TURKISH ROMANCE FICTION AND WORLD LITERATURE THROUGH THE CASE OF NİHAL YEĞİNOBALI

A Master's Thesis

by
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To my parents

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines the oeuvre of Nihal Yeğinobalı whose literary output as a translator and a novelist stretches from the 1950s to the 2000s. Each chapter of the thesis offers close readings on one of her six novels and discusses the ways in which Yeğinobalı employs generic tropes found in romance novels and gothic novels. It aims to bring the first years of Yeğinobalı's career when he wrote under the pseudonym of an American man Vincent Ewing with her works from later years when she wrote under her own name. Theoretically based on Wai-Chee Dimock's concept of "Genre as World Literature", this thesis considers Nihal Yeğinobalı as a part of world literary canon especially with regards to her kinship with the female tradition. It explores and builds thematic and formal connections between Yeğinobalı's work and the work of novelists such as Charlotte Bronte, Emily Bronte, Margaret Mitchell, and Doris Lessing.

Yeğinobalı's career offers a rare subject of analysis as she constantly moved between author/translator, American/Turkish, female/male. In her attempts to surmount gendered prejudices in publication; her novels transformed; changed nationalities and revealed shifts in notions of womanhood, social responsibility, and sexuality throughout 20th century Turkey.

Keywords: Nihal Yeğinobalı, women's writing, world literature, genre studies, pseudo translation

ÖZET

NİHAL YEĞİNOBALI ÖRNEĞİ ÜZERİNDEN TÜRKİYE'DEKİ AŞK ROMANLARI VE DÜNYA EDEBİYATI ÜZERİNE İNCELEME

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Yüksek Lisans, Türk Edebiyatı Bölümü

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Bu tez, kariyeri bir çevirmen ve romancı olarak 1950'lerden 2000'lere uzanan Nihal Yeğinobalı'nın yapıtlarını incelemektedir. Tezin her bir bölümü, Yeğinobalı'nın altı romanından birine odaklanır; romanlar hakkında yakın okumalar sunar. Bu yakın okumalar aracılığıyla Yeğinobalı'nın aşk romanlarında ve gotik romanlarda bulunan durumları, metaforları nasıl kullandığını tartışır. Bu tez, Nihal Yeğinobalı'nın, Vincent Ewing yani yarattığı Amerika erkek yazar mahlası altında yazdığı ilk romanlarını, daha sonraki yıllarda kendi adıyla yazdığı yapıtlarıyla bir araya getiriyor. Teorik olarak Wai-Chee Dimock'un "Genre as World Literature" kavramına dayanan bu tez, Nihal Yeğinobalı'yı özellikle kadın geleneği ile olan akrabalığı açısından incelemekte ve dünya edebiyat kanonunun bir parçası olarak görmektedir. Bu tezde Yeğinobalı'nın eserleri ile Charlotte Bronte, Emily Bronte, Margaret Mitchell ve Doris Lessing gibi romancıların eserleri arasındaki tematik ve biçimsel bağlantıları kurulur. Kariyeri

boyunca yazar/çevirmen, Amerikalı/Türk, kadın/erkek kimlikleri arasında gidip gelen Yeğinobalı'nın eserleri nadir karşılaşılabilecek bir analiz fırsatı sunuyor. Yayıncılıktaki cinsiyetçi önyargıların üstesinden gelme girişimlerinde; romanlarını dönüştüren, milliyetelerini değiştiren Nihal Yeğinobalı'nın eserlerine odaklanılarak 20. yüzyıl Türkiye'sindeki kadınlık, sosyal sorumluluk ve cinsellik kavramlarındaki değişimler inceleniyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Nihal Yeğinobalı, kadın yazını, dünya edebiyatı, tür çalışmaları, sözde çeviri

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INTRODUCTION

In her speech addressing the subject "women and fiction" which was later turned into one of the most influential pieces of feminist criticism *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf says:

> This is an important book, the critic assumes, because it deals with war. This is an insignificant book because it deals with the feelings of women in a drawing-room. A scene in a battlefield is more important than a scene in a shop — everywhere and much more subtly the difference of value persists. (83)

This quote lays bare a prejudice that still persists to this day, that texts about women and assumed to targeting female readership are inherently more frivolous or less challenging. Even when male novelists penned stories that employed romance plots and domestic settings, academics examining these texts have historically been more willing to investigate more and see the social turmoil that was conveyed in these stories. It seems to me that some of this willingness stems from the belief that when a man writes a love story he must be using this genre to write about something "more important" and whereas the romance plot that's written by a woman is seen more as a way to court a mass audience and offer an escape from real life. Many canonical novels that have been staples in discussions of Modern Turkish prose have themes and plots akin to their more forgotten contemporaries. Considered to be the first modern novel in Turkish literature to provide "an elevated critique and reflection of society" by the critic Güzin Dino, Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil's *Aşk-ı Memnu* (1900) is almost exclusively built on the feelings of women in domestic spaces; Şemseddin Sami's *Taaşşuk-ı Talât ve Fitnat* (1875) and Namık Kemal's *İntibah* (1876) are best contextualized when they are read by focusing on the actions of their female characters; Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's *Huzur* (1949)

investigates conflicting ideologies and sentiments through a love triangle. While men include women in their exploration of public and private life; female novelists who have focused on women's experience, namely domestic life narratives such as Kerime Nadir, Muazzez Tahsin, Nezihe Muhittin, and Peride Celal have historically been left out of academic discussions. This is partly due to their position as female authors but also due to the assumed readership of their works, which was female and not the male intellectual who expected to be the best judge of literary merit.

This thesis will examine one such forgotten novelist: Nihal Yeğinobalı whose literary output as a translator and a novelist stretches from the 1950s to the 2000s. As well as being the translator of 127 works of literature, she has six novels of her own:

Genç Kızlar (as Vincent Ewing) (1950)

Eflatun Kız (1957) / *Eflatun Kız* (as Vincent Ewing) (1964)

Mazi Kalbimde Bir Yaradır (1988)

Sitem (1997)

Belki Defne (2005)

Gazel (2007)

In his 1991 memoir, *99 Yüz: İzdüşümler - Söz Senaryosu*, Cemal Süreya remembers Nihal Yeğinobalı as figure who occupied an unusual position among translators in Turkey: "Deneyi de kimseninkine benzemiyor. Bir eli klasik yapıtlarda, bir eli magazin romanlarda. Özellikle kadın çevirmenler arasında benzersiz bir konumdur bu. Hem ayrık, hem prototip..."[1] (396) The experiment Süreya references here is her work under the pseudonym Vincent Ewing. The

[1] [My translation] "Her experiment was not like no one else's. She had one hand on classical works, one hand on tabloid novels. A unique position among female translators especially. She was both an outlier and a prototype…"

two novels she wrote under this pseudonym will be explored in Chapter Two and Chapter Three respectively. The first of these, *Genç Kızlar,* is a famous case of pseudo-translation in Turkish literature. It has been the subject of great, worthy research in Translation Studies written by academics such as Işıl Bengi-Öner and Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar. The novel takes place in an all-girls performing arts school in Virginia, but was based on Yeğinobalı's own experiences as a student of Arnavutköy American College for Girls which became Robert College in 1971. Yeğinobalı was fluent in English and worked as a translator for the publishing house Altın Kitaplar. Her interest in literature, however, was not limited to translation; she was also convinced that she could write a novel of merit herself. Curious to gauge the possibilities for publishing it, she asked the editors of the publishing house about publishing her novel. According to her interview with Erdal Öz for the 2003 edition of *Genç Kızlar* published by Can Publishing House, she was told that she was too unknown and too inexperienced for them to invest in and was urged towards continuing with translation. In the summer of 1950, Yeğinobalı would work around this obstacle by telling her editors that she had come across a novel serialized in an old American magazine. Supposedly, this story was the author Vincent Ewing's only work, and it had been published so long ago that the publishing house would not have to pay copyright fees. In order to make her ruse convincing, Yeğinobalı would mimic some translation patterns in her writing and make the plot look as though it were originally written in another part of the world. Having studied at an all-girls American boarding school in Istanbul, she reckoned she could pull off a story about a group of young girls set in the United States. Thus *Genç Kızlar* was

published in 1950 as the translation of Vincent Ewing's "The Curtain Sweeps Down" with no one the wiser about its actual origins. The novel gained popularity immediately after publication, becoming "a best-seller" as Cemal Süreya remembers it. (397) In 1963, more than a decade later it would be adapted to a Turkish setting for a film starring Türkan Şoray, Hülya Koçyiğit and Ediz Hun in his first movie role, with a script written by Nihal Yeğinobalı herself who in the process of adapting the story to the screen, also "Turkified" it. She is credited as the screenwriter alongside the director Nevzat Pesen; there is nothing on the promotional material or the poster indicating that this is an adaptation of Vincent Ewing's novel.

This notion of localizing a pseudo-translation or intralingual translation shows up again Yeğinobalı's career in the form of her second novel, *Eflatun Kız* which was published as three separate novels at separate times: In 1957, it was published as a serialized Turkish novel in the newspaper Vatan under Yeğinobalı's own anme; In 1964, due to financial needs, Yeğinobalı was asked to rewrite the story as an American romance novel and this version was once again published under the pseudonym Vincent Ewing; Finally, in 1988, the story was translated back into Turkish and published by Cem Publishing House as a social realist work. In the chapter dedicated to this novel, I provide close readings of these three texts as a way to see what changes when "a Turkish novel" becomes "an American novel" in translation just seven years apart; and what changes when a serialized romance novel from 1957 Turkey is re-written as a work of literary fiction.

In their work *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar discuss authors like the Brontë Sisters, George Sand, and George Eliot who used male names while publishing in order to surmount similar gendered prejudices in literature:

> Disguised as a man, after all, a woman writer could move vigorously away from the 'lesser subjects' and 'lesser lives' which has constrained her foremothers… dressed in the male 'costume' of her pseudonym, she could walk more freely about the provinces of literature that were ordinarily forbidden to ladies. (144)

Yeğinobalı herself has expressed the freedom that came with a male pseudonym with regards to writing more explicitly. Furthermore, looking at the biography young Yeğinobalı had concocted for this pseudonym it is clear that she was trying to hide behind every sign of privilege there is: Vincent Ewing is described a born New Yorker whose father was the famous stockbroker Vendig Ewing, and whose mother was Olivia Everett-Haldane from a renowned royal family from the UK: Everett-Haldanes. According to this fictional biography, Vincent completed his education at the most prestigious universities in the UK and the USA before moving to Georgia where started to busy himself with agriculture and livestock. In the back cover of the 2003 edition of *Genç Kızlar*, Yeğiobalı says, "*Genç Kızlar* ilk olarak okurlarımın karşısına, takma adımın yanısıra, gerçek adımla çıkıyor: Nihal Yeğinobalı ya da Vincent Ewing. Hem Nihal Yeğinobalı hem Vincent Ewing,"[2] a statement that blurs the definite binary of the male costume and the female writer as she claims that Ewing and Yeğinobalı co-exist, thereby assigning authenticity to Vincent Ewing as well.

[2] "For the first time, *Genç Kızlar* will appear before my readers with my real name next to my pseudonym: Nihal Yeginobali or Vincent Ewing. Both Nihal Yeginobali and Vincent Ewing."

This is why it is important to read *Genç Kızlar* and *Eflatun Kız* (1964) in conjunction with the three novels she has written under her name: *Sitem* (1997), *Belki Defne* (2005) and *Gazel* (2007). The chapters devoted to each of these three novels will explore and analyze her work beyond the Vincent Ewing years in order to offer a comprehensive look at her bibliography and see the ways in which her novels connect as well as the ways in which they evolve and vary.

The first book published under her own name, *Sitem* (1997) takes place during the late 1940s early 1950s in Yeşilce, a small village near İzmir. It is framed as the recollections of the protagonist Cenan who has received a letter from her childhood friend Dalya, which delves her back into the childhood memories she has repressed. As a young girl, she lived with her father and their maid when she was ten, a man from the *yörüks* came to their house in order to try and sell his 12-year-old daughter Sitem. After they accept Sitem into their lives; this blue-eyed, blonde-haired girl closely bonds with Cenan. Their relationship is sometimes sisterly, sometimes maternal, and sometimes prone to sexual and emotional jealousy. Over the next couple of summers, they both grow up and start to notice things that are happening around them. Mainly through their spying on the affairs of Mihri Hanım, their next-door neighbor, they are introduced to sexuality. Mihri Hanım's son Eşber becomes an object of desire for the both of them which causes a rift between the two girls until one summer Sitem disappears without a trace. The novel ends with Cenan remembering the summer Sitem disappeared and finally accepting the fact she has always known; that Eşber murdered Sitem and buried her under Cenan's cellar. Dalya's letter concludes with the news that their old cellar has been sold to foreign investors

and that Eşber is on his way to visit Cenan; this ambiguous ending suggests that Eşber is coming to deal with the only witness of his crime. Described as "Güneş Gotiği" by Yeğinobalı herself, *Sitem* utilizes these possibilities in a seemingly non-stereotypical setting: rather than the ancient ruins of an Old European land, her novel takes place in the sunny, rural area of a new Republic. Although Yeşilce seems like an idyllic, ordinary town with its wide gardens, quiet and night-like afternoons when everyone falls asleep, it is an uncanny place with all sorts of gothic qualities; there is an ever-present threat of violence surrounding the girls, there are illegitimate babies killed and buried in the vineyards, secret rooms, and corridors inside the large mansions. Yeğinobalı's own description of this novel as "Güneş Gotiği" is telling of her aim to add to a tradition of Gothic novels. Feminist implications in Gothic novels have been explored by many critics starting from Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar in their 1979 book *The Madwoman in the Attic,* whose analysis of the split between Bertha Mason and Jane Eyre is especially relevant to *Sitem*, and will be referenced heavily in the chapter dedicated to the novel.

Belki Defne (2005), stands apart in her oeuvre as the only novel that exclusively follows the lives of adults. The dual timeline of *Belki Defne* follows an older Defne considering attending the funeral of Sahir Eybey as she remembers the year 1970 when she was 30-years-old and first met Sahir and his wife Beril. After Defne was divorced from her husband who had cheated on her, she became close friends with this seemingly perfect couple, but their relationship became complicated as Defne developed sexual and romantic feelings for both her friend Beril and her friend's husband Sahir. After

witnessing Beril emotionally breakdown over not being able to get pregnant, Defne realizes that her friend had been observing the way her and Sahir had been acting as a way to test her marriage. Neither Defne nor Sahir act on their desires nonetheless Beril leaves her marriage without any explanation and flees to Switzerland with a 20-year-old political refugee while Defne returns to her ex-husband. This chapter engages with the work of British female novelists from the 1960's and the 1970's mainly that of Doris Lessing and her groundbreaking novel *The Golden Notebook* (1962). *Belki Defne*'s exploration of life after the sexual revolution which supposedly led to female liberation and of female authorship are better understood when its kinship with *The Golden Notebook* (1962) and Nihal Yeğinobalı's ties with this period of writing is questioned.

With *Gazel* (2007), Yeğinobalı returns to the Female Gothic, as she tells the story of a fictional Istanbul neighborhood, Mirganköy, most likely based on Emirgan, in the 1940s and follows two sisters during an eventful summer. The older sister Zerrin is dealing with an unwanted pregancy and the guilt she feels over premarital sex while Serap, the younger sister is inspired by ancient maidens such as Iphigenia and Cassandra to believe that she has a claivoyance due to her virginity. With the arrival of a mute handyman called Gazneli to Mirganköy, as the friend and implied lover of the rich painter Haldun Abut; Serap is shocked to find herself fantasizing Gazneli forcing himself on her, raping her. The titular character Gazel refers to the spirit the town believes to be haunting Mirganköy. Gazel was a young servant who had taken a boat ride at night with Fazıla, young daughter of the house he worked for but drowned after an accident. His body was never found despite Mirganköy being famous as a

cove where the stream keeps everything in the caverns under the water, not allowing anything to flow away. When Zerrin realizes that she has lost her baby due to a miscarriage, she secretly throws the fetus in the water of the cove only for it to resurface again a few days later and be referred to as Gazel's baby. This exasperates the already mentally unstable Fazıla's belief that Gazel has returned to take her and she confesses that she had purposefully flipped the boat hoping to kill her rapist brother-in-law but ended up killing Gazel who did not know how to swim. In the end, Fazıla gets on another boat this time with Gazneli, and believing him to be Gazel's reincarnation, she kills him and herself so they can be together. This time they find Fazıla's body but Gazneli's body does not surface. While *Sitem* explores the complicity of its female characters in the patriarchal structures and plot that oppressed them for their own salvation, *Gazel* plays with the trope of female victimization by casting its virginal heroines as the villains. These women's fantasies and delusions end up killing both Gazneli and the titular Gazel who become the personifications of a 'tabula rasa', the blank slate on which insecurities surrounding unfamiliar identities are imprinted.

The theoretical goal of this thesis is to situate Nihal Yeğinobalı within the network of world literature. While there are many methods and theories offered as a way to understand how texts and authors interact across borders, I believe Wai-Chee Dimock's conceptualization of world literature is best-suited to this study. Dimock suggests that we should not assume a single, fixed national identity that is vulnerable in the face of a dominant one when discussing the circulation of form and genre but rather put works which have common quirks together as a way to better contextualize their interconnection. When it comes to

conceptualizing relations between texts, she advises dropping the rigid legality of genre in favor of the notion of kinship: "a remote spectrum of affinities, interesting when seen in conjunction, but not themselves organically linked" (Dimock 2006: 86). Her term kinship, allows us to remove any implication of intrinsic hierarchy or chronological privilege while comparing literary works. Kinship also removes the aspect of contention between a new writer and the predecessor: the kind of which has been explored most clearly in Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973). Bloom's claim that a new writer feels intimidation and anxiety at the sight of a great literary tradition and can only rise to the level of a great writer if he can produce a stronger work using the symbols of his predecessor, has been criticized by many since its publication. Feminist critics such as Gilbert and Gubar has pointed out the problematic nature of positing a literary history built on forefathers and sons.

