, she was not attended to for several hours, left alone without being fed (216-17). What she particularly remembers from the day her mother dies is the buzz of a fly and the watchman announcing the time thudding his stick on the sidewalk: It was seven o'clock (207), with the number seven as indication of "completeness" and "closing of the cycle" (Olderr 5). This buzz of the fly can be associated with Emily Dickinson's poem "I heard a Fly buzz—when I died—" (1896) where the fly symbolizes ephemerality (Ferber 78), suggesting the short life span of beauty and once grand feelings in *Fatma'nın Günahı*. The invisibility of the mother can also explain Fatma's wish to seek comfort in someone's love and affection: "She needed someone kind-hearted and generous, someone she could seek comfort in, someone she could be loved by (204).<sup>108</sup> With the buzz of the fly, Fatma is reminded that love just like all other grand feelings completes its life cycle. This can be related to Suat Derviş's essay titled "Kızlar Neden Evlenirler?" ("Why Do Young Women Get Married?") published in 1935, where the writer states that love is an entity with the shortest life span: "It can sometimes last a month, sometimes a year... But never a lifetime" (11).<sup>109</sup>

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olan bu adam hasettir. Bu adam saadetlere gıpta eden, aşklara gıpta eden hasettir" (S. Derviş, *Buhran Gecesi* 169).

<sup>108</sup> "Sokulmak, şımarlamak, sevilme için iyi ve müşfik bir insana ihtiyaç duyuyordu" (S. Derviş, *Fatma'nın Günahı* 204).

<sup>109</sup> "Sevgi[,] ömrü en kısa olan bir varlıktır: Bazen bir ay sürer, bazen bir sene... Fakat bütün bir ömür asla" (S. Derviş, "Kızlar Neden Evlenirler?" 11).

The dehumanizing effect of socially constructed beauty in *Fatma'nın Günahı* can be considered as the consequence of the hedonistic individualism of classical liberalism, leading to materialistic fetishism, an argument raised by republican conservatives, as indicated by Nazım İrem (105). Celal confesses that he has seen a former lover that day and this leads to Fatma to lose her sense of life, her purpose, and reason to live (210). She feels like her husband is not grateful for her being his slave as the most beautiful woman on earth (210), her sense of vanity reminiscent of Aphrodite. Fatma then breaks the mirror in the house (213), her beauty adorned with jewelry, and her hands once a model for a sculptor no longer have value now that she does not feel loved (213). S. Derviş, in her essay, titled “Kadınlar Neye İçlenir?” (“What Distresses Women?”), published in 1935, writes: “Women are distressed by negligence. [...] She is distraught when the man she loves pays attention to others” (5).<sup>110</sup> Fatma thought her husband was a slave to her for being so beautiful (210), but now he is seeking comfort from her, begging her to love him even if he were blind or wrongful, unfaithful or sick (212). She looks into the mirror to see all her beauty and her jewelry are in vain, and she shatters the mirror (213). Previously, she was a source of envy of all women as the happiest women in the city (230), but now like an unnatural moon that looked like a drop of blood (233), she drops into the darkness of night and is, like a flower, plucked away from herself (234), like many other women may have been, a possible explanation from within the text, for the blood-colored dirt on the mountain roads.

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<sup>110</sup> “Kadın lâkaydîye içlenir. Kendisinin, muhitinin dikkat ve alâka merkezi olmadığını hissettiği anda bedbaht olur” (S. Derviş, “Kadınlar Neye İçlenir?” 5).

Fatma leaves the house like the walking dead (236): “She had lost her love, her faith, her thrill, her purpose in life, her joy of being beauty” (235).<sup>111</sup> Out on the streets, she is found sick and taken into shelter by an artist named Ali (238-39). Fred Botting indicates that in the mid-nineteenth century the location of the Gothic became the modern city with its “industrial, gloomy, and labyrinthine” qualities (114). In this setting, the influences of the Gothic and Romantic are still seen as signifiers of loss and nostalgia, and reflections of culture that bore the restlessness of a “deteriorating identity, order, and spirit” (114), such deterioration reflected by Ali’s eyes without color. Rebecca Munford mentions how the relationship between poet and muse has changed between the classical tradition, where the poet was taken as possessed by the muse, and the Romantic tradition, where it is the poet who possesses the muse (73). Thus, Ali’s remark on taking Fatma inside is clarified: “When I was trying to save your life during your days of sickness, I was like an art lover trying to rescue a valuable work of art” (245). Here she starts to model for Ali’s paintings (247),<sup>112</sup> the artist painting her with religious enthusiasm (248).<sup>113</sup> The fame of her beauty being heard of in the city (252), Celal divorces Fatma, and Zeynep, her adopted sister whom she used to be like a mother to, comes to rescue her. With Zeynep’s arrival, she brings the spring and light to Ali’s house, with her youth, her fresh and new appeal, suggesting that Fatma has been consumed and Zeynep is the new center of attention for the intellectuals who bear resemblance to the winter and the night (256). The distinction between Zeynep and the others can be explained through Rousseau’s concept of “amour-propre,” that is to say, pride. Lori Jo Marso, in her PhD dissertation titled *Citizens in Conflict: Detached Men and Passionate Women in the*

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<sup>111</sup> “Aşkını, imanını, heyecanını, yaşamak gayesini, güzel olmak zevkini kaybetmişti” (S. Derviş, *Fatma’nın Günahı* 235).

<sup>112</sup> Fatma takes care of an injured sparrow (S. Derviş, *Fatma’nın Günahı* 247), the sparrow also known to be a reference to one of Aphrodite’s birds (Ferber 198).

*novels of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Germaine de Staël*, explains how one deviates from virtue through pride, saying:

Man's original nature equals virtue, defined as the absence of pride (amour-propre). It is society and its institutions that are corrupt compelling us to live in the opinions of others, robbing us of our original sense of empathy and a natural transparency in our interactions with people. The essential nature of the individual is goodness, while society and the historical situation have created the evil of appearances and false virtue. (22)

Fatma returning to her grandfather's mansion with Zeynep, she feels dead inside (258). Unable to share her experience of her transformation, from being an object (229), to being nothing (235), she cannot help her sister. Zeynep was once like a creature of nature (222), like a puppy (221) and a leopard cub (223), but is now trying to be beautiful for Kamil (261). When Kamil expresses his tediousness with the same places, the same faces, and the same things (266), they separate their ways, and Zeynep loses her sense of faith, just like Fatma had: "This love was my faith, my belief, my backbone, my sense of morality" (273).<sup>114</sup> Fatma's reply to her Zeynep, reveals how she, too, has been dehumanized in her former marriage but she will give her sister the wrong impression: "But I don't know why... why I didn't die? [...] To hold a dead heart in a dead body like this? To be an object like this, one that does not have emotions or a soul, one that cannot cry, laugh, or remember?" (273).<sup>115</sup> Fatma hears the buzz of a fly trapped in the window and smashes it, signifying she feels she

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<sup>113</sup> "[d]indar bir teheyyüç" (S. Derviş, *Fatma'nın Günahı* 248).

<sup>114</sup> "[Bu emniyetle] bu aşk benim imanım, itikadım, istinatgâhım, ahlakım olmuştur" (S. Derviş, *Fatma'nın Günahı* 273).

<sup>115</sup> "Fakat bilmem ki niçin... neden ölemedim? [...] Sonunda böyle yaşamayan bir vücutta ölü bir kalp taşımak için mi? Sonra böyle eşya gibi bir şey, hissiz, ruhsuz, bir cisim, ağlayamayan, gülemeyen, hatırlamayan bir cisim olmak için mi?" (S. Derviş, *Fatma'nın Günahı* 273).

no longer has anything to lose (276). The clock strikes seven (277), and Zeynep throws herself from a cliff (278), the only parts left identifiable being her dress and her hands and eyes (279). Trying to understand the hatred in these eyes, Fatma understands that her sister does not forgive her sin (289). Yet, what she deems as her sin, is the evil of deteriorated culture that reduces men to consumers and women to objects, women being the victims of a materialistic principle of utility.

Consequently, this section dwells on how the themes of Turkish political Romanticism can be brought to the fore so as to question the effects of dehumanizing beauty on women in Suat Derviş's *Buhran Gecesi* and *Fatma'nın Günahı*. These two novels focus mostly on "romanticization of youth; melancholy, the past, and dreams; and lack of an anti-capitalist attitude" (Aksakal 46-65). Youth that is romanticized in this section is a state of nature that does not know the evils of envy and pride, as defended by Rousseau: In *Buhran Gecesi*, Nedim tells the reader that Zehra is punished by the embodiment of Envy for looking for more beautiful flowers to decorate her rooms (152), revealing an instance of how female curiosity is punished in the novel, a possible projection of the male narrator. In *Fatma'nın Günahı*, those who are in a state of nature but are corrupted with pride and envy die inside, not able to feel empathy for others. The women in these novels can carry on with their lives despite feeling dead or being consumed, and yet this lack of empathy and feeling of guilt are not empowering, unless they understand that they are the victim of a void for emotional and spiritual needs which are often compensated through degeneration related to materialistic fetishism. Whereas Zehra in *Buhran Gecesi* possibly wants to redress the past, either seeking forgiveness or demanding property that is rightfully hers, Fatma in *Fatma'nın Günahı* becomes aware that forgetting her past only leads

to isolation. In this section, the most prominent theme of Turkish political Romanticism appears to be the lack of an anti-capitalist attitude. The effect of classical liberalism on hedonism reveals itself in the form of degeneration in these novels, visible in man's passion to know and to own and to consume. Such a portrayal of man creates pride and envy in women in a way that leads to alienation from her dehumanized body and isolation from sisterhood.

This chapter focuses on how Suat Derviş's Gothic novels published in book form discuss themes of Turkish political Romanticism to voice doubt regarding the vows of her dwellings that lead to confinement, dispossession, and undeserved guilt. Whereas the first section shows this through the depiction of the silent cry for help of the heroine, the second section focuses on how dehumanized beauty haunts her, altogether creating the representation of women who need to develop their own strategies of survival to cope with their traumatic experiences. References to other literatures accentuate the uncanny universality regarding the ephemerality of life and feelings, the ambivalence of materialism and spiritualism, or injustices against women. Thus, through the subversions in S. Derviş's novels, the question of how the heroines can depend on the general will as envisaged by Rousseau's Social Contract under these circumstances turns into an issue women are implicitly asked to become aware about.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> The distinction between the functions of man and woman as presented in Rousseau's *Emile or On Education* (1762) is clearly an indication of how the general will asks the heroine for her hand in the unromantic vows of Romantic dwellings: "The entire education of women must be relative to men. To please them, to be useful to them, to be loved and honored by them, to rear them when they are young,

## CHAPTER III

### TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT: THE PURSUIT OF LOVE IN NEZİHE MUHİDDİN'S GOTHIC NOVELS (1929-1944)

Jenny DiPlacidi, in the article titled “Rearticulating the Economics of Exchange: Incest and After Marriage in the Gothic,” refers to how the conventions leading to the mistreatment of wives have been taken as indicative of the “civil death after marriage” by Gothic scholars such as Ruth Binstock Anolik and Diana Wallace (162). With reference to eighteenth-century Britain, DiPlacidi maintains that “the genre’s explorations of the law, property, inheritance, ownership, equality, individual choice, and obligation to one’s natal family mediate a range of concerns central to experiences of marriage” (162). This assertion can open a range of possibilities for reading Nezihe Muhiddin’s novels, as well, especially when one takes into account the writer’s activism in favor of women’s matrimonial rights. To illustrate, Zihnioğlu mentions the writer’s speech given at a conference held in 1924 as part of the women’s preparation for the Family Law (142-43). In this speech, N. Muhiddin criticizes the problems of *talaq* as Muslim divorce, man’s polygamous marriage, and

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to care for them when they are grown up, to counsel and console, to make their lives pleasant and

child marriage (143). However, it is notable that despite her struggle for man and woman to be equal in the marriage, Nezihe Muhiddin has refrained from commenting on the duties of the husband and wife (107), bringing to mind the possibility of self-censorship on openly voicing her idea on problematic issues. Given this context, this chapter aims to study the implications of the pursuit of love in Nezihe Muhiddin's Gothic novels with a focus on equality, independence, and society's expectations from women when it comes to the pursuit of love. With reference to Nilüfer Yeşil's unpublished MA thesis titled *Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadın Gotiği ve Gotik Kahramanlar (Nezihe Muhiddin, Female Gothic and Gothic Hero[in]es)*, this chapter looks into the incestuous marriage of the concubines in *Benliğim Benimdir! (My Self is Mine!, 1929)* and *Sus Kalbim Sus! (Hush, My Heart, Hush!, 1944)*, and the women's encounter with a necrophiliac man in her search for her prince in *İstanbul'da Bir Landru (A Landru in Istanbul, 1934)*.

### **3.1 The Incestuous Marriage of Concubines: When It Happens in the Family, Does It Stay in the Family?**

In Nezihe Muhiddin's novel *Benliğim Benimdir!*, Zeynep narrates her story of how she became a prostitute, a thief, and a murderer, after being sold as a Circassian concubine to the Ottoman vizier Nusretullah Pasha at the age of thirteen. Having been sold by her parents, Zeynep considers that her only salvation lies in committing suicide but her attempts to kill herself are in vain. When her friend Mehveş is sold to a different house, she loses her one companion. At the Pasha's mansion, Zeynep is given lessons to learn how to read and to play the piano, and in exchange, she is asked to massage the Pasha's knees every night. One day, she sees the Pasha's son

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charming, these are the duties of women at all times" (cited in Okin 136).



Ferruh in the mansion and he gives her Namık Kemal's play *Zavallı Çocuk* (*Poor Child*, 1873), promising to give her other books, as well. The night when Zeynep is attacked by the Pasha as she does her nightly chore of massaging his knees, she escapes to Ferruh's room. When the Pasha finds Zeynep hiding there, a brawl breaks out between the father and son, resulting with the son being arrested upon the charge of holding banned books in his library. Mehveş visits Zeynep and tells her how she has come to be like a daughter to the man she was sold to. She has become an assistant to her effendi who is a writer and a poet, and she is let in on her effendi's secret about how all slavery will come to an end. Mehveş shares this secret with Zeynep but before that day of abolition comes, the Pasha rapes Zeynep. The concubine starts to sleep with him in return for gifts, and feeling like a prostitute, she fixates on the idea of killing him. Once Zeynep learns that it is, in fact, the Pasha who has turned in Ferruh to the police, she no longer lets him enter her room. Ferruh having been sent into exile in Fezzan, Zeynep asks for Mehveş's help to rescue him. Zeynep gets money from the Pasha for the association Mehveş works for, but even so, she continues to refuse his request to let him into her room. The Pasha resorts to marrying Zeynep without her consent, and to take revenge she has an affair with a young man living in one of the mansions nearby. This young man is later murdered by the Pasha for impregnating his wife. Zeynep is freed from the Pasha's persecution when the Young Turks abolish despotism in the country. Though Ferruh is now free, he does not contact Zeynep on his return to Istanbul. Considered as a lady by others due to her inheritance of the Pasha's wealth, Zeynep devotes herself, like a slave, to her son. Having referred to herself as a prostitute, a thief, and a murderer at the beginning of the novel, and as a lady and a slavishly devoted mother at the end, she asks the readers who she really is.

N. Muhiddin's second novel about the torment of concubines, *Sus Kalbim Sus!*, starts with an old man telling his granddaughter the story of Zerrin, the former concubine who once lived in the neighboring mansion. No more than seven or eight years old, the child is sold to the Padishah's mother who wishes to raise her to take revenge on the Padishah's Favorite in the harem. She is named as Zermisal by the Valide Sultan and she no longer remembers her old name from before she was sold. Zermisal is given lessons to learn how to play the piano, to read and write, and to acquire a command of French. When the Padishah takes her as his Favorite, he rapes her. Once he understands that his Favorite has fallen in love with the Prince in her dreams, he forces her to marry the old and ugly İlyas Pasha. This Pasha treats Zermisal more like his daughter and changes her name to Zerrin. The mansion's housekeeper Mademoiselle Françoise is responsible for Zerrin's upbringing here. As the two women spend their days reading the classics of French literature and imitating the lives of royal women,<sup>117</sup> they develop a close relationship. Following the death of İlyas Pasha, his nephew Osman Nuri from France comes to visit the mansion. Despite the reactions of the servants and the neighbors, Zerrin and Osman Nuri grow close but she does not accept his proposal to leave the mansion and live far away from the others' sight. Esma, the granddaughter of one of the old servants, also comes to visit the mansion upon İlyas Pasha's death. İlyas Pasha has left a letter that writes his wish that if Osman Nuri and Esma get married, he will leave them some money. Zerrin gives her consent to İlyas Pasha's will and tells the two that she will hand over the mansion in exchange for the imitation Mayerling Lodge next to the mansion. She then acts to tell Osman Nuri that she is willing to move away from the

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<sup>117</sup> They read each other lines from the poems "L'infini dans les cieux" and "Le lac" in Alphonse de Lamartine's *Méditations poétiques* (N. Muhiddin, *Sus Kalbim Sus!* 436-38).

mansion with him as he has previously asked her to, but Esma and Osman Nuri have already gone off on their honeymoon. Zerrin commits suicide, leaving behind her will requesting her shroudless body be put in a coffin that is to be buried in the cellar of the Mayerling Lodge. Nobody from Zerrin's community wants to bury her and they treat her dead body with disrespect. Three days later, Mademoiselle Françoise dies, with the confession of her converting to Islam written out in her will. The novel ends with the old neighbor as the narrator saying that these two women rest in peace in their forsaken graves.

Referring to the eighteenth-century legal scholar William Blackstone's description of the married woman's experience of matrimony as civil death, Jenny DiPlacidi holds that incestuous relationships in the Gothic novel are used to highlight the restrictions and threats that lie within the institution of marriage (162). Representations of the family in the Gothic novel often blur the distinction between kin and unrelated individuals (162), indicating an incestuous relationship between the concubine and the members of the family she is sold to. Bearing in mind Nezihe Muhiddin's grievances against *talaq*, man's polygamous marriage, and child marriage expressed in her speech in 1924 (Zihnioğlu 143), one can claim that the issues related to the social death of the concubine considerably persist for the Republican woman. This situation, thus, brings into question Nesli Özkay's analysis of *Kadın Yolu* (1925-27) with regard to the magazine writers having praised the Republic and criticized the Ottoman governance (178), a situation that again raises doubts when the political oppression of the Women's People's Party (*Kadınlar Halk Fırkası*) and the Women's Union (*Kadın Birliği*) is taken into consideration. *Benliğim Benimdir!* and *Sus Kalbim Sus!* have been interpreted by Türkân Erdoğan and Seda Coşar as novels that

commend how the Republican regime has set women free. Contrarily, with reference to Nilüfer Yeşil's MA thesis, this section intends to analyze these two novels that relate the story of the concubine so as to illustrate how incestuous matrimony in the Gothic genre can function as a political allegory problematizing women's social death.

The concubines in N. Muhiddin's novels are children left alone in the world, treated as objects, forced into polygamous marriage without their consent. Ann Blaisdell Tracy, in her book titled *Patterns of Fear in the Gothic Novel 1790-1830*, points out to the solitude and alienation of the main character of the Gothic novel as a common feature of the genre (317). According to Tracy, the main characters in the Gothic novel are often orphans and they are adopted (317) —a condition that often relates to how they are often portrayed as a foreigner far away from home (318). In the novels *Benliğim Benimdir!* and *Sus Kalbim Sus!*, the concubines are of Circassian origin and as children, they are sent to Istanbul. Mehveş tells Zeynep how, like orphans, they have no one to turn to Istanbul in *Benliğim Benimdir!*: “If you can find a solution to this situation of ours, go ahead and tell me!.. Who can we resort to? [...] Even you do not have any answer... Then what else can we do but submit to them? They will scorn us, hit us, and kill us if they want to!.. We have no one to ask of what has happened to us!..” (65),<sup>118</sup> suggesting that injustices remain unamended when one's family, or even more, the society turns a blind eye. Zeynep, unaware of what will be expected from her, hopes that the Pasha will be her new father when she is brought before him for the first time: “Would the Pasha Effendi adopt me as his child?.. I

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<sup>118</sup> “Bak sen bile cevap veremiyorsun... O halde itaatten başka elimizden ne gelir, sövecekler, dövecekler, hatta isterlerse öldürecekler!.. Arayıp soranımız yok ki!..” (N. Muhiddin, *Benliğim Benimdir!* 65).

could easily be his grandchild; without doubt, he was fifty-five years old...” (71).<sup>119</sup>

Later on in the novel, the Pasha has turned in his son Ferruh who fights for freedom, sending him to exile, a situation which Zeynep regards similar to hers as she, too, has been sent away far away from home by her parents: “How could one be so low enough to send his own child to exile [...]!. Still, was my life anything different than living in exile? Was it not my father who had sent me away, too? One of them had done a condemned transaction for three hundred liras, whereas the other had hatefully sent his son to exile (92),<sup>120</sup> both instances illustrating how parents use their children to maintain power as if they were objects. In *Sus Kalbim Sus!*, the alienation of the heroine is conveyed through Zermisal’s disappointment with her realization that the Valide Sultan is not a mother to her and the Padishah is not a brother, when she is asked to do her chore of massaging the Padishah’s knees: “I no longer have any family here!.. I have no mother... The Valide Sultan is not my real mother! Whereas I was so happy when I thought she was... I was so happy to have a brother...” (398).<sup>121</sup> The concubine’s story is similar to Şefika’s in Namık Kemal’s play *Zavallı Çocuk* where the daughter is forced to marry a much older Pasha to pay off the family debt, despite her love for her step-brother Atâ. Şefika says to her father: “Am I a person to be able to love someone else?” (38).<sup>122</sup> The concubines being sold away to homes where they are regarded as a commodity can be associated with the context of the Republican young women being sold into marriages in exchange for the money demanded by the women’s parents. In 1926, in the “Dear

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<sup>119</sup> “Acaba paşa efendimiz beni evlatlığa kabul edebilir miydi?.. Hatta ferah ferah torunu bile olurum, hiç şüphesiz elli beş yaşında vardı...” (N. Muhiddin, *Benliğim Benimdir!* 71).

<sup>120</sup> “Evladını [...] menfalara sürdürecektense kadar bir insanın sefil olabileceğini bir türlü havsalam kabul etmek istemiyordu!.. Fakat benim hayatım da bir menfadan başka bir şey miydi?! Beni süren de bir baba idi; o üç yüz liraya mukabil bu merdud [reddedilmiş] işi tutmuş, öbürü ise menfur bir hisle oğlunu sürdürmüştü!” (N. Muhiddin, *Benliğim Benimdir!* 92).

<sup>121</sup> “Benim artık burada kimsem yok!.. Annem yok... Sultan Efendi benim annem değilmiş! Halbuki demin ne kadar sevinmiştim... Bir de kardeşim var diye ne kadar çok sevinmiştim...” (N. Muhiddin, *Sus Kalbim Sus!* 398).

Abby” section in the newspaper *Resimli Perşembe*, *A Second Mother* (*Cici Anne*) says: “The family who sells her daughter in exchange for a contract or diamonds is not modern but quite the opposite, that family is the last representative of the old mind-set” (cited by Demirel 164).<sup>123</sup> Consequently, Nezihe Muhiddin employs the concubine’s incestuous matrimony to portray the Republican woman’s plight of forced marriages in *Benliğim Benimdir!* (*My Self is Mine!*, 1929) and *Sus Kalbim Sus!* (*Hush, My Heart, Hush!*, 1944).

Allusions to incestuous matrimony among unrelated individuals in N. Muhiddin’s novels relating the stories of concubines can be associated with women being reduced to a commodity, to an object, who does not need to give her consent in sexual relations. Diane Long Hoeveler, in her book titled *The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës*, considers the orphan Gothic heroine struggling against the corrupt patriarchal system as a tradition of feminist Gothic novels (154), which is used to voice the writer’s reaction against the family as a patriarchal institution (188). To this end, the female writer has recourse to the themes of incest and cannibalistic tendencies in the mother or father (188). The concubines being raped in *Benliğim Benimdir!* and *Sus Kalbim Sus!* disclose how paternal protection comes with its dangerous limitations of freedom. In *Benliğim Benimdir!* Zeynep describes the incidence of her being raped by Nusretullah Pasha: “A broad, creepy body squeezed through the dark doorway into the room!.. The door was closed. The metallic sound of the lock was heard... The gory vizier’s giant body

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<sup>122</sup> “Ben ne âdemim ki, gönlüm başkasını istesin” (Namık Kemal, *Zavallı Çocuk* 38).

<sup>123</sup> “Kızlarını kontratla ve bi[rk]aç parça elmasa mukâbil satan aile asrî değil, bilakis eski zihniyetin son taraftarlarıdır” (cited in Demirel 164).

heaved at me with the weight of a nightmare coming true!!!..” (88-89),<sup>124</sup> the lock indicating that the concubine cannot escape. Moreover, in *Sus Kalbim Sus!*, the Padishah rapes Zermisal after intoxicating her with alcohol, showing that there is no need for the woman’s consent for sex, and yet the Padishah’s door remains guarded: “A woman’s scream rose from the Padishah’s room, striking terror in the guardians at the door” (407).<sup>125</sup> Thinking of how he can stop Zermisal from thinking about the Prince in her dreams, the Padishah unconsciously reveals his cannibalistic tendency: “He was going to eat the poor child’s heart tonight... He was going to suck on the warm blood that flowed through her youthful nerves like a dream!..” (405),<sup>126</sup> suggesting the Padishah is like a vampire that feeds on the concubine’s blood, on her freedom. Incestuous matrimony and the father’s cannibalistic tendency are used by the female writer to subvert the father’s privileges in the family, which are given to him in exchange for his support to the patriarchal hegemony, as stated by Hoeveler (188). This claim can be interpreted within the context of the Republican regime positioning man as the head of the family. With reference to Taha Parla, Yaprak Zihnioğlu claims that although Kemalism has claimed that the Civil Law has freed women in 1926, in fact, it positions man as the leader of the family in exchange for his support to the Republican regime (223). As the leader of the family, it was the man who was to give permission to the woman to be able to work, casting doubts on how free women really were under these circumstances (223). Nezihe Muhiddin’s use of the incestuous marriage of concubines in her novels can thus be seen as a

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<sup>124</sup> “Karanlık aralığından iri, dehhaş bir vücut tıkları içeri girdi!.. Kapı tekrar örtüldü. Bir kilidin maden[î] sesi işitildi... Kanlı vezirin korkunç heyulası canlı bir kâbus ağırlığıyla yürüyerek üzerime abandı!!!..” (N. Muhiddin, *Benliğim Benimdir!* 88-89).

<sup>125</sup> “[P]adişahın yatak odasından akseden bir kadın çılgılığı, kapıda nöbet bekleyenlerin aklını başından almıştı” (N. Muhiddin, *Sus Kalbim Sus!* 407).

<sup>126</sup> “Belki bu his, bugünkü verdiği cinayet kararının şuuraltı bir ezasıydı. Kendisinden korkan, ürken, torunu yaşında küçücük bir kıza zorla temellük etmek de bir cinayetti. Zavallı çocuğun pembe kalbini yiyecekti bu gece.... Onun körpe damarlarından hülya gibi akan ılık kanını emecekti!..” (N. Muhiddin, *Sus Kalbim Sus!* 405).

Gothic convention used to subvert the Republican New Man's privileges in the family.

No matter how luxurious and secure the palace, mansion, or mansion in the novels may be, the confinement of the concubine indicates that she is deprived of her freedom. A female reader's reply to a survey published in 1925 regarding what she would do if she were a man is relevant to understanding a Republican woman's discontent with being confined to a domestic space, despite the sense of security it may convey. Fatmagül Demirel, in her book titled *Cumhuriyet Kurulurken Hayaller ve Umutlar* (*Dreams and Expectations in the Founding Years of the Republic*), refers to Zeynep Hanım's reply put as: "When they put a bird in a golden cage, it flaps its wings and shrieks for freedom... We, too, would act wisely if we shouted for freedom in our metal cages, if we wanted to be like men who granted us our freedom. I promise my sisters that if I become a man I'll be a very loyal husband" (121-22),<sup>127</sup> implying her awareness of women's grievances regarding inequality in the family. This image of a "bird in a golden cage" shows itself in both of N. Muhiddin's novels that narrate the story of the lives of concubines. Zeynep feels that, in the mansion, Nusretullah Pasha has offered much more than her own father has been willing to provide her with, her being given private lessons to teach her how to read and play the piano, and her even secretly receiving French lessons (73-74). Still, the opportunities in the mansion do not stop her from feeling "like an estranged canary in a glorious cage" (76),<sup>128</sup> not being able to use the freedom she is given in the limitation of her confinement. Getting French lessons from an elder woman in secret

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<sup>127</sup> "Kuşu altın kafese koymuşlar hürriyet diye kanatlarını çırpmış, feryad etmiş... Biz bu demir kafeslerde hürriyet diye bağırarak, bu hürriyeti bize te'min eden erkekliği istersek, elbette akıllıcasına hareket etmiş oluruz. Hemşirelerime te'min ederim eğer erkek olursam çok sadık bir koca olacağım" (Demirel 121-22).



(76), the freedom given to her actually depends on the Pasha, and any education she wishes to receive out of his notice needs to be given to her in a hidden manner. Similarly, in the novel *Sus Kalbim Sus!* the Padishah resembles the concubine Zermisal to a bird that is wounded in the chest (404), that is, in her heart, being stripped of her innate freedom. When Zermisal refuses to be with the Padishah, he is concerned that her fear will be the end of her: “An ominous suspicion awoke in his heart that she would fear his slightest movement, her wings that hit the glittery walls would be torn, and that her innocent body would fall down onto the silk rugs” (404-05).<sup>129</sup> For a moment, the Padishah feels pity for the concubine for unconsciously he has decided to rape her, an act he can equate with murder (405). He can sacrifice all of his riches, even his throne, and still, he does not have the power to make Zermisal forget the Prince in her dreams (405). The Pasha and the Padishah in both of the novels are willing to use their power and their wealth to be able to strengthen their possession of the concubines. In these two novels, the confinement of the women like pets held in golden cages signals to the domesticity which the incestuous marriage in particular, and the patriarchal regime in general sees fit for her.

The cultivation of the concubine is so as to ensure she better serves the man of the home, or allegorically the men of the country. Zihnioğlu states that reducing the women’s role to motherhood and working for charity, women were expected to be man’s assistants, passive observers, complementing social projects (262). Likewise, the need to cultivate the Turkish woman as mother and wife provides a context for the price women have to pay in exchange for education in Nezihe Muhiddin’s novels

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<sup>128</sup> “Müzeyyen kafesin içinde mahzun bir kanarya gibi” (N. Muhiddin, *Benliğim Benimdir!* 76).

<sup>129</sup> “Ufak bir hareketten ürkecek, narin kanatlarını bu yaldızlı duvarlara çarpa çarpa parçalandıktan sonra masum ölüsü, ipek halılara düşüp serilecek diye kalbinde meşum bir vehim uyandırıyor” (N. Muhiddin, *Sus Kalbim Sus!* 404-05).

that relate the lives of concubines. In *Benliğim Benimdir!*, Zeynep does not only receive lessons on how to play the piano and how to read but she is also taught how to serve Nusretullah Pasha in return: “After dinner, the servant Dilşat dressed me up in one of my new dresses and said: ‘Tonight you are going to the Pasha’s room to thank him for the favors he has granted to you.’ The servant was right, I had received favors from the Pasha as such that even my own father had not bestowed on me, but still... still!..” (74).<sup>130</sup> Despite her fears, she feels as if the Pasha is pleased to see that she is intelligent enough to understand Turkish in just a few days (74). Raped by the Pasha, Zeynep screams at Dilşat for leaving her alone with him (75), whereas the servant tells her that the concubine’s duty in the mansion is to please the Pasha (76). The concubine learns that she is expected to submit to his commands to pay back for the education she receives. Conversely, Zeynep regards the books that Ferruh gives her as the only source of light in this dark mansion that bears the dangers of an incestuous marriage and an oppressive regime: “As I left his room and passed through that grand dungeon’s, that shimmering prison’s hallway where suspicions lay in its shadows, my skin crawled with hatred and fear, whereas my soul and conscious bathed in the holy light of a torch...” (83).<sup>131</sup> The books being banned, Zeynep fears that she will be caught but she is also filled with the hope of bringing an end to her slavery, a hope that will remain yet unfulfilled at the end of the novel despite the overthrowing of the tyrannical regime.

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<sup>130</sup> “Akşam yemeğinden sonra Dilşat Kalfa bana yeni elbiselerimden birini giydirdi ve: ‘Bu gece paşanın odasına gidecek ve sana yaptığı lütuflardan dolayı eteğini öpeceksin,’ dedi. Kalfa haklıydı, babamdan bile görmediğim şeyleri paşanın sayesinde görmüştüm, fakat... fakat!..” (N. Muhiddin, *Benliğim Benimdir!* 74).

