

İSTANBUL BİLGİ UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS  
FILM AND TELEVISION MASTERS DEGREE PROGRAM

**AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC JOURNEY:  
FIVE FILMS ON SPACE AND MEMORY**

Burak Çevik  
119603012

Prof. Dr. Feride Çiçekođlu

İstanbul  
2023

An Autoethnographic Journey: Five Films on Space and Memory

Otoetnografik bir Yolculuk: Mekan ve Hatırlama üzerine Beş Film

**Burak Çevik**

119603012

**Tez Danışmanı:** Prof. Dr. Feride Çiçekođlu (İmza): .....  
İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi

**Jüri Üyesi:** Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Ebru Çiğdem (İmza): .....  
Thwaites Diken  
İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Derya Özkan (İmza): .....  
İzmir Ekonomi Üniversitesi

Tezin Onaylandığı Tarih : 19.06.2023

Toplam Sayfa Sayısı : 72

Keywords (Turkish)

- 1) Otoetnografi
- 2) Mekan ve hatırlama
- 3) Tuzdan Kaide (2018)
- 4) Aidiyet (2019)
- 5) Unutma Biçimleri (2023)

Keywords (English)

- 1) Autoethnography
- 2) Space and memory
- 3) The Pillar of Salt (2018)
- 4) Belonging (2019)
- 5) Forms of Forgetting (2023)

## **Foreword**

When I was a young high school student who dreamed of making films, one evening Feride Çiçekoğlu's e-mail fell into my mailbox. She said she had seen my short film and wanted to meet me. That week we met at a coffee shop near my school and talked about cinema. She asked me what I wanted to do in the future and since that day, she has graciously stood by me through all the processes to realize what I wanted to do. She gave me realistic criticism, sometimes politely and sometimes with brutal clarity, as it should be. Her criticisms have been an important example of looking back at my own films and thinking about the films I have made. I am grateful.

Another ally of mine during most of my film making and thesis process was Dilşad Aladağ. Thanks to a companion like her, who has a strong analytical mind and creative perspective on space and memory, I was able to finalize this thesis. I am grateful.

Thinking about the films I have made is not an easy process. reviewing what has been written about the films sometimes means recalling old memories, friendships and situations. Being abroad in Berlin helped me to create a decent distance to look at the past while writing this thesis. Thanks to this process and the thesis, my films now have a frame, a space. And so, I have a reason to remember them.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| TABLE OF CONTENTS.....                                      | iv |
| ABSTRACT.....   | v  |
| ÖZET.....   | vi |
| INTRODUCTION .....  | 1  |
| CHAPTER 1 .....   | 15 |
| FILMOGRAPHY IN THE MAKING.....                              | 15 |
| 1.1. Filmography in the Making .....                        | 15 |
| 1.1.1. 8 Haziran - The 8th of June .....                    | 15 |
| 1.1.2. Belleğin Topoğrafyası - A Topography of Memory ..... | 18 |
| 1.1.3. Tuzdan Kaide - The Pillar of Salt .....              | 22 |
| 1.1.4. Aidiyet - Belonging .....                            | 25 |
| 1.1.5. Unutma Biçimleri - Forms of Forgetting .....         | 29 |
| 1.2. Filmography as remembrance.....                        | 33 |
| CHAPTER 2 .....   | 35 |
| PERSPECTIVES ON FILMOGRAPHY.....                            | 35 |
| 2.1. Perspectives on filmography .....                      | 35 |
| 2.1.1. 8 Haziran - The 8th of June .....                    | 35 |
| 2.1.2. Belleğin Topoğrafyası - A Topography of Memory ..... | 38 |
| 2.1.3. Tuzdan Kaide - The Pillar of Salt .....              | 41 |
| 2.1.4. Aidiyet - Belonging .....                            | 48 |
| 2.1.5. Unutma Biçimleri - Forms of Forgetting.....          | 53 |
| 2.2. Charting a trajectory for memory .....                 | 57 |
| CONCLUSION.....   | 58 |
| REFERENCES.....   | 61 |

## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the relationship between memory, space, and cinema through a personal and artistic journey. The author reflects on their own experiences of fragmented memories and the discovery that remembering places can evoke vivid recollections. Drawing inspiration from Frances A. Yates' concept of "the art of memory," the thesis investigates how the art of memory has been revitalized in the author and the broader zeitgeist.

The introduction delves into the author's early experiences with photography and filmmaking, highlighting the significance of spaces as vessels for memory. The thesis further examines the author's films and the narrative construction, emphasizing the importance of spaces in conveying meaning. The author reflects on the role of death, forgetting, and the recording of images as a means to resist loss and preserve memories. The exploration of the five films, *The 8th of June* (2013), *A Topography of Memory* (2015) *The Pillar of Salt* (2018), *Belonging* (2019) and *Forms of Forgetting* (2023) reveals the author's focus on capturing the memory of places rather than the events, emphasizing the importance of spaces in their filmography.

The influence of philosopher Henri Bergson on the filmography of the author is highlighted, underscoring the concept of duration and the relationship between cinema, memory, and space. The thesis argues that spaces possess their own memory, and through cinema, they can offer audiences a unique experience that encompasses the past, present, and future. By examining the unique qualities of cinema, such as the separation of the visual image and the sound, the thesis asserts that spaces in films have the potential to become memories themselves, bridging temporal dimensions and engaging audiences in a transformative experience.

## ÖZET

Bu tez, bellek, mekân ve sinema arasındaki ilişkiyi, kişisel ve sanatsal bir yolculuk üzerinden inceliyor. Yazar, parçalanmış anılarının ve yerleri hatırlamanın canlı anıları çağrıştırabileceği keşfinin üzerine düşünüyor. Frances A. Yates'in "bellek sanatı" kavramından ilham alarak, tez, bellek sanatının yazar ve daha geniş bir zamanın ruhu tarafından nasıl canlandırıldığını araştırıyor.

Giriş bölümünde yazarın fotoğraf ve film yapımıyla ilgili ilk deneyimleri ele alınmakta ve mekânların bellek için taşıdığı önem vurgulanmaktadır. Tezde ayrıca yazarın filmleri ve anlatı kurgusu incelenerek, mekânların anlam aktarımındaki önemi vurgulanıyor. Yazar, ölüm, unutma ve görüntülerin kayda geçirilmesinin kayba direnme ve anıları koruma aracı olarak rolü üzerine düşünüyor. *8 Haziran* (2013), *Belleğin Topoğrafyası* (2015), *Tuzdan Kaide* (2018), *Aidiyet* (2019) ve *Unutma Biçimleri* (2023) adlı beş filmin incelenmesi, yazarın filmografisinde mekânların önemini vurgulayarak olaylardan ziyade mekânların hafızasını yakalamaya odaklandığını ortaya koyuyor.

Filozof Henri Bergson'un yazarın filmografisi üzerindeki etkisi vurgulanarak süre kavramının ve sinema, bellek ve mekân arasındaki ilişkinin altı çiziliyor. Tez, mekânların kendi hafızalarına sahip olduklarını ve sinema aracılığıyla izleyicilere geçmiş, bugün ve geleceği kapsayan benzersiz bir deneyim sunabileceklerini savunuyor. Görsel imge ile sesin birbirinden ayrılması gibi sinemanın kendine özgü niteliklerini inceleyen tez, filmlerdeki mekânların zamansal boyutlar arasında köprü kurarak ve izleyicileri dönüştürücü bir deneyime dahil ederek bizzat hafızaya dönüşme potansiyeline sahip olduğunu savunuyor.

## SECTION ONE

### INTRODUCTION

I try to remember, and every time I do, I find myself in fragmented moments, non-fluid still frames, and vague emotions. I try to put them together. Most of the time I fail. Then I remember that in my teenage years, I developed a practice of remembering on my own. Remembering by thinking about places, not memories or emotions. I realized that remembering the apartment and its surroundings in Ataköy, where we lived until I was around 10 years old, place by place, piece by piece, brought memories with it. The courtyard of the apartment building, the alleyway where we used to play soccer, the steep slope in the backyard where my mom taught me how to ride a bicycle, the elevator and every time I pressed the elevator button I would look eyes with the bell of the house across the street, the cellar that struck fear into me with its pitch black darkness, the daughter of our neighbour who lived on the first floor and was 10 years older than me, the rust on the iron to which we locked our bicycles...

It's as if when I can't imagine the place, the memories become decontextualized, vague, and unable to find something to hold on to in the mind. In this way, space becomes not only a space with a physical function but also an intermediary that connects and reawakens memories and makes them thinkable and memorable. Only after I became a filmmaker, I had an undergraduate degree in filmmaking and I wanted to explore more at graduate level did I find out that this was not unique to me but was an essential element of "the art of memory" as Frances A. Yates calls it. (Yates, 1966)

Yates claims in the beginning of her book that "we moderns have no memories at all ...but in the ancient world, devoid of printing, without paper for note-taking on which to type lectures, the trained memory was of vital importance." (Yates, 1966, 4)

4) This thesis is a journey of exploration, delving into the narratives and

narrations of my films, as well my own stories of how I made them and their receptions, but most of all the story of that discovery, how and why the art of memory was revitalized not only in me but emerges an essential element of the zeitgeist or “the spirit of time,” as my thesis advisor has highlighted with a shared memory of our joint journey which extends to long before this thesis. which I will share in the conclusion.

Long before I wanted to be a filmmaker, when I was not even ten years old, my first camera was a gift from my grandmother. It was a 36-frame automatic analogue camera. I remember excitedly putting the film in and walking around the house and then going out on the street. I used up my 36 frames in a very short time. I asked my father to take the film for development and the next day he came back with the pictures printed on paper. He didn't like what I had shot because I had only shot empty spaces. There were no people in any of the 36 frames.

My father thought I had wasted the film. He said he would give me the camera back if I promised never to take pictures without people again. So I promised. But I was very confused. I couldn't comprehend the idea that we needed a human being for a photograph to be valuable. I wasn't thinking about it literally, of course, but I felt that a landscape might not necessarily need a human being. Because the absence of a person brought to mind the person photographing the landscape. I was seeing and taking the picture. Even if there was no one in the landscape, a pair of eyes looking at it was taking this picture. Then we could say that the eye looking at this empty landscape could itself be the person in the frame. Because it can also be said that an empty space owes its importance to the absence of possible content. Since the person who should have been there was not in that landscape, he could remind us of his presence in his absence. That's why I couldn't understand what my father was saying. I was looking at the photographs he said were without people, and I couldn't be convinced. Of course, my father was right, there were no people in a sense, but I, who saw it and photographed it, was there. I felt like that.

From the very first moment, the camera became a tool of my testimony in terms of its function. Proof of my gaze and, in a sense, proof of my existence. I needed places to remember, so the films I made became places themselves. Places that I want to keep when I look back in the future. They became the memories that these places reminded me of.

In 2010, when I was 17 years old, I went to my grandfather's village in Kastamonu, where there were only two or three distant relatives left. It was my second visit to this village in my life and I didn't remember the first one at all. It was a completely different atmosphere for someone born and raised in the city. I had brought a small video camera with me. I didn't know what to shoot, but I wanted to shoot something. We came across a dead dog on the side of the road. The dog's body was covered with worms. That was the first footage I took with the camera on this trip. When we arrived at the village house that night, I saw that my grandfather's uncle was on his deathbed. It was known that he was sick, but I was not told that he was so ill. He was unconscious, breathing deeply, his body scarred from lying in the same position in bed for weeks without moving. His breathing filled the whole room. He was dying and for the first time I was in the same room with a dying person. Being so close to the reality of death affected me a lot. That night I took a pen and paper and wrote a script, not from a story, but from images and moments, thinking in this way. I was just thinking about which image would follow which one. So the story slowly began to reveal itself. The next day I shot the film in a very short time, in three or four hours.

Thus, my first film *Waiting* (2010) was a film about death. For me personally, the most impressive shot of the film is the blurred image of my dying great-uncle, which becomes clearer as the camera closes in, and then, when he stops breathing, that is, when he passes away (fictionally), the camera moves away again and the image becomes blurred. All that was left was the tick-tock of the clock filling the room. My old uncle's face was more like a space occupying the entire frame than

a human face. The moment the camera got the closest, there were no boundaries surrounding the body anymore. The whole screen was filled with wrinkled facial features, gestures played by an unconscious mind. The human face was becoming a space.

It is not surprising that the notion of death makes me want to record it. It feels like standing on the threshold of passing away and trying to prevent it or somehow resisting it. I think about the connection between death and forgetting. As it was expressed years later in the film *Forms of Forgetting*, which I made in 2023, “where does the memory of a shared moment between two people go after these two people die? Only stones and places remain. The traces we leave on these stones remain.”

Could it be that for me, cinema fulfills the function of these stones? The title of my first feature film in 2018, *The Pillar of Salt*, makes a lot of sense with this idea. The film was about a female character who is fixed in time, who never ages, who has become a kind of fixed image, wandering around the city looking for her twin sister. Based on the story of the destruction of the people of Lot by God's punishment, I was fascinated by the idea of the Prophet Lot's wife being turned into a pillar of salt because she looked back at a moment when God forbade her to look back. I thought that cinema and photography, by its ontology, also fixes people in time. Cinema as a method of resistance against death or extinction. I think of the woman's unresponsive, expressionless acting in the film and it immediately brings to my mind the act of recording in order to remember, the way I record spaces or the spatialized faces of people.