> Thus the 'anxiety of influence' that a male poet experiences is felt by a female poet as an even more primary 'anxiety of authorship' -a radical fear that she cannot create, that because she can never become a 'precursor' the act of writing will isolate or destroy her. (49)

Thus, female writers expect and participate in a different literary culture compared to their male peers and she moves through it with different goals and emotions "by actively seeking a female precursor who, far from representing a threatening force to be denied or killed, proves by example that a revolt against patriarchal literary authority is possible." (50) Dimock's conceptualization of kinship can allow us to imagine relationships between female writers who are not bonded by "a genealogical connection" but "a convergence of attributes, issuing from environments roughly similar but widely dispersed." (2006 74) As the

translator of many 19th and 20th century works from the English into Turkish; Yeğinobalı's work offers the perfect case study to utilize this concept of kinship. Authors whose works she has translated like Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, Margaret Mitchell and Doris Lessing are crucial in understanding the way Yeğinobalı positions women at the center of sexual relations, politicizing the female body, female desire and the attempts to control it.

CHAPTER I: FEMALE NOVEL TRADITION AND THE ROMANCE GENRE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF WORLD LITERATURE

The term "world literature" has become one of, if not "the", most theorized and discussed terminology in literary studies in the last decade. The

concept of world literature is based on the idea that national disciplines for literature, such as Turkish Literature or English Literature, do not successfully provide a proper idea of how literature develops or how it is read.

The concept of world literature is often attributed to Johann Goethe's conceptualization of *weltliteratur* in 1827 which was meant to refer to the increased circulation of works of literature among European writers and intellectuals. In *Conversations with Goethe*, German poet and author Johann Peter Eckermann notes Goethe saying "national literature has not much meaning nowadays: the epoch of world literature is at hand, and each must work to hasten its coming" (Strich 349, qtd in Pizer), and he would regularly return to Weltliteratur over the next four years, almost up to his death in 1832. In an article on "Edinburgh Reviews," he elaborated:

> these journals, as they gradually reach a wider public, will contribute most effectively to the universal world literature we hope for; we repeat however that there can be no question of the nations thinking alike, the aim is simply that they shall grow aware of one another, understand each other, and, even where they may not be able to love, may at least tolerate one another (Strich 350).

In *What Is World Literature?* (2003) David Damrosch puts the case for translation as a necessary instrument for, and at the same time an agent in, what he takes world literature to be; Damrosch describes translation being the most vital tool for the formation of a world literature canon which is made up of "all literary works that circulate beyond their culture of origin, either in translation or in their original language". (4) As he puts it: "A work only has an effective life as world literature whenever, and wherever, it is actively present within a literary

system beyond that of its original culture" (4). Damrosch comes close to the original Goethean idea of Weltliteratur as an active principle in the world, rather than a list or series of great works or as a sum of all literature in all the world: "World literature is not an infinite, ungraspable canon of works but rather a mode of circulation and reading" (5).

Critics like Franco Moretti have offered a more material and economy based form of study as opposed to Damrosch's expansive understanding of the term. In his article published in the year 2000, "Conjectures on World Literature" Moretti points out that the any conceptualization of world literature would be affected by economic and material realities when he says: "for which international capitalism is a system that is simultaneously one, and unequal: with a core, and a periphery (and a semiperiphery) that are bound together in a relationship of growing inequality." (55–56). Moretti's proposal for overcoming these material barriers can be found in his project *The Novel: History, Geography and Culture* (2006) where he claims that the novel in its historical and cultural variability can be used to create a disciplinary frame for the study of comparative literature. Moretti chooses to focus on the novel due to its global ubiquity and its relation with modernity, but his work does not interrogate the concept of genre.

In *The Routledge Handbook of Genre*, John Frow defines genre as a "more specific organization of texts with thematic, rhetorical and formal dimensions." (67) Though Gothic novels, sensation novels, romances, detective fiction, fantasy novels, science fiction, and adventure stories have been getting produced and being commercially successful since the mid-nineteenth century,

the phrase genre fiction was not used to pull them all together until quite recently. According to Frow, given that most of these texts were popular and financially successful "bestsellers" there was always tension, a prevailing assumption that genre fiction and literary fiction are mutually defined at odds with each other. In her article, "World Literature and the Book Market" Ann Steiner expands on Moretti's observations in a way to that discusses the presence of commercially successful genre fiction; she not only touches on the "The material, financial, and legal conditions determine which books can and will be exported as well as imported" she also brings up the topic of generic trade fiction. (316) Often discussed largely in terms of elite productions, world literature has previously been applied primarily to literarily valuable fiction however, many of these novels that circulate outside of their original language are generic trade fiction, and yet they are not included in conversations about world literature canons. The question then becomes whether or not crossing national borders is sufficient for a definition as world literature. Ann Steiner contends that "perhaps additional factors are required, such as literary influence or historical impact." (317) However, the factors used to measure value are themselves time-bound and prone to change.

Mads Rosendahl Thomsen explains that, "literary history [is] something that provides a long life for certain works and a short one for others." (138) Aside from the material and social circumstances of the novelist, the academic worth and prestige that is assigned to a certain text greatly affect what is allowed to survive. The basis of what is considered valuable and not valuable is variable. "'Value' is a transitive term: it means whatever is valued by certain people in

specific situations, according to particular criteria and in the light of given purposes." (Eagleton 1996, 10) Thus, genre's reception changes as the system changes. One clear example of this variability from Turkish literature would be the change in the reception of Sabahattin Ali's *Kürk Mantolu Madonna*. As Deniz Malaymar traces in her 2017 thesis project titled, "The "Once-Forgotten" Turkish Bestseller: (Re-)Contextualizing Sabahattin Ali's *Madonna in a Fur Coat*" when Sabahattin Ali's novel first came out it was unfavorably compared to the mass-appealing serialized novels of Kerime Nadir, Peride Celal, Esat Mahmut. It was heavily criticized by some of Sabahattin Ali's Marxist friends. For instance, Behice Sadık Boran, a Turkish Marxist politician, author, translator and sociologist, published a critical view on *Kürk Mantolu Madonna* in Adımlar magazine in May 1943 where she condemned Ali because he "narrates just 'a love story' in Kürk Mantolu Madonna" (1943 33) *Kürk Mantolu Madonna* has since been, not only been one of the bestselling novels in Turkish, but has been translated into English among other languages as an essential classic and been subject of more detailed analysis[34] which have questioned its attitude towards European modernism, cosmopolitanism and women's role in the Early Republic Years in works such as Kristin Dickinson's "Translating Surfaces: A Dual Critique of Modernity in Sabahattin Ali's *Kürk Mantolu Madonna*". Similarly, novelists such as Kerime Nadir, Peride Celal and Nezihe Muhiddin have been brought back to academic attention by academics such as Şima İmşir[5], Burcu

[3] See Soysal Eşitti (2020)
[4] See Çetin Güven (2021)

[5] See Parker İmşir (2014)

Karahan[6] and Nilüfer Yeşil[7]. This has led to not only a fuller and more accurate picture of women's writing in Turkish but of Turkish literature in general.

Other than gendered prejudices regarding authorship and readership, one of the reasons why certain novels have taken more space in discussions of national and world literary canons is partly due to the task assigned to canonical novels of upholding, shaping and allegorizing national identity. It is notable that Goethe came up with and latched onto the idea of a world literature in an age of intense nationalism which would lead the writing of national literary histories as part of summing up and conveying "the story of a nation" with the help of which, national identities would be forged. Thus the idea that literature can function as a sign of national identity has been present in the study of world literature from the start. This has been the basis of much discussion surrounding Turkish literature's position in a World literature canon as well. Much of key texts that have contributed to this area of research have examined the influence of foreign or the assumed universal forms and values entered into the local in Turkish and the negotiation between those two spheres. Gül Mete Yuva's *Modern Türk Edebiyatının Fransız Kaynaklar* (2009), *Benden Önce Bir Başkası* (2011) by Nurdan Gürbilek and Meltem Gürle's *Ölülerle Konuşmak* (2016) discuss many of the canonical works of 20th century novels in Turkish in conjunction with European works with which they are in active dialogue or have been compared to.

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[6] See Karahan (2006)
[7] See Yeşil (2009)

In *Kör Ayna, Kayıp Şark* (2004), Nurdan Gurbilek locates a sense of belatedness in the Turkish novel, a sense that she defines by what "Gregory Judanis calls belated modernism; Ahmet Hamdi Tanpinar describes as 'joining a flowing river, after-the-fact'; Cemil Meric describes as 'entering a play in the middle of the fifth act' and Oguz Atay describes as 'arriving on the scene as a servant and a fool'" (132). Thereby revealing the anxiety within writing a novel that can take from the local and the universal and work on both levels. Many of the novels from 20th century Turkish literature are read as being influenced by works in the Western Canon, from Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil's *Aşk-ı Memnu* (1899) being the Turkish *Madame Bovary* (1856) to Oğuz Atay's *Tutunamayanlar* (1971) commonly labeled "The Turkish *Ulysses*". For writers living in non-Western countries, belatedness is a historical reality in terms of the novel, as well as an individual feeling experienced by the writer. In her book, *Ölülerle Konuşmak* (2016), Meltem Gürle explains that one inevitable consequence of belatedness is the anxiety of not having a unique voice: "Eğer Batı bu oyuna çok daha önce girdiyse ve hatta oyunun kurallarını tespit ettiyse, o zaman Doğu'da üretilen metinlerin ikincil sesler ya da talihsiz kopyalar olma ihtimali vardır[8]." (84) However once this anxiety is taken as an intrinsic quality it can lead to generalizations which Azade Seyhan refers to as "Türk romanı doğası hakkındaki fazlasıyla kemikleşmiş klişeler"[9] in her book *Tales of Crossed Destinies : The Modern Turkish Novel in a Comparative Context*. She further explains: "Elverişli bulunan ikilikler ve dönemlendirmeler çerçevesinde Türk

[8] "If the West has entered the game way earlier, even determined the rules of the game, then the non-western voices are in risk of being secondary, of being mere copies, imitations."
[9] "entrenched stereotypes about the nature of the Turkish novel"

romanı çoğunlukla gecikmiş ve taklitçi olarak tanımlanmış; orijinalliği ya da yaratıcılığı olmayan olumsuz anlamda bir çeviri, hatta bir intihal olduğu görüşlerine varılmıştır."[10] (13) Nihal Yeğinobalı's pseudo translations and intralingual translations offer the kind of off-center example that can challenge these assumptions. As Yeğinobalı says in her own introduction to the 2003 edition of *Genç Kızlar*, "O yıllarda ellerde dolaşan birçok Türk romanlarının, adlarına kadar, Fransızca'dan kotarılmış olduğu dillerde gezerken, benim, hepsinden daha çok beğenilen romanımı bir Amerikalı'ya mal etmemdeki ironi de hoşuma gidiyordu.[11]" (9) Her work as Vincent Ewing does not fit within these paradigms. In using her own experiences as a student in Arnavutköy Girls High School or her accumulated knowledge as a reader and translator of Anglo literature, she was able to mimic the regional identitarian realities enough to be believable to a reader in Turkey. Her example offers a different perspective regarding the relationship of the influence of the Western novel on the 20th century Turkish novel, and the notion of anxiety over belatedness, and lag in adoption of genres and artistic movements that is taken for granted in most of literary criticism dealing with the Turkish novel.

If *Genç Kızlar* and the rest of Nihal Yeğinobalı's work does in fact have such potential for academic discussion then there is the question of why her work is so under researched. In my opinion, the answer to this question can be found in the fact that her best-known novel *Genç Kızlar* is associated with the romance

[10] "Within the framework of suitable dualities and periodizations, the Turkish novel is mostly defined as delayed and imitative; It has been framed negatively as translation without originality or creativity, or even plagiarism."

[11] "So many of the Turkish novels circulating back then were appropriated from French, even down to their titles, that I enjoyed the irony of me attributing my well-liked novel to an American."

genre and with female readership. There are writers such as Kerime Nadir, Muazzez Tahsin Berkand, Güzide Sabri, and Peride Celal who have been associated with the romance genre which can be defined as:

> a love story in which the central focus is on the development and satisfactory resolution of the love relationship between the two main characters, written in such a way as to provide the reader with some degree of vicarious emotional participation in the courtship process. (Ramsdell 12)

The examples of this genre in Turkish have been labeled with terms such as *piyasa romanları*, *pembe romanlar* or *melodrama* and been the output of certain publishing houses like Altın Kitaplar whose editor is quoted as saying "Biz, genç kızların okuyup da, genç erkeklerin okumadığı kitaplar basıyoruz."[12] (Süreya 396) Perhaps due to this assumed readership, despite their high selling numbers and cultural influence were rarely mentioned in terms of Turkish novel's progress. One of the milestone texts of literary criticism in Turkish Literature, Berna Moran's three volumes, *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış I-II-III* (1983-1994), does not mention these authors at all. In her thesis project titled "Kemalist Modernleşmenin Adab-ı Muaşeret Romanları: Popüler Aşk Anlatıları", Aslı Güneş situates novels of Berkand, Nadir and Sabri as a continuation of European Novels of Manners, and important agents in the period of national construction and the emergence of the new woman fitting the New Republic. In her research, she shows that many of the Early Republic Novels that are still in circulation and that are held in high-esteem are thematically or stylistically not so different from these romance novels:

[12] "We publish books that young girls read, not young men."

> Araştırmacıların, incelemecilerin Cumhuriyet kimliğine ilişkin yazılan sayfalar dolusu çalışmada popüler edebiyatı göz ardı etmekteki ısrarlı tavırları kanonun yaratılmasında gösterilen elitist tavrın, ideolojik seçmeciliğin, akademik alanda da işlediğini gösteriyor. İşin ilginç yanı sağlam bir takım edebi ölçütlere dayandığını söylemeni mümkün olmamasıdır. Kanonun baş köşesine oturmuş Yakup Kadri ya da Reşat Nuri'yi Kerime Nadir'den, Muazzez Tahsin Berkand'dan ayıran edebi ölçütü bir çırpıda kolayca bulup söylemek kimse için kolay olmasa gerek.[13] (5)

This elitist bias is neither limited to Turkish literature nor a thing of the past. In *Rethinking the Romance Genre* (2013), Emily S. Davis interrogates "the critical bias of academic readers and professional reviewers [...] who typically refuse to celebrate texts they see as courting mass audience instead of the credentialed elite who are supposed to be their "best" interpreters." (21) Davis also notes the importance that the works "most frequently dismissed as inconsequential to discussions of global politics and social change are precisely those identified with disempowered groups such as women and queers." (11) This elitism also extends to reader demographics, romance is often a genre that is considered to be by, for, or about women; typically focusing on the social lives and relationships of women. The treatment of female writers and the female readership as being inconsequential to literary value is aptly discussed in Nancy Armstrong's, *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (1987) in which she rehistorizes the rise of the novel as a consequence of the increased visibility of women in public and private spheres as well as the increase in female authorship. Her book builds

[13] "The insistence of the researchers in ignoring popular literature in the pages full of studies on the identity of the Republic shows that the elitist attitude, ideological eclecticism, shown in the creation of the canon, also operates in the academic field. The interesting thing is that you can't say it's based on a solid set of literary criteria. It must not be easy for anyone to easily find and say the literary criterion that separates Yakup Kadri or Reşat Nuri from Kerime Nadir and Muazzez Tahsin Berkand, who are sitting at the head of the canon."

on Ian Watt's classic study *The Rise of the Novel* (1957) which ties the popularity of such writers as Daniel Defoe and Samuel Richardson to an economic individualism and Puritan ethic they shared with a substantial portion of the new reading public but criticizes Watt in his failure to consider why "the majority of all eighteenth-century novels came from the female pen." (Watt 297)

Going back to Goethe's assumption that world literature will contribute to nations "Grow(ing) aware of one another, understand(ing) each other" without ever hoping to find "that nations thinking alike", how would the female writing tradition that has been alluded to here fit into this? Would novels written by and assumed to be read by women reveal a different kinship, or would that be gender essentializing stemming from false equivalences of female experiences?

In her pioneering work, *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) Elaine Showalter traces hitherto buried lines of kinship and inheritance from George Eliot and Virginia Woolf to sensation novelists like Mary Braddon, Rhoda Broughton. Taking her title from an observation of John Stuart Mill in 1869 "If women lived in a different country from men and had never read any of their writings, they would have a literature of their own," Showalter suggests that women themselves were slowly growing aware of their separateness and leaving a record of that awareness in their works which led to the growth of a collective self-consciousness and the history of a distinct literary subculture. Showalter explains:

> The "female imagination" cannot be treated by literary historians as a romantic or Freudian abstraction. It is the product of a delicate network of influences operating in time, and it must be analyzed as it expresses itself, in language and in a fixed arrangement of words on a page, a

> form that itself is subject to a network of influences and conventions, including the operations of the marketplace. (...), I am intentionally looking, not at an innate sexual attitude, but at the ways in which the self-awareness of the woman writer has translated itself into a literary form in a specific place and time-span, how this self-awareness has changed and developed, and where it might lead. (12)

We can assume that since throughout history, women have been subjected to the same kind of oppression, it is natural for women writers to perceive the world and life differently from men and thus women writers have a distinct tradition. Thus, if there is indeed a noticeable difference it is not due to a biological distinction, it is a result of material circumstances of women. Women form a subculture within the society, and therefore there is a unity, or at least a similarity, between the experiences that women writers express in their novels, the behaviors they exhibit, and the values they defend.