<sup>131</sup> “Odasından çıkıp o müdebedeb zindanın, o yaldızlı hapisanenin, gölgelerine vehimler sinmiş koridorlarından geçerken cildim nefret ve haşyetle ürperiyor, ruhum ve şuurum ise nurlu bir meşalenin ziyasında yıkanıyordu...” (N. Muhiddin, *Benliğim Benimdir!* 83).

In the novel *Sus Kalbim Sus!*, the concubine is not only cultivated to meet the master's needs but also this is the only way she can be used to win over the favors given to another woman: "The Padishah's mother wanted to take revenge from his Favorite so she had begun to prepare Zermisal for her son. She wanted to raise her as competent and well-rounded, besides her beauty. Zermisal had tutors for the piano, for reading, as well as for French" (393).<sup>132</sup> Similar to Eleanor Ty's interpretation of incest in *The False Friend*, a novel by Mary Robinson, in her book titled *Empowering the Feminine: The Narratives of Mary Robinson, Jane West, and Amelie Opie, 1796-1812* (58), the two concubines being raped by a father figure in exchange for their education in these novels can be interpreted as a political statement about how the fatherly role can be abused, a situation that can be related to the master of the house or the father of the country. Mehveş in *Benliğim Benimdir!* also suggests that the concubine is abused for the man's interests. Raised as a daughter of a writer and poet fighting for freedom, she is allowed to read and write whatever she wants to (80). She works as her effendi's assistant and learns that many intelligent men are working to rescue concubines from slavery (80). Zeynep even envies Mehveş's peacefulness, although her friend lives in an old and much more modest house when compared to the mansion (94). Mehveş comes to the mansion one day telling her that she can work for the association and rescue Ferruh from exile by helping them find money (97). Saying that they cannot sell jewelry given by the Padishah, Mehveş encourages Zeynep to be a thief or the Pasha's prostitute (97-98). This situation in the novel shows how women are expected to complement the political act initiated by men. The education of the concubine does not provide women with the means to be independent. Through the incestuous marriages

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<sup>132</sup> "Padişahın anası, başgözdeden intikam almak için Zermisal'i oğlu için hazırlamaya başlamıştı. Onu güzelliği kadar da hünerli ve bilgili yetiştirmek istiyordu. Bir taraftan piyano, bir taraftan okumak

depicted in the novels, N. Muhiddin thus conveys that though women are seemingly cultivated, they are often forced into being rivals, as the benefits are reaped by the fathers.

She who approves what the patriarchal regime has to offer cannot help the concubine who wants to escape the incestuous marriage, implying how women cannot help one another when they are forced to live in the same confined spaces. The Padishah's mother raises Zermisal like a daughter for her son to take revenge from another, the Padishah's Favorite (393), suggesting her approval of polygamy. Hoeveler also lists the violent rivalry of siblings as one of the themes taken up in female Gothic to express grievances against patriarchal institutions (188), a theme that can imply women's rivalry to attain more power. The Valide Sultan feels that she will be able to prepare Zermisal without going through much trouble (393), again pointing out to her self-interest. Zermisal is being raised to be the new Empress, for the Valide Sultan is not aware that the empire is dissolving (393). This can be read as an indication of the woman's unawareness of the political situation that has confined her behind walls, granting her limited power when compared to the Padishah. In Nezihe Muhiddin's other novel on the incestuous marriage of the concubine, *Benliğim Benimdir!*, Zeynep cannot forgive the servant Dilşat who leaves her alone with Nusretullah Pasha, leading to her being raped: "You're Circassian aren't you! What else can you expect from someone Circassian!.. My mother who sold me was Circassian, too!.." (75),<sup>133</sup> suggesting her mother's passive status resembles a servant's, both functioning towards the persistence of the same system that has disadvantaged them. These examples are illustrative of the mother figures, as either

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yazmak, bir taraftan da Fransızca öğreticileri vardı" (N. Muhiddin, *Sus Kalbim Sus!* 393).

the biological parent or step-mother, being as evil as father figures in Gothic novels, as indicated by Dani Cavallaro in his book *The Gothic Vision: Three Centuries of Horror, Terror and Fear* (143). However, it is noteworthy that this evilness arises from the women's need to survive, to gain power in a system that forces her to be relegated to a passive object. In *Sus Kalbim Sus!*, Mademoiselle Françoise represents an educated French woman who has access to the freedom to work but within the confines of the mansion. No longer possessing her youth, she becomes an unwanted woman in the patriarchal regime with no one in demand of her service. She says that Zerrin resembles herself, suggesting that society imposes limitations to the woman's freedom to love: "Her dainty, pretty silk wings were going to hit the dim and isolated ostentatious walls of the mansion and she, in the end, would turn into an old bag of bones like myself" (425).<sup>134</sup> The relationships in the novel show that these limitations can either be related to age and kinship as seen in the relationship between Zermisal and İlyas Paşa (410, 413, 433-36) or to widowhood as marital status and again kinship as evident in the affair between Zermisal and Osman Nuri (459-68). Such limitations can also be associated with class and nationality as indicated in the affair of Mademoiselle Françoise and the Habesha eunuch Mercan Agha (417-22). Mademoiselle Françoise and Zerrin, are considered the two "melancholic girls" of the mansion (416, 425),<sup>135</sup> or "girls of the old world" (470).<sup>136</sup> In both novels, the concubines cannot resort to the assistance of other women from different backgrounds, the women either contributing to submission to man's will in *Benliğim*

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<sup>133</sup> "Çerkes değil misin?! Sizden hayır gelmez!.. Beni satan anam da bir Çerkes'ti" (N. Muhiddin, *Benliğim Benimdir!* 75).

<sup>134</sup> "Yalının yaldızlı loş ve تنها duvarlarına çarparak onun ince, güzel ve ipek kanatları parça parça olup nihayet kendisi gibi ihtiyar bir kadit haline gelecekti" (N. Muhiddin, *Sus Kalbim Sus!* 425).

<sup>135</sup> "naşad kız" (N. Muhiddin, *Sus Kalbim Sus!* 416, 425).

<sup>136</sup> "ihtiyar dünyanın kızları" (N. Muhiddin, *Sus Kalbim Sus!* 470).

*Benimdir!* or deprived of the power to secure their place within society in *Sus Kalbim Sus!*.

The concubines' thoughts of matricide and patricide, as another theme attributed to female Gothic to avert the oppression of patriarchal institutions (Hoeveler 188), reveal that she feels she is the victim of those who have pretended to love her but were unable to protect her, instilling in her the wish to take revenge. Cavallaro refers to Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) to illustrate how the abandoned children in the novel, aware that they have been left and forced to face the difficulties of establishing an identity, wish to take revenge from those that have deserted them (154). Zeynep, in the novel *Benliğim Benimdir!*, is also cognizant of her enemy being closer to her than expected, her family having sold her away as a concubine: "How horrendous was the rage and hatred I felt for my mother, my father [...] [who] first cast the chains of slavery around my identity, my freedom and my character which I had believed in!.. Seeing those closest to me as the [...] enemy hurt me so much that the scar of this first experience of hatred still remains on my heart!.." (60).<sup>137</sup> The mother who submits to the father figure's rule is again referred to as an enemy in the closest of her family, revealed through Zeynep's conflicting emotions of love and hate, as she is introduced to the servant Dilşat: "This woman resembled my mother!.. As we lay side by side sleeping at night and I felt the need to wrap my arms around her neck, some force arose in my arms that wanted to strangle this woman who

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<sup>137</sup> "Tapındığım benliğime, hürriyet ve şahsiyetime ilk esaret zincirini [...] elleriyle vuran anam ve babama dehşetli bir gayz ve nefret hissettim!.. En yakınlarımı [...] birer düşman olarak görmek beni o kadar derinden yaraladı ki hâlâ o ilk nefretin çıbanı yüreğimde işler durur!.." (N. Muhiddin, *Benliğim Benimdir!* 60).

resembled my mother that had sold me!..” (72).<sup>138</sup> The concubines in the two novels dream of patricide to put an end to the incapacitating situation of incestuous matrimony. Zeynep expresses that she is “a murderer in her thoughts” in *Benliğim Benimdir!*, saying that she wishes she could secretly kill the Pasha (90).<sup>139</sup> In *Sus Kalbim Sus!*, upon her marriage to İlyas Pasha, Zermisal has planned the things that she will do once her confinement comes to an end and she feels that it is only fair for her “to stomp with her little feet on the giant dragon-like head” of this old man (410).<sup>140</sup> Consequently, being abandoned and sold away as a child through an incestuous marriage, Zeynep voices her distrust in those who wish to protect her like a mother or father. This may suggest N. Muhiddin’s discontent with the attribute of the “child-woman” in the Republican years as indicated by Zihnioğlu (11), such wishes to protect women only leading to their debilitation which, in fact, creates an insecure environment for them.

Forced into incestuous matrimony, the child-woman in these novels is asked to fulfill her fate. Though this arouses her fantasies to escape, she is not able to flee from the expectations of society. Hoeveler maintains that the agitation of the confined woman can be sensed in her dreams of running away from the house (188). In the novel *Benliğim Benimdir!*, Zeynep wishes she could escape the mansion surrounded by walls but she cannot think of a way out: “A word without any destination fluttered about in my mind like a butterfly with black wings: To escape! But to where.. to whom? I could no longer expect salvation in death. I tried to kill myself twice but

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<sup>138</sup> “Bu kadın benim anneme benziyordu!.. Gece yan yana yatarken içimden kaynakayan bir ihtiyaçla boynuna sarılmak istedikçe, kollarımdan kalkınan bir kuvvetle boğazını sıkmak istiyordu, bu beni satan anneme benzeyen kadının!..” (N. Muhiddin, *Benliğim Benimdir!* 72).

<sup>139</sup> “fikren bir katil” (N. Muhiddin, *Benliğim Benimdir!* 90).

<sup>140</sup> “[onun başını] bir ejderha başı gibi küçük ayaklarının altında ezme[yi]” (N. Muhiddin, *Sus Kalbim Sus!* 410).

both attempts were in vain!..” (75).<sup>141</sup> The heroine has made two futile attempts to commit suicide for the slaveholders who see her as a commodity have saved her life (60-61, 67-69). As for the religious servant in the slaveholder’s house, she believes that Zeynep should fulfill her destiny as a concubine (64). At the beginning of the novel, Zeynep questions her identity within her incestuous marriage to the Pasha, saying that she has become a prostitute, a thief, and a murderer (57). The heroine’s narrating her story as a “lady” who has inherited the Pasha’s wealth and a mother who has dedicated her existence to her son (57, 113) brings to mind a transformation forced on women by the patriarchal regime that values money, the widow’s honor (*namus*), and the motherhood of sons, more than the woman’s free self (57). Interestingly, Zeynep as a child that has been forced into an incestuous marriage as a concubine, grows up to be a widow that can no longer unite with the Pasha’s son Ferruh she has romantic feelings for, the patriarchal regime protecting man’s sense of honor. Ferruh’s disinterest towards Zeynep can be related to his submission to society’s expectations of protecting Zeynep’s *namus* as a widow, or again his refusal to accept her illegitimate child. Unlike Atâ in Namık Kemal’s *Zavallı Çocuk*, who is willing to die with his step-sister, Ferruh’s transformation from freedom fighter to a plump-faced, wealthy man suggests man’s value of material interests (83, 113). Both Ferruh’s attitude towards Zeynep and his material ambition reveal his acceptance of the patriarchal demands, despite him having fought for freedom, allegedly for women’s freedom, as well. Thus, the child-woman is on her own in this struggle to change her fate, the man willing to accept patriarchal demands in exchange for material gain.

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<sup>141</sup> “Fikrimde hiçbir hedefi olmayan bir kelime, siyah kanatlı bir kelebek gibi dolaşıyordu: Kaçmak, gitmek! Fakat nereye... ve kime?.. Artık ölümden halas bekleyemezdim. İki defasında da bana yâr



In *Sus Kalbim Sus!*, the concubine who is confined first in the Padishah's palace and then in İlyas Pasha's mansion, also resorts to her imagination to escape her fate. Zerrin who is forced to marry a man old enough to be her grandfather, İlyas Pasha, dreams about falling in love: "Her big blue eyes always dazed off beyond the limitations of her own circumscribed space to the unknown lands of imagination" (426).<sup>142</sup> Although İlyas Pasha leaves most of his assets to Zerrin in his will (441), he arranges for his sister's son Osman Nuri to steer away from Zerrin and to get married to Esma to protect the family's honor (477). Despite the short affair between Zerrin and Osman Nuri, the end of this incestuous affair is signaled through the novel's references to the Mayerling Incident in which the Austrian Prince Rudolph has commonly been considered to have committed suicide in the Mayerling Lodge together with his sixteen-year-old mistress Marie Vetsera in 1889 (King and Wilson 188-202). Zerrin's resembling herself to the Austrian Empress Elizabeth ("Sisi") (427), Prince Rudolph's mother, and her yearning for love being described in the novel as her waiting for her Rudolph like Elizabeth (439) again disclose that the incestuous affair will come to an end. Osman Nuri shows his preference for the New World, putting aside what Zerrin and the Old World have to offer (472), and marrying the actress from the US, the granddaughter of İlyas Pasha's nanny, Esma (481). This resulting with Zerrin's committing suicide in the imitation Mayerling Lodge, as Osman Nuri and Esma are on their honeymoon, suggests that Zerrin is deserted as a woman of the Old World, similar to the Padishah's favorite she had once replaced with her youth. Being left by Osman Nuri, Zerrin sees how society continues to control her freedom to love even after İlyas Pasha's death and commits suicide, rejecting a Muslim burial (481-82). Zerrin's suicide can be interpreted as the

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olmamıştı!.." (N. Muhiddin, *Benliğim Benimdir!* 75).

result of the imposed confinement of the widowed child-woman who is deprived of the freedom to love, or as her objection to the patriarchal institutions of society. In *Sus Kalbim Sus!*, Zerrin hints at the ways of escaping confinement through imagination and total rejection of the system, both tactics coming together to show a female writer how to subvert the system with the Gothic genre. Similar to how the concubine's story is narrated by the old man to his granddaughter in the neighboring mansion half a century later (392), Nezihe Muhiddin's story of the confined Republican woman will be able to pass on to the readers of her Gothic novels.

This section has analyzed the theme of incestuous matrimony in N. Muhiddin's Gothic novels *Benliğim Benimdir!* and *Sus Kalbim Sus!* so as to elucidate how child marriage and man's polygamous marriage can debilitate woman's development of an independent identity. The child concubines being sold away are left without a family to protect them and are deceived into believing that the paternal figures of the new house can provide them security. Accordingly, these Gothic novels can be read as an indication that the child-woman of the Republican period has to protect her own freedom, particularly considering how the feminist movement was subdued by the Kemalist regime with the dissolution of the Women's People's Party and the Women's Union. Given education in the house she is sold to, the concubine is asked to serve the master of the house, a situation that bears resemblance with the Republican New Woman that has been encouraged to be cultivated so that she accommodates the demands of the father of the house. With restricted economic and political power within the confines of the house, women tend to regard each other as rivals in seeking favors in patriarchal institutions, further consolidating the injustices

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<sup>142</sup> “İri lacivert gözleri daima kendi dar muhitinin sınırlarını aşarak meçhul hayal alemlerine dalgındı” (N. Muhiddin, *Sus Kalbim Sus!* 426).

that are imposed on them. Escaping this confined status that is open to the threats of men is physically impossible, leading the heroine and the female writer to seemingly accept the role imposed on her and seek amends through Gothic imagination. In *Benliğim Benimdir!* the writer asks her readers who she really is, questioning the identities imposed on her by society, and in *Sus Kalbim Sus!* the heroine turns into a legend, committing suicide as a way of totally rejecting what the patriarchal society has to offer her: less freedom than that which is given to man.

### **3.2 The Story of Women Looking for Their Prince: Encountering a Necrophiliac in *İstanbul'da Bir Landru***

James Fowler, in his article titled “Handsome, Gallant, Gentle, Rich: Before and After Marriage in the Tales of Charles Perrault,” refers to Charles Perrault’s tale “Bluebeard” published in 1697 to discuss the issue of *mésaillance* (“incompatibility in marriage”) in the aristocrats of the end of the seventeenth century (75). Bluebeard, assumingly from the bourgeoisie, marries a woman of aristocratic descent in Charles Perrault’s tale (76), providing the aristocratic reader with a revenge fantasy about those who marry for wealth or rank (79). Marrying women of unequal wealth and rank to gain income as his reason to murder ten women has led Henri Landru (1869-1922) to be considered as the most infamous Bluebeard of the twentieth century (Schechter and Everitt 30). Referring to Landru’s murders, Nezihe Muhiddin writes the story of a Landru in Istanbul to problematize the encounter of Nils, as a necrophiliac Byronic character with the Ottoman aristocrat Princess Nazlı and the daughters of the families of the Republic. This situation raises doubt about how Seda Coşar claims that N. Muhiddin regards the Republican women as the victims of Westernization (71). For according to Coşar, to give her readers a message with her

novel (71), the writer uses evil female characters that confront established norms (106-07). As for Nesli Özkay, in her analysis of *Kadın Yolu*, her claim regarding the magazine writers, referring to women being confined by religion and the need to turn towards the West without rejecting Turkish culture (178), becomes problematic in the sense that Turkish culture, as well as the West, both can bear restrictions on women's freedom, regardless of their concern for religion. With reference to Nilüfer Yeşil's MA thesis titled *Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadın Gotiği ve Gotik Kahramanlar*, this section aims to investigate how *İstanbul'da Bir Landru* (*A Landru in Istanbul*, 1934) can be read in the context of the problematization of the pursuit of love working to the disadvantage of women who fantasize about a Prince as an escape from their realities.

In the novel *İstanbul'da Bir Landru*, Nezihe Muhiddin relates Princess Nazlı's memories dated to the summer of 1932. Nazlı, together with her servant Beshir Agha, leaves her mansion in Bebek to stay at the hotel Solarium Palace. At the beach, she comes across Nils who presents himself as a Danish artist who has been living in Istanbul for two years. Nils tells Nazlı that he has to attend business in the city and his absence arouses Nazlı's curiosity. Suspicious about whether he has an affair with another woman, she decides to follow him to the city. When they run into each other at the train station, they go to the city together. During their stay in the city, Nils takes Nazlı to a bar where he loses money in gambling. Nils agrees to take money from Nazlı on the condition that she lets him pay her back the next day. The following day, as she waits in her hotel in the city for Nils, she reads a story in the newspaper about five missing women in Istanbul. These women missing for one and half years, Nazlı suspects that Nils may be the Landru in Istanbul mentioned in the

newspaper. Upon Nils calling her up to tell her that he is leaving Istanbul, she goes to his house to see him one last time and is shocked to see him making love to a dead woman in his cellar. Nils tells Nazlı about his adventures with the women he has murdered and then gives her a secret: Never before Nazlı has he ever fallen in love with a living woman. Through a hole in the cellar, they enter an underground passage. At the end of this passage, Nils gets on to his plane to flee from Istanbul, and Beshir Agha rescues Nazlı from this remote place at night. Nazlı wakes up at the hotel and sees that her family heirloom ring has been removed from her finger. Beshir Agha brings her the newspaper where she sees Nils's photograph and the story mentioning that he is a kleptomaniac. The novel ends with Nazlı crying with her confession that she does not know the reason for her tears.

The resemblance between *İstanbul'da Bir Landru* and "La Barbe Bleue" ("Bluebeard") is evident with their tale of a serial-killer man, a dark space hiding his secrets, and a woman discovering the truth. Anne Williams, in "The House of Bluebeard: Gothic Engineering," provides the following summary of the folktale with reference to "La Barbe Bleue" (40): Though Bluebeard is an affluent man, women are not attracted to him because of his blue beard. He is also infamous for having married many times, his wives disappearing without a trace. Still, this does not keep Bluebeard from getting married again. He tells a widow of his wish to get married with one of her two beautiful daughters. The family is alarmed but Bluebeard convinces the younger daughter to get married. After their first month of marriage, Bluebeard sets out on a trip, telling his wife he has to tend to his business. The wife is left a key to every room in the house but is warned not to open the door to one of these rooms. Her husband tells her that if she is to use the key of that one

door, she will be punished. Despite Bluebeard's warning, the wife cannot help but rummage through the house and start to wonder what is hidden behind the door she is not to open. When she unlocks the door, she finds the dead bodies of Bluebeard's former wives. Seeing the blood stain on the key, Bluebeard understands what she has done. The woman is able to keep him busy until her brothers come and kill him. With the money she inherits, her sister gets married with the man she loves, the brothers start off their own business, and she gets married to a wealthy man, forgetting her bad experience with Bluebeard. Apart from Williams, Dani Cavallaro also mentions Bluebeard's name as a Gothic figure trying to hide a secret in the dark (27). Darkness in early Gothic fiction functions as a place where "torment, punishment, mystery, corruption and insanity" is hidden and locked rooms have often been associated with such dark places that keep taboo objects and crimes as secret (27). Nils's mystery can clearly be related to Bluebeard's secret, as well as to the serial murders committed by Henri Désiré Landru, the "Bluebeard of Paris" (as referred to in Schechter and Everitt 8).

In the novel, the dangers of the woman's pursuit of a companion are openly portrayed with the background of Nils's victims. These victims are listed in the newspaper article as follows: A respectable merchant Simon Effendi's daughter Mademoiselle Henriette; the poor, young wife of the wealthy and old Hadji Mürteza Effendi who is a storekeeper in the Grand Bazaar; Feyzullah Pasha's adopted daughter Dilber; Nuran Hanim as the pretty, intelligent, and sensitive daughter of a well-to-do fig seller from Izmir; and Leyla Hanim, a pianist from the Paris conservatory (322). The news report tells the readers that these victims either come from an affluent background or that they have stolen money before running off to

Nils (322). Although the victims are from different backgrounds, their access to money is what they have in common. Dying in the hands of a necrophiliac thief, the ill fate of these women is reminiscent of another tale in Charles Perrault's book of fairy tales, "Red Riding Hood," warning its young women readers that "if they allow themselves to be (sexually) consumed, they will 'die'; effectively, this means they will lose their value for the marriage market" (Fowler 75). To no surprise, Nezihe Muhiddin's novel has often been regarded as the problematization of women's escape to their Prince Charming from foreign lands as the reason for their death or in Princess Nazlı's case, her near-to-death experience. Belma Ötüş-Baskett, in her article titled "Nezihe Muhi[dd]in'in Romanları" ("Nezihe Muhiddin's Novels") points out to a message given in *İstanbul'da Bir Landru* warning readers about the risks of "falling in love with foreigners and drifting apart from traditions" (48). Two scholarly studies on N. Muhiddin's novels are also in line with how Ötüş-Baskett interprets the novel. Hüseyin Güç, too, maintains that the novel dwells on the dangers of having an affair with a foreigner (128). Similarly, mentioning "Western threats" among the themes of the novel, Seda Coşar claims that the writer uses this theme to caution her readers against the perils of Westernization (60). A foreigner after his victims' money and carnal pleasure have thus often been the focus of the reading of *İstanbul'da Bir Landru*.

The common understanding of Nils as a foreign threat becomes questionable when this novel is interpreted as a Gothic novel that makes use of the Byronic hero as a mechanism that blurs the distinction between good versus evil. Deborah Lutz, in her book titled *The Dangerous Lover: Gothic Villains, Byronism, and the Nineteenth-Century Seduction Narrative*, looks into how the Byronic hero functions in the

seduction narrative. According to Lutz, the early twentieth-century Gothic love narratives, different than early Gothic novels, utilize the character which embodies two opposites being the virtuous hero and the sinister villain (12). How these two opposing characters merge in *İstanbul'da Bir Landru* bears significance in understanding Nils as a Byronic hero,<sup>143</sup> and ultimately what an encounter with this hero-villain means for women looking for their Prince Charming.

In *The Gothic Vision*, Cavallaro states that the hero-villain in Gothic literature enables dark psychologies to find their way into the narrative (48-49). He touches on the conflicting mental and physical features in the hero-villain, giving the example of Melmoth in Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* as an example of fire and ice coming together in the same character (49). Nils also brings together the images of coldness and warmth in *İstanbul'da Bir Landru*: "The almost cold sensation, that was close to fear, that one felt when they looked at this strange young man's nose, lips, chin and the way all of these came together, melted away in a deep and warm sense of security and closeness once they looked at his colored, warm eyes" (301).<sup>144</sup> Though Nazlı finds "the sun's most vibrant light and warmth" in Nils's eyes, she also compares the coldness in his actions to marble (310), signifying the conflicting psychological traits of the hero-villain. The bright yellow strands of light in his eyes are central to understanding his dark character. Women are allured to Nils's eyes, Nazlı expressing her attraction with these words: "His mysterious eyes that shined with golden rays of light gave the heart a pleasant and warm desire to be closer"

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<sup>143</sup> Nil Sakman writes a similar analysis of Nils as a Byronic hero in *İstanbul'da Bir Landru* in a chapter of her book *Kendine Ait Bir Kalem: Kadın Yazını Üzerine* published in 2018 (pp. 201-04).

<sup>144</sup> "İnsan bu garip gencin burnuna, dudaklarına, çenesine ve bunların heyet-i mecmuasına bakarken duyduğu korkuya benzeyen soğukça bir his, sarışın ve sıcak gözlerine bakınca derin ve ılık bir emniyet ve yakınlıkla eriyordu" (N. Muhiddin, *İstanbul'da Bir Landru* 301).



(297).<sup>145</sup> Lutz mentions how the hero, from the start, has a physical trait that implies the darkness and violence within, and the mystery of this dark aspect remains uncovered until the end of the narrative (54). This mystery unfolds when one considers how Nils's eyes that shine with "golden rays of light" when he first meets Nazlı is later again seen in the way he looks at Nazlı's family heirloom, the chrysolite ring which she will not be able to find on her finger (301), and once more in his gaze as he makes love to a dead woman towards the end of the novel (330), indicating a wish to consume women. The light in his eyes can also be related to the depiction of Jack the Ripper and Dracula with glowing red eyes as indicated in Martin Tropp's book *Images of Fear* (114, 148). Nils's attractive physical traits revealing a dark character can be construed as an indication of him being a hero-villain that can be associated with the dangerous lover narrative and other prominent Gothic figures.

Apart from the hero-villain's conflicting physical traits, Lutz also refers to this character's being an "unhappy, estranged brooder" as another aspect that can be related to the Byronic hero, which is commonly used in dangerous lover narratives (53). According to Lutz, it is the dangerous lover's frown or his wrinkled forehead that lures people towards himself (54). In *İstanbul'da Bir Landru*, Nazlı is also bewildered by the way Nils is stiff like marble, making her eager to learn what or who is on his mind: "What kind of a person was he? Along with my desire, a deep, burning suspicion kept my heart ablaze. Not only was this suspicion and jealousy, but also insuppressible eagerness..." (310).<sup>146</sup> Moreover, this brooding character can

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<sup>145</sup> "içlerinden huzme huzme altın ışık saçan esrarlı gözleri kalbe munis ve sıcak bir yakınlık arzusu veriyordu" (N. Muhiddin, *İstanbul'da Bir Landru* 297).

<sup>146</sup> "Bu nasıl bir insandı? İhtirasla beraber kalbimi derin, yakıcı bir şüphe kavuruyordu. Şüphe ve kıskançlıkla beraber önüne geçilemez bir tecessüs..." (N. Muhiddin, *İstanbul'da Bir Landru* 310).

be associated with the self-exiled artist as another representation of the Byronic character. Lutz states that the Byronic hero, who chooses to act upon his free will, sends himself into exile (55). It is this feature of free will in the Byronic hero that has granted him the chances of being the alienated artist appearing in the works of Joyce, Stein, Faulkner, and Kafka (55). The Byronic hero as the self-exiled artist can be seen in *İstanbul'da Bir Landru*, as well, with Nils telling Nazlı “Artists find deep pleasure in solitude and appreciating nature, being alone with it in its spaciousness” (300).<sup>147</sup> Saying that he loves being alone (316), Nils chooses to live in a secluded house in Küçük Çekmece, outside the city, either to inspire his artistic personality with nature or to hide his secret from the eyes of others. His dark side is covered with an artistic persona, a virtuous cover, that adds to the hero-villain’s conflicting character. As an artistic man who enjoys nature on his own, Nils attracts the attention of women as a sensitive man, while maintaining his privacy to carry out his evil deeds as a necrophiliac.

Nils’s being a thief who is in love with dead women is a clear indication of his criminality that has often been associated with the Byronic hero choosing seclusion in historical places. In his book titled *The Gothic Heroine and the Nature of the Gothic Novel*, Raymond W. Mose maintains that issues that can be regarded as too controversial or taboo for the traditional novel are masked through historical and exotic places in the Gothic novel (37), shedding light to a necrophiliac’s choice of a secluded space. Mario Praz stresses on how exotic and erotic ideals are placed together in the Gothic novel (cited in Mose 37), explaining Nazlı’s interest in Nils’s house, if it not be out of her jealousy: “There is something mysterious and even hair-

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<sup>147</sup> “Sanatkârlar yalnızlığı, tabiatı geniş ve baş başa hissetmekle çok derin bir haz duyarlar” (N. Muhiddin, *İstanbul'da Bir Landru* 300).

raising in the appearance of this historical house that is somewhere so lonely, so secluded, and so deserted that it catches one's attention" (300). Other than drawing the attention of women, Nils's preference for an isolated, decrepit house can be linked to his choice to live on the margins of society as a criminal. Lutz elaborates on how the Byronic hero frequently discloses himself as a criminal: "Not just aloof, [he] often [...] is a criminal, an outlaw, who is not only self-exiled but who also actively, hatefully works against society, as a murderous pirate or a vengeful lover" (49-50). Seeking vengeance, the Byronic hero is out to turn the past into the present, reversing events so that "the punisher becom[es] the punished" (67). Lutz describes this wish to take revenge as an obsession with readdressing past injustices: "The dangerous lover obsesses about this revisitation, [...] and he desires so strongly to make his violent thoughts reality that all his actions move toward this outcome" (67).

Revisiting the past is visible in *İstanbul'da Bir Landru*, with Nils choosing to live outside of town, in an old structure that can be likened to the seclusion of a castle, though small and far from the ostentation of past glory. Cavallaro writes of how the middle-class reader as the consumers of early Gothic fiction related the castle to the sins associated with the aristocracy (29). Nils being from Denmark, a far-off and in this sense exotic country where aristocracy was a leading social class until the nineteenth century, can help the Turkish reader relate this deserted house to the sins of a ruling class that has lost its power but continues with its immoral ways. For Cavallaro, the castles in Gothic fiction signify "a desire for power that invariably carries sexual connotations" (29). This desire for power can be linked to Lutz's claim that the female character becomes a means for the Byronic hero to take revenge (67), a situation that can explain Nils's choice of victims. Consequently, both Cavallaro's view of the castle in early Gothic novels as referring to the sins of the ruling class

and Lutz's description of the Byronic hero as one who seeks revenge of the past through the victimization of women can bring light to the secret Nils hides in the cellar of his remote house on the outskirts of Istanbul.

In line with coping with a loss of power is Nils's necrophilic tendency which reveals fears of degeneration. Lisa Downing, in her book titled *Desiring the Dead: Necrophilia and Nineteenth-Century French Literature*, pinpoints how sexological writing has explained the necrophilic urge with the idea of death and destruction (4). Such explanations regarding the necrophiliac's desire for destruction can be connected to Diane Long Hoeveler referring to how the Byronic hero wishes to destroy himself and others (197). Accordingly, the desire for destruction in the necrophiliac can be related to the degeneration theory. Downing writes of how the advocates of the degeneration theory in France in the 1840s had abandoned hope in progression: "Degeneration theory considered that the evolution of the species and its intertwining with culture had reached an impasse" (37). This pessimism had to do with the rise in prostitution, criminality, and cretinism, and with the increase in phenomena related to sexual and social perversion, strengthening the feeling that with every generation the species was, in fact, regressing towards its atavistic origins (37). Within this context, it is possible to read into how Nils, both with his sexual preference for the dead and his assumed kleptomaniac tendencies, chooses to live somewhere that is cut off from society and that is curiously connected to distant lands via his plane that ensures his escape —technology regressively being used for evil deeds.

