

**NEGATING THE WALL:  
AN ANALYSIS OF SPACE, RESISTANCE, WITNESSING AND WRITING IN  
TURKISH COUP D'ETAT LITERATURE**

by

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*To My Grandfather,  
İdris Akyıldız*

**DUVARI YADSIMAK:**

**TÜRK DARBE EDEBİYATINDA MEKAN, DİRENİŞ, TANIKLIK VE  
YAZIMIN BİR ANALİZİ**

Cihan Yılmaz

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politik edebiyat

**ÖZET**

Türk edebiyatının bir alt janrı olarak darbe sonrası edebiyatın en çok önem verdiği konulardan biri politik temsil konusudur. Bu kerte de edebiyat, temsiliyetin temsiliyetini yapabilme kapasitesiyle ve tarihteki olayları farklı bir perspektif sunabilme ihtimaliyle büyük bir ehemmiyet teşkil etmektedir. Özellikle otobiyografik anlatılar darbe dönemlerinin şart ve koşullarına yönelik bilgilendirici bir karakter taşımaktadırlar. Bu noktada, günümüzden geriye bakılarak yapılan analizlerin çoğunlukla darbe döneminin nihai bir istisna hali, dönemde sessizleştirilen, şiddete maruz bırakılan bireylerin ise faillikten yoksun, çaresizlik tarafından yutulmuş özneler olarak resmedildiklerini görüyoruz. Bundan ötürü, edebiyatın ideolojik temsiliyetle olan gerilimi hakkında ve edebiyat üzerinden yapılacak araştırmalar sayesinde bütünleştirici, soyutlayıcı ve farklılıkları dikkate almayan ve sessizleştirici yazımlar yerine, çeşitlilikleri göz önüne alan ve farklı temsil ve varoluş alanları açan analizlere bir ihtiyaç duyulduğu görülmektedir.

Bu tez, darbe sonrası edebiyat örneklerine bakarak öncelikle mekansal yoksunluğun ve mahkumluğun bireylerin politik failliği üzerindeki etkisini inceleyecektir. Bu noktadan hareketle, hapishane ortamında tanık olma hali ve tanıklık ihtimali tartışıldıktan sonra, bu metinlerin işaret ettiği politik yapılanmalar mercek altına alınacaktır. En nihayetinde de mevcut iki konunun analizden hareketle, otobiyografik yazım ile antropolojik çalışmanın yakınsayabileceği, alternatif bir tanıklık halinin ve yazım üzerinden bir politik projenin mümkünlüğü sorgulanacaktır.

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**ABSTRACT**

One of the most crucial topics of coup literature as a sub genre of Turkish literature is the matter of political representation. In this respect, literature with its capability to be the representation of a representation and being able to display historical events from different vantage points; becomes of uttermost importance. Specifically, autobiographical narratives have an informative characteristic with respect to the periods of coups. From this point, one can see that the retrospective analyses on these periods, firstly depict these periods as an ultimate state of exception, whilst portraying the subject who has been silenced and subjected to violence as devoid of agency and engulfed in desperation. Thus, it is clear that there is a necessity for a way of analysis that takes different positionalities into consideration and pave way for alternative representation and existence zones instead of totalizing, abstracting and silencing narratives through an inspection of the tension between ideological representation and literature and literature itself.

This thesis will investigate literary examples, to first, locate the impact of spatical deprivation and confinement's affect on individuals' political agency. Moving from this point, the issues of conditions of bearing witness in prison setting and possibility of testimony will be discussed, only to reveal the political alternatives these texts signify. In the end, through the analysis of mentioned issues, the relationship between anthropological and autobiographical will be investigated and the possibility of writing as an alternative political project as well as bearing witness in an another way will be questioned.

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I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my grandfather, İdris Akyıldız.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Military coups as historical and political rupture moments have always been underlined as turning points. Unfortunately, Turkey has seen more than its share of coup d'états that caused severe economic, social, cultural and political changes and like any other form of expression and representation, literature addressed these issues vigorously. Post coup d'état literature as a sub genre of Turkish literature is thereof, a rich one. A considerable collection of memoirs and novels came into existence in the recent years as well as in the past, as forms of witnessing, testimony and reconciliation in relation to these military interventions on political and civic life.

Before going into the details of the thesis, a brief historical reflection would be of use, specifically in relation to coup d'états of 1971 and 1980 . The instability in the form of clashes in 70's between ultra-nationalist militants and radical-leftists, urban guerrilla terrorism, sectarian antagonism, union strikes, and a deteriorating economy in the midst of global and domestic economic crises increased political tensions. (Narlı 2007: 112) Throughout this period, the military was highly critical of successive civilian governments due to their impotence to cope with economic troubles and solve stability issues. In the late 1970s, civil-military relations, in Dekmejian's terms, tended towards an uneasy coexistence. According to Dekmejian, both camps were divided along at least three competing ideological lines: Islamism, pan-Turkism, and socialism. (Narlı 2007: 113-14) The coup of 1971 was the result of a worsening political condition marked by increase in violence, fragmentation of political parties, and weak and unproductive government. Although the wide-ranging grant of individual rights and freedoms with the 1961 constitution was not enjoyed by some, the military refrained from completely overturning the regime and was satisfied with a promise from the leading parties to enact a series of constitutional amendments intended to reinforce the government's capability in dealing with violent groups. There are some indications that the commanding officers were mobilized to action by rumours of plots from below. According to Faraz Ahmad, the intervention was rationalized on the basis that the

government was "driving our country into anarchy, fratricidal strife and social and economic unrest with the consequence that the future of the Turkish Republic... is seriously threatened..." (Ahmad 1977: 205) In this respect "the 1971 intervention in Turkish politics resembles what Nordlinger calls "moderate" military rule, i.e., the military exercise (or threaten to exercise) a veto over civilian authorities with the goal of preserving the social and economic status quo." (Tachau and Heper 1983: 23) The distinction between 1960 and 1971 interventions was that the military wished to keep the regime as it is, except only slight alterations were prepared to consolidate the power further against challenges, particularly from the political left.

In 12 September of 1980, this time the military stated that the coup's aim was to "re-establish democracy." After the coup, Turkey moved to a "military rule/civilian influence" phase, evidenced by the military government of the 1980-83 periods. Political and military reorganization efforts gave the military an increasing influence over Turkey's political process. (Narlı 2007:116) The preparation of a new constitution in 1982 which revoked formerly granted civil liberties and enhanced the military's power can be considered as the most significant political result of the 1980-83 period. For example, according to Article 118 the 1982 constitution, Turkey's Council of Ministers must consider, "with priority, the decisions of the National Security Council (NSC) concerning necessary measures for the protection and independence of the state, the unity and indivisibility of the country, and the peace and security of society." (Narlı 2007:118) The constitution was backed by an overwhelming majority in a referendum, as was the election of General Kenan Evren as president. Let's also note that after the coup a wave of arrests reached to all ends of Turkey. Within six weeks of the coup 11500 people were arrested. This number increased to 30000 at the end of 1980 and 122600 within a year. Zürcher claims that the positive aspect of this implementation was the fact that 90 percent of the terrorist attacks because of political dissident was eliminated. However, he argues, the people arrested were not only "terrorists"; trade unionists, teachers, politicians, students, basically anyone who expressed an opinion of the Left before September 1980 was in the scope. (Zürcher 2008: 408) Also inhumane treatment, violence and systematic torture was present during or after the arrests. During two years following the coup, the number of cases with death penalty was 3600. Fifteen

of them were executed. On the flipside, the political problem which started to present itself more and more was Kurdish issue in the larger context. (Zürcher 2008: 432) After 1980 coup, the repression and oppression over Kurdish identity had intensified. Kurdish was prohibited, even in private sphere. The state authority over the Kurds who represent the largest ethnic minority in Turkey even came to the extent of denial or alternatively referring to them as "mountain Turks." Taner Akçam on the issue argues:

‘There are no Kurds in Turkey; the Kurds are actually mountain Turks,’ it is said. The 125th and 171st Articles of the Penal Code and others have been employed against those who claim that Kurds actually exist as a separate ethnicity. (Akçam 2004: 231)

It is in this respect Zürcher states; 21 March 1984 celebration of Newroz, the banned Kurdish new year, marked the start of PKK's activities in southeast region of Turkey. (Zürcher 2008: 434) Ahmad claims that, the 1980 junta began this process of historical revisionism by questioning the legitimacy of the 1960 coup, blaming it for the liberal 1961 constitution and democratic laws, denounced as a luxury for a country at Turkey's stage of development. Consequently, 27 May was eliminated as a day for celebration. (Ahmad 1977: 244-245) However, it was a short step to question the coups of 12 March 1971 and 12 September 1980 which had far less to show for than the military intervention of 27 May 1960. And that is precisely what the intellectuals began to do.

After this brief summary, I would like to define and distinguish what I refer to as coup literature. For the aims of this thesis, I set the limits of this notion to the works of literature which has been written by those who has firsthand experience of prison during military interventions. This distinction is also useful in terms of differentiating between prison literature and coup literature. As I will try to demonstrate through the thesis as well, I believe coups presents us a special case through the extension of prison space towards daily life as it becomes a constant. Thereof the difference between inside and outside becomes minuscule in terms of symbolic violence and oppression. In the coup setting the assault and regulations on civic life becomes much more evident especially considering the state's repressive implementations.

The prison space in this regard can be considered in two ways. First of all, as a material and concrete space, it becomes the manifestation of intensified conditions of violence and repression under coup setting. Secondly, I argue, it surpasses its physical existence and becomes a constant in daily life as we will see in the novels. The analyses of post coup d'état periods and imprisonment in this regard through suspension of law/constitution, usually heavily rests Giorgio Agamben's notion of state of exception. However, I believe we can say that, for Agamben, the current and rather recent predicament is not characterized by an intensified politicization of constitutional matters as Schmitt would argue. The issue is not how to do politics at the interstice between law and anomie but rather the "nature" of politics when the threshold has become irrelevant and indeterminate whilst the political predicament has changed from the exception to the-exception-as-the-rule. Thus I claim that Agamben's theoretical framework squeezes the social out of the political realm and strata. I argue that the notion of exception produces an absence in the sense that it erases the political and social for which they signify a realm of multi-faceted, historically structured political mediations and meditations whilst diminishing various forms of critical energies. It is in this respect the idioms of exception indeed produce a categorical absence. They delete the political, a category which is a placeholder for various histories and sites of politically oriented societal practice as structured by objectified mediations. Paraphrasing Adorno, the idiom of exception has been called a jargon precisely because it marginalizes, and in the more radical cases, erases the societal as a realm of multi-faceted, historically structured political mediations and mobilizations. This kind of approach in my opinion, causes an impaired reception of events and in turn, unimaginative responses. Furthermore, the attempt to capture, narrate and conceptualize the events as well as the witnesses of the past through such a perspective, is disturbingly close to state's practices which aim to render the subject a political failure devoid of agency and capability.

Without trivializing the atrocities that took place in Turkey during post or early coup periods, this thesis aims to present different ways of bearing witness as well as transgressing and transcending the confinement of prison. Furthermore another set of inquiry will revolve around the topics of how the space is constructed, how it is represented, what kind of affiliations does it engender and how does it affect social

connections. This inquiry has two connected reasons. Firstly, the texts I analyzed presented a powerful interest towards space as a result of being engendered with relation to being confined in a particular space. This investment through representation of space, to the point of obsession becomes a locus of reflections of yearning, disappointments, failures, hopes and all sorts of other affections.

The text is a tissue of meanings, perception and responses, which inhere in the first place in that imaginary production of the real which is ideology. The 'textual real' is related to the historical real, not as an imaginary transposition of it, but as the product of certain signifying practices whose source and referent is, in the last instance, history itself. (Eagleton, 1978: 75)

Terry Eagleton's remark on the production of the text is important here; not only because it signifies the historical capabilities of the text, which will be linked to the discussion of bearing witness in this thesis; but also how different layers of responses in the form of meanings, perceptions, dispositions may contribute to the text itself.

Henri Lefebvre's *Production of Space* on the other hand, provides keen insights on the issue and has been a source of inspiration for this thesis as well. His project of *spatiology* involves a rapprochement between *physical* space (nature), *mental* space (formal abstractions about space), and *social* space (the space of human interaction). For Lefebvre, fragmentation, conceptual dislocation and separation of these concepts ensures consent, perpetuates misunderstanding, props up the status quo and serves distinctively ideological ends.

Instead of uncovering the social relationships (including class relationships) that are latent in spaces, instead of concentrating our attention on the production of space and the social relationships inherent to it - relationships which introduce specific contradictions into production, so echoing the contradiction between private ownership of the means of production and the social character of the productive forces - we fall into the trap of treating space "in itself", as space as such. We come to think in terms of spatiality, and so fetishize space in a way of reminiscent of the old fetishism of commodities, where the trap lay in exchange, and the error was to consider "things" in isolation, as "things in themselves." (Lefebvre, 1991: 90)

It is in this respect, space is no more a passive plane, an empty zone on which things "take place" and action to ground itself somewhere; space, like other social products, is itself actively produced. It is not a dead, inert thing or object, but on the contrary,

organic and alive, it palpitates, flows and collides with other spaces. And this is the second part of the analysis on space, considering Eagleton's reflections. In this respect, the texts this thesis aims to analyse provides us crucial perspectives on the conditions of possibilities and possibilities of conditions with respect to space and bearing witness.

This scope of this thesis can be summarised under three sections. The first can be conceptualized as transgressing and transcending the prison space in the coup literature. The second one is portraying the ways in which the author figures as political subjects bear witness to the events and open up possible paths for resistance and solidarity whilst defying totalizing and victimizing ways of imagination. The third one is looking for a link between autobiographical and anthropological ways of writing through disturbing the rather rigid understanding of space and confinement. I will be using four books for the thesis and investigate them respectively: Mehmed Uzun's "*Sen*"<sup>1</sup> as spaces of post-colonialism, Sevgi Soysal's "*Yıldırım Bölge Kadınlar Koğuşu*"<sup>2</sup> as spaces of laughter, Erdal Öz's "*Yaralısın*"<sup>3</sup> as spaces of violence and Orhan Miroğlu's "*Ölümden Kalıma*"<sup>4</sup> as spaces of writing. There are two particular reasons for the selection of these books. The first one is the fact that these are texts, heavily riddled with references to author's own personal experience in prison, even autobiographical at certain points. Thereof their testimonial and witnessing capability is crucial. Secondly, these texts also reflect ambivalences towards the space they represent. The space of imprisonment becomes the source of various limitations, yet it also becomes a place in which the inmates reflect their memories, their experiences and their social connections. Thereof, through connecting with space or simply being in that space, the experience of prison becomes something more than being suspended in a void, or being disciplined and punished under the everlasting gaze of the authority. The other issue this thesis aims to address the relationship between anthropology, autobiography and prison on the ground of space, and with respect to this also, tries to propose another way of reading as well as writing through transgression of space.