Jaqueline McLeod Rogers, in her book *Aspects of the Female Novel* (1995), suggests that there is a difference in that female novelists are more concerned with the inner world than the outer world. McLeod Rogers explains that in most women's writing, the end is clear from the beginning and that the pleasure that the reader will get from the work is not to reach the result and discover the result, but to discover the patterns that make up the experience. (27-31) McLeod Rogers' point about the process being more telling than the conclusion is one of the defining characteristics of genre fiction. Whether it is crime fiction, romance or fantasy, wherever a specific genre novel is produced, the form is usually recognizable. By picking up the novel, the reader looks for a certain experience and finds it. Andreas Hedberg in his article "The Knife in the Lemon: Nordic Noir and the Glocalization of Crime Fiction" explains:

> The elements common to all crime fiction—or at least to the great majority of drag rather than genre—are the form and the focus on producing a certain reader response, particularly, a feeling of suspense and/or curiosity. Perhaps paradoxically, this strictly standardized frame offers unparalleled possibilities for variation. When adopted into a new cultural milieu, the given mold ofthe crime story can be filled with almost any narrative material. (14)

Genre fiction is therefore able to attract the reader by incorporating the latest fashions, trends, and current affairs. It's the standardized form that makes this operation possible and since the form of a genre is recognizable everywhere it surfaces, it is an excellent pedagogical example of how literature and especially literary genres change when crossing from one cultural sphere to another:

> The more standardized the literary form or genre, the easier it travels. If a literature no longer aims to be wholly loyal to a particular situation, no longer aims to restrict its form to a unique human experience shaped by a specific culture or milieu, if it then casts off the auratic character of canonized modernist art (to use Walter Benjamin's term; Benjamin 2008), doesn't that also mean that when it comes to literary form, it becomes more cosmopolitan, more a form of world literature? (Hedberg 21)

Andreas Hedberg's description of aspects of genre as a traveling-form aligns with Moretti's theory in that when a genre is adapted into a new literary environment, it is always a compromise between foreign and local.

While Yeğinobalı's oeuvre can offer us an apt example in understanding how genre can travel and diffuse in world literary systems; the genre that is most helpful in understanding this with regards to her work is the female gothic. Despite the label of romance that was used to market *Genç Kızlar* and *Eflatun Kız*, "the gothic is present in every single of Yeğinobalı's novels." (Sakman 114) The literary importance of this choice on the part of Yeğinobalı, and its meaning

can be best understood if she is situated in a long line of female writers using the form to deal with anxieties and paranoia of female existence in a patriarchal society.

Vijay Mishra explain in his book *The Gothic Sublime* (1994), the gothic, deals with the subconscious, the repressed; emotions that are ignored. Historically poetic elements inherent in both gothic and romanticism have been utilized by female writers as the expression of the horror of the woman writer about her own body and self under various social pressures. It has also worked as the relatively sheltered expression of women's desire and passion; fantasy and search for alternative life. As Diane Long Hoeveler puts it in *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontes* (1998),

> The female gothic novelistic tradition became a coded system whereby women authors covertly communicated to other women -their largely female reading audience- their ambivalent rejection of and outward complicity with the dominant sexual ideologies of their culture. (8)

In Turkish literature, gothic and poetic elements appear in most women writers from Nezihe Muhiddin to Suat Derviş and Nerime Kadir. Similarly, *Sitem* and *Gazel* both use the Female Gothic with the way in which Yeğinobalı deals with the repressed and the reappearance of the repressed. Both of these novels take place in a small seaside community where bodies that were buried, threaten the current social quo; where women's sexual desire and guilt are explicitly drawn. Characters' loyalty to notions of virginity, pureness and sin are explored as well as their attempts to escape predetermined plots that are set out for them as young women.

Examining Nihal Yeğinobalı's use of the romance genre and the female gothic can show that "genre takes place in the interplay of readings and of the social force they carry." (Frow 139) Genre complicates established periodization and hierarchies in Turkish Literature's position regarding world literature. Connecting her to female novelists is a matter of revealing hidden kinships; as Wai-Chee Dimock contends,

> Literary history becomes a different kind of history when it follows the careers of these second and third and fourth cousins, in turn having cousins of their own. Periodization becomes much more complicated then, for a population of kin is bound to scatter and reconnect at odd intervals. (2006: 78)

CHAPTER II: EXPLORING THE BORDERS OF ROMANCE: *GENÇ KIZLAR* (1950)

In her memoirs titled *Cumhuriyet Çocuğu* (1999), Nihal Yeğinobalı recalls the first time she imagined writing a novel and describes what kind of novel this would be:

> Gazetelerde izlediğimiz romanlardan da esinlenerek kafamda bir 'aşk ve ıstırap romanı' kurguladım. Cümle ilgilerin odak noktasının cinsellik olduğunu artık anlamış bulunduğum için romanımın konusunu da cinsellik temeline oturtmuştum ve bu yüzden ablama bile anlatmaya utanıyordum. (198)

Her first published novel *Genç Kızlar* fits this description well. This debut novel is not only the most famous among her works, it is also the most conventionally structured one in her oeuvre. *Genç Kızlar* is the one that is easily classifiable as a romance novel without having to trim its edges. In her book *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass Produced Fantasies for Women* (1982), Tania Modleski describes the formula of a romance novel as this:

> The formula rarely varies: a young, inexperienced, poor to moderately well-to-do woman encounters and becomes involved with a handsome, strong, experienced, wealthy man, older than herself by ten to fifteen years. The heroine is confused by the hero's behavior since, though he is obviously interested in her, he is mocking, cynical, contemptuous, often hostile, and even somewhat brutal. By the end, however, all misunderstandings are cleared away, and the hero reveals his love for the heroine, who reciprocates. (28)

This formula is not unique to novels published under the romance genre; many classics from *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Jane Eyre* (1847), Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) share elements of this formula and have contributed to the development of it. What distinguishes a novel with romance elements and a novel in the romance genre however, is the promise of an experience. Reader comes at the novel expecting a certain experience in the case of romance, it is the promise of being "taken care of and to achieve that state of self-transcendence and self-forgetfulness promised by the ideology of love" and can rightfully become indignant if the promised experience is not provided.

(Modleski 28) The possibility that the common elements in a genre can be reduced to a formula suggests that this formula can be suited to travel and made to contain different content: as the Nilsson, Damrosch, and D'Haen indicate, "genre as a mold, can be set anywhere and everywhere and can be filled with whatever readers' interests are"(20). Yeğinobalı herself makes this point in the first page of the *Genç Kızlar*. Taking place in an all-girls performing arts school, the novel starts with Gabriel Samson, a 38-years-old man coming back to Ludlow Academy to teach diction. The first paragraph signals the supposed universality of this environment, "O (Samson), genç kız yaradılışının, hele özel okullarda, paralı-yatılı okuyan ayrıcalıklı kızların yaşantılarının, her nerede ve ne zaman olursa olsun, temelde hiç değişmediğini bilirdi."[14] (17) Indeed, Yeğinobalı in her interviews claims that the dynamics between the girls, their habits their rituals in the dorms were all based on her own experiences as a student in Robert College. So much so that she explains that the physical descriptions of the building were entirely based on her alma mater: "Ludlow akademisi: sınıflar, koridorlar, merdivenler, bahçe, Arnavutköy Kız Koleji'nin ta kendisiydi." (Introduction to the 2003 edition of *Genç Kızlar* 14)

The central story of the novel is the budding romance between Gabriel Samson and Miss Bee, Beatrice Krakova. A landowner's daughter, an immigrant of Russia, Miss Bee is described as having black hair, slanted dark eyes and a heart-shaped face. She is an orphan who has taken on the responsibilities of managing the land and wealth she has inherited from her father. As her last name indicates, she is of Russian heritage with her father having migrated from Russia following the 1917 Revolution. Physically, Miss Bee's appeal is often highlighted as a charm or allure that does not stem from her

[14] "He (Samson) knew that the disposition and lives of young girls, especially those in private schools, does not fundamentally change no matter the place or time."

physical beauty: she is often described as less beautiful compared to her friend Hindley Bell and Mariana. From the emphasis on her intelligence and her capricious nature as well as her being a young Southern belle, it is possible to see Miss Bee as a descendant of one of the most well-known heroines of early 20th century Scarlett O'Hara of *Gone with the Wind*. Being one of the best-selling novels of American literature, this novel was also translated into Turkish by Nihal Yeğinobalı alongside Avni İnsel, and it would make sense that in her effort to write "an American novel" Yeğinobalı would take inspiration from best-known works of American fiction at the time. This comparison is strengthened by her relationship to her father who was a white first-generation immigrant who leaves behind land for his daughter to manage; the black maid as her closest companion and mother figure. As an older, jaded man who shows her affection towards the heroine by exchanging verbal blows Gabriel Samson is also reminiscent of Margaret Mitchell's leading man Rhett Butler.

From Gabriel's introduction into the novel, it is made clear that he does not have a positive view on his position or on young women:

> Şapkasıyla pardesüsünü vestiyere bırakırken kendini gene bir kız okulunda ders vermeye zorlayan talihine içinden lanet okudu. Çünkü Gabriel Samson otuz sekiz yaşında olduğu ve erkeklerin güya körpe dişilere düşkünlükleri varsayılan döneme yaklaşmış olduğu halde, genç kızlardan hoşlanmaz; onları eftenpüften, henüz oluşmamış, gülünç yaratıklar olarak görürdü. (17)[15]

[15] "Leaving his hat and overcoat on the cloakroom, he cursed the luck that was forcing him to teach at a girls' school again. Gabriel Samson does not like young girls, even though he was thirty-eight years old and was approaching the supposed age when man would supposedly develop a fondness for young females; he saw them as ridiculous creatures that were not yet formed."

You don't feel like a sacrificial Vestal Priestess, do you?' he asked. Gabriel obeyed her sarcastic solemnity: 'Well, my dear Madame, I am as cheerful as an ancient Roman Christian going to meet the lions in the arena. (19)

In *Lolita in Peyton Place: Middlebrow, and LowBrow Novels of the 1950s* (1995), Ruth Pirsig Wood suggests that most American middlebrow novels of the 1950s, which this pretends to be, have similar opening chapters:

> Since a main function of the middlebrow novel is to convince its readers that oppressive social structures are manageable … the typical middlebrow opening features an aspect of the protagonist's background or personality with inherent potential for conflict with a social system. (49)

In the opening paragraph of *Genç Kızlar*, Yeğinobalı offers a male protagonist who feels contempt for his situation in life, with his new setting; it also distinguishes him from men his own age by emphasizing his aversion to young women. This aversion quickly makes him a difficult, curmudgeonly target for the girls in school. Samson becomes an object of desire for many of the girls at this school but the main three characters are the beautiful and talented Mariana, the timid and childish Hindley Bell and the protagonist Miss Bee. From his first conversation with the headmistress of the academy, Yeğinobalı positions him as a potential prey for these young women which; immediately reassigns the assumed roles; here the young girls are framed as predatory:

> Kendini kurbanlık bir Vesta Rahibesi gibi hissetmiyorsun ya?' diye sordu. Gabriel de onun alaylı ciddiyetine uydu: 'Ne münasebet, sevgili Madam, arenadaki aslanlarla tanışmaya giden bir eski Romalı Hristiyan kadar keyifliyim. (19)

Most romance novels use the third-person narration as Yeğinobalı does in *Genç Kızlar*, Modleski refers to the style of third-person narration commonly used in the genre "personal third person narration" in which "any critical distance is established between reader and protagonist, and few doubts about the heroine's thoughts and feelings are introduced, women can freely view the fantasy as their fantasy." (47) The reason why

first-person narration is not employed is for the heroine to be believably unaware of her circumstances, unaware of the feelings of the hero.

> As women watch themselves they are at every moment incurring guilt, proving themselves to be the "narcissists" they are often accused of being. Women can be artless and demon-strate this artlessness only in the absence of men. Unfortunately, men are the ones they have to convince. In literature this dilemma is generally resolved by making men into eavesdroppers: Mr. B. in the closet observing Pamela's "artless prattling"; Rochester disguised as an old woman fortune-teller prying out the secrets of Jane's soul; Harlequin heroes in doorways, behind bushes, in near-by rooms listening, looking, and, finally, loving. (Modleski 44-45)

Befitting this trope, Gabriel Samson and Miss Bee's first encounter happens when he decides to eavesdrop on her conversation with her friend Hindley Bell. Miss Bee is caught by her new teacher, giving a detailed account of her first impression of the man: "Elbet yakışıklı değil, canım. Yakışıklı erkeğin bini bir para! Ama, böyle bir yüz, binde bir bulunur, cacağızım. Güzellik ölçülerinin dışında, hatta üstünde bir yüz bu!... Bu yüzyılın bir tanrısı olsaydı herhalde yüzü ancak bu kadar şahane ve azap dolu olurdu!"[16] (22-23) The way Miss Bee assumes that the older man would be vain because he is physically attractive is also a play on conventional views as associating beauty with vainness is an equation traditionally kept for women:

> Hem zaten adam yüzde yüz sersemin biridir, varsan baksan! Kişiliğinin de yüzüne uymasını ummak, bu zamanda mucize beklemek gibi bir şey olur… Görünüşe aldanma dememişler mi? En şahane görünüşlerin içi çoğunlukla koftur, Hindley Bell! Varsan baksan bu da

[16] "Of course he's not handsome, my dear. A handsome man can be found everywhere! But, this face, this face is rare, sweetie. This is a face beyond the measure of beauty, even above it!... If there was a god of this century, his face would probably be so glorious and full of torment!"

> bomboş, tıngır mıngır bir adamdır. Kendini beğenmiş züppenin biridir.[17] (23)

As in all of Yeğinobalı's novels, the female protagonist is supported by a cast of women who are defined by qualities that distinguish them from the heroine. Miss Bee's closest friend in school is Hindley Bell with her wavy straw-blond hair that is often left loose as opposed to the tight buns of Miss Bee: "Lacivert gözleri kapalıydı. Bir dokunsan kırılıverecek, porselenden yapılmış gibi ince ve nazlı duran bu bedenden böyle şahane bir sesin çıkması eskiden beri herkesi şaşkınlığa uğratırdı.[18]" (36) As the quote suggests, Hindley is weaker in constitution, more timid and is often emotionally as well as physically protected by Miss Bee. Whereas Miss Bee is defined by her connection to the land and her competent personality is romanticized by the text:

> O an Miss Bee ayağında bir pantolon, elinde bir kırbaçla at üstünde olmayı, zenci işçilerle konuşup onların o yumuşak, yayvan sesleriyle anlattıkları dertlerini dinlemeyi, vekilharçlarına talimatlar vermeyi, kentten gelen kaşarlanmış bir pamuk tüccarıyla çekişe çekişe pazarlık edip ona parmak ısırtmayı özledi.[19] (37)

Even their voice types signal the difference between their personality with Hindley Bell being a soprano and Miss Bee being an alto. When they are being cast in the upcoming show the school will put on, Lionel Sherwood a Broadway director, casts Hindley as the young ingenue from a small Midwestern town who moves to the big city with great

[17] "Besides, the man must be stupid! Hoping that a personality will match a face would be like waiting for a miracle at this time… Didn't they always say don't be deceived by appearances? The most amazing looks are often hollow inside, Hindley Bell! If you look, this is also an empty, jumbled man. He is a smug snob."

[18] "Her dark blue eyes were closed. It used to surprise everyone that such a wonderful sound could come out of this thin and delicate body that would break if you touched it."

[19] At that moment, Miss Bee missed being on a horse with a trousers on, a whip in her hand, talking to the black workers and listening to their grievances in their soft, flat voices, giving instructions to her stewards, haggling with a hard-boiled cotton merchant from the city and giving him a bite.

hopes but he cannot place Miss Bee in this comedic play at all. He, instead, claims that Miss Bee belongs in a story of passion and likens her to Madame Bovary:

> Her şeyini unutmuş, tüm dikkatini Miss Bee'ye vermişti. Adım adım gerileyerek, sonra yaklaşıp çevresinde dönerek kızı inceliyor, bir yandan da sürekli yorumlar yapıyordu. 'Ama senin bu modern komedide yerin yok! Sen baskı altında tutulan tutkusun. Sen Emma Bovary'sin.'[20] (41)

While Miss Bee's sensible nature is often contrasted to Hindley's dreamlike existence and thus Emma Bovary's infamous fancies and even delusions seem inconsistent with Miss Bee's characterization, I think what Yeğinobalı does here is to give her the physicality of Bovary who, with her pale skin as well as dark hair and eyes, is physically similar to Beatrice and to imply an inherent sensual quality to Miss Bee's character. Mariana, the third character in this central cast of young women, is repeatedly described as the most beautiful girl in school but she is pointedly not given this sensual charm which is emphasized in Gabriel Samson's reaction to Miss Bee. Furthermore, by having a character declare that Miss Bee is worthy of being at the center of a tale of passion,Yeğinobalı ends up categorizing her own novel as one such tale.

Hindley Bell, Mariana and Miss Bee all fall in love with Gabriel Samson. Prissy, another girl at Ludlow, who incidentally has the same name as one of the side characters and antagonists in *Gone with the Wind*, convinces Mariana to agree to a bet that she could get Samson to fall in love with her before the school year ends. Miss Bee asks them to sign a written document and then signs her own name as the official witness. While Samson remains cordial to Mariana, even being appreciative towards her talents and looks, he is not open to any romantic advances. For a while, Mariana's pursuit of

[20] "He had forgotten everything, giving his full attention to Miss Bee. Stepping backwards, then approaching and turning around, he studied her, constantly making comments. 'But you have no place in this modern comedy! You are the suppressed passion. You are Emma Bovary.'"

their teacher puts a strain on the friendship of the three girls however they quickly realize the danger of having a written document about the bet. They realize Prissy had been sending anonymous letters, addressed from New York to Hindley, taunting her about her love for Samson. These letters are trying to emotionally manipulate Hindley to commit suicide and giving directions to how she should do it. At first the bet seems like an unfinished side plot that distracts from the main tension in the text; however on closer inspection the character of Prissy who facilitates all of these events, reveals herself to be a symbol of feminine rage that will be more openly used in Yeğinobalı's later novels.