Fears of degeneration are not only in the public that craves to read the newspapers that write about the Landru in Istanbul but also within Nils himself. According to Cavallaro, the embodiment of opposing features in the hero-villain, in fact, reflects the conflicting tendencies in the culture that bring about this character (49). The individual is encouraged to go beyond the limits posed by morality and is at the same time stigmatized for crossing boundaries (49). Cavallaro links this situation of incompatible tendencies in the culture to one of the distinctive features of Western capitalism: “the desire, paradoxically coexistent with a pseudo-humanistic glorification of autonomous choice, to police personal aspirations as means of hindering the eruption of putatively unruly passions” (49). Although the association of such a clash solely with Western capitalism is rather questionable, Cavallaro’s emphasis on the conflicting traits of hero-villain as indicative of “fear of the individual” as much as “fear in the individual” is noteworthy (49). The fear of the individual can be associated with one of the explanations theorists have given for the necrophilic act. Danielle Knafo in her article “For the Love of Death: Somnophilic and Necrophilic Acts and Fantasies” states that the necrophilic urge can be explained as “the attempt to escape the fragile human condition and the need to become the Master, to deny helplessness, dependency, castration, and death.” In *İstanbul’da Bir Landru*, degeneration and destruction come with the necrophilic act of a hero-villain who aims to be the master, wishing to avoid dependency. Hence, evading the control on personal desires can be considered as one’s way to being a master who denies helplessness and resists dependency. Downing stresses the fear of the regressive, animalistic individual, indicating the controlling factors of the state and science: “The fear in question centered on the idea that man was regressing towards an atavistic genus which lay inherent within him, and which must be fought against and

controlled from without by state and science” (37). Nils’s necrophilic act can thus be interpreted as the individual’s fear of and opposition to the control and stigmatization of the unruly passions within.

Lutz sees the disgruntled Byronic hero as a character that is lost in activities that sustain and intensify his feelings of longing and among these activities, she lists onanism (67), an activity that can be related to Nils’s engagement in necrophilia. In line with the Byronic hero lost in onanism, Downing makes note of the passive object in the necrophilic act: “[F]or some, the corpse as a radically inanimate and passive object is central to the understanding of the perversion type” (4). Seeing necrophilia as the Byronic hero’s way to overcome his discontent provides an insight into Nils’s serial murder of women for sexual pleasure, having murdered sixty women all over the world (332). The consideration of Nils as a Byronic hero who seeks vengeance for the past by victimizing women can help the reader interpret how he chooses his victims in the novel. For instance, Nils thinks Nazlı’s green eyes are black (299), and he even says that his favorite thing about her is her dark black eyes (302). Nils is not only mistaken about the color of Nazlı’s eyes, but he is also wrong about his assumption regarding her age. When he addresses Nazlı as “mademoiselle,” she corrects him and a shadow crosses his face (299), learning that she is married. He explains why he is surprised, telling Nazlı that he thought she was much younger: “I thought you were only seventeen” (299).<sup>148</sup> In his urge to take revenge for the past, Nils may be looking for a black-eyed woman who is seventeen years old and probably yet a virgin, for the four of his victims are not married, and one is married to an old hadji (322). Saying that he does not like women (306),

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<sup>148</sup> “[S]izi ancak on yedi yaşında zannettim” (N. Muhiddin, *İstanbul’da Bir Landru* 299).

perhaps implying (sexually) experienced women, Nils does not take Nazlı with him and leaves her in Istanbul. Interestingly, before flying off in his airplane, he tells Nazlı that she is the first living woman he has ever loved (332), and upon the sound of a possible trespasser, who may turn out to be Nazlı's servant looking for her, Nils heroically leads her outside the cellar (333). The way the novel ends with the separation of Nazlı and Nils can be read with reference to how Lutz contends that the Byronic hero "shapes a concept of subjectivity based on failure," failure in love being included in this sense of subjectivity (67). As a hero-villain who has conflicting emotional traits as an indication of his dark soul, Nils is obsessed with taking vengeance for his past through necrophilic acts and is thus doomed to failure in love, not being able to reciprocate Nazlı's feelings.

Nazlı's feelings for Nils, a situation that primarily discloses itself with the revelation of Nils's secret, are of significance in interpreting *İstanbul'da Bir Landru* as a Gothic novel, showing that Nils is not the only character who bears conflicting emotions. Referring to Freud's claim that repulsion and attraction are two sides of the same coin, Downing points out the coexistence of necrophobia and necrophilia (39). In the novel, this coexistence is expressed by Nazlı with these words: "This man who kisses a dead woman with a desire close to love disgusts me so, and yet, he attracted me with a force I could not withstand. I remained motionless like a needle between two poles that were both equally positive and negative" (331).<sup>149</sup> The way Nazlı is caught in between repulsion and attraction can be linked to Cavallaro's suggestion of the tension between "fear of the individual" and "fear in the individual" as aforementioned, revealing the individual's urge to go beyond the limits posed by

morality as well as the fear for being stigmatized for such curiosity (Cavallaro 49). Though Nazlı does not bear conflicting physical features like Nils, her attraction to him uncovers her incompatible emotions: “I have to confess that I was listening with baffling, disgusting pleasure to Nils’s gory and phenomenal adventure that was so inconceivably violent” (332).<sup>150</sup> At the end of the novel, as Nazlı looks at Nils’s photograph in the newspaper, she expresses her awareness of his both captivating and repulsive character: “The yellow light beaming from his eyes are blinding my eyes once again. Oh God, this mysterious brightness was the way to such a horrible, dark soul!” (336).<sup>151</sup> Lying in her bed, following her encounter with the necrophiliac Nils, Nazlı begins to cry. One would reckon she is crying out of fear or relief and yet her not knowing the reason for her tears leaves this situation unresolved: “What was the source of my tears? This, I still do not know” (336).<sup>152</sup> Nazlı may well be crying for a lost love, not being able to unite with her necrophiliac love. At the end of the novel, this ambiguity signals to the uncertain situation of the individual who is urged to transgress boundaries but also censured for doing so.

The reader is not only left with the question of why Nazlı sheds tears at the end of the novel, but also with the enigma regarding why Nils does not choose to be with Nazlı. Saying that he does not like women (306), perhaps implying he prefers virgins, Nils leaves Nazlı in Istanbul. If the young women are victims of Westernization, like Seda Coşar claims them to be (71), curiously Nazlı does not turn

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<sup>149</sup> “Bir ölü kadını aşka benzeyen bir arzu ile öpen bu adam beni şiddetle tiksindiriyor, mukavemet edilmez bir kudretle de kendine çekiyordu. Aynı tesirde müspet ve menfî kutuplar arasındaki ince bir ibre gibi garip sabitiyle hareketsiz kalmıştım” (N. Muhiddin, *İstanbul’da Bir Landru* 331).

<sup>150</sup> “[B]en de onun bu vahşeti akıl almayacak kadar kanlı ve müthiş olan macerasını, itiraf ederim, anlaşılabilir iğrenç bir zevkle dinliyordum” (N. Muhiddin, *İstanbul’da Bir Landru* 332).

<sup>151</sup> “Gözlerinden fışkıran sarışın ziya gene gözlerimi kamaştırmaya başladı. Ya Rabbi bu ışıltılı esrar meğer ne korkunç ve karanlık bir ruhun menfezleri imiş!” (N. Muhiddin, *İstanbul’da Bir Landru* 336).

<sup>152</sup> “Bu gözyaşlarının kaynağı ne idi? Bunu hâlâ bilmiyorum!” (N. Muhiddin, *İstanbul’da Bir Landru* 336).



out to be another victim of the necrophiliac Landru. Nazlı is probably not a virgin and this may be the very reason she is able to stay alive. In the novel *İstanbul'da Bir Landru*, Nazlı may confront established norms, looking for a love affair despite her being a married woman, and yet whether she is an evil character like Coşar would assume her to be is rather questionable (106-07). Although Nils assumes that Nazlı's eyes are black when they are, in fact, green, he will not be able to see her as a young unmarried woman like his other victims. One possibility that comes to mind is that both Nazlı and Nils are of aristocratic origin, whereas Nils's victims can be considered to be from the bourgeoisie or the homes of well-established figures. Nils being from Denmark and Nazlı being an Ottoman princess, both characters have a servant to tend to their needs: Nils's servant a liminal figure somewhere between dog and human (329, 330) and Nazlı's servant a colored man who takes care of Nazlı despite her rank no longer carrying any significance (296). However, just like Nils lures his victims with their money, he takes Nazlı's money when he loses in gambling, and chances are he has stolen the family heirloom ring Nazlı loses at the end of the novel (334). Nazlı's losing her family heirloom after her encounter with Nils, who is claimed to be a kleptomaniac in the newspapers (336), brings to mind that there may be reasons other than class in the way Nils spares Nazlı's life. Knafo's previously mentioned explanation of the necrophilic urge can shed light onto why Nils does not choose to be with Nazlı. Nils's choice of victims can be related to "the need to become the master," and similarly Nazlı's wish to be a master, in fact, can be interpreted as the reason why Nils does not choose to be with her. This is visible in the way how both Nils and Nazlı declare their own victory after they find themselves racing each other as they swim together in the sea (299): "'I'm the winner!' he said

with a smile. / ‘So am I!’ I replied.”<sup>153</sup> Later in the novel, when Nils tells Nazlı that he will be able to come back only three days later, Nazlı gets angry and tells him he does not need to (309). Nils cannot understand her change of mind and says “This is how women are!”<sup>154</sup> adding that he wants to run away from her (309). Then, after Nazlı learns that Nils is a necrophiliac, she faints and finds herself in his arms (332). She expresses her will to be the master with these words: “Despite all the trouble, the fear, and the thrill, I felt an inexplicable power and might! At last, I had taken possession of a rare kind of murderer” (332).<sup>155</sup> Rather than fully submitting to a Prince’s will like the other victims, Nazlı’s wish to overpower him leads to her survival, though this will mean losing her chance at love.

This section focuses on the analysis of Nils as the Byronic hero and Nazlı as the damsel in distress to look into how the Gothic characters in *İstanbul’da Bir Landru* can function to express not only fear in the individual in the face of modernization but also fear of the individual. The dual hero-villain character and the married and yet romantically adventurous Nazlı cast doubt on interpretations of Nils as a perilous necrophiliac from the West and Nazlı as an evil Ottoman Princess without morals. With reference to Charles Perrault’s tale “Bluebeard” and Henri Landru as the Bluebeard of the twentieth century, the issue of incompatibility in romantic affairs is problematized to convey that disappointment awaits those women who pursue romantic love with a partner who is not their equal. Nils’s necrophilic urge and Nazlı’s wish to take possession of a man are key to understanding the tension between fear in the individual and fear of the individual, creating a Gothic

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<sup>153</sup> “‘Kazandım!’ diye gülümsedi. / ‘Ben de!’ dedim!” (N. Muhiddin, *İstanbul’da Bir Landru* 299).

<sup>154</sup> “İşte kadınlar böyledir!” (N. Muhiddin, *İstanbul’da Bir Landru* 309).

<sup>155</sup> “Bütün buhranlara, korkulara, heyecanlara rağmen içimde tarif edilmez bir kudret ve azamet vardı! Nihayet emsali bulunmaz bir caniye temellük etmişim!” (N. Muhiddin, *İstanbul’da Bir Landru* 332).

atmosphere in this novel. Beyond geography or religion, the individual is spurred to exceed the limits posed by morality, while facing stigmatization for doing so (Cavallaro 49). In this context, it becomes easier to understand why Nils “screams in surprise and fear” when Nazlı sees him making love to a dead woman in his cellar (330) and Nazlı expresses her fear saying “How am I to return among other people?” following her adventure with Nils (333),<sup>156</sup> portraying the impasse of love between sexes in this novel.

Addressing the problems inherent to the pursuit of love in N. Muhiddin’s three Gothic novels, this chapter aims to investigate the possible interpretations of the incestuous marriage of the concubines in *Benliğim Benimdir!* and *Sus Kalbim Sus!*, and the women’s encounter with a necrophiliac man in *İstanbul’da Bir Landru*. Once a leading figure of the women’s movement in Turkey in the early 1920s, Nezihe Muhiddin’s Gothic novels problematize issues such as law, property, inheritance, equality, individual choice, and obligation to one’s natal family that are fundamental in the experiences of marriage or romance —a situation that can be interpreted within the context of the writer’s activism for matrimonial rights. Evidently, N. Muhiddin’s Gothic novels can be read as a subversion of the expectations from the Republican women, bringing into question whether the writer has continued her political struggle through the concealment of Gothic literature. This chapter consequently depicts the impossibility of love between sexes when the woman does not have a status equal to a man’s, a situation that contradicts the tale of the woman freed by her Prince, the Republican man.

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<sup>156</sup> “[B]en artık insanların içine tekrar nasıl döneceğim?!” (N. Muhiddin, *İstanbul’da Bir Landru* 333).

## CHAPTER IV

### BURIED ALIVE: THE CALL FOR DUTY IN PERİDE CELAL'S *YILDIZ TEPE* (1945)

This chapter investigates how *Yıldız Tepe* (*Star Hill*) can be read as a look into the portrayal of the “‘militant citizen’ who has evolved until the end of the 1940s, and who has been ‘burdened with duties’” (Üstel cited in Kadioğlu, “Citizenship and Individuation in Turkey” 33). The reference to the term “militant citizen” sheds light on how the novel can be construed as the frustration of the citizen in the political atmosphere of 1945. In the novel, the background to this atmosphere is depicted through reference to World War I, the narrator describing her generation’s childhood as one that witnessed the torments of the World War (4). Now this generation faces the fear of another war that has broken out right beside the country: “When the cities were burnt down and people began to flee in distress dying in flocks, the first songs of the glory of the war, the speeches full of hope and trust, the official parades of operettas all came to an end. Under the falling stars of those bright dreams, came the

smirk of death” (4).<sup>157</sup> It is in this political atmosphere that this chapter claims that the novel attempts to discuss the possibilities of new designs of identity and community. Emma Hutchison and Roland Bleiker, in their article titled “Grief and the Transformation of Emotions After War,” indicate that following conflicts and wars, the social conditions that are laden with emotions facilitate the “political opportunity” of building new identities and communities (213). The authors state that this chance is often lost (213), due to political projects that counter these unleashed emotions with the aim to re-establish control and political authority (Humphrey cited in Hutchison and Bleiker 213): “Certain forms of emotions —hatred, fear, anger, anxiety, and even guilt and humiliation— often ‘take over’ and become central to the contours of post-war identity and community, while others, such as compassion and wonder, become marginalized” (Volkan; Kirmayer cited in Hutchison and Bleiker 213). Such emotions are evidently problematical in the novel *Yıldız Tepe*, with the curious, Gothic heroine Sâra being sent to Yıldız Tepe that is delineated as “a cemetery where lie the living dead” (43), hinting at a live burial. It is this gloomy house in the countryside where a family mourns over the loss of a son, trying to escape people’s contempt for the son charged with murder and weighed down with the guilt of not being able to save him. With reference to the tension between the city and the countryside, this chapter aims to argue how the character’s suffocation is not only a matter of location but a matter of limited possibilities for constructing new forms of identities and communities with the burden of citizenship duties.

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<sup>157</sup> “[Ş]ehirler yanm[a]ya, insanlar perişan kaçışmaya, sürüler halinde ölmeye başlayıp da harbin o ilk zafer şarkıları ümit ve güvenç dolu nutukları, operet resmi geçitleri, sona ererek gözleri kamaştıran o parlak hülyaların dökülen yıldızları altından ölümün korkunç yüzü sırtınca [bu müthiş felâket hudutlarımızdan uzak olmakla beraber bizim de genç başlarımız ürkeklikle dikildi]” (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 4).

Sâra writes her story starting with how she leaves Istanbul and goes to Yıldız Tepe which is close to a town on the Black Sea coast.<sup>158</sup> Ahmet Kılıçoğlu, as a distant relative, takes her there where she meets the family members and finds herself to be rather lonely in their bleak house. The wife of Ahmet Kılıçoğlu, Fatma, roams around like a spirit and constantly looks down at the ground, her eyes not meeting any other's. Fatma's mother and Ahmet Kılıçoğlu's aunt, known as Grandmother in the family, is blind and yet she somehow senses what is going on. Cemile, a wild-natured young girl, is Fatma's niece who has begun to live with the Kılıçoğlu family after the loss of her parents. The two sons in the family, İbrahim and Ali, can be considered as opposites: İbrahim often resembles a savage and, similar to his father, is a reserved man. Ali is often treated like a child in the family and is interested in poetry. Sâra feels as if the family has a secret and she is intent to learn it.

Following Sâra's birthday, a storm breaks out at night and Sâra hears Cemile having a fit. She faints at the sight of seeing İbrahim in Cemile's room with a whip in his hand, thinking İbrahim is beating Cemile. Sâra wants to leave Yıldız Tepe after this fearful night but Grandmother calms her down. She forgets about this wish to leave when Ali takes her to Doctor Faruk's house where she meets the doctor's family. Cemile and İbrahim's rudeness on the one hand, and Ali's obsession with her on the other, leave only Grandmother in the house for Sâra to talk with. After Ali tells Sâra about his feelings for her, forcibly kissing her on the neck, she starts to avoid him. On a walk with Grandmother, the old woman asks Sâra what is wrong but she remains silent about the incident with Ali. Grandmother tells Sâra that there are

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<sup>158</sup> Pelin Aslan Ayar relates this narrative technique to “metafiction” (281). Based on what the narrator tells the reader, Aslan Ayar interprets this choice of technique as the narrator’s way of making the events easier to follow, even though the narrator sometimes switches to the future, commenting on

secrets that she cannot tell her about and that she should not be hasty in judging the family. One day, Sâra finds the grave of the third son of the family, Osman, in a garden nearby. On her return from a visit to Doctor Faruk's house, she hears İbrahim telling Ali to stay away from her. İbrahim and Sâra have another fight and İbrahim leaves Yıldız Tepe to go to the highlands. Grandmother convinces Sâra to stay at Yıldız Tepe and tells her about their family history but not about what has happened to Osman. Ali, one night, announces to Sâra that he wants them to get married and upon Sâra's refusal he wraps his arms around her. Cemile sees Sâra slapping him and joins the brawl to protect her cousin. The next day when İbrahim has come to visit his brother's grave, Cemile explains to the other family members what has happened the night before, leading to İbrahim asking Sâra to leave Yıldız Tepe. Sâra opens up to Grandmother about the incidents with Ali and Cemile the night before, and how İbrahim has heard Cemile's accusations about Sâra trying to seduce Ali.

Doctor Faruk's mother sends Sâra an invitation to go to the highlands where İbrahim is staying, and although Ali warns her not to go, she decides to accept the invitation. There she tries to explain to İbrahim what has happened with Ali, but İbrahim does not listen to her. He says that he is going to prove that he is as heartless a man as she thinks he is. Fearing what he will do to her, Sâra calls out his name for help, and this way they understand that love each other, resolving the conflicts between them. İbrahim tells her that they cannot be together after that night, when shortly Ali comes with the intention to save Sâra and shoots İbrahim in the shoulder. Doctor Faruk treats İbrahim's wound at Yıldız Tepe and tells the family that Ali is at his house. Cemile says that it was again a woman who had killed Osman and that they have

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events as if they have already happened (Aslan Ayar 281). Looking into the function of this technique based on concrete examples from the novel may lead to further discussion.

killed her. Sâra suspects İbrahim to have killed the woman, and this is why he has said they cannot be together. Grandmother tells her the secrets about Osman's death and about the way she has murdered the woman who led to their loss. The day after, Grandmother passes away and Sâra returns to Istanbul to live with her mother as she waits for İbrahim to come back to her. İbrahim completes his military service but still keeps his distance.

#### **4.1 The Coming of Age of the Lone Child-Woman**

Dani Cavallaro, in his book titled *The Gothic Vision*, points out to the ambivalence of children in narratives of darkness due to their relation to innocence and lack of worldly experience on the one hand, yet on the other hand, their perception as a threat to the adult society (135). He also adds that young women are also among the frequent victims of Gothic families and that they are treated as children in power structures regulated by the patriarchy (142). The uncertainty associated with the child is particularly a focal point in understanding a similar kind of dubiousness associated with the child-woman, a figure that is represented by Sâra, the Gothic female protagonist in *Yıldız Tepe*. Although Sâra is a young lady in her early twenties (10), the grandmother of the Gothic family she is forced to stay with at Yıldız Tepe always calls her "child" in a way that overlooks that she is coming of age and that she may have her own individual will. Sâra acknowledges this situation in the novel and says "[Grandmother] couldn't really hide that she didn't like my name" (36).<sup>159</sup> The first section in this chapter aims to dwell on how the coming of age of the child-woman is portrayed in the novel as a glimpse at the possible realities of women in Turkey in the political atmosphere of the period in which the novel was published.

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<sup>159</sup> "İsmimi pek beğenmediğini gizleyememişti" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 36).



Ahmet Murat Aytac, in his book on the formation of the idea of the modern family in Turkey, mentions how autonomy and rationality, as principles that establish political modernity, are shaped within the context of the socio-political history of the family (117). Whereas autonomy points to the individual's relative independence from the family and society, rationality implies exceeding a single individual's sense of rationality, often in a way that autonomy and rationality may conflict with each other (117). In the novel *Yıldız Tepe*, Sâra's graduating from high school and being sent to Yıldız Tepe to the home of Ahmet Kılıçoğlu problematizes the young woman's autonomy under circumstances where she is expected to behave according to the demands of a patriarchal figure. Sâra, as the narrator, decides to depict the events starting with the day she receives her diploma from the boarding school she attends in Istanbul. World War II has broken out one year ago and Sâra wishes that the war will end soon so that she can get back with her family, her father working as a consul, and her parents living in a foreign country (4). During her final exam period, she receives a letter from her father telling her that they do not think it is safe for her to come to where they live, the war having broken out (5). Although her parents are not in danger, still they cannot risk asking Sâra to live in this foreign country with them under these conditions: "Your mother and I can take care of ourselves. But for a young girl like you, it wouldn't be right" (6).<sup>160</sup> Her parents' thinking that she will not be able to take care of herself contradicts with Sâra's having been able to manage things ever since she has been sent to boarding school, reaching the age to attend school: "[W]hen I was old enough to go to school, I was left alone, often living far away from them as I attended a boarding school throughout my childhood, till I had

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<sup>160</sup> "Biz nasıl olsa annenle beraber başımızın çaresine bakarız. Fakat senin gibi genç bir kız için bu doğru olmaz" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 6).

grown up to become a young lady” (5).<sup>161</sup> Being sent away from her family at an early age in her life, Sâra confesses that this situation has given her "a timid and wild nature" (5),<sup>162</sup> portraying the ambivalent nature ascribed to child-women in Gothic narratives as mentioned in the introduction of this section with reference to Cavallaro. Although her father asks Sâra what she thinks of their plans for her, he writes her their final decision, telling her that a distant relative of her mother, Ahmet Kılıçoğlu, is to come to get her on the last day of school to take her to a town on the coast to the Black Sea, to a place called Yıldız Tepe (6). When her best friend Nihal asks her to spend the summer with her family, Sâra knows she has no other choice than to do what her parents have asked from her: "I was used to obeying my mother and my father. I could not object to them" (6).<sup>163</sup> Having got used to obeying instructions, waiving her sense of autonomy, she finds herself waiting for Ahmet Kılıçoğlu to pick her up on the last day of school.

Obedience to the father and acceptance of the role as “child-woman” in *Yıldız Tepe* brings along a sense of security to Sâra. Graduating from high school, she feels that her classmate Nihal and herself understand that they have come to a new threshold to "an untrodden and long path of life that extends to the unknown, a path that they will have to walk without any teacher, guide or even without any parents, all alone" (8).<sup>164</sup> Still, despite all her curiosity about what lies ahead, this is a path her parents have chosen for her, and she tries to overcome her fear by remembering how her father used to encourage her when she was younger: "My daughter may be young but

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<sup>161</sup> “[T]ahsil çağım gelince yalnız başıma kalan ve çocukluktan genç kızlığa kadar leyli bir mektepte ekseri onlardan uzak yaş[a]yan ben oldum” (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 5).

<sup>162</sup> “tabiatımın biraz ürkek, vahşi oluşu” (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 5).

<sup>163</sup> “Fakat anama, babama itaat etmeye alışmışım. Onlara itiraz edemezdim” (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 6).

she is a brave girl" (9).<sup>165</sup> The instruction laid out for the child-woman here is for her to harbor the courage she once needed to be accustomed to being sent away to a boarding school. Sâra says that she wants to be worthy of her father's praise (9). Raymond W. Moseley, in his book titled *The Gothic Heroine and the Nature of the Gothic Novel*, pinpoints "filial duty" and "filial obedience" as indicative of changes that occurred in the family unit in the Gothic narratives of the eighteenth century (7). A similar theme uncovers itself through Sâra's obedience and her urge for acceptance, particularly when the father-daughter relation in *Yıldız Tepe* is taken into consideration. To fulfill her father's expectations, or due to her timid nature, Sâra has displayed her courage several times at school. Nihal and her classmates have told Sâra many times how strong she is with the way she does not fear the teachers, how she attends classes even when she is ill, and when she quarrels with the other female students (9). Regardless of her courage and strength, Sâra is not asked to join her parents in a foreign country where the war has broken out, and she has to wait for times of peace, or their return. During her stay at Yıldız Tepe, Sâra also says that though she is known for her boldness, in fact, she was but a "fearful, anxious, and timid little girl" (68).<sup>166</sup> Till she is back with her parents, Sâra looks for guidance or acceptance to overcome her fears, and she often needs to agree that she is still but a "girl" to find a sense of security when she finds herself alone in a Gothic setting.

Sâra would rather stay with her parents or her friend Nihal and is angry with her parents' decision. Anger as an emotion in Sâra is a critical theme in the novel in the sense it becomes indicative of her situation of being torn between autonomy and

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<sup>164</sup> "Önümüzde meçhule doğru giden yepyeni, uzun bir yol, artık hocasız, yol göstericisiz, hattâ anasız, babasız tek başımıza yürümemiz lâzım gelen bir hayat yolu uzandığını o da belki benim gibi görüyor" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 8).

<sup>165</sup> "Benim kızım küçük, fakat cesur bir kızdır" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 9).

rationality. Mary Holmes in her introductory article titled “The Importance of Being Angry: Anger in Political Life,” mentions Lupton’s study stating how emotionality brought about resistance against the dominant rational control of the late eighteenth century (126). Holmes refers to the Romantic discourse in which emotions were considered the source of human action (126). Similar to this sense of discourse of emotions as resistance, Sâra’s anger about being sent to Yıldız Tepe is expressed in the novel. As Sâra waits for Ahmet Kılıçoğlu to come to take her to Yıldız Tepe, she starts complaining: "How can they force me to live somewhere out of nowhere with complete strangers!" (8).<sup>167</sup> She is again resentful towards her parents, once she meets the members of the Kılıçoğlu family: "How was I going to tolerate these people? A blind old woman, this wild girl, and this woman who talks without looking at one's face, her voice as dull as a record player that’s been wound up. Oh my! What is to say about my parents who sent me away to this remote place among people who are not even the least friendly!" (16).<sup>168</sup> Holmes also conveys that the praise of emotions, due to the dangers that emotions may entail, have come along with the suggestions to repress anger (127). In *Yıldız Tepe*, Sâra is, in fact, angry with her father for not asking her to come and stay with them, as well as with her mother who does not leave her father on his own (8). However, she says that although she is angry, she will not open up her feelings and that she attaches significance to remaining composed: “I can get annoyed, furious, and even find myself losing my mind. Still, I don’t easily shed a tear or express my feelings” (8).<sup>169</sup> Sâra’s refusal to

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<sup>166</sup> “korkak, telâşçı, evhamlı küçük bir kızdı başka bir şey değildim” (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 68).

<sup>167</sup> “Beni nasıl böyle bir dağ başında, yabancı kimselerle yaşama[y]a mecbur ediyorlar!” (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 8).

<sup>168</sup> “Bunlara nasıl tahammül edecektim? Bu gözleri görmeyen ihtiyar, bu vahşi kız, insanın yüzüne bakmadan kurulmuş bu plâk gibi konuşan bu donuk sesli kadın.. Hay Allahım! Şu anama babama beni böyle bir dağ başına, hiç de dost görünmeyen insanların arasına attıkları için ne demeli?” (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 16).

<sup>169</sup> “Kızlar, öfkelenir, hiddetten deliye dönerim. Fakat kolay kolay ağlamam ve hissiyatımı dışarı vurmam” (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 8).

show her anger can be regarded as her way of trying to fulfill the filial duty that is given to her by the father of the family, a patriarchal figure that intends to contain the child-woman.

Repressing her anger by intending to get used to things in a civilized manner is the way Sâra copes with the differences at Yıldız Tepe. Although she is resentful about being sent to Yıldız Tepe, she is filled with courage and joy when she sees the scenery from her room: "I'll just get used to it. These meadows, mountains, and hills are not that bad. Tomorrow I'll start to see what there is around here" (17).<sup>170</sup> Then on her birthday, Sâra again expresses her hopes for the years to come: "Later, I would be together with my mother and father. I was going to see new countries and get back together with my friends and loved ones. There was no reason in complaining just because these were being postponed. I had many long years ahead of me to be happy" (40).<sup>171</sup> Her anger about being forced to act against her will seems to be temporary and her hopes become a source of strength for her to get used to Yıldız Tepe as she waits for the war to end. It is this intention to bear with the situation along with her sense of curiosity that will provide her a sense of autonomy at Yıldız Tepe. After her first days at Yıldız Tepe, Sâra feels contradicting emotions of boredom and fascination. She receives a letter from her mother, writing that the Kılıçoğlu family has lived something devastating in the past and that out of respect, the past should remain as a secret (28). Her mother knows that she is going to be curious about the family, and she wants her to promise that she does not ask anything about their history (28). Nevertheless, regardless of her mother's instructions, she

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<sup>170</sup> "Canım ne olacak alışırım, bu kırlar, dağlar, tepeler fena değil, yarından itibaren etrafı bir dolaşırım" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 17).

cannot help but wonder: "What did they want to hide from me? What could that tragedy in the past be about?" (26).<sup>172</sup> Staying at Yıldız Tepe, Sâra feels that her curiosity about the family's secret is like that of a child (30), a child that does not obey her mother's wishes. Yet, there are situations in which fear of the family's dark manners make her think that she would rather not learn their secret if, in the end, she is going to be like them (45). This indicates how the curiosity of the child-woman does not comply with getting used to things, or accepting instructions as they are. Evidently, it is this sense of curiosity that endows Sâra with a sense of autonomy that has been retrieved from her by her parents who have sent her to Yıldız Tepe.

The new setting and the family's secret are not the only factors that grow curiosity in Sâra. There are several incidents in the novel where Sâra takes a look at her reflection and comes to an understanding that she is no longer a child. At the beginning of the novel, as she waits for Ahmet Kılıçoğlu to come and take her to Yıldız Tepe, she sees her reflection in the window (7). No longer wearing a school uniform, she relates the difference in her appearance, with reference to becoming a woman: "I have now taken my first step from being a student, or rather, being a child to being a young woman" (7).<sup>173</sup> When Ahmet Kılıçoğlu comes to the school, he tells Sâra that the last time he had seen her, she was a baby and that now she has become a young lady (10). He takes her to Yıldız Tepe, and though distant in his ways, he attends to her needs and keeps an eye on her on the way there as if he were doing a duty expected from him (11). The duty given to Ahmet Kılıçoğlu by the patriarchal

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<sup>171</sup> "Bir müddet sonra annem ve babamla beraber olacaktım. Yeni memleketler görecektim, arkadaşlarıma, sevdiklerime kavuşacaktım. Bütün bunlar biraz gecikti diye, şikâyet etme[y]e lüzum yoktu. Önümde mesut olmak için uzun seneler vardı" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 40).

<sup>172</sup> "Fakat benden neyi saklamak istiyorlardı? Geçmişteki felâket ne olabilirdi?" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 26).

structure is to ensure the security of the child-woman who is perceived to pose a threat with her physical appearance.

Two and a half months later after her arrival to Yıldız Tepe, her parents send her gifts and a letter for her birthday (39). Having to celebrate this occasion away from her parents for the first time, she feels upset and says: "Does it really matter it's my birthday? I had grown up, I was no longer the child I was before" (39).<sup>174</sup>

Nonetheless, she gathers herself together and decides to enjoy her gifts, a gold bracelet and a white dress. The birthday gifts may be considered as signs of how her father wants to instruct her: "My father wanted to raise me as free from a mind full of confused thoughts and a heart full of fears and doubts, carefree and simple, far from being wiped out by emotions, as a materialistic person" (119).<sup>175</sup> In her parents' letter, her mother asks her to wear the dress on her birthday and to go outside and enjoy herself (39). Sâra realizes that her mother has no idea of what kind of a town she has sent her daughter to (39), implying that she is, in fact, able to question her parents' wishes. The parents sending Sâra presents she cannot comfortably use in Yıldız Tepe can also be interpreted as their unawareness of the sharp distinction between the modern consumption patterns in the city and the realities of rural life. During her stay at Yıldız Tepe, she has not minded her looks and she says that she wore a casual outfit as if she were back in school (40). Once she wears the dress, puts on the bracelet, and wears high-heels, she looks at her reflection in the mirror and blushes when she sees she is lady-like once again (40). Her appearance surprises the

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<sup>173</sup> "Böylece talebelikten, daha dogrusu çocukluktan genç kızlığa ilk adımı atmış oluyordum" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 7).