Five years before *The Pillar of Salt*, in 2013, when I went out to Taksim with the childish excitement for the Gezi Park protests, I looked around and said: “I’m afraid that one day I will forget all this.” Of course, like everything else, it would be forgotten. Just like the reason I pointed my camera at death in *Waiting*, I was afraid that something that existed here would be lost. I realize now that this was

the starting point of my other films. To hold on to the inevitable loss through images, or at least to make it easier to remember every time I look at those images.

This is partly why my films focus more on the places where the events take place than on the events themselves. Just as I shot my first 36-shot film with my first still-image camera so that my eyes looking at these places would look at these frames in the future and say, "I am here and I looked at these places with my eyes. If you watch this film, feel my gaze and my presence."

On June 8, 2013, my aim to film the barricades stretching from Taksim Square to the end of Gümüşsuyu Slope, one by one and without people, was also related to this perspective. That is why the film has the name *The 8th of June*.

I remember the euphoria that swept across Turkey and affected my generation. I had participated in the construction of the barricades, I had been in the middle of the chain when the paving stones were removed and carried by hand. The barricades were very impressive on their own. I thought of them as sculptures of many people coming together for a similar purpose and stacking things that were around at the time. Symbolically, they had become the object of my experience of Gezi. How could I record this object? How could I turn the barricades into a space? I walked around the barricades all day with my camera and started shooting them very closely, in a way that would cover my entire frame. There were no people, but there were barricades that many people had put up collectively, with their own hands.

When I made *The 8th of June* (2013) video, I had just started studying film at İstanbul Bilgi University. I had started organizing film screenings. First I became the head of the cinema club, then I left and founded a new organization called Fol and started showing films in various places in Istanbul. I started to think that making a film was not only about recording images with a camera but also about

collecting some images that had already been shot, reconstructing and editing them to tell a story or a case. I was very excited by this idea. I remember after watching Straub & Huillet's adaptation of Kafka's novel *America*, *Klassenverhältnisse* (1984), I stopped for a moment and turned to the audience in the theatre and said, I want to remake this film but without people.

I can't remember exactly what made me say that. But about a year later I had the courage to make it happen. I took the film, and frame by frame I located the empty spaces and reconstructed the film chronologically. The people had disappeared. What remained were the shadows of people reflected in the spaces, the dialogues that continued or were suddenly interrupted on empty spaces, the movement of a person closing the door after leaving the room.

This 10-minute intervention of mine made the function of space as represented in the film of Straub and Huillet more apparent. We could see how the directors had obsessively designed the *mise-en-scène* and how each space was carefully constructed. We could also understand that when the actors left, the spaces were of equal importance as the actors. The space suddenly became the film itself and nothing was lost from the feeling of the film. All that was left were the ghosts. Things we knew existed but never saw, things whose traces we could follow but which never gave themselves away. The spaces became an intermediary that carried these traces, hid them and transmitted them.

The film I made, *While Cursed by Specters* (2020) was included in the screening program of 58. New York Film Festival under the heading "Currents". That may be the turning point when I started to re-think about the relation of my filmography to Bergson; a relation I had first explored during the first semester of my master courses before the pandemic while we were still able to attend face-to-face courses. In fall semester of 2019 when I made a presentation in our Colloquium class about four of the films I focus on in this thesis – *The 8th of June* (2013) *A Topography of Memory* (2015); *Pillar of Salt* (2018), *Belonging* (2019) –

since I had not yet made *Forms of Forgetting* (2023) then, my reference to Bergson was an attempt to find a theoretical background to my filmography, to trace a continuity in my line of thinking to the origins of filmmaking.

While Bergson was thinking about the image and its possibilities in the early days of cinema, and writing about it as “the cinematograph inside us” (Bergson, 1911; 306) he highlighted that cinema was the art of space and time. He underscored the relationship between cinema and memory through the concept of duration. When I became acquainted with Bergson’s work, and discovered how he saw duration as the inner life of a person experiencing the past, the present and the future at the same time, I felt that this way of thinking showed me how human memory carries the past into the present or moment, and both the past and the future can exist in memory at any moment due to our inner life. I think that this personal duration or time is not limited to stories or people, and that spaces also have a memory. I think that spaces can turn into time itself. I think that spaces can carry traces of the past, and by utilizing the possibilities of cinema, they can offer the audience another experience with the knowledge of the future.

In this way, the space can have the possibility of becoming a memory that carries within itself both the past, the present and the future. This is exactly what is unique to the medium of cinema. Deleuze gives an example from a film by Straub & Huillet when questioning what is unique to cinema. What is it to have a cinematic idea, he asks. First we see a plain. For the spectator, this plain is just a calm greenery. Nothing more. But when the voiceover speaks of the dead lying beneath the plain, our sense of the place changes. This is precisely what reveals something unique to cinema: It allows the audience to wander through the memory of the place. Tracing Deleuze’s reference to the landscapes in Straub/Huillet’s films as “stratigraphic” and “empty and lacunary”, where “the camera movements (when there are any, notably pan shots) trace the abstract curve of what has happened, and where the earth stands for what is buried in it” (Deleuze, 1985; 244) highlighted another continuity in my films: The respective

autonomy of the sound image and the visual image, and the relationship between the two autonomous images (Deleuze, 1985; 245-260).

When I looked at my filmography from this frame of reference, I realized that sound does not accompany the image on a one-to-one basis. On the contrary sound is usually there to remind us of the traces of time, of memory, that linger in the spaces. Even in *Waiting* (2010) which I shot when I was not even a film student but a teenager in high school, the sound of breathing, which is a representation of life, turns into a representation of death when it disappears. The face of my great-uncle, which has become a space, becomes blurred. It turns into a lifeless face, in a sense, a space without people. In *The 8th of June* (2013) the audio recording of the police's harsh intervention against 'Woman in Red' (Williamson, 2013) – who got to be known as a figure of resistance – spraying her with tear gas, accompanies the images of the fragmented barricades. But the sound is quite different from the original sound of the tear gas spray: like the barricades, we listen to a version that has been broken into a thousand pieces and put back together again. We experience the space through a different version of a sound recording from those days. We experience the trace of the similarities but reminding us of other possibilities through the soundscape.

In my first feature film, *The Pillar of Salt* (2018) the protagonist listens to her memories on an analogue tape recorder. As she listens to this, we see on the screen 36 frames of photographs from the past, from the day when that memory happened. Both the photographs and the sound come from the past to the present. It becomes a concrete image of what is remembered. In *A Topography of Memory* (2015) the autonomy of the sound image and the visual image is to such a degree that it is difficult to make any association between the two unless given any additional information. I realized while I was writing this thesis that *A Topography of Memory* was not accepted to any festival before the screening of my later films and it shown for the first time only after the dissociation of the

sound and image came to be recognized not as an idiosyncrasy but a continuity of style.

In the first twenty-five minutes of *Belonging* (2019), as we listen to a real interrogation text recorded in a police station, we see the present state of the places mentioned in the texts. The voice of the past echoes in the empty spaces of the present. Our eyes and ears search for traces in the memory of the place. In *While Cursed by Specters* (2020) the sound fills the spaces like the traces of beings. It gives us what has just been there but can never be captured at the moment. It is almost like a clue; a clue that does not fully satisfy, a clue that strives to remind us of something we have perhaps not yet discovered, but never puts the result directly in front of us.

While getting ready to submit this thesis, I am also getting ready for a special screening of *Forms of Forgetting* (2023) at İstanbul Modern in June 2023, after the premiere at Berlinale and the screening at MoMA in February 2023. In *Forms of Forgetting* (2023) while watching the film with the audience, the couple talks about the images watched as a meta-voice and try to remember the places that are part of their personal memories through the images taken, again making us think about both the personal and public side of space. Who do all these memories belong to? To the couple talking about their own relationships and lives, to the director who did the film, to the audience watching it? Who do all these spaces belong to? To the couple, to me or to the audience? Do they or how do they differ in the screenings of different cities and times?

The research question of this thesis may be summarized as the search for an internal drive, a personal motivation, which weaves the narrations – more than the narratives – of the five films I have focused on in this thesis under the heading of “space and memory”. Why did I start making films and what is it that runs like an invisible thread through my films weaving them into a unified whole where they

explore the form of cinema as a unique way of capturing the space as the memory of the ephemeral?

The method of exploration emerges almost by itself as soon as I formulate my research question as above: Auto-ethnography, as I have also highlighted in my title. The method was introduced to the higher education system of Turkey in İstanbul Bilgi University by the seminal Ph.D. thesis of Hande Çayır (2016), which was also published as a book with the same title by Vernon Press (Çayır, 2020): “Documentary as autoethnography: A case study based on the changing surnames of women”. The thesis is now listed as the first one (2016) when searched with the keyword ‘otoetnografi’ (autoethnography) in the official website of the Council of Higher Education in Turkey. The Turkish title is listed as: *Otoetnografi olarak belgesel: Kadının değişen soyadına dair bir vaka çalışması.*

Of the 12 theses listed under the keyword autoethnography, 3 were written at İstanbul Bilgi University and with the same supervisor, Prof. Dr. Feride Çiçekoğlu, the first being by Hande Çayır (2016); the second by Leyla Toprak (2017) “Bir performans sanatçısının filme yaklaşımı: Otoetnografik yöntemle film incelemeleri” (*A performance artist's approach to films: Film reviews by autoethnographic method*) and the third by Zeynep Demirhan (2022) “An autoethnographic exploration: “How did Agnès Varda change my way of seeing?” with the Turkish title listed as: *Otoetnografik bir araştırma: Agnès Varda benim görme biçimimi nasıl değiştirdi?*

When considering the method of autoethnography and its efficacy as a research practice, I focused on its its fundamental definition as an approach to research and writing that aims to describe and systematically analyze personal experiences in order to understand cultural experiences (Ellis, 2004; Holman Jones, 2005). As a method that recognizes the connection between the personal and the cultural, acknowledging that our individual experiences are shaped and influenced by the

wider social and cultural contexts in which we live, it helped me to contextualize my personal artistic journey as a transformative experience reflecting certain instances of the past decade of the political turmoil in Turkey.

Hande Çayır's thesis titled "Documentary as Autoethnography: a Case Study Based on the Changing Surnames of Women" was a guide for me in understanding autoethnography as applied in the context of Turkey. According to Çayır, through autoethnography, the systematic analysis of personal experiences can be recognized as an integral part of cultural experiences and can contribute to the overall cultural landscape (Çayır, 2020). It allows researchers to delve into their own lived experiences, examining the nuances and complexities that arise from their interactions with the world around them. By intertwining the methodologies of autobiography and ethnography, autoethnography offers a rich and multi-layered approach to understanding human experiences (Çayır, 2020).

According to Ellis, Adams, and Bochner (2011, 273), autoethnography challenges traditional research practices and representations, treating research as a politically and socially conscious act. It encourages researchers to critically reflect on their positionality, acknowledging how their identities and social locations shape their perspectives and interpretations. By embracing the tenets of autobiography and ethnography, researchers can engage in a process that goes beyond detached objectivity, emphasizing the subjective nature of knowledge production.

In the field of filmmaking, despite the industry's imposition of certain workflow patterns, the creative process can vary significantly, especially for financially independent directors. As I took a closer look at the subjects, formative decisions and production processes of my own films, I realized that authenticity was becoming more and more of a priority. Originality and personal expression become the guiding principles that shape the production processes, allowing for a personalized approach that deviates from standardized industry norms.

In my research, to explore the use of space in my films in relation to the unique creative processes that shapes my films, I decided to use autoethnography as a method. By examining my personal processes and experiences of making these films, I can gain deeper insights into the meanings and implications underlying the spatial choices. This personalized approach foregrounds the research process, emphasizing the active engagement and subjective participation of the researcher in understanding and representing their own creative efforts .

Engaging in autoethnography requires a meticulous examination of the production process, from conceptualization to realization, as well as an exploration of personal memories and their connections to the socio-cultural context. This introspective journey allows me for exploration of my decisions, priorities and social reflections as a filmmaker, leading to a deeper understanding of the complexities inherent in my creative work.

According to Richardson, writing serves as a powerful tool in this process, allowing researchers to navigate the complex interplay between personal and cultural experiences (2000). As the researcher grapples with their own subjectivity and critically reflects on the results of their work, writing becomes a means of self-knowledge and self-questioning. Richardson (2000) emphasizes that writing is not only a means of transmitting information, but also a method of inquiry that enables researchers to deepen their understanding and engage in a continuous process of exploration and investigation.

In addition to its intrinsic value, autoethnography challenges assumptions of neutrality, impersonality and objectivity that prevail in research practice. As Atkinson (1997), Buzard (2003) and Delamont (2009) point out, some researchers still hold the belief that research can be conducted from a neutral and unbiased perspective. However, scholars such as Bochner (2002), Denzin and Lincoln (2000) and Rorty (1982) argue that this assumption is increasingly untenable. Autoethnography, on the other hand, offers an alternative approach that looks at

the world through a wider lens and expands it. By rejecting rigid definitions of what constitutes meaningful and useful research, it allows diverse and nuanced perspectives to emerge.