This side plot functions as a submerged plot which Elaine Showalter describes as:

> A radical alteration of our vision, a demand that we see meaning in what has previously been empty space. The orthodox plot recedes, and another plot, hitherto submerged in the anonymity of the background, stands out in bold relief like a thumbprint. (1975 435)

According to Showalter, these hidden plots reveal buried anger and hostility towards patriarchal norms and structures: representations of feminine rage. Prissy and the events that are born out of her actions are an example of this submerged feminine rage. From her introduction, Yeğinobalı presents this character as someone who acts as the guide or the storyteller of an unashamedly sexual world for the young woman in school. Her introduction in the novel is with her sitting in the middle of the dorm, telling a story about a young woman inviting her fiance to her house and getting sexually preyed upon, to her classmates who listen to her in excitement. During this introduction, the narrator shows the difference in the outward proclamations of the girls and their internal wish that the story becomes more sexual quicker:

> Prissy şimdi iyiden iyiye coşmuş anlatıyordu: Adam önce pek terbiyeli, pek efendi oturmuş. Daha kapıdan girerken başlamış manevraya. Kızın yanağına şöyle kardeşçe bir

> öpücük kondurmuş. Ondan sonra elini sürmemiş. Kızcağız da yavaş yavaş gevşemiş, rahatlamış. Gerçi biraz uzakta, kapı yanında oturmayı elden bırakmamış ama, adamakıllı rahatlamış." Birkaç ses birden, *"Zavallıcık!"* diye mırıldandı. *Ama aslında bütün kızlar hikayedeki kızın boşuna vakit geçirdiğine sinirleniyor ve azgın nişanlı bir an önce saldırıya geçsin diye bekliyorlardı.*[21] (50) (emphasis mine)

From this introduction it is clear that Yeğinobalı does not allow Prissy to be a complete other, alien in terms of her attitude towards sex, she shares the desires of her peers but none of the inhibitions. Her descriptions and stories confound her friends who have a sterilized and romanticized view of marriage and sex while she persistently argues that such a mindset it against the very nature of these acts: "Evliliğin, yani cinselliğin tüm işlevlerinin pis olduğunu bilmiyor musun?"[22] (159)

When she catches Hindley alone in the dorms and pushes the young woman to confess her infatuation with their teacher, she takes on the role of the predator: the two girls become figures out of a forced seduction scene. As Prissy tries to prode Hindley into giving a reaction by describing what she, herself finds attractive about the man, Prissy ends up seducing and forcing herself on Hindley via this man's physical attributes.

> "O elini karatahtaya doğru uzattığı zaman için bir tuhaf olmuyor mu, Hindley Bell? O eller insanın vücudunu ne güzel okşar! Kimbilir kaç kadın vücudu o ellerin altında zevkten inlemiştir, kıvranmıştır! Ona soğuk diyorlar, ama ben inanmıyorum. Böyle erkekler aşk konusunda çok ateşli olur."

[21] "Prissy was now exultantly telling: The man first sat down very well-mannered and well-mannered. He started the maneuver as he entered the door. He placed a brotherly kiss on the girl's cheek. He didn't touch it after that. Little by little, the girl relaxed and relaxed. Although he didn't mind sitting a little far away, by the door, he was completely relaxed." "Poor thing!" several voices shouted at once. B*ut in fact, all the girls were angry that the girl in the story was wasting their time and were waiting for the horny fiancé to attack as soon as possible*."

[22] "Don't you know that all functions of marriage, that is, sexuality, are filthy?"

> "Ya dudakları! Biliyor musun o dudaklar insanı nasıl öper? İncecik, sert dudaklar, kadının yumuşak ağzını eser! Sınıfta ders anlatırken onun ağzına baktıkça içinin eridiğini hissetmiyor musun, Hindley Bell?"
>
> Hindley Bell başını kollarına yaslayarak ağlamaya balamıştı, "Tanrı aşkına… Tanrı aşkına…" diye hıçkırdı. Prissy ona yaklaştı, sesini alçaltarak: "Güpegündüz onu düşünmekten, onu özlemekten kahroluyorsun, Hindley Bell! Geceleri kendi kollarını onun kolları diye kendi vücuduna sarıyorsun. Onun niyetine, 'Seni seviyorum, Hindley Bell,' diye kendi kendine fısıldıyorsun. Kendi vücudunu yatıştırmak için kendi ellerinle okşuyorsun. Ama onun yerini tutmuyor, değil mi, Hindley Bell? O olsa başka türlü olur. Sonra insanın kendi kendini öpmesi de mümkün değil ki! Deli olmuyor musun, düşündükçe, Gabriel Samson insanı nasıl öper? Boyu çok uzun, ona yetişmek için sen ayal parmaklarının ucunda doğrulursun, o sana doğru eğilir… eğilir.." Prissy elini uzattı ve birden Hindley Bell'in sarı saçlarını tuttu: "Değil mi, Hindley Bell?" (69-70)[23]

The sexual tension Prissy creates in this scene has a queer undercurrent which is only strengthened by her declaration that one does not need a man for sexual gratification a few chapters later. (168) However as she continues to taunt Hindley into suicide, she crosses from being an unconventional classmate to something undefinable borderless in the eyes of peers:

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[23] "Isn't it weird when he reaches out his hand to the blackboard, Hindley Bell? How beautifully those hands caress one's body! Who knows how many women's bodies groaned and writhed under those hands! They call it cold, but I don't believe it. Such men are very hot in love."

"Oh lips! Do you know how those lips kiss a person? Thin, hard lips blow her soft mouth! Don't you feel your heart melt when you look at his mouth while she's lecturing in class, Hindley Bell?"

Hindley Bell had started to cry, her head on her arms, "For God's sake… for God's sake…" she sobbed. Prissy approached her, lowering her voice: "You're sick of thinking about him, missing him in broad daylight, Hindley Bell! At night you wrap your arms around your body as his arms. You whisper to yourself, 'I love you, Hindley Bell,' imagining it's him. You caress your own body with your own hands to soothe it. But it doesn't take his place, does it, Hindley Bell? It would be otherwise. It is not possible for a person to kiss himself afterwards! Aren't you crazy, thinking about how Gabriel Samson kisses you? He's so tall, you stand on tiptoes to catch up with him, he leans towards you… hhe bends over.." Prissy held out her hand and suddenly grabbed Hindley Bell's blond hair: "Isn't it, Hindley Bell?"

> Onlar Prissy'yi dedikoducu ve erkek düşkünü, hain ve terbiyesiz bir kız olarak tanırlardı. Oysa bu Prissy, aynanın karşısında kendi çıplak kalçalarını okşayan bu kız, o insanı allak bullak edici mektupları yazmış olan, tanımadıkları ve anlayamadıkları, yalnızca dehşet ve nefretle sezinledikleri bambaşka, korkunç bir şeydi.[24] (167)

With this transformation she stops being human in their eyes and is relegated to the word "thing". Under this new light shed on her character, Yeğinobalı immediately associates this wrongness and perverseness with the darkness of her complexion that is brought up in the same scene as Miss Bee comparing her to a dark, unknowable continent:

> "Ne o Mariana? Vücudumu beğenmedin mi? Göğüslerim belki sizinkiler kadar pembe değildir ama…" (167)
> (...)
> "Miss Bee, Prissy'den korkuyordu. Onun normal biri olmadığını anlayınca Prissy gözünde karanlık bilinmezlerle dolu, yabancı bir ülke gibi korkunç bir anlam kazanmıştı." (174) [25]

Yeğinobalı repeats this association she makes between dangerousness and darker skin when Miss Bee is assaulted by an older journalist at a party: "beyaz elini kendi esmer pençesinde sıktı." (230) *Genç Kızlar*'s position as a pseudo-translation makes it difficult to understand or analyze this tendency. It is unclear whether these are cultural clues Yeğinobalı placed in the text to convince her readers that this is a book written in early 20th century America or if these colorist remarks would have been present in a Turkish version of the story regardless.

Prissy's story ends midway through the novel, and without intervention from either Mariana or Miss Bee, she is expelled from the academy. She invites the writer of

[24] They knew Prissy as a gossipy and tomboyish, treacherous and impolite girl. But this Prissy, this girl stroking her bare buttocks in front of the mirror, the one who had written that shocking letter, was something else, something completely different, something they didn't know and couldn't understand, but only sensed with horror and hatred.

[25] "What is that Mariana? Don't you like my body? My breasts may not be as pink as yours, but…" (…) "Miss Bee was afraid of Prissy. When she realized that she was not a normal person, Prissy had a terrible meaning in her eyes, like a foreign country, full of dark unknowns."

the play they are staging to her dorm room and is caught naked. This allows Mariana and Miss Bee to be rid of the threat that their bet about their teacher be revealed and Hindley to be avenged without positioning the three girls as antagonistic which might have rendered them unfavorable to the reader. Before she is expelled from school, Prissy makes a show of explaining her night in detail to all her classmates including Mariana and Miss Bee who would rather leave: "Bu sefer söylediklerime dudak bükmeyeceksiniz, sonuna kadar dinleyeceksiniz" dedi. "Oturun yerinize!"[26] (191) She does not allow them to shun her once more, she makes them sit and listen to her agency, her own desire in the situation:

> "Dün gece siz salonda aptal aptal dans edip dururken ben Sayın Bay Samuel Prost'u odama aldım!" diye açıklama yaptı.
> Salonda şimdi herkes birbirine girdi. En sonunda ortalık yatışınca kızlar şaşkınlık ve zevk dolu bir heyecanla Prissy'nin çevresini sardılar.
> "Anlat, Prissy, anlat," diye yalvarıyorlardı.[27] (191)

As this quote reveals, the act for which Prissy is punished is fueled by urges and curiosities all of the girls share, but as indicated in the next quote, their urges are exorcized and neutralized through the pornographic books they read.

> "O istiyordu da ben istemiyor muydum! Dans ederken çaktırmadan beni öyle bir okşuyordu ki, her tarafım ateş gibi yanıyordu."
> Onun bu sözlerini dinleyen kızların çoğunluğu açık saçık romanları okurken duydukları şaşkınlık ve heyecanla karışık zevki duyuyorlardı. Ona hoşutsuzlukla, sinirlenerek

[26] "This time, you will not sneer at what I say, you will listen to the end." "Sit down!"

[27] "Last night I took Mr. Samuel Prost into my room while you were dancing around the hall stupidly!" she declared. Everyone in the hall now mingled with each other. When it finally settled down, the girls surrounded Prissy in excitement and surprise. "Tell us more, Prissy, tell us more," they begged."

> bakanlar bile merak yüzünden ses çıkarmadan dinliyorlardı.[28] (191)

She ends her speech by declaring the girls hypocrites for their reaction:

> "Sanki siz benim gibi değil misiniz? Siz de benim yaptıklarımı yapmak istersiniz, ama cesaretiniz yok. Benim cesaretim var diye beni kıskanıyorsunuz. Ne olacak işte? Ömrünüzde erkek yüzü görmemişsiniz ki! Erkek nedir bilmediğiniz için erkek gördünüz mü deliye dönüyorsunuz. Baksana, Gabriel Samson'u nerede yiyeceksiniz!"
> Mariana, "Onun adını ağzına alma!" dedi.
> Prissy bir kahkaha attı: "Ağzıma alırsam adı kirlenir değil mi? Ben ağzıma onun adını değil…"
> Mariana, Priss'nin ağzına elinin var gücüyle vurdu.[29] (194)

Prissy's declaration of her right to her sexuality ends with her fainting from anger and all the girls who enjoyed her tales ostracizing her: "Mariana'nın duyduğu aşırı tiksinti, şimdi hepsine öyle bulaşmıştı ki, biraz önce anlattıklarını zevkle dinledikleri kıza parmaklarını bile sürmek istemiyorlardı.[30]" (196)

The main tension in many gothic novels, sentimental novels and romance novel has to do with the heroine's virginity; whether it is the threat of being robbed of it or whether the heroine will be able to "defend her virginity against the attacks of a rake, who might or might not reform." (Modleski 6) The morality of this plot is not the

[28] "It's not like he wanted it and I didn't! While I was dancing, he was caressing me so gently that I was on fire like a fire." The majority of the girls who listened to his words were amazed and excited while reading the lewd novels, even those who looked at her with displeasure and anger were listening silently out of curiosity.

[29] "As if you are not like me! You want to do what I did, but you don't have the courage. You're jealous of me because I have the courage. What will happen? You have never seen a male face in your life! Since you don't know what a man is, you go crazy when you see a man. Look at you, you are about to eat up Gabriel Samson!"
Mariana said, "Don't mention his name!" said.
Prissy laughed: "If I put it in my mouth, it'll get dirty, right? I would do more than put his name in my mouth…"
Mariana slapped Priss in the mouth with all her might.

[30] "Mariana's extreme disgust was so pervasive now that they didn't want to touch the girl they had just been listening to with pleasure."

immorality of sex itself but the immorality of indulging one's sexual desires without the possibility of marriage. Prissy's description of what happened between her and Samuel Prost is significantly similar to what will happen between Miss Bee and Gabriel however Miss Bee will not be punished for her actions neither by the school nor by the text. Prissy's anger at this inequality punctures the love story that is built on the assumption that good behavior will be rewarded and bad behavior will be discarded:

Prissy	Miss Bee
"Ona öyle bir sarıldım ki, o da benden başka her şeyi unuttu. Üstümü başımı pençeleriyle parçaladı. Her tarafımı çürüttü." Prissy kazağının önündeki fermuarı hevesli ellerle açtı ve atletini de sıyırarak esmer boynunu ve biraz da göğüslerini meydana çıkardı. Kızlar şaşkınlıkla ve heyecan sesleriyle yaklaşarak bu çürükleri yakından incelemeye giriştiler. (193)	Sonra çıplak omuzlarına erkeğin elleri kıskaç gibi yapıştı ve onu hırsla kendine doğru çekti. Miss Bee onun bastırışı ve ağırlığı altında bedeninin arkaya doğru yattığını ve bütün sinirlerinin, gene o beyinsiz korkuyla gerildiğini hissediyordu…. Ne kadar çırpınırsa çırpınsın çıplak omuzlarını sıkan kıskaçlar gevşemiyor, dudaklarını ezen ağız, ağzının üzerinden kalkmıyordu. (281) Şehevi bir zevkle aynaya çevrilen gözleri birden telaşla büyüdü, çünkü sol omzuyla göğsünün arasında da, irice bir para büyüklüğünde bir morluk vardı (287)
"I hugged him so much that he forgot everything but me. He tore my top off my head with his claws. It rotted every part of me." With eager hands, Prissy zipped open the front of her sweater and pulled off her tank top, revealing her brunette neck and some breasts. The girls approached in surprise and with their voices of excitement, attempting to examine these bruises closely. (193)	*Then the man's hands gripped her bare shoulders like pincers, and he greedily pulled her towards him. Miss Bee felt her body lean back under his pressure and weight, and all her nerves tensed up in that mindless fear again…. No matter how hard she tried, the claws that gripped her bare shoulders couldn't loosen, and the mouth that crushed her lips wouldn't lift from her mouth. (281)* *Her eyes, which were turned into mirrors*

	with sensual delight, suddenly grew alarmed, for there was also a bruise the size of a large coin between her left shoulder and chest (287)

After the threat of Prissy is removed, Miss Bee and Gabriel's relationship continue in a constant push and pull, after the headmistress convinces Samson to live in the house next to Miss Bee's, they get closer however he remains cruel and dismissive towards her in school. Miss Bee and her maid Felicity start to notice a light in another room in his house followed by a shadow of a woman. They assume it is a woman Samson is romantically linked with but he denies the existence of another person in the house. This person is revealed to be his 15-years-old daughter. The reveal that Gabriel is married and that due his Catholicism, is unable to get a divorce is not the kind of reveal that holds the same weight as Rochester keeping his wife locked in the attic however his explanation that this woman he met in Bermuda, was introduced to her as a "part of the aristocratic, respectable and conservative circle of Bermuda"; as a girl who "excelled at dance, swim, tennis, horse-riding, driving" (321) is reminiscent of Rochester's account of the time he was introduced to Bertha Mason. Samson explains that he started to hear rumors about her having two previous engagements that have failed due to her excessive behavior. But when she became too sexually incontrollable to the point of "ripping him apart with her teeth" she had to be done away with; the solution is that Samson pays her to remain in Switzerland where their daughter goes to school. (324)

Once he enlightens Miss Bee about the woman she had been seeing inside the house, he attacks her which sets the tone for the sexual scenes Yeğinobalı had always

mentioned as the reason why she was scared to own the novel as her own. In a 2003 interview with the magazine *Tempo,* she remembers a young man in publishing asking her to dance and then asking if she had lived a night like the night between Gabriel Samson and Miss Bee:

> Hatta kitap yüzünden yine sözlü tacizlere maruz kaldım. Birisi bana 'Kırmızı aylı gece gibi bir geceyi yaşamamış olsan bu kadar iyi çeviremezdin' dedi. O zaman çok sinirlenmiştim. Çünkü okulum bitmişti, profesyonel olarak çalışıyordum, kendi hayatımı kurmuştum. Ama insanlar bir kadın olarak seksi yaşamaya hakkım olduğunu düşünmüyordu.[31]

Ironically this scene is perhaps the least erotic in her all her work; this is partly due to the tame language partly due to the it being presented through Miss Bee's perspective and it is made clear that she is not enjoying the act itself: "Bu hoyrat sevişmeden, arzulu erkek elinin bu ısrarlı ve acıtıcı okşayışlarından zevk almıyordu, gene de kendini bırakmıştı. Çünkü onu seviyordu…[32]" (299) She fights him before it goes any further: "Şimdi aralarında bir boğuşma başlamıştı. Çimenler arasında iki hayvan gibi boğuşuyorlardı. Gabriel daha güçlü ve iriydi, evet, ama bakireliğin erkeğe karşı olan o ilkel, beyinsiz korkusu da Miss Bee'ye olağanüstü bir güç veriyordu.[33]" (301) However when she is back home, she views herself in the mirror, trying to picture how she had looked to him and enjoys this aspect much more than the act itself: "Çırılçıplak aynanın

[31] "In fact, I was subjected to verbal abuse again because of the book. Someone said to me, 'You couldn't have translated it this well if you hadn't experienced a night like the night with the red moon. I was very angry then. Because my school was over, I was working professionally, I had established my own life. But people didn't think I had a right to have sex as a woman."