<sup>174</sup> "Doğduğum günün ne ehemmiyeti vardı? Büyümüşüm, eski çocuk değildim" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 39).

family members at the breakfast table and Cemile mocks her for the way she looks as if she were going somewhere special (41). Cemile's words put her in a rage and she tells the Kılıçoğlu family that it is her birthday and that her parents have asked her to wear the gifts they sent her (41). İbrahim tells her that the household does not celebrate birthdays, but commemorates the dead (43). In her article titled “Cinselliğin İnkârı: Büyük Toplumsal Projelerin Nesnesi Olarak Türk Kadınları” (“The Denial of Sexuality: Turkish Women as the Objects of Grand Social Projects”), Ayşe Kadioğlu contends that Turkish women have been transformed into symbols in the grand projects of Kemalism, political Islam, and socialism (91-92). According to Kadioğlu, all three projects “assigned women the impossible duty of establishing a balance between the traditional and the modern” (92).<sup>176</sup> This impossible duty is also given to Sâra whose attempt to grant her parents' wish ends with the surprise and admiration of some of the household members, but the mockery and condemnation of others. Also, with this situation, the differences between the rituals of the city and those of the province are revealed, the visitor from the city is accustomed to rejoicing on birthdays, as the family in the town mourns for a lost past. As a young woman celebrating growth, Sâra is alone in this faraway town, in a home that has fixated on death.

In time, Ali starts to have feelings for Sâra and, one day, coming to Sâra's room to ask her for a book, he kisses her on the neck. Sâra takes a look at her lady-like figure in the mirror, and her physical appearance makes her think that she is guilty of what has just happened (78). She expresses how she feels, now that she has grown up: "If I

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<sup>175</sup> “[B]enim kafası karışık düşüncelerden, kalbi endişe ve tereddütlerden âzade, serbest, sade; hislerine mağlup olmaktan uzak[,] oldukça maddî bir insan olarak yetişmemi istemişti” (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 119).



were younger, maybe I would have liked a young man's admiration. I would even be amused. I wouldn't refrain from playing with his feelings. But Yıldız Tepe's heavy and longing atmosphere will not allow for childish pleasures and games" (80).<sup>177</sup>

Sâra is evidently aware of the realities of the province and the forbiddance of extramarital sexual intimacy. A. Ömer Türkeş in his essay titled "Orada Bir Taşra Var Uzakta..." ("That Town May Be Far..."), points out to sexuality as being one of the most problematic areas of the province with its being a matter of privacy, its denial, and its sole legitimization through marriage (180). It is within this context, Sâra's acknowledgment of her physical appearance as a threat to the Kılıçoğlu family causes her to fear that the household will learn about Ali's feelings for her.

Grandmother asks Sâra to join her in a walk and Sâra feels as if she has no choice but to obey her (81), being a child-woman. When Grandmother asks her what is wrong, Sâra avoids telling the old woman what has just happened (82). The child-woman instead says that she is getting used to things (82), and hides her realization of her presence as a threat, being left alone and unprotected against Ali's sexual advances.

Supernatural darkness is attributed to Sâra's sexuality by Cemile and the townspeople. Cemile perceives Sâra as a "red devil, a man-hunter, a cursed girl" (123).<sup>178</sup> The day Ali takes Sâra to Doctor Faruk's house, the town's children run after their car and Ali explains their attention, telling her that, with her red hair and green eyes, for them she is like a fairy from a tale, and that she is different from the town's women, who are exhausted with housework, or the public officials' wives that

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<sup>176</sup> "kadınlara geleneksellik ile modernlik arasında denge kurmak gibi imkânsız bir görev yüklüyordu" (Kadioğlu, "Cinselliğin İnkârı" 92).

<sup>177</sup> "Belki eskiden olsa genç bir adamın hayranlığı hoşuma gidebilir, beni eğlendirirdi bile. Onun sevgisi ile oynamaktan çekinmezdim. Fakat Yıldız Tepe['] nin ağır, ihtiras dolu havası çocukça heveslere, eğlencelere müsait değildi" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 80).

<sup>178</sup> "Kızıl şeytan [...]. Erkek avcısı, uğursuz kız..." (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 123).

wear too much makeup and are overweight sitting all day gossiping (62-63). This perception as the dark other in *Yıldız Tepe* can be interpreted as Gothicizing the unfamiliar. Ali says that the townspeople are not used to strangers and that they will get used to her as she becomes like one of the family at Yıldız Tepe (63). He also adds that the natives call Yıldız Tepe as "Şeytan Tepe" (Devil's Hill) and that they consider the family as uncanny people who mingle with spirits (64). Thus, Sâra is seen as if she were a supernatural being in the town, a child-woman who is different from the others, both in terms of her physical appearance and the people she stays with. A similar understanding of Gothicizing the other can be seen in the way Sâra apprehends the town and the members of the Kılıçoğlu family. Upon her arrival to the town from Istanbul with Ahmet Kılıçoğlu, she describes the lifeless atmosphere through this description: "The cramped, small, dark parcels; the low-set houses with dim windows that looked like empty, dazed eyes; the narrow, murky streets; the one or two shadows that quietly paced to and fro in the station; indeed, it was a suffocating sight" (11).<sup>179</sup> In her fight with İbrahim in his cabin in the highlands, Sâra says: "Do you want me to thank you and your family for suffocating me with loneliness and boredom, for subjecting me to your strange, mysterious gaze, your enigmatic demeanor, for even making me shiver out of fear?" (150).<sup>180</sup> Consequently, similar to how the townspeople have Gothicized Sâra as the visitor from the city as well as the mysterious Kılıçoğlu family that has moved to this town from Istanbul years ago, Sâra deems both the family and the town as the dark other.

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<sup>179</sup> "Bu birbirine sıkışmış, küçük, karanlık kümeler, pencereleri fersiz, ölü gözler gibi buğulu basık damlı evler, dar karanlık sokaklar, garda şuraya buraya sessizce, gidip gelen bir iki gölge doğrusu iç boğucu bir görünüşü" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 11).

<sup>180</sup> "Aranızda yalnızlıktan, sıkıntıdan boğulduğum, garip, esrarlı bakışlarınız, muammalı tavırlarınız karşısında, hattâ zaman zaman korkudan titrediğim için mi, size teşekkür edeyim[] istiyorsunuz?" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 150).

Birol Caymaz, in his article titled “Citizenship Education in Turkey,” describes homeland education in the 1940s as generally a continuation of the citizenship inculcated in the years of the establishment of the Republic (210). According to his study of the textbooks used in homeland education lessons, much focus is given to villages and rural life (210). Within this context, one can read of the militant citizen’s duty of attaining civilization, as indicated by Üstel in her book chapter titled “Türk Yurttaşının Karakter Özellikleri: Medenî ve Yurtsever” (“The Character of the Turkish Citizen: Civilized and Patriotic”), with reference to the way Sâra describes the Kılıçoğlu family members, especially İbrahim and Cemile, as “primitive,” “savage,” “vulgar” or “wild.” During her visit to Doctor Faruk’s house, Sâra thinks that Ali comes to this house to get the affection he does not receive at Yıldız Tepe but then she strangely feels that: “Although [the Kılıçoğlu family’s] love is silent, without pretentiousness, and even primitive, it was love that one could always trust” (67).<sup>181</sup> When Doctor Faruk and his family talk about visiting Sarı Çiçek Yaylası (The Yellow Flower Highlands) where İbrahim lives, Sâra says “I almost screamed ‘No, I don’t want to go there. I don’t want to see that cave where that savage lives’, but instead, I calmly said, ‘Yes, we should go there one day. It’ll be a curious trip’” (70).<sup>182</sup> Later in the novel, İbrahim and Cemile scoff at the way Sâra is interested with how they draw water from a well (73), or they cut wood (75), claiming that life at Yıldız Tepe is not suitable for a city woman. Sâra considers İbrahim drawing water from the well to be a way of “exercising the body” (73), illustrating her mindset perceiving the world through her citizenship duty of achieving civilization. In the article “Cumhuriyet Döneminde Modern Kadın ve Erkek Kimliklerinin

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<sup>181</sup> “Onların sevgisi, gösterişsiz, hattâ belki biraz iptidâî fakat her zaman için dayanılır, güvenilir bir sevgi idi” (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 67).

Oluşumu: Kemalist Kadın Kimliği ve ‘Münevver Erkekler’” (“The Foundation of the Identities of the Modern Woman and Man in the Republican Era: The Kemalist Woman Identity and ‘Enlightened Men’”), Ayşe Durakbaşı refers to how the weekly newspaper *Yeni Adam* published in the 1930s and 1940s, portrayed the new man as one “who uses the forces of nature for the benefit of the society, who has become specialized, who is socialist, industrialist, and sportive,” particularly in the writings of İsmayıl Hakkı Baltacıoğlu (43). Although Sâra thinks İbrahim is exercising, he replies that he is simply a villager tending his garden (73). As İbrahim and Cemile are drawing water from the well, Cemile spills water on Sâra on purpose and Sâra yells, “I find you to be wild and vulgar. You two are the most despicable, most heartless creatures on earth!” (74).<sup>183</sup> The way İbrahim and Cemile despise Sâra for her urban manners and Sâra’s emphasis on the lack of civilization in *Yıldız Tepe* bring to mind the Republican woman’s impossible duty of balancing the traditional and the modern in terms of the citizen’s duty of attaining civilization.

In her book titled *The Rural Gothic in American Popular Culture: Backwoods Horror and Terror in the Wilderness*, Bernice M. Murphy compares two prominent popular culture features screened on TV in the US in the 1970s, to delineate a binary opposition of backwoods families. Bearing in mind how the townspeople in *Yıldız Tepe* considers the Kılıçoğlu family and Sâra as supernatural beings, along with how Sâra constantly refers to the Kılıçoğlu family as savages, many similarities between Murphy’s description of the “bad” backwoods families and the townspeople as well as the Kılıçoğlu family in *Yıldız Tepe* stand out, such families being “racist and

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<sup>182</sup> “Az kalsın ‘Hayır ben istemiyorum, ben o vahşinin kapandığı ini görmek istemiyorum’ diye bağıracaktım. Halbuki gayet sakin ‘Evet bir gün gitsek, pek meraklı bir gezinti olacak’ demiştim” (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 70).

ignorant/uneducated,” “feral, savage and degenerate” as well as “brutal, callous, and psychotically idiosyncratic” (149). As opposed to the dark “savages” of *Yıldız Tepe*, Grandmother sees Sâra as “human”: “With your joy, open heart and good character, you brought a little light and hope to this dark place. You could do good for all of us. It was as if we were buried alive here. You were coming from among humans, from a brand new world” (84).<sup>184</sup> It is within this context, Sâra is given the filial duty of achieving civilization and her plight lies in the situation that she is left alone in fulfilling this impossible task. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk lays emphasis on the necessity for women’s commitment to her duty in one of his speeches (1923): “Raising children with the features the country needs depends on the mother bearing these features in their own character. This is why our women have to be even more enlightened, more progressive, more informed than our men” (cited in Feyzioğlu 595).<sup>185</sup> The Turkish woman being left alone in this citizenship duty is also mentioned by Serpil Sancar in her book *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti: Erkekler Devlet, Kadınlar Aile Kurar* (*The Gender of Turkish Modernization: Men Build the State, Women Build the Family*): “The woman seems to be unfairly given the whole function of creating happiness for the family which is assigned the duty of modernizing social life” (251).<sup>186</sup> Sâra regarded as “human” by the Grandmother cannot fulfill the duty of attaining civilization as she is left lingering on her promise to Grandmother to marry İbrahim.

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<sup>183</sup> “[S]izi vahşi, kaba buluyorum. İkiniz de dünyanın en sevimsiz, en kalpsiz mahluklarısınız” (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 74).

<sup>184</sup> “Neş’en, açık kalbin, iyi huylarınla bu karanlık yere biraz ışık, ümit getirmiştin. Hepimize iyiliğin dokunabilirdi. Bizler buraya gömülmüş gibiydik. Sense insanların arasından, yepyeni bir dünyadan geliyordun” (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 84).

<sup>185</sup> “Bugünün anaları için gerekli özellikleri taşıyan evlât yetiştirmek... pek çok yüksek özelliği şahıslarında taşımalarına bağlıdır. Bu sebeple kadınlarımız hattâ erkeklerden daha çok aydın, daha çok feyizli, daha fazla bilgili olmaya mecburdurlar” (Atatürk cited in Feyzioğlu 595).

The conclusion to *Yıldız Tepe* gives shape to the reading of the tensions between city and province as contributing to the discussion of the impossibility of the filial duty of attaining civilization on one's own. Sâra returning to Istanbul, waits for İbrahim whose whereabouts are not known for two years. Willing to keep her promise to Grandmother, this situation shows that the female remains burdened with duties that cannot be fulfilled. Catherine Lutz, in her article titled "Emotions and Feminist Theories," refers to Jessica Benjamin's work that looks into emotional development and particularly into the deformities of social life that encourage women's participation in her own submissiveness (108). With reference to Benjamin, the girl's developmental progress is described as one that proceeds towards "self-abnegation" which involves feelings such as: "female fear of independence, women's attempts to control anxiety about separation through service, and their 'longing for recognition' in the midst of a gender polarized world in which men are subjects, women [are] objects" (108). In this atmosphere, as the Gothic heroine, Sâra's survival depends on finding a way not to become an individual, either by obeying power figures, getting used to forced conditions, or waiting for better days. Peculiarly, the female's burden in Peride Celal's novels has also been considered as one of woman's strengths, whereas it maintains the existence of this unfair situation. Sümeyye Çakallı, in her MA thesis on the female characters in P. Celal's novels, concludes her study by asserting that the female characters in the writer's novels cannot distance themselves from love, and though unhappy with or without love, these characters muster their strength from within (214). Torn between autonomy and rationality throughout *Yıldız Tepe*, Sâra's return to Istanbul may be deemed as a signal of her individuality. However, she in fact perpetuates the imprisonment she feels at Yıldız Tepe, by

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<sup>186</sup> "Toplumsal yaşamı modernleştirme ile görevlendirilmiş ailenin mutluluk ve saadet üretimi işlevi tek taraflı olarak kadınlara yüklenmiş gibidir" (Sancar 251).

continuing to carry the burden of the impossible duty of “attaining civilization as a maternal figure” without any imminent probability for marriage.

This section has delved into the modernization of the Turkish family within the context of the tension between autonomy and rationality to determine Sâra’s role as a young girl coming of age in *Yıldız Tepe*. As a child-woman who is expected to continue her subordination to the father’s instructions, Sâra’s submissiveness can be read in the context of the Turkish woman’s complying with the filial duty assigned to her by the father of the country. The child-woman’s anger and her curiosity become focal points to see how often individual autonomy is sacrificed for the sake of collective rationality. Nevertheless, this sense of rationality bears conflicts within, regarding the traditional and modern roles of the woman who tries to achieve civilization, further burdening the woman. Sâra’s suffocation in her country gives the reader the idea that the burden of citizenship may just as well be as life-threatening as it is to move to a foreign country during the war. Despite her moving back to Istanbul, Sâra’s provincial boredom continues, for as Nurdan Gürbilek writes in her book chapter titled “Taşra Sıkıntısı” (“Provincial Tedium”), this is a state that can be understood by “those who live their life as a province,” by “those whose life is out-of-place and undeveloped” like one’s childhood (56). Keeping her promise to Grandmother to get married to İbrahim, Sâra is buried alive in Istanbul as a child-woman, listening to her father’s instruction:

Do not think or analyze life as if it were an enigma, a mystery, a matter of life-and-death. Try to seek and find the happiness you deserve within limits set by society, try to enjoy everything in this life that will one day come to an

end. If you think deeply [...], maybe you might become a more insightful, a more mature person but you won't be happy.<sup>187</sup> (119)<sup>188</sup>

#### 4.2 Gothic Law: In Limbo Between the Traditional and the Modern

Geoffrey Swenson, in his analytical essay titled “Legal Pluralism in Theory and Practice,” explains legal pluralism in terms of the co-existence of two or more legal systems of the state and non-state actors such as “custom, tradition, religion, family lineage, [and] powers not sanctioned by the law” (438-40). The state and non-state actors maintain a fluid relationship that can be described through theoretical archetypes listed as “combative, competitive, cooperative, and complementary” (442), this variety of relationships disclosing that the state and non-state actors can either work together or in opposition to each other in shaping the members of the society. This section aims to bring legal modernity in *Yıldız Tepe* into question, particularly with reference to the enforcement of the citizen's duty of inculcation of patriotism (Üstel cited in Kadioğlu, “Citizenship and Individuation in Turkey” 33), which can run counter to the individual's rights to the extent that Modern law does not always serve justice. It is also in the situation of such vulnerability in Peride Celal's novel that Traditional law can impose its own special laws in a way that both legal systems function to the disadvantage of the member of the society, altogether creating a Gothic environment of insecurity for the individual, burying the citizen alive.

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<sup>187</sup> cf. “The association between imagination and trouble is powerful. It teaches us how the happiness duty for women is about the narrowing of horizons, about giving up an interest in what lies beyond the familiar” (Ahmed 61).

<sup>188</sup> “Hayatı bir muamma, esrarlı, vahim bir şey gibi düşünme[y]e, tahlil etm[e]ye kalkma. Cemiyetin çizdiği hudutlar içinde hakkın olan saadeti aram[a]ya, bulm[a]ya, şu ölümlü dünyada kendine her şeyi



Although the citizenization in the 1940s extensively involves the spread of Republican values among the villagers, Birol Caymaz pinpoints the more racist tone in these textbooks when compared to the early 1920s (210). This racist tone can be sensed in how a nation is defined in Homeland Education textbooks in the 1940s, grounding it on essentialist attributes that can allegedly be regarded as “objective” with their emphasis on identities based on land, blood, and language (210). The urge to instill citizenship, however, also includes a sexist tone in this textbook. In his article, Caymaz cites from the introductory statements from Tarık Emin Rona’s fourth-grade textbook, *Homeland Education Lessons*, published in 1941: “Just like me, millions of *sons of the Turks* live in these villages and cities” (Rona cited in Caymaz 210).<sup>189</sup> The first person singular voice is highlighted in this citation because, according to Caymaz, it encourages the “internalization of patriotism” (210). The book aiming to inculcate patriotism in the “sons of the Turks” is again a point to make mention of. This can be understood in the context of the duty that is assigned to the sons in terms of protecting the country through conscription, for students are asked to take an oath in the textbook: “I shall happily march to death for the protection of the homeland and the survival of the Turkish nation” (Rona cited in Caymaz 210). Caymaz comments on this oath as a way “to ensure that they will devote their individual existence to the Turkish homeland and Turkishness” (210).<sup>190</sup> The sons’ giving away their existence to the Turkish homeland by enrollment to the army not only maintains a racist tone, but also one that excludes the female and the family life: “National sentiment is such a boundless feeling that we love our nation

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zevketme[y]e bak. Fazla derin düşünme[y]e [...] kalkarsan[,] belki daha anlayışlı, mütekâmil bir insan olursun a[m]a mesut olamazsın” (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 119).

<sup>189</sup> “Bu köy ve şehirlerde benim gibi milyonlarca *Türkoğlu* yaşıyor” (Rona 2).

<sup>190</sup> “And içerim büyüklerim: [...]Yurdu korumak, Türk’ü yaşatmak için vakti gelince canımı verme[y]e severek koşacağım” (Rona 3).

more than we love our mothers or our own life” (Rona cited in Caymaz 211).<sup>191</sup>

Caymaz’s study, therefore, manifests how being a Turkish male citizen in the 1940s entails both a racist and sexist tone, encouraging the sons of the country to sacrifice their life to the country, as well as any emotions that they and the female figures may bear for each other. This racist and sexist tone that is predominant in the instillation of patriotism can bring legal modernity closer to Traditional law.

In *Yıldız Tepe*, the patriotic duties become particularly problematic with regard to their inculcation in Sâra and İbrahim. Grandmother, similar to a patriarch, declares her wish for their family lineage to continue: She expresses how she hoped for a grandson before the firstborn İbrahim’s birth (37), and she tells Sâra that if she were not blind, she would not let her ancestor’s blood dry up in Yıldız Tepe (84). The racist and sexist connotations are evident in how Grandmother describes the blood in her family lineage: “My grandfather’s blood, his glorified, pure blood... My fathers spilled their blood in handfuls in strifes and battles for the country, for honor, for dignity. Pure blood, clean blood, the blood of the brave. [...] We buried ourselves here. Maybe we’ll rot away [...] and turn into soil and this honorable name [...] will disappear” (84-85).<sup>192</sup> Erkan Irmak, in his study titled *Eski Köye Yeni Roman: Köy Romanının Tarihi, Kökeni ve Sonu (1950-1980) (A New Novel to the Old Village: The History of the Village Novel, Its Origin and End, 1950-1980)*, also makes note of the patriarchal function of the old village woman in the village novel. According to Irmak, in the village novel “as long as there is a man of the house, the woman’s will

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<sup>191</sup> “Seni kendimden değil, anamdan bile çok seviyorum!” (Rona 3).

<sup>192</sup> “Benim dedemin kanı, aziz, temiz kanı.. Dövüşlerde, cenklerde, vatan uğruna, namus uğruna, şeref uğruna ecdadım avuç avuç kanını verdi. [...] Saf kan, duru kan, mert insan kanı... [...] Kendi kendimizi buraya gömdük. Belki hepimiz [...] çürüme ile toprak olacağız ve ismimiz babamın bana, büyük amcamın torunu Ahmet Kılıçoğlu’na, bıraktığı bu güzel, şerefli isim belki de dünyadan silinip gidecek” (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 84-85).

has no effect on the development of the events, only when he is dead can she rise to the throne, not as a queen, but rather wearing the king's robe" (188).<sup>193</sup> Following Grandmother's death, Sâra cannot bring İbrahim back to civilization as she has promised the old woman (203-04). Sâra can neither guide İbrahim towards modernization nor continue the family lineage on her own, not having the power that Grandmother holds, the power of a patriarch. Yet, İbrahim having graduated from university and worked as district governor in Istanbul (111), has not enrolled in the army despite his age being 32-33 (19) and the war has started a year ago (4). This situation makes the reader wonder whether the character is willing to "happily march to death for the protection of the homeland and the survival of the Turkish nation" and whether he values the nation's needs more than he values his mother or his own life, with reference to Rona's book (Caymaz 210). İbrahim does his military duty only at the end of the novel (216), following the death of Grandmother, the woman who has raised him and whom he obeys like a child (37). Sâra's being unable to continue the family lineage on her own, and İbrahim's extensive period of reluctance to enroll in the army thus bring to mind a controversy regarding the instillation of patriotism in *Yıldız Tepe*.

Sacrificing one's life is a problematic issue in *Yıldız Tepe* as the Kılıçoğlu family loses a son who is sentenced to death for confessing to a murder he has not committed. Grandmother tells Sâra about the secret of the middle child of the Kılıçoğlu family, Osman, whose grave is in a garden nearby the house at Yıldız Tepe, and not in a graveyard with the rest of the community. Osman's death is dated back to 1936 and on the gravestone, it writes "Here lies Ahmet Kılıçoğlu's son

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<sup>193</sup> "evde bir erkek bulunduğu sürece kadının olayların gelişiminde herhangi bir iradesi yoktur; evin erkeği öldüğündeyse kadın boşta kalan tahta kraliçe unvanıyla değil, yalnızca ölen kralın kıyafetlerini

Osman Kılıçoğlu. He died a most tragic death” (89),<sup>194</sup> patrimonial lineage being accentuated and leaving the mother unacknowledged. During the years in which the Kılıçoğlu family lives in Istanbul, Osman is in his senior year studying law, signifying Modern law’s need for law professionals for its implementation. The young man falls in love with a married woman whose wealthy husband often goes away on trips. Osman’s mother Fatma learns about their affair and tells this situation to Grandmother, customarily the decision-maker as the eldest member of the family, but she does not let Grandmother interfere, hoping that the woman might divorce her husband (185). Despite his passionate love for the woman, Osman breaks up with her because he can no longer bear sharing the woman with her husband who has no intention of divorcing his wife (187), showing the effect of Modern law on the private lives of the citizens. One morning the police come to the Kılıçoğlu’s house to arrest Osman for poisoning his lover’s husband (188). As the police take him away, Osman tells Grandmother that his lover has murdered her husband out of her love for him, so that they can get back together (188). Although Osman believes in his lover’s good intentions, the woman accuses Osman of murdering her husband (189). To the family’s surprise, their son does not tell the truth, so that he can protect the woman he loves (189), sacrificing his life for a woman. Whereas traditions regard this woman as someone outside of the family and likely to bring trouble (109), the citizenship education of the period considers her not worth sacrificing a man’s life for, when compared with patriotic love. The family tries to convince the officials that he is lying, however, all of their attempts are in vain (189), implying customary law having no effect in such situations even when it is a matter of life or death. Two days before the court comes to a final decision, Grandmother sees Osman to beg him to

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kuşanarak oturabilir” (Irmak 188).

confess that he is lying (190). Nevertheless, having said that he will break up with the woman if she does not get a divorce, Osman feels that he is the reason that the woman has murdered her husband, and therefore he refuses to tell the truth (190-91), his own individual conscience bearing more effect on his actions than Grandmother's will. The Kılıçoğlu family learns from the newspapers that Osman is sentenced to death and the Court of Appeal confirms the sentence (191-92), the court replacing the family council. Despite Modern law's claim to protect the individual's rights, Osman's execution points out to the limits of Modern law in terms of having access to the truth and serving justice to the citizen.

The Kılıçoğlu family learning about Osman's death sentence from the newspapers (191) and Ahmet Kılıçoğlu's reading the papers in the novel can be regarded as the citizens' way of being informed of their rights or duties, as well as a display of their fear of being caught for the crimes they have committed. News on murders were particularly widespread in the newspapers of the period in which *Yıldız Tepe* was published. In his book on the discussions of daily life between 1945-1950, Levent Cantek addresses the issue of the crime rate having increased during the War and after 1945, the increase showing itself in the accumulation of news articles expressing concern about this situation (259). The reasons for the escalation in the crime rate is given as "the economic crisis, weaknesses of the government, adaptation problems of the new migrants to the cities, cinema's influence, and the popularisation of the tabloid papers that gave priority to criminal issues" (259-60). Not only does the apparent war provide the reader with a historical context for the racism and xenophobia in *Yıldız Tepe*, but the increasing crime rate in the 1940s and

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<sup>194</sup> "Burada Ahmet Kılıçoğlu Osman Kılıç yatıyor. 25 yaşında ölümlerin en beteri ile öldü" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 89).

the false accusations of being a racist or communist leading to arrests in that period also add on to this context.<sup>195</sup> Referring to the war, Sâra might as well be implying the violence within the country's borders: "We're used to it now. We don't care about violence, death, fire or blood" (4).<sup>196</sup> Thus, Gothicizing the "other" citizen in *Yıldız Tepe* can be interpreted with reference to certain characteristics of the rural Gothic. Bernice M. Murphy puts forth the features of "good" and "bad" backwoods families as a binary opposition, and many characteristics of "bad" backwoods families that can lead to creating a racist notion of the "other" are visible in the Kılıçoğlu family as well as in the townspeople: "racist and ignorant / uneducated," "inbred and incestuous," "insular and xenophobic," "representatives of the 'other' US," and "fanatical and intolerant" (149). These features are also apparent in the way those from Istanbul perceive the townspeople, as exemplified by Ali telling Sâra that the townspeople do not like strangers (63), or Doctor Faruk's mother saying that the townspeople are jealous of those who come from Istanbul (97). The construction of the "other" Turkish citizen in *Yıldız Tepe* through racism and xenophobia that is supported by the limitations of legal modernity in protecting the individual's rights, facilitates the reading of the citizen burdened with duties regarding the inculcation of patriotism which holds sexist and racist associations.

One of the ways that patriotism is instilled in the Turkish woman is by stressing the need for her to be a maternal figure as promulgated by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk again

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<sup>195</sup> The significance of newspapers in *Yıldız Tepe* can also be related to the events leading to an anti-communist protest in 1945 vandalizing the printing houses of *Tan*, *Yeni Dünya*, and *La Turquie*, along with the bookstores "Berrak" and "ABC" as described in Mete Çetik's book titled *Üniversitede Cadi Kazanı. 1948 DTCF Tasfiyesi ve Pertev Naili Boratav'ın Müdafası (False Accusations in the University. The Dissolution of DTCF in 1948 and Pertev Naili Boratav's Testimony)*. Çetik highlights these events as follows: the racism vs. anti-fascism tension surrounding the publishing of *Yurt ve Dünya* between 1941-44, Nihal Atsız accusing Pertev Naili Boratav and Sabahattin Ali of being communists in 1944, the arrest of both racists and leftists in 1944, the Press Law ending the publication of *Yurt ve Dünya* and *Adımlar* in 1944 (6-16).

in a speech in 1923: “The greatest duty of a woman is to be a mother” (cited in Feyzioğlu 592). This duty is commonly associated with the woman’s function in the modern family as the happily married woman. The functions of different legal systems in protecting the married woman can be illustrated through the comparison of the implementation of the Modern law in the city and the practice of Traditional law in the town in *Yıldız Tepe*. Modern law has been able to function in putting an end to marriages in the cities, seemingly capacitating the female figure. When describing her parents’ marriage, Sâra says that before marrying her father, her mother had got married at an early age and then got divorced because she was not happy with her husband (5). As another instance in the novel, Doctor Faruk’s little sister Leylâ had married a relative who was wealthy and in love with her, but the man had changed his ways after they got married, becoming “a rude, jealous, and quarrelsome man” (65).<sup>197</sup> Whereas Traditional law may have paved the way for the women’s marriage at a young age with a relative, Modern law seems to have functioned by divorcing the couple that does not get along with each other, in some instances despite their blood ties. Hence, Sâra says “This marriage that she had at an early age of her life seemed to have left absolutely no trace in Leylâ. It was as if she had awoken from a bad dream and she was now content with life with her sweet and docile attitude” (65).<sup>198</sup> This sweet, docile attitude is also visible in the second marriage of Sâra’s mother with her not leaving her father’s side since he claims to have several illnesses, despite his healthy appearance (4-5). The behavioral pattern of the wife in the city can be connected to the discourse on the ideal woman prominent in the daily newspapers of the period of “conservative modernity” between 1945-60,

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<sup>196</sup> “[A]rtık alıştık; vahşete, ölüme, ateşe ve kana âdeta kanıksadık” (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 4).

<sup>197</sup> “kaba, kıskanç, kavgacı bir insan” (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 65).

as indicated by Serpil Sancar. To elaborate on this discourse on the ideal woman, Sancar refers to Nûkhet Sirman's study on magazines, daily papers, popular romance novels, and movies that reflect the ideological guidance of women to sacrifice themselves for the happiness of others, as the secret to a happy marriage and family (246). Docility being thus ideologically prescribed to the ideal Turkish married woman indicates how the State has tried to regulate circumstances for her to be able to fulfill the duty of the patriotic, maternal figure, bringing into question Jenny B. White's claim in her article titled "State Feminism, Modernization, and the Turkish Republican Woman" that state feminism was predominantly interested in the public emancipation of women, rather than her private life (147). *Yıldız Tepe* thus manifests how the private lives of the Turkish married woman in the city have been kept under control through her citizenship duty to inculcate patriotism as the happily married maternal figure and to assist men in helping them fulfill the same citizenship duty by being able to leave her behind. Although Modern law provides women with female agency to divorce and remarry, its accommodation for agency within the marriage to voice her own interests has remained limited.