By adopting autoethnography, researchers not only gain unique insights into their own experiences, but also contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of culture and society. Adams (2005) and Wood (2009) emphasize the importance of autoethnography in revealing the complex ways in which personal subjectivities intersect with broader social and cultural dynamics, thereby enriching our understanding of the complexities of human existence.

For all these reasons, autoethnography offers a valuable framework for exploring personal experiences in a cultural context. Through the integration of autobiography and ethnography, researchers gain unique insights that foster a deeper appreciation of the complexity of human experiences and their multifaceted relationship to the broader socio-cultural landscape. In my opinion, an autoethnographic approach will help me to recognize how my identity, experiences, both as I perceive and as it is perceived by others, influence my interpretations of the issues I focus on, materials and methodologies I bring to my creative process and the narratives I construct.

Following the theoretical explorations about autoethnography through reading the references of the above, I realized that this was a method I was subconsciously using all the time since my resistance to my father's insistence that I include people in my images after I shot my first 36 frame still-image film with my very first camera. My own story was woven into the films I made, not to mention that I started making films at all, thanks to that very first camera my grandmother had given me as a gift. How did her absence make an impact on me and how is that related to my filmography? Does absence and disappearance trigger an obsession to capture and record? Is the zeitgeist or the spirit of our time cursed by such an obsession since all is melting away?

These final questions are not part of my research since they are speculative but I will attempt a personal view in conclusion, which will also include a memoir of my interaction with my supervisor Prof. Dr. Feride Çiçekođlu who triggered an introspection by suggesting the method of autoetnography. During the process of writing her closest ally was Dilşad Aladađ, with whom she shares an architectural background. That they have both been trained in sculpting spaces may not be a coincidence.

## CHAPTER ONE

### FILMOGRAPHY IN THE MAKING

#### 1.1. Filmography in the Making

In this section, I will reflect on the possibilities of thinking on and with the space and memory in the medium of cinema through personal anecdotes. For this purpose, I will focus on each of my films individually and review and analyze the first idea stage, the development of the idea and its evolution into a film, touching on the stages of the production process. Starting from my *The 8th of June* video work, which I made in 2013 as a 20 year old university student, I analyzed the use of space in *A Topography of Memory* (2015), my first feature film, *The Pillar of Salt* (2018), followed by *Belonging* (2019) and *Forms of Forgetting* (2023).

Emphasizing the relationship between filmmaking and the personal, as a filmmaker I reflected on the relationship between space and memory, remembering and forgetting. My filmography covers a period of 10 years from 2013 to 2023 with 3 feature films and various short videos. In each of these films, the use of space and its relationship with memory is present, albeit in a varied way. In this section, as the filmmaker of the films, I aimed to provide an ethnographic perspective on my filmography.

##### 1.1.1. 8 Haziran - The 8th of June (2013)

*8', Turkey, Turkish*

Beginning in May 2013, the Gezi Park Protests were a movement that started with the resistance of a handful of people against the demolition of Gezi Park next to Taksim Square and grew rapidly as a reaction to the authoritarianization of the Erdoğan government. In this process, recording, archiving and circulating the protests through alternative methods and social media, outside the censored

mainstream media, became an important issue. The protest had started as a reaction to the intervention in the memory of the city. It quickly turned into a resistance against the government, which was trying to destroy people's collective memory and construct a new and artificial 'memory'. This movement was recorded both by local people who participated in the protest and by cameramen, journalists, photographers and filmmakers working professionally in this field.

On June 8, 2013, I went to film the barricades on the Gümüşsuyu Slope around Taksim Square. This effort meant two things; firstly, as a 20-year-old film student who tries to look at the world through images, I wanted to see the barricades 'with my own eyes'. Secondly, I was trying to make a contribution, just as everyone else was trying to make a contribution based on their own professional life and practice. In an environment where doctors set up first aid tents, theater actors performed plays in Gezi Park, and those who owned houses in the neighborhood generously opened their doors to the protesters, I hoped to be a part of this collective effort with my camera.

This 8-minute video, titled *The 8th of June*, consisted entirely of barricade fragments. Throughout the video, we don't see people's bodies, only pieces of the barricades. We watch the barricades, which are the product of a collective effort, consisting of uprooted paving stones, garbage containers, piles of metal and pieces of concrete, sometimes close up, sometimes from a distance. In the background, we hear a sound design based on the sound recording of the disproportionate police intervention against a woman in red, who later became a symbol of the process.

Taksim and its surroundings have a symbolic significance for both the government and the opposition, for the communities, minorities and dominant ethnic and religious identities in Turkey, in short for every person living in Turkey, and especially in İstanbul. By looking at how this area has changed and how it has been forced to change under which government, we can discern clues to how

society has been changed or forced to change by the government in Turkey. Until the early years of the Republic, 850,000 square meters of land, including Taksim Gezi Park, today's Divan Hotel, TRT Istanbul Radio Building and part of the Harbiye Military Museum, belonged to the Armenian community. The Armenian Cemetery was located on a large part of this land.

The government's effort to take the land from the Armenian Society first started in the 19th century. This effort reached its peak during the Republican era, which preferred to break ties with the old and aimed to establish a new Istanbul and Turkey. The first major lawsuit was filed by the Beyoğlu Municipality in 1931, 8 years after the foundation of the Republic. When this lawsuit, which was the beginning of several lawsuits that would last for many years, was finalized in 1939, this area belonging to the Armenian community was 'legally' confiscated by the government. The cemetery was moved and most of the tombstones were used to build the stone stairs of Gezi Park.

Erdoğan's government has tried to change Taksim and its surroundings through various initiatives over the years. The Atatürk Cultural Center, directly opposite the park, was left in disrepair. Years of neglect were considered a valid reason for demolition and it was demolished. A new one was built in its place. The Taksim Mosque was planned to be built directly opposite the Atatürk Cultural Center. The construction started in 2017 and opened in 2021 with the participation of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The Topçu Barracks was ordered to be rebuilt in Taksim Gezi Park without a zoning permit as part of the Taksim Pedestrianization Project, despite the decision of the Istanbul 6th Administrative Court and the No. 2 Cultural and Natural Heritage Protection Board. In 2013, the Gezi Park protests were sparked by the public's opposition to this construction.

During these protests, the park was barricaded by protesters and the uprooted paving stones became an important object of the barricades. Focusing on these barricades, the video, *The 8th of June* explores the cinematic recording of the act

of barricading itself. In the course of this research, it endeavors to reconstruct a kind of barricade within the medium itself, with measured frames that zoom in and out. The fragmented images become a cinematic representation of the barricade as a fragmented structure. At the same time, these fragments hope to produce a statement about Istanbul and its barricades, where different layers come together and overlap.

Making a film or a video brings the opportunity to communicate with the masses. As images are edited in a certain way and reach people through various communication channels, a flow of information takes place. One of the reasons why the Gezi Park Protests quickly resonated socially and involved the masses was the rapid accessibility of the videos to people through social media. The video recording of the violent intervention against the woman in the red dress caused the masses to gather in Gezi Park. In this sense, it can be said that one of the cornerstones of the resistance, that is, the barricades, was the medium of video. In this sense, *The 8th of June* can be read as the cinematic equivalent of the act of resistance that found a place in the barricades.

*The 8th of June* is also an alternative historiography. Not only does it have the value of a historical document because it was shot on that day, but it also proposes an alternative history because the frames were cut and re-cut and reconstructed in the editing, in other words, because it has the subjective point of view of the director. It is an alternative narration of an event or an alternative narration of an event through the eyes of a young 20-year-old film student. In this sense, it can be said that history, like the act of remembering, renews itself every time it emerges and emphasizes the creation of new layers in these emergencies.

### **1.1.2. Belleğin Topoğrafyası\* - A Topography of Memory (2015)**

*\*Although it was finished in 2015, it premiered at the Locarno Film Festival in 2019.*

*30 min., Turkey, Turkish*

On June 7, 2015, general elections were held to determine the 550 deputies for the 25th term of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. This election was of critical importance due to the 10 percent threshold in the electoral law. If the HDP, a left-wing party voted for mostly by citizens of Kurdish origin in Turkey, had passed the threshold, Erdoğan's AKP would have lost the chance to rule alone and the elections would have resulted in the formation of a coalition government. As the election results started to be announced in the early morning hours of June 8, 2015, it became certain that the HDP would pass the threshold.

The 30-minute video *Topography of Memory* brings together two separate sources of image and sound. Two different mediums collected from two different times and sources.

In audio, we listen to the sound recording of a nuclear family going to vote on the morning of June 7th. The nuclear family consists of a mother, father, a boy in his 20s and a small baby. First, we listen to the rush of a family getting ready to leave the house to vote. Then they drive in the car driven by the father to the primary school closest to their home, one of the voting centers. They talk among themselves along the way. These casual conversations include the political agenda, as they will soon be voting. We get a closer understanding of the political views of this nuclear family. It becomes clearer to the audience where they correspond to in terms of their thoughts and ideas in Turkish society, and from which class and window they view the world. The son argues with the mother, and the father intervenes to end this argument as the power element in the family. The only person who does not speak in the film, a baby, mumbles quietly in the midst of all this discussion and waits for what will happen to her. These sometimes tense but always calm discussions are sometimes interrupted by the father singing along to old Turkish pop music on the radio. The family enters the school to vote, waits their turn and casts their votes. On the way back they take side streets to avoid the

traffic and the video ends with the father's last sentence: *This road will lead somewhere. But where?*

The footage accompanying the audio recording of the video consists of CCTV cameras that were planned by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality as a touristic project and are currently (2023) being broadcast publicly on [istanbuluseyret.com](http://istanbuluseyret.com).

With a wide-angle view of Istanbul's public spaces, these cameras show 23 points in the city. These include public spaces of both touristic and historical importance such as Ortaköy, Spice Bazaar, Eminönü, Grand Bazaar, Maiden's Tower, Emirgan and Taksim Square. From the night of June 7 until sunrise on June 8, we see these public spaces from cameras, sometimes stationary and sometimes moving systematically to the left and right to provide a panoramic view. Sometimes these images are pixelated due to poor quality, sometimes they freeze due to the internet connection or the server they are on. Despite all these glitches, it provides a view of the city's public spaces from above and a view of the city at a certain point in time.

The wide-angle camera of the government, which sees the city from above and never stops recording, and the speech of a nuclear family overlap. In this way, the layered meanings contained in the two different materials become apparent. The cameras that see the city, record its public spaces and digitally create a memory always making the same movements. Always in the same rhythm, pre-programmed and mechanical in a way that does not allow for randomness, they record the city like a soulless eye. However, a family living in the same city, going to vote at almost the same time, presents a completely different representation. They become part of unexpected reactions, rising and falling tensions, in short, a human dialogue. In contrast to the mechanical and wide angle of the image, the humanity and minority of the voice creates a sense of contrast.

I was the young boy on the recording and my parents were on the recording. At the time of the recording, no one except me was aware that their voices were being recorded. Although permission was later obtained to use the recording, the sentences they were saying at the time were not fictional. I wasn't explicitly planning to make such a video at the time. That was not exactly my intention.

Just as I preferred to see the barricades with my own camera in my *The 8th of June* video, I wanted to document with my voice recorder a day that I thought was of historical socio-political significance and that had personal significance for me. In my *The 8th of June* video, what interested me was the barricades and what they represented as a collective structure, rather than a more general situation such as the entire park or the protests. What interested me this time was exploring the various meanings that might emerge from this journey I took with my family, overlaying the political difference between generations with the public spaces of a changing Istanbul.

Although the film was finalized in 2015, it was rejected by various festivals that same year. In 2019, when I decided to send it to festivals again, it premiered at the Locarno Film Festival and was screened at the New York Film Festival and Toronto Film Festival the same year. In the catalogue of the Locarno Film Festival, where it premiered, the introduction by Daniela Persico ends with the following sentence: "*Who preserves the memory of a country?*"

As a method, *A Topography of Memory* 'collects' two different materials. It does not produce a material by itself. It consists of the overlapping of two collected materials. The film takes place during the elections that took place two years after the Gezi Park protests. It is a period when the government tries to change meanings through interventions in urban spaces. The film reveals this period in Istanbul's public spaces through CCTV cameras and images produced by the government itself. I think it is more accurate to consider *A Topography of Memory* as an attempt to produce a personal memory. In this sense, everyone in a country

has the ability to preserve the memory of a country in their own eyes. Just as each image taken with cell phones or cameras during the Gezi Park protests has found its place in the layers of history, each imaging effort can be evaluated in this context. However, memory not only keeps information alive but also involves the acts of forgetting and remembering.

*A Topography of Memory* fixes time by documenting it. In this way, it offers the opportunity to compare the public spaces of the city in 2015 with the spaces of the city today every time it is watched after some time has passed. Thus, for the viewer, the unexperienced time in between becomes a document within the experience of the film. This experience reminds the audience that the memory of a country may also be a memory that Erdoğan's government does not want to preserve, a memory that is forgotten and made to be forgotten over time.