[32] "She didn't enjoy this rough lovemaking, the insistent and painful caresses of his lustful male hand, yet she had given up. Because she loved him…"

[33] "Now there was a struggle between them. They were fighting like two animals in the grass. Gabriel was stronger and larger, yes, but that primitive, mindless fear of virginity also gave Miss Bee extraordinary strength."

karşısına geçti. Gabriel elbisesini beline kadar sıyırdığı zaman nasıl göründüğünü görmek istiyordu[34].” (287)

“As many critics of romantic fiction have pointed out, the description of sexual activity between a man and a woman is one of eroticized power play set in a timeless space which resolves previous conflicts between them.” (Taylor 135) While it involves the female character being dominated and rendered powerless against a man, it also makes the male character who had been an unknowable other up until this point, more comprehensible. Perhaps the most discussed instance of this contentious issue and the various readings it provides is the rape scene in *Gone with the Wind*. Furious with jealousy, Rhett Butler gets drunk and frightens his wife Scarlett with saying how easily he “could tear (her) to pieces with them” and threatens to put his hands “on each side of (her) head and smash (her) skull between them like a walnut.” (905) After this declaration he sweeps Scarlett off of her feet and carries her over the stairs to their bedroom. Next morning Scarlett wakes up and remembers that, “he had humbled her, hurt her, used her brutally through a wild mad night and she had gloried in it.” and feels “stronger than shame,.. The memory of rapture, the ecstasy of surrender.” (908) This image of Scarlett O’Hara carried off in Rhett Butler’s arms has been a key image used in the posters for the 1939 movie as well as subsequent book covers. In *Scarlett’s Women: Gone with the Woman and Its Female Fans* (1989), critic Helen Taylor sums up the legacy of this scene by saying:

> In critical and journalistic articles, as well as in the letters and questionnaires I received, it is seen as the erotic climax (in both senses) of book and film, a symbolically crucial scene. Opinions and feelings vary about it enormously,

[34] "She stood in front of the mirror naked. Gabriel wanted to see how she looked when she pulled her dress down to her waist."

> especially among writers of different generations and political positions, as do perceptions of what actually happens. (130)

The varied reactions include Angela Carter calling it a revenge fantasy: “Cut to the morning after. Scarlett stretches luxuriously in bed, smiling, singing a happy little song to herself. See? That’s just what the bitch needed all the time. And if you believe that, you will believe anything.” (1997 291) On the other hand, Carolyn Gage frames it as a psycho-spiritual bonding: “The attempted rape was only the natural surge of an animal passion that would sweep up both husband and wife and carry them beyond their pride and their personalities to some transcendental realm of psycho-spiritual bonding.”

Unfortunately, there is not as much material available to us that can help us learn the reception of the scene between Gabriel Samson and Miss Bee. It seems from Yeğinobalı’s own recollections as well as more recent criticism written about the book[35], it is considered an erotic sex scene with its ambiguity with regards to consent, being largely ignored. However, it is important to consider the power dynamic in this scene as it situates the novel with its contemporaries written in English but it also provides a baseline that can help us better conceptualize Yeğinobalı’s treatment of consent and rape which will be most important in her last novel *Gazel*.

[35] See Alt (2008)

CHAPTER III: THE MANY LIVES OF *EFLATUN KIZ* (1957)

On the back cover of Nihal Yeğinobalı's 1988 novel *Mazi Kalbimde Bir Yaradır*, published under Cem Publishing House's "Türk Yazarları Dizisi", the novel is presented as Yeğınıbalı's authorial debut under her own name. No part of the Cem edition mentions this but *Mazi Kalbimde Yaradır* is not the first version of this story. In 1957, it was serialized in the daily newspaper Vatan under the title *Eflatun Kız* as the work of Nihal Yeğinobalı. Later in 1964, it was published by Altın Kitaplar again with the title *Eflatun Kız* but as a novel by Vincent Ewing that was translated by Nihal Yeğinobalı. In their presentation on Yeğinobalı's *Genç Kızlar*, Sündüz Öztürk Kasar ve Serap Gün Birdane emphasize that popular literature products like this pseudo-translation example are sociologically and culturally significant and that conducting research on them would enable it to reach at new conclusions concerning culture and society since these products "make up half of the material read in Turkey in the 1950's." (14) Due to all this change it went through, *Eflatun Kız* offers a rare subject for analysis. This story was written as a Turkish novel first which was later "translated" to be an American novel. In 1988 it was subjected to intralingual translation as it was reworked into Turkish as a novel that was written in the late 1980s. Looking at these three different iterations, it's possible to see each version capture something specific about the time in which it was published. In this chapter, I will compare the three versions to see how each version reveal shifts in thinking about womanhood, masculinity and politics throughout 20th century Turkey.[36]

[36] See Işık(2022)

EFLÂTUN KIZ

EDEBİ ROMAN **Yazan: NİHAL YEĞİNOBALI**

Ilk defa olarak Yelda'nın sesi titredi ve yüzüne bir renk dalgası yayıldı. Kestane rengi saçlarının kısa ve düz kesimi, cazip ve sade kıyafetiyle o kadar modern ve serin kanlı bir görünüşü vardı ki onun taşralı bir genç kız gibi kızardığını gören doktor içinin bir tuhaf olduğunu hissetti.

ve hele kadının yaşı gençse... Bir daha gebe kalmasına hiç bir surette imkân yoktur...»

Yâni onun, Yelda'nın çocuğu olmasına hiç bir surette imkân yoktu.

... «Çocuğumuz olursa inşallah sana benzer, Yelda...»

«Bense sana benzemesini istiyo-

tümseyisle baktı:

Figure 1. *Eflatun Kız* (1957) Vatan Newspaper

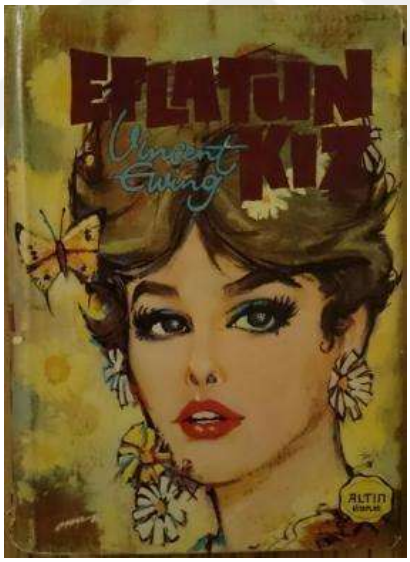

Figure 2. *Eflatun Kız* (1964) Altın Kitaplar Edition

Figure 3. *Mazi Kalbimde Bir Yaradır* (1988) Cem Publishing Edition

Before delving into the plot of the novel, it's worthwhile to look at the paratextual features of the two book editions as they each establish a different context for reception. Altın Kitaplar's *Eflatun Kız* presents a colorful portrait of a young woman whose make up is in line with the fashion of her times, she is surrounded by daisies, sunflowers and butterflies to convey a sense of springtime and the transitory state of youth. Emphasizing the part of the novel where she is 15-year-old. There are references to *Genç Kızlar* in the front and back cover which proves that the publishing house was intending on drawing on the popularity of Vincent Ewing and keeping the myth alive. Yet, by this time, the editors knew that he was not real. The 1964 edition is published as part of a series called "Love is Beautiful". Other authors marketed with this tagline on the dust jacket are Alberto Moravia, Leon Uris, Erich Maria Remarque, and Fannie

Hurst; none of whom would be known as primarily writers of love stories nowadays but their novels are clearly grouped together here to be publicized as romantic best-sellers. Again in his memoir, Cemal Süreya recalls the owner of Altın Kitaplar saying, "Biz, genç kızların okuyup da, genç erkeklerin okumadığı kitaplar basıyoruz.[37]" (396) This quote is important in terms of understanding the role of genre fiction and assumption of demographic and readership.

This readership demographic seems to have changed by the 1988 edition. The version published by the Cem publishing house features a much more melancholy cover, unlike the wide-eyed expression of *Eflatun Kız* (1964), the female figure here is looking down which indicates a state of melancholy and reminisce. And it emphasizes the part of the novel in which the protagonist is older and is remembering her youth, her time growing up. The blurb of this edition is also clearly written in an attempt to reassure the reader that even though this might have a romance plot it is not an escapist work, but rather a work of literary fiction. The back cover reads "at first glance this novel may seem like a love story involving a married woman but is in fact a realist novel reflecting Yeğinobalı's immediate milieu and the social atmosphere of the 1940s."

The plot of *Eflatun Kız* remains the same through its three iterations. It is a story that takes place during the 1940s and 1950s; a married woman in her late twenties must tell her husband that due to an abortion she had under poor hygenic conditions while she was sixteen, she is no longer able to have children. Having spent the last couple of years visiting doctors, she has resigned herself to the fact there is no other way but to tell the truth. While she is preparing herself for this confrontation, she receives a letter from her cousin whom she grew up with, asking the protagonist to come back to their small

[37] "We publish books that young girls read, not young men."

hometown to visit. At first, she is hesitant but after her confession results in a break-up with her husband, she gets on the train back to her town where she meets her first love again.

In both Turkish versions, the protagonist (named Yelda in 1957, Lamia in 1988) lives in Istanbul and travels back to Yeşilce, a small town near Manisa. In the American version, Tonia lives in San Francisco and travels back to Orleana[38], a small town near New Orleans. During this migration from Manisa to New Orleans, Yeğinobalı employs certain foreignization or domestication strategies regarding culture specific items such as food and drink. Food names common to Turkish cuisine in the source text are foreignized within the same language to make the existence of an originally English language context felt. For instance, a meal consisting of "tas kebabı, pilav ve üzüm hoşafı[39]" becomes "Orleans usulü domates ve yeşil biberle midye kabuklarının içinde fırınlanmış ıstakoz eti ve şarap[40]." Similarly, "cevizli tatlı sucuk hevenkleri[41]," of the 1957 text is foreignized as "domuz pastırmaları[42]" in the 1964 text. Her aunt's drink of choice becomes gin rather than rakı. The box of Turkish delight her husband Ali brings from Istanbul becomes "Mark'ın San Francisco'daki Çin Mahallesinden getirmiş olduğu içi niyetli, kabuk şekilli kara Çin bisküvileri.[43]" (64) In his explanation of pseudo translations, Gideon Toury suggests that features associated with genuine translations

[38] Orleana might be fictional as I was unable to find a town with this spelling or it might be Orleans, New Orleans.

[39] Tas kebab, rice and grape compote

[40] Lobster meat baked in mussel shells with Orleans-style tomatoes and green peppers, and wine.

[41] Sweet Sausage with walnuts

[42] Bacon

[43] Hearty, crust-shaped black Chinese biscuits that Mark brought from San Francisco's Chinatown.

are often embedded in pseudo translations, sometimes to the extent of ‘‘overdoing-in-imitation’’(78). Writers may create the ‘‘feel’’ of translation in the text through scattering ‘‘signals of translationese’’(79). For instance, the 1964 text has four translator’s notes in which Yeğinobalı gives brief explanations of various references to the American setting such as the Salem Witch Trials, and flamingoes. Another example of this ‘‘overdoing-in-imitation’’ is in the description of the spaces, the references to locations and street names. While she is in Maçka waiting for her husband, the protagonist looks at her home notes the “plain but sophisticated” decor whereas Tonia looks out of the window and sees the “San Francisco körfezinin emsalsiz manzarası ve Altın Kapı köprüsünün haşmetli, kusursuz kavsi.[44]” (1988:14) (1964:8) When Tonia wishes to sum up the sound of Orleans, she gives a detailed description sprinkled with references to an idea of a Southern American town:

> Ihlamur ve okaliptus ağaçlarının yapraklarından süzülen rüzgar, otomobil sesleri, zencileri vadideki çiftliklere götürüp getiren at arabalarının tekerlek ve nal şakırtıları, çarşı sokağındaki mağazaların içinde çalan baygın, hafif plaklar, akşam üzerleri zencilerin söylediği, yüreği yerinden oynatan ve bu plaklardaki yapmacık hüzünleri gülünçleştiren keder türküleri. Şehrin önünden geçip vadiye doğru kıvrılan ve Bayan Galanos diye anılan ırmağın sızıltısı…[45](20)

Throughout her intralingual translation, Yeğinobalı scatters references like these to give a sense of the foreign; to place special emphasis on the American ‘‘origins’’ of the novel. Neither the 1957 nor the 1988 version attempt to describe this sound at all.

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[44] “The unmatched view of San Francisco Bay and the majestic, flawless curve of the Golden Gate bridge.”

[45] “The wind blowing through the leaves of linden and eucalyptus trees, the sounds of cars, the clatter of wheels and horseshoes of the horse-drawn carriages that take the blacks to and from the farms in the valley, the faint, light records playing in the shops on the market street, the songs of grief sung by the blacks in the evening, which make the heart move and make the fake sadness on these records ridiculous. The rush of the river, which passes in front of the city and curves towards the valley, is called Miss Galanos…”

This foreignization process also flattens certain cultural specificities and political references that are only found in the 1957 and 1988 versions. When the protagonist is a young girl, her father leaves and her mother dies soon after so she is sent to live with her aunt Lütfiye in Yeşilce. This aunt is the main figure of authority in each version, both as a paternal figure in the protagonist's life and as a governing figure in her small town. In 1957, she is the daughter of an "asilzade" family who had aligned themselves with the military and with the CHP after 1923. Despite being a woman in the 1930s, her high social status in the almost feudal system of this Aegean town allows her to drink raki every night, talk like a man, be openly anti-religion and still be a respected member of this community. In 1988, her background is more or less the same but her devotion to CHP is a lot more emphasized and the social freedom she enjoys is associated with the values of the early Republic years. In 1964, Aunt Emma is the daughter of a plantation owner, her power comes exclusively from family names and land; she has no connection to small town government or a larger political side. Any dominance she has in the town is tied to her own personality, her own ideals.

One of the most interesting differences between the 1957 and 1988 versions is the increase in the number of references to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. I would argue that this difference is caused by the thirty years in-between the two versions and by the fact that one is written during the Democrat Party regime while the other is written in hindsight. In 1957, there is no difference between the Yeşilce of the protagonist's childhood and the Yeşilce she finds when she returns which soothes her. The only difference is that her cousin has married the son of the biggest farming family in the town. With the arrival of this man, her aunt is no longer the head of the family, "Bekir

evin efendisi olup çıktı. Tabii annem ona öyle bir tabi oluyor, öyle laf dinliyor ki[46].” (Serial No. 62) This shift in power is explained only by gender; it is treated as an amusing but expected change that a groom would hold dominance in a household. In the 1988 version, Bekir’s family gains a higher status in the town because of the new government. Unlike the aunt and CHP officials, they have the respect and support of the farming community. Lamia, the protagonist notices hostility towards her family’s once-privileged position, a sense of hostility that is only placated by the union of these two families through marriage. Bekir’s presence in the house protects the family while also draining any of their remaining power or wealth. Outside of her family home, she finds Yeşilce socially changed as well. Asking about the parties they used to have, where she met her first love, she is told that the town no longer holds those gatherings in order to protect the youth.

> Süsi, Yeşilce’de gardenparti filan olmuyor artık,” dedi. “Bu yobazlar Halkevlerini kapattı, biliyorsun.”
> “Ama nasıl olur?” Yeşilce yazları danssız, dans müziksiz nasıl düşünülebilirdi? Gençler aşkı nasıl tanıyabileceklerdi, tangolar olmazsa? “Ya orduevi? Kulüp?” diye sordu Lamia.
> “Oralarda da dans edilmez oldu artık. Gelip giden komutanların falan kişisel yapısı da olabilir ama bizim buraların yaşantısında bir kapanma olduğu kesin.”
> Lamia kendini de şaşırtan bir yitim duygusuyla içi yanarak, “Yazık,” dedi.
> Bekir kıs kıs gülüyordu.
> Süsi sevecen bir kınamayla “Bununla Hacer,” dedi “Zil yakıp oynuyorlar, gençlerin ahlakı kurtuldu, diye.”
> Bekir, “İbadet de gizli kabahat de,” diye mırıldandı.[47] (259)

[46] “Bekir became the master of the house. Of course, my mother became so obedient, she listens to him.”

[47] “There are no garden parties in Yeşilce anymore." Süsi said “These bigots closed Community Centers, you know.”
"But how could that happen?" How could Yeşilce summers be imagined without dance and music? Without tangoes, how would the young people be introduced to love? “What about the military base? The officers’ club?" asked Lamia.

With institutions representing CHP, such as the “orduevi” and “kulüp” having lost their influence, the novel holds a more nostalgic attitude towards the 1930s and 1940s. The word “Mazi” in the title becomes not only the past of this one woman but of a nation. While the 1957 version has no reference to Atatürk or to CHP by name and the 1964 American version does not even offer an equivalent of this political change, these names are a much more prominent part of everyday dialogue in the 1988 version. Lamia even dreams of naming her future child after him whereas in the 1957 version this honor was reserved for Ali, her future husband and in 1964, it was for her father. By 1988, all other male influences but Mustafa Kemal are erased.

Eflatun Kız (1957)	Eflatun Kız (1964)	Mazi Kalbimde bir Yaradır (1988)
Yelda, "Ali ismi iyi isim," dedi. "Ama ben en çok Mustafayı severim. Büyüyünce çocuğum olduğu zaman adını Mustafa koyacağım. İkinci bir oğlum olursa belki Ali koyarım." (Serial No. 16)	Kız, "Mark iyi isim," dedi. "Büyüyüp çocuğum olunca ilk oğlumun adına Michael diyeceğim, çünkü babamın ismi. İkinci oğlumun adına da siz izin verirseniz Mark derim." (37)	Lamia başını onun dizine bırakarak, "Ali iyi isim," dedi. "Ama ben erkek isimlerinden en çok Mustafa'yı seviyorum. Sonra da Kemal..." (49)
"The name Ali is a good name," said Yelda. "But I like Mustafa the most. When I grow up, I will name him Mustafa when I have a child. If I have a second son, maybe	*“Mark is a good name,” the girl said. “When I grow up and have a child, I will call my first son Michael because his name is my father. I will call my second son Mark if*	*“Ali is a good name,” Lamia said, placing her head on his knee. "But I like Mustafa the most among male names. Then Kemal..."*

“There is no dancing there anymore either. Maybe it’s due to the new commanders, their personal beliefs but either way, our lives are certainly not as open anymore.”
“That’s a pity,” Lamia said, burning with a sense of loss that surprised even herself.
Bekir was silently chuckling.
"Him and Hacer,” explained Susi with a tone of kindly reprimand, "they're jumping in joy because the morals of our youth have been saved."
Bekir muttered, “both worship and sinning should be done in private.”