In *Yıldız Tepe*, Modern law has an even narrower reach in the marriages in the towns where Traditional law often becomes considerably more influential. On the day when Sâra wishes to celebrate her birthday with the presents her parents have sent her, she is surprised how İbrahim tells her that they are used to commemorating the dead in the house. She expresses her feelings of shock by saying "You're almost going to say

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<sup>198</sup> "Genç yaşında hayatından gelip geçen bu izdivaç Leylâ[']da en küçük bir iz bırakmamış gibiydi. Fena bir rüya görüp uyanmış, yaşamaktan memnun, tatlı, uysal bir hali vardı" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 65).



that Yıldız Tepe is a graveyard. A graveyard full of the living dead!” (43),<sup>199</sup> and İbrahim agrees with Sâra that Yıldız Tepe is possibly so (44). Yıldız Tepe being considered as a graveyard foreshadows the answer Ali gives to Sâra’s question about whether it was his family that had Yıldız Tepe constructed. Ali tells Sâra that they had moved there seven or eight years ago (64), most probably after his brother died in 1936. The house belonged to a notable man who was jealous and cruel, and who would imprison his wives at Yıldız Tepe (64). His wives who could not bear his injustices had died one by one, and this was why the townspeople regarded Yıldız Tepe and the Kılıçoğlu family that moved in there as damned (64). This rumor of the maltreatment of women is reminiscent of the tale of Bluebeard, whose wife enters the underground chamber she was forbidden to enter and finds the dead bodies of her predecessors, Bluebeard’s previous wives (Williams, “The House of Bluebeard” 40). The story of Yıldız Tepe can be considered as a common theme in female Gothic, unveiling how patriarchal legal systems consider the position of women, a characteristic of female Gothic that is highlighted by Sue Chaplin in her article titled “Female Gothic and the Law” (134). According to Chaplin, the conventions in Gothic fiction are often used in female Gothic so as to portray how the law leads to women’s “incapacitation and maltreatment” (134). Furthermore, Chaplin contends that modern legality has often made situations worse for women who are trying to protect themselves from men’s violence (147). The notable man’s maltreatment of several women at Yıldız Tepe signals to the inefficient implementation of Modern law with the incapacitation of the married woman who submits to the injustices till her last breath. In *Yıldız Tepe*, such misogyny in the legally bound marriage in the town can be explained through the correlation between the traditional legal system

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<sup>199</sup> “Nerede ise Yıldız Tepe’nin bir mezarlık olduğunu iddia edeceksiniz, dedim. Yaş[a]yan ölülerle dolu bir mezarlık!” (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 43).

and the female's status in family law as maintained by Mala Htun and S. Laurel Weldon in their article titled "State Power, Religion, and Women's Rights: A Comparative Analysis of Family Law" (146). However, *Yıldız Tepe* shows that the anti-discrimination of legal modernity remains questionable: "Some countries — including Morocco, Turkey, and Botswana— changed legislation virtually overnight, catapulting them from the group of most discriminatory countries to among the least" (147), Modern and Traditional law commonly co-existing to the disadvantage to the woman.

Modern law's narrow reach of implementation in *Yıldız Tepe* disadvantages those who do not fulfill their citizenship duty of the inculcation of patriotism. Sacrificing his life for a woman, instead of for his country, leads to Osman's execution upon false accusation. This is why Grandmother seeks retribution for her grandson's death and kills his lover, a woman who rejects the docile, maternal role imposed on the married woman. Similar to what leads to Osman's execution, Grandmother's taking justice into her own hands cannot be proved through evidence, her action falling out of the reach of Modern law. Grandmother tells Sâra that back then, she would justify her action by saying to herself: "Didn't she do the same thing? Didn't she deny everything when they had arrested Osman? Now she paid back for what she has done. [...] I killed her. She deserved it. Justice was served" (197),<sup>200</sup> implying how Traditional law comes to operate when Modern law does not function. After killing the woman, Grandmother says she does not feel any sense of regret lurking in her conscience: "The dead woman's ghost did not come and disturb me in the middle of

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<sup>200</sup> "O da öyle yapmamış mıydı? O da Osman[']ı alıp götürdükleri zaman inkâr etmemiş miydi? Böylece ödeşmiş oluyorduk. [...] Onu ben öldürdüm [...] Buna müstahaktı, adalet yerini buldu" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 197).

the night like it is written and told in stories” (106).<sup>201</sup> Instead, she feels the comfort of having done her duty (106), ensuring justice where Modern law falls short to do so. Grandmother resorts to Traditional law to make sure that Osman’s lover pays for the loss of their son, without any consideration of mitigating circumstances, as may be implied with the possibility of the woman murdering her husband to get back together with Osman (190), and her being held in a mental institution for a couple of months after Osman’s execution (194). In the end, Grandmother is not happy with what she has done, implying the burden Traditional law and Modern law have imposed on her: “I even wanted to be pleased like someone who took revenge. But I couldn’t find the strength to feel like that. Strangely, I felt drained. Even though I didn’t feel regret, I definitely didn’t feel pleasure either. You might call this a pang of conscience” (197).<sup>202</sup> This lack of consideration for the woman’s conduct and the violence incurred on her, in the end, reflect a misogynistic attitude. Osman’s execution and Grandmother’s seeking revenge demonstrate that both Modern law and Traditional law may be limited in their reach, those wanting justice positioned in limbo between the two legal systems.

The sexist and racist tone entailed in the female’s citizenship duty of inculcating patriotism as a docile female who is expected to bear children for her country leading to misogyny is also visible *Yıldız Tepe* through the construction of the female identity as a stranger, an enemy. After Ali shoots his brother in the highlands, İbrahim is brought back to Yıldız Tepe, and the Kılıçoğlu women express their anger to Ahmet Kılıçoğlu. Fatma says Sâra is a stranger, someone not from the family: “[A]gain

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<sup>201</sup> “[H]ikâyelerde yazıldığı gibi öldürdüğüm kadının hayali gece yarısı gelip beni rahatsız etmedi” (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 196).

because of a woman! [...] Didn't I tell you it would be wrong to let a stranger in among us?" (172).<sup>203</sup> For Cemile, Sâra is not even someone from this country: "That foul spy, that damned snake, maybe she came here to find about this" (173).<sup>204</sup> In another incident, when Ali wraps his arms around Sâra, telling her that he wants them to get married, they will end up in a brawl which Cemile will join to protect her brother, signifying the practice of Traditional law. Cemile calls Sâra a "red devil, manhunter, [and] damned girl" (123),<sup>205</sup> conveying how misogyny is related to the consideration of a woman's seductiveness as a threat to the family. It is in this context that İbrahim accuses Sâra of misleading Ali and asks her to leave Yıldız Tepe in a letter saying: "I will not allow this family to be hurt for the second time at the hands of a woman" (125).<sup>206</sup> Later in the novel, İbrahim openly expresses his apologies to Sâra who goes to the highlands to tell him about her innocence: "I am the one who should say I'm sorry. I treated you as if you were the lowest creature on earth. I had always felt a strange sense of hatred towards women. Maybe there was a reason for this. This shouldn't surprise you. After so many years of thinking of them as the lowest creatures on earth that would only bring disaster" (160).<sup>207</sup> Misogyny is also expressed in Cemile's words after Ali shoots İbrahim at the highlands to protect Sâra, and İbrahim is brought home: "I'll kill her Aunt, I'll kill her with my bare hands. We had killed the other one, yes one of us did that, and I'll kill this one!"

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<sup>202</sup> "Hattâ hıncımı almış biri gibi sevinmek istiyordum. Fakat buna muktedir olamıyordum. Tuhaf bir halsizlik içinde idim. Pişman olmamakla beraber tam bir memnuniyet de duymadığım muhakkaktı. Sen belki buna vicdan azabı diyeceksin" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 197).

<sup>203</sup> "[G]ene bir kadın yüzünden! [...] Bir yabancıyı aramıza sokmanın doğru olm[a]yacağını söylemedim mi?" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 172).

<sup>204</sup> "Pis casus, uğursuz yılan belki buraya da onun için geldi" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 173).

<sup>205</sup> "Kızıl şeytan [...] Erkek avcısı, uğursuz kız..." (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 123).

<sup>206</sup> "Bu ailenin ikinci defa, yine bir kadın elinden yaralanmasına müsaade etm[e]yeceğim" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 125).

<sup>207</sup> "[B]en senden af dilemeliydim. Sana karşı dünyanın en sefil bir insanı gibi hareket ettim. Eskide[n] b]eri kadınlara karşı garip bir nefretim vardır. Belki bu da sebepsiz değildir. Hayret etmemelisin. Onları dünyaya felâket için gelmiş feci mahlûklar olarak senelerce düşündükten sonra..." (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 160).

(172).<sup>208</sup> The Kılıçoğlu family's perception of Osman's lover and Sâra as seductive and therefore punishable brings to mind that Traditional law with its struggle to defend the family, similar to Modern law with its citizenship duties to defend the country, produces a misogynistic environment that leaves the woman vulnerable in a Gothic environment.

Sâra suspects that the Kılıçoğlu family, contrary to providing shelter and security for her, will physically give harm to her, revealing her distrust in Traditional law as well as her fear of the limitations of Modern law. Her suspicions are agitated with especially two incidents in the novel: the containment of Cemile and the murder of Osman's lover. On a stormy night, Sâra hears someone calling for her in her dream and wakes up to hear Cemile's scream in the house (53). She sees that İbrahim is standing in the doorway to Cemile's room with a whip in his hand (54). İbrahim tells Sâra to go back to bed (54), but she does not leave. Cemile yells, "Don't touch him! [...] Brother, they are killing him! Save him!" (55),<sup>209</sup> in fact, remembering the day she has witnessed Osman's execution. When Sâra sees İbrahim lifting his whip and closing the door, she runs to the door and starts pounding on it, shouting "Leave her you monster, you monstrous man!" (55).<sup>210</sup> Ali comes by her side and she urges him to do something about this, saying "He's killing her! Killing her!" (55).<sup>211</sup> The following morning, as everyone acts as if nothing has happened, Sâra tries to understand why the family members have not interfered with İbrahim, and who Cemile wants İbrahim to save (56). She cannot believe that Cemile is not running away from this man who has whipped her last night and that she has even asked for

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<sup>208</sup> "Onu öldürürüm teyze, ellerimle boğarım. Öbürünü de biz öldürmüştük, evet bizden biri, bunu da ben öldüreceğim" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 172).

<sup>209</sup> "Onu kurtar, onu öldürüyorlar İbrahim [A]ğabey" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 55).

<sup>210</sup> "Onu bırak canavar, ah canavar adam!" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 55).

his help (56-57). Sâra learns that only İbrahim can comfort Cemile when she has such fits (36), and seeing the way Cemile adores İbrahim (37), she understands that İbrahim has no intention to kill or beat his cousin. The family takes pity on Cemile since she has lost her parents at an early age (183), and consulting a doctor about her mental health, they decide to let her live with them at Yıldız Tepe (113). Yet, after İbrahim's departure from the house at the end of the novel, the family sends her to an institution (216). Cemile being sent to a mental institution indicates how the woman who has lived a trauma with Modern law, and who no longer is considered fit to bear children in line with the expectations from the patriotic female citizen, is dealt with when a male family figure sets her aside. Other than Sâra's suspicions about İbrahim beating Cemile, having heard the girl's words about one of the members of the family killing Osman's lover, Sâra cannot help but think whether it is İbrahim who has murdered the woman. As Sâra talks with Grandmother, she seems to not really care whether İbrahim is the woman's murderer or not: "Even if he's the killer, I'll accept him as he is, Grandmother. I accept to never ask him any questions" (181),<sup>212</sup> disclosing her readiness to be docile. However, when Sâra learns that it is, in fact, Grandmother who has killed Osman's lover, she cannot help but feel relieved: "İbrahim was not the murderer. I felt a relief close to happiness in being able to say this" (198).<sup>213</sup> Cemile's containment and the murder of Osman's lover thus prove Sâra wrong about her preconceptions regarding İbrahim and his potential for violence. Learning that İbrahim may not be as savage as he may seem creates a sense of understanding as well as a willingness to be constructive in Sâra, as she tells İbrahim at the end of the novel: "Grandmother told me about some horrible things.

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<sup>211</sup> "Onu öldürüyor, onu öldürüyor!" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 55).

<sup>212</sup> "Fakat böyle bile olsa razıyım büyük anne... Ona ebediyen soru sormam[a]ya bile razıyım" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 181).

But rather than pushing me away, she helped me understand and love you and your family. Why should the past prevent us from loving each other? People need a strong and great love like ours to reconstruct what has been destroyed, to forget the past” (215).<sup>214</sup> Overcoming differences depends on communication, understanding, and love, which is of significance for a novel written in 1945. Nonetheless, the two characters being from the same family makes one question the reason and extent to this understanding.

Unity as a family is crucial for the female citizen to be able to carry out her citizenship duty as a maternal figure. Grandmother tells Sâra about the history of the family lineage, about how her father İbrahim Kılıçoğlu (“Son-of-swords”) was one of the old Turkish beghs who was notable for his accomplishments in battle, with his skill in using swords (109). She relates how all her ancestors were born and have died in her father’s mansion (109), as opposed to how migration later became a part of their lives. Sâra also learns that back then, getting married with someone from outside the family was condemned (109). Cemile’s mother marries someone not from the family and dies when giving birth (109), as if she is punished for her marriage. It is Traditional law that ensures the continuation of the family lineage as reflected in Grandmother’s words: “I don’t want our blood to dry up forever, and our family name to be wiped off this world. I am willing to accept anything so that our descendants live on and our name remains” (85),<sup>215</sup> echoing the patriotic female citizen’s duty. Before her death, Grandmother tells Sâra about her hopes that she will

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<sup>213</sup> “İbrahim katil değildi.. Bu sözü söyleyebilmekle saadete yakın bir ferahlık duyuyordum” (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 198).

<sup>214</sup> “Evet büyük annenin anlattığı şeyler korkunçtu. [...] Fakat beni ürkütecek, uzaklaştıracak yerde sizleri daha iyi anlamama, daha çok sevmeme yardım etti. Geçmişte olanlar bizim birbirimizi sevmemize niçin mâni teşkil etsin. Bilâkis yıkılan şeyleri yapmak, maziyi unutmak için insanların bizimki gibi kuvvetli, büyük bir aşka ihtiyaçları vardır” (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 215).

be the one who takes İbrahim away from this town and gets him back to where people live (203), and she asks Sâra to promise that she will do so (204). On her deathbed, she wants Sâra to give her word that they will name their son after Osman (205), asking her to follow Traditional law. In the novel, the purity of the family lineage does not only signify endogamous marriage but also being proud of one's family name that has a good reputation. After Osman's execution, İbrahim leaves his post as a district governor in Istanbul, telling his family that "They will find out that I am the brother of a killer and that my family is accused of a second murder. I'm sure that they'll look for the best opportunity to disparage me, to do me harm" (203).<sup>216</sup> Fearing others will learn about Grandmother's murdering Osman's lover for retribution in a way that explicitly conveys the limitation of Modern law, İbrahim tells Sâra that he is not a suitable match to be her husband (214), and keeps his distance from her even after he has done his service in the army (216), doing his share of what is required from the male citizen as his duty towards his country. At the end of the novel, Sâra says that she is keeping her promise to Grandmother, holding on to the hope that İbrahim will come back to be with her (216). In contrast with İbrahim who steers away from marriage with Sâra, the wife that Traditional law has dictated for him is waiting to grant Grandmother's last wishes, ready to fulfill her duty as the self-sacrificing mother instilling patriotism to her children —a plan that is deferred due to the male citizen's absence.

This section focuses on the problem of legal modernity in *Yıldız Tepe* in terms of the misconception that Modern law has replaced Traditional law to protect the rights of

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<sup>215</sup> "Kanımızın ebediyen kurumasını, ismimizin dünyadan silinmesini istemiyorum. Neslimizin devamı[,] ismimizin yaşaması için her şeye razıyım" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 85).



the individual. Published in 1945, *Yıldız Tepe* raises doubts about the assumption that Modern law secures the individual's rights, especially considering the War, crime rates, and the racist vs. leftist tension in the historical and social background of the novel. This context also bears meaning for reading the novel's Gothicized opposition between the modern city and the rural town, through the depiction of the "other" as an enemy, stranger, and foreigner. Legal pluralism indicates that both Modern and Traditional legal systems can co-exist, in some instances, one functioning when the other is limited in serving justice. The limited reach of Modern law is particularly visible in *Yıldız Tepe* when Osman is executed based on his lover's false accusation. Such limitations in legal modernity lead to misogynistic anxieties in the novel, particularly regarding Sâra's fears about the incidents of the containment of Cemile and the murder of Osman's lover. Moreover, both legal systems existing together can sometimes imply that both systems can operate to the disadvantage of the individual. As the female's citizenship duty, inculcating patriotism by being a happily married maternal figure overlaps with Traditional law's order to conserve and continue the family lineage. The sexist and racist tone of the female's citizenship duty bears much resemblance to the female's duty to continue the family's unity in Traditional law. Despite the woman's duty to her family and her country, the man's citizenship duty requires him to love his country, more than any female figure, even if she be in his family. His inculcation of patriotism requires him to set the woman aside, to leave her alone in serving her country, making her burden double-folded: The woman is to build the family on her own with no one to love her. Thus, in *Yıldız Tepe*, the Gothic limbo of the individual lies in the distrust in both Modern law and Traditional law,

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<sup>216</sup> "Nereye gitsem ergeç öğrenecekler diyordu. Bir katilin kardeşi olduğumu, ailemin ikinci bir cinayetle de itham edildiğini derhal haber alacaklar. O zaman beni küçük düşürmek, fenalık yapmak için fırsat gözleyeceklerini biliyorum" (P. Celal, *Yıldız Tepe* 203).

both sources of law having limited ability in serving justice, when one's duties become more consequential than one's rights.

The aim of this chapter is to elaborate on how the citizen's duties in the 1940s provide a context to read the Gothic mechanism of live burial in *Yıldız Tepe* in a way in which it conveys that both women in particular and citizens in general are burdened with duties that they cannot fulfill. In the first section, the coming of age of the female figure is portrayed through the lone child-woman who is torn between autonomy and rationality. Her anger about being sent to Yıldız Tepe, and her curiosity especially about her physical development and the Kılıçoğlu family's secret can be considered as signs of autonomy. However, rationality expects her to submit to the father figure and to attain civilization, two duties that burden the female figure with their incompatibilities. In the second section, the concept of legal pluralism is used as a tool to investigate the limitations of Modern law and Traditional law.

Focusing on misogyny and the death sentence, the extent to which these legal systems serve justice is questioned, displaying the woman's and the citizen's Gothic limbo between both legal systems. The individual's vulnerability to law in *Yıldız Tepe* is thus explained with reference to the citizen's duty to inculcate patriotism, its sexist and racist implications bearing a burden not only for the woman but for all citizens. Reading *Yıldız Tepe* as a Gothic novel thus brings into question those statements on whether Peride Celal is an average writer that writes unrealistically for the ladies. By looking into how the Gothic genre can be associated with the citizenship duties of the 1940s in *Yıldız Tepe*, this chapter claims that when duties carry more weight than rights, the citizen is buried alive.

## CHAPTER V

### A LOOK INTO THE FEMALE WRITING EXPERIENCE WITH KERİME NADİR: A FEMALE VAMPIRE’S BATTLE FOR BLOOD AND GLORY IN *DEHŞET GECEŚİ* (1958)

In her memoirs collected in *Romancının Dünyası* (*The Novelist’s World*), Kerime Nadir expresses that book sequels do not receive the same acclaim as the first book (165). Nevertheless, the writer has written a sequel to *Haydutlar Hanındaki Kadın* (*The Woman in the Bandits Inn*) published in 1953 as a frame novel titled *Dehşet Gecesi* (*Night of Horror*) published in 1958 (Erayda 98-100), which contrary to the author’s claim about the lack of success of sequels has received extensive readership indicated by the novel’s several editions. A. Ömer Türkeş, in a review titled “Bir Vampirella” (“A Vampirella”) published in 2004, refers to certain Gothic motifs in *Dehşet Gecesi* such as the sexual attraction of the vampire and the sublime environment, which are connected to a sense of adventure and horror in the novel (11). In fact, the critic is referring to the male characters’ experiences in *Dehşet Gecesi*, as suggested in how the sense of adventure and horror is said to function towards the novel’s focus on love and sexual desire (11). Türkeş deems this focus as

a typical characteristic of K. Nadir's novels and connects it solely to the male characters' viewpoint: "This love is such that in the end Mümtaz says 'Even though she is a ghoul, I am ready to live that night of horror all over again to come together with her again... That love which has no comparison cleanses my soul like holy water'" (11).<sup>217</sup> The male character's experience of love having the effect of holy water as indicated in the citation from the novel (K. Nadir 174) is particularly striking in the sense that Türkeş also assumes that the female vampire represents evil—echoing Münir Yalçın's review of Cengiz's book titled *Kızıl Puhu (The Crimson Owl)*. Summarizing the plot of the novel, Türkeş writes "a young man, who is invited to the vampire's far-away castle for business, is attacked by the vampire, and in the end wins the battle between good and evil" (11).<sup>218</sup> Thus, in Türkeş's review on *Dehşet Gecesi*, not only the sense of adventure and horror, along with the focus on sexual love and desire in the novel are linked specifically to male experience, but also the male character represents goodness and is the victor in his struggle with the evil, female vampire.

Kerime Nadir starts the frame novel *Dehşet Gecesi* with an introduction titled "Meçhule Doğru" ("Towards the Unknown"). The plot begins in the summer of 1953 when Mümtaz Evren on a train to Hakkari, a province located in Southeast Turkey, encounters another passenger in his compartment: A young, beautiful woman with an Istanbul accent, who has her initials "P.R." engraved on her luggage. As a journalist who runs his own newspaper, Mümtaz Evren has been invited to the opening of a

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<sup>217</sup> "Öylesine bir aşktır ki bu, sonda Mümtaz; 'bir hortlak da olsa, tekrar vuslatına ermek için yeni baştan o hailevi dehşet gecesini göze almaya hazırım... Bana yaşattığı emsalsiz aşk ruhumu bir zemzem gibi yıkıyor' diyecek" (Türkeş, "Bir Vampirella" 11).

<sup>218</sup> "genç bir adamın ticari bir mesele için vampirin uzak diyarlardaki şatosuna davet edilmesi[,] orada vampirin saldırısına maruz kalması ve sonda kötülükle iyilik arasındaki savaşta iyinin galip gelmesi" (Türkeş, "Bir Vampirella" 11).

hotel at Mount Cilo and he learns that this intriguing woman is a relative of the hotel's owner, the Iraqi oil tycoon El-Hüdaî (meaning "God's creature"). The woman gets off the train before they arrive at Hakkari and to Mümtaz Evren's surprise, she resembles the woman on the cover of the book he has with him. This book, titled *Kızıl Puhu* (*The Crimson Owl*), was written by a man named Cengiz who sent it to the newspaper to have it published. Mümtaz Evren begins to read the first section of the book titled "Haydutlar Hanı" ("The Bandits Inn") which is, in fact, the first section of the first novel *Haydutlar Hanındaki Kadın* (*The Woman in the Bandits Inn*), published before its sequel *Dehşet Gecesi* (*Night of Horror*) as a frame novel.

In the first section of Cengiz's novel, titled "Haydutlar Hanı," his fiancée Selmin receives a letter from a woman named Princess Ruzihayâl —"ruzihayâl" implying both meanings of "daydream" and "fortune." The Princess claims to be Selmin's great-aunt and oddly has the same initials as the woman in Mümtaz Evren's train compartment. She wishes to give Selmin one-fourth of her assets as a wedding gift and asks her or someone to represent her to come to The Crimson Owl Mansion at Mount Cilo. Despite the hard weather conditions of winter, Cengiz goes on this journey on behalf of Selmin and finds his way to The Bandits Inn where the bandits learn about Cengiz's destination. A woman who calls herself Şahikalar Melikesi (The Queen of Peaks) comes to the inn and attacks one of the bandits who forces himself on her. She appears to have sucked blood from the bandit's neck and then she flies away like a bat. Other bandits come to the inn, as well, and decide to follow the carriage that will come to take Cengiz to where Princess Ruzihayâl dwells.

In the second section of Cengiz's book, titled "Kızıl Puhu Malikanesi" ("The Crimson Owl Mansion"), the carriage leads the bandits to the mansion. The bridge to the mansion collapses and the bandits fall off the bridge. During Cengiz's stay at the mansion, a painting that portrays a man, Prince Mahî (The Prince of Destruction), who is the dead lover of the Princess, comes alive and warns Cengiz about keeping the prayer-necklace that will protect him from Princess Ruzihayâl. To break the spell of the vampires, Prince Mahî tells Cengiz to go down to the cellar where the forty vampires sleep during the day, to stab their hearts with a magic sword hanging above each coffin, and to spread three handfuls of crushed mirror dust on each vampire. On his way to the cellar, Cengiz sees a tall, statue-like man who actually is the dead husband of the Princess, Prince Affan Ferhad (The Prince of Chaste True Love), who tells him to listen to Prince Mahî's warning about not removing his prayer-necklace. Cengiz stabs the vampires in their coffins and the mansion collapses. He finds himself on a snowy mountain top and asks for help from villagers passing by. Though his story is hardly plausible, it fascinates everyone who hears about it. Cengiz regards all that has happened to him as a punishment for not being satisfied with what one has, as what one gets for having high expectations, reminiscent of Princess Ruzihayâl's name and the dream of fortune.

The final section of K. Nadir's novel, titled "Dehşet Gecesi," holds the same title as the writer's novel-within-a-novel and functions as the end of the frame novel written as a sequel to *Haydutlar Hanındaki Kadın*. In this section, Mümtaz Evren, having finished the book, feels as if the passenger in his compartment was Princess Ruzihayâl. His train is held up by bandits, and one of the bandits from the inn, named Yedibela Hamza, captures Mümtaz Evren telling him that he will take the revenge of

his uncle Kürt Halo who was one of the bandits that died when the bridge to The Crimson Owl Mansion collapsed. Yedibela Hamza also wants to raid the opening of the hotel, thinking the owner wants to be the new ruler of these mountains. A dancer named Kezban, whom Mümtaz Evren suspects may be Princess Ruzihayâl, guides him away from the bandits' cave and leads him to Ruzihayâl's trap. Mümtaz Evren escapes from this trap and finds himself on a mountain top, similar to how Cengiz had at the end of his novel. A villager passing by does not believe in his story but still takes him to the Gendarmerie nearby. Upon the oil tycoon King El-Hüdaî's instructions, Mümtaz Evren is forced to attend the hotel's opening. At El-Hüdaî's mansion, ornate like The Crimson Owl Mansion, Mümtaz Evren is introduced to Princess Ruzihayâl, who here is King El-Hüdaî's aunt, and learning that Cengiz is put in an asylum, he wishes he had a prayer-necklace of his own. Mümtaz Evren sees the woman in the train compartment, who actually is Cengiz's fiancée Selmin, and tells her about his story which she finds hard to believe. King El-Hüdaî thwarts Yedibela Hamza's plans and burns the bandits alive in the hotel's pool full of oil. Thus, Mümtaz Evren understands that Selmin, Kezban, and Princess Ruzihayâl are all the same person, and he cannot escape her plans of possessing him. He wakes up in his bed after a train accident and tries to convince Münir Yalçın, a literary critic working for his paper, that Cengiz's novel *Kızıl Puhu* (*The Crimson Owl*) is a true story. Awaiting Selmin and Cengiz's visit, Mümtaz Evren closes his eyes to dream about Princess Ruzihayâl, despite all the horror she brings.

### 5.1 The Shapeshifting Vampire's ASL<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> As a requirement for the completion of the dissertation, this section was translated and revised for its publication as an article in the Turkish literary journal *Varlık* in December 2020 (no. 1359, pp. 83-90), with the title "Şekil Değiştiren Kadın Vampirin Gözünden Kerime Nadir'in *Dehşet Gecesi*" ("Kerime Nadir's *Dehşet Gecesi* in the Eyes of the Shapeshifting Female Vampire").

In the introduction to her book *Romancının Dünyası*, which is a collection of her memoirs published in 1981, K. Nadir states that in the years 1953-1954, a series of her memoirs were published under the heading of “Okuyucularıma Mektuplar” (“Letters to My Readers”) in the magazine *Yirminci Asır*. She was later concerned with the publishing of these memoirs because she thought that, as a novelist, she needed to hide behind her characters: “The better one can hide, the better one can act freely... The novelist who presents oneself directly to the reader is in every way vulnerable and weak” (5).<sup>220</sup> In line with this statement in *Romancının Dünyası*, Kerime Nadir’s wish to conceal herself in her novels so as to attain more freedom is evident in her use of shapeshifting in the Gothic novel *Dehşet Gecesi*. This section looks into how shapeshifting in the novel can be interpreted as a reaction to critics who have criticized K. Nadir’s ability as a writer with reference to her sex, age, and the genre she has preferred to work with.<sup>221</sup> To this end, this section analyzes three types of shapeshifting in the novel, those regarding the vampires’ shapeshifting into animals, the female protagonist Princess Ruzihayâl being several other women at different ages, and the dual perception of stories either as fiction or realistic, true stories. These three modes of shapeshifting can be associated with Kerime Nadir’s memoirs in *Romancının Dünyası* in a way that sheds light on how the writer uses this Gothic mechanism to possibly reflect the hardships of the social conditions that have shaped her experience as a female writer.

Shapeshifting into animals in *Dehşet Gecesi* is a literary tool that helps vampires capture their victims, and empowers the protagonist Princess Ruzihayâl against male

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<sup>220</sup> “Ne kadar iyi saklanabilirse, o kadar rahat edebilir çünkü... Doğrudan doğruya okurun karşısına çıkan yazar, her bakımdan korunmasız ve zayıf kalır” (K. Nadir, *Romancının Dünyası* 5).



threats. Mümtaz Evren first sees a woman's portrait —resembling the passenger he shares his compartment with on the train to Mount Cilo (10)— blended in with the picture of a bloody owl on the cover of *Kızıl Puhu* (9), the book Cengiz has sent to his paper, asking for the story to be published with a review. Mümtaz Evren is fascinated with the dark eyes of the woman's portrait on the cover of the book (9). In this book, as Selmin's fiancé, Cengiz goes to Mount Cilo, to The Bandits Inn where Princess Ruzihayâl's car will come to take him to The Crimson Owl Mansion. At the inn, when one of the bandits, Feyzo, attempts to rape the woman visitor who has introduced herself as Şahikalar Melikesi (The Queen of Peaks), he dies as if he were attacked by a vampire (66-67). The bandits shoot at Şahikalar Melikesi and without a trace of being shot, she leaves the inn as if she were a bat: "The woman opened her arms on both sides and spread her arms as if they were the wings of a bat. This black shadow, passed through the smoke and disappeared through the broken window" (68).<sup>222</sup> Another incident of shapeshifting is given in the second part of Cengiz's novel, when he gives an account of what he hears at the meeting of the vampires at The Crimson Owl Mansion: "The forty ghouls told their horrible stories, one after the other. Each one of them took the shape of a bird, an animal, or a human and killed one or two innocent people, taking their share from one or two fresh dead bodies" (98).<sup>223</sup> These two incidents in Cengiz's novel demonstrate that shapeshifting is used by vampires in general to capture their victims, and by Princess Ruzihayâl in particular to avert male threats.

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<sup>221</sup> In her article titled "(K)[adın]: Dehşet. Kerime Nadir'in *Dehşet Gecesi* Romanı Üzerine," Seval Şahin refers to how women both as writers such as Kerime Nadir and characters in their novels that tended to sell so well became the subject and object of fear in the publishing market (55).

<sup>222</sup> "Kadın kollarını yanlara doğru açmış ve bu kollar bir yarasanın kanatları halinde gerilmişti. Bu kara hayal, duman bulutları arasında pencerenin boşluğunda gözden kayboldu..." (K. Nadir, *Dehşet Gecesi* 68).

<sup>223</sup> "Kırk hortlak art arda feci şeyler anlattılar. Her biri çeşitli kuş, hayvan ve insan şekline girerek, o gece bir veya iki masumun canına kıymış, bir veya iki taze ölüden payını almıştı" (K. Nadir, *Dehşet Gecesi* 98).

Mümtaz Evren's adventure in "Dehşet Gecesi" reveals the shapeshifting of Princess Ruzihayâl to obscure the distinction between fantasy and reality, and to thus captivate the male victim. Though the critic working for Mümtaz Evren's paper, Münir Yalçın, claims that Cengiz's book is a fantastic story, Mümtaz Evren also sees Princess Ruzihayâl in other animal forms that make his own adventure no less fantastic. While escaping from the bandits' cave, he finds himself climbing a crocodile-like monster that has bushy hair (136) that resembles Ruzihayâl's (110). An eagle then picks him up and drops him into a lake on top of a mountain, similar to the mountain top where Cengiz finds himself at the end of his story in *Kızıl Puhu* (139-40). The resemblance between both men's stories blurs the line between fiction and fact, fantasy and realism. At the end of the novel, after Princess Ruzihayâl tells Mümtaz Evren that he too is a ghoul, a slave that belongs to her, she turns into a gigantic bird, and then into the monster in the well (171-72). Shapeshifting in both examples within Mümtaz Evren's side of the story leads to the confusion of fantasy and reality, and to bewilderment amid this disorientation.