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<sup>1</sup> Eng. You

<sup>2</sup> Eng. Women's Ward of Yıldırım Region

<sup>3</sup> Eng. You Are Wounded

<sup>4</sup> Eng. From Death to Survival

## CHAPTER 2

### SPACES OF NARRATIVE & TESTIMONIAL SPACES

#### 2.1. SPACES OF POST-COLONIALISM

Mehmed Uzun, one of the founders of modern Kurdish literature, was born in 1953 at Siverek, a small town in Urfa province. He was imprisoned in Diyarbakır Prison at the age of 17 where he spent two years and learned Kurdish. He left the country at 1977 to avoid further imprisonment and oppressive political atmosphere in Turkey. He lived in Sweden from 1977 to 2006 July when he finally returned to Turkey. After the military intervention of 1980, Uzun lost his Turkish citizenship and lived an exilic life until 1992. During that time his first publication, *Tu*, came into being in 1985. As a multilingual and a multicultural writer, he had made literary studies on Kurdish, Turkish and Swedish and played a role at the administrative board of International PEN clubs, and also became a member of Sweden and World Journalists Associations. He wrote seven novels in Kurdish, which have been primarily translated in Turkish and still being translated. His essays which are published in over 20 languages can be seen at various newspapers and magazines. Until 2000, he wrote the following novels in Turkish, Kurdish and Swedish: *Mirina Kaleki Rind* (1987), *Siya Evine* (1989), *Rojek Ji Rojen Evdale Zeynike* (1991), *Bira Qedere* (1995) and *Roni Mina Evine Tari Mina Mirine* (1998), collection of essays such as *Hez u Bedewiya Penuse* (1993), *Nar Cicekleri* (1996), *Bir Dil Yaratmak* (1997) and *Dengbejlerim* (1998), and prepared an anthology of Kurdish Literature named *Antolojiya Edebiyata Kurdi* in 1995. He was put on trial in the spring of 2001 about his book *Aşk gibi Aydınlık - Ölüm gibi Karanlık* and his essay book *Nar Çiçekleri*, yet he was acquitted. The same year, he was awarded by The Turkish Publishers Association with the annual Freedom of Thought and Expression Prize, by Berlin Kurdish Institute with Literature Prize. He also received Torgny Segerstedt Freedom Pen award, one of the most prestigious prizes in the Scandinavian region, due to his stance with respect to freedom of expression and literary freedom. At 2002, he was awarded by Swedish Academy with Stina-Erik Lundeberg Prize because of his contribution to Swedish cultural life and at 2005 he received Iraqi Kurdistan Region Honorary Prize and Diyarbakır Municipality Honorary Prize. Uzun published

two volumes of *HD* novels in 2002 and 2003. His essays published under the title *Zincirlenmiş Zamanlar Zincirlenmiş Sozcukler* in 2002, Uzun's last finished literary work during exile is *Ruhun Gökkuşığı*, an autobiography, which was published in Turkish in 2005. At 11 October 2007, he lost the battle against stomach cancer which he has been suffering for so long and passed away. He was, at that time, working on his new novel in Kurdish, *Heviya Auerbach*.

I would like to open up a parenthesis here for Diyarbakır Prison to give a brief background, because like Uzun's, Miroğlu's account takes place in Diyarbakır Prison as well. It was built in 1980 as an E-type prison by the Ministry of Justice. After the September 12, 1980 Turkish coup d'état, the facility was transferred to military administration and became a Martial Law Military Prison. Control of the prison was returned to the Ministry of Justice on May 8, 1988. What has been called "the period of brutality" or "the hell of Diyarbakır" refers to the early and mid-1980s (in particular the years between 1981–1984) when the prisoners in the newly built Diyarbakır Military Prison No. 5 were exposed to horrific acts of systematic torture. According to *The Times*, it is among the "ten most notorious jails in the world." Between 1981 and 1984, 34 prisoners lost their lives.

### **2.1.1. Siege of Diyarbakır: Colonial Condition of the Outside**

*Tu*<sup>5</sup> bears the importance of being Uzun's first novel and was written during his exile years in Sweden. Mostly written in the second-person point of view -and the only novel in which Uzun deployed the second person narrative-, it also includes flashbacks to second person narrator's memories and past, through his dialog with an insect which happens to be near him in the prison cell. Both these elements combined, tell us the story of an inmate whose name is not revealed; the story of how he was captured and how he experiences imprisonment. Considering Uzun's imprisonment in Diyarbakır Prison, I believe it is possible to say *Tu* contains an autobiographical aspect and heavy references to his own experiences. Three characters in the novel helps us identify this

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<sup>5</sup> Tr. Sen



process. The first one is *pismam*<sup>6</sup>, his cousin, Ferid Uzun, who was assassinated as mentioned in the novel: "He was roughly four years older than you. Neither you, nor him, nobody knew that he was going to be murdered six years after these sentences." The second individual is İsmail Beşikçi, who was imprisoned as well within that time period in Diyarbakır Prison due to his sociological studies on Kurdish region and population. He is referred as *Mamoste*<sup>7</sup>. The last and third one is, Musa Anter - a Kurdish writer and intellectual who was assassinated on 1992. He is referred as *Apo*<sup>8</sup>.

The novel begins with a nursery rhyme as the first person narrator is imprisoned within an abysmal cell, his body is broken and tortured. An insect just like the ones in his grandmother's stories, the lady bug, suddenly appears in his cell and he starts to sing:

Bug, bug, lady bug,

With your scuff slippers,

Dresses with glitters,

Where do you go?<sup>9</sup><sup>10</sup>

This rhyme, thus, not only gets to be transferred in this respect, but also lets us keep in mind that narrator in fact is talking with an insect - the very insect from his grandmother's tales which can only be understood as an appreciation of oral legacy. I will follow up on this track later on, and try to reflect on what is the importance of lady bug later.

After the initial scene we are welcomed with depictions of Diyarbakır:

Your little city was surrounded with vineyards and orchards. As spring arrived, everything blossomed, and was engulfed in a warm green. Every resident of the city owned a vineyard.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Tr. Amca oğlu, Eng. cousin

<sup>7</sup> Tr. Hoca, Eng. Teacher

<sup>8</sup> Tr. Amca, Eng. Uncle

<sup>9</sup> All the translations of these texts are mine.

<sup>10</sup> Mehmet Uzun, *You*, p. 9

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15

What we have afterwards are the wise men of the city. These men for Uzun, represents the cultural and political accumulation within the neighbourhood, unofficial leaders of the city:

Yes... the wise men of the city were the prosperity of the city. It was them what made your city a city. They had experienced so much. They had seen good and bad days, they saw the pain, the hurt, the massacre and they were the history itself. Most of them were storytellers and *dengbejs*<sup>1213</sup>.

This peaceful and friendly portrayal however is shattered when narrator's memory wanders off to official presence in the city. The spatial distinction between outside and inside, which will be much more present in the novel later on, is first established here. If the inside represents being desperate and subjected to deprivation, narrator's account shows us that there is in fact an kernel of in the outside as well, and that is the presence of the colonial power.

A couple of times a year, they fill the streets of your city, garnish the squares with flags and demand from you to participate. They pull the children out of their schools and cram in to the city square. They build high pedestals for their army officials, soldiers and their policemen; celebrate their festivals with bands and orchestras, drums, kettledrums and trumpets.

It is only appropriate to call these days as charade days. You mock these days. They shout in these days at the top of their lungs:

- God bless our brave and great leader!
- Long live the Republic!

Then, you looked into each others' eyes and start giggling. It was their brave and great leader who ordered your massacre and slaughter. And their Republic was built on the ruins of your land.

You couldn't celebrate your national holidays. Your sovereigns had them banned "for the sake of the unity and solidarity of the Republic". You were desperate. You had to submit to these lies, to these eyewashes.<sup>14</sup>

This oppressive control over the city is of course met with resistance. Outside, the city space, is open for struggle. Furthermore, it has always been a space for struggle. Referring to an old castle within the borders of the city, narrator says "Since the past,

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<sup>12</sup> Eng. Wandering minstrel

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 17

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 20

there is always a flag to flag on the bastions. Sometimes it is your flag, but mostly it belong to the foreigners'." Yet, there are much more beautiful sights in comparison to magnificence of the castle there. It is sight of slogans.

Do you know what is the best of all? Before they took you away, like four years ago, there was a slogan on one of the castle's walls in big, very big letters. It written with lime and in Turkish. Your neighbours loved it. But the state and its accomplices turned into crazy. State's soldiers and police painted over it with black countless times. But a couple of days later, it returned to its old self. Smiling through that white lime once again. You were used to it. It slowly became one of the riches of your city.<sup>15</sup>

Later on we learn what the slogan says: "Electricity and roads to the West, police soldiers and stations to the East".<sup>16</sup> This statement, which will be accompanied by many articulations of the narrator is going to be a part of a multifaceted depiction of colonization problem. Whether the predicament of Kurdish region in Uzun's narrative rests on a post-colonial tension or economical disinvestment on the part of state policies is an open question. However, as it will be discussed later on Uzun seems to side with the formal analysis, and the narrator's memories as well as comments seems to support this sensation.

As a narrative which heavily rests on binaries and dualities to expose the hierarchical power inequalities, it also displays the tension and deepen the differences between both sides of the equation. Uzun's first attempt arises when we consider two consecutive chapters in his book. Before the narrator was taken from his home by the state officials, we are invited to visit the cell he is being held in and listen him to speak to lady bug.

Dear sir, welcome to your new mansion!

Now we have to return to our golden bed. Do you see how valuable of a captive I am? We cannot, in no way, find a bed like this in no other place. There is not a place you can find a bed like this, there cannot be. It has turned into leather, it has turned into wood because of all the excrement, all the piss, all the blood, all the sweat.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 21

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 22

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 39

The inside of narrator's house, after this scene, becomes part of a very powerful juxtaposition and a stark contrast. Warmth of the home is expressed through heirloom items, valuable trinkets, countless books, floor tables and narrow yet peaceful rooms. However it does not last forever, and the privacy of the household gets shattered when the officials show up at his door at midnight. As a protective act, he demands for a search warrant, and the answer he receives etches a novel mark on the distinction between private and public sphere:

Don't you know where you live? Forget about the papers, permits and laws, just don't stand in our way and be quiet. It will not be good for you. Neither for you, nor the ones inside. Get out of the way, we are coming in.<sup>18</sup>

...As if the police sergeant and his friends were risen from the dead, they were tearing everything down like foxes in a chicken coop.<sup>19</sup>

This attack on the household and the ways in which it is represented accomplishes a couple of things: First of all, the fox metaphor emphasizes the nature of invasion. The private sphere of household is shattered by the officials without reason, without respect in an animalistic manner. Secondly, even though the officials have an tremendous power over these individuals, they are represented as simple-minded creatures, they had no taste for literature, especially Western literature which the narrator was so fond of, they look and act like animals, rabid animals in fact. Victimhood is here linked to an intrinsic quality of humanness which in fact perpetrators are lacking and will continue to so, due to their inhuman nature. The juxtaposition of space on the other hand, becomes much more clear when he is taken under custody.

You were not at home, not at your warm and cosy bed. You realized where you are now. And this scream was nowhere near the battle cries you shouted against the monsters, the witches in your dreams. Someone, here, right next to you, in the police station of the city, was getting a beating, was being tortured.<sup>20</sup>

Yes, the houses of the strangers, the stations of the strangers were large and cold and you were moaning within them.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 45

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 49

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 72

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 77

The narrator's account also focuses on the physical artefacts which are instrumentalized in order to establish ideological and spatial web, and one of these artefacts is Mustafa Kemal Atatürk portraits. Having several appearances at different locations these portraits, and sometimes busts, conjure a gaze, a violent gaze under which the sensations of guilt, shame and despair arises in the political subject.

Above the ones who were sitting, there was a big framed photograph of Mustafa Kemal. Under the frame, there was a writing on the wall which belonged to him

- Turkish Nation and State is a Unity that cannot be Shattered!

There were more pictures on the wall. But you did not look at them, because you were not interested in them. Now you were alone in the middle of the huge room. And all the pictures were looking at you. Then, you felt like a naked actor.<sup>22</sup>

Government buildings can also be conceptualized as the other component of this ideological and spatial web. The prison building can be understood in terms of a physical manifestation of the violent interruption, but that kind of a rupture is not the only way for sovereign to express his control. The government building in Diyarbakır is the most morose example of this in Uzun's narrative:

The government office was the most remarkable building in your tiny, poor-fellow city; it was built out of large, white marbles. Builders had garnished the stones with colourful patterns. It had a huge door. Above the door there was a magnificent pillar and Arabic scripture on it read as the following: PROPERTY AND HONOR<sup>23</sup>

The emphasis on property is important. A particular example stands out for that matter as well. The narrator tells us that the police station he was in was built upon a land, which was once a public house, an inn for the poor; and interestingly enough the trees of the inn was still standing at the yard of the station.

There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places - places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society - which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 80

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 90

reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias. (Foucault 1986: 24)

This analysis purported by Foucault is critical here, because it not only helps us to understand the violent erection of a government building which in turn becomes a locus for perpetuating violence, but also lays the question of dispossession and redistribution of certain spaces to the table. Dispossession of various minorities, Armenians, Kurds, Rums has been a source of turmoil and anxiety in the past of Turkish Republic. However, in Uzun's narrative the memory of the inn and the trees which once belonged to the garden of that inn, opens up an evoking path of imagination and criticism whilst disturbing and transgressing the material predicament.

### **2.1.2. Juxtaposing Space: Dichotomy of Outside and Inside**

Of course, simply referring to the space as a material and psychic boundary which can be crossed, or exists only to be crossed, becomes too much of an optimistic and selective analysis. Furthermore it does not do justice to the atrocities that took place in Diyarbakır Prison. Thereof, even though this line of argumentation claims that the spatial deprivation does not impose an ultimate failure on and for the subject to exist, it is still important to get a sense of narrator's experiences and how he reflects the prison space as a restrictive reality. The following section is from the chapter where he is taken to the "palace". The palace is the ironic and cruel name of the torture house for the official soldiers.

There was nothing interesting nor charming in your palace. It was like any other cell. It was narrow, low, cold, suffocating and the floor was wet.<sup>24</sup>

Then you realized you were trembling. In the middle of the winter, you were all by yourself in your empty cell. Floors were wet, the walls were damp. You looked around. Wall, wall, wall, wall again. Are these walls going to be your friends? Door, door viewer and the little muddy window. Are they going to be witnesses of your life here? Lamp, exhausted lamp, lightless lamp, weary lamp, crabbed lamp. Is it going to give any light and warm your heart?<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 181

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 187

This place was like an open grave, one you slowly crawl into.<sup>26</sup>

After being tortured for the first time in Heaven, once again an ironic and cruel name instituted by the officials, he gets thrown in to his palace.

You looked around, four walls... Four silent, deaf, blind, mute walls. Can't they see you are struggling, wallowing in your own blood? The wall with the door, that was the road to everything. Everything would be present through that door, including death or survival. That door was playing a crucial role between you and life. The door with the little window was the wall between you and freedom. Doesn't it ever get sad for locking you, condemning you to captivity? The other walls, on the other hand, were blocking the path between you and other prisoners.<sup>27</sup>

Keeping these hurtful depictions in mind, the image and imagination of Diyarbakır become all the more striking in the narrative. Often severely contrasted with the outside, when we consider the depictions of Diyarbakır and memories of rural areas, we can claim that what separates the inside from the outside becomes rather obsolete with respect to spatial dynamics. There is one thing crucial to mention here: The portraiture of outside, especially Diyarbakır in this respect, is not based on vague recollections of spatial elements which the protagonist desperately yearns for. Quite the contrary, the experience of being outside and the representations of it in the texts are very vivid, to the extent that *as if* the narrator accompanied by the reader, is outside. It is in this regard I believe it would be accurate to say that the allegory of nation, is now incorporated in/through an allegory of the body - self and space is not detached from that processes of subjectivity, but quite the contrary they are the very formations that processes take place and interact with. Thus imprisonment can be considered as a matter of connectivity, or better yet, it is a matter of access to networks of social connectivity. When the narrator is locked down in the prison for the first time, he starts to wonder.

I wonder, is this being arrested and put into prison? I wonder, shrinking the world is the aim of imprisonment and prison?

I wonder, what do these men do, how do they spend their days? The place to eat, the place to move, sleep, wiggle seems all the more less than usual. I wonder,

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 190

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 207

does the way you think gets smaller as well? Do the limits of thinking gets bordered like the limits of the prison?<sup>28</sup>

Diyarbakır for narrator on the other hand, is a promise, a hope. Against the metallic, horrid, arid and concretely concrete images of prison that entails being killed the fantasy of (another) Kurdistan proposed revolving around the ethics of presence in Diyarbakır. It is the fantasy of a land of unlimited possibilities blessed with the languages of as-if-paradise and cherished by its inhabitants whose works are to recognize, to understand each other. The claustrophobia induced by especially torture scenes are deeply transgressed by the scenes in which narrator has an affective link with his surroundings, his memories, his friends, his oral culture that ties him to history and self.