I will name him Ali." (Serial No. 16)	*you will excuse me." (37)*	*(49)*

When Lamia's future husband visits their home when she is only eight, he mentions having met Atatürk once it creates a ruckus in the house that is fueled by idealization and adoration of Atatürk.

> Hele Ali'nin Gazi'yi de tanıdığı, bir yaz günü Yalova'daki köşke yapılan bir ziyaret sırasında onunla tokalaştığı anlaşılınca hepsi çılgına döndüler. Süsi Gazi'nin göz renginin tam tonunu öğrenmek istiyor, Lütfiye Hanım Ali'nin onunla konuşup konuşmadığını soruyordu… Sarma tenceresini mutfağa götürüp ateşe vurmak için ayağa kalkan Hacer, "Gazi'nin hakkı ödenmez," diye konuştu. "Her aldığımız nefesi ona borçluyuz, Allah başımızdan eksik etmesin ama bir de dinimizle uğraşmayaydı!" Lütfiye Hanım hışım gibi, "Sus oradan cahil, nankör kadın!" diye çemkirdi. "Kim kimin diniyle uğraşmış? Camilerin hepsi açık değil mi? Beş vakit namazında değil misin?" Korkut, "Örümcek kafalı işte!" diye söylendi[48]. (53)

The conflict between the secular aunt and the religious maid Hacer at the bottom of this quote is present in all versions: In the 1957 and 1964 it is a matter of everyday practice of faith and in the 1988 version it becomes a matter of secularism. However, in 1964 version, it's not just that Islam is swapped out for Christianity, Hacer becomes Safir, a black woman whose parents have been slaves in the Morell estate. As she is in the previous version, Safir is represented as a close friend and companion to the aunt but the frequent references to the superstitions of her "Afrikadaki cetleri" and to her friend

[48] "When it became clear that Ali had met the Gazi and shook hands with him during a visit to the mansion in Yalova on a summer day, they all went crazy. Süsi wanted to know the exact shade of Gazi's eye color, and Ms. Lütfiye was asking if Ali had talked to him… Hacer, who got up to take the cooking pot to the kitchen and set it on the fire, said, "We can never pay Gazi back for what he has done." "We owe every breath we take to him, God bless us, but he should not have messed with our religion!" "Shut up, ignorant, ungrateful woman!" Lütfiye snapped. "Who has been messing with whose religion? Aren't all the mosques open? Aren't you in the five daily prayers?" Korkut said, "A bigot!" (53)

Cleo who is described as “zenci mahallesinde oturan ve çocukluk arkadaşı olan büyücü” and in general association of black characters with sorcery and zombies shows a lack of nuance in racial representation. (18) (114) While the parts of the town that inspire an awe for the past in our young protagonist are the “Gazi Heykeli, kubbeli hamam ve serin kokulu müze[49]” in the 1957 version or the “Yunanlardan kalma sur kalıntılar[50]” in the 1988 text, when these symbols are foreignzied they are replaced with “İç Savaş sırasında ölmüş olanların Meçhul Asker anıtı[51]” and “İç savaştan önceki görkemli günleri hatırlatan malikaneler[52]”. (1964: 40) If we consider that the statue of Mustafa Kemal who is clearly shown in a favorable light in the Turkish versions is replaced by statues of Confederate soldiers, the protagonist's love for these monuments of Antebellum South does not align with the abolitionist views of her family. There is also the mention of a rumor that an old woman still lives in one of these mansions and having lost all her inheritance and plantations, her only servant remains a black man who is thought to be a resurrected zombie. (1964: 41)

The partial authority Safir is given within the household, the implications that she is the one actually running the house are not empowering but rather playing into the mammy stereotype and is a successor of Felicity from *Genç Kızlar*. As it was explored in the *Genç Kızlar* chapter, the way Yeğinobalı treats the enslaved and free black people in her American novels, seems to be greatly influenced by one of the most read works of American fiction, *Gone with the Wind* (1936) by Margaret Mitchell. Both Safir and Felicity are a version of the Mammy, played by Hattie McDaniel in the 1939 movie

[49] “Gazi Statue, domed bath and cool-smelling museum”
[50] “Ruins of Greek walls”
[51] “Monument to the Unknown Soldier who died during the Civil War”
[52] “Mansions reminiscent of the glorious days before the Civil War”

adaptation; “the figuration of slaves generally as simple, docile and happy with their lot.” in Mitchell’s novel aligns with Yeğinobalı’s paternalistic approach to black people. (Williams 15) Both Safir and Felicity are given authority in the house as in *Gone with the Wind*, “Mammy felt that she owned the O’Haras, body and soul, that their secrets were her secrets.” (11)

There is always tension between the aunt and the maid in all three iterations as she is markedly different from the rest of the family in her devotion to God. However, as we can see in the quote below, the attempt to transpose the Muslim maid to a Black Christian woman can cause confused equivalences such as the daily prayer in Islam being replaced with her singing Ave Maria while working.

Eflatun Kız (1957)	Eflatun Kız (1964)
“Beklettim ama öğle namazını kazaya bırakmıştım da şimdi ikisini bir kılıverdim.” dedi. Lütfiye Hanım ona bakmıyarak mırıldandı: “Tembelin bir işi helaya gitmek öbür işi namaz kılmakmış…” Kadire çorba kasesini masanın ortasına koyup yerine otururken “Allaha bin şükür ki ben dini bütün bir müslümanım,” dedi. “Yoksa yarın ahirette kıllı topuz yiyecek imasızlardan, allahsızlardan değilim!” Lütfiye Hanım çorbaları dağıtmağa başlamıştı: “Benim Allaha sevgim, dinim imanım içinde.” dedi. Kadire Lütfiye Hanımın ilacına doğru öfkeli bir nazar fırlattı: “senin içindeki ne dindir ne de iman.” (Serial no. 13) *“I made you wait, but I had forgotten the noon prayer, so now I prayed the two of them together.” said.*	“Beklettim sizi, kuzularım,” dedi. “Ama çorba kıvamına gelsin diye beklerken bir Ave Maria söylemeğe başladımdı da bitireyim dedim.” Emma Teyze ondan yana bakmadan mırıldandı: “Tembelin bir işi helaya gitmek, öteki işi tesbih çekip dua okumak, diye babam söylerdi.” Safir Bacı çorba kasesini masanın üstüne koyup yerine geçerken, “Tanrıya şükür benim dinim bütün,” diye söylendi. “Bazı dinsizler yarın öbür dünyaya göçünce cehennemin alevlerinden kurtulmak için benim şefkatime sığınacaklar.” Emma teyze çorbaları dağıtmaya başlamıştır: “Benim kimsenin şefkatine ihtiyacım yok. Dinsiz de değilim. Ama dinim benim içinde.” Safir Bacı Emma Teyzenin ilacına doğru öfkeli öfkeli şöyle bir baktı:

Miss Lütfiye, not looking at her, muttered: "One of the lazy people's job is to go to the toilet, the other is to pray..." *Kadire placed the bowl of soup in the middle of the table and sat down, saying, "Thank God, I am a devout Muslim and not one of the godless people who will burn in eternity!"* *Lütfiye Hanım started to distribute soups: "My love for God, my religion, my faith are all in me."* *Kadire cast an angry look towards Ms. Lütfiye's: "What is in you is neither religion nor faith." (Serial no. 13)*	-Senin içindeki ne dindir, ne de iman, Emma Morell." (26) *"I kept you waiting, my lambs," she said. "But while I was waiting for the soup to thicken, I started singing Ave Maria so I thought I'd finish it."* *Aunt Emma muttered without looking her way:* *"My father used to say that one job of the lazy is to go to the toilet, and the other job is to pray the rosary."* *"Thank God I have my religion," said Safir Baci, as she placed the bowl of soup on the table and took her place. "When some heathens migrate to the afterlife tomorrow, they will take refuge in my compassion to escape the flames of hell."* *Aunt Emma has started to deliver the soups:* *"I don't need anyone's affection. I am not religious either. But my religion is in me."* *Sapphire Sister glanced angrily at Aunt Emma's medicine:* *"It is neither religion nor faith in you, Emma Morell." (26)*

This tension escalated and acquired a more political undercurrent in the 1988 version where it turns into an ongoing disagreement between the secular aunt who is loyal to Ataturk's legacy but is blind to class struggle of the religiously motivated loyalty of Hacer to the new Democratic Party:

> Lütfiye Hanım bir dudak büküşüyle, "Bizim Hacer yeni partiyi tutuyor," diye güldü. "Hem de sımsıkı tutuyor! Öylesine ki duyan onu partiden mebus falan olacak sanır."
> Hacer, "Beğenemedin mi, Lütfiye Hanım?" diye sırtardı. "Mebus dediğin ille zenginler arasından çıkar, değil mi? Yağma yok, o günler geçti artık. Bundan öyle köylü kısmının da sesi duyulacak!"

> "Sen ne zamandan beri köylüden sayar oldun kendini?" diye Lütfiye Saru güldü. "Hem köylünün nesi eksik? Kulağıma geliyor. Köy kadınlarına ipek çorap giydireceklermiş. Pek işlerine yarar da!"
> "Tok ne bilir açın halinden."
> "Kimmiş aç olan, yahu? Yeşilce'de aç mı var? Herkesin karnı yok, elhamdülillah."
> Hacer, "Kimilerinin karnı daha tok!" diye dudaklarını büzdü.[53]" (1988: 83)

Safir's blackness and the references to the multiracialism of the American context are not used to say anything about the culture at large. They are employed to carry the reader into a foreign atmosphere, they are decor if anything. Yeğinobalı doesn't have any stake in this subject unlike her strong attachment to the ideals of the Early Republic which are apparent even in the title of her memoir *Cumhuriyet Çocuğu* (1999); a memoir in which she spends a considerable amount of time reminiscing about the Early Republic Years she grew up in and bemoaning the loss of the ideals and culture of that time. However, it is important that all versions of the story offer female figures who take their power from different institutions, different authorities; religion, land, inheritance and Republican ideals under which the young women of the household struggle to become individuals. Compared to many social realist Turkish works at the time these contradictions and clashes in society are exclusively explored through women, and Yeğinobalı's female characters are never at the sidelines of the story.

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[53] "Our Hacer is supporting the new party," Ms. Lütfiye laughed with a sneer. "She's supporting it so much! So much so that anyone who hears it might think she will be a member of the party or something."
"Didn't you like it, Ms. Lütfiye?" Hacer responded. "Government workers do not have to come out of the rich, right? No not anymore, those days are over now. From now on, the voice of the peasant part will also be heard!"
"Since when did you consider yourself a peasant?" Lütfiye Saru laughed. "And what's wrong with being a peasant? I heard they are trying to make the village women wear silk stockings. That would do a lot of good!"
"How can the rich understand the poor, the hungry?."
"Who is hungry, huh? Are you hungry in Yeşilce? Everyone is full, alhamdulillah."
Hacer pursed her lips, "Some have a fuller stomach!"

The chapter that changes most from version to version is the opening. In 1957, Yelda is at a gynecologist's office in Vienna. The narration is from the perspective of this old and perceptive doctor who describes the young woman in front of him as "sevilmek için yaratılmış[54]." (Serial no. 1) He is also aware that he is being lied to when he asks if she was ever able to get pregnant prior to these attempts. In this chapter, Yelda is placed under the appreciative gaze of a man and her secret is seen rather than being shared by her own accord. In the 1964 version, Tonia is at home reading magazines, waiting for her husband to come. It's been a month since her doctor's appointment in Vienna and certain lines come up again and again in her mind "Ehliyetsiz biri tarafından yapılan hoyratça bir müdahale kadını tamamen kısır bırakabilir.[55]" (8) A markedly more clinical statement and a more dramatic start as her desperation is introduced to the reader almost immediately. Adult Tonia's chapters are in first person perspective whereas her childhood is told through third person perspective. This version also puts more emphasis on domesticity. While the doctor's comments are brewing in her mind, Tonia is able to carry out her routine as a housewife; she cleans the house; cooks and dresses up before welcoming her husband. When she has completed everything she has to do, she sits down to read her women's magazines which are different from the medical journals sent to her husband.

In 1988, the novel starts on the morning after her arrival from Vienna and Lamia is on the phone with her husband who is more interested in their conversation than she is. Their phone call is interrupted when she gets the letter from her cousin. What's

[54] "Created to be loved"

[55] "A rude intervention by an unlicensed person can leave a woman completely barren."

written on the envelope makes her discomfort with her role as a wife clear: "Bayan Lamia Daimoğlu: Tanımadığı bir kadın. Maçka, İstanbul: bilmediği bir yer. 15 Mayıs 1956: daha gelmemiş bir zaman.[56]" (6) This version is free indirect speech from start to finish and she once again recalls her experience in the doctor's office but this time it's entirely her inner turmoil that is on the forefront: "Nasıl da utanmıştı, o adamın karşısında bacaklarını ayırıp yatmaktan! Çıplaklığını, kadınlığını sergilemekle bu adamın gizli Havari tövbesini bozdurtuyormuş, kirliymiş de onu da kirletiyormuş gibi gelmişti.[57]" (10) She gets up trying to tidy up the place, "Lamia kurulu bebek gibi tozları almaya girişti." (10) And during this tidying up we see an aspect of her husband that is completely absent prior to 1988. In the earlier versions her husband is an affluent, successful career man with no political associations. In *Mazi Kalbimde bir Yaradır* he is a socialist. While Lamia is cleaning, she sees the articles about the Labour Party in the UK, she had to translate for Ali's "Çalışanlar Partisi." (11) Still a housewife as her earlier versions, Lamia has a more ambiguous position in how much of Ali's intellectual life, his life outside of the home. As a graduate from Robert College, like Yeğinobalı herself, there is an implication that she may have had a better education than Ali but has chosen to not work because he asked her not to thus it is more than their marriage that is at stake for her if he reacts badly to her news.

> Lamia paniğe benzer bir duyguya kapıldı. Şu yaptığı daktilolar, çeviriler yoluyla Ali'nin ev dışı yaşamını paylaştığına kendi kendini inandırmıştı. Oysa, işte onun yokluğu anımsanmamıştı bile. O kendi kadınca tutkularının peşinde koşadursun, kocası ve ötekiler kendi

[56] "Mrs. Lamia Daimoğlu: A woman she does not know. Maçka, Istanbul: a place she doesn't know. May 15, 1956: a time that has yet to come."
[57] "How ashamed she was to lie with her legs apart in front of that man! By displaying her nakedness and femininity, it seemed as if she was defiling this man."

> zengin, doyumlu erkek dünyalarındaki yaşantıyı sürdürmüşlerdi. Lamia şimdi kocasının, bu dünyada onun için araladığı pencereyi yüzüne kapadığını, onu temelli bıraktığını görür gibi oldu.[58] (11)

This new aspect of their marriage, this emphasis on their ideological and intellectual life in the 1988 version causes no difference in the gendered power dynamic between them; it changes nothing about her husband's chauvinism and what he wants their marriage to be. When her husband meets her as a child, he gives her the name "eflatun kız" which implies a woman's virginity belonging to a particular man. But he does not end up being the first person she has sex with. This person ends up being a friend of her cousin, Tufan. Tufan and Ali represent "the splitting of the male in female literature" as Tania Modleski calls it her book *Loving with a Vengeance* (1982):

> Feminists (as well as traditional psychoanalysts) have frequently cited the male tendency to divide women into two opposing and unreconcilable classes: the "spiritualized" mother and the whore. But there is also a corresponding tendency in women to divide men into two classes: the omnipotent, domineering, aloof male and the gentle, but passive and fairly ineffectual male. (71)

Even beyond their relationship to Lamia, in their political attitudes they fit into these two categories. Tufan is a favorite of his philosophy teacher who asks him to party meetings where there is less political discussion and more readings of Nazım Hikmet poetry. While Ali studies law to establish this party and be the head of it, Tufan does not want to join society and become his tyrannical father so he delays his high school graduation for as long as he can. After Tufan and Lamia have sex, Lamia is not unhappy, but she feels like getting away: "o anda evinde olmak ve uykuyla geçmiş uzun bir geceden sonra

[58] Lamia had a panic-like feeling. Through those edits and translations, she made, she had convinced herself that Ali was sharing his life outside the home. However, her absence was not even remembered. While she pursued her own womanly passions, her husband and the others had lived in their own rich, fulfilled male worlds. Lamia now seemed to see that her husband had closed the window he had opened for her in this world, leaving her out for good.

yatağında uyanmak isterdi. İçinde bir kaçmak ve yalnız olmak arzusu vardı.[59]" (1988: 111) Feeling that she is drawing away from him, he cries which arouses feelings of pity and compassion in her: "derin bir şefkat, acımaya çok benzeyen yepyeni bir sevgi duydu.[60]" (1988: 149)

When the dominering male character (Ali and Mark) learns that the protagonist is no longer a virgin, in the 1957 and 1964 texts he rapes her. In the first two versions, the term used to describe this act is "zorla sahip olma", his violation leaves Tonia considering killing him as she realizes how easy it would be to kill him as he lays next to her afterward. Her anger is not allowed to last long as in both texts, her assaulter starts crying which makes him a child to be comforted, to be forgiven in the eyes of the young woman:

> İçinde merhametle dehşet birbirine karıştı. Ağladığını görmemek için Mark'ın başını gene göğsüne bastırarak: 'Sus, Mark,' diye fısıldadı. 'Sus, bir tanem, sus, sevgilim, hiç ziyanı yok…' Kendi de farkında olmadan Mark'ın saçlarını okşamağa başlamıştı. İçindeki acı hisler kaybolarak yerini derin bir huzura bıraktı.[61] (1964: 149)

The words pity and compassion are echoes of her time with Tufan and both scenes imply that what is most fulfilling to her in those moments is the vulnerability of men. As in *Genç Kızlar* these sex scenes render the male characters more comprehensible.