### **1.1.3. Tuzdan Kaide - The Pillar of Salt (2018)**

*70', Turkey, Turkish*

*The Pillar of Salt* is a biblical expression. It plays an important role in the story of God's punishment and destruction of the people of Lot. God sends a prophet to warn the people of their heresy and then decides to destroy them completely after they refuse to listen to his warnings. He tells the prophet to take his wife and leave the city and never look back. As the Prophet Lot was about to leave the city with his wife, she turned and looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt by God.

Milan Kundera, after telling this story in *Immortality*, adds: "This is perhaps God's greatest curse: that he fixes man in time." (Kundera, 1988) The film, *The Pillar of Salt* is a film of a search. A character, fixed in time, ageless and perhaps immortal, is on a journey of search. This woman wanders through the old, ruined, moldy places of Istanbul, of which we don't see many cinematic representations in general, looking for her twin sister. Her twin sister is not like her; she has grown

old but has lived this life to the fullest. The search takes her to a botanical garden, a television repair shop, a bird shop, a cemetery, and a photography studio.

All these places have something in common with each other, even if it is not obvious at first sight. In the television repair shop, images from the 1999 Earthquake appear on the screen. Inside a frame, we see images recorded in the past and preserved for years. These images have survived to the present day and are now available for people to watch. The names and species of the plants in the botanical garden are written on the sides and displayed. They are waiting for visitors who come to see them in glass greenhouses, where a suitable space has been created for them to grow in a controlled manner. A variety of birds are lined up side by side in the tiny shop, singing in cages and waiting for someone to buy them or for interested eyes. The cemetery, as the narrator says at the end of the film, is a representation. It is a reminder of the presence of someone who has died. The grave is a stone intermediary set up for loved ones to visit and pay their respects. The photographic studio is an occasion for the reappearance of an image fixed in time. Here, photographs go through a chemical process so that other people can see them. The result of this process is the image. All these spaces have their own frames and wait for their visitors through the experience of seeing. Some reproduce the image, others show the image that has already been produced in the past. Others reduce the living or the dead to an image. In this way, they allow other people to visit them. At the same time, this process causes each subject to turn into an object with a certain frame.

According to the story, when Prophet Lot's wife turned her head and looked at the chaos of this world, she turned into a pillar of salt. Lot's wife knew the rules. She was aware of the prohibition. Yet she could not control herself and turned back, knowing the consequences. She wanted to look at the destruction, daring to defy God. She wanted to see and experience the transformation of a place with her own eyes.

In 2015, while I was thinking about the story and locations of the film, there was chaos in Turkey. Immediately after the 2015 general elections, a coalition government could not be formed and bombs started exploding all over the country. After this bloody process, the AKP came back to power in repeated elections. In 2016, while I was trying to write the script of the film, ISIS, which had a cell organization in Turkey, started to carry out its attacks. In March, a big bomb exploded in the middle of Istiklal Street, a little further away from Taksim Square, killing 5 people. We started shooting the film in mid-2016 and this was the first in a year and a half of a fragmented shooting schedule. On the last day of December that year, 39 people were killed in an armed attack on the Reina nightclub during New Year's Eve celebrations.

We were going through a time when it was impossible not to look back at the destruction in the geography we lived in, but we could not fully understand the source, cause and framework of the violence. Turkey was changing along with the violence that brought destruction. People began to walk less in the neighborhoods targeted by bombs, preferring to walk on side streets instead of the main avenues. The people of the city, who had traveled the same route from one place to another for years, were looking for new routes. The city was changing, but it was not a voluntary change. It was forced to change.

I was trying to make *The Pillar of Salt* in such a period. I was dreaming of a film in which a character who had lost his time wandered through old, moldy and rusted places. Maybe Istanbul was still the city as we knew it. One could cross from one shore of the Golden Horn to the other in a small boat and look out to sea over the half-destroyed city walls. But this Istanbul was not even close to the representation of Istanbul we are used to seeing in the movies. It evoked an Istanbul left to us after a great destruction. It was as if it was a dystopian city from a possible future. And through the narrow frame of the film, it presented itself to the present-day audience as a memory from the future. It was like a recollection of a possible future that never happened but was not too far away.

As a director, when I was thinking about the film, I was looking at my story through the filter of the period Turkey was going through, and I was constructing the locations with this feeling. Just like in *The 8th of June* or *A Topography of Memory*, I was in the middle of the violence and destruction that brought about change. Accepting the possibility of turning into a pillar of salt, I was experiencing the events with my own eyes and camera. When we were thinking about the image world of the movie, cinematographer Burak Serin and I spent a long time thinking about the framing of the film, in other words, the aspect ratio.

The biggest factor in deciding on a ratio close to 5:4 was to make the frame of the film narrower and clearer. By making the frame clearer, the function of the locations in the film could be matched with the image world of the camera. The protagonist's biggest problem in *The Pillar of Salt* was also related to this frame. I thought that a timeless character would lose her perception of time and therefore lose her frame. When she meets the sister she was looking for, we see that she is old and she is waiting for death. In other words, she has reached at the end of her life, which has a beginning and an end, a frame.

This character, who we understand in her dialogues to have experienced a fuller life, and in that sense has lived better, says: "I have lived and I am dying, you are not dying but you have not lived. When the frame becomes clear, it also means defining a space for transmitting an image to the other side. An image must have boundaries in order to be received. Just as the locations in the film reproduce the experience of seeing with their unique frames, the film was trying to reproduce the experience of seeing with both its characters and its formal choices. While trying to reduce everything to an image and a representation, as a result of this effort, it also provided a frame for the audience to perceive.

#### **1.1.4. Aidiyet - Belonging (2019)**

*70', Turkey, Turkish*

In 2003, I was 10 years old when the news of a murder that took place in the Başakşehir neighborhood of Istanbul was published on the third page of the newspapers. My aunt, together with her boyfriend, had planned and murdered her mother, my grandmother. As a result of a trial that spanned years, one was sentenced to life imprisonment for instigating the murder and the other was sentenced to life imprisonment for committing the murder.

In 2017, near the end of the editing process of *The Pillar of Salt*, I picked up the case file that was in its usual place at home. I started reading the file. As I read, I realized that I remembered some of the locations from my childhood. I had never been to my grandmother's house since the incident. First of all, making a movie was not on my mind, but I couldn't stop myself from wondering about the current state of the places I read about. There was something I needed to see in those places and I couldn't understand exactly what it was. One night I got in the car and drove to the house in Başakşehir and after a while I found the house where my grandmother was murdered.

Until that day, I thought that every family has its own tragedy and that our story was not much different from the stories of other families. I did not give this event the necessary importance and even preferred to accept it as an ordinary event. That day, I stood in the apartment building and looked at the stairs leading to the upper floors. I could not go upstairs. Yet 15 years had passed since the incident in this place. Then I remembered the details and places in the text of the interrogation of both the woman and the man in the case file. I couldn't restrain my desire to go back to all these places and look at them with my own eyes (my camera). This experience pushed me to make a film about this event, titled *Belonging*. As I often repeat in the Q&As or interviews with the audience after the screenings, I wanted to make a film about the memory of places. We leave a trace in places with what we have lived or not lived, with our presence or absence, in

short, with all our possibilities. Looking back at a murder that took place 15 years ago, the effort to look at it through places was a bit related to this.

The film, *Belonging*, which I made based on this real event, can be structurally divided into two parts. In the first 25 minutes of the film, the text of the confession of the male suspect who committed the murder during the police interrogation is read by the fictional male character of the film as a voice-over. For 25 minutes we see neither the man nor the woman. The only thing we see are the various locations that accompany the voice-over. In this interrogation text, which is an important part of the case file, we are told how the couple became close starting from the first night they met, how their relationship progressed and how the idea for the murder came about. Finally, the details of the night of the murder and what happened during the night are shared with the audience in full clarity.

After the first 25 minutes of the film, after the empty spaces accompanying the male narration, we see the title of the film and a short credits. It is as if the film has just shown us a long prologue. When the first part, based on a real document, ends, we realize that we are on the first night the couple met. This time both the woman and the man in the story are played by actors. Everything has become fiction.

We already know from the previous interrogation how the couple met, how they spent the night. But this is only a few minutes of the story we have just heard, which is insignificant. We watch these one or two minutes in full detail for the rest of the film, for 45 minutes. The couple meets on the rocks, they walk together, they go to the woman's apartment. She brews coffee and they have a long conversation. We learn how they see the world, we listen to their youthful excitement, their problems and their questioning about belonging. In the morning they wake up in the same bed, tell each other their dreams, have breakfast and he leaves. This second part of the film does not give us any details of the criminal

incident. The audience cannot find an answer to their questions about why the murder took place, the moral basis or the motive for the murder.

In the first part, the camera indeed moves from one location to another like a detective. The voice-over reads a text from a source 15 years ago, while images from the present (from May 2018) appear on the screen. When material from different times is overlapped as references to the same event, it starts to become an experience and cinematic investigation into the temporal layers of space and story.

Between these layers, after 15 years, the audience starts to wonder whether these spaces carry anything from the past. They desperately search for a trace. For example, a rusty tablecloth where the murder took place evokes a blood stain. When we see the (fictional) actor's photograph on a table while wandering around the locations, the layers of time and reality become even more ambiguous. The audience falls into a void where they do not know what is real and what is fictional, and they do not know what they can trust and what they cannot trust.

This experience of insecurity is of course not unfamiliar to me. This was a story that happened to me and my family, and the feeling of insecurity was one of the main feelings that surrounded me during this whole period. Maybe that's why everything was closer to fiction for me. When I saw a newspaper piece, I remember tearing that part of the newspaper with excitement and showing it to my friends. It didn't matter why my aunt was in the newspaper, the strange excitement of her being in the newspaper was more important. I was also excited when she appeared on the main news bulletin on TV. It was as if experiencing this event in the newspaper or on the screen, in a framed medium, made the whole story even more fictional for me. In that sense, then, it makes sense to make a movie where the boundaries between reality and fiction gradually disappear.

In films with documentary elements, such as *The 8th of June* or *A Topography of Memory*, time also attributed a historical value to these two films due to their importance in Turkey's political history. The barricades or the public spaces of the city sealed time for the audience who would watch them later, and they themselves became cinematic documents. The film *Belonging*, on the other hand, is an attempt to realize this whole experience not by spreading it over years, that is, over time, but within its own 70-minute duration. And it tries to do this by focusing on a third-page news story that we come across perhaps every week.

As we follow the locations of *Belonging*, we listen to the actions that took place in those locations in the past. The audience, just like the man who remembers what he did during the interrogation (and together with the man), tries to visualize the actions in his mind. He walks through an empty stairwell, waits at a gas station, opens a door right after a murder... When we move to the fictional part and watch the night when the couple meet, we have just listened to their future in detail and even imagined it. While thinking about their future, we think about the places we have just seen, which are actually in the past for us. In a way, we remember the future through the places.

This is a kind of history telling. Time and space blend together, the audience becomes an active part of an act of remembering. However, each time history is told, it presents a new layer. The locations become another part of this layer each time they are shown. The murder takes place in 2003, the film is shot in 2018, and each time the viewer opens the film and watches it, they can visit the locations of the present day, thus adding a third layer of time to the experience of the film.

#### **1.1.5. Unutma Biçimleri - Forms of Forgetting (2023)**

*70', Turkey, Turkish*

*When a couple separated fourteen years ago meet again, they realize that they cannot remember how they broke up. Memories and places are mixed together in*

*time. Everything overlaps in memory. Forms of Forgetting explores how history is layered and rewritten on a couple. The film becomes an exercise in remembering through the stories, dreams and memories that emerge from the interviews with the couple.*

If *Forms of Forgetting* were watched silently, that is, without a voiceover, one might think that it consists of spaces that have little to do with each other. It is the story of a couple that re-connect, trying to make sense of the locations and narrating their memories in those locations as each of them remembers.

Throughout the film, it is as if Erdem (Şenocak) and Nesrin (Uçarlar) watch the film together with the audience. Even though they look at the same images as the audience, since their experiences in this life are unique, their memories in those places are also unique to them. In this way, the film constructs a narrative about the couple's shared memory.

This was a couple that separated 14 years ago; when they met again years later they sat on the stone steps of a theater and started chatting. Over time, they both realize that they remember things differently. Even on important issues such as how they met or how they broke up, they cannot establish a common narrative. In their memories, they both focus on different moments and images. Because of the difference and subjectivity of the experience, they both tell everything differently. It is precisely in these moments that they disagree, argue and get tense with each other. Neither of them remembers the same, but they want to construct a single narrative. For this reason, they cling to their own memories and try to convince the other, to reconcile on a single 'personal history'.

This is of course not a reconciliation but an imposition. Therefore, it turns into an endeavor in which it is not possible to find common ground. Apart from this 12-minute dialogue scene, we never see Erdem and Nesrin again. However, we hear their voices throughout the film to accompany the images. When they appear

in the 12-minute scene, they start talking about themselves, this time in the upper voice. While watching Erdem and Nesrin's scene with dialog, suddenly there are sounds from two different sources in the soundscape of the film. One is this scene, the dialog itself. The other is Erdem and Nesrin's commentary as if they are watching the film together with the audience as an upper voice. When it comes to their own scenes, these two sound sources overlap. They themselves start talking, discussing, thinking and evaluating about their own scenes.