The blood of the captives -and most probably your blood as well - had been engraved in the walls of the torture house!<sup>29</sup>

In this respect, and through this discussion it is important to recognize two things. First of all, we have to ask the question of what is the importance of prison with respect to this narrative and its promises of resistance and solidarity. It is possible to say that prison is a token of the sovereign's violence, oppression and governance. Throughout the novel, more than once, it is mentioned that prison is a place in which Kurds, and Turks for that matter, from different backgrounds, different classes comes together, thus bears the quality of being a mosaic of our social condition. That place of oppression however, in turn becomes the very place in which cultural connectivity and consciousness is engendered. Teacher's, İsmail Beşikçi's, remarks on Kurdistan region is worth recalling on this issue:

Do you know how much of the oil of Turkey comes from Kurdistan? %99. Yes, yes, %99. Turkey annually takes out 3.5 million tons of petrol and %99 of it comes from Kurdistan. Again, %67 of the extracted mines in Turkey comes from Kurdistan. Your country is rich but it is under captivity. Thus, as I said, the biggest part of breaking the chains of captivity rests on your shoulders, the shoulders of Kurdistan intellectuals. Thereof, it is good for you to be together here. It is good for me as well, I do learn quite a lot from you.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 115

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 210

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 158



The other figure who has affected the narrator is Uncle who has actively mentored him during his time in prison. Thereof, the ways in which he describes the resistance with regards to the region becomes a critical reference point in the narrator's political imagination:

Young man, I am seventy three years old. I was born into war and I am still at war. Prison is a battlefield as well. We resisted, we stood up. Believe me son, we did not want much. Just like anyone else, we wanted to live freely on our lands. We wanted for ourselves to plant the land, harvest and cultivate it. We wanted to decide our own future with our own decisions. They gruded us for this.<sup>31</sup>

Another issue Uncle genuinely emphasizes is the issue of language:

Our main difference from the enemy reveals itself at the issue of language. Our religions are the same, our customs and traditions are alike. But our languages are very different. The enemy knows this. Thus they press against this. They want our language to be forgotten. Do you know the toll it has taken on our language? It became shallow and rough. If the state would have been able to keep its dominance with all of its newspapers, radios, schools and books fuelled by denial and rage for sixty years, we would not be able to speak even these simple words.<sup>32</sup>

After this brief lecture on the past of Kurdish language by Uncle, the narrator in a determined manner declares that he will learn Kurdish as soon as possible, write down Uncle's memories, stories and translate them into various languages, so that world can bear witness. This autobiographical reference can help us understand two things, first the extend of the cultural assault on the region's people's language and the ongoing tension apropos of Kurdish language and its appearance in public sphere. Because ironically, being taken from outside as a punishment, is what enables to speak and learn Kurdish inside. Yet we should also keep in mind that, "we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth." (Foucault 1977: 12) In this regard, the discourse of the post-colonial morphs into the grounds of a struggle for power in which language is instrumentalized. Why is it the case? Foucault gives the answer: "Power is invested in the language because it provides the terms in which truth itself is constituted." (Foucault 1977: 165) Secondly, it promulgates a memory that could be linked to *Tu* itself, and how to position it as an exilic novel which has been originally written in Kurdish.

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31 Ibid., p. 144

32 Ibid., p. 152

Thus, the aforementioned stories fostered by oral traditions and social links cannot be merely reduced to tools of survival or solidarity within prison setting. Aside from those, they also carry the remnants of a past which creates new conditions for thinking and acting for an alternative future. Secondly, the actualization of spatial elements is different for each and every subjectivity. We witness, how the narrator use his body as measurement device for an environment, especially for the environments that he is feeling attached to:

The yard of your house was wide and lengthy. How many times did you measure it with your feet: The length of it was 46 and the width of it was 22 feet. It took 46 steps to reach the living room from the outer door.<sup>33</sup>

A bodily commitment to spatial reality becomes once again a method of reclaiming space. And the bastinado punishment is all the more crucial if we are to think it as a way of assault to this reclaiming as well. Even though the aims is to break down the body, the claim of control over space is damaged as well since the space is appreciated though the body itself. It is no coincidence that the narrator starts to recall or wants to recall his memories with endlessly and without exhaustion running next to his goat, *Nameless*, in open fields when bastinado punishment starts. Furthermore the walls of torture house that are covered with victims' blood, indicates the turmoil and the violence whilst also signifying a process of intertwinement that refuses and denies interference. Subjectivity and its relationship with spatial definitions is also present with respect to outside as aforementioned. It is possible to say that the inhospitable mountains and caves which have been witnessing a low intensity war and thousands of deaths are accompanied by images of aridness, death and pain to the psyche of Turkish Republic. Yet the depictions in Uzun's novel begs to differ:

Most of the houses had views. The caves were in the same line and one within the other. The caves were so beautiful, so elegant, neat and they had views too. You could wander to the caves at the end from the ones at the beginning.

This was an efficient way of protection from the enemies and the wild animals. The villagers had the uttermost faith in their caves.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 47

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 168

### **2.1.3. From Depths to Beyond: Languages of Irrepressible Connectivity**

Let's return to the beginning and lady bug here. I believe, the presence of lady bug can be inspected through two aspects. According to Walter Benjamin, stories are products of collective memory, because they are produced and reproduced through sharing and representing of experience itself. Memory as re-evoked moment (*Erinnerung*) provides a link between experience and generations establishing a traditional connection. As it is mentioned, it is the role of oral legacy is also what keeps him alive, through that stories the narrator clutches to the history itself. It is through this backtracking to stories and oral traditions, narrator fixates himself as a valid subject within history. He forces us to recognize these traditions, utilizes them as means of survival and denies the rigid distinction between past and present - formulating a new historicity in which the account of the perpetrator is not the sole one. It is in this regard we can think of lady bug as an artefact of resistance which recognizes the forms of spatial and cultural detainment, but refuses to be halted, or simply cannot be halted. What Said claims on the issue of incessant production and reproduction of truth by the colonial power and its dominance can be of use here: "No matter how apparently complete the dominance of an ideology or social system, there are always going to be parts of social experience that it does not cover and control." (Said 1993: 289)

Yet, I think, it is also possible to stress the fact that narrator himself is talking to an insect basically. This, however, is not an omen of madness, it is quite the contrary, a very felicitous recognition of an impossibility. Lying in a cell, broken and damaged, narrator lacks the very basic conditions of self. Inflicted violence and horror of sorts does not kill him, yet keeps him alive only to be perhaps buried alive. He can be killed, but not sacrificed - As in condition of "bare life" his only status is of an anomaly that disrupts the sovereign's and the law's norms. It is when the individual is reduced to its sole biological existence, detached from any rights or recognition in which violence and deprivation are the ways in which sovereign can extract power.

We are your God, your prophet, your owners, we are your leaders. Your voice cannot reach to anyone from hear. Do not move, do not even try to wiggle. We will squash your heads like ants.<sup>35</sup>

Thereof, if no one can hear the narrator's story, it is not only because there is no one to listen, but it is because what he tells is not something listenable. It is not to be heard, not be made sensible. Telling the story to an insect is to become an insect - only to witness and account for the impossibility of testifying.

The second person narrative on the other hand, tells us about the midnight raid to our home, then how we are taken into detention, to police station, to court, to prison and to torture. It is not a mere mechanism of identification in this respect, it not only enables us to identify with the narration, but also lets us to see the hierarchy between the perpetrator and the victim. It widens the chiasm between the perpetrator and the victim, enables us to blame the evil-doers in a more absolute fashion. Also it displaces the notion of readerness, if these are our experiences as narrator tells them, then we in fact can share the weight of authorship as well, it may as well be us who is experiencing and narrating the story. Of course it is important to note down that the original novel was written in Kurdish. It, thus, becomes a problematic process to answer the question of "Who is us?" Who is this "you" the novel keeps referring to? In this respect, Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualization of minor literature can be of use. "The first characteristic of a minor literature in any case is that in it language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization". The individual is inextricable from the social, the subject linked to the political: "its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics. The individual concern thus becomes all the more necessary, indispensable, magnified, because a whole other story is vibrating in it". This political nature of a 'minor literature', then, is inseparable from the third characteristic of a 'minor literature', its collective value the political domain has contaminated every statement (énoncé). But above all else, because collective or national consciousness is 'often inactive in external life and always in the process of break-down,' literature finds itself positively charged with the role and function of the collective, and even

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 178

revolutionary, enunciation. As Deleuze and Guattari argue “there are only collective assemblages of enunciation” thus an asubjective assemblage, the “minor no longer designates specific literatures but the revolutionary conditions for every literature within the heart of what is called great (or established) literature”. Thus, a ‘minor literature’ is a “revolutionary force for all literature” which proceeds through “dryness and sobriety” and “willed poverty, pushing deterritorialization to such an extreme that nothing remains but intensities. (Deleuze and Guattari 2003)

This dichotomization process becomes a locus for “a search for essential cultural purity” (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2002, 40), which can be easily located in Uzun's narrative. In this regard, the memories and the oral tradition through which the narrator once again becomes a valid subject in the circulation of social connectivity in colonial rule are the legitimization for a cultural purity as Bhabha claims: “Looking to the legitimacy of past generations as supplying cultural autonomy.” (Bhabha 1990: 298) Furthermore if we were to rethink the deep and clear cut distinction between the perpetrator and the victim positions, basically it is presented as a dichotomy of colonizer vs. colonized, within the novel, we can say Uzun articulates a "counter-narrative" in which the ideas of nationalism are transgressed. On this matter, Bhabha claims:

Counter-narratives of the nation that continually evoke and erase its totalizing boundaries — both actual and conceptual — disturb those ideological manoeuvres through which 'imagined communities' are given essentialist identities. (Bhabha1990: 300)

The novel ends when the narrator is taken out of the torture house and put into his regular ward with all the other inmates. He sees Uncle, approaches to him, cries and smiles at the same time on his shoulder. Once again a spatial transition occurs. From the depths of his cell where he was only able to communicate with, or transfer his incommunicability to, the lady bug, he comes back to his fellow inmates. Uzun's novel utilizes the actual as well as the metaphorical space to formulate an axis of testimony. This testimony is however far from being isolated or obscured, it is very well in touch with the space that performs ambiguously, perhaps self destructive and self abnegating

in a symbolic sense, under the post-colonial condition and provides the grounds for solidarity and resistance.

## 2.2. SPACES OF WRITING

Orhan Mirođlu was born in the small town of Keferhavar in Mardin-Midyat. Living in Batman and Diyarbakır for a while, he played an active role in the post 1970's youth movements. In Diyarbakır he was the president of Revolutionary People's Culture Association. He received his diploma on Turkish Language and Literature degree from Diyarbakır Training Institute in 1979. He worked as a teacher for a year in cities of Diyarbakır and Aydın. He was arrested after 12 September coup d'etat. He was imprisoned in Diyarbakır Prison till the year of 1988. After his release, he first moved to Midyat and then Diyarbakır. He was present at the assassination of Musa Anter at Diyarbakır in 20 September 1992; he was wounded but he survived. Having a political ban on him till 1995, he return to his active political career in 1999 at HADEP. He acted as a deputy chairman at two parties which founded later on, these were respectively DEHAP and DTP. At 2007 elections, he was an independent candidate from the city of Mersin, but he lost at the elections. As a columnist, he wrote in several newspapers such as: Radikal İki, Ülkede Özgür Gündem, Özgür Politika, BirGün and Taraf. After one of his writings was turned down by the administration of Taraf newspaper, he quit his job and transferred to Star. His first book, *Dijwar*, is published at 2004. After that, several of his writings is published as well such as; *Çapraz Ateşte İki Halk: Kürtler ve Türkler*, *Hevsel Bahçesinde Bir Dut Ağacı*, *Barişa Dair Bir Hikayemiz Olsun*, *Her Şey Bitti Ana'ya Söyleyin* and *Ona Zarfsız Kuşlar Gönderin*. He is still alive and residing in Ankara.

The book to be inspected, *Ölümden Kalıma*, is the collection of Mirođlu's letters which have been written by Mirođlu whilst he was imprisoned in Diyarbakır Prison, and conveys a time period of four years. The preface of the book contains Mirođlu's personal reflections on Diyarbakır Prison and the predicament etched into the minds of everyone who had a relation with the prison. Furthermore, it also gives insights about the letters themselves, the condition under which they have been written.

When I think about this prison, I remember the words written the nameplates that Nazis forced the Jews to carry around their necks: Ich bin nichts! (I am nothing)<sup>36</sup>

Although everyone was treated as if they were nothing, he claims writing was a way of standing against this process of psychic deterioration. For Miroğlu, Diyarbakır Prison was a space in which everything had been utilized to inflict violence and pain. The variety of the discouraging and humiliating practices differs of course. He vividly recalls how the newspapers, that the prisoners had a right to read, were on top of a desk right at the entrance of the ward, only to be replaced the day after with new ones by the guards so that inmates can see them, but cannot reach. He also remembers very powerfully the January of 1984, during which the wards were raided, the prisoners were forced to wear uniforms and many people has passed away during their hunger strikes. In this respect, we can address the January of 1984 at Diyarbakır Prison is a very important part of the social memory created within and through this institution, due to countless deaths, incessant and intensive torture and their aftermath. However, Miroğlu states in advance that, this book does not contain the full horror of the experiences, the tortures, the deaths, the perpetrators and the victims. It was impossible, he says, for these to get out through letters. "How astonishing it would have been however!" he adds. We also learn that he has been keeping his letters in a briefcase with lock years in, years out. I will try to reflect on the issue of writing and writing in prison space later in the analysis.

### **2.2.1. In Between The Outside and The Inside: Letters that Surpass the Wall**

The issue of inmates' relatives is a theme that is common in almost all of the texts that are reviewed. The ways in which how a relative or even a friend of a prisoner, can be treated in a violent manner through visiting regulations and oppressive actions within

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<sup>36</sup> Orhan Miroğlu, *From Death to Survival*, p. 9

the city space will also be seen in Soysal's account. Miroğlu's memories include this status as well.

We all had our share in these rough times.

Mothers, fathers, brothers, spouses and children on the outside, we on the inside, indeed those were hard times for all of us.

For three years, dead bodies have been carried from the prison to the morgue of the military hospital.

In the times of resistance, the relatives on the outside would wait in anxiety and curiosity for hours and days, just to get a news. Because when there was no news, the rumours of death circulated like a flash in the crowd who were waiting outside the doors of the jail. This was a horrible wait lived in amongst the morgue of the military hospital and the prison.<sup>37</sup>

Miroğlu's letters mostly represent space through sensations of yearning. More often than not, he attempts to juxtapose the inside and outside through his relations with space and certain items, such as books, pieces of clothing.

Dear mother, I received the washcloth, the blanket and the bedclothes you've sent for me. The day I got them was the day we take baths. I had the most wonderful bath. I changed my clothes as well as dressing of my bed and pleasantly drifted into sleep. For a while I thought I was at home. The only thing missing was your care and warmth. I wish it was present, I wish. I would have given anything for it.<sup>38</sup>

At these points longing becomes much more tangible, but note the sole source of expectation. Miroğlu's yearning for his life on the outside, relations with parents and social existence can be tracked down more than once and in great detail. He specifically chooses to show his great affection towards his parents through spatial metaphors. In these sections, he often instrumentalizes a dichotomy between the inside and the outside to underline the deprivation he is in. The depictions of rural areas play a significant role in this regard.

You can always come and visit me. See you in the visitation cabin under the soft feels like to reincarnated... It feels like picking up flowers in a warm spring evening from the mountain.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 15

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 38



Now I imagine Midyat. It is the time of the grapes. It is the perfect time to pick them up and head back to the village.<sup>39</sup>

I think, an important thing to take cognizance of in Miroğlu's letters is the fact that these are very personal letters. Personal here does not necessarily refer to secrecy or privacy, but an intimate relationship that is built and enacted through persons. As most of the letters converge to texts of small talk, it becomes much more clear that, what Miroğlu signifies for the most is a particular *way of living*. This way of living is embedded, as for anyone, within spatiality and Miroğlu's way of dealing with the deprivation takes the shape of an imaginary reflection.

I missed waking upon at a sea shore while birds are singing.