The shapeshifting of Princess Ruzihayâl, or vampires in general, in *Dehşet Gecesi* can be explained with an insight into K. Nadir's experience as a female writer as written in her memoirs in *Romancının Dünyası*. Referring to the first novel *Haydutlar Hanındaki Kadın* published in 1953, poet Behçet Kemal Çağlar tells Kerime Nadir: "When reading a female writer's writings, one often understands that it is written by a woman. There is something feminine in her style of expression. Yet,

there is nothing feminine in your writings” (219).<sup>224</sup> Kerime Nadir writes about her confusion regarding Çağlar’s reaction, saying she does not know whether he was complimenting her writing or criticizing her (219). The poet’s reaction to K. Nadir’s works shows that women writers have faced presumptions regarding their writing skills. In another criticism written by Behçet Kemal Çağlar in 1954, he expresses that he thought Kerime Nadir was just another enthusiastic writer who tries to write about that sensibility that seems to afflict women (158). However, according to Çağlar, with her novel titled *Ruh Gurbetinde* (*Flight of the Soul*) published in 1952, the writer has written a novel different from her previous sentimental works that likened her to old writers such as Güzide Sabri Aygün or the other new women writers (159). With this novel, the writer “has taken the path of art that has started with Suat Derviş and ascended towards Halide Edip” (159).<sup>225</sup> Çağlar’s understanding of established female writers is associated with those writers that he deems do not write sentimental novels with women’s sensibility. The critic’s view of K. Nadir’s writing thus displays a preconception of the style and genres taken up by female writers.

Princess Ruzihayâl’s shapeshifting into other female characters in *Dehşet Gecesi* helps the writer enforce the idea of immortality and the situation in which the women characters in the novel, regardless of their age, usually personate a common soul in their encounters with men.<sup>226</sup> Mümtaz Evren reads in Cengiz’s novel *Kızıl Puhu* that though Selmin is thought to be an orphan (18), she receives a letter from her great-aunt Princess Ruzihayâl who lived two hundred years ago, inviting her or her

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<sup>224</sup> “Kadın yazarların yazılarını okurken, bunların bir kadın tarafından yazıldığı genellikle anlaşılır. Çünkü kadınsı bir şeyler vardır anlatımda... Ama sizin yazılarınızda böyle birşey yok” (K. Nadir, *Romancının Dünyası* 219).

<sup>225</sup> “[B]u yeni eseriyle Kerime Nadir, Suat Derviş’lerden Halide Edip’lere tırmanan bir sanat yoluna girmiştir” (K. Nadir, *Romancının Dünyası* 159).

representative to The Crimson Owl Mansion at Mount Cilo to give her a wedding gift (20-22). In the novel, the woman visitor at The Bandits Inn, Şahikalar Melikesi, is, in fact, Princess Ruzihayâl (77). When Cengiz arrives at The Crimson Owl Mansion, the Princess confesses that she is an immortal soul, and shows him the portrait of his great-grandfather's grandfather, Prince Mahî, who looks just like himself (77-78). The Prince has given his soul to the Angel of Death and is not immortal, thus Cengiz represents the Prince's body and soul in the world of mortals, whereas Selmin represents only the body of Princess Ruzihayâl, both women looking like twins (79). Wanting to come back together with the Prince's soul in Cengiz's body, the Princess has arranged for Cengiz to fall in love with her youngest granddaughter, as she refers to her niece, so that he will come to The Crimson Owl Mansion (80). Şahikalar Melikesi, Selmin and Princess Ruzihayâl bearing the same soul in these instances in Cengiz's novel indicate the immortality of the woman's soul and her need for the redressing of her affairs with male characters.

In Mümtaz Evren's story, Princess Ruzihayâl continues to change the form of her body in several incidents. He first meets with Princess Ruzihayâl in their compartment on the train to Mount Cilo. The journalist notices the passenger's initials "P.R." are engraved on her luggage (6), and that she looks remarkably similar to the woman on the book cover of Cengiz's novel (10). Then, in the second section of the frame novel, having read Cengiz's book, Mümtaz Evren is captured by the bandit Yedibela Hamza and is put in a cave where he sees a dancer entertaining the bandits, Kezban, who reminds him of Princess Ruzihayâl (129). In another incident, the passenger in the compartment has told Mümtaz Evren that she is a relative of the

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<sup>226</sup> cf. Seval Şahin's article that explains this situation in the novel with the woman writer turning herself into the object of desire in the publishing market (55).

owner of the hotel (8), the oil tycoon El-Hüdaî, and then upon his arrival to King El-Hüdaî's mansion, he sees that Princess Ruzihayâl is the oil tycoon's aunt (151), and the passenger is actually Cengiz's fiancée Selmin (156). Further on in the novel, when Mümtaz Evren and Selmin go out to see the zoo, the private rooms (*halvet*), and the laboratory on the hotel grounds, he notices how Selmin's eyes resemble the eyes of the dancer Kezban (159). At the end of the novel, following El-Hüdaî's success with thwarting Yedibela Hamza's plans, the visitors go to the private rooms where Mümtaz Evren realizes that Selmin, Kezban, Princess Ruzihayâl, the old ugly shrew from the hotel, and the ghoulish version of the Princess are all the same women (169-71). These several instances of shapeshifting add to the obscuring of fact and fiction through the sense of immortality, as well as implying the persevering urgency for rectification in the affairs between the female and male.

Princess Ruzihayâl appearing in the form of several other characters in *Dehşet Gecesi* can be associated with the writer's memoirs about the criticisms regarding her age. It can be said that for Kerime Nadir the female writer is like an immortal soul and she, too, has assumed a similar attitude against oppression towards her age, and thus indirectly towards her gender that is usually regarded as "child-woman." In her memoirs, K. Nadir relates how her family had forbidden her from writing before she started her career as a writer. Her father had told her that she was too young to be a writer, and had warned her against her false hopes (19). Back when the writer's first novel *Hıçkırık* (*Tears*) is published as installments in 1937, the newspaper *Tan* promotes the writer as a new, young writer who in her novel reflects the realities of life with her engaging style (29). Following the publishing of this novel, the established literary figure M. Turhan Tan says that this novel has caught his attention

because it is written by a female writer (40). According to Tan, the new writer's style and narration are skillful enough to fascinate an old writer like himself (40). Kerime Nadir stands out as a female writer that is competent regarding her style and narration and then again Tan adds that the novel does not promise much, regarding representation and philosophization (41). Another incident that can be linked to the writer's young age occurs with the preparations for *Türk Meşhurları Ansiklopedisi* (*The Encyclopedia of Turkey's Distinguished People*) in 1946. K. Nadir learns that whereas İbrahim Alaaddin Gövsa is unwilling to add her biography to the encyclopedia due to her age, Sedat Simavi agrees that her present works would be enough to have her name listed among the other influential figures (112). The fact that she is criticized despite good reviews by established literary figures is again of notice: When Kerime Nadir meets Selim Sırrı Tarcan in 1948, he tells her that it is Nurullah Ataç that has drawn his attention to her works, having written "Note this young talent! In her, I see tomorrow's great writer..." (170-71).<sup>227</sup> These instances mentioned in K. Nadir's memoirs demonstrate the conflicting attitudes of her father and male critics regarding her age and competency as a writer. The female writer seeking to rectify presumptions regarding her identity as a writer provides a context to understand the shapeshifting of Princess Ruzihayâl into women at different ages in *Dehşet Gecesi*, the character drawing the attention of the male characters through her physical allure as well as her bewildering resemblance to other female characters in the novel.

As the third mode of shapeshifting, the recognition of the stories of Cengiz and Mümtaz Evren in *Dehşet Gecesi* shifting between a true story and a fantastic novel

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<sup>227</sup> "Bu genç istidade dikkat! Onda yarının büyük yazarını görüyorum..." (K. Nadir, *Romancının Dünyası* 170-71).

indicates how both genres can be perceived interchangeably throughout the novel.<sup>228</sup> Cengiz sends his novel *Kızıl Puhu* (*The Crimson Owl*) to Mümtaz Evren's newspaper claiming that the book is about a true story (10). Though Mümtaz Evren doubts that the story is truly a factual one (10), he gives the book to Münir Yalçın who is known to be a relentless critic (11). Münir Yalçın praises the novel for being a work of imagination, where reason is silenced and the unconscious is articulated (11). According to him, the novel is about sentiments, and it is written freely, without the limitations of reason (12). He tells Mümtaz Evren that this book is a fantasy, a fantastic story about a nightmare and that it challenges all laws of nature and physics (13). According to Münir Yalçın, the novel is like Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Kubla Khan: or A Vision in a Dream: A Fragment*, published in 1816, in the way the poem, too, is left unfinished (13). In a thought-provoking manner, Münir Yalçın says that it is sentiment that has formulated the ideology in this book (14), whereas ideology is often associated with realist novels in the literary circles of that period. Münir Yalçın also adds that it is difficult to classify Cengiz's work because it is somewhere between prose and poetry (15), again bearing a sense of shapeshifting between two genres. Similar to what Mümtaz Evren relates about Cengiz's book before he starts to read it, shapeshifting between a true story and a fantastic novel again surfaces at the end of *Kızıl Puhu*, as well. Cengiz concludes his story by writing that once he kills the forty vampires at The Crimson Owl Mansion and the mansion collapses, he finds himself on a snowy mountain top (119-21). He feels that no one will believe his story, so he tells the villagers that he was captured by bandits and that he has escaped (121). One of the villagers has heard about the rumor that the leader of the bandits, the notorious Kürt Halo has vanished, and the other villagers believe in this rumor

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<sup>228</sup> Aslan Ayar's analysis also refers to the similarities between these stories creating an ambivalence between imagination and reality (307-08).

(121). Cengiz says he was tended to by the officials, and that his story had left people in awe (121). Though he may have not told people about the vampires, the way the bandits vanish into thin air is again beyond belief. Nevertheless, this unrealistic story draws the attention of people, although in this period most critics favor realist literature as implied by Münir Yalçın's review of the book.

The shifting between the perception of fact and fiction is also evident in how Mümtaz Evren's allegedly factual story can be connected to the novel *Kızıl Puhu* —a novel that Cengiz, too, claims to be a true story. Mümtaz Evren reads this novel and finds the story to be truly unbelievable, agreeing with Münir Yalçın's suggestion that the book was the creation of the ill-minded (122). Still, the links between Cengiz's story and Mümtaz Evren's trip to Hakkari, such as the initials "P.R." engraved on the woman passenger's luggage (122), or the bandit Yedibela Hamza seeking Kürt Halo's revenge (125), are hard to believe. As Mümtaz Evren escapes the bandits' cave, he thinks of how his fantastic stories will draw the public's attention, once they are published in his paper (139). However, the villager who finds him on the mountain top does not believe in his story, unlike those who had listened to Cengiz's story, but the villager still takes him to the Gendarmerie (142). Contrary to the officials in Cengiz's story, the Gendarmerie doubts the truth of how he escaped the bandits' cave and sends him to King El-Hüdaî's hotel for the opening (144-46). At the hotel, Mümtaz Evren learns that the other passengers captured by Yedibela Hamza were not killed, but they have arrived at the hotel (148). He also sees that King El-Hüdaî's brother Mahmut El-Hüdaî, who had come back from the dead and then had died again in Cengiz's story, is also at the hotel (151). Mümtaz Evren is told that he should not believe in Cengiz's fairy-tales (151), for the writer is currently in



an asylum (154), once more blurring the factuality of his supposedly true story in *Kızıl Puhu*. When Mümtaz Evren tells his story to Selmin, as the fiancée of Cengiz, she tells him that the coincidences are a matter of his imagination, his fears are but a nightmare (159). She expresses her concern with these two men's stories, stating the difference between her perception of a journalist and a novelist: "I admire you as a great journalist who is a realist... I do not want to see you under strange impressions like my husband... I hope my husband is relieved from these impressions that have led to his incurable illness" (160).<sup>229</sup> Selmin has a similar attitude when Mümtaz Evren talks about the animals he sees on the hotel grounds. In one of the cages at the zoo, he thinks he has spotted the eagle that had previously flown him off to the lake (162), and then in the aquarium at the laboratory, he comes across the crocodile-like monster from the well (163). Selmin's reaction to these coincidences is that Mümtaz Evren has to be more realistic: "You're just like a fearful child! If you continue like this, I will lose my trust in you... Please be more brave and reasonable..." (164).<sup>230</sup> After Mümtaz Evren learns that Princess Ruzihayâl has captured his soul, he wakes up in his bed, Münir Yalçın telling him that he was in a train accident (172-73). Mümtaz Evren tries to convince his friend about his story but in vain, for the critic thinks that he has seen a nightmare (173-74). Münir Yalçın tells him that Cengiz is not in an asylum and that he will be coming to visit him with his fiancée Selmin (173). The journalist closes his eyes to dream again about Princess Ruzihayâl (173), putting forth his preference between fantasy and reality, regardless of the perception of others with respect to these two modes of reality.

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<sup>229</sup> "Ben, realist olan büyük bir gazeteciye hayranım... Onun da kocam gibi birtakım acaip tesirler altında kalmış olduğunu görmek istemiyorum... Kocamı şifasız bir hastalığa sürükleyen o tesirlerden onun hemen sıyrılmasını istiyorum..." (K. Nadir, *Dehşet Gecesi* 160).

This shifting of the modes of reality in *Dehşet Gecesi* can be related to metafiction as clarified in Patricia Waugh. According to Waugh, metafiction entails:

a celebration of the power of the creative imagination together with an uncertainty about the validity of its representations; an extreme self-consciousness about language, literary form and the act of writing fictions; a pervasive insecurity about the relationship of fiction to reality; a parodic, playful, excessive or deceptively naïve style of writing. (2)

Metafiction can be sensed in the way the frame novel in *Dehşet Gecesi* functions to display how Mümtaz Evren comes across with the so-call fictional realities in *Kızıl Puhu* and yet at the end of *Dehşet Gecesi*, he wakes up to find out he is only dreaming (174). Similarly, the villagers and the officials believe in the story related by Cengiz at the end of his novel titled *Kızıl Puhu* (121), whereas the villager and Gendarmerie doubt Mümtaz Evren's story (141-46). Despite the credibility of Cengiz's account of the events in his novel, Mümtaz Evren learns that the figures he is familiar with from Cengiz's novel do not believe in what the newspaper owner has to say —the novelist Cengiz being in an asylum, casts doubts on the coincidences in Mümtaz Evren's story. Nevertheless, the incredibility of what has happened to Mümtaz Evren is not only limited to the perceptions of the characters from Cengiz's novel. When Mümtaz Evren wakes from his dream, he is told that he is recovering from a head injury he has incurred in a train accident, explaining why his friend Münir Yalçın is not believing in his story. He also learns that Cengiz is not in an asylum but on his way to visit him with his fiancée Selmin. Kerime Nadir's use of metafiction in *Dehşet Gecesi* helps blend the two modes of reality and intensifies the Gothic atmosphere in the novel.

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<sup>230</sup> “‘Siz korkak bir çocuktan farksızsınız!’ dedi. ‘Böyle devam ederse size güvenim sarsılacak... Daha cesur ve makul olmanızı rica ederim’” (K. Nadir, *Dehşet Gecesi* 164).

The need for shapeshifting in this third sense, switching from modes that could be perceived as realistic to those that are often criticized for being fantastic, can be detected in Kerime Nadir's memoirs about her formative years. The writer's mother urges her daughter to keep her feelings to herself, i.e. what should remain private should not go into the hands of the public (19). Following the success of her first novel, the writer thinks her family regrets having once forbidden her from writing, and when she verbalizes this feeling, her mother scorns her for blaming them: "So the more successful you are, the more we'll hear you pointing your finger at us about the past?" (35).<sup>231</sup> The writer says that after that day she never criticized her parents again (35); however, the relating of this memory in her memoirs may again be considered as the writer's disapproval of their attitude, as well as an incident showing that she may have been influenced by her mother's wish for her not to write about her private feelings. K. Nadir thinks of her years in Saint Joseph Private French High School as another reason why she has chosen to write: "The years under the strict control of the professors at Saint Joseph in Bebek did not interrupt my reading. Quite the contrary, I felt the need to write under such pressure" (14).<sup>232</sup> Although her formative years have created an environment inspiring Kerime Nadir to write, still she does not link such oppression with life's realities. The writer openly expresses that her years at this high school have not prepared her for the realities of life (25). She states that all she knew about the real world was limited to what she had learned at school and home, and that her books informed her only about theory, rather than practice (25). Consequently, in the writer's memoirs, the controlling

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<sup>231</sup> "Demek başarıların arttıkça biz böyle takazalar dinleyeceğiz? dedi" (K. Nadir, *Romancının Dünyası* 35).

environment at home and school are not associated with her practice of life.

Nonetheless, the writer is still disappointed with how she is rebuked for not knowing the realities of society after the publishing of her first piece of writing, a short story titled “Yeşil Işıklar” (“Green Lights”), in 1933 (92). The writer is criticized for not knowing the realities of the society, even with the persecution she has faced throughout her years at home and school. This criticism is directed towards her literary works as well, ignoring the realities she has confronted with her experience as a female writer.

In spite of the criticisms about her being unaware of the realities of society, Kerime Nadir does not express in her memoirs a preference for realistic literature. With reference to the publication of her novels *Funda* and *Samanyolu* (*The Milky Way*) in 1941, the writer explains her perception of the novel in one of her memoirs titled “Roman Anlayışı” (“Understanding of the Novel”). She thinks that a novel is not a mere copy of daily life and that, it actually brings the reader a message from external everyday regularities: “The reason we need the novel is that it holds a magic mirror to the realities we live in, and reflects these realities for us in a more appealing, unusual, and intriguing way” (69).<sup>233</sup> Following her experience of writing a novel upon the commission of the General Director of Forestry in 1946, K. Nadir writes about her hesitation about the task, for according to her, a writer should not hand one’s own artistic skill to certain causes: Art should be independent of motive, measure, and form in general (104-05). In her memoirs, Kerime Nadir also mentions

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<sup>232</sup> “Bebek Saint Joseph’[t]e sörlerin katı baskısı altında geçen yıllarım okumalarımı hiç etkilememiştir. Tersine[,] yazı yazmak isteğini hep bu baskı içinde duydum ben” (K. Nadir, *Romancının Dünyası* 14).

<sup>233</sup> “Ona olan ihtiyacımızın nedeni de, içinde yaşadığımız gerçeklere sihirli bir ayna tutmasından, onları bize daha çekici, daha başka, daha ilginç bir biçimde yansıtmastandır” (K. Nadir, *Romancının Dünyası* 69).

how she feels indebted to Adnan Cemil Uryâni for his guidance about a writer's responsibilities. As they go over the novel *Gelinlik Kız (Bride to Be)* to be published as installments in 1943, Uryâni warns her to refrain from referring to real life in her work: "There are some drawbacks that should be taken into consideration when writing novels on the drama of real-life people. The writer carries responsibilities towards those people, society, and the law. Go ahead, read a few lines from your own novel... I can press charges against you with only one word of it" (77).<sup>234</sup> K. Nadir's attitude towards the realities of daily life, as articulated in her memoirs, can be taken as an indication of how *Dehşet Gecesi* as a Gothic novel reveals the writer's wish to conceal herself and her realities, particularly using shapeshifting between the perception of realistic and fantastic literature when relating the stories by Cengiz and Mümtaz Evren. Such shapeshifting can thus be regarded as a tool that the female writer may possibly have used to expose the realities of her writing experience in a realm that was often dominated by the relatively more realistic male in the publishing circles.

This section focuses on shapeshifting as a mechanism used in the Gothic novel *Dehşet Gecesi*, particularly through vampires shifting into the bodies of animals, the female protagonist swapping bodies of different women bearing an immortal soul, and the switching from the realistic to the fantastic, in a way that contributes to the utilization of metafiction. Shapeshifting brings light to how Kerime Nadir may have used this Gothic mechanism in her novel to reflect a context that reveals the social conditions that have shaped her experience as a female writer. The three modes of

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<sup>234</sup> "Toplumda yaşayan kişilerin dramından roman yazmanın bi[rt]akım sakıncaları vardır. Yazar o kişilere karşı, topluma karşı ve hukuka karşı sorumlu duruma düşer. Bu romanınızdan bana birkaç satır okuyun... Ben sizi bir tek sözcükle bile mahkûm edebilirim..." (K. Nadir, *Romancının Dünyası* 14).

shapeshifting can be associated with presumptions regarding her gender, her age, and the genres she has preferred to write, and the writer's wish to subvert such misperceptions.

## **5.2 Dames in Distress Go Trick-or-Treating**

Stefanie Lethbridge, in her book chapter titled "Negotiating Modernity, Modernising Heroes: Heroes and Heroines in Gothic and Sensation Fiction of the Long Nineteenth Century," maintains that the Gothic genre, grounded in romance and the need to rescue the generic damsel in distress, gives the hero the opportunity to display heroic endeavor (31). The switch of the gender of the distressed victim from damsel to dame in *Dehşet Gecesi* can help elucidate the social conditions that surround the female writer's experience and a need to correct injustices. In her memoirs collected in *Romancının Dünyası*, Kerime Nadir gives an account of the reactions of male readers, publishers, and critics she has deemed as opportunist, harassing, and brutal. Within the context of these memoirs, this section discusses how the female vampire Princess Ruzihayâl tricks the opportunist dames who seek the treats of material gain and the favors of fraternity in the novel.

In *Dehşet Gecesi*, despite his romantic intentions towards his fiancée in the beginning, Cengiz shows a desire for money, which signals to his opportunistic attitude. His fiancée Selmin can be considered as almost an orphan and is from a poor family (18). Cengiz's family tells him that finding a woman from a richer family would be better for him (19). Though he thinks his engagement is a "victory," having acted against his family's warnings, later on with the wedding preparations, he soon understands his parents' concerns (19). He is gripped by fear of the future

and starts to feel sick, not being able to buy a gift for his fiancée (19), when unexpectedly Selmin receives a letter from a great-aunt who wishes to give her one-fourth of her assets as a wedding gift (20). Although Selmin does not know she has an aunt, Cengiz says that he secretly wants his fiancée to be related to this woman of aristocratic descent (21). With the possibility of having a rich Princess willing to share her money in the family, Cengiz suddenly starts feeling better, and together with his fiancée, they go to her uncle Atıf Effendi to check the family tree (21). Cengiz's parents are not willing to send him to Hakkari in the middle of the winter as someone representing his fiancée, yet Cengiz says that he is eager to make this sacrifice, hoping he will be entitled to a share of Princess Ruzihayâl's money (26). His change of heart regarding his engagement and his wish to get a share of Princess Ruzihayâl's wedding gift both uncover the opportunistic attitude of the male pursuer.

Kerime Nadir's aversion to the affected interest of men is also expressed in her memoirs in *Romancının Dünyası*. After her first novel *Hıçkırık* is published in the newspaper *Tan* in 1937, she begins to receive letters from her readers who are often admirers. K. Nadir writes in her memoirs that a family friend, Nuri Bey, had commented on this situation saying that she had done more than writing a novel, she had in fact made a debut as a young woman ready to get married (34). Referring to a letter written to her in 1938, she also recounts the memory of how she was engaged to one of these readers who had written to her. Kerime Nadir considers this engagement as being tricked into a "trap" and as her "first painful lesson in life" for her fiancé intended to bring his mistress to their home, claiming she is his sister (48). In her memoirs, much to one's surprise, the writer does not associate her home and school environment, or her having her first book published, as her experiences with

the realities of life; her first painful lesson in life is associated with her romantic frustration. In *Romancının Dünyası*, the writer also mentions a letter she has written to her readers as published in *Yirminci Asır* in 1953. With reference to this letter, Kerime Nadir recounts an incident from ten years ago, mentioning another reader who openly asks for her hand in marriage with his intention to marry a rich woman (154-55). She writes that the difference between the parasite-like so-called men who wanted to marry her and this greedy man is his honesty (154). At the end of this memoir, K. Nadir connects this incident to how she removed the figure of a huge eagle in the oil painting she was working on back then. The writer has eliminated this image of a black eagle, which was about to land on a nest and was preying on innocent birds (154), following her encounter with this man with insincere intentions. This eagle is interestingly reminiscent of the eagle that picks up Cengiz and Mümtaz in *Dehşet Gecesi* (138-40, 162), this gigantic bird being one of the shapes Ruzihayâl uses (115, 172).<sup>235</sup> In both incidents mentioned in her memoirs, the writer expresses her distrust of men who have wanted to marry her for their own financial interests. Such an attitude can also be sensed in how Kerime Nadir, with regard to the letters she has received from her admirers, writes that love without material intentions, i.e. ethereal sentiments are the greatest gifts a writer can receive in life, as published again in the newspaper *Yirminci Asır* in 1953, in another letter she writes to her readers (155). However, not all readers have approached the writer without hope for material gain. In her memoir titled “Harika Trafik” (“Wonderful Traffic”), she also

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<sup>235</sup> Research about the connotations of the eagle as a literary symbol indicates that Romantic poets have used it as a symbol of the poet and the poet’s imaginative powers (Ferber 68). It is also stated that “the sight of a flying eagle carrying a struggling serpent [...] is central to the symbolism of Shelley’s *Revolt of Islam*” (67). Fatbardha Doko, in her analysis of this poem, maintains that it is about “the struggle between the good and the bad, authorities, state, in other words, it can be considered as an ABC of morality and political education” (214). A comparative study may provide further insight into possible political allegories. Doko also mentions the similarities between Shelley’s *Revolt of Islam* and Coleridge’s *Kubla Khan* (220), another insight worth analysis in the comparison



refers to the threats she has received from her readers and their acts of persecution, asking her to write their story or to meet them in person. A striking point worth mentioning is that K. Nadir states that sixty percent of the letters and requests she has received from her readers are from men (247). In this memoir, with reference to letters written to her in 1945, she recalls one of these incidents as “the adventures of a disoriented womanizer” who wanted to blackmail her into seeing him (248-49), along with the brutal behavior of a reader who claimed she had written his life and wished to blackmail her into giving him his share (254-55).<sup>236</sup> Referring to her readers, Kerime Nadir pinpoints that being a female writer entails certain dangers: “Love letters, acclamations of praise, criticisms... Go ahead and add threats to these. Threats cast through writing, with words, with essence; sometimes through open attacks and sometimes covert aspersions... In the end, love prevails!” (255).<sup>237</sup> Similar to the writer’s distrust in the motives of men, as expressed in her memoirs, the reader can also discern suspicions about Cengiz’s intentions in *Dehşet Gecesi*.

Cengiz is not the only male looking forward to getting his share of money, for the bandits at the inn try to make use of opportunities, as well.<sup>238</sup> The bandits see the plane crash survivor Mahmut El-Hüdaî as a chance to get the ransom from his brother, the oil tycoon King El-Hüdaî, and when the survivor refuses to write the letter, the bandits act to torture him (36-37), indicating the brutality of the bandits. Then, the bandits follow the carriage that comes to take Cengiz to The Crimson Owl Mansion, with the intention of stealing the Princess’s treasures (73), yet their attempt

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with *Dehşet Gecesi*, with the direct reference to *Kubla Khan* in the novel (K. Nadir, *Dehşet Gecesi* 13).

<sup>236</sup> “ruh hastası bir çapkının serüvenleri” (K. Nadir, *Romancının Dünyası* 248).

<sup>237</sup> “Aşk mektupları, tak[d]ir alkışları, eleştiriler... Buyrun bunlara tehditleri de katın. Yazıyla, sözle, özle; kimi zaman açık saldırılar, kimi zaman üstü örtülü iğneler.. Ama yine de sevgiler baskın çıkıyor işte!” (K. Nadir, *Romancının Dünyası* 130).

is thwarted when the bridge to the mansion on a mountain peak collapses and the bandits fall into a deep precipice (75). Within the context of the social conditions surrounding the female writer's writing experience that involve the male pursuer with secret intentions to gain material benefits, the reader can easily discern the possible implications of the sense of distrust towards the bandits as a group of men who act to set traps and try to trick their victims to get the ransom and steal treasures, unveiling their wish to rise to the opportunity.

Ahmet Özcan, in his study titled "*Ama Eşkîyalık Çağı Kapandı!*": *Modern Türkiye'de Son Kürt Eşkîyalık Çağı* ("The Age of Bandits is Over!" The Last Age of Kurdish Bandits in Modern Turkey), claims that in contrast to those who thought bandits were figures of isolated incidents in the 1950s, they were to become a massive phenomenon within the next ten years (114-15). For instance, columnists tried to give political and social messages to their readers by using the figure of the bandit (115-16). Whereas politicians and businessmen were to be regarded as "bandits wearing tuxedos" in the newspaper *Milliyet* in 1962, another columnist was to write that women were more dangerous than bandits in 1956: "A bandit will ask for either your money or your life. A woman will want both your money and your life" (116).<sup>239</sup> In this context, the bandits' eagerness to get their share of money in *Dehşet Gecesi* can be read in connection with the female writer's cynicism with regard to the males having the upper hand in the publishing world. K. Nadir condemns publishers for having stripped her of her right to make money through writing, and in her memoirs she writes of her encounters with traps in the publishing

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<sup>238</sup> İmşir Parker explains the death of the bandits in the pool of oil with their "greediness for money" (81).

<sup>239</sup> "[E]şkîya 'ya paranı, yahut canını!' talebinde bulunur. Kadınsa: Hem paranızı, hem de canınızı ister!" (cited in Özcan 116).

world set by men, revealing the difficulties of earning one's living as a female writer. In one incident, her first novel *Hıçkırık* is also published in a Cypriot newspaper without her permission in 1940 (49). The owner of this newspaper tells her that there was no copyright notice of the installments when it was previously published in the newspaper *Tan* and offers to send her a ballroom dress or a blouse as a token of their appreciation—an offer the writer does not even reply to (49). According to another memoir, in 1943, when *Tan* was to publish Kerime Nadir's novel titled *Gelinlik Kız* as installments in the paper, the newspaper's director Halil Lûtfi Dördüncü asks her to shorten the novel, not only because the reader would grow weary of it, but also because the payment for each installment would add up to an amount beyond regular rates (77). When she refuses to abridge the novel, *Tan* still agrees to publish it; however, not before long, the publishing of the novel's installments begins to lapse (78). K. Nadir mentions the reader's complaints about the installments not being published regularly, hinting at the newspaper's inability to pay for her commission (78). She listens to her agent Garbis Fikri Bey's advice, him telling her that Halil Lûtfi Bey will not pay that much for a novel, resulting in the discontinuation of the installments and the publication of the novel as a book (78). Kerime Nadir also writes about how the newspaper *Tan*, published between 1935-45, has not paid for some of her short stories, indicating that the newspaper's director Halil Lûtfi Bey is someone she has had her differences with (79). In another memoir, both the writer and the publisher blame each other for being cruel in pursuing material interest. She accuses Yusuf Ziya Ortaç of stealing her rights to publish *Kalp Uyumaz* (*The Heart Never Sleeps*), giving the readers of *Aydabir*, the magazine in which the installments were published, book covers for these installments (127-28). Referring to this incident, in her memoir titled "Öldürülen Kitap" ("A Book Is Killed"), the writer

makes mention of Yusuf Ziya's letter written in 1953 in which he accuses her of being "ruthless and somehow still the one who has been wronged" (130).<sup>240</sup> K. Nadir writes that he will always live in her memory in the same way: as someone who is "ruthless and somehow still the one who has been wronged" (130). These incidents with male publishers uncover the female writer's struggle to earn a living in a male-dominated publishing world that pursues material gain.

The traps set by the publishers have led to frustration in Kerime Nadir trying to gain sustenance as a female writer, as can be inferred from her reminiscence about the days when her father was alive and she was not the one mainly responsible for taking care of the family (116-17). With reference to the lessons in literature she has received in 1953, which included lessons on Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*, she writes of how in those years a male friend of her family looks down upon her as a writer who writes novels on commission (116), whereas it is through such commissions she has been able to maintain her sustenance. A prominent male literary figure, whose name is not mentioned but who has passed away in 1945,<sup>241</sup> criticizes K. Nadir for being out of place and taking on a man's job (205-06). He discredits her work, saying that they are romance novels (206), and calls her "The Champion of Dumping Novels" writing for low commissions (207).<sup>242</sup> In 1963, when the writer buys herself a house with a bank loan, she complains of the difficulties of paying off this loan: "Though I was one of the writers most read in this country, I had not set aside enough money to buy

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<sup>240</sup> In his letter, Yusuf Ziya Ortaç writes: "Beni cidden inci[t]en bu mazlum zalimliğiniz karşısında şimdilik söyleyebileceğim bir tek kelimeden ibarettir Hanımefendi: Teessüf!" (cited in K. Nadir, *Romancının Dünyası* 130). Kerime Nadir writes she wish could she tell him: "Ben sizi hafıza defterimden de söylemem aziz üstadım! Çünkü bu benzersiz 'mazlum zalimliğiniz'le anılarımda her zaman yaşayacaksınız" (130).