Each attempt to remember and tell their personal history opens a new layer. In that case, it can be said that *Forms of Forgetting* contains different layers of memories and layered differences of personal history.

In the introduction of the film, the audience is informed that the film is the result of interviews with the couple in 2020-2022. Since Erdem did his military service in Kars (and probably shared this information during the making of the film), the film opens on Çıldır Lake. And then, while watching this image, Erdem remembers that he did his military service in Kars. In this way, it is not clear whether the image triggers the memory or the memory triggers the image.

While watching and reminiscing about these important places for them, Erdem and Nesrin inevitably find themselves talking about social events. They talk about the history of the Golden Horn Shipyard and colonialism in the Ottoman Empire. They talk about the endless construction on the Karaköy waterfront and the rise of the new building of the Istanbul Modern Museum among the old historical buildings. They see a forgotten, abandoned botanical garden in the city and talk about what plants have forgotten.

Throughout the film, the couple tries to reconstruct a narrative by recounting their lost memories. It is only through this narrative that they seem to be able to recall their memories. Therefore, they constantly talk and want to tell. Even if they

cannot create a common personal history, at least they have to tell in order to create their own history.

As Erdem, who tries to remember his dream in the first scenes of the film, says, remembering is a bit like telling a dream. *The dream is recreated while being told.* While Erdem and Nesrin are chatting, they talk about the tea garden where they met. Erdem pauses; it has become a hotel, he says. The personal history of two people is, in a sense, the history of constantly changing places. Perhaps this is why the couple cannot meet on a common history throughout the film. As the places change, the memory of the city also changes. Gaps and vague images are left behind. In a way, the couple creates new memories through this emptiness by narrating. Memories also need a framework to be remembered and recreated. But spaces are also needed to narrate them.

Towards the end of the film, while seeing the construction of the Istanbul Modern Museum, Erdem mentions the director's plan for the film's release. According to the plan, the film will be shown publicly for the first time in this museum and will not be shown in Turkey for 14 years. When I came up with this idea, I was standing in the middle of the construction of Istanbul Modern. I remember thinking how I could reproduce the experience of remembering a couple who remembered everything by telling everything, in the relationship that the film established with the audience.

The film, which would be 'forgotten' by not meeting the audience again for 14 years after a single screening, would be remembered again after 14 years. This could be both an experiment on how time affects the images we are exposed to and a reproduction of the way of forgetting. In addition, the construction scene in the film also includes the construction of the theatre where we will screen the film. While the audience experiences the film in the theatre, they also have the opportunity to experience the past, that is, the memory of the place they are sitting in, on the screen. Just like the idea that spaces have memory, which I often

expressed in *Belonging*, here it turns into something much more obvious, a collective viewing experience.

## **1.2. Filmography as remembrance**

Reflecting on my filmography, I observe a recurring thematic exploration of places and their significance. In my films, places come to the fore as tools of remembrance. They serve as concrete manifestations of events, human faces and familiar settings that capture the essence of the stories being told.

The first example is the depiction of the Gezi Park barricades on *The 8th of June*, which takes up the entire screen and becomes the space itself. In this depiction, public spaces in Istanbul become symbolic representations of an important political event that resonated across society. The deliberate emphasis on these spaces conveys the collective impact and shared experience of the political movement.

Similarly, in *A Topography of Memory*, the images show public spaces in Istanbul. These spaces are not just backgrounds, they function as the physical embodiment of political and social events that shape people's lives. The film captures Istanbul's public spaces at an important point in history and evolves into the memory of an election day.

*The Pillar of Salt* further explores the interplay between space and storytelling. The film exists in a world that can only be understood and represented through spatialization, where the framing and boundaries of spaces directly affect the understanding of the narrative.

The relationship between space and memory emerges as an important motif in *Belonging* also. Ordinary spaces undergo a transformation when juxtaposed with

the text of the investigation, gaining new layers of meaning and memory. The places carry the traces of the past. And as the audience hears the story of this past, they seem to remember the spaces.

*Forms of Forgetting* explores the connection between remembering and spaces. The central idea of the film revolves around the idea that memory and places are actually intertwined and form a unified relationship with each other. The film explores how places function as memory storage and shape our understanding of the past.

As a final word to this section, it is possible to say that writing this thesis became an additional layer of memory; viewing my filmography as remembrance and depicting the visual images and sounds of the cinematographic medium through language was itself a different journey. Furthermore, I had to go through this journey not in my native language but in English, which added yet another layer and even more distance. I had to delve into “the art of memory” in a medium that was alien both to my way of seeing through the camera and my way of thinking in Turkish. This double alienation may have helped me to step out of my personal zone of comfort in creating a narrative more accessible for readers from different backgrounds and histories, individually and culturally.

## CHAPTER TWO

### PERSPECTIVES ON FILMOGRAPHY

#### **2.1. Perspectives on Filmography**

Making a film also means opening a debate in the public sphere, and having both the formal and the contextual aspects of the films examined and criticized by various critics. These criticisms also have the characteristic of revealing what has accumulated in social memory. It is an archive of how and from which perspective films were perceived according to their period. In this section, I summarize the criticism my films have received throughout my filmography. I intend to give an overall idea about how the films were perceived in the public sphere starting from their first screenings in different film festivals, as well as the opinions of the critics, how their views converged or diverged in their positive or negative evaluations in various publications.

I have included both the relation of each film with the audience in the national arena in Turkey and the criticism of the critics, as well as the reception of the films in the international arena. I have indicated from which perspectives critics abroad have approached my films. Apart from these criticisms, I have also reviewed the festival journey of the award-winning films, the awards they received or did not receive because these are also an indicator of reception in the public sphere. In this sense, this is an attempt for an overview on how the films find a place for themselves in both the national and the international arena, using the case of my films as an example.

##### **2.1.1. 8 Haziran - The 8th of June (2013)**

*The 8th of June* was first screened at the Milano Film Festival in 2013. It was part of a special selection programmed by director Sylvian George on the theme of street protests and resistance. The selection titled 'Oh Libertà' (experiment the

forms, experiment the justice) / 'Oh Freedom!' (experiment the forms, experiment the justice), which included experimental films about the protests in Brazil, the Spanish Revolution, the Greek Revolt, consisted of short films by important directors such as Bruce Baille, Ben Russels, Ken Jacobs, Jean-Luc Godard, Raymundo Gleyzer.

Sylvian George wrote the catalog essay for the film and introduced it with the following sentences:

Through a combination of several still and moving images, sounds and voices of the barricades in Istanbul, Burak Çevik shows the bewilderment of Turkish power in the face of the Turkish people's rejection of new autocratic goals, the reaction of power in the form of repression and how the "street" is experimenting with new strategies of political action. A pure dialectical image. (George, 2013)

The film's festival journey was quite limited. In Turkey, it was included in the short film selection of the Istanbul Independent Film Festival. Then it was nominated by Siyad (Cinema Writers Association) in the Best Short Film of the Year category. It did not win any award.

Serdar Kökçeoğlu wrote an article about *The 8th of June* in his column devoted to short films in Arka Pencere magazine.

Burak Çevik is a prolific young artist who not only contributes to the experimental cinema culture of the country with his films but also with his contributions to publications and organizations. His work *The 8th of June* is a barricade film that can be shown in exhibitions as well as film festivals. It has an aesthetic that is close to the aesthetics of newsreels doing damage assessment accompanied by gloomy music

and science fiction films with a post-apocalyptic feel, but it invites us to look at the barricades with different eyes through careful editing.

Burak evik takes a close look at the basic parts that make up the barricades that protect the Taksim *commune village* from the police, which was established so that street children beaten for eating leftover food can eat comfortably and so that people remember the meaning of togetherness and sharing. Accompanying the details of the barricades, the sound work, which at first glance feels like contemporary music, consists of audio recordings of the tear gas attack on the 'Woman in Red' at the beginning of Gezi. In other words, a cause-and-effect relationship takes shape between sound and image. Burak evik's meaningful 'space research', which has been recorded in history as *The 8th of June*, is an indication that we will see more innovative works about Gezi, and that the openness of mind in Gezi continues on different platforms. (Kökeođlu, 2013)

*The 8th of June* was included as a chapter in Feride iekođlu's book *Şehrin İtirazı* (The Protest of the City) sub-titled “Gezi Direnişisi Öncesi İstanbul Filmlerinde İtiraz Eşiđi” (The Threshold of Protest in Istanbul Films Before the Gezi Resistance). iekođlu devoted the last chapter of the book to this film, juxtaposing the last sequence of Michelangelo Antonioni's *L'Eclisse* (1962) with the frames of *The 8th of June*.

June 8 was one of the days during the Gezi resistance when the streets leading to Taksim were blocked with barricades, bringing together the catastrophe of pepper spray and violence with the utopia that another kind of life was possible. Burak's film *The 8th of June* is an 8-minute documentary that presents the movement reflected on camera in still frames from a barricade, accompanied by the sound of pepper spray

being fired at the "Woman in Red", who would later become one of the iconographic symbols of Gezi. (...)

At this point, let's have another Janus-like moment and juxtapose in our minds the film frames from the last sequence of *L'Eclisse* with the frames from Burak Çevik's documentary *The 8th of June*, shot during the 2013 Gezi resistance. If this similarity we see in the silent and motionless environment is about the city losing its face, the sound and movement of *The 8th of June* documentary on the Gezi resistance can be read as a kind of scream of the city trying to find its face again.(...)

Watching *The 8th of June* again now, through the framework of this book, I can see it as both an homage and a humble response to the sequence at the end of *L'eclisse*, which I know Burak had not seen before: The energy contained in the time captured in still frames against the images of nowhere, where the main characters do not show up, where an eclipse of emotion is described with piles of bricks, iron bars from constructions and empty intersections; the energy contained in the time captured in still frames, the deep pulse of an explosion, a threshold experience that makes you feel the before and the after, where fear and flight are suspended; a two-week greeting from Istanbul to the 72-day Paris Commune, which built the most magnificent barricades on the same streets in Paris that Haussmann cut up so that barricades could not be built. (Çiçekoğlu, 2015, 129-131)

### **3.1.2. Belleğin Topoğrafyası - A Topography of Memory (2015)**

*A Topography of Memory* was first shared publicly by me for free on my personal Vimeo page in 2015. Very few people paid attention to the film and after about a week it was removed from this page, again by me. I didn't know where I could show the film. I remember sending it to various festivals, the names of which I don't remember, but I didn't get any positive feedback from any of them. In 2019,

when I was showing *Belonging* at festivals abroad, I started thinking about the film again. During this process, I applied to three festivals: Locarno Film Festival, Toronto Film Festival and New York Film Festival. When I received invitations from these three festivals, the film was screened in these festivals in order.

The film consisted of audio recordings of my family going to vote, and my family was speaking their thoughts without hesitation. Considering the content of the film, I decided not to show it in any other festival other than these three festivals due to the political atmosphere of 2019. For this reason, I also turned down the invitation from IDFA, one of the most important documentary festivals in Europe.

The film was first screened at the Locarno Film Festival in August 2019. Daniela Persico, one of the curators of the festival, introduced the film as follows:

Various opinions, arguments, and hopes succeed one another in the time that separates the intention from the vote. Invisible to our eyes, this family becomes a symbol of a driving force in contrast to the impersonal images of the city's surveillance cameras, which film everything but capture nothing. Who preserves a country's memory? (Persico, 2019)

After the screening in Locarno, it was screened at the Toronto Film Festival's Wavelengths Section, which offers space for experimental films. Afterwards, as part of the New York Film Festival, it was exhibited at the Lincoln Center Building on a loop throughout the festival. The New York Film Festival catalog featured the film as follows:

This subtly expansive new work by Burak Çevik combines CCTV footage of urban Istanbul with audio of a family heading to vote in the controversial June 2015 Turkish general election. As talk ranges from domestic matters to political affiliations, shots of the city's skyline, coastal architecture, and religious landmarks captured the day after the election

slowly scroll past. Underlying these eerily serene images is the knowledge that in a follow-up vote five months later, the right-wing government would regain power. (The New York Film Festival, 2019)

Since the film has never been screened in Turkey, I don't know how it would have been received by audiences in Turkey. I was only able to attend the Toronto Film Festival in person. During the Q&A after the film, the moderator asked me a question about why and how the sound recordings and footage were taken. This question, which asked me to elaborate on the formal style of the film, was the first and only question I encountered during my festival journey.

This experience later made me ask myself for whom I make my films. Are films made to be shown? Do films lose their function when we don't show them? Can we make films for ourselves or just for the experience of the process? These questions later became more mature in *Forms of Forgetting*, and both the production and screening stages of my films could be positioned as a response to these questions. The only review of *A Topography of Memory* was written by Phil Coldiron. The Canadian critic first described the film and then talked about his experience, saying that this boring experience haunted him two days after seeing it. (Coldiron, 2019)

The particularly confrontational programming choice I alluded to above came in the program's fourth film, Burak Çevik's half-hour *A Topography of Memory*, which matches panning surveillance footage of Istanbul to an audio recording of a mother, father, and son on their way to vote in the Turkish elections of June 7, 2015. The family's conversations are resolutely banal, as, for example, the son chides his centrist mother for her incoherent arguments against the progressive Peoples' Democratic Party. Seen on the 25-foot-wide screen of Theater 3 at TIFF's Bell Lightbox, these lower-than-low resolution images were rendered as muddy, pixelated quilts, of the sort favored by late Godard. Though the quality of their light

varies wildly based on the differences in their locations, the general movement is from dark to light, and indeed, the end credits confirm that this footage, sourced online, was all recorded at dawn of the day following the election, in which Erdoğan's right-wing Justice and Development Party lost its parliamentary majority.