I missed eating some fresh baked pie at a cafe which I will be sitting after I wandered around the streets of Diyarbakır.

I missed watching movies at Dilan Theatre, I missed drinking raki at Sino, I missed buying newspapers from Doşo who is located at Dörtüol and chat with him about Bülent Ecevit whom he admired so much.

My body is here, yet my heart is out. After this, it is either going to be another prison, or I'll be set free.<sup>40</sup>

The intersubjective relationships that get reflected through literature in Miroğlu's accounts are highly personal ones and perpetually sidetracks the life inside the prison. It may be a survival tactics of sorts against the state's repressive control over the letters going in and out, however Miroğlu incessantly refers to his parents as his pillar of strength and his letters do not give away any clue with respect to life inside the ward on the basis of social networks and interactions. His personal affiliations in this respect limited to the space and the inventory around him. His father, on the other hand, who keeps visiting him once every two or four weeks, becomes a locus for his imagination and caring.

I can hear you saying that none of these material things matter.

Then, what do we have to say about the fact that every time you come here your compassion and care passed through the barbed wires under the soft lights and reached to me?

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 77

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 200

If you have not carried your warmth, your caring, your hope here every now and then, what would happen to me?<sup>41</sup>

He even compares his condition from a broader perspective with regards of connectivity and counts himself as blessed.

In so called developed countries, it is hard to find someone who would worry about you once you end up in prison. His relatives may stop asking about him, his friends would not get even in the same neighbourhood with him. There is not a collective stance against an unexpected accident.<sup>42</sup> A person may left alone. No one would sell his car, his land, his gold to pay for his needs so that he does not feel lacking of something. The sensation of being kindred is very loose, the friendship is a careless one. How about us?

I kept thinking about you. I kept think about you and living with you. I grew up through the unwavering faith you have in life.

And then came a moment in which I became too large to be contained within the hard rock body of this prison, within the solitude that feels like a well with no ends.

I was free at that moment. I was in the middle of desolation, but I was free. I was with you. We were holding hands and roaming at the tops of the mountains. The forest was trickling down from the side of those mountains till they reach the sea. You were laughing. We never cried together and we would not.<sup>43</sup>

Through fixating his reference point outside of the prison, Miroğlu not only escapes from the grasp of censorship mechanisms, but also establishes an affective link that he can immediately relate through imaginary devices. It varies from being concerned about holiday plans of his parents and advising them new places which he describes carefully, to ordering books to read only to foster his world and imagination as he states. Thereof, the letters of Miroğlu signifies an appreciation of the prison space as a space of transmission through literature. More than once, Miroğlu admits in his letters that he had much more access to almost anything in comparison with his fellow inmates especially economically. During his stay, his father was bringing in a flood of books, interestingly enough the first one was Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname*, for example, Miroğlu starts to learn English as well as French whilst he was inside. He even states that he was afraid he would be released before learning these languages properly. I

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 179

<sup>42</sup> The notion of *accident* requires further attention and will be discussed.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 92

argue these differences which locate Miroğlu in this rather privileged position with respect to those "who has no idea how to spend their days". Furthermore the access to writing letters and receiving them from this privileged position, whilst carefully constructing a sentimental language that effectively avoids censorship, enables Miroğlu to enjoy a partial benefit of *seeing without being seen*, it provides a ground and position from which to speak; an enjoyment that may slip the detection of the sovereign. Under horrid conditions, sending and receiving letters, he says, brings a piece of freedom from the outside and helps him survive no matter how individualistic and personal it may be.

Prison is a small space. But the world we are living is far from being that small. We are living in an endless world. As the surroundings of the man shrinks, he is forced to operate in his imagination.

Dear father, I wish I could have written you letters as beautiful as songs.

Maybe I did not do that. But I believe I successfully built a road between Diyarbakır and Midyat with these letters. Without them, everything would be much more difficult.<sup>44</sup>

Miroğlu's letters in some cases become much more than simple connections, but they make other sorts of sensations possible that deny deprivation and spatial restrictions. I believe, the example following is a prime instance of this and is very important to capture the sensation of hope which can prevail no matter how horrific the conditions may get.

There is a great film on TV at 22nd of this month called "Horse". It is a story between a son and his father. Prepare your heating stove and fruits and place yourselves in front of the TV. Just now that I will be watching the same movie with you. I know, there are 200 kilometres between us. But watching the same film at the same time, knowing that we doing exactly the same thing, enjoying the same thing may cause us to experience another sensation. I think it is worth a shot, what do you say?<sup>45</sup>

### **2.2.2. Writing in Prison: Language, Failure and Representation**

In the end I believe, it will be useful to address two crucial issues with respect to content and form of Miroğlu's letters. The first one is censorship. The right to write

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 208

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 91

letters was granted to prisoners at 1983. In his first letter, Miroğlu declares his determination to use this right in all its extent. However, we should also note the fact that the letters going out as well as the ones coming in had been subjected to examination by prison administration. The letters were let to circulate only after they have been approved by the administration and stamped as "Prisoner's letter. Approved." In this regard, self-censorship comes into prominence. Miroğlu's condition shows us that, knowing that the letters will be examined, the narrative as well as the narration of the letters changes dramatically. This cannot be however simply reduced to staying away from grand and disruptive discourses as well as utterances against the state or criticisms towards the predicament the inmates had faced. As it is mentioned in the analysis of Uzun's narrative, Foucault claims that exercise of power is engendered through the production and reproduction of truth. The language becomes all the more important for it is the grounds on which the truth is produced. In this respect, the extent of the censorship has to be thought from this perspective. Miroğlu refers back to this issue in the preface:

I wish there was a way to mention all the things happened in this prison in my letters that I have written for four years...

There was not of course, it was impossible from the beginning.

During the visitations, even the words that you choose to you could cause trouble, they could have been understood as secret passwords and cause an entire ward to be tortured.

Just because one of our friends asked one of his relatives about the lentil production of the year, all our ward was tortured. Guards were furious, shouting at us "Didn't we warn you not to talk about lentils? Who was it, who talked about them?" Of course, no one was able to, or no one did step forward and we endured the punishment for this fault "collectively."<sup>46</sup>

This recollection is a prime example in Miroğlu's narrative in the sense that it perfectly displays the sovereign's rule and discipline over the language. Even though guards' remarks may lead one to think that there has been incidents around the word "lentil" or it has been used as a password or code, this rationalization and justification get subsided with the discourse of sovereign's ability to rule, over and inside the language. The sovereign's entwining capability to render any word, any utterance and any

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 13

manifestation, as dangerous or abject shows us the potential sources of arbitrariness and violence, and perhaps arbitrary violence. However, we should also keep in mind that no rule over language is final, and Miroğlu's letters in his experience opens up the lines of flight for him and turns into a supportive appendage. This brings us to the second issue apropos of prisoners' letters. The prisoner, who wished his letter to get out heeds the call of censorship and self-censorship. This channels the writings in a way that the content and the form of the text becomes harder, if not impossible due to arbitrariness, to link to the crimes, faults that are defined by the sovereign. The language in this letter brakes away from any sort of violent, political, militaristic and official discourse, does not attempt to take them into consideration and comes up with an alternative. The articulation of such a language however, I believe presents us a double bind, or a tension within and outside the text. On the one hand, the letters of Miroğlu deploys a language that is loving, warm and tender since the only recipients of these letters are his relatives, and most of them are his parents. Miroğlu, even refuses the state's account on his penalty and states that only his father and mother can forgive him. As an account of yearning towards the outside, daily practices, moments of simple joy and freedom, Miroğlu's text turn into a monument of civil life which fixates the reader in an empathetic location and inspires understanding. I believe asking whether this is intentional or not is a wrong question, what we should consider becomes the writing of another text under the oppression towards language that is implemented by the state. However, the text than faces the trap of victimhood. As Sibel Irzik puts it, the texts that relate to themselves with 1971 and 1980 coups "typically construct their discourses around the innocence of the victims, not acknowledging their political agency either in intention or act." (Irzik 2009: 4) According to Irzik, these texts also "have a tendency to slip into discourses of victimhood that are either based on either childlike innocence or on the abstraction, pathologization and depolitization of the subjects involved." (Irzik 2009: 20) Miroğlu's accounts in this respect, not only disregards political subjectivity or political formulation of the collective inside; but through an uttermost exclusion of any political reference to the coup and its aftermath, it breaks away with the political predicament of the coup. Without a reference, the confinement becomes an anecdotal characteristic of the individual who is doomed to be prison or become a prisoner of fate.

Thereof, imprisonment within Diyarbakır Prison, seems as if it is *accidental*, something one should bear and that has no relation whatsoever to the politics of the outside. Miroğlu's general attitude towards imprisonment can be a clue in this respect. "Hills remain apart forever, but people do meet someday." he quotes countless times, the time in prison is something that simply to be endured, he is not concerned with the legal processes because it does not matter whether stays in there for another five years or not. The letter he writes to his father on account of being in the prison can also be of use here.

How can my dear mother understand why his son is in jail?

For her, you got to jail if you kill someone, or attack a person's dignity or property.

Her son gets arrested one day, who has not left her side for a second in 28 years for no reason and gets sentenced to 15 years. How is it even conceivable? It is not.<sup>47</sup>

Being a prisoner of fate, or doomed as a prisoner, these accounts of representation invoke the sensation of *catastrophe*, a disaster without a perpetrator, a natural event, an incident that denies agency on both ends, something that could not have been predicted and perhaps, prevented. This aspect then becomes a paradox within victimization as well, if this is as *accidental* as it seems in the accounts of Miroğlu, then there is no victimizer, and no victim. In this respect, I believe it would be too harsh to claim that these letters exempts the perpetrators for it displaces politics and the state. Although aforementioned later accounts of Miroğlu displays his desire to have been a witness and properly utter the experiences, it still leaves out the political character of this collective experience. Thus I argue, representing the experience of Diyarbakır Prison without a reference to the political, bears two crucial points in Miroğlu's text. The first one is as Irzik argues, in the sense that an overtly emphasized construction of victimhood, "ironically converges with the repressive state's own discourse of the nation as infantile and in need of guidance and punishment." (Irzik 2005: 4) As the second, I claim that the exclusion of the political from this narrative suspends the event, and replaces it with an accident; an accident in which the political subject is denied of being a witness, just like

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 64

the state's power to deny it, since there is no *thing* to witness. Thus, the arbitrariness of control and regulation is akin to the arbitrariness of accident; and both are in tune with the discourses of the state. In this respect, the civil life Miroğlu may have represented due to censorship and through his own will becomes not something he has been actively participating in and taken away from him but something doomed to wither.

This however, does not entail a failure of agency in its entirety. For Miroğlu, being able to write and the act of writing as aforementioned becomes a tool of survival; and also perhaps not the tool, but survival itself. The writing for Miroğlu's text surpasses its character as a representation and turns into the real experience. The letters that enable him to get in touch with his family on the outside are liberating for Miroğlu, not only they reflect taking the control and possibilities of the world back, but for they are implicit demands for freedom. If the texts can negate the wall, the very texts that exceed representation and manifest themselves as experience, why would not he?

### 2.3. SPACES OF LAUGHTER

Sevgi Soysal was born at Istanbul in 30 September 1936. After finishing Ankara High School and, getting a degree on archaeology from Ankara University she moved to Germany with her husband, Özdemir Nutku, in 1956. During her stay she audited classes on archaeology and theatre, and returned to Turkey in 1958. As she started working in Ankara Radio, she also started to publish her essays, which tried to express the individuals' increasing anxiety within and in the face of society. Her texts which were heavily influenced by neo-realism had been published during 1960-1964 in several magazines such as, *Dost*, *Yelken*, *Ataç*, *Yeditepe* and *Değişim*. Her first story book, *Tutkulu Perçem*, was published in 1962. After marrying Başar Sabuncu, 1965, she started to work in TRT, the government channel, as a program specialist. Her writing continued in this period as well, and her stories were being published in *Papirüs* and *Yeni Dergi*. Meanwhile, she finished her thesis and received her archaeology diploma. Her first novel, *Yürümek*, in which she focused on the themes of gender relationships and marriage, was awarded with Success Prize in TRT Art Prizes Contest in 1970. The

period after 12 March, was simply harsh on Soysal. Her first novel, *YürümeK*, which was once awarded by TRT, had been banned and collected on the basis of the charges of obscenity and Sevgi Soysal faced a brief prison time, which forced her to leave her job at TRT. She married with Mümtaz Soysal, a professor of constitution, while he has been imprisoned in Mamak Prison due to the charges of communist propoganda. After that she faced charges once again and arrested for political reasons and stayed in Yıldırım Region Jail for eight months, only to be sent to exile to Adana for two and a half months later. She was awarded with Orhan Kemal Novel Prize in 1974 with her novel *Yenişehir'de Bir Öğle Vakti* which was written during her time in jail. Her time in as an exilic writer in Adana, became the basis of her other book in which she heavily criticized the process of 12 March. The novel was about the events that a woman who had been exiled to Adana and published as *Şafak* in 1975. During this time she played important roles on the foundation of Anka News Agency and Worker's Culture Association. Her memories of prison life on the other hand, which had have been published in a newspaper, *Politika*, was collected into a book under the title of *Yıldırım Bölge Kadınlar Koğuşu* in 1976. After a mastectomy to fight cancer in 1975, her condition continued to deteriorate. She had another operation in September 1976 and went to London for treatment. However, without getting the chance to finish the novel she was working on, *Hoşgeldin Ölüm*, she passed away in 22 November 1976 at Istanbul. Her writings for *Yeni Ortam* and *Politika* newspapers were collected into a book, *Bakmak*, in 1977.

Before going in to the analysis of *Yıldırım Bölge Kadınlar Koğuşu*<sup>48</sup> as a text of autobiographical nature, I believe it would be useful to take into Oya Baydar's, who happens to be one of the fellow inmates of Soysal, reflection on Soysal's book, just to get the sense of its effect.

As I had remembered women's ward of Yıldırım Region thirty-two years later through Sevgi's eyes and soul, I thought about writing memoirs. Why some of the memoirs books are cold, bleak and pedagogical whilst the other ones are so warm and they can speak to your soul and capture it? I believe, Sevgi Soysal's memories about Women's Ward of Yıldırım Region contains the answer: Honesty, a pure subjectivity which is devoid of intentional distortions, absence

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<sup>48</sup> The book and the ward will be referred to as Yıldırım Region from here on out.



of an anxiety with respect to what others may think and respect towards people and reality. Because Sevgi accomplished these, her memories can be always read with joy and contemplation, even though they may be saddening or laughter inducing. She does not write for political heroism or self praise, she writes with a humanistic care, only to illustrate the human. We watch Sevgi's Women's Ward of Yildirim Region, Sevgi's prisons, through her eyes, her mind, her soul and her language. This is what makes her work of art unique and dear, this is what gets rid of corniness.

### **2.3.1. Welcome to the Prison: Gender and *as if* Coup Conditions**

Sevgi Soysal narrates her two "visits" as she refers to them, to Yildirim Region after 12 March ultimatum as a memoir, and depicts the power relations of political structure then and their applications in and outside of the prison. She, herself as the narrator and the protagonist through the autobiographical pact by means of the compatibility of this two-fold characteristic, walks the reader through the experiences of not just hers but also the inmates', as a cogent witness and author of these events. It is substantial to note that her position as the narrator a reinforced position through the autobiographical pact. Moreover, while she cites these experiences which are not limited to prisoners of the ward but also includes the officers, the warden, members of the Turkish Military Forces and the web of relationships in this setting; she carefully analyzes and asserts the incessant physical and symbolic violence that is being inflicted upon the inmates. And more importantly, their refusal to this state of victimhood or passivity through certain kinds of actions, exercises or more precisely, performances. One of the distinguishing feature of this account is of course rests on the fact that, it is narrated by a female subject. Later on it will be discussed the ways in which this femininity affects the possible political resistances, implications as well as repercussions, yet it is significant to note the fact that Soysal's account is a persistent one when it comes to the illustrations of gender. It becomes all the more clear with as soon as possible when she starts to present the ward's conditions:

I was hungry and I had to use the bathroom because I was being dragged from pillar to post for the last twenty four hours. In the end, I could not resist but asked the permission of the petty officer. Officer ordered two soldiers with

tommy guns to accompany me. They came with me to inside of the bathroom. Feeling uneasy, I could not do it and went back.<sup>49</sup>

As she ventures into the ward, she realizes that the political atmosphere on the outside is the most crucial and determinant factor of the life inside. This initial meet and greet, even though it does not last long, provide the ground for the reader to captivate the humorous and sarcastic tone of Soysal's account. Later we figure out that this tone is not simply a choice for Soysal, but the very ground of social connection and resistance towards sovereign condition.