In the 1988 text, this "zorla sahip olma" is replaced by a more ambivalent yet still violent act: Ali insults and berates her in the same way and still forces himself on

[59] "She wanted to be home right then and wake up in her bed after a long night of sleep. She had a desire to escape and be alone."

[60] "a deep compassion, a brand-new sort of love, much like pity."

[61] "Pity and horror mingled in her. 'Hush, Mark,' she whispered, pressing Mark's head to her chest again so as not to see him crying. 'Hush, honey, shut up, darling, it doesn't matter…' She had started stroking Mark's hair without even realizing it. The bitter feelings inside her disappeared and she gave way to a deep peace."

her but he does so by performing cunnilingus. His expressed goal is to distinguish himself from Tufan by making himself the first man to give her sexual pleasure. Yet his forcefulness and his disregard for her refusal, shows that he holds the same ideals as his past selves. The hypocrisy of his outward support for gender equality as an activist and his behavior in private are underlined in the 1988 version when after this violent sex scene Ali says: "İşte bizim uygar, Avrupa görmüş erkek mitosumuz da buraya kadar!" diye güldü. "Hani Cumhuriyet çocuğuyduk, Osmanlı erkeği olmayacaktır, babalarımız gibi, hani kadın erkek eşitliğine inanıyorduk![62]" (192)

Modleski's suggestion that there is a "tendency in women to divide men into two classes: the omnipotent, domineering, aloof male and the gentle, but passive and fairly ineffectual male." is important in understanding gender relations and romance plots in Yeğinobalı's work as all of her novels do offer male suitors who fall into these categories. (71) In *Genç Kızlar*, this duality is present with the aloof, domineering Gabriel Samson who does end up winning the heroine's heart and Miss Bee's childhood friend Ronny. Modleski suggests that in most romance novels it will indeed be the first type of men who will be favored by the heroine and the readers; however, it seems that Yeğinobalı had already strayed from this type of ending with her second novel. While no version of this story ends with the protagonist ending up with the gentle, but passive and fairly ineffectual male, she does choose her first love over her husband in all versions. He always ends up being the one refusing her offer out of a fear that he would not be enough for her which verifies the unreliability and passivity that had made the protagonist give up on their relationship as a young woman and get an abortion. It is this

[62] "Here is where our myth of the civilized, European male ends!" he laughed. "We were the children of the Republic, we would not be like Ottoman men, like our fathers, we were supposed to believe in the equality of men and women!"

pregnancy and the consequent abortion that moves *Eflatun Kız* from away from the conventional romance plot that was used in *Genç Kızlar*. The decision which Yeğinobalı places squarely in the protagonist's agency reveals the shortcomings and the darker side of "the omnipotent, domineering, aloof male". Her love for her husband ends not when he forces herself on her but when he refuses to acknowledge her right of choice regarding her pregnancy and refuses to sympathize with her circumstances.

Eflatun Kız (1957)	Eflatun Kız (1964)	Mazi Kalbimde bir Yaradır (1988)
"Bunların hepsi fantezi" dedi. "Sevmişsin sevmemişsin, bunların ne ehemmiyeti var, bir çocuğun yanında? Sen ki eskidenberi çocuk seversin, bir çocuğun hayatı neyle değişilir?" "Ama o benim gözümde çocuk filan değildi ki daha! Ürkütücü bir şeydi, ayıptı, lekeydi. Nedim'den vaz geçmiyecek bile olsam düşürtmek istiyecektim. Zira daha evlenmemiş -hemen evlenecek de değildim. Bu çocuk benim için nasılsa bir yüz karasıydı. Bunları biraz olsun anla artık!" (Serial No. 8)	Mark bana bir tek kelime söylemişti: "Orospu!" Bütün yalvarmalarım, göz yaşlarım, bütün anlatma gayretlerim hep o sözün taş duvarına çarparak parçalanmışlardı: "Orospu!" On yıllık kocam, gözlerimin önünde buz gözlü, buz yürekli bir yabancı olup çıkmıştı. "Mark!" diye haykırmıştım. "Senin çok zaman dik olduğunu bilirdim ama, böyle taş olabileceğini bilmezdim!" "Anla beni!" diye inlemiştim. "Kendini benim yerime koymağa çalış bir an!" Ama her yol o bir tek kelimenin çıkmazında tıkanmıştı. "Orospu!" (18)	"Verilmiş sözün, karnındaki çocuğun hiç mi önemi yoktu senin gözünde?" "Ama o benim gözümde çocuk falan değildi ki daha! Ayıbımdı, karabasanımdı. Turan'dan ayrılmamış bile olsam doğuramazdım, çünkü evlenmemiştim, hemen evlenecek de değildik! Benim için bir yüz karasından, kabustan başka bir şey değildi, Ali. Bunu anla artık." (21)
"This is all fantasy," he yelled. "Whether you loved him or not, what does that matter when we are discussing the life of a child? You who have always loved children, how could you have given up on a child's life? *"But it wasn't even a child in*	*Mark said one word to me: "Bitch!" All my pleadings, tears, all my efforts to explain were shattered by hitting the stone wall of that word: "Bitch!"* *My husband of ten years had turned into an icy-eyed, icy-hearted stranger before my*	*"Did the promise not matter to you, or the child in your womb?"* *"But it wasn't even a child in my eyes yet! It was my shame, it was my nightmare. Even if I hadn't left Turan, I couldn't have given birth, because I*

my eyes yet! It was a scary thing, it was shame, it was a stain. Even if I wasn't going to give up on Nedim, I would want to lose the child. For I was not yet married—nor was I to be married immediately. This baby was a disgrace to me in every way. Try to understand what I'm explaining!" (Serial No. 8)	*very eyes.* *"Mark!" I cried. "I have known you to be strict, but I didn't know you could be as unmoving as stone!"* *"Understand me!" I begged. "Try to put yourself in my place for a moment!"* *But every road was blocked in the dead end of that one word. "Bitch!" (18)*	*wasn't married, and we weren't going to get married right away! It was nothing but a disgrace, a nightmare for me, Ali. Understand that already." (21)*

The final version is the only one who dares to imagine a future without either of these men for the protagonist when Lamia asks, "Süsi, ille biriyle gitmem şart mı?[63]" (319) Nonetheless, all three versions are feminist in the importance they place in a woman's right to sexuality and to face its consequences on her own terms.

[63] "Süsi, do I really have to go with someone?"

CHAPTER IV: A GOTHIC TALE UNDER THE SUN: THE USE OF THE GOTHIC IN *SITEM* (1997)

Taking place in the rural Aegean, in the idyllic town of Yeşilce, Nihal Yeğinobalı's 1997 novel *Sitem* follows the lives of two girls in the 1930s but with only one getting to grow old and become an adult. In this paper I will examine this novel as a work of feminist gothic fiction that is working with the tropes and themes of classic Gothic works such as Ann Radcliffe's novels *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) and *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794); Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847). Gothic is a poetical notion that is present in all of Yeğinobalı's six novels, however in no other novel is the return of the repressed this blatantly utilized. In *Sitem*, Yeğinobalı uses the Gothic machinations and elements to reveal an uncanny and oppressive system that forces women to the roles of victims and collaborators.

Memory and being haunted by the past are at the heart of this novel. When Cenan, the protagonist, is introduced, she is an adult woman who receives an unsettling letter from her childhood friend, and neighbor Dalya. This letter shakes her equilibrium as she delves her back into the childhood memories she has been repressing for decades; commenting on how these memories were never really gone:

> Kaybolmuş değildi aslında. Oralarda bir yerde, Cenan'ın belleğinin kurcalamamayı yeğlediği bir köşesinde hep var olmuştu… Görünmez mürekkeple çizilmiş bir imge gibi, silik kalma süresini doldurmuş, şimdi yeniden belirginleşiyordu. [64](17)

[64] "It was never really lost. It had always existed out there, in a corner of Cenan's memory, a corner she preferred not to tamper with… Like an image drawn with invisible ink, it had expired and was now becoming clear again."

The reader is never given any explanation or description of Cenan's adult life; whether she is married, whether she is a mother or her current occupation or status; all these real and immediate aspects of her life become irrelevant in the face of her past and its demand to be dealt with in the present.

In her letter, Dalya mentions that she has found the doll that she cherished when they were all little.

> O gül yanakları biraz solmuş, organdi elbisesinin o baygın eflatununa birkaç sandık lekesi düşmüş ama gözler hala o uzun, kıvırcık kirpikli masmavi gözler… saçlar hala o sapsarı saçlar (hani "lepiska" denirdi o zamanlar) ve yatırıp kaldırdığın zaman hala, "Mam..maa" diyor.[65]" (11)

This doll that is named Latife Nisyan, and it is the last missing piece in Cenan's understanding of her own past; its existence debunks the delusion she has held onto for years about the murder she has witnessed. The doll is also an immediate trigger for her memory as it travels from it to Sitem, her closest friend and confidant during childhood. Cenan remembers living with her father and their maid after the death of her mother. When she was ten, a man from the mountains came to their house in order to try and sell his 12-year-old daughter Sitem whose mother was also dead. After they accept Sitem into their lives, this blue-eyed, blonde-haired girl closely bonds with Cenan. Sitem and Latife Nisyan are often tied together by the text, especially in terms of their physical appearance. The first time they meet Sitem, Cenan's maid describes her by saying:

> Gözlerine de bak, hele, mavi mavi bakıpdurur. Hem de kudretten sürmeli! Şu kirpiklerin kıvırcıklığına da bak,

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[65] "Those rosy cheeks have faded a bit, the faint magenta of her organdy dress has a few chest stains, but the eyes are still those long, curly-lashed azure eyes… The hair is still that blond hair (they were called "lepiska" back then) and when you tilt it up it still says, "Mam. .maa" she says."

> gözümden sakındım valla!... Saçlar böyle lepiskayken bu kirpiklerin, bu kaşların karalığı da ne oluyor böyle, kuzgun kanadı gibi?[66] (31)

However, the connection between this doll and Sitem is more than skin deep; starting from the commodification of her body as she is sold by her father, Sitem becomes a precious possession to Cenan. Though their bond is mutual in its quick transformations; sometimes sisterly, sometimes maternal, and sometimes prone to sexual and emotional jealousy and though Sitem often functions as a maternal figure for Cenan from changing her underwear after she pees her bed to telling her about sex and mensturation. Nonetheless, her status is as precarious as the doll's. Whether or not she will be sold again to pay for Cenan's father's debts or whether she will ever be allowed to legally join the family are all out of her control. Similarly, Cenan feels the similarity when she comments:

> Ama ben o gece o bebeği hep, "Sitem" diye okşadım. Yanağının o serin yuvarlağı, her biri birbirinden ayrı duran, tırnakları bile belirtilmiş o tombul parmaklar, o gül goncası ağız, o ipek saçlar, gözlerini yumduğu zaman tenine düşen o uzun uzun kirpikler… Ve o geceden sonra Sitem'i, iç sızısıyla karışık yepyeni bir sevgiyle sevdim. Ona benzettiğim bir taş bebeği koynumda pışpışlamak bana çocuk Sitem'i öğretmişti.[67] (154)

The protectiveness Cenan develops towards Sitem after this moment hints at the future events where she will betray Sitem. As the eerie call for the doll's "mama"; a call that is technically improbable considering the forty years this

[66] "Look at her eyes, her blue eyes. And they must be granted by God! Look at the curls of those eyelashes, may God protect her!... What is up with the raven blackness of these eyelashes and these eyebrows when the hair is so blond?

[67] "But that night, I caressed that baby as "Sitem". That cool round of her cheek, those chubby fingers, each one standing apart from each other, with even pointed nails, that rosebud mouth, that silk hair, those long long eyelashes that fell on her skin when she closed her eyes… And after that night, I loved Sitem with a brand new one mixed with anguish. Holding this baby doll, which resembled her, in my bosom, taught me to love the child Sitem."

machine has spent in a chest; Sitem will also reappear from where she has been left behind and hold those who did not protect her, accountable.

While classic Gothic novels in this female tradition usually follow one protagonist, as Diane Long Hoeveler explains this female protagonist is often narratively supported by a secondary female character who presents the anger and insanity the protagonist successfully represses in herself in order to believably triumph over the male-created system of oppression and corruption, the patriarchy:

> There is always another female character who counters the measured and composed attitude of the protagonist and is punished for being less repressed: The female gothic heroine spends most of the text cultivating the posture of passive-aggression through the two extremes available to her: hiding in a room/silence/repression of her emotions and her body or moving through space in a sort of manic dance/hysterically acting out her assault on the patriarchy. (22)

In Sitem and Cenan's relationship Yeğinobalı makes the choice of dividing these two positions between the two girls, at first, they both contain restrain and anger, successfully balance each other when the other needs it; however over the years Sitem partly due to her age partly due to her precarious situation, finds herself in risky situations where she no longer has the privilege to remain measured and composed.

The catalyst for the girls' coming-of-age comes in the form of Eşber, Dalya's older brother who is studying in an American high school in Istanbul. As Nihal Yeğinobalı describes it, this novel is a "Güneş Gotiği" as such its most illicit relations and horrific scenes play out under the scorching sun. Thus Eşber, the villain of this gothic tale, only appears in midsummer, when he travels from

Istanbul to stay with his family. Sitem catches the attention of Eşber who openly flirts with the young girl. Sitem, while being swayed by his attention, is shown to be aware of her own status and her own disposability as opposed to the power this rich young man wields in the village. Through observing the behavior of this boy she has known as a brother for years, Cenan both experiences the pleasure of sexuality but also witnesses the dangers of being a girl who acts out on these desires, dangers that are less present for her than for Sitem, but are effective nevertheless. As Hoeveler suggests:

> The gothic feminist is a deeply conflicted subject who fends off the blows and manages to watch voyeuristically other women get punished for her own projected crimes. Consider, for instance, Jane Eyre who watches Bertha beat and get beaten. The beatings that suffuse the female gothic suggests the ambivalent construction of gender that lies just slightly below the heroine's surface pose of complicity and passivity. (15)

The complicity and passivity within Cenan's character in regard to the transgression of social norms of sexual behavior is played out in the scene where she first sees Sitem and Eşber engaged in oral sex. She first becomes enchanted by the beauty of the picture in front of her, she places them as characters in an ancient pastoral scene where the rules of religion have not entered yet:

> Bir yerde dehşete kapılmıştım evet, ama beri yanda da, nasıl söylesem, Dalya, sanki bir doğruluk, bir uyum vardı bu sahnede. Bir kere, ikisi de öyle güzeldiler ki! Sitem'in alaca ağaç gölgesinde başını oynattıkça kah beyazlaşıp kah ağdalaşan saçları omuzlarından, kalçalarından aşağı akmış, (kim çözmüştü bu saçları, ne zaman, hangi yalvarışla ya da buyuruşla?) çopur tarlanın o kıraç, taşlı, beyaz toprağına yayılmıştı. Eşber'in belden yukarısı ve bacakları çıplaktı. İkisi de, şu sırada iskan ettikleri doğa köşesine yaraşıyorlardı. Buraları bir zamanlar, bizim tanıdığımız zamanın öncesinde, kır ve su perilerinin, keçi bacaklı

> orman tanrılarının yaşayıp seviştiği yerler değil miydi, Dalya? Belki de o ikisi, o an için, zamandaki bir kırpışmayla o çağa, o çağdaki kişiliklerine dönmüşlerdi ve bunu görmek bana nasip olmuştu.[68] (143)

But when she hears a farm dog barking, she is jolted back to reality. Similar to Adam and Eve realizing the shame of their condition after eating the fruit of knowledge, Cenan is overcome with the shame and disgust of what she is doing and what she is witnessing:

> Köpeğin sesi bir büyüyü dağıtmışçasına, deminden beri bir adım ötede tutmayı başardığım karanlık duygular, korku, dehşet, tiksinti, benliğime el koymuş, bedenimi sarsmaya başlamıştı … Sonra oradan uzaklaşıp bir ağacın altına kendimi attım ve iki büklüm olarak kusmaya başladım… (145)

Througout this scene, Yeğinobalı successfully makes her heroine have a sexual awakening and a initial sexual experience peripherally; without making her ever take action or do anything that could compromise her social status. By illustrating Cenan's ambivalence towards what she is seeing, Yeğinobalı also underlines the conflict between public values and private impulses of her heroine.

Beyond the repulsion Cenan experiences at the end of this scene, Yeğinobalı often intertwines sex with horror thoughout the text. The first time Cenan and Sitem witness sex is when they follow their neighbor Mihri Hanım, Eşber and Dalya's mother, to a dilapitated, abandoned building. In this building,

[68] I was terrified on one hand, yes, but also, how can I say it, Dalya, it was as if there was a correctness, a harmony in this scene. For one thing, they were both so beautiful! As she moved her head in the dappled shade of the tree, her hair, now white and now waxing, flowed down her shoulders and hips, (who untied it, when, after what kind of begging or command?) spread over the barren, stony, white soil of the muddy field. Eşber was bare from the waist up and legs. Both were worthy of the nature corner where they now inhabited. Wasn't this the place where nymphs and nymphs and goat-legged forest gods lived and made love, before the time we knew them, Dalya? Maybe those two had returned to that era, to their personalities in that era, with a flicker of time, for that moment, and I was fortunate to see that.

the girls hear her screams and moans immediately deciding that she is being murdered by her lover Affan Bey. It is only when they see her alive after this incident, only when the possibility of murder is eliminated, do they recognize the reality of what they had seen. Over the years they keep observing Mihri Hanım as she takes on more lovers; knowing her secrets allow them into the lives of the adults around them; seeing how they lie, cheat and gossip to each other is a crucial process in their emergence into adulthood. Yeğinobalı wraps up this emergence in childish innocence and naivete which only exacerbates the darker aspects of these acts. For example, when Dalya, Sitem, and Cenan are play acting as doctors: Dalya starts reenacting the scene of a woman begging the doctor for an illegal abortion. Sitem and Cenan feel intimidated by the scenario Dalya is coming up with and pull back from the game, only for Dalya to continue acting out the scene on her own as if she is a trance:

> "Geçen sefer söyledim sana, 'Bir daha olmasın,' diye. Elimde kalacaksın. Senin gittiğine yanmam, arkanda bıraktıklarına yanarım, bir de benim başımın belaya girmesine!"
> "Haklısın Doktor Bey, ama söz veriyorum, bu sefer artık son."
> "Valla son olmak zorunda, Şeteraban Hanım. Zaten içinde kazınacak yer kalmadı, neredeyse karnın delinecek. Bir daha gelirsen ben sana elimi sürmem. Kasapların elinde kalırsın bak, bilesin."
> Şeteraban'dan tiz, gene de kibar bir haykırı daha.
> Sitem böyle bir oyunda nasıl çığlık atılacağını iyice öğrenmek ister gibi dikkat kesilmişti. Cenan da soluğunu tutmuş, kulak kesilmiş dinliyordu.[69] (86)

[69] "I told you last time, Never again,' he said. "You'll die in my hands. I don't even pity you, I pity the people you'll leave behind, and that you'll get me in trouble of course!"
"You're right, Doctor, but I promise, this is the last time."
"Well, it has to be the last, Ms. Şeteraban. There is no place left to scrape in anyway, your stomach will almost be pierced. If you come again, I won't touch you. You'll stay in the hands of the butchers, you know."
Another shrill, yet gentle cry from Şeteraban.