As Çevik sets pan after pan, for a time, the tension grows: surely one of these sweeps across nearly deserted streets and squares will land on something. I cannot say when precisely it became apparent to me that this was not going to be the case—that the video would drone on at the same sluggish pace until its conclusion—but as the tension dissipates, a void grows which Çevik makes no effort to fill. In the theater, I found this unmitigated tedium entirely unproductive, or perhaps worse. Given the knowledge that Erdoğan's thuggish regime would consolidate its hold on power in a snap election just five months later and continue to drive the country toward authoritarian rule in the intervening years, the failure of anything of substance to emerge from this morning of at least minor triumph seemed to express nothing but abject despair. And yet, two days on, *A Topography of Memory* refuses to leave my mind: it may be an overly miserable experience, but it captures a purgatorial mood too typical of our times with a rare directness. (Coldiron, 2019)

### **2.1.3. Tuzdan Kaide - The Pillar of Salt (2018)**

*The Pillar of Salt* had its world premiere at the Forum section of the Berlin Film Festival in February 2018. Forum is a side section of the Berlin Film Festival, in its 68th edition in 2018, that gives space to films that are close to the language of innovative cinema and that expand the possibilities of storytelling. During the press conference to introduce the films, Christoph Terhechte, the artistic director of the Forum at the time (2018), chose to introduce *The Pillar of Salt* by saying, "I have never seen a work like this in Turkish or international cinema." (Terhechte,

2018) Anna Hoffman, one of the curators of the festival, summarized the film in the following sentences in her catalog text:

A pregnant young woman who lives in a sort of cave is looking for her vanished sister, yet this plot summary hardly does justice to the charm, richness and radical nature of Burak Çevik's first feature – all of which a result of the liberties he takes in creating an extravagant cinematic world to tell this story. The protagonist leaves her almost fairytale-like cave to set out across a river, taking up her sister's trail. This trail leads her to a botanical garden, a bird shop, and a darkroom. The photo lab technician compares the effect of photographs to God turning Lot's wife into a pillar of salt because she couldn't resist the temptation of turning around to see Sodom be destroyed. Captured for eternity, transfixed for eternity – should we take it at face value when the protagonist tells the boatwoman that she is a part-time vampire? The dreamlike way in which the film digresses to show us a plant, a strip of negatives, or a table tennis match contributes considerably to the strange fascination it develops. Some things remain mysterious – which only makes us even more curious about what they might be referring to. (Hoffmann, 2019)

The first review of *The Pillar of Salt* was published in Posta Magazine the day after its screening at the Berlinale. Written by Kerem Akça, the review focused on the film's approach to the city of Istanbul and its innovative formal endeavors. "The Pillar of Salt" is perhaps one of the most mysterious first films of Turkish cinema... It derives its excitement from the fact that it extracts a dark tale from Istanbul. (Akça, 2019)

The article mentions that *Tuzdan Kaide* (Pillar of Salt) is resonates with the style of Polish director Wojciech Has, who made surreal and sometimes fairy-tale-like films, and that it shares a common bond with Turkish director Reha Erdem's *A Ay*

(Oh Moon 1988) and Kutluğ Ataman's *Karanlık Sular* (The Serpent's Tale, 1995), a mysterious vampire story set in Istanbul.

The film premiered in Turkey at the Istanbul Film Festival in April 2018 at the Atlas Theater in Beyoğlu. Critics and audiences were often sharply divided. During the screening of the film, which was included in both the national and international competition sections of the festival, poet Küçük İskender, one of the members of the national jury, left the theater midway through the film. The film left its first competition in Turkey without winning any awards. This trend did not change during the following period. Competing at the Ankara and Adana Film Festivals, the film divided the audience and was not awarded by the jury. After the Berlin Film Festival, the film did not find a place in foreign festivals and its festival journey was limited.

*The Pillar of Salt* was not an easy viewing experience for the audience. Some audiences preferred to leave the screening hall and join the life outside early. As someone who was in the theater during these screenings, I would try to keep a statistic by counting the audience out of the corner of my eye. I observed that the audience left the movie more often than other festival films.

From August to December 2018, I wrote a series of 4 articles for Manifold.com in which I tried to explore the inspirations, writing and production process of the film from a personal perspective. Through these articles, I tried to understand the impact of the fact that *The Pillar of Salt* was a film made without public funding and the impact of the production process on the outcome of the film. I was exploring how there is a connection between how we make a film and the final product, which is the film. I was wondering, "If *The Pillar of Salt* had been funded and made in a way that was closer to the general production practice of the industry, would it have been the same film?" (Cevik, 2018)

The process of *The Pillar of Salt*, which I believe is the product of an effort and labor outside the stereotypical filmmaking practice of the industry, did not meet with the audience as we are used to. At a time when both the ticket sales and the interest in films shown at festivals called art-house were decreasing, and people were going to the cinema less and less in general, it would not have been a logical attempt for a commercial release in the theaters. For this reason, even though the distribution company had already agreed with us, we decided not to release the film. We tried to organize single screening events, a venture which we would later repeat with the stronger example of *Belonging*. We contacted the cinema organizations in some Anatolian cities and the cinema clubs of universities, organizing various screenings.

In an environment where social realist films predominated in Turkish Cinema, *The Pillar of Salt* was received with a distant interest. There was interest, after all; the film had premiered in an important festival like the Berlin Film Festival, but the unfamiliarity of the film's language, its fragmented narrative and slow rhythm, which the audience was not used to, created distance. After one screening, the audience in the theater shared their thoughts: "*This film is like a UFO, it is unclear where it came from and where it is going. It just appeared in the sky in the Turkish Cinema.*"

Making a film also means opening a topic in the public sphere, initiating a discussion, dialoguing and interacting with the audience in the Q&A sessions after the screening. Audiences were generally interested in the film's use of space, storytelling style and atmosphere, and chose questions accordingly. Likewise, critics preferred to write about these aspects of the film which are listed below:

Just like the Russian formalists and American avant-gardists, Çevik, who opens paths of thought on the cinematic form, embarks on a search for a new language, identity and representation in *The Pillar of Salt*. But he

avoids the idea of fixing these searches to any representation, identity or language as much as he can.” (Çalışır, 2018)

The atmosphere created in the film is so strong that, combined with mythological and religious elements, a very impressive, dark, fairy tale-like story emerges from familiar places in the city. (...) With its unique narrative, *The Pillar of Salt* seems to give young directors an idea to find their own language. (Özdikmenli, 2018)

(...) Turkey's "art cinema", despite the good examples that emerge from time to time, mostly uses some familiar patterns. At this point, *The Pillar of Salt* is a breath of fresh air, even if it occasionally brings to mind a few different films. Love it or hate it, it is a breath of fresh air. (Derin, 2018)

Everything begins with a woman's search in a familiar but unfamiliar Istanbul, at that point where time stands still. (...) Every everyday space that comes to life in the film - a television repair shop or a strange basement where table tennis is played - corresponds to spaces of meaning beyond this time. The state of mind of being trapped inside the movie theater draws the characters in. Their words to nothingness are stillborn dialogues. Because the human being, who becomes a part of the film universe, can only exist on the screen by losing his humanity. (Sofuoğlu, 2018)

In addition to those who found the film's structure innovative, there were also film writers who thought the opposite. Among these, Barış Saydam wrote the most detailed article. In this article, in which the author justifies his negative opinions about the film, the use of the film's visual language and the effort to bend the rules are emphasized, but not found sufficient and powerful. (Saydam, 2018)

Some may think of it as an avant-garde work in which the rules and semantics of visual language are challenged or the possibilities of a different semantics are tried. Obviously, the structure of the film is open to both readings and possible more and different readings. In the end, it can be considered as an essay and a contemplative effort on cinema, but beyond that, it is not possible to say that it has a strong language and focus. Perhaps in the future, Çevik's cinematic world may evolve into a fairy-tale and surreal universe that rejects reality, like Reha Erdem, and turn into a narrative effort through images, but it should be noted that the first film is far from such a situation. (Saydam, 2018)

Just as underlined in these reviews, *The Pillar of Salt's* use of space, representation of Istanbul and innovative cinematic language were frequently mentioned in the following periods. However, the most prominent among these texts was the chapter devoted to the film in Feride Çiçekoğlu's book *İsyankar Şehir* (The Revolting City, 2019). In this book, which proceeds with personal experiences and examples from films through the question "*How did women becoming the protagonists of their own stories, 'going out to the city' despite all the pressure on them, reflect on some films made after the Gezi resistance, and what did it change?*", the film was positioned as a new cinematic language representing a new beginning in our cinema in the epilogue of her trilogy:

*The Pillar of Salt* is not like the other films that are the subject of the book, nor even like the films we have seen before. It is a beginning in itself, a new cinematic language, a brand new narrative. It deserves to be the closing film of both the book and the trilogy, not only because all the characters are women and the city is feminine, but also because of its story about birth, natality and plurality. It also represents a new quest in the way it tells its story, so it does not fall into any category yet. It is the last stop of the journey that has been going on for more than ten years with *Vesikali*

*Şehir* (The Whore of a City, 2008) and *Şehrin İtirazı*.(The Protest of the City, 2015) The beginning of new journeys. (Çiçekoğlu, 2019)

Feride Çiçekoğlu, after focusing on the film's attitude towards sound and image, starting with the fact that only female actors are in the frame and the male is an invisible voice representation, wrote about the perception of space in the female character's search in the city.

The skyline of the decaying city in the background: It reminds us of the Manaki brothers' images of the Tersane-i Amire in Kasımpaşa, one of the first panning shots in the history of cinema, sweeping from one side to the other. At least five generations have passed through these places in the more than a hundred years since the Manaki brothers' filming, and like the clothes of the mothers and fathers who have passed away, the city is still there, still lying along the shore, decaying or abandoned. (...) When I think we have different perspectives on the narrative and wonder what it is that brings us together in this film, I keep coming back to the sense of space reflected in the cinema.

Especially that sequence of empty spaces: that unforgettable sequence where we first think that the spaces we thought were defined by women are then empty and we feel that women are temporary and spaces are permanent. *The Pillar of Salt* is a film about spaces even more than women, a film that begins and ends with a cave. We can read the film as a story about humanity, whose path passes through decayed cities and exhausts itself, returning to the point where it started, or as a first film that has no other expectation than to tell the story of a new nature in a world without men. (Çiçekoğlu, 2019)

Istanbul, the city that Feride Çiçekoğlu underlines as 'rotting away in the background', is the place where I was born, grew up and lived for a long time. It is

a city whose changes I have witnessed up close, demolished and rebuilt, where the places where my memories are embedded are changing, and where I try to show resistance by creating new memories or recording those places in some way. The Bosphorus Bridge, which we often come across in its visual representation, is not a magnificent view for me, but an asphalt that I wait on for hours while trying to cross from Europe to Asia. İstiklal Street is a labyrinth whose back streets are feared and dreaded as much as it was the loitering area of my high school years. For me, places are structures that will inevitably be lost once they exist and inevitably turn into a memory.

In terms of the film's use of space, in an article written more than four years after the first screening of the film, "Burak Çevik's Cinema: A Quadruple Typology of Film Space", Hasan Cem Çal underlined that the spaces of *The Pillar of Salt* have two different perspectives: The temporal, that is, the temporary, and the timeless, that is, the eternal.

In *The Pillar of Salt* (Tuzdan Kaide), spaces are sensed from two different perspectives, first from the perspective of the temporal, the temporary, and then from the perspective of the timeless, the eternal. (Towards the end of the film, some of the places we see throughout the film are seen once again, but this time "hollow". We see it. That's why. This first perspective of spaces belongs to time, while the second perspective belongs to the timeless. This latter corresponds to pure spatiality, the view of space as detached from time. The image seems to depict a truth: Things are ephemeral as well as transient, space is unique and eternal). And yet these spaces are timeless. The timelessness of spaces transcends, even swallows, the movement they encompass, the movement of things. (Çal, 2022)

#### **2.1.4. Aidiyet - Belonging (2019)**

In 2019, *Belonging* had its world premiere at the Forum section of the 69th Berlin Film Festival. Immediately after the screening, it was included in the New Directors / New Films selection, which brought together films by innovative filmmakers, organized collaboratively by Lincoln Center and MoMA in New York.