A jamboree was present in the ward. There were people who were jumping from one bed to the other, there were the ones fighting with pillows, ones who were snacking food. There were people who were playing tag around the long dining table which stood in the middle of all those cramped bunk beds. They were very happy with the fact that they had a break from that life of an employee, got together with their school mates. The joy of reliving that school days were surpassing the sadness stemming from the failure to abolish the Turkish state.

When the police men or the soldiers open the door of the ward to deliver the daily rations of soup, everyone runs out like children at school, celebrating the recess.<sup>50</sup>

As the political situation on the outside gets darker and much more dire, the rules of the prison changes according to Soysal.

The conditions were not so bad on the first period of 12 March era. At least, the door of the women's ward was not always shut, like it would be in the second period, and we were not left to suffocate in a ward with more than forty people in it. Even only this can explain, why we would recall that times as the "socialism period". As the repression increased, it became sort of a custom to talk about those days as "Back in the day, we had socialism."<sup>51</sup>

This period of time also affects the ways in which spatial interaction occurs with respect to gender. I believe Soysal's memories can be utilized in this respect. There is great discrepancy between first and second period of 12 March era, not only on the basis of political oppression and repression, but also on the basis of affiliations of male gaze and socio-sexual relations. The relationship between female inmates and male guardians as well as soldiers change its tune from playfulness towards violence. For example, the

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<sup>49</sup> Sevgi Soysal, *Yıldırım Region*, p. 24

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p.28

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p.28

following scene of recreation activity in prison yard is from the first period and is represented in a very mischievous manner:

As we get prepared to start playing, a break out happens. The soldiers and their morning drill. Only with their soldier pants, they are running squad by squad as they sing. Clap! Clap! Clap! There is no way to play now. Miss Behice and Naciye looks confused, they do not know whether they should be angry to us, or burst into laughter. The soldiers, with their naked torsos, continue clapping and singing as they run in circles around us: "Girls with big breasts!"<sup>52</sup>

Just like in Uzun's narrative, Soysal also is fond of prison in the sense that she gets to be with her old friends and appreciates the opportunity to have new ones. In the political climate of the time she says, it is almost better to be inside with friends rather than to be outside with constant suspicion. Yet this social network within Yıldırım Region, is obviously not a homogeneous one. There are two sections of wards, one of political and one for petty criminals. Even though Soysal's account does not depict in depth the ways in which these wards interact, it is usually known that political prisons are respected and recognized within and outside of the prison. This hierarchical bifurcation between political and petty criminals becomes all the more clear in Öz's narrative. However, Yıldırım Region presents us an intriguing example. A sex worker who has been arrested had to be placed with the political activists due to facility's overcrowded condition. Melahat is nothing but devastated by this decision, voices her misfortune, perhaps signalling a turn of tables and a foreshadowing with regards to the future of political criminals under the rule of 12 March:

Oh, my fears come true! Oh my poor destiny! What did I do to be placed at the same ward with these communists!<sup>53</sup>

### **2.3.2. From Outside to Inside: Affects of Coup on Prison Experience**

Soysal places a special emphasis on the deterioration of the conditions. These accounts also underline the difference between first and second phase of her condition at another level. The discrepancy with regards to prisoner's conditions can be related to the

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p.34

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p.49

difference between a regular prison and a coup d'état prison. Friends and relatives were also subjected to the change in the conditions of prison as well. The link between those individuals thereof, becomes an appendage that is not exempt from the sovereign's control. Symbolic violence finds new ways to exceed its spatial limits, or perhaps expanding the limits of the prison structure. Let's take a look at the following passages.

There were incessant reforms of the terms on which prisoners' visitations. Reforms that made these visitations all the vexatious and gruelling on both the prisoners and visitors. It was enough to be a friend or a relative of a prisoner to be an enemy of 12 March. As if the martial law considered acquaintances of the prisoners as guilty as they are and through this opportunity punished them. But the visitations in the summer of 1971 was not that inhumane like it would be later. At least we could see our second degree relatives. At least we could sit face to face, and not slumped into two sides of iron cages and scream like mad people only to talk. The people were waiting outside the prison in endless lines, only to see their related ones for a couple of minutes, only to give them some gifts for holidays, only to not be able to hug their children and not know why, only to be turned down for no reason.<sup>54</sup>

This was not something that was solely performed at Yıldırım Region according to Soysal. The situation at Mamak Prison was not that different.

Under the freezing winter of Ankara, from the main road of Mamak to the line of sight of the prison, the relatives of inmates were treated as prisoners. They were condemned to see their loved ones. As if, this condemnation was the grounds on which officials of martial law acted without reason, without mercy, without pity.<sup>55</sup>

The observation about Mamak made by Soysal during a visit to her husband belongs to a time when she was released for the first time and had not been arrested and sent back to Yıldırım Region for the second time. During her this time she also makes observations about Ankara, and how gravely it has been affected by the political predicament.

As the atmosphere get harsher, Mamak and Yıldırım Bölge prisons became comparable to Nazi's concentration camps. As if Ankara as a city was surrounded with invisible barbed wires and turned into a prison. As if the residents of Ankara were divided into two, police and surveyed. There was not a single phone which has not been tapped, not a single home escaped surveillance. They wanted everyone to be enemy of the other; they tried to turn prisoners

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 77

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 76

against prisoners, relatives against relatives, ones whose houses have been searched to ones whose houses remained untouched. They wanted people to be torn apart with barbed wires, snitches, police and fear, so that everyone would be alone and terrified. All they could foster was grudge, against those who committed these. And fear, fear they could introduce to the hearts of all. Fear which put everyone out in the open in that huge Ankara, just like wounded game animals.

"Torture". This word spread all over Ankara, slowly at first, but then shadowed the whole city. And like any other rumour, the rumour of torture became even more effective than itself.<sup>56</sup>

The link between prison space and the city does not solely exist in Soysal's account. For Uzun it is an extension of post-colonial condition and a physical manifestation of colonial will. For Öz, akin to Soysal's memories, it is a fear and an anxiety mechanism to be instrumentalized by the state to tighten the grasp over individuals and create mental distress. Thereof it is possible to claim that prison and prison space, extending its cruel reach far beyond than its materiality and reality, turns into a metonym and signifier that induces an imprescriptible distress of networks of connectivity and lines of flight. Pursuit of Mahir Çayan and his friends is one of the most prominent and severe example of this process. Soysal describes the process as "ambush, torture and re-ambush." The policemen ambush a house, torture everyone who is there to get information out of them on whereabouts of Çayan and his comrades, someone cracks, the new lead leads to a new house and so on. The restraints on connection with respect to prison becomes much more evident for Soysal during her second visit to Yıldırım Region. Her encounter with the irritating policewomen Suna is another instance of this.

I look at the ward I stayed last summer, just like a house I used to live in. Suna cannot know that my mind lingers at that place. Or there is no way they will put me in that ward. One of the things administrators of the jails pay special attention is to separate sisters, even mothers and daughters. Not only induce pain of course. To shatter the sensation of solidarity so that they cannot resist altogether when the time comes.<sup>57</sup>

As aforementioned, there has been an exchange of gazes between female inmates and male police force as well as soldiers. After the second wave of arrests and detentions, the nature of this exchange takes a turn for the worse, because some of the inmates are

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 76

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 84

victims of sexual abuse, torture and severe violence. The tightening grasp of state and its surveillance shatters the desire to even peek, since it risks being seen. Soysal's memories tend to slide onto that issue and one incident from inside the bathhouse where the inmates are taken once a week to clean themselves can be used to understand this.

Hey! You are trying to pry outside, but it is much more easier to see here from the outside. Before we take a bath, we plug the possible peek holes with loincloths of the soldiers.<sup>58</sup>

Here, it is possible to argue that bathhouse is a much more private area and have stronger ties to nudity and sexuality. However, in this respect it would be a mistake to simply disregard or leave aside the resemblance between sovereign's desire to encapsulate individuals and male gaze directed upon the female body. A discussion on scheduling outdoor exercises underlines this tension more clearly, especially if we are to consider the previous examples of the encounters of inmates with soldiers which had in fact made people laugh and giggle.

Around the barbed wires soldiers with tommy guns, inside the barbed wires girls doing exercises together. Gülay is upset about this:

-This is not right, this is absurd. Right in front of the soldiers. This is the kind of thing that upsets our people.<sup>59</sup>

To extend the scope of the discussion on second wave of 12 March and its effects on prison space, we can return to aforementioned visitation practices.

I go to the visitation place which is exactly like an animal cage in a zoo. This place is built for wild animals. There two iron bars, two meters apart. On the one side of the bars, there are prisoners. The visitors are on the other side. In between, policewomen with guns stand. Prisoners on the one side, visitors on the other shout at the top of their voices. Sometimes policewomen intervene.

-Change the subject! Shut up! I will end your visit!<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 102

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 192

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 139

As the new arrangements are imposed, the inmates' relationship with space alters as well. Furthermore the legal status of the prisoners are changed to private-prisoners in the martial ranking and system. A whole new set of activities with respect to space and bodily performances become identified in this respect and this entails very basic regulations, such as mandatory salutes, chain of command and other militaristic codes and acts. Soysal and her fellow inmates articulate various forms of resistance modes towards these implementations. Even though Soysal's account displays a great variety of backgrounds and political organizations as well as affiliations from different ideological orientations, the women of Yildırım Region achieves to act and resist as a whole under the authority of the state. And perhaps this adds all the more irony to scorching humour and sarcasm which denies to be victimized if we are to consider the homogenizing and standardizing rules and discourses of military rule.

By making us private rank soldiers, they managed to add countless anarchists as the number of prisoners to the ranks of the army. Ha ha ha!... Anarchist squad! Get in the line!<sup>61</sup>

The issue of lining and standing at attention as a disciplinary device is incessantly challenged by the inmates. Even though they are required to perform this military action every step of the way, either they distort the hierarchical order intrinsic to it, or simply mimic it to that extent that it becomes a distorting parody of the original.

The oppression that cannot reach to our minds, reach to our hearts constantly attacks to the image. When being count, "Attention, get in the line", out in the yard, "Attention, get in the line", going to get some money, "Attention, get in the line", going to infirmary "Attention, get in the line", going to court "Attention, get in the line", going to bathhouse "Attention, get in the line", but like anything too excessive, it lost its power on us. Who can get our thoughts and hearts in line? Who can make them stand at attention? That is what matters...

The colonel, after making sure everyone stands at attention willingly orders: "At ease!" But no one moves a muscle. Everyone stands still at attention, like statues. Colonel plants himself in front of me and yells: "I said 'At ease!', spokeswomen, 'At ease!'" With an infinitely calm voice, I reply to colonel: "We are at ease like this, sir!"<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 163

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 165

The survival struggles of Mahir Çayan and his comrades on the one hand, Deniz Gezmiş, Hüseyin İnan and Yusuf Aslan's last days on the other seem to be the most significant events for the inmates within Yıldırım Region. At March 26 of 1972, after kidnapping four English citizens according to Soysal's narrative, -even though it is later found out that there were three people, two of them were English and one was Canadian-, Çayan and his fellows demand an exchange with Deniz Gezmiş as well as Hüseyin İnan and Yusuf Aslan for the hostages, yet they were killed in the gunfight with the soldiers in March of 30. As the news of this incident arrives to Yıldırım Bölge, an enormous emotional break out happens.

The whole ward is like a heart that starts to beat too fast.<sup>63</sup>

Although it is plausible to refer the ward here as a metonym and a reference to the people within, this becomes the most tangible and powerful sign of an affective relation between the space and the inmates. Later on, as it will be discussed, space after this point plays a tremendous role in the ways in which Soysal and other prisoners perform their resistance. After the executions of Deniz Gezmiş, Hüseyin İnan and Yusuf Aslan, the ward becomes desperate and disastrous. As they hear the names of the executed on TRT, Soysal comments:

Is there anyone who is not crying? The whole world is crying as it seems to us. Even the policewomen who would walk through the gates of the ward were crying or could cry.<sup>64</sup>

The day after, colonel comes to visit. Insincerely he asks the mood in the ward.

We had one thought, not let the colonel see the tiniest bit of sorrow. Suna, the policemen, have been curiously peeking inside ward for a couple of days now, just to see a couple of wet eyes. We do not have that much problem hiding our emotions from the colonel. He does not know what to do with the silence persisting in the ward now. He commands the petty officers behind him: "Measure that wall!" Wall is being measured at length. Two officers take notes on a piece of paper. Colonel, in all his seriousness, checks the notes. If a fly would pass by, we would hear it in this silence. Silence seems to get to him, so he reads the numbers once again. As he moves out of the ward, he turns and

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 119

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 153



says: "I was planning to place a wardrobe on that wall!" If we could, we would laugh. But we could not.<sup>65</sup>

### 2.3.3. From Mourning to Laughter: Sabotaging Hierarchy and Language

To understand the dynamics of resistance in Yıldıırım Region, I believe it is more than useful to refer to Bakhtin and look for *traces* of carnivalesque. Carnival in its historicity for Bakhtin “celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical ranks, privileges, norms and prohibitions.” Furthermore, carnival “offers the chance to have a new outlook on the world, to realize the relative nature of all that exists, and to enter a completely different order of things.” Thus, carnival is outside of official discourses and practices while it also signifies the uprooting processes of hierarchies. Moreover, Bakhtin asserts that carnival as “the people’s second life, organized on the laughter.” But what kind of laughter? The particular form of laughter as the essence of the carnival possesses multiple features; it is a collective act, the individuals are released from their atomic existence and become a part of a larger body. It is a performance without spectacle, people can laugh with but do not laugh at in carnival. It is ambivalent, “it is gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking, deriding. It asserts and denies...” It contains lack of respect, signifies becoming insubordinate; hence it is a tool for and/or a representation of freedom and opposition. On the other hand, as a bodily manifestation, “laughter degrades and materializes”, destroys the world in order to bring forth something more and better. For the final point, one could say that, even though the carnival, therefore laughter, suspends the hierarchies and forms a plane for a “second life”, there still is a connection, a connection which is defined through mimicry and creating a parody out of the higher order. This parody formed by laughter, ridicules the power and the fear it imposes, and is the gateway to empowerment, since “complete liberty is possible in the completely fearless world” and “fear is the extreme expression of narrow-minded and stupid seriousness, which is defeated by laughter.” (Bakhtin 1984) Transgressions of Turkish nationalistic, militaristic discourses in this respect provides us many examples. When knitting becomes the primary recreational activity,

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 155

they start to call themselves as *Underground Knitters Organization*. For the ones who has been sexually abused, assaulted, even raped or tortured, there is *Revolutionary Whores Organization*.: "Even torture becomes a laughing stock. Yes, even torture. There is a name for them, for those who had been tortured: Devos.<sup>66</sup> The lightest insult they hear is whore, and we know what has been done to them as well, thus the name is ready: Devos. Against all these humiliation and violence, jokes and laughter are necessary. Laughter is important to resist." Sevgi Soysal makes fun of her condition as she is being released from Yıldırım Region for the first time and claims that she will break out her husband from Mamak prison in "a *Kemalistic* fashion". They even perform *Release Prayers*. However, completely conceptualizing this performance as *carnavalesque* would be a mistake since there are events that rupture this atmosphere as well. The prime examples would be the torturers whom sight becomes unbearable as Soysal declares or deaths of Deniz Gezmiş, Mahir Çayan and all the others. I believe on this issue we can turn to Idelbar Avelar. Avelar asks a question: If practices of mourning are corresponds to an active or a passive forgetting, how can we attain a mourning that is creative, productive and positive? His analysis on *Em Liberdade* proposes the notion of melancholic joy which can be thought in tune with *Yıldırım Region* as a narrative written with joy, in joy:

...structured by repetition, yet anticyclical; ruthless in its pillage of another signature yet conceived as a gesture of love; melancholic in its embrace of defeat yet making of this acceptance a joyous affirmation. *Em Liberdade* is saying yes, in a word, to the defeats suffered in the past so that a radical and uncompromising labour the task of mourning can begin anew. (Avelar 1999)

The divertive uses of language at this point, supported by bodily performances are at the heart of this "*carnavalesque*" condition which later on transmutes to a ground on which their first attempt becomes to resist *infantalization* against the disciplinary codes and discourses. The resistance towards infantilization can be read in two directions. The first aspect for the inmates is about taking and reclaiming control over their lives. Within the disciplinary and regulatory realm their performances exceed the limits of these discourses to the extent that at the same time it becomes a parody and the a source of power to control. If they are to be woken up at 6 am, the inmates of the ward wakes

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<sup>66</sup> This is a combination of the two Turkish words, one is devrimci, (revolutionary in English) and the other is orospu (whore in English).

up at 5. If they are to stand at attention, the inmates refuse to break the stance even when they are ordered to be at ease. Begona Aretxaga in her *States of Terror*, explores the ways in which IRA prisoners resist and revolt to their condition within British jailhouses. It is through her analysis we can claim Foucault's understanding of the body as a political field can be invested with intersubjective dynamics through which power takes places. (Aretxaga 2005: 58-59) She quotes Lacan and claims that "subjectivity is always grounded in history - a history that includes the scars left by forgotten episodes and hidden discourses, as much as conscious narratives." (Lacan 1977: 50-52) Through these perspectives we can address the actions of the prisoners of Yıldırım Region as performances against the random beatings, scarce diet, constant visibility and denial of control over their own body. These acts by the sovereign in Aretxaga's words were directed at "defeating the will of autonomous individuals and transforming them into dependent infantilized subjects through physical pain and humiliating practices." (Aretxaga 2005: 62) The second aspect can be identified if we are to focus on language as well as space through the actions and utterance of newly appointed senior major, Major Kemal. Through his visits, the logic and language he uses can be described, at best, as simply meaningless and as a result of which enables endless sequences of dialogues which are deprived of sense. No matter how complicated and frequent it is, claiming laughter as the sole device of transgression would be a mistake. Particularly after Gezmiş's execution and the legal change of their status, we see a different pattern of insubordination, one which is heavily dependent on calculated misunderstandings and exploitations of language through gaps and (a)symmetricality. So what happens in these series of dialogs is, as long as commander comes up with a question that is ridiculous, the answers are even more gibberish yet legitimate which leave no room or reason for punishment, even if there is no necessity for one. However it seems clear that the suspension of logic and reason is not just accepted by the prisoners, but is also taken a step further, infringing the rules of the hierarchy, reclaiming space as well as language and resisting to the infantilization that would otherwise leave them as push-to-talk dolls.

As we stand at attention before our bunks, majors starts with his questions.

He points towards at the table we use every day to eat.

"What is this?"

"This is a table sir!"

He opens the doors to the cupboard, filled with bread that is supplied by the military.

"What is this?"

"This is a cupboard sir!"

There are flowers on the table which has been brought by the visitors.

"What are those?"

"Those are flowers sir!"

"Why are they there?"

"They are there as flowers sir!"

He, then, goes to the corner filled with pictures and drawings.

"What are these?"

"These are pictures sir!"

Then he inspects our bunks.

"What is the reason for these bunks be where they are?"

"These bunks are bunks sir!"

"Hmm... No... No..."<sup>67</sup>

Interestingly enough, the act major performs and disciplinary measures he implements within the ward to establish control remains focus on to space and language. Since he is disappointed with the latest answer he receives; he, in an incredible detail, goes on to describe how the bunks should be, where they should be and how all these regulations should be charted. Yet, as one of the inmates, Tülin collapses on the floor due to an illness, we witness to this scene:

After examining Tülin on the ground, he asks. "What is this?" I want to say "This is a fainted prisoner sir!" but I cannot. He leaves the ward with petty officers following him.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 187

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 190

Sevgi Soysal, before her departure takes part in one last blow against the prison administration. Before of their legal private soldier - prisoner condition, their ward are to be inspected by the military generals. Colonel Saldıraner who at the same time happens to be the warden of Yıldırım Region, comes to ward and warns the prisoners to be at their best behaviour. This lengthy depiction of the event shows us how the inmates create an alternative reading of "best behaviour" and utilize space for that matter.

We cleaned out the ward. "Let's say the cleaning is for ourselves, shall we do something for our superiors? Let's have little writings on everything, stating what they are." With the help of a typewriter, we write on little pieces of paper. "This is a sink", "this is a toilet", "this is a closet", "this is a bunk" We glue these on the items they belong.

-Hey! We should glue something on breads as well that says "this is a bread."

-If you want, we can also attach something on our foreheads that says "this is an imprisoned soldier."

Someone comes up with an even brighter idea, breaking one of the sinks. Right before the inspections, we do that. Door is knocked so we would stand at attention. We take our positions before our bunks. Ward is silent yet dripping sound is forever. "Şrrrr şrrrr" General Recai, other generals, Saldıraner, Major Kemal, policeman Zafer, all of them step into the ward at once. "Attention !" "Şrrrr", dripping sounds from the sink. Generals come in, "At ease!" The dripping sound tails this command. Saldıraner turns pale. Zafer runs and finds a rubber for the sink, "şrrrr" goes just a little bit quiet. Generals pass and gaze upon us as if they are doing an inventory count. Generals up the front, Saldıraner is behind, they will circle around the tables. But they cannot. We placed the tables in such a position that there is no space to move between the tables and prisoners. The group which inspecting the prisoners on the other side suddenly choked up when they turn towards us. Saldıraner is about to go mad. He takes stuff out of the way as the generals wait in impatience. It is so good to see him as a subordinate. The group leaves the ward disappointed. Formally they ask as they leave "How are you?" "Thank you" we say in the tone of a buzz. Saldıraner angrily comes back to the ward, "What kind of an inspection is this? Didn't I tell you that your eyes should show compassion when your superiors arrive?" He did. They must have been able to see the compassion in our eyes. It is evident what is in our eyes.<sup>69</sup>

Another interesting example with regards to all these discussion is the case of Ayda. After the death of Mahir Çayan and his fellows, Ayda, at the age 13, starts to writing notes which blames the state and the army as "murderers" and slips them under the

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 224

doors of her neighbours. She gets caught and arrested due to the charges of insult to the army under martial law. After being convicted to six months, Supreme Military Court reversed the judgment. Yet the time period she spent at Yıldırım Region was a transformative experience according to Soysal. As Ayda leaves the ward, Soysal notes the following.

Policewomen, Suna, is at the door. She is furious that we are singing for Ayda.

"Come on girl, your mom is waiting."

In this way, by emphasizing that she is a child, Suna states that she does not consider her to be a person. But we do. She is a person, who was imprisoned for declaring a murder as murder, who has experienced a martial court. Ayda witnessed to executions whilst she was inside. And when she got out, even though she was 13, she was no child.<sup>70</sup>

Through this perspective, I believe it becomes all the more crucial and important to reflect on the operations and the ways in which prisons as an attempt to control and shape political subjectivity. The attempt to infantilize the prisoners in the case of Yıldırım Region through and within prison space is not only met with a form of resistance that refused to be victimized and rendered powerless. On the other hand, Ayda's case presents us something quite the contrary. It is through that seemingly regulatory and disciplinary deprivation, Ayda's subjectivity takes *another* shape far from being infantilized and punished.

Soysal's account in the end with respect to her as well as her fellow inmates' experiences can be read in the lines of resistance and solidarity which utilizes prison space that is pregnant with many possibilities. I intentionally prefer the term pregnant, because it is a feminine experience. Although it is not necessarily the political grounds on which they form their actions, the community within Yıldırım Region actualizes their existence through being a social body that can celebrate and reflect humour against militaristic and masculine discourses. One last thing to mention is the fact that, only in Soysal's account we witness an active and agency guided alteration and utilization of prison space in terms of resistance and solidarity. All the accounts as this thesis argues, give sights and clues about the permeable nature of this spatial dynamic, however

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 150

Soysal's experience is the only one in which the space actively partakes in resistance. And perhaps if the example of Soysal's narrative tells us something, it is as the following: "Feminist embodiment, feminist hopes for partiality, objectivity, and situated knowledges, turn on conversations and codes at this potent node in fields of possible bodies and meanings." (Haraway 1988: 596)

## 2.4. SPACES OF VIOLENCE

Erdal Öz was born at Sivas, Yıldızeli in 26 March 1935. He had the chance to see different parts of Turkey with his father who was a public servant. After finishing Tokat High School, he started his undergraduate studies in faculty of law in Istanbul University, but he received his degree from the faculty of law in Ankara. He worked at the editorial section of Turkish Language Association and Ankara branch of Turkish Film Library Association. He founded the magazine *a* with his college friends from Istanbul. His first story book, *Yorgunlar*, was issued by *a magazine publications* in 1960. His first novel, *Odalarda*, was published by Varlık at the same year. He started Sergi Bookstore in Ankara in this time period. He was imprisoned for three times in the political turmoil which was initiated by 12 March coup, served jail time in Mamak Prison, however in the end he was acquitted. He won the prize of 1975 Orhan Kemal Novel Award with his novel, *Yaralısın*. He founded Can Publishing in 1981 through which he not only published prominent examples of world literature, but he also introduced countless writers to Turkish literature. He received Sait Faik Novel Prize of 1988 with *Sular Ne Güzelse*, Sedat Semavi Story Award of 2001 with *Cam Kırıkları*. In his story book *Kanayan* (1973), and memoir novels such as *Deniz Gezmiş Anlatıyor* (1976), *Gülünün Solduğu Akşam* (1986), he narrated the lives of Deniz Gezmiş and his friends before their execution, as well as his own reflections. The notes and impressions that did not make it into *Gülünün Solduğu Akşam*, was collected into a book in 2003, *Defterimde Kuş Sesleri*. *Allı Turnam* (1976), a collection of impressions from his trip to USSR was republished in 1998 as *Bir Gün Yine Allı Turnam*. His story book, *Havada Kar Sesi Var* was published in 1987. He has also written three children's books,

respectively, *Dedem Korkut Öyküleri* (1979), *Alçacıktan Kar Yağar* (1982), *Babam Resim Yaptı* (2003). Erdal Öz passed away in 6 May 2006.

Öz has published *Yaralısın* one year later from his release. The timeline of the narrative on the other hand can be identified through two incidents. The former is the arrest of the protagonist on 30th of May, as he recalls "How can you forget? It was three days after from 27 May, Holiday of Freedom and Constitution. It was a holiday, so no one was taken."<sup>71</sup> The latter is related to one of his torturers' comments. For his torture "session" is postponed, the torturer declares "The British have saved your ass." referring to the football match they which was played between Ankaragücü Football Club and Leeds United on 13 September 1972; they wanted to watch the game and postponed the session. Thus, it is possible to place the narrative one year after the 12 March.

Written entirely in second person narrative, it contains two types of episodes: The first one narrates the experiences within the prison and the second is about the arrival to the prison. As the protagonist alternates between these episodes, we witness a full account which starts at the outside and ends in the inside. As a dark and claustrophobic narrative about a political prisoner, *Yaralısın*, gives a detailed account of violence that is beyond measure. I believe it would be useful to elaborate on the notion of claustrophobic for it signifies two crucial aspects; former being with respect to spaces of violence and their crushing effect on the protagonist's psyche. The latter however, can be conceptualized with regards to second person narrative. As it will be discussed later, second person narrative in Öz's text, not only propels the reader to identify with the character and become invested in it, but also forces the reader to drift across the plot without an agency or possibility to act (against), just like the protagonist in the actual event.

#### **2.4.1. Humiliation, Anxiety and Violence: Space as a Perpetrator**

Sensations and spaces of violence can be referred to as the constituent element of the novel. Except for a brief moment of time before his capture, the protagonist is under

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<sup>71</sup> Hürriyet ve Anayasa Bayramı: After 27 May military coup, this day has been celebrated as a national holiday beginning from 3 April 1963. After the constitution of 1982 became effective, it was suspended.



constant surveillance, physical as well as symbolic violence and assault. In this respect, space becomes a symbolic gesture or enactment of the sovereign and its desire. The characteristics of the space however, should be read in tune with the protagonists' psychic investments since the representation of the space through the second person narrative cannot be separated from his experiences. The city as an open-air prison was one of the issue that has been discussed with respect to Sevgi Soysal's *Yıldırım Region* narrative. How the city space itself is instrumentalized by the state only to evoke the sensations of fear and anxiety was one the aspects. Öz's narrative contains a similar vein, only it is much more dense, suffocating and overwhelming. Yet, it should be also noted that denseness and closeness is not simply a matter of physical reality. The reality of the space becomes an intersubjective experience for it is fostered by and for it fosters the impossibility and repression the protagonist finds himself entrapped within. As the chains of floating anxieties connect with each other in the mind of the protagonist, space in its entirety becomes unbearable. These anxieties vary from not being able to know whether there is a step when coming down the stairs to the fear of exposing everything he knows that sovereign carnally desires.

The initial depiction of the ward he stays in, exposes us the horrid conditions of the place for the inmates. Especially the placement of food and water supplies sticks to eye as sources of humiliation.

From the door that opens up to the toilets, a keen and aged smell of urine comes and hits you across the face.

The door opens to the toilets is right across you. Right next to that door there is a cupboard full of bread, its lid is broken at the bottom, so you can see through. On the left side of the door, there is tankard placed near the wall. The bottom of it seems to be riddled with old green moss. There is a big, awry crack on it which has plastered with cement; but the water still leaks.<sup>72</sup>

As he fails to figure out what to do, the ward becomes all the more frightening for the protagonist:

You realized this game has ended as well, once the table in front of you was suddenly moved and aligned with the wall. You were like a bug, suddenly

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<sup>72</sup> Erdal Öz, *You are Wounded*, p. 16

exposed as the rock on top of it was removed and looking for a hole to hide itself. You stepped aside to corner of the wall to get out of the way.

It is tiring for you to wait standing. Only so much time must have been since the end of your torture. You did not get used to standing up for such a long time. Your soles are wounded. You are wounded.<sup>73</sup>

The malaise and fatigue of the protagonist's body, especially, his feet is an underlying theme during the narrative. An important aspect of the bastinado punishment was investigated during Uzun's narrative. There, the damage inflicted on the feet attempted to function in a way that disrupted, even shattered the protagonist's bodily relationship with his surroundings, especially the vicinities of affection. In both narratives, this punishment also imposes further restrictions and limitations on the confined prison space the protagonists are in. Even the simple tasks of standing, going to the bathroom, moving around turns into an unbearable physical act due to incessant suffering. The remnants of pain stalks him as he wanders on and through space. More than once the protagonist is shocked by the pain because of the physical contacts that he has to make during his daily routine.

Suddenly he rests against your feet. You jump, feeling a dire agony. He is surprised. Without knowing he put pressure at such a point that the pain lodged itself to the bones of your soles. You are writhing.

"What, what happened to you friend? Suddenly you turned pale? Did I..."

"No. It is nothing." you say.

But your insides tremble because of the pain. You cannot rub your feet as well. You just hold them in your hands.<sup>74</sup>

Another perspective to reflect on Öz's narrative is the fact that physical condition of the body, particularly the feet as the marks of torture, turns into a token of humiliation and shame.

No one looks at you as you undress, it makes you glad. You always have kept your armpits away from the gazes of the other. But during torture, you had no chance of hiding any part of you, they did lots of things to you in front of

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 17

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 237

all those people. Just thinking about it gives you a red face. You are trying to forget. But you do not take your socks out.<sup>75</sup>

These two reasons can be accounted for the protagonists obsessive care and protection against his feet. The anxiety of humiliation and the fear of pain drives him to be careful as he moves, speaks, sits and sleeps. However, there is one thing he cannot seem to deal and control for it exceeds his rational carefulness.