<sup>241</sup> Kerime Nadir is referring to Mahmut Yesari (1895-1945).

a small apartment, and instead had taken a big loan. The reason for this situation was not that I had earned a lot but didn't know the value of money. The reason was the ridiculous commission paid to mental laborers in our country" (236).<sup>243</sup> Kerime Nadir's memoirs, exemplifying the difficulties of earning a living and a reputation as a female writer commissioned to write for the publishing world largely monopolized by men, can be considered with reference to the bandits in *Dehşet Gecesi* that try to acquire material gain by plundering someone else's rights.

It is not only the males' monetary interest that surfaces in *Dehşet Gecesi*, as their bodily desires also emerge, leading again to the demonstration of an opportunistic attitude. This can be read in the context of how Özcan maintains that some columnists like Burhan Felek were declaring the end of the age of chivalry for bandits in 1973 with a view to recreate those ethical values in society they deemed as deteriorating (116). In 1952, Nevruzoğlu writes that "the real bandits of the past" would not attack women either for money or sex, whereas today's bandits had no values, being killers, thieves, and rapists (116). The end of the age of chivalry is also heralded in *Dehşet Gecesi* with the bandits' desire to rape the women visitor. When Şahikalar Melikesi arrives at the inn, she asks the bandits if she can stay the night there (45). One of the bandits, Feyzo, tells her that they have a room in the inn and food for her to eat (46), with a politeness that is in contrast with how they were treating Cengiz as the other visitor at the inn, considering they were about to burn him alive (44). In his story, Cengiz describes this newly acquired sense of civility:

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<sup>242</sup> "Mecmuayı elime alınca, birinci sayfada iri harflerle 'DAMPİNG ŞAMPİYONU' başlığı altında kendi adımı gördüm" (K. Nadir, *Romancının Dünyası* 207).

<sup>243</sup> "Bu ülkede en çok okunan yazarlardan biri olduğum halde, bir küçük daire satın alacak parayı bir köşeye koyamamış; bir yığın borç altına girmiştım. Bunun nedeni, çok kazanıp savurganlıkla bu durumun içine düşmüş olmam değil; ülkemizde fikir işçisine ödenen ücretin komik bir düzeyde tutulmasıdır" (K. Nadir, *Romancının Dünyası* 236).

“This politeness that the coarse man tried to show the woman was a bit ridiculous, but the other bandits had got a hold of themselves, as well, when they saw the woman” (46).<sup>244</sup> The bandits Feyzo and Çömez fight with each other to prepare Şahikalar Melikesi something to eat and Feyzo says “That’s my job. I saw her first” (53).<sup>245</sup> Upon the woman visitor choosing to eat her dinner with Cengiz in her room (53), one of the bandits, Çömez, says that his boss, Kürt Halo, is outraged because “Somebody else has shot his fox” (57).<sup>246</sup> With an affected sense of politeness, and the perception of the female as prey, the bandits’ sexual interest is described in a way that shows the competition among bandits to make use of the opportunity of carnal satisfaction.

In *Dehşet Gecesi*, to the bandits’ surprise, their plans are foiled by Princess Ruzihayâl in Cengiz’s story. When Cengiz goes to bed at The Bandits Inn, he finds himself at the bottom of a well and sees that it is the bandits’ well for the dead. Surrounded by skulls, skeletons, and insects in this damp tunnel, he feels he is buried alive and faints (62), like damsels in distress often do. He sees a red light in the tunnel, a red light like in the eyes of the owl who previously broke the inn’s window with its wings (63). While he follows this mysterious light, he trips over the dead body of the bandit named Irgat who disappeared when the owl broke into the window (62). Cengiz thinks to himself that the bandit has been hoisted by his own petard (63), Irgat having disappeared while cooking for the bandits that were about to torture Mahmut El-Hüdaî for him to write a ransom letter (37, 40), i.e. the bandits’ intended “oil well” (40). Other than the bandit Irgat, Feyzo meets a similar end when

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<sup>244</sup> “Kaba herifin göstermeye yeltendiği nezaket biraz komik kaçıyordu; ama öteki haydutlar da kadını görür görmez, kendilerini hemen derleyip toparlamışlardı” (K. Nadir, *Dehşet Gecesi* 46).

<sup>245</sup> “O benim işim... Onu ilk ben gördüm” (K. Nadir, *Dehşet Gecesi* 53).

<sup>246</sup> “[K]ekliğini başkası avladı” (K. Nadir, *Dehşet Gecesi* 57).

he goes up to the room given to Princess Ruzihayâl as Şahikalar Melikesi to do what he has set his mind to (65), to take advantage of her sexually. He tells Kürt Halo, that he, too, as their leader will get his share (65), but that he reserves his right as the first to see the female visitor. Feyzo attempts to rape Şahikalar Melikesi but she attacks him as a vampire (67), and takes off with her arms opened wide like a bat, although Kürt Halo shoots at her several times (68). Both Kürt Halo and Musa, as one of the bandits that has arrived at the inn the next day, express their resentment with a woman having outplayed them at their own game (68, 70). Following the death of Irgat and Feyzo, the bandits again are defeated in Cengiz's story when they want to secretly follow the carriage taking Cengiz to The Crimson Owl Mansion, and they all fall into the precipice when the bridge to the mansion collapses (75), another trap Princess Ruzihayâl leads them into. The opportunist male being caught in his own trap can thus be considered as a way Princess Ruzihayâl takes revenge on men who have material intentions on their minds, and who are brutal enough to resort to violence to attain those gains.

Curiously, the idea of men having recourse to violence and violation so as to be able to make use of an opportunity can be traced in Kerime Nadir's memoirs that focus on the brutality of the publishing world, providing the reader with the context of the female writer's experience in Turkey that has also produced *Dehşet Gecesi*. When the newspaper *Tan* is to publish her first novel *Hıçkırık* in 1937, Zekeriya Sertel tells her that the novel is too lengthy to be published in installments and that they will publish it in the paper if she is willing to have it abridged: "We need to shorten some sections. We'll have the abridgment done, if you agree to this..." (28).<sup>247</sup> K. Nadir

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<sup>247</sup> "Bâzı bölümlerini kısaltmak lâzım. Bunu biz yaptırırız, râzı olursanız..." (K. Nadir, *Romancının Dünyası* 28).

asks the director of the newspaper Halil Lûtfi Dördüncü whether she can see the abridged copy of the novel, and he complies with her wish, telling her that the novel needs to be published in installments within no more than one year at the most, otherwise the readers will grow weary of the novel (31). In her talk with Dördüncü, Kerime Nadir is informed that she has written some sections too long and that she has placed unnecessary details into the dialogues (31). Though this abridgment has been done due to the length of the novel, Dördüncü stresses the fact that K. Nadir is still young and that she has not established herself as a writer: “Such things will happen. You’ll get used to it. The publishing world does not take the writer’s wishes into account. Especially at the start...” (31).<sup>248</sup> The person from the newspaper who has done the abridgment is the well-established poet Nazım Hikmet. Through this incident, Kerime Nadir learns that the kind of experience in the publishing world she will learn to deal with is one represented by males, be it the owner of the paper, its director, or the accomplished other literary figure working for the paper. She labels this abridgment of her first novel of five hundred pages by the removal of one-third of it as “brutality” (31), and she is forced to agree with such impositions of the publishing world represented by males in order to have her first work published.

In her memoirs, K. Nadir mentions her interaction with a young female writer named Reyhan Timi in 1954. The new writer accuses Kerime Nadir of having monopolized the publishing market (201), and blames the publishers for favoring famous writers (203). Timi says “God damn them all” and when K. Nadir asks her who she is referring to, the young writer says “Those no good men” (203).<sup>249</sup> Similar to how

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<sup>248</sup> “Böyle şeyler olacak. Alışacaksınız. Yayın hayatı sizin isteklerinize uymaz. Hele başlangıçta...” (K. Nadir, *Romancının Dünyası* 31).

<sup>249</sup> “Allah hepsinin belâsını versin!..” / “Kimlerin?” / “Kimlerin olacak? O mendebur heriflerin...” (K. Nadir, *Romancının Dünyası* 203).



Timi's words express her contempt for the male-dominated publishing world, Kerime Nadir sees these men as opportunists, and more importantly as men bonded through fraternity. K. Nadir, in her memoir titled "Fırsat Düşkünüleri" ("Opportunists"), with reference to 1973, writes about her aversion to opportunists who she describes as people who often stab someone in the back (354). For Kerime Nadir, one of those opportunists is Selim İleri who as a critic, she believes, has been encouraged by his fellow colleagues, "his brothers" (354). In his criticism of her works, the critic claims that she has a deterministic attitude in her novels which does not foster the development of the reader's imagination (355), a criticism K. Nadir perceives as an attempt to monopolize art (361). Another group of opportunists the writer refers to in her memoirs is the "pirates of scenarios" in the movie industry. These pirates attain meaning in the Gothic context when one thinks of how the characters in Ann Radcliffe's sublime landscapes are usually "*banditti*, fierce gypsies, hired assassins, and pirates" (Mellor 92). In Kerime Nadir's memoir titled "Senaryo Korsanları" ("Pirates of Scenarios"), with reference to the late 1960s, she accuses them of having stolen motifs, dialogues, and scenes from her novels (289). According to the writer, who refers to the year 1971 in her memoir titled "Oyun İçinde Oyunlar" ("Tricks of the Trade"), the Yeşilçam movie industry stole themes and names from her novels and whoever knew how to get this job done assumed they had the right to do so (307). She blames this on the lack of a publishing law that would protect the writer's rights: "Oh the Turkish writer! Why is there no publishing law to protect your rights? You are in the hands of extortionists and pirates. They shape your destiny and you earn your bread through them" (293).<sup>250</sup> The opportunist critics bonded with fraternity, and the pirates in the movie industry can provide a

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<sup>250</sup> "Ey Türk yazarı! Neden senin haklarını gereğince koruyacak bir basın yasası yok... Bi[rt]akım gasıpların, korsanların avucundasın. Kaderine onlar egemen; rızkını onların elinden alıyorsun" (K.

context to how the fraternal bond is envisioned through K. Nadir's portrayal of the opportunist brothers and the violent bandits in *Dehşet Gecesi*.

At the inn, Princess Ruzihayâl has a trap set for Cengiz, as well, leading this opportunist dame into the distress of confinement at The Crimson Owl Mansion. Cengiz is both fascinated by the beauty of Şahikalar Melikesi, by the color of her skin under the moonlight (54), but is also disgusted by her long and sharp red nails, apart from her sickening teeth (56). He tells her that he is engaged and that he loves his fiancée more than he values his own life (56). Şahikalar Melikesi tells him the value of his life amounts to one sinful kiss and that men can never be eternally faithful to a woman: "Every man is an opportunist" (56).<sup>251</sup> Despite Princess Ruzihayâl's warning in her letter for him not to, Cengiz tells Şahikalar Melikesi the reason why he has come to Mount Cilo because he is so fascinated by her beauty (59). She shakes his hand with her beautiful, white hands which are strong and stiff like a skeleton's (59). Although Cengiz wishes to kiss Şahikalar Melikesi only once, he is sent to his room (60), like a child. Cengiz thus loses his control and is ready to give his life for one kiss from the Princess (94), but is left to Princess Ruzihayâl's will. After the carriage comes to pick Cengiz up from The Bandits Inn, he expresses his feelings of despair, being forced into troublesome situations (73). Though Princess Ruzihayâl tells Cengiz he is completely safe in The Crimson Owl Mansion (77), she has actually used her magical powers so that Cengiz falls in love with Selmin and then comes to the mansion (80). The Princess has lured Cengiz into her ploy because she has been pursuing her lover Prince Mahî for two hundred years: The Angel of Death has captured his soul and now the Prince has reincarnated with

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Nadir, *Romancının Dünyası* 293).

<sup>251</sup> "Her erkek bir fırsat düşünüdür" (K. Nadir, *Dehşet Gecesi* 56).

Cengiz (80). Though Cengiz is repulsed by the Princess's plans, he is bound to her will as she expresses: "You are under my command and you have no other choice than to stay here!" (80).<sup>252</sup> Princess Ruzihayâl promises to give the money she has offered as a wedding gift and to set Cengiz free on one condition: She wants him to remove the prayer-necklace from his neck and to burn it seven times (86-87), the Princess thus making a material offer for an opportunist man. This is when the painting of Prince Mahî comes alive and leaves Cengiz in horror: "That one minute in which I had spasms, with my hair standing on end, made me feel the distress of a hellish wait. Then I saw that the eyes in the painting really did move... I clenched my teeth and my throat went dry... It was as if my whole body turned into stone" (90).<sup>253</sup> Cengiz being trapped in the mansion, forced to obey Princess Ruzihayâl to be able to leave, and horrified at the sight of a painting coming alive, reminds one of the situation of the damsel in distress in Gothic novels, a male character this time caught in his own trap in *Dehşet Gecesi*.

Princess Ruzihayâl's condition to give Cengiz the money she has promised as a wedding gift, that is, her asking him to remove the prayer-necklace from his neck, and Prince Mahî coming alive in the painting to warn Cengiz to keep the necklace on him are indications of the opportunist dame's need for fraternity to defeat the Princess. Anne Williams, in her article titled "Dracula: Si(g)ns of the Fathers" explains how the weapons used against the vampire are associated with patriarchy as follows: "If we accept the possibility that the conflict between human and vampire is tacitly a struggle between a reigning patriarchal culture and an ancient female nature,

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<sup>252</sup> "Bana bağılsınız ve burada kalmaya mahkûmsunuz!" (K. Nadir, *Dehşet Gecesi* 80).

<sup>253</sup> "Saçlarım dimdik bir halde ispazmozlar içinde geçirdiğim bir dakikalık zaman, bana, cehennemî bir bekleyişin azabını duyurdu. Derken o gözlerin gerçekten hareket ettiğini görür gibi oldum... Dişlerim kilitlendi, boğazım kurudu... Bütün vücudum taş kesilmişti" (K. Nadir, *Dehşet Gecesi* 90).

then the weapons effective against the vampire should be signs of fathers” (454). The signs of the fathers can be associated with the weapons against vampires in *Dehşet Gecesi*, as well. Prince Mahî tells Cengiz that Princess Ruzihayâl is an evil-spirited woman that was in love with him but has killed him because of her jealousy (91). She has been sucking human blood for two hundred years and the prayer-necklace (*En'am-ı Şerif*) on Cengiz's neck protects him from her evil (91). Prince Mahî, his eyes full of heavenly light, gives Cengiz the secret to how he can put an end to the spell by killing the vampires in the mansion: He needs to go down to the cellar after dawn, thrust the magical sword hanging above all forty coffins into each vampire's heart and spread three handfuls of mirror dust onto each body, for mirrors are said to reflect all that the vampires try to hide (91-92). Consequently, the prayer-necklace,<sup>254</sup> the mirror dust, and the phallic sword in Kerime Nadir's novel can be linked to the signs of the father as symbols of patriarchal religion and fraternal power.

The need for fraternity is also conveyed in the way Münir Yalçın recommends Cengiz's book *Kızıl Puhu* (*The Crimson Owl*) to Mümtaz Evren. He says that in the novel the good is represented by a young man, the evil is embodied in a woman with fangs, whereas knowledge is mirrored with a bearded man (14), revealing the presumptions of which gender will represent good or evil according to the male critic. Knowledge and experience, according to Münir Yalçın, portrayed by men in Cengiz's story, are apparently the two bearded figures being Prince Mahî and Prince Affan Ferhad. Prince Mahî is framed in a painting and tells Cengiz how to kill the vampires, and Prince Affan Ferhad, whom Princess Ruzihayâl has turned into a priest and then into a statue, reiterates Prince Mahî's warnings. Although there is no

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<sup>254</sup> In her analysis of the novel, Aslan Ayar also mentions the use of the prayer-necklace as a symbol of Islamic religion in opposition to the cross in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (306). İmşir Parker refers to

sign of them having a beard, it is Atıf Effendi and his grandfather who hold the documents of Selmin's family tree (21), the male figures again being considered as a source of knowledge. When Selmin asks to write a reply to Princess Ruzihayâl's letter, Atıf Effendi recommends them that they write to his friend in Hakkari, possibly another male figure as the source of knowledge, who tells them that there are contradictory rumors about the factuality of The Crimson Owl Mansion (23). Upon this piece of information, Atıf Effendi warns the couple, advising them not to take this invitation seriously (24), a futile attempt to stop the opportunist dame from going to Hakkari on his own, where Princess Ruzihayâl awaits his arrival. As Cengiz does his preparations for his trip to Hakkari, it is Atıf Effendi who gives him a prayer-necklace to protect him from ill fate (26), denoting the relationship between the male figure and religion regulated by patriarchy.

Fraternity is also sensed among other groups of men in Hakkari, as well. The bandits in Cengiz's story display a sense of brotherhood, and even in Mümtaz Evren's adventure, the bandit Yedibela Hamza wishes to take the revenge of his uncle Kürt Halo. In Ruzihayâl's letter to her niece, she cautions the one who will be doing the trip to not tell anyone about their reason for coming to Hakkari (25), maybe to ensure that Cengiz also leads his "brothers" into her trap, and he does tell his secret to the bandits when he is asked about his destination (30). The bandits ask Cengiz to talk in French and tell Mahmut El-Hüdaî to write his brother King El-Hüdaî a ransom note: "If you help us, we'll help you [...] We are citizens of the same country with you, young man. What we want from him should not trouble you. We just want him to

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the prayer-necklace as an "Islamic charm" (80).

write a short letter” (35).<sup>255</sup> Moreover, the names of the vampires that are bound to Ruzihayâl also reflect her wish to put an end to the sense of fraternity among men: Captain, Vizier, Judge, Princess Ruzihayâl’s housekeeper Haşmet Effendi and the mansion’s servant Cafer Agha (97, 102). These male vampires bear titles that signal a symbol of authority in patriarchal societies but they are now under Ruzihayâl’s command. It is the duty of these vampires to share with the others the bodies they capture every night (98), the former symbols of fraternity now serving Princess Ruzihayâl. Overhearing the talk of the vampires, Cengiz describes his distress in these words: “This horrible darkness I was surrounded with left no doubt that I was buried alive. I started to yell for help... I couldn’t hear any reply but the echo of my own voice... I felt such horror that it seemed to have a grip on my heart and I fainted” (99).<sup>256</sup> To Cengiz’s dismay, fraternity that once served the patriarchy, has turned into vampires through Ruzihayâl’s lure and obeys her only.

Religion clearly signals to a sense of fraternity that acts against the vampires in *Dehşet Gecesi*. There are several instances in Cengiz’s story where a prayer saves him from Princess Ruzihayâl’s plans: When Cengiz throws the glass of champagne, given to him by the Princess, to the floor, it turns into a seven-headed dragon which Ruzihayâl regards as a Shahmaran that will punish him for this action (106). Cengiz says the Shahadah, and the dragon disappears (106). In another incident, the housekeeper asks Cengiz to sign some papers which document that Princess Ruzihayâl has given the money to Selmin, but when Cengiz recites the prayer Ayatul

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<sup>255</sup> “Eğer bize yardım edersen biz de sana iyilik ederiz. [...] Sen bizimle vatandaşsın delikanlı... Ondan isteyeceğimiz şeye bakıp da, yüreğin kararmasın!. Ondan isteyeceğimiz şey, kısacık bir mektup...” (K. Nadir, *Dehşet Gecesi* 35).

<sup>256</sup> “İçine gömüldüğüm korkunç bir karanlık, diri diri mezara girmiş olduğumda[n] şüpheye yer bırakmıyordu. Haykırıp imdat çağırmaya başladım... Fakat sesime, kendi sesimin yankılarından başka

Kursi onto these documents, they wither into pieces of papyrus (108). To punish him for what he has told Cengiz, Ruzihayâl wants to burn the painting of Prince Mahî (111). Cengiz starts to read prayers from the prayer-necklace on his neck, starting an earthquake that leads to a fire, and then the collapse of the mansion as if it were Doomsday (112). On his way to the cellar to kill the vampires as Prince Mahî has told him to do, Cengiz falls into a river and is caught in the clutch of an octopus but he holds onto a chain and climbs out of the river. There a gigantic bird flies over him as the roof of the mansion collapses (115). The serpent-like Shahmaran, an octopus reminiscent of Medusa, and a bird like Lilith in Cengiz's story all have a reference to female creatures that have been considered as outcasts by patriarchal structures. A struggle between Shahmaran and Medusa leading to Cengiz's escape from Medusa's grasp (113), brings to mind Shahmaran's warning Camasb not to reveal her secret to the others (Burcu Kara 18-20), similar to how, at the beginning of "Haydutlar Hanı," Princess Ruzihayâl asks Selmin or her representative not to reveal their reason why Selmin is invited to Hakkari (25). Though in Cengiz's story, Shahmaran helps him flee from Medusa, she has previously appeared to assist Princess Ruzihayâl (106), creating ambiguity regarding Shahmaran's identity, if not about Cengiz's reliability. In need of a miracle before the sun sets and the vampires awaken, he hears the voice of Prince Affan Ferhad, Princess Ruzihayâl's dead husband who she has turned into a priest (117). The Prince has been waiting for two hundred years for Cengiz to save those souls lost between this world and the hereafter (117). Cengiz is told that the vampires he has seen in the cellar had all fallen in love with Princess Ruzihayâl but they did not have the protection of faith like Cengiz does (117). Prince Affan Ferhad tells Cengiz to maintain his faith and do what Prince Mahî has told him to do to end

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cevap alamadım... O derece büyük bir dehşete kapıldım ki, yüreğime iner gibi oldu, kendimden geçtim..." (K. Nadir, *Dehşet Gecesi* 99).

the spell of the vampires (117). Upon Cengiz doing as told, the mansion collapses even more, this time with a greater fire (119-21), each collapse showing the destructive power of religion on Princess Ruzihayâl's mansion, hence implying the meaning of Prince Mahî's name: The Prince of Destruction.

In Cengiz's book *Kızıl Puhu*, fraternity helps Cengiz put an end to Princess Ruzihayâl's power: "Yes, that ominous ghoul named Ruzihayâl was no longer on the face of earth and humankind had been saved from her torment" (120).<sup>257</sup> Killing Princess Ruzihayâl is considered as a victory in Cengiz's story, a victory that further strengthens the bonds of fraternity: "This victory encouraged me. Remembering that the other ghouls were innocent souls that had been cursed, I completed my mission, with eagerness, to save their souls from this distress. They all turned to soil one by one. This is how the witch field at The Crimson Owl Mansion was removed from this world till eternity" (120).<sup>258</sup> On the other hand, in Mümtaz Evren's story, there will be no sense of fraternity to save him from Ruzihayâl's seductive power: "I regret not having a prayer-necklace like he did" (153).<sup>259</sup> Furthermore, the presence of the Princess in Mümtaz Evren's story arouses suspicion on whether Cengiz's story is not a true one, and whether people believe in this story because the Princess is thought to be dead. A Medusean crocodile and a huge bird like Lilith are again present in Mümtaz Evren's story as other shapes of Ruzihayâl. When Mümtaz Evren sees these animals confined in the laboratory and zoo on the hotel's grounds, he tells Selmin that he recognizes these animals from his adventure before coming to the hotel's

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<sup>257</sup> "Evet, Ruzihayâl adındaki meşum hortlak, işte böylece yeryüzünden kalkmış ve beşeriyet onun belâsından tamamen kurtulmuş bulunuyordu" (K. Nadir, *Dehşet Gecesi* 120).

<sup>258</sup> "Bu başarımla, cesaretimi ve gayretimi arttırdı. Aynı zamanda diğer hortlakların bu feci âkıbeta istemeyerek sürüklenmiş birtakım günahsızlar olduğunu hatırlayarak, onların ruhunu bir an evvel azaptan kurtaracak olan işime daha candan sarıldım" (K. Nadir, *Dehşet Gecesi* 120).



opening. Selmin's reply is one of disbelief that denigrates Mümtaz Evren as an outcast, similar to Cengiz who is said to be in an asylum. Waking up from this dream, Mümtaz Evren learns that Selmin and Cengiz are on their way to visit him, and he will prefer to close his eyes and go back to the dream where Ruzihayâl has won her victory. Interestingly, similar to how Princess Ruzihayâl asks Cengiz to throw the prayer-necklace into the fire, as a symbol of fraternity that leads to the death of Princess Ruzihayâl in *Kızıl Puhu*, Münir Yalçın wants to burn Cengiz's novel at the end of *Dehşet Gecesi*. Implying the novel's connection to the devil, the critic says "I'll burn this heinous book,"<sup>260</sup> thus suggesting his wish to restore fraternity. Mümtaz Evren closes his eyes to see his fantasy of Ruzihayâl, a fantasy he says cleanses his soul like Zamzam water (174). The well of holy water being revealed to a female figure, Hagar, in Islam (Hughes 154), Mümtaz Evren seeks atonement for his sins through his acknowledgment of the power of Ruzihayâl.

Looking into the memoirs of Kerime Nadir published in *Romancının Dünyası*, this section questions how the female writer's experience of writing in a male-dominated publishing world can provide a context for an alternative reading that focuses on the dame in distress in *Dehşet Gecesi*. The writer's memoirs about the reactions of the male readers, the publishers, and the critics disclose a sense of opportunism and fraternity. These social conditions of the female writer lead to doubts of whether the dames in *Dehşet Gecesi* are in distress, especially when they are trying to take advantage of all opportunities, using fraternity for their personal benefit. The dames are out for the treats of society's patriarchal structures but are in the end tricked to come back for more of what the female has to offer: the correction of injustices.

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<sup>259</sup> "Boynundaki En'am[-]ı Şerif[']ten bir tane de bende bulunmayışına ne kadar esef etsem azdır" (K. Nadir, *Dehşet Gecesi* 120).

This chapter has focused on the reading of *Dehşet Gecesi* with reference to the contextual information provided in the memoirs of K. Nadir collected in *Romancının Dünyası*. The social conditions that surround the writer's experience as a female writer have been used to question the roles of the shapeshifting female vampire and the dame in distress in reading the battle of the sexes as portrayed in the novel. Similar to the female writer that has to encounter misperceptions about her gender, her age, and the genres she chooses to work with, the female vampire in *Dehşet Gecesi* takes on different modes of shapeshifting to avert the male threat and to entice the victims, specifically through the vampires shifting into the forms of different animals, Princess Ruzihayâl shifting into the bodies of different women sharing the same soul, and allegedly true stories shifting into fiction. The female vampire holds out the treats the male has come to take for granted through the favors of patriarchy, and in the end, the dame in distress is hoisted by his own petard, tricked by his own temptations. At the end of the frame novel, Mümtaz Evren chooses to be with Princess Ruzihayâl, casting doubt on the male being considered as the victor of the battle between good and evil, and bringing into question whether the male can be regarded as the representative of good as mentioned in Münir Yalçın's review of Cengiz's book *Kızıl Puhu* as well as in an actual review of *Dehşet Gecesi* written by Türkeş in "Bir Vampirella." Contrary to the theses mentioned in the introduction of this study, patriarchal structures are present in different religions and regions and the female vampire as the victor in the battle for blood and glory tells the story of how she is able to trick the dame in distress who is a victim of his own desires.

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<sup>260</sup> "Şu yezid kitabı yakacağım...." (K. Nadir, *Dehşet Gecesi* 174).

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **CONCLUSION**

Literary production in Turkish literature concentrating on realistic literature for the sake of reforming the literature, as articulated in Namık Kemal's "Mukkadime-i Celal" (1888), the inquiries into Gothic literature have been limited. A number of studies that have referred to the Gothic convention generally tend to overlook the originality of the genre: Analyses that consider the Republican period, with its tendency to focus on Enlightenment, as an impediment for Gothic literary production, or those that claim the Gothic genre to be fantastic literature without a social objective fail to notice the subversive nature of the convention, thus neglecting its distinctive features. This is why this dissertation aims to look into the investigation of the characteristics of Turkish Gothic novels written by female writers in 1920-1958. In selecting the writers for this study, Suat Derviş, Nezihe Muhiddin, Peride Celal, and Kerime Nadir have been chosen with regard to current research showing that these writers have written Gothic novels in similar periods of literary production. Such a selection intends to put forth an inventory of Gothic themes as well as the motives that these women writers appear to have fictionalized

in the specified period. Using paratexts and intertexts, along with studies that elaborate on the historical context of the novels, so as to analyze the writers' inclinations, this study claims that these writers have used the Gothic novel to subvert the domination of patriarchal ideology in private and public spaces, discussing issues related to the female's position particularly in literary, political, and social spheres. Their choice of genre as female Gothic has thus overturned the authority of the realist novel as the only means to write about reality in the given period, writing subjectively about the reality being regarded by some critics as a style for the less evolved, the primitive, or the "acceptably" feminist writers.

The paratexts used in this study reveal that the four writers that have written Gothic novels published as books between 1920-1958 have been regarded as woman writers, particularly in the magazine *Yarım Ay* (1935-1943). In this magazine, there have been articles that focus on each of these writers as a woman writer, except for Peride Celal. This may be an indication of this writer's reservations about being a woman writer, although this writer has also specifically stated in an interview published in 1989 that she has written about the identity crisis of women during the years of WWII. The writers included in this study have also been censured in 1943 by Mahmut Yesari, another eminent literary figure in Turkish publishing circles, for doing a man's job. Though the four women writers included in this study have not given a common statement about being a women's writer, their choice of genre and the possible motives of this choice can be associated with women's writing. The analyses of paratexts have put forth those issues related to gender which elicit these women writers' motives in writing Gothic novels. This study has looked into how paratexts bear meaning for the contextualization of the writers' motives by

investigating the conditions of the literary, political and social spheres related to the time interval of 1920-1958 and their effects on women's lives. The paratexts used generally focus on issues circling on the writers' perception of being a writer; the writers' relationship with her family, her readers, and publishing circles; the writers' ideas on issues that affect women's lives such as the young women's and families' intentions on marriage; the victimization of women, and their strategies for survival. Specifically, this study takes into account Suat Derviş's essays on women's vulnerabilities and the possibilities of overcoming them, looking into the inquiry of the writer's engagement with the themes of Turkish political Romanticism. As paratexts for analyzing S. Derviş's novels, this study also refers to a review of *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...* written by Ahmet Haşim in 1923 and later republished together with the novel in its 1946 edition, a prominent poet associated with Turkish symbolism and impressionism. This 1946 edition of the novel also has an addition to its ending, encouraging the reader to reconsider the possibilities of how the scuffle between father and son may have ended. For Nezihe Muhiddin and Peride Celal, the paratexts in this study disclose the writers' views on citizenship rights and duties in the given period, as well as the effects of legal pluralism revealing a Gothic limbo between Modern law and Traditional law. In particular, alongside P. Celal's novel being dedicated to Münevver Andaç as a woman figure known in political and literary spheres, the writer's views on the period stated retrospectively are also taken as points of reference. As for the paratexts used in the study of Kerime Nadir's novel, the writer's autobiographical memoirs express the writer's grievances which provide the reader with a context to read into the fictionalization of the writer's motives. The contexts unfolded by such paratexts show that these women writers have used the

female Gothic genre to subvert the authority of systems that have been established through “rationalism, capitalism, patriarchy, or the realist novel” (Schmitt 9).