The Berlinale catalog described the film as follows:

*Aidiyet* is a contemporary thriller that maps out a criminal case, though it's the very opposite of a genre film. In a voice-over delivered in the sober tone of a confession, a man reconstructs the murder of his future mother-in-law. Acting on the wishes of her daughter, his lover, he hired a contract killer to murder her because she opposed their relationship. All that the film shows are the many locations that make up the tragedy: a tidy apartment, the bus station in Ankara, the parking lot, the hallway, the murder victim's bed... On the way back to Istanbul, the motorway by night becomes a screen onto which the terrible inner torment of someone with a life on his conscience is projected. Then the film changes perspective and shows how the lovers met and what preceded the bloody deed. These seemingly harmless images and conversations become charged by the viewer's prior knowledge, as if in a psychosis. Why did the mysterious Pelin hate her parents so much? That's a question the film doesn't answer. In *Aidiyet*, Burak Çevik conducts an elegant, exciting, and instinctual experiment with the detective impulses of his audience. (Berlinale, 2019)

The film's festival journey was more intense than *The Pillar of Salt's*. It was one of the few films from Turkey that took part in prestigious festivals abroad that year. It took part in important festivals such as Sarajevo Film Festival, Thessaloniki Film Festival, Transylvania Film Festival, Sao Paulo Film Festival and Vancouver Film Festival. In Turkey, it was screened first at the Adana Film

Festival and then at the Bosphorus Film Festival, where it won the Best Film and Best Screenplay Awards. Film Comment, one of the world's most important cinema magazines published by Lincoln Center in New York, selected it as one of the 10 best films that have not been distributed in the US in 2019. Following the screenings, the film was purchased by VOD platforms such as Blutr and Mubi and Pay TV platforms such as Digiturk and SinemaTV for a certain period of time.

It was a period when I realized that new distribution models needed to be considered. I was thinking about how a director who had already made his film could meet the audience among the distribution models. With this in mind, we drew a road map and contacted various cinema communities to create a screening schedule. After the festival screenings, the film met with the audience with single screenings in Turkey. Many of these screenings were accompanied by me as the director of the film. We organized screenings with interviews in Adana, Istanbul, Izmir, Mardin, Diyarbakır, Kastamonu, Sinop, Ankara, Ardahan, Kars, Malatya, Eskişehir.

The interest of both critics and audiences was more intense than *The Pillar of Salt*. At this point, it may be more accurate to divide the approach of the critics into two as foreign and domestic. The first review in Turkey was published by Kerem Akça in Hürriyet Newspaper right after the screening at the Berlinale. In the article titled "*Such 'belongings' open horizons*", the critic underlined the film's innovative approach to storytelling. With its emotion and professionalism, *Belonging* allows us to carefully follow Burak Çevik's devoted approach that does not stop 'experimenting'. It could even be called the best Turkish film of Berlinale 2019. (Akça, 2019)

The documentary-like attitude of the text of the investigation file in the first part of the film and the fictional attitude in the second part of the film were considered to be stylistically striking. This was the first thing that stood out and was the first

thing that was talked about when thinking about a film that was so clearly structurally established. So much so that audiences and critics referred to the film as the first part and the second part, as if they had seen two different movies.

In a sense, the first half of the movie explores the psyche of objects and places to give us a sense of the places where the events took place. The sea, the empty rooms, the bed, the stairs and other places where the event takes place are conveyed through the character's external voice. The first part is similar to Alain Resnais's narratives on the change of people, space and emotions, in which sound and image often convey different meanings and different bands function. In the second part, Eric Rohmer's moralistic perspective comes to the fore, drawing attention to the key points of the emotional relationship that begins between two people who have just met. (Saydam, 2019)

Critics were often interested in highlighting this formal style and the film's attempt to intertwine fact and fiction in its storytelling. I did the voice-over at the beginning of the movie, and for the first 25 minutes of the movie a real police interrogation script is read out, and then everything we hear during that time is re-enacted by two actors. So everyone watching the movie was asking themselves what was real and what was fiction.

Beginning his story with "I don't know what is real and what is a lie", Çevik, as the narrator, lays his cards on the table from the very beginning. The rest depends on the thousands of imaginations the audience will construct while combining sound and image. *Belonging* is more like an "experiment" about the existence of as many truths as there are rememberers, narrators, viewers and listeners, rather than the absence of truth. The first half, which functions like a kind of playground and is full of ghostly images, gives way to the director's own truth in the second half. (Ildır, 2020)

According to critics, the fact that we see the murder sites without people in the film and listen to the real police interrogation transcript of the murderer's real police interrogation as a voice-over at the same time was also addressing the relation of the act of remembering to the places. The audience remembers with the killer, it is as if they start to remember those places with the killer, or at least accompany him. When we started watching the second part of the film, this time, because we had just listened to the whole story from beginning to end, we were 'remembering' the murder they were going to commit in the future while watching the two people meet.

The events in the film appear as a response to the question "where did it happen" rather than "when did it happen". Everything that has happened has happened in time, but space, as a kind of virtual circle of memory, continues to contain and hide everything that has happened. What happened did not happen "now", but it happened "here". And in a way, in this space, they happen forever; they happen in the memory of the space: Again and again. (Çal, 2022)

*Belonging* received its first award at the Open City Film Festival in the UK. In its decision, the jury preferred to emphasize the film's formal approach: "With its provocative approach to the documentary genre and its emotionally challenging approach, *Belonging* inspires us with what documentary can be."

Reviews of the film abroad in publications such as Mubi, New York Times, Film Comment, cineuropa.org, etc. were generally positive. These reviews often emphasized the film's structural form and stylistic innovation.

Çevik's second feature, *Belonging*, continues his existential explorations through the story of a crime committed on Istanbul's outskirts. (...) Driven by a belief in cinematic language, *Belonging* is a therapeutic gesture that

risers above psychological and moral judgments to navigate the complexity of family history. (Talu, 2019)

(...) The extraordinary peculiarity of this work lies in the formula that the auteur has chosen to use to depict the tragedy. The mise-en-scène does not tie in at all with that of an academic crime thriller. The first half of *Belonging*'s running time is a kind of homage to *Landscape Suicide* by James Benning, offering the audience a contemplative overview of the locations where the crime was planned and committed. (...) The dramatization of this night-time encounter is excellent, thanks to the sustained dialogue between the protagonists, written as if it were at a kind of crossroads between Éric Rohmer and Richard Linklater. (Moseguí, 2019)

A stylistically different quest drives Burak Çevik's noir, *Belonging*. The film's first part comes across as an essay film, and hints at why Çevik made the film. In a letter to his aunt, the director says in voiceover that the story he's about to tell is as much his as it is hers. The opening is mysterious: interiors of rooms, crepuscular scenes, a voice and tone that promises a resolution of a crime. What follows, however, is almost a direct debunking of the preamble. In the next etude—Çevik's entire film stands just slightly over 70 minutes—two young people meet and spend a night together. Nothing momentous happens, other than their stubborn, though hardly life-changing—or so it seems—mutual infatuation. (Bittencourt, 2019)

#### **2.1.5. Unutma Biçimleri - Forms of Forgetting (2023)**

*Forms of Forgetting* was first screened at the Forum section of the Berlin Film Festival in February 2023. Soon after, it was included in MoMA's Doc Fortnight selection in New York, focusing on experimental documentaries. The film's

festival circuit continued in Paris in the competition of Cinema du Reel at the Pompidou Museum, Hong Kong Film Festival, Jeonju Film Festival, Beldocs, Dokufest, Hot Docs and Viennale.

The synopsis of the film written by James Lattimer in the Berlinale's catalog was as follows:

We only see Nesrin and Erdem once on camera, in the 12-minute shot of the two of them sitting on the steps of a stone amphitheater. They talk about their relationship, they talk about how they broke up, neither of them remember things quite the same. The two of them also talk over the conversation in voice-over, as if holding a discussion in four dimensions; they already remember things they had forgotten about that specific situation, just two years before. They talk over other images as well, the frozen lake with the hole cut in the ice, the shipyard that once housed a prison, the ruined city of stone, the greenhouse and the forest, the new museum that will show this film once before it disappears from the screen for 14 years, love leaves the mind and re-enters it at will; everything else does too, in too many ways to describe. But there are other images too, the ones that reason without words, the flat being gutted, the hide of the elephant, the laptop screen in the dark. Nesrin recalls what Marc Augé once said, although not word for word: “Forgetting and remembering are not completely opposite things. Because one exists, the other is possible.” (Berlinale, 2023)

The first article published about the film was a review by Lawrence Garcia on Arsenal's website titled “Matter and Memory”. In this review, Garcia prefers to talk about the film's memory-oriented theme and the use of space.

Time and again, we are met with sequences that offer the textural, documentary-like pleasures of simply inhabiting a space, but which also take on an allegorical charge, as if standing in for an invisible

past. In one passage, which echoes the Pompeii visit of Rossellini's VIAGGO IN ITALIA, we see the ruins of Blaundus, an ancient city in Turkey which the couple had visited long ago, and whose interlocking stone structures look "like two people hugging each other". In another, the pair's voices narrate and reflect on footage of themselves in conversation filmed years earlier, creating an intricate dance of temporalities reminiscent of Hollis Frampton's 1971 masterpiece (NOSTALGIA). Across FORMS OF FORGETTING, most every image relates to an invisible past; and every time we try to locate the present, we find ourselves thrown back into memory.

(...)

Like Dante's "Commedia", then, FORMS OF FORGETTING is a work both haunted by those gaps in memory which "return not to the mind", and driven by a desire to represent them. These efforts relate, of course, to a past that is no longer. Then again, we may consider that every act of creation is also directed at a future that is still to come. (Garcia, 2023)

After the Berlin Film Festival, Müge Turan and Senem Aytaç from Turkey wrote about *Unutma Biçimleri* (Forms of Forgetting), the only film from Turkey at the festival. While Müge Turan described the film as "*a cinematic essay on the role of memory as a constructor of the past, as opposed to an idle vault*" (Turan, 2023) Senem Aytaç emphasized the film's cinematic language, which shifts from telling to showing, that is, in a sense, to the visual field.

At the beginning of the film, Çevik includes a long sequence in which the couple Erdem Şenocak and Nesrin Uçarlar discuss their breakup, the reason for which even they cannot remember, years later - again intertwining fiction and reality. As the couple reconstructs together a memory that sometimes doesn't remember something very important but turns out to have been kept in their minds all this time, sometimes

seems to have been forgotten by a joint decision, sometimes is deliberately distorted by the passage of time, the film calmly begins to open up into a visual space towards the oblivion of space, city, things and matter. This is where the film gets its strength. Not where it speaks about forgetting and remembering, but where it opens a cinematic space for the witnessing of image, matter, surface. (Aytaç, 2023)

One of the most detailed articles about the film was written by film writer Phil Coldiron, who also wrote on *A Topography of Memory*.

Whatever my frustrations, the core of *Forms*—a pair of shots spanning its fifth to twenty-third minutes—would make a remarkable work on its own. The first shows a tight frame on a hole cut in ice, hands occasionally appearing to reposition the fishing net which sits inside it, bobbing just on the verge of being lost for good. As an image of how memory works—a tangled web amidst a shimmering surface, always on the edge of the abyss—it avoids any preciousness through the simple, careful, unfussy nature of this practical action. The second shot sees the man and woman whose conversational voice over covers the film, seated on the wooden steps of a small theater.

Onscreen they chat, snacking and smoking, about their memories of a breakup some time ago, while on the soundtrack they respond to the footage of this conversation, itself now a documentary of their history, with voices and memories oscillating and creating feedback in the ongoing present of the finished film. (Watching this with subtitles—their commentary runs across the top of the frame, with their dialogue on the bottom—has the effect of making the scene considerably more legible than I imagine it would be for a Turkish speaker.) The mundane details of their history matter less than the casual music of their conversations, a harmony of bemusement and annoyance, warmth and distance, which does strike me as something

like the sound of how difficult it is to forget what you've truly known.  
(Coldiron, 2023)

## **2.2. Charting a trajectory for memory**

As films meet with audiences and critics, the spaces of public discussion open up and turn into thought exercises about films. Analyzing the critical work surrounding my filmography since its inception becomes crucial to charting the trajectory of a director's artistic journey.

In the film, *The 8th of June*, it is important to discuss a social event together with an object like a barricade and to establish a connection between social memory and barricades. Following this film, *A Topography of Memory's* questions about who stores and represents the memory of a country can also be considered interconnected. From this perspective, my films can be analyzed both as independent entities and as parts of the larger social memory. They serve as cultural artifacts that contribute to and shape the fabric of collective remembrance.

Feature films such as *The Pillar of Salt*, *Belonging* and *Forms of Forgetting*, which reached a wider audience, drew the attention of both national and international critics to their formal experimentation. The spotlight on these films has further emphasized the use of space in their narratives. Each of these works exhibits different but complementary formal choices that explore the relationship between memory and space.

The attention of a wider audience and the acceptance to festivals of some of my earlier work due to this relatively increased attention is only recent. There has not been enough time yet to evaluate and to digest. This is just a short note therefore, of the trajectory of reception during the past decade, so that it will be possible to turn back and to look once I have enough distance these films and to myself as the filmmaker who made them.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, my journey as a filmmaker has been deeply intertwined with the exploration of memory, space, and the art of remembering. From my early experiences with photography as a child, where I captured empty spaces and landscapes, to my first film *Waiting* that delved into the theme of death, I have been perpetually captivated by the profound connection between spaces and memories. I have not included *Waiting* as one of the films to be discussed in detail in this thesis, but I wish to note it as a landmark in my journey. Neither have I focused on *While Cursed by Specters* since it is an intervention, but again I will pay homage to the filmmakers who inspired that work in the conclusion of this thesis as a memory for future.