Just now, there was a fight in the ward; two guys waiting right next to each other whilst standing near the wall started to attack each other. The first reaction to the rotund sounds of the fists landing on each other came from your feet. A keen pain set your feet on the edge.<sup>76</sup>

In this respect, the condition of his feet exceed physical contact and assault, and becomes a grounds on which a new subjectivity is established. The traces of torture and violence is embedded in his body, and this visceral mark is triggered whether a door is slammed, a table is moved, or someone simply falls down. I will refer to this point later on, and discuss what kinds of possibilities emerge from this visceral experience and intersubjectivity.

The outside, or particularly the city, invokes an ambivalent sensation for the narrator. On the one hand it is the source of anxiety and fear, yet on the other he becomes much more receptive, he becomes defamiliarized from the city space, only to appreciate the vitality it contains.

That big city, which you wanted to run away from your whole life, suddenly seems beyond reach, it becomes the most liveable space. It is too far now. You are too out of it. The thought of curtains which has not been drawn in the houses where bulbs start to light up one by one holds you like a distant happiness.<sup>77</sup>

Yet, a new recognition of the city cannot be thought separately from the protagonist's captivity. Entrapped with a space of simply not knowing, he is being dragged from one building to another; his attempts to get a sense with regards to his whereabouts are rendered futile. Blind-folded more often than not, he becomes humiliated, incapable and impotent.

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 28

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 26

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 47

But you have no idea where you are going, to what kind of a place you are headed to. How long will it take? Is it far? In which part of the city? What does it like? Is it like the places in movies? Will you miss the painful, narrow and horrible rooms<sup>78</sup> in which you were all by yourself?<sup>79</sup>

You have been waiting for days now for your turn. Every morning they come around at then, doors of some other rooms are opened and closed, and they take away some one. You are listening the outside whilst holding your breath and pressing your ear to the door. There is a small glass compartment on the door. It is covered with a black curtain from the outside. At uncertain times of a day, a curious face with a couple of careful eyes appears at the glass, looking at you, browsing through the room, instigating fear and horror in you. Then the curtain is drawn again.<sup>80</sup>

A apt passage narrates getting down from the stairs whilst being blind folded depicts this desperation.

Blind fold. An endless darkness. When the dirt road ends which your feet searched for curiously, a concrete platform begins. You stumble. A thick step. Another thick step. The fall of your left feet into emptiness as it searches for the third one. There is no third step. You are like a moron who cannot even walk.<sup>81</sup>

Another passage in which the protagonist is being taken out of the torture cell depicts the ways in which the desire to humiliate can be entwined with and produce a torturous space. Here, his body is almost completely broken.

"Can I go to the toilet?" you asked.

"Yes you can." they replied.

They said that and let you go. You collapsed in a heap over the concrete ground. You were at the very beginning of another staircase.

"Come on, go to the bathroom." said one of them.

Whilst trying to stand up without making a noise, you heard them laughing like hyenas.<sup>82</sup>

Some of the objects occupying the violent spaces have the potential turn into objects of anxiety by themselves in the narrative. An example can be the case of light bulbs in

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<sup>78</sup> Referring to the places in which he has been tortured.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 43

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 67

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 89

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 227

Öz's narrative. After being subjected to torture for the first time, the protagonist becomes obsessed with bulbs and in his imagination they take intriguing yet disturbing shape of an hanged man. Even though he claims that later on he found out a way to turn these shapes into games, his initial account graphically depicts an execution, an image that will haunt him in the shapes of light bulbs everywhere he can see: As the nook tightens around the neck, the body of the executed turns into a bloody pulp.

#### **2.4.2. Becoming Nuri: Moving Past Trauma**

Disastrous as it may seem, prison space includes other possibilities as well in Öz's narrative. Especially in relation to physical as well symbolic impotence, the scene in which the protagonist masturbates to a water stain on the wall whilst imagining it is a woman is important. For electrical shocks were applied to his penis during torture and left him devastated physically as well as mentally, this eruption of sexuality becomes an integral part of claiming back authority and power and the prison space plays an intriguing role in it.

You let your eyes to wander on the ceiling that looks like a coloured map because of the water stains. A woman's hip comes into being right at the spot where the light from the bulb meets the stains at the ceiling. What is above her waist is shrouded by the dark. A shock travels from your groins as you check out the ward and see that no one cares about you. Your hand slowly ventures under the covers. It is warm.<sup>83</sup>

Another aspect that can be mentioned is connectivity, akin to other narratives that has been mentioned so far. The prison space in Öz's narrative becomes a unique zone in which the protagonist who as the only political prisoner<sup>84</sup> meets with a horde of *Nuris*. Even though Nuri is a regular Turkish male name, the reader soon enough realizes that everybody in the ward is named as Nuri. The grounds on which the protagonist meets

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 48

<sup>84</sup> These prisoners are referred as "political" in daily language.

with Nuris becomes one of the most vital aspects of Öz's narrative. This issue will be addressed later. Nuri the Mavzer<sup>85</sup> narrates.

You do the crimes because you are educated, we do them because we are not. If we had your knowledge and you had our manners, can you think what would happen? Neither you would be here on the inside, nor us. You and us, we could not come together. They will not make it easy for us. What do you do, we can only meet in the spaces of a prison. No matter what, this is a start as well.<sup>86</sup>

But who are Nuris? Nuris of the prison are simply petty criminals. They are the thieves, the murderers, the rapists. More importantly, as it will be referred later, they are the abject of the society, they are the outcasts.

On the relationship between Nuris and the political prisoners, Nuri the Gilay's<sup>87</sup> talk and particular insight with the protagonist is of high importance.

Do not mind, we have a chip on our shoulder<sup>88</sup> with regard to you<sup>89</sup>. Thus we do not like your kind too much. You are the same in a sense. You cannot put a foot wrong. You are always on your high horse. Then you go ahead and start a struggle for us, without us. No way. For starters, you do not have the right and also without us, you will lose it. We have the power.<sup>90</sup>

But the notion of Nuri in Öz's narrative invoke many issues and controversial points as well. As I will try to demonstrate space, Nuris, civilization and nature has quite a complex and transgressive relationship.

You are out in the yard. It is a small concrete yard surrounded with four high walls. The yard is no different than the ward except its upper part is open. And instead of a ceiling a tiny piece of sky had been nailed to the top.

All you can see is the tiniest bit of sly, painted in gray and blue, and its four cloudless and sunny corners. This is all the nature there is here. Everything else

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<sup>85</sup> Mavzer is the name of a bolt action type of rifle in Turkey. Hence this name is a reference to mauser type of rifle and guns. The nicknames in Öz's narrative, formed through association. This Nuri beats up a mukhtar with his rifle but deter from killing him at the last second. Not surprisingly, he asks the protagonist at the end of their conversation whether he can supply him with an automatic rifle to kill the mukhtar who put him in jail.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 149

<sup>87</sup> For he was once a boxer, his name is a reference to Muhammad Ali whom birth name is Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr.

<sup>88</sup> Referring to Nuris.

<sup>89</sup> Referring to political prisoners.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 170

is structures of the man, crappy stuff of civilization: Rough hewn stones, dirty cement, barbed wires; iron doors; iron bars.

There is no nature but Nuris here. There, in front of you, lots of Nuris. Almost everyone is out at the yard.<sup>91</sup>

It is also useful to address the depiction of the structure that he was taken for the first time for interrogation for it signifies the material horridness and *abjectivity* of spaces of violence in comparison to Nature.

In the middle of emptiness, distant from whole society, you stopped in front of an primitive, weird single floor build which was built in an abstract countryside.<sup>92</sup>

A lengthy narration of the issue by the protagonist as he joins the dinner at the ward however, summarizes it aptly more than any other.

You now realize, even a single fork, even a single knife is for those free people outside and these items belong to their tables. Thereof these artefacts of civilization are discovered so that free people can enjoy their meals easily.

Nuris can eat with their hands. Because it seems everything civilization has produced belong to free people. The sovereigns, in the name of society, registered these man as criminals, separated them and locked them in a space that is outside the society. And they took away every invention of civilization, and that's how sovereigns really punished them; dehumanization. There is not any meaning trying to define this creature as a "human" which in fact has been abstracted so much with respect to society and humanity. Perhaps it would be better to call all the primitive men, all those without a sun in here a new, a different name; Nuris.<sup>93</sup>

Thus, the narrative of Öz proposes a critical insight with respect to condition in prison space and its transformative aspect. In this narrative, considering the depictions of prison ward, yard and building, not only Nuris are designated as abject by the sovereign power, but also the physical structures that contain Nuri as abject reflect abjectivity. The spatial configuration of the prison itself and the collective it keeps locked away, are both casted out by the civilization of the sovereign and deprived of beauty as well as nature. I believe Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's analysis is of keen usefulness here.

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 102 - 103

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p. 63

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 224

One of the fundamental tasks of the State is to striate the space over which it reigns, or to utilize smooth spaces as a means of communication in the service of striated space. It is a vital concern of every State not only to vanquish nomadism but to control migrations and more generally, to establish a zone of rights over an entire "exterior," over all flows traversing the ecumenon. If it can help it, the State does not dissociate itself from a process of capture of flows of all kinds, populations, commodities or commerce, money or capital, etc. There is still a need for fixed paths in well-defined directions, which restrict speed, regulate circulation, relativize movement, and measure in detail the relative movements of subjects and objects. (Deleuze and Guattari 1996: 385)

To put it simply, the State functions by capturing movement and the segmentation of space. Similarly, the State is also concerned with striating space or imposing a hierarchical regime of relations which locates the individuals and habitants of each segment at odds with those of other. As Deleuze and Guattari describe it, the State is concerned mainly with creating structures or constructs through which lines of flight can be harnessed and controlled. The State, thus, harnesses energy and extract power by creating inequalities.

So, what makes Öz' s narrative a victorious epic of the man who resists as Orhan Kemal defines it; especially when we consider the analysis on Miroğlu's text? As one of the post coup d'etat novels, *Yaralımsın*, seems to share and take its part in the failure in Irzık's analysis in the sense that "what escapes representation in these novels is not the violence, the torture, the pain, but the specifically political character of this collective experience." (Irzık 2009: 20) The letter of protagonist's lover in which the nature, especially the steppes is praised and the ending of the novel is crucial for that matter I believe.

"In every place sunset is a different beauty, at the sea, at the mountain, in the meadow, in everywhere. But they are nowhere near when the sunset is at the steppe."

It seems yearnings of Nuris has spread to you as well.

It is as if there exists no sun here; neither rising nor setting sun.

A whole bunch of Nuris surrounding you, Nuris whom suns have been taken away.

Steppe? Steppe is inside of all Nuris.



I wonder if, I wonder if you are turning into a Nuri as well?<sup>94</sup>

The novel ends with the following lines.

"You did not mention your name?"

For the first time one of Nuris asked you your name. You speak quietly as if you were whispering:

"Nuri," you say slowly. "Nuri."<sup>95</sup>

As Deleuze and Guattari elucidate, the process of "becoming-" is not one of imitation or analogy, it is generative of a new way of being that is a function of influences rather than similarities. The process is one of altering the original capabilities of the element, only to replace it with new ones. In this respect, I believe, the protagonist, by endowing his own elements with the relations of movement and the affects he perceives, is on the process of *becoming Nuri*. However, this attempt is not complete, it will never be complete neither the transformation of Nuris. I found the mentioning of "steppe" is particularly striking and powerful in Öz's narrative. Because, steppe is the land of the *nomad*. And for Deleuze and Guattari, nomad as a site of resistance that has no structure or fixed identity, it is a body without organs.

You never reach the Body without Organs, you can't reach it, you are forever attaining it, it is a limit. People ask, So what is this BwO?—But you're already on it, scurrying like a vermin, groping like a blind person, or running like a lunatic; desert traveller and nomad of the steppes. On it we sleep, live our waking lives, fight—fight and are fought—seek our place, experience untold happiness and fabulous defeats; on it we penetrate and are penetrated; on it we love... The BwO: it is already under way the moment the body has had enough of organs and wants to slough them off, or loses them. (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 150)

Orhan Kemal in the preface, celebrates the figure of an old woman whose duty is the keep the torture houses clean. Even though she witnesses the tortures as they happen, she faces the victims every moment of ever day, she does not say a word nor gives any kind of reaction in the narrative. On this figure, Kemal argues:

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 220

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 256

This woman is a common woman. She just stands there. In a mechanical manner she cleans the floor, there is no movement, no sign on her face. She just stands there, boiling inside. Erdal Öz does not say anything about this, but how do we know about the storms inside her. The character I love the most in this novel is that woman who stands still, but boiling inside who curse the torturers and pierce our hearts with her curses as if they were a dagger.

It is in this respect I argue *becoming Nuri as a nomad* process of the protagonist is what signifies the triumphant element of this narrative. It is a process that can never be finalized, not only because BwO is a limit in itself, but also the protagonist is marked by the violence, especially through his feet, that has already and irreversibly affected his subjectivity through the visceral domain. The awarding potentiality of his becoming rests on the combination of being a witness and shying away from the event at the same time. BwO in this respect, is a utopia that surpasses individualistic achievement, one would have to leave even language behind to achieve it; however as a mindset which refuses a trauma as the original and constituting event, it signals other sorts of political existence and creative imaginations. Thus, that potentiality attributes a lot of agency to the individual organisms but recognizes that they are useless towards a democratic achievement if not functioning as a unitary body. Hence I believe, not talking to torturers is not what makes the protagonist a hero, to be able to survive in another form is.

## CHAPTER 3

### CONCLUSION

"The critical ontology of ourselves has to be considered ... as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment of going beyond them. (Foucault 1984: 50)

I would like to introduce a summary of what has been discussed so far. From different vantage points, I, first of all, tried to present that different ways of bearing witness and transgressing prison confinement exists in coup literature and experience in order to challenge totalizing narratives which render the subject incapable, impotent and devoid of agency. Uzun's text signifies this through an appreciation of oral culture and tradition. His links to his past as well as his surroundings and new social networks are also part of this process of testimony. For Miroğlu, writing takes the highest importance, his life outside of the prison and his attachment to his memories are made possible by literature. Soysal's account show us a humorous way of resistance and solidarity in Yıldırım Region, how language and apparatus of the hierarchy can be turned on itself. Öz on the flipside I believe, depicts an intricate portrait of moving past trauma and embracing another form of survival for the subject, whilst signalling alternative political existences. Furthermore, whilst analyzing these text, I believe I also managed to present the fact that prison space, or prison space under coup d'état government, cannot be simply read as a physically confining space. All the accounts from the authors firstly presented us that imprisonment becomes a constant. Öz's and Soysal's account are the prime examples for this, since they clearly aim to represent how a city in its entirety starts to feel like an open-air prison due to state's incessant violence and surveillance. Uzun's narrative on the other hand, narrates us a prison space that becomes the embodiment of the state's colonial will. However, as I tried to present, the prison space is not totalizing and does not mean a total deprivation neither. Soysal and her fellow inmates instrumentalize the space itself to resist, for Öz's protagonist prison space pushes him forward on his journey to become a Nuri. In Uzun's text, prison

space becomes the locus of anti-colonialist awakening through networks of connectivity and Miroğlu tries to transcend this confinement through writing.