In analyzing the subversion of authoritative systems of the period through these Gothic novels, intertexts have offered valid points of reference, either through explicit mention of such texts or the allusion to them through the names of characters or spaces, common mythological and folkloric sources, or Gothic mechanisms that can be related to eclectic discourses such as religion, science, law, art, and music. The use of such paratexts by the female Gothic writers in this study can be associated with Hasan Aksakal’s mention of the significance of translation in Turkish political Romanticism (55-58). Turkish female Gothic writers being familiarized with world literature in general, either as translators or readers, shows their Romantic tendency of “being open to the world, innovative, and curious”, as indicated by Azade Seyhan (cited in Aksakal 56). In Suat Derviş’s *Kara Kitap*, Şadan reads the translation of Alphonse de Lamartine’s *Méditations poétiques* (*Poetic Meditations*) that are prayer-like verses in opposition to her cousin Hasan’s poems written with “stormy” and “thundering” deep thoughts (105). Her wish to find an answer about what life and death mean through these verses contrasts with Hasan’s will to commit suicide with the intention to possess Şadan in the afterlife. Reminiscent of Victor Hugo’s *Notre-Dame de Paris*, he wants to hug his cousin’s bones and to make them his gods, bringing into question, as a demonic poet, the traditional hero’s cause to die one’s own country. The novel ends with a scene that is similar to that of Matthias Claudius’s poem “Der Tod und das Mädchen” (“Death and the Maiden”) set to music by Schubert, where Şadan finds herself in sleep paralysis, left in a situation to either wait in agony for someone to save her or be a hero of her own. Interestingly, the

relativity of subjective reality regarding the degenerate demonic poet taking his fate into his hands can be taken as a reference that challenges Şerif Mardin's indication to "a somewhat barrenness"<sup>261</sup> in modern Turkish literature with respect to its rejection or masking of the "daemonic," usually equated to evil, rather than to "the strength of sexuality, the persistence of the creator, the scorch of rage, [and] the greed for power" (258).<sup>262</sup> In S. Derviş's second Gothic novel *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...*, Zeliha cites and translates Goethe's poem "Der Erlkönig" ("King of the Alders" mistranslated and widely received as "The Elfking") as she plays Schubert's composition for it on the piano to ask for her husband Osman's protection from the threatening advances of his son Kemal. The novel ends with the two men fighting over the possession of Zeliha, as if she were a porcelain doll that could be broken, and her gaze fixed on the scenery of pine trees as a symbol of the Burkean sublime signifying male empowerment. Yet, the sublime experience is comparable to that in Ann Radcliffe's novels where the threat arises from men outside, or *banditti*, as they threaten the security of the private home. These references to the sublime make it possible to read into the victimization of the woman in the house that is thought to protect her, and to ponder on the professionalization of gender as the only way of survival. In this respect, Ahmet Haşim's review of this novel is significant in how Suat Derviş is said to bear resemblance to male literary figures from world literature that have gained recognition for their works that are associated with Symbolism, Transcendentalism, and Decadence: Poe, Emerson, Baudelaire, Villiers de L'Isle-Adam, and Maeterlinck. Consequently, the intertexts in these two novels, with their signification of alternative uses of subjective reality, show the contrasts between the

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<sup>261</sup> "bir tür fakirlik" (Mardin 258).

<sup>262</sup> "[c]insiyetin kudreti, yaratıcının inadı, kızgınlığın yakıcılığı, [ve] iktidar hırsı" (Mardin 258).

male and female perceptions of power, contributing to the female's strategy making for survival.

In his review of *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...*, Ahmet Haşım refers to Suat Derviş as a descendant of Babylonian, Assyrian, Egyptian, and Phoenician "magicians" (6), an association which reveals that the writer makes use of mythological sources. This association is also of particular significance to this study in how it contributes to the analysis of subversion in *Buhran Gecesi* and *Fatma'nın Günahı*. The reference to the Devil as the source of Zehra's guilt for assumedly murdering her husband out of envy is a clear indication of the use of religion in *Buhran Gecesi*. The novel is narrated by the late husband's cousin Nedim who gives several people's accounts of how the widow is thought to be a ghost, bringing to mind Edgar Allan Poe's short story "Ligeia" where opium addiction creates visions of the character's dead wife (Botting 122). Zehra is referred to as "Woman in White" in the novel, a name which the reader can link to Wilkie Collins's novel *The Woman in White* in which the married woman loses her inheritance and her identity in the face of law (May 85-87). It is through this reference, the reader suspects Nedim's intentions of sharing Zehra's story so that the readers can pray for her forgiveness. This subversion of the story is in line with how Zehra fails to bring her husband back to life, as she finds only his bones when she digs up his grave with Nedim, a scene that S. Derviş relates through the reference to Egyptian mythology. Following the murder of God Osiris by his brother, his wife Isis brings him back to life to give birth to the rightful heir. This scene suggests that Zehra may be being blamed for a murder committed by Nedim, although he portrays himself as willing to give his own heart to his cousin, for his lack of emotions has rendered him idle. His attempt to "work" as he digs up his



cousin's grave with Zehra can be associated with the dehumanized scientist in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, materialistic societies creating abhumans with regulated emotions. This perception of Nedim's intentions helps the reader understand his "lust to know and own" (Papasthephanou) that is revealed in his wish to take possession of the mansion that he considers to be beautified by a woman for a man, also hinting at his necrophilic tendency. The painting of Zehra's portrait, similar to the painting in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, hypnotizes Nedim with its sublime beauty. The portrait portraying the female head resemblant of Medusa as a reference to Greek mythology suggests how women have been fictionalized as the enemy, the one to blame. Such subversion in the reading of *Buhran Gecesi* is in line with Suat Derviş's fourth novel in this study, *Fatma'nın Günahı*, where Fatma, treated as a dehumanized object of beauty in society, feels shame for not being to protect her little sister Zeynep who commits suicide, consumed with pride and envy just like her elder sister has been before. However, this reading can be subverted in the sense it is, in fact, society's sin in the way it treats women as such objects of beauty, creating conflicts not only between men, but also between women even though they suffer from similar victimization. This reading is reinforced through the analysis of symbols in the landscape and the weather with references to Greek mythology and Romantic poetry. It is in the context that the approach of an ominous ending in the novel is conveyed with Fatma hearing the buzz of a fly which reminds her of the day her mother passed away. The buzz of the fly can be considered as an allusion to Emily Dickinson's poem "I heard a Fly buzz—when I died—" as it conveys the ephemerality, particularly of beauty and the once-grand feelings it evokes, if not the invisibility of the mother and her protection.

Similar to Suat Derviş, Nezihe Muhiddin refers to a number of intertexts in her Gothic novels in a way that helps the writer to position herself with respect to the reception of realism in the canon of Turkish literature as well as in print newspapers, alongside the links established with French Romantic poetry. The reference to Namık Kemal's *Zavallı Çocuk* (*Poor Child*) in her novel *Benliğim Benimdir!* is a reference to how forced marriages lead to the disintegration of the family and the death of lovers, reminiscent of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Whereas in Namık Kemal's play, marriage is imposed on Şefika to pay off the family debt, in the same vein, in N. Muhiddin's novel, the concubine Zeynep is sold off to be married to a much older Pasha. Namık Kemal's Şefika commits suicide, which is in opposition to Zeynep whose two attempts as a concubine are thwarted by slaveholders, leaving the concubine in the situation of professionalizing her assigned gender role. Şefika's cousin Atâ commits suicide for his love for her, and him being her cousin brings to mind associations of incest that are used by N. Kemal to refer to collectivity and a union of fate. This is in opposition with the Pasha, old enough to be a father, raping Zeynep, a theme of incest that is later repeated in Nezihe Muhiddin's second Gothic novel in this study, *Sus Kalbim Sus!*, as a sign of degeneration. Contrary to Atâ who takes his own life upon Şefika's suicide, the freedom fighter son of the Pasha, Ferruh, who initially gives Zeynep a copy of *Zavallı Çocuk* for her to read and is later sent to exile for having a copy of such banned books in his library, transforms into a wealthy man after the abolition of despotism by the Young Turks and does not contact Zeynep who is relatively free: She is no longer a concubine but as his father's widow with a son from an illicit affair, she is regarded as a prostitute, a thief, and a murderer by some, and yet a lady and a slavishly devoted mother by others. These labels imposed on Zeynep make her question who she really is and whether she, too,

is free. Through this reference to *Zavallı Çocuk*, N. Muhiddin is able to bring up the problems of *talaq*, man's polygamous marriage, and child marriage as indications of the problematic female status in Family Law (1924). The incestual connotation between cousins in N. Kemal's play, no longer signifies a union of fate, but the father being privileged in the Republican period, with reference to the Civil Law (1926) in exchange for his support to the new regime. This exchange is also visible in *Sus Kalbim Sus!* where the concubine Zerrin is raped by the Padishah, and then given away to İlyas Pasha who may be considered relatively harmless in terms of his feminine character. Nevertheless, Zerrin and the mansion's housekeeper Mademoiselle Françoise are forced to live in the mansion without the options of heterosexual love, both women forming a bond of spiritual union over the melancholy expressed in Alphonse de Lamartine's poems "L'infini dans les yeux" and "Le lac" which they read to each other in the mansion's pool they name "Lac du Bourget". Though the two women are familiar with the life of the Austrian Empress Elizabeth ("Sisi") and the sensational Mayerling Incident, possibly through print newspapers, they are not aware of society's expectations, particularly from widowhood, not to mention their indifference towards the observation of religious faith. Unsatisfied with the two women's attempts to re-enchant the world through melancholy, and seeking to find a Prince Charming in the late İlyas Pasha's nephew Osman Nuri, Zerrin finds herself cut off from such dreams due to her fear of leaving her life in the mansion when society confronts her for such a relationship. This leads to Zerrin committing suicide in her own "Mayerling Lodge," reminding the reader of society's expectations from Austrian Prince Rudolph in the Mayerling Incident (1889). With Zerrin's dead body disgraced in the burial, and Mademoiselle Françoise converting to Islam out of fear of the same fate, the novel intends to subvert the fears

of misogyny. Thus, as stated by Mignon, Nezihe Muhiddin paves the way to a reading that calls societal norms into question and opens to consideration women's strategies for empowerment.

The stigma for trying to “re-enchant the world,” as put in Mignon's study, through unruly passions is often disseminated through the print newspaper, often through metafictional excerpts, creating a tension that reappears in some of the novels included in this study. In N. Muhiddin's *İstanbul'da Bir Landru*, the writer relates the story of Princess Nazlı who falls in love with necrophiliac Nils who is also a kleptomaniac, by giving reference to the folktale “La Barbe Bleue” and the serial killer Henri Désiré Landru, the “Bluebeard of Paris” (Schechter and Everitt 8), a figure from the print newspaper. Rather than being a message to warn those women who may drift apart from tradition and may fall for foreigners, in fact, the ill-intentions of the Bluebeard in this novel are to an extent undermined through reference to Nils as a Byronic hero, the hero-villain blurring the distinction between good and evil. The Danish necrophile and the Princess, facing the decline of the aristocracy, find a common ground of dealing with the loss of power. The two are, however, not able to unite, facing the tensions of modernization urging the individual to transcend the limits of morality, and yet controlling them with the fear of the stigmatization of society, a fear that is clearly revealed in how such stigma is spread through the printed newspaper in the novel. A similar fear of stigma is revealed in Peride Celal's *Yıldız Tepe* where the Kılıçoğlu family learns about their son's death sentence from the newspapers. The print newspaper not only functions to inform citizens of their rights or duties but also reveals the citizens' fear of being caught for the crimes they have committed. It is this fear of Modern law that has led the

Kılıçoğlu family to hide from its reach in a rural town, in a house where according to the townspeople's rumors, reminiscent to Bluebeard's tale, a man has imprisoned his wives, leading to their death. Other than creating such a sensation of fear regarding control and stigma, the use of metafictional reference to the print newspaper also functions in Turkish female Gothic to create a sense of ambivalence that can subvert the factuality of the newspaper. In Kerime Nadir's *Dehşet Gecesi*, Cengiz's novel *Kızıl Puhu* is resembled to Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Kubla Khan: or A Vision in a Dream: A Fragment* as an incomplete fantastic story, and yet it bears resemblances with the real-life experience of the journalist Mümtaz Evren. Though others will believe in Cengiz's story in his novel *Kızıl Puhu*, no one will believe in Mümtaz Evren's true story, telling him it was a dream. Metafiction in this novel thus casts doubts about the fictionality of literature and the realism of journalism, functioning to reduce the reliability of males and to empower a female vampire that not only has references to vampire folklore and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, but also comes from a line of female figures of mythology, such as Shahmaran, Medusa, and Lilith in the novel. Through this lineage of female power, K. Nadir hints at how the female writer can overcome the fraternal opportunists of the publishing circles.

The metafictional device in these novels is also observed with the insertion of intertexts other than the print newspaper. Osman's diary entries in *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...* reveal the ambivalence within spiritualism and materialism, casting doubts on his assumed sickness in an order that seemingly strives for rationalism. The letters from Sâra's parents in *Yıldız Tepe* reveal the tension between the city and the countryside, with Sâra being instructed to observe her duty of filial obedience, accepting her role as child-woman. In addition, the diegetic apparatus as intertext in

*Yıldız Tepe* can also be associated with metafiction, the narrator trying to muster her courage to write down her experience in *Yıldız Tepe* not as a novel, but as a letter or memoir (3-4). The insertion of the novel's dedication to Münevver Andaç right above the voice of this narrator is also suggestive with regards to metafiction, particularly when one considers Sâra's close friendship with Nihal in the novel. Kerime Nadir also uses intertexts in *Dehşet Gecesi* to reinforce the effect of metafiction, creating uncertainty about the validity of Princess Ruzihayâl's existence. The insertion of Cengiz's letter to Mümtaz Evren asking him to read his novel, Princess Ruzihayâl's invitation to Selmin to Hakkari, Selmin's family tree, and Atıf Effendi's letter to his friend in Hakkari to confirm the factuality of The Crimson Owl Mansion are instances of metafiction used to create an insecure context pertinent to the ambivalent relationship between fiction and reality. These instances of the use of intertexts provide hints to the writers' motives of subversion in their Gothic novels, with Osman signifying the tensions between and within spiritualism and materialism, both orders creating an insecure environment with their battle over Zeliha as the trophy wife, Sâra buried alive with her citizenship duty of attaining civilization as a maternal figure without a partner, and Princess Ruzihayâl rectifying injustices echoing K. Nadir's real-life experiences as a writer.

The use of common themes by female Gothic writers can also be considered as the writers' recourse to intertexts that secure their connection to the literary tradition, contextualizing subversive readings of their novels. As a "threshold" or space of "midtransition" (Turner cited in Tavener-Smith 20), liminality is common in Gothic figures that evade classification such as specters, the insane, and vampires (Tavener-Smith 20). To this list, the study of Turkish female Gothic 1920-1958 can add a

number of liminal themes and figures, namely diseases, the hero-villain, dreams, the sublime, cannabis smoking, shapeshifting, the child-woman, and live burial. The degeneration of Hasan in Suat Derviş's *Kara Kitap* with his diseases leads to his self-destruction, however, this brings him demonic liminality, freeing himself from the norms of society.<sup>263</sup> Şadan's family consumed with melancholy cannot save the heroine from her death-like sleep paralysis, and Şadan not able to communicate with the dead spirits of the two brothers in her room, has to take her fate into her own hands either by self-destruction or negotiating with the limitations imposed on her life by her disease. In *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...*, although Osman's belief in reincarnation can be traced in his dreams, his liminal memories of having lived certain tragedies before. Nonetheless, though reincarnation is often associated with the Ottoman Empire's sickness by scholars, in fact, it can signify the evolution and progression of history (Türesay 169). In the final scene of the novel, in a way that can be related to liminality, the obscurity of tall pine trees outside, associated with male empowerment, threatens the private home through their sight from the window. It is in the same scene that Osman shows up in a liminal state between life and death, and the ambivalence of who killed who at the end of the novel heightens Zeliha's need to maintain her survival through the control of her emotions. Zehra as the spectral Woman in White is a liminal figure in *Buhran Gecesi* with her body having not been buried. This situation casts suspicion onto the narrator Nedim's version of the story where the apparition seeks forgiveness for having killed her husband out of jealousy. The maid telling Nedim that they find the pillows wet and warm every morning ever since the husband's death raises questions about whether or not it is an

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<sup>263</sup> cf. Frederick Beiser's comment in his analysis of Friedrich Schiller's play *Die Braut von Messina* (1803): "Here is a fate so awful, and a life so dreadful, that the only rational decision seems to be to leave it. [...] Don Cesar's suicide thus shows that there is something of higher value than life itself: freedom, the power to take responsibility for one's actions and to be master of one's fate" (92).

apparition who is feeling guilty. Nedim's use of cannabis and his feverish sleep in bed for two weeks, after catching a cold outside during his time with the Woman in White, adds liminality to his version of the story, the readers being left with the decision to decide on who they are to trust, the widow whose property is stripped away from her or a man who has no emotions and yet has the lust to own. Nedim narrating the Woman in White's story with clues of her still being alive and his disbelief of the chances of there being anybody to believe in this story in the twentieth century create a tension of metafiction, similar to that between Mümtaz Evren's experience of reality or dream in *Dehşet Gecesi*. Shapeshifting in the latter thus becomes a noticeable theme of liminality with the female vampire Princess Ruzihayâl shapeshifting into other female characters, the vampires shapeshifting into animals, and the metafictional shapeshifting between a true story and a fantastic novel. This device is used by Kerime Nadir to redress those injustices she has faced as a writer with regard to her age, sex, and the genre she has preferred to work with to express her subjective reality.

The analyses of the novels included in this study reveal that another common theme of Turkish female Gothic 1920-1958 is the infantilization of the woman as child-woman. Often embodied as the damsel in distress, the child-woman can be related to "fear in the individual" as a central theme of the Gothic genre (Cavallaro 49), or to the subversion of such fears. With reference to Aksakal's study manifesting a number of themes embraced by Turkish political Romanticism, Suat Derviş's novels bring up how the woman is confined to Romantic dwellings and isolated from sisterhood and society. The child-woman as an indication of Burkean Romantic beauty is a common theme in all four of S. Derviş's novels that are published as



books between 1920-1924, be it the young woman in *Kara Kitap* who, infantilized by disease, is agonized by her inability to live a life she thinks her beauty deserves; the woman who is commodified in *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...*; or the women who are regarded as sinners, rather than victims, in *Buhran Gecesi* and *Fatma'nın Günahı*. With the emphasis on the silent cry for help and women reduced to dehumanizing beauty, Suat Derviş's child-woman evidently calls into question the need for heroes and the disputable comprehensiveness of the Turkish adaptation of the general will in Rousseau's Social Contract.<sup>264</sup> N. Muhiddin, with her Gothic novels published between 1929-1944, again makes use of allusions to Turkish political Romanticism with their references to the child-woman and the past. Nezihe Muhiddin's lone concubines are forced into incestuous marriages and are raped by the Padishah and Pasha who they first thought would be a father, signaling at the oppression of the Republican New woman in child marriage and man's polygamous marriage. Again in *İstanbul'da Bir Landru*, Princess Nazlı overcomes her fears to challenge her infantilization through her curiosity. These Gothic novels can be read as N. Muhiddin continuing her political struggle in the literary sphere, following the rejection of the establishment of the Women's People's Party in 1923, and the temporary closedown of the Women's Union in 1927 (Zihnioğlu 22). Nezihe Muhiddin's subversion of systems that infantilize women in her novels evidently challenges the way Rousseau's understanding of general will has been adopted in the formulation of Turkey's constitutions of 1921 and 1924 with their authoritarian nature (Aksakal 54-55). As for Peride Celal's heroine in *Yıldız Tepe* (1945), she shows the isolation of the woman in her coming of age in a town during the years

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<sup>264</sup> cf. Sara Ahmed's *Promise of Happiness*: "Feminist consciousness can thus be thought of as consciousness of the violence and power that are concealed under the languages of civility and love, rather than simply consciousness of gender as a site of restriction of possibility" (86).

that lead to WWII. Similar to Nezihe Muhiddin's concubines who seek favors from the Padishah and Pashas as their non-blood fathers, Sâra's submissiveness can be considered as an implication of the filial duty assumed by the Turkish woman citizen caught in the middle of the tension between autonomy and rationality in the modernization of the Turkish family, her filial duty under the disguise of collective rationality creating tension with autonomy (Aytaç 117). The general will implied by the daughter's filial duty creates a burden due to the inability of women to complete their citizenship duty of attaining civilization on their own in a town, particularly when women are caught in between the conflicts within collective rationality regarding the traditional and modern roles ascribed to women (Kadioğlu, "Cinselliğin İnkârı" 92). It is through her anger and curiosity that the child-woman strives for a sense of autonomy in the novel to overthrow this burden imposed on her. In Kerime Nadir's *Dehşet Gecesi* published in 1958, the child-woman can be seen in Princess Ruzihayâl in the disguise of Selmin who is not able to go to Hakkari and sends Cengiz as her representative to the Princess awaiting his arrival for her own designs. Shapeshifting of the female character entails swapping bodies that bear the same immortal soul, unfolding how the women writers' grievances in the literary sphere need redressing, when the novel is read within the context of the writer's memoirs. The use of the child-woman, therefore, helps these writers to create an atmosphere where the fears in the individual as a Gothic theme embrace the fears of women of 1920-1958 calling for a solution from the woman herself, or as in the instance of *Dehşet Gecesi*, the fear of the child-woman is subverted to lead the hero into a trap where injustices can be rectified.

Also known as “premature burial” and “vivisepulture,” live burial, as a concept that suggests spaces on the borders between life and death, emerges as another common theme in Turkish female Gothic of the given period. Katie Garner, in her entry in *The Encyclopedia of the Gothic*, defines this concept as follows: “Liminality can be both biological or social, and center on ‘a body socially dead but not bodily interred, as well as the decaying corpse’” (Bronfen cited in Garner). The infantilization of the child-woman in Turkish female Gothic 1920-1958 is often paired with the fear of live burial to signify civil death in these novels as indicative of women’s conditions in the related period. Suggesting “civil death after marriage,” with reference to Anoluk and Wallace (DiPlacidi 162), this theme recurrently manifests itself in Turkish female Gothic 1920-1858 as the married woman’s confinement in the “failed home” (Ellis ix). The theme of live burial is apparent in Suat Derviş’s *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...* with Zeliha forced to silence in her marriage to Osman, strategies of the “professionalization of gender” being her only way of survival (Hoeveler xv). *Buhran Gecesi*, as the story of a woman related by a man, casts doubt on the death of the wife Zehra whose body has not been found, and raises suspicion about the rightfulness of the inheritance of the mansion by the husband’s cousin Nedim. In Nezihe Muhiddin’s *Benliğim Benimdir!* and *Sus Kalbim Sus!*, the concubines face civil death through marriage, leading to Zeynep resorting to “Gothic feminism” (Hoeveler xv) to play along with patriarchy, whereas Zerrin chooses suicide rather than to be forced to the isolation of widowhood. Live burial is also suggested by burdens related to guilt, particularly in Suat Derviş’s *Fatma’nın Günahı* and Peride Celal’s *Yıldız Tepe*. In *Fatma’nın Günahı*, the heroine Fatma feels like a sinner for her influence on her adopted sister Zeynep bringing on her suicide, despite her being a victim herself of the perception of dehumanizing beauty in society. Such a burden

can be read within the context of the materialistic fetishism of beauty that has accompanied the individualism of classical liberalism associated with the establishment of the Republic (İrem 105), if not the lack of an anti-capitalist attitude as a theme of Turkish political Romanticism. The burden of guilt is also apparent in *Yıldız Tepe* where the members of the Kılıçoğlu family are like the living dead due to the regret they feel for not being able to stop the son Osman's execution, him being charged for a murder he did not commit. With this burden of guilt, P. Celal's novel subverts the sense of justice and the assumptions regarding the reach of Modern law with reference to the historical context regarding the crime rates between 1945-1950 (Cantek 259-60), and the arrest of both racists and leftists in 1944 (Çetik 6-16). In the years that lead to WWII with the citizens being burdened with their duties, Osman sacrificing his life for his lover and bringing shame to his family, İbrahim not enrolling in the army, and Sâra being given the duty to continue the family's name by bearing children but without a husband in sight are all instances of how the Kılıçoğlu family and Sâra are buried alive in the novel, subverting the citizenship duties given to both male and female citizens. Apart from the implications of civil death and the burden of guilt, live burial is also visible in the liminality of those who live with disease (Turner cited in Tavener-Smith 20), particularly Şadan and her cousin Hasan, as well as the family members that live in the house, who show indications of being consumed in *Kara Kitap*. Problematizing political Romantic themes such as the romanticization of youth and the recourse to dream, past, and melancholy (Aksakal 46-61), this novel deflates the young girl's dreams of materialistic self-fulfillment in marriage, and brings down her expectations to be saved by her melancholic family members or by the haunting images of her two dead cousins: the traditional hero from history or the demonic Byronic hero. Live burial in

Turkish female Gothic 1920-1958 is thus fictionalized as the subversion of three issues: civil death, the burden of guilt, and the incapacitation and questioning of sense of purpose that come with the liminality of disease.

The analysis of Turkish female Gothic novels of this period shows that dehumanization is another Gothic theme that can be investigated as a device that overturns the objectification of women. S. Derviş stating that while writing these early novels, she felt as if she was playing with her dolls (“Sua[t] Derviş Diyor Ki” 308), and her references to a porcelain doll and statuettes in these novels, together suggest the use of the objectification of woman as a Gothic mechanism. In Suat Derviş’s *Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...*, the woman is like a trophy in the power struggle between men, with the heroine choosing to contain her emotions as a strategy for survival, signifying woman’s negotiation with the crimes committed behind the walls of her confinement. As for the writer’s novels *Buhran Gecesi* and *Fatma’nın Günahı*, the instances of women being treated as a collector’s item and an artist’s muse unfold how men can regard her beauty as something to be possessed. This sense of dehumanizing beauty brings a sense of guilt on women, leading to pride and envy, and consequently to their isolation from society and sisterhood. In N. Muhiddin’s *Benliğim Benimdir!* and *Sus Kalbim Sus!*, the young women sold as concubines are treated as commodities with no sense of family protection and consequently vulnerable to the threats of incest by their non-blood families. Under such circumstances, women often treat each other as rivals seeking favors from the Padishah or the Pasha they have been sold to. Even if the forced marriage is to a feminine male like İlyas Pasha in *Sus Kalbim Sus!*, her option of heterosexual love is denied throughout the marriage, not to mention as a widow as well, after the Pasha’s

death. With the women pretending to accept the roles given to them and their escape into imagination or self-destruction, the use of the story of the concubines subverts the oppression of patriarchal institutions on women. The objectification of women results from the degeneration of man revealing itself in these novels with topics such as “[c]rime, poverty, mental illness; the existence of the ‘pervert’, [...] Decadent art and philosophy” (Margree and Randall 218), along with the tendency towards revolution, as opposed to evolution, in *Ne Bir Ses... Ne Bir Nefes...* and the consumption of cannabis in *Buhran Gecesi*, ambivalently used either as the medicine for headaches or resulting with this side effect. Curiously, the allusion to the objectification of man through necrophilia is used to subvert injustice against the heroine. The intention of the woman’s necrophilia in *Buhran Gecesi* is implied through how the male narrator refers to Zehra’s scream like Isis at the sight of Osiris’s corpse as the two of them dig up her husband’s grave. With reference to Egyptian mythology, Zehra’s motive apparently is to conceive the rightful heir of the mansion, but nature has taken its due course leaving mere bones in the grave, deserting the heroine to liminality following the guilt of having murdered her husband out of jealousy. In this novel, necrophilia subverts the dispossession of the heroine’s home as its implication casts doubt on Nedim’s narration of the story.

Closely linked to dehumanization, emphasis should be given to degeneration in the form of crime as a theme that can be associated with fears of misogyny and of the limitations of Modern law in the novels. Such fears are revealed through stripping away the widow’s property, incestuous rape, murders hidden in cellars, necrophilia, desecrating the dead, confinement of women in their homes, and murder as an act of revenge. Whereas Suat Derviş subverts the possible crime of property stripping in

*Buhran Gecesi* by casting doubt on the male narrator's intentions, Nezihe Muhiddin's Byronic hero Nils as a necrophiliac subverts the fear of the degenerate individual *İstanbul'da Bir Landru* with his platonic affair with Princess Nazlı. Princess Nazlı along with Nils's victims hidden in his cellar bring into question the expectations from the Republican woman, the necrophilic urges of this Prince Charming conveying the impossibility of love between sexes when they do not have equal status. In N. Muhiddin's *Sus Kalbim Sus!*, the desecration of Zerrin's body as indication of misogyny is overturned with Zerrin and Mademoiselle Françoise's questioning of societal norms through their non-observance or superficial conversion of religion. Out of fear of how the religious community will treat her following her suicide, Zerrin writes in her will that she wishes to be buried in the cellar of the Mayerling Lodge. Though her dead body is desecrated during her religious burial, Zerrin has taken her own fate into her hands, rather than living a life that is prescribed to her by societal norms. Society's reaction to her suicide is subverted with the expectation of tolerance and acceptance. In *Yıldız Tepe*, Cemile's trauma about the unjust execution of her cousin Osman results with her having fits that are contained in her room with the help of the elder cousin İbrahim. Seeing him with a whip in his hand, Sâra fears that he is beating Cemile; and yet, this fear is dispelled when she learns the truth, only till the reader is told at the end of the novel that, in İbrahim's absence, Cemile has been sent to an asylum: Despite Modern law's limitation to protect her cousin Osman's right to live, it assumes the duty to contain the female family member that has been traumatized by injustice. Another incidence related to the problematic subversion of misogynistic fears in *Yıldız Tepe* has to do with Grandmother, empowered through Traditional law, taking justice into her own hands to avenge her grandson's death. Grandmother not giving consideration to why

and how Osman's lover has accused him of killing her husband, as well as the old woman's feeling of content with having done her duty are both misogynistic, a situation that can be explained with the patriarchal function of the old village woman in the village novel (Irmak 188). At the end of the novel, Sâra tells İbrahim how Grandmother has told her the truth about the murder of Osman's lover, clearing her suspicions about İbrahim being the murderer. Grandmother has helped Sâra understand the Kılıçoğlu family and she is ready to forget the past. Still, considering the racist and xenophobic atmosphere in this novel, the misogyny related to the murder of Osman's lover is not subverted, İbrahim and Sâra being from the same family. One wonders if the Kılıçoğlu family has forgotten the past with respect to the rumors about the mysterious death of the wives of the man who used to live in Yıldız Tepe as another possible incident revealing misogyny and the limitations of Modern law. Nevertheless, crimes against women are subverted in K. Nadir's *Dehşet Gecesi*, starting with the bandits' intention of raping Princess Ruzihayâl as Şahikalar Melikesi is thwarted by the Princess in Cengiz's story. Then, during his stay at The Crimson Owl Mansion, Cengiz witnesses in the cellar a meeting of the vampires, all named with a symbol of authority in patriarchal societies but now under Princess Ruzihayâl's command. In this meeting where the vampires share the bodies they have captured, Cengiz feels as if he is buried alive due to his alienation among these former symbols of fraternity. One can argue that Kerime Nadir uses the subversion of power, the servitude of fraternity to depict the misogyny she has sensed in the publishing circles that lack a publishing law. Consequently, these novels of Turkish female Gothic 1920-1958 make use of the theme of degeneration in terms of crimes so as to reveal misogynistic fears and the ineffectiveness of Modern law to protect women, with the aim to rectify injustices through subversion.



Ultimately, with a view of Gothic literature being an exceptional genre with regard to the realistic Turkish literary canon, this study argues that currently Turkish academia considerably overlooks the originality of the genre with its assumptions that the Enlightenment has impeded its production and that this genre is fantastic literature lacking social function. This claim calls for the historicized reading of Turkish female Gothic 1920-1958 to exemplify how the motives that underlie subversion are significant to the reading of Gothic mechanisms in this genre. To this end, this dissertation has concentrated on the Gothic novels of Suat Derviş, Nezihe Muhiddin, Peride Celal, and Kerime Nadir, who have been regarded as women writers in the literary circles of the given period. The subversive motives that can be related to the female Gothic writers in this study are analyzed through paratexts and intertexts, generally contextualized with reference to Şerif Mardin's indication to Kemalism's inability to create a value system and Laurent Mignon's evaluation of the writers of modern Turkish literature trying to re-enchant the world in face of such a moral and spiritual void. Such contextualization of Gothic mechanisms not only elicits the social and political conditions of females in general between 1920-1958, but also provides an understanding of the circumstances pertaining to the professionalization of the women writers in this period.

As an initial step of its kind, focusing particularly on Turkish female Gothic, this study encourages further discussions that may bring depth to its scope and analyses, particularly through the reading of Gothic works by taking into consideration other gender constructs that similarly may have been disregarded and neglected by male-dominated spheres and orders. Research into the similarities and differences between

the Gothic novels written by female and male writers can further shed light on the social and political conditions of the period as well as the professionalization of writers that have written Gothic novels. Other paratexts and intertexts can also significantly function to contextualize subversions with different points of focus or interpretations. The study of other Gothic genres in Turkish literature may also contribute to a more comprehensive analysis of the professionalization of those writers that have chosen to write subjectively as opposed to the canon's concentration on realist literature. Another area where investigations into the subjective realities of this genre can be associated with is the effect of Romanticism on Turkish literature, with current studies concentrating on what Turkish political Romanticism means largely for men, despite the possibility of having different implications for female writers. Finally, this study can contribute to the examination of how tensions within and between spiritualism and materialism, on the route to modernization, influence literary production. It is with suggestions and hopes for future discussions that this study concludes its attempt to do justice to the writers of Turkish female Gothic 1920-1958.

*"Ne var ki, 'dışarıda' kalmanın olanakları kadar, ödenmesi gereken bedelleri de her zaman vardır. Bu bedel bir yazar için çoğu kez yazarken edebiyatın ve genel olarak aydın ortamın dışında bırakılmak, ciddiye alınmamak olabildiği gibi, ölümden sonra yapıtlarının ve yazarlığının unutulması da olabilir."*

—Fatmagül Berktaş, *Tarihin Cinsiyeti*, p. 205

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