Throughout my artistic evolution, the camera has transcended its role as a mere device; it has become an instrument of testimony, faithfully preserving my gaze and bearing witness to my very existence. The films I have meticulously crafted over the years have metamorphosed into tangible places themselves, each acting as a conduit that I wish to safeguard for the future. They have seamlessly intertwined with the memories they evoke, seamlessly merging the past and the present.

The discovery that the art of memory, as described by Frances A. Yates, was not unique to me but a fundamental element of human experience has further fueled my exploration. The notion that spaces have the power to reawaken memories and make them tangible resonated deeply with me. It made me realize that cinema, as an art form that combines space, time, and images, has the ability to transport audiences into the realms of memory and create unique experiences.

The profound realization that the art of memory, as illuminated by Frances A. Yates, is not an idiosyncratic experience confined to my own existence, but rather

a universal and fundamental aspect of human consciousness, has profoundly deepened my exploration. The revelation that spaces possess the remarkable power to reawaken dormant memories, rendering them palpable and visceral, resonated deeply within me. It unveiled the inherent potential of cinema as an art form, one that artfully intertwines space, time, and imagery, enabling it to transport audiences into ethereal realms of remembrance and craft unique sensory experiences.

Amidst the tapestry of my filmography, I have meticulously honed my focus not merely on the events transpiring, but equally on the environments that serve as their evocative stage. These spaces have metamorphosed into characters in their own right, suffused with their own distinct narratives. From my evocative captures of the hauntingly vacant barricades during the transformative Gezi Park protests, as witnessed in *The 8th of June*, to the deliberate emphasis on the intrinsic significance of spaces in *While Cursed by Specters*, where I embarked upon a transformative intervention, meticulously deconstructing Straub & Huillet's film by removing human presence, the spaces have assumed newfound prominence. They have become the film itself, vessels holding the imprints of the unseen, the ghosts that linger amidst the absence of human form.

The synergy between cinema and memory has led me down the path of Henri Bergson's philosophical insights, wherein he illuminates the concept of duration and the inner essence of the human experience. Much like our memory functions as a conduit, ferrying fragments of the past into the present, spaces too can bear the weight of memories, transcending temporal boundaries. Cinema, with its unique ability to capture, manipulate, and transcend space and time, presents an unparalleled medium in which past, present, and future harmoniously coexist, intertwining in a captivating tapestry.

The profound autonomy of sound and visual images, as masterfully highlighted by Gilles Deleuze, further reinforces the role of spaces and their multifaceted

interplay with other cinematic elements. Sound and visuals exist in harmonious symbiosis, fashioning a layered and immersive experience that enables audiences to meander through the labyrinthine corridors of a place's memory, unearthing hidden depths and long-forgotten narratives.

My cinematic oeuvre stands as a testament to these profound explorations, capturing the very essence of spaces and their intrinsic relationship with memory. They serve as my personal testament, my endeavor to both preserve and actively remember fleeting moments, ephemeral traces of existence. As I continue my odyssey as a filmmaker, I shall venture deeper into the realms of memory, discovering innovative avenues to evoke raw emotions, provoke profound contemplation, and create spaces that resonate unequivocally with audiences, defying the constraints of time itself.

Ultimately, the art of remembering through spaces has become the indispensable cornerstone of my filmmaking practice. It encapsulates the zeitgeist of our era, offering an unparalleled perspective on the interconnectedness of memory, space, and cinema. Collaborating with my esteemed thesis advisor in this joint voyage of rediscovery and shared memory, surpassing the confines of this academic endeavor, I am profoundly reminded of the tremendous power of cinema. It serves as an intrepid bridge, connecting the abyss between personal and collective memories, beckoning us to revisit the past, fully immerse ourselves in the present, and fervently contemplate the future through the prism of our very own existence.

## REFERENCES

- A Topography of Memory*. Film at Lincoln Center. (2019, September 21).  
<https://www.filmlinc.org/nyff2019/films/a-topography-of-memory/> <accessed May 28, 2023>
- Adams, Tony E. 2005. Speaking for others: Finding the “whos” of discourse. *Soundings* 88 (3-4): 331-345.
- Akça, K. (2018, Feb 22). *Böyle 'Aidiyet'ler Ufuk Açar*. Hürriyet Ana sayfa.  
<https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/kelebek/keyif/boyle-aidiyetler-ufuk-acar-41115924>  
<accessed May 28, 2023>
- Akça, K. (2019, Feb 13). *Berlin'den “Tuzdan Kaide” ve “Güvercin” Eleştirileri*.  
Posta.  
<https://www.posta.com.tr/yasam/berlin-den-tuzdan-kaide-ve-guvercin-elestirileri-1385187> <accessed May 28, 2023>
- Atkinson, Paul. 1997. Narrative turn or blind alley? *Qualitative Health Research* 7 (3): 325-344.
- Aytaç, S. (2023, May 19). *Berlinale 2023 izlenimleri: Hatırlama Biçimleri*.  
Altyazı Sinema Dergisi.  
<https://altyazi.net/yazilar/seyirdefteri/berlinale-2023-izlenimleri-2/> <accessed May 28, 2023>
- Aytaç, S. (2018, February 22). *Berlinale 2018 izlenimleri – 2. Gün: Daughter of mine, Tuzdan Kaide, heaven on Earth, shadow of the vampire, 7 days in Entebbe*.  
Sinema Manyakları.  
<https://sinemamanyaklari.com/2018/02/22/berlinale-2018-izlenimleri-2-gun-daughter-of-mine-tuzdan-kaide-heaven-on-earth-shadow-of-the-vampire-7-days-in-entebbe/> <accessed May 28, 2023>

Bergson, H. (1911) *Creative Evolution*

[https://brocku.ca/MeadProject/Bergson/Bergson\\_1911a/Bergson\\_1911\\_04.html](https://brocku.ca/MeadProject/Bergson/Bergson_1911a/Bergson_1911_04.html)

<accessed May 28, 2023>

Bittencourt, E. (n.d.). *The pleasures of ambiguity*. MUBI.

<https://mubi.com/notebook/posts/the-pleasures-of-ambiguity> <accessed May 28,

2023>

Bochner, Arthur P. 2002. Perspectives on inquiry III: The moral of stories. In Handbook of interpersonal communication, 3rd ed., ed. Mark L. Knapp and John A. Daly, 73-101. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Buzard, James. 2003. On auto-ethnographic authority. *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 16 (1): 61-91.

Coldiron, P. (2019, September 10). *TIFF Wavelengths 2019, Program Two: Home Movies: Filmmaker Magazine*. Filmmaker Magazine | Publication with a focus on independent film, offering articles, links, and resources.

<https://filmmakermagazine.com/108236-tiff-wavelengths-2019-program-two-home-movies/> <accessed May 28, 2023>

Coldiron, P. (2023)

<https://toneglow.substack.com/p/film-show-024-berlinale-2023-part>

<accessed May 28, 2023>

Çal, H. C. (n.d.). *Burak Çevik'in Sineması: Film Mekânının Dörtlü Tipolojisi*. Manifold.

<https://manifold.press/burak-cevik-in-sineması-film-mekaninin-dortlu-tipolojisi>

<accessed May 28, 2023>

Çalışır, G. (2018, April 26). 37. *İstanbul Film Festivali Eleştirileri: Tuzdan Kaide*.

Filmloverss. <https://filmloverss.com/tuzdan-kaide/> <accessed May 28, 2023>

Çayır, H. (2020) *Documentary as Autoethnography: A Case Study Based on the Changing Surnames of Women*, Vernon Press

Çevik, B. (2018, August 8). *Durmak Mümkün Müdür?*. Manifold.  
<https://manifold.press/durmak-mumkun-mudur> <accessed May 28, 2023>

Çiçekoğlu, F. (2007) *Vesikalı Şehir*. Metis.

Çiçekoğlu, F. (2015). *Şehrin itirazı: Gezi direnişi öncesi İstanbul Filmlerinde İsyân eşiği*. Metis.

Çiçekoğlu, F. (2019). *İsyankâr şehir: Gezi Sonrası İstanbul Filmlerinde Mahrem-İsyân*. Metis Yayınları.

Delamont, Sara. 2009. The only honest thing: Autoethnography, reflexivity and small crises in fieldwork. *Ethnography and Education* 4 (1): 51-63.

Deleuze, G. (1985) *Cinema-2 The Time-Image*  
[https://monoskop.org/images/6/68/Deleuze\\_Gilles\\_Cinema\\_2\\_Time-Image.pdf](https://monoskop.org/images/6/68/Deleuze_Gilles_Cinema_2_Time-Image.pdf)  
<accessed May 28, 2023>

Demirhan, Z. (2022) An autoethnographic exploration: How did Agnès Varda change my way of seeing? Master Thesis in Film and Television, İstanbul Bilgi University.

Denzin, Norman K., and Yvonna S Lincoln. 2000. Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In *Handbook of qualitative research*, 2nd ed., ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 1-28. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Derin, H. N. (2018, February 22). *Berlinala 2018 izlenimleri – 2. Gün: Daughter of mine, Tuzdan Kaide, heaven on Earth, shadow of the vampire, 7 days in*

*Entebbe*. Sinema Manyakları.

<https://sinemamanyaklari.com/2018/02/22/berlinale-2018-izlenimleri-2-gun-daughter-of-mine-tuzdan-kaide-heaven-on-earth-shadow-of-the-vampire-7-days-in-entebbe/> <accessed May 28, 2023>

Ellis, Carolyn. 2004. *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel About Autoethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: an overview. *Historical Social Research*, 36(4), 273-290. <https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.36.2011.4.273-290> <accessed May 28, 2023>

Garcia, L. (n.d.). *Essay: Matter and memory*. Arsenal.

<https://www.arsenal-berlin.de/en/forum-forum-expanded/forum-programme/main-programme/unutma-bicimleri/essay-matter-and-memory/> <accessed May 28, 2023>

Hoffmann, A. (n.d.). *Tuzdan Kaide: The pillar of salt - forum 2018*. Berlinale.

<https://www.berlinale.de/en/2018/programme/201811677.html> <accessed May 28, 2023>

Holman Jones, Stacy. 2005. Autoethnography: Making the personal political. In *Handbook of qualitative research*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 763-791. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ildır, A. (2021, October 23). *Aidiyet: Mekânın Hayaletleri*. Altyazı Sinema Dergisi. <https://altyazi.net/yazilar/elestiriler/aidiyet-mekanin-hayaletleri/> <accessed May 28, 2023>

Kökçeoğlu, S. (2013) "8 Haziran." *Arka Pencere*, Vol.nr: 203, Eylül.

Kundera, M. (1988, 1990) *Immortality*, Faber.

Moseguí, C. (n.d.). *Review: Belonging*. Cineuropa.  
<https://cineuropa.org/en/newsdetail/368353/> <accessed May 28, 2023>

Talu, Y. (2019, April 1) *Film Comment*.  
<https://www.filmcomment.com/blog/interview-burak-cevik/>  
<accessed May 28, 2023>

Özdikmenli, İ. (2019, April 10). *Başka Bir Dil Mümkün: Tuzdan Kaide (2018) - eleştiri - izlenim, Sinema Yazıları*. Fil'm Hafızası.  
<https://filmhafizasi.com/baska-bir-dil-mumkun-tuzdan-kaide-2018/> <accessed May 28, 2023>

Persico, D. (n.d.). *A topography of memory*. Locarno Film Festival.  
<https://www.locarnofestival.ch/LFF/program/archive/film.html?fid=1116001&eid=72> <accessed May 28, 2023>

Rorty, Richard. 1982. *Consequences of pragmatism (essays 1972-1980)*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Richardson, Laurel. 2000. *Writing: A method of inquiry*. In *Handbook of qualitative research*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 923-948. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Saydam, B. (2019, October 25). *7. boğaziçi film festivali Ulusal Yarışma Değerlendirmesi*. Avrupa Sineması.  
<http://www.avrupasinemasi.com/2019/10/25/7-bogazici-film-festivali-ulusal-yarisma-degerlendirmesi/> <accessed May 28, 2023>

Sofuoğlu, Ö. (n.d.). *Tuzdan Kaide: Mumyılanmış imgeler*. Manifold.  
<https://manifold.press/tuzdan-kaide-mumyalanmis-imgeler> <accessed May 28, 2023>

Toprak, L. (2017) “Bir performans sanatçısının filme yaklaşımı: Otoetnografik yöntemle film incelemeleri” (*A performance artist's approach to films: Film reviews by autoethnographic method*) Master Thesis in Film and Television, İstanbul Bilgi University.

Turan, M. (2019, March 7)  
<https://www.filmcomment.com/blog/interview-burak-cevik/>  
<accessed May 28, 2023>

YÜKSEK ÖĞRETİM KURULU BAŞKANLIĞI TEZ MERKEZİ  
<https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/tezSorguSonucYeni.jsp>  
<accessed May 28, 2023>

Williamson, L. (2013, June 5). 'Woman in red' sprayed with teargas becomes symbol of Turkey protests  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/05/woman-in-red-turkey-protests>  
<accessed May 28, 2023>

Wood, Julie T. 2009. Gendered lives: Communication, gender, and culture. Boston: Wadsworth.