The aim of this thesis has been to display the ways in which space is conceptualized and narrated by different authors and different perspectives so far. I tried to put forth several examples from the novels to contend that even though prison space may intrinsically signify being subjected to physical as well as symbolic violence and suspension of basic freedoms, it does not necessarily mean the total deprivation of political self-subject or an irreversible displacement with regards to networks of connectivity. On the contrary, all of the texts investigated presented examples of how different forms of psychic and political investments may take in the prison setting. I also believe the aforementioned examples also present the fact that literary approaches to the notion of prison, relates to the concept through metaphors as well as metonyms which at the least challenges the invisibility of prison experience and transgresses inside vs. outside dichotomy. Furthermore, instead of categorizing the narratives by common themes which can be seen in all of them such as, bearing witness, testimonial space or representations of violence, I think it was better to address these texts separately. By this means, and through use of extended quotations, I tried to keep narratives as intact as possible, trying to benefit from their autobiographical aspect and produce a writing *as if* it was an ethnographical inquiry. Thus I tended to treat each text in its own merit. Moreover, aside from the fact that the texts are autobiographical ones, I believe their powerful metaphors as descriptive devices, their political voice and concerns over testimonial capabilities as well as their challenge towards the notion of confinement provides a necessary and fruitful ground of discussion on autobiography and anthropology.

Zoltan Kövecses in his *Metaphor in Social-Physical Reality* whilst discussing the metaphors' ability to be realized in social-cultural practice institutions, as well as in modalities other than language gives a scheme as the following:

If we take a conceptual metaphor to be a pairing of domains A (target) and B (source), such that “A is B,” then the realization can occur in at least the following ways: The source domain, B, can turn into social–physical reality; The entailments of the source domain, B, can turn into social – physical reality; The target domain, A, can actually become the source domain, B, and, at the same time, turn into social–physical reality. (Kövecses, 2012)

Thus, in simplest terms, the representation of prison and prison experience becomes something much more relatable, something much more inclusive in the ways in which it relates itself to the outside. It cannot be barred and locked down like the spatially and physically bound human being in the prison. It is in this respect I will move to discuss the possible relationship between autobiography and anthropology, and subject position of autobiographer, author and self.

My interest in this particular subject was shaped by the discussions that has had been prevailing for a long time and will continue to do so which obviously mounted to an important mass and are revolving around the problems conducting anthropological research in different settings. The issue of anthropological authorship here is problematized not only because there is almost always hierarchical power relations and privilege disparities with respect to the final ethnographical text/product, but also very accessibility to the sources that makes the research possible in the first place. This inquiry can cover a range of questions. A very blunt example would be whether a Sunni Turkish straight male can perform an anthropological research on an Alevi Kurdish bisexual female. Of course this question does not address on the validity and scientific nature of the anthropological product, but it problematizes the necessary relations for one to partake such a task. A much more sophisticated version of the discussion can be followed in the trajectory of subaltern studies and the plain yet powerful question of "Can the subaltern speak?" One's access to different human networks are affected by political organizations, language indexes, economical tropes, cultural, ethnic, racial positions and all the other factors that play a potent role in this shortage. This dialogue will obviously persist, yet a much more simpler spark comes into mind, what happens when you cannot perform the most fundamental practices of anthropology? This refers to obviously the limitations with respect to space; the prison space's ability to mark itself as an incommensurable threshold. I will not delve into the political critique of anthropology in the sense that there exists a subject group which by definition is intrinsically linked to yet paradoxically and immeasurably afar from the discipline's reach. Yet I will briefly inspect the practice of fieldwork, or lack thereof, and try to move on how to instrumentalize autobiographies in this respect.

Fieldwork, participant observation and the analysis that immediately follows this experience is a merged praxis. Scholte on this issue states that "The ethnographic situation is defined not only by the native society in question, but also by the ethnological tradition 'in the head' of the ethnographer. Once he is actually in the field, the native's presuppositions also become operative, and the entire situation turns into complex intercultural mediation and a dynamic interpersonal experience." In other words, as Hastrup states "Due to the fundamental simultaneity between discovery and definition in anthropology, the reality experienced in the field is of a peculiar nature." (Hastrup 1992: 117) It is not the unmediated world of the "others", but the world *between* ourselves and the others. (Tedlock 1983: 323) Let's say, fieldwork is situated between the realms of autobiography and anthropology for it links a crucial personal experience to a general field of knowledge. Then, we should take cognizance of the fact that this link itself has a generative effect on anthropology as well, and like other any other person, anthropologists are also continuous with the space they constitute. (Ardener 1987: 39-40)

Even though the production of texts through texts, rather than means of fieldwork in the anthropological realm may simply peril focusing on the writing rather than fieldwork as experience, the acceptability of fieldwork rests on a critical analysis of this appendage. There exists different works on prison and a few examples of prison ethnography, however when one looks at this works, it becomes evident that fieldwork in correctional/disciplinary facilities can enjoy a partial gaze. What is more common than not in these works can be summarized general surveys, follow ups on prisoners' consumption, religion, education and financial activities, their expectation and interrelation with field of jurisdiction, brief interviews with facility administrators, service providers, legal professionals. In this respect, Okely's argument which claims that "the experience of fieldwork is totalizing and draws on the whole being. It has not been theorized because it has been trivialized as the "collection of data" by a dehumanized machine. Autobiography dismantles the positivist machine." (Okely, 1992: 3) becomes much more valuable in the setting of prison. Thus, it becomes pivotal to think about the most imminent problem of accessibility to prison space and search the ways in which we can benefit from autobiographical accounts.

Autobiography for its own appearance, representation and sake has been increasingly recognized as a new genre in the literary canon. Whilst, the most common and recognized public appearances of the genre can be addressed as success stories and scandalous memoirs of 20th and 21st century, we can also acknowledge that there is an increasing demand as well as supply in terms of personal experiences and memories which render themselves indispensable as testimonies and witnessing accounts under violent conditions. In this respect episodic and semantic memories come together to propose an alternative way of imagining the past. The appeal of the autobiographical accounts come from this fact, they propose an "other" perspective of the past, of the history. Okely claims that an interest in the autobiographical dimension of the anthropological encounter has been conflated with a suggestion of that ethnography has no other reality than a literary make-believe. (Okely 1992:3, Gellner 1988) In this respect I believe Smith's intervention is of high importance:

In autobiography the reader recognizes the inevitability of unreliability but suppresses the recognition in a tenacious effort to expect "truth" of some kind. The nature of that truth is best understood as the struggle of a historical rather than a fictional person to come to terms with her own past. (1987: 46)

It would also be useful here to refer to Philippe Lejeune and Leigh Gilmore, and their evident tension on the issue of the truth and representation. For Lejeune, the biographies and the autobiographies should be conceptualized as referential which formulate a referential contract that is "specification of the area of the reality being treated and a statement of the manner and degree of resemblance the text is claimed to possess." (Lejeune 1982: 211-212), unlike the fictional texts. So one can safely assert the idea that, whilst referential texts promulgates a claim for truth, fictional ones do not. On the flip side, Leigh Gilmore seems to think differently and argues that "autobiography provokes fantasies of the real." (Gilmore 1994:16) For her the autobiography is a "technology of the self" which "strives to produce "truth" and that cultures code this truth production through discourses that can be judged as truthful." Nonetheless, the references in the narratives which are being examined in this thesis, to specific dates, times and individuals clearly aim to structure particular utterances that denotes a hybrid production of sorts that nevertheless clinger to the claim of truth. These references take the form of names of the inmates in Sevgi Soysal's account, the figures of Uncle and

Hodja in Mehmet Uzun's narrative, a football match between Ankaragücü and Leeds United in Erdal Öz's novel, the specific dates and concrete physical existences of the letters of Orhan Miroğlu.

The challenge towards grand/master narratives and total systems from postmodernism is often understood and conceptualized as a rather unlimited form of relativism which is fostered and fed by a value and meaning free cynicism. Motto was simple: Anything goes. Yet, this challenge towards the concept of meta narratives can be interpreted from different angles as the unleashing and embellishment of a numerous variety of imaginative possibilities. Cultural past can also be re-examined. Alternative paradigms have already existed at margins; in this case, autobiographical texts which defied the master literary tradition. Postmodernism may have created a climate where different autobiographies elicit new interest, but the former did not create the latter. (Okely 1992: 4)

Autobiography's progression also can be seen in this light. The probable origin of the genre dates back to St. Augustine's *Confessions*. Other references could be Rousseau's *Confessions* and J.S. Mill's *Autobiography by John Stuart Mill*. The main appearance and recognition of the genre in this respect can be tracked as "a 'Great Man' tradition which speaks of individual linear progress and power has defined what constitutes a meaningful life." (Juhasz 1980: 221) Other sorts of autobiographical texts and testimonies were dismissed in literary circles, especially working class autobiographies were "bequeathed to social historians". (Dodd 1986: 7) Okely claims that "autobiographies from the marginalized and the powerless -those of a subordinate race, religion, sex and class- have not inevitably been a celebration of uniqueness, let alone public achievement, but a record of questions and of subversions. " (Okely 1992: 7) Here, it is important to intervene. The existence of mentioned autobiographies in the West rests heavily on the differentiation and bifurcation of private and public sphere. The written and displayed self by the autobiographer is deprived of private, its appearance is of a silhouette nature. The great man representation with confessional tone is an enactment of and a hail to the public sphere, its ethical value distribution and evaluation. It is perhaps for this reason, Edward Said, according to Okely, has voiced regret over an increasing interest in autobiography precisely because the subject is



presented as outside time and context. (Said 1982: 17) However, Dodd argues that Said has "confused autobiographies and the Autobiography constructed by the Tradition." (Dodd 1986: 11) This differentiation between autobiographies and the Autobiography constructed by the Tradition is crucial. Here, one can recall Derrida's analysis on the roles of speech and writing in Western tradition, and the deconstruction of this dyad. Just as once writing once occupied the position of subordinate/secondary with respect to speech, now experience holds an akin location with respect to writing. It helps us to understand why autobiography has been contemptuously seen as a mere narcissism (Llobera 1987: 118), egoistic or self-inflating. The hierarchical relationship between the ethnography and autobiography, public sphere and private sphere, Autobiography of Tradition of Great White Men and autobiographies becomes much more problematic when we take into the motto and applications of "the personal is political" of Women's Liberation Movement in 1970's and postmodern thought. I believe it is quite fascinating to realize that, even though autobiographies are recollection of memories of an individual and thus to some extent are unique, or expected to be so, they seem to evoke and signify certain and very powerful common aspects with respect to social realities. Stanford Friedman notes that:

... the individualist concept of the autobiographical self that pervades Gusdorf's work raises serious theoretical problems for critics who recognize that the self, self-creation and self-consciousness are profoundly different for women, minorities and many non-western peoples. (Friedman 1988: 34)

Furthermore, the reader or the witness to the autobiography is expected and invited to take cognizance of resemblances, "individualistic paradigms of the self ignore the role of collective and relational identities in the individuation process." (Friedman 1988: 35) Okely claims that Simone de Beauvoir's autobiography, *Mémoires* (1958), invites the women reader to identify with the common aspects of a young girl's childhood. (Okely 1986: 22-50) I would like to return to the texts I have been analyzing here. Clearly Soysal's account displays a collective feminine resistance to state violence and presents us a welcoming, warm solidarity, Miroğlu's letters invoke a sensation of empathy and understanding. However, Uzun's and Öz's novels obviously go much more further than that. The most striking aspect of both these novels, *Sen* and *Yaralımsın* are and in line

with Okely's analysis, is the fact that both authors had decided to use second person narrative. The use and power of the second person narrative here can be distinguished into two. Firstly, the second person point of view creates an intense sense of intimacy, or identification for that matter, thus empowering the reader's connection to the text in hand. Both these novels, intentionally and successfully incorporate the reader into the body and affect of the text and makes possible an encapsulating psychic investment. Secondly, through this investment, the reader is rendered rather powerless and obscured in an implicit way in and against the course of the plot that leads her. A haunting mimicry conjured here: Just as the second person narrator who faces inconceivable forms of violence in spaces which perpetually deny access and any form of witnessing, the reader of these novels are blind folded, dragged in the hallways of the narrative in a trembling sense of anxiety, just like the narrator and the reader is once again linked to the narrator, only to relate to and experience the violence. The spatial representations in the novels are also instrumentalized as auxiliary elements of this narration. Narrative of Öz's text is immensely claustrophobic, the space as well as the narrative itself is envisioned only to turn and collapse into itself, the discord of outside and inside is daunting and repressive. Through this portraiture Öz ably signifies the violent and overwhelming conditions of his memories. Thereof the represented space and space of narrative morphs into a testimony and monument of the predicament of the witness and of witnessing. Uzun's account, however, differs from Öz's in the sense that the imagination and representation apropos of the outside. The liminal space as well as the continuity between outside and inside is much more complicated and charged with hope as well as resentment towards the state. The depiction of Diyarbakır prison and evoked memories, just like Öz's text, puts the reader the position of a captive, however outside of the prison, especially Diyarbakır, is an open land of possibility contrary to morose atmosphere of prison and the reader is invited to celebrate and recognize these possibilities. Furthermore, the trips to the outside in Uzun's narrative are always accompanied by alternative histories, Kurdish epics and local sagas. In this respect the discrepancy between imprisoned and invisible subject which will be digested within the official history and recognized subject which cherishes and cherished by oral histories and registered through sociality are underlined all the more.

Though they may be partial, self-censored or simply alternated by leaving the *event* behind, all of the reviewed accounts, narratives and texts are related to the authors' own experiences. The autobiographical space engendered through these texts however exceeds simple self-narration and provides material that can benefit to and from social theory. Irzık claims on art and politics claims that:

Because they both have to struggle incessantly with the paradoxes of representation art and politics resemble each other. Perhaps what makes literature so unique, so indispensable for both life and politics, is its ability to portrait the paradoxes of representation and represent the representation. (Irzık 2008: 52-53)

On the role of autobiographies with respect to historical contingencies and the hierarchies that intrinsically bound to them, Friedman asserts that:

Isolate individualism is an illusion. It is also the privilege of power. A white man has the luxury of forgetting his skin colour and sex. He can think himself as an "individual". Women and minorities have no such luxury. (Friedman 1988: 39)

This statement can be referred to the material as well as symbolic limitations which are imposed by the prison space. Even though, Friedman's argument primarily signifies the hierarchical structures within everyday experience and privileged position of Great White Men, I believe it can also be argued that isolate individualism does not reflect a social reality, it simply procures one. Social scientists involved in the study of the Other, virtually from the inception of the disciplines. Patton claims "the insistence on the primacy of Othering fails to recognize that the body is often already 'in place' before it becomes self or other, and that, in fact, these *placings* are often constitutive of those bodies' first legibility." She further argues that "this is not an argument for a prediscursive body, but for a body *placed* extradiscursively, prior to its inscriptions *through* or legibility *in* discourse. (Patton 1995: 176-177) In this respect, I argue that conceptualizing the prison space as a finalized space of domination and the experience within as an absolute deprivation is a lacking and a misleading perspective. Not only it totalizes the sovereign's ability to control, but also it turns a blind eye the precarious

condition of discipline and control. To articulate the prisoner as mere victim trivializes the agency of her, just as the sovereign disregards the existence of one. Assuming the perfect prison space, victimizes the prisoner further, only to be consumed by Othering whilst misses the gist of "every creature as it issues forth and trails behind, moves in its characteristic way." (Ingold 2006: 15)

Geertz argues the ethnography must be "a rendering of the actual, a vitality phrased." (Geertz 1988: 143) Hastrup, borrowing from Crapanzano claims that this is not a simple return to empiricism, or to methodology as an anxiety-reducing device. It is for her, a reframing of the empirical, or a redefinition of the real. (Hastrup 1992: 116) Thereof, the dilemma is not literary, but writing is a part of it. In this regard, one should keep in mind that anthropologist is not merely a *writer*, but also the *author*. (Barthes 1982) I believe, these texts I analyzed and my contribution with regards to these narratives through social theories can be of use for enhancing our comprehension in relation to prison space and experience whilst undermining the dichotomy of inside and outside in all its aspects, whether it is physical or imaginary. My main aim was to provide not only an alternative reading on the basis of space and transgress the aforementioned dichotomy, but also to propose, if possible, another way of imagining the space and bringing the reality of prison a bit closer to the reach of anthropological thinking and writing. The texts I reviewed proposed an interesting relationship between space, subjectivity, experience, political variations and the variations of subjective authority. Perhaps conceptualizing the writing as a *parole* and praxis, not an ossified, non-negotiable *langue* would create surprising possibilities. Hopefully, this thesis can contribute to writing of *another* text.

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