This scene which appears near the beginning of the novel and is framed by a child's play is a foreshadowing of future events in the novel. Mihri Hanım and her family, are by this point familiar faces to the reader, this moment successfully overturns this amiable familiarity not for the reader but for the girls; it reveals the secrets which seem horrific to the girls due to the images of scraping one's insides, bellies being ripped open and the talk of butchers; but it also alarms the reader for the way Mihri Hanım's desperation ends up being conveyed through the body of her young daughter. It demonstrates the uncanny lives of families who live in suppressed and silenced states, incompatible with the roles they perform on the outside.

The novel reaches its narrative climax when Mihri Hanım gets pregnant once again, and comes to beg Hatçe, Cenan's maid for help. Assuming that the baby is from her newest lover, the town doctor, Hatçe firmly refuses to perform another operation on her claiming Mihri Hanım cannot possibly survive another one. This dialogue is witnessed again by Sitem and Cenan through the peephole they have made on Sitem's floor where they often watch Hatçe. This breakdown of the private space, and the invasion of privacy ties back to the gothic where as Andrew Hock Soon Ng explains in *Women and Domestic Space in Contemporary Gothic Narratives* (2015): "the easy sliding between 'house' and 'home' is ruptured, and thus demonstrates that its exterior threat … so sharply contrasted with 'the intimate shelter of private comfort'" (13)

Sitem was paying attention, as if she wanted to learn how to scream in a game like this. Cenan, too, was holding her breath and listening intently.

Mihri Hanım's refusal to have the baby seems to be a desperate attempt not to confront the village or her husband and family. However, Mihri Hanım already has a considerable amount of power over her husband and the village, enough for her to weather a scandal like this. As Cenan notes a few times in the novel, no matter how many social borders she trangresses she is indispensable to the women in the village who live vicariously through her affairs as such her firm resolution to fight the option of giving birth is confusing for those around her. Eventually she does give birth to this baby yet refuses to take care of or nurse him; she locks herself in her room for months and her appearance shows from a vital, glamorous woman to one who is quickly wasting away becomes apparent even to the young eyes of Cenan. Her situation has parallels to that of Lousia Mazzini, the matriarch in Radcliffe's *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) who has been locked inside her room for decades, reduced to only hearing her children through the walls of her prison. However, unlike Lousia Mazzini, this punishment is self-inflicted as everyone is willing to forget the illegitimacy of her baby including her husband, with her son Eşber remaining the only person who is angry at his mother for giving birth and repulsed by the baby. Mihri Hanım's motivations for such a withdrawal are unexplained until the end of the novel. When Cenan reaches the end of Dalya's letter, she remembers a scene she had witnessed alongside Sitem, of a faceless man having sex with Mihri Hanım in the garden; at first, she had assumed it was the town doctor but in retrospect, Cenan recognizes the gleam of the ruby ring Eşber always wore. With the realization of the incestous relationship Eşber and Mihri Hanım had, the baby is implied to be the result of that illicit relationship.

Fred Botting explains that in Gothic literature, "the disturbing and demonic villain (…) retains a darkly attractive, if ambivalent, allure as a defiant rebel against the constraints of social mores." (92) Eşber, the fits these criteria and with committing incest, perhaps the most rigid social more, he becomes the quintessential Gothic villain. Incest is a theme that comes up often in classic Gothic works such as Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* (1796) where the devout Ambrosio becomes sexually obssessed with his sister Antonia and in Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797) where Ellena is abducted and raped by her father Schedoni. In these novels, the urge to commit incents is framed as a sign of extreme villainary. As George E. Haggerty explains in *Queer Gothic* (2006), in Gothic fiction, these scenes are, "usually dismissed as merely sensational" yet they are political, "It is the nature of patriarchy to make incest, for instance, its most basic prohibition, for unless the terms of familial desire are carefully controlled, according to the logic of patriarchy, the fabric of society will break down." (12) Michel Foucault who famously claimed that sexuality itself has become a mode of social knowledge and control, would argue that this attempt at subversion is not only doomed to failure but also is an aspect of the extension of cultural control that he calls the deployment of sexuality.

> In society such as ours … where the family is the most active site of sexuality, and where it is doubtless the exigencies of the latter which maintain and prolong its existence, incest… occupies a central place; it is constantly being solicited and refused; it is an object of obsession and attraction, a dreadful secret, and an indispensable pivot. (1978 109)

By turning the Oedipal fantasy into vivid and horrifying reality in her novel, Yeğinobalı exposes the process of cultural control and what Foucault calls the

"pathologization of pleasure." This realization mars what is left of Cenan's memories of a happy childhood in Yeşilce which was previously described as safe enough for young girls to wander around at any time of the day: "çünkü herkesin birbirini tanıdığı Yeşilce yollarının gece ve gündüz, her zaman güvenli olduğunu herkes bilir, cennette bile yılan olabileceği düşünülse de ciddiye alınmazdı.[70]" (159) With the awareness of this transgression, her final description of her memories becomes:

> En mutlu çocukların bile bir karabasan boyutu vardır: Karanlık bir aynadaki yansınım gibi, diye benzeti yapılır çoğunlukla. Ya da fotoğraf negatifine benzetebiliriz… Ya da en doğru benzeti belki de çocukların resimli boyama kitaplarındaki bulmacalar olacak: Bu resimde bir çobanla iki kuzusu gizli; bakalım bulabilecek misiniz? Ve gerçekten de uzun çabalardan sonra çocuk gözler çobanla kuzularını seçer, sayfadaki köy manzarasının en olmayacak köşelerine, en olmayacak biçimlerde sıkıştırılmış olarak…[71] (400)

Yet, Cenan's confrontation with her past does not end with her acknowledging her own role as the witness who could locate the sheep that is hidden in the unlikeliest of places; the secret of sexual transgression that defies the culture that would attempt to control, contain of even know it. She admits to her own complicity in the act of violence committed against Sitem who had suspected Eşber's intent to kill the baby. Cenan ends up being the one to see Eşber bury a body in the woods:

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[70] "Because everyone knew that the Yeşilce roads, where everyone knew one another, were always safe day and night, even if it is thought that there may be snakes in heaven, it was not taken seriously"

[71] Even the happiest children have a horrific dimension: Like a reflection in a dark mirror or we can compare it to a photographic negative… Or perhaps the most accurate analogy would be the puzzles in children's picture coloring books: A shepherd and two lambs are hidden in this picture; can you find it? And indeed, after long efforts, the child's eyes choose the shepherd and his lambs, compressed into the most unlikely corners of the village landscape on the page, in the most improbable ways…"

> Çevresini kolaçan etmek için doğrulduğu anda ben onun yere bırakmış olduğu şeyi gördüm: Dolunayın, aydınlattığı oranda gizeme büründüren ışığında saçları yaldız gibi parlayan minik bir kafa, ışığı cam gibi yansıtmış bir çift göz, küçücük, soluk kollar, bacaklar seçtim. Kafa tuhaf biçimde yan dönmüş duruyordu.[72] (361)

She decides to use what she has seen as a way to attach Eşber to herself; after she confesses her love and loyalty to him, promising to keep his secret; Eşber tells her that she is mistaken. He convinces Cenan that the body he was burying belonged to his sister's doll, Latife Nisyan, which he had broken in a moment of rage because it was a gift from his mother's lover. He makes Cenan promise not to tell anyone what she has seen. Finding this promise insufficient, he assaults her in order to further tie her down with the shame of no longer being a virgin. This moment of having sexual relations with Eşber which Cenan had been fantasising about for months, comes in the form of a punishment for seeing and hearing too much. As Valdine Clemens claims in *Return of the Repressed: Gothic Horror from The Castle of Otranto to Alien* (1999), "Violent sexuality, especially male sexuality, is a continuing preoccupation of Gothic fiction. The gothic presentation of sex is extremely unromantic and anti-idealistic." (8) When Cenan returns home that night and learns that Sitem, who had left the house because she thought she was hearing a baby crying, has disappeared. She chooses to believe that Sitem has left them, that she has run away. She chooses to not consider any other option as she knows that allowing herself to suspect

[72] "As he stood up to survey his surroundings, I saw what he had left on the ground: a tiny head, his hair shining like gilding in the mystifying light of the full moon, a pair of eyes that reflected the light like glass, tiny, pale arms and legs. The head was eerily turned on its side."

anything more would not only render her more vulnerable, but it would also endanger Eşber whom she still loves.

With the examination of Cenan's complicity in Sitem's murder, Yeğinobalı recreates the binary that is used in Gothic novels; that of a woman triumphing and surviving patriarchy only through letting another woman bear the brunt of patriarchy's violence; much like Jane Eyre receiving her happy ending only after Bertha Mason dies after burning down Thornfield, the symbol of Rochester's power and leave him wounded and helpless in the process. By being silent Cenan finds the opportunity to escape Yeşilce and Eşber when she moves to Istanbul in order to study. She leaves Sitem's body buried in the cellar as a sacrifice made to patriarchy: "For the Gothic heroine, the house is sometimes not a home but a prison, or worse, a crypt" (Ng, p. 14) However this secret threatens to surface as the cellar will be renovated and Dalya informs Cenan that Eşber is on his way to her house to pay her a visit: "Yalnız şunu bil ki o, geçmişiyle barışmaya geliyor oraya. Demek ki sen, hangi nedenle olursa olsun, bir yerde, herkesten ve hepimizden daha çok, onun geçmişiymişsin, Cenan…[73]" (400)

In all six of her novels, Nihal Yeğinobalı uses gothic to various degrees and in all six of them she examines women's sexuality starting from *Genç Kızlar*. In this way, she is contributing to the "decentralized web" Wai-Chee Dimock describes in her book *Through Other Continents*, as a web "born of local circumstances that shape them and echoing other forms shaped by circumstances more or less alike." (74) In terms of Gothic fiction and Romance fiction,

[73] "Just know that he is coming there to reconcile with his past. So, for whatever reason, you were, more than anyone and more than all of us, was his past, Cenan…"

Yeğinobalı is a “reproductive reader” which Dimock explains is “reproductive in the sense of rewriting the text, updating it, giving it a new context of action.” (16)

CHAPTER V: FACING LIBERATION: *BELKI DEFNE* (2005)

Belki, Defne (2005) is the only Yeğinobalı novel that deals exclusively with the lives of adults. When the novel begins, the titular character Defne is a woman in her 70s attending the funeral of an old friend. Taking place on the 23rd of January 2001, this funeral is of a man named Sahir Eybey. The nature of their relationship is left vague however there are constant allusions to a sexual relationship with Defne constantly comparing the warmth of his body to the cold soil it will be buried in: "kendi rızası olmadan bu karlı örtünün altındaki buz gibi toprağa konulacak ve orada öylece bırakılacak olmasını içine sığdıramıyordu.[74]" (8) Like *Sitem* and *Mazi Kalbimde Bir Yaradır*, the novel is told in a dual timeline; while at this funeral Defne's memory travels back to the 1969-1970 when she was a newly divorced 30-year-old who met Sahir and his wife Beril. While this novel does not have any sections that take place in the 1940s and 1950s which are Yeğinobalı's most often used time periods, it is heavily invested in understanding the cultural changes and promises from the 1950s onwards especially with regards to female liberation. Through the legacies of their mother's lives and unlived experiences Defne and Beril try to define a different, liberated womanhood for themselves but clash against the same.

Belki, Defne is also the only Yeğinobalı novel that packs in many written references to older novels and popular culture material from Defne likining herself to Scarlet O'Hara or Lady Chatterley to the movie *Love Story* (1970). The key text that can help us understand the themes and conflict in *Belki, Defne* is one that is not mentioned in the text at all, it is Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* which according to Elaine

[74] "She couldn't bear the fact that he would be placed in the ice-cold ground under this snowy cover without his consent and left there."

Showalter, "began to point out, in a variety of notes of disillusionment and betrayal, that the 'free women' were not so free after all." (301) In the chapter "Beyond Female Aesthetics: Contemporary Women Writers" of her 1977 book, Elaine Showalter examines the work of Lessing, Margaret Drabble, A.S. Byatt, Jean Rhys, and Muriel Spark who evolved from the female tradition:

> (…) to deal with this recognition of an ongoing struggle for personal and artistic autonomy, contemporary women writers have reasserted their continuity with the women of the past, through essays and criticism as well as through fiction. They use all the resources of the modern novel, (...) but they have been profoundly influenced by nineteenth-century feminine literature, sometimes to the point of rewriting it. (302)

The themes of feminine realism or analyses of female liberation are hardly rare in Turkish literature. Many authors such as Leyla Erbil, Sevgi Soysal, and Adalet Ağaoğlu have dealt with womanhood in the context of twentieth century social and political concern and they have done so in books that were published in years closer to the period Showalter specifies. However, given Yeğinobalı's own literary history with translating and later building on the 19th century female tradition as well as the structure of *Belki Defne* reflect these parallels especially close and make a comparison especially fruitful in understanding the novel. In its treatment of its female authorship, female friendship, marital loyalty and the burden and joys of liberated womanhood *Belki*, *Defne* asks similar questions to Lessing's monumental novel.

Defne and Beril meet in a shop following Defne's divorce from her cheating husband Mete. Defne is a housewife who left her marriage and got an abortion after learning of her husband's infidelity. She considers this to be the start of a new chapter in her life and is more emboldened with hope when her new friend Beril announces that

with this decision, she has become a free woman. Ironically, the source of this hope, Beril is married herself, as a piano teacher who was training to be a concert pianist before an injury inhibited that dream. She is married to a photographer Sahir Eybey. Defne falls in love with this couple, at first her feelings are towards the love she believes they share; their banter and affectionate behavior; but her feelings quickly transform into a romantic fixation on Sahir. Beril pushes Defne to date her step-brother, Fikret Pamir who also becomes Defne's divorce attorney. This setup leads to a lot of tension in the group until Beril, burdened by her problems with infertility, asks Defne to sleep with Sahir to test their marriage. When her plan fails and they do not have sex, she leaves the country with a younger man and Defne returns to her ex-husband hoping to become a mother while Samir gets married with another woman and disappears from their social circle.

The tension driving the outer layer of the plot is Defne's hesitation on attending Sahir's funeral; in order to take her mind off of this event she walks the streets of Kadıköy, Beşiktaş and Karaköy until she finds herself in Şişli where the funeral is taking place. The core of the story is also seemingly about the tension between Sahir and Defne; the narrative moves in a way that keeps the reader wondering whether they will act on their feelings. However as Sabri Kuşkonmaz explains in his review of the book, this tension is false as we are already told that nothing will happen between Sahir and Defne from the very first chapter: "Kolay yolu seçmemiş yazar, Sahir ölmüş, Sahir'le yatılmamış, Beril ile ara açılmış. Ee, katil belliyse sonucu, gereği nedir bu kurgunun,

dememeli okur.[75]"(2005 4) The most important relationship at the center of the story is the relationship between Defne and Beril. Defne's interest in Samir and Fikret are an extension of her interest and even desire for Beril, chanelled into more licit and heteronormative feelings. It is Defne's acknowledgment that what she shared with Sahir above all else was their love for Beril, that settles her hesitation and leads to her decision to attend the funeral: "Zaten Defne de, Sahir de, en çok Beril'i sevmiş değiller miydi her zaman, her şeye ve de herkese karşın?[76]" (29)

From their very first meeting, Beril is a fresh breath of air into Defne's life, who has been raised in an upper-middle class family with a strict but loving father who owns a pharmacy and her mother died when she was very young. Her university years are described as not exciting but also not troubled and when she graduates, she marries the man working at his father's pharmacy and quits her own job. This shows how narrow Defne's life had been until her separation:

> İstanbul Kız Lisesi'ndeki, komşu üniversitenin Edebiyat Fakültesi'ndeki, belki heyecansız ama hiç değilse bunalımsız geçen öğrencilik faslı. Sonra, romanlardakine benzeyen ilk aşkı: annesinin zamansız ölümünden az sonra, ana yitimine karşı sunulmuş bir panzehirmiş gibi karşısına çıkan Meto'yu (babasının yeni yardımcısı Metin Engin'i) sevmeye ve onun tarafından sevilmeye başladığı, o düşe benzeyen günler. Sevip sevilip de sevişememenin tatlı gerilimiyle örülmüş nişanlılık dönemi… Şimdi düşünüyordu da, kim ne derse desin, yaşamının en güzel günleri belki de bu nişanlılık dönemiydi.
> (…)
> Defne çalıştığı bankada, işini pek fazla sevmemesine karşın iyi bir yere gelmişti. Birkaç dergide birkaç öyküsü yayınlanmış, içlerinden biri yarı amatör bir yarışmada ödül bile almıştı. Sonra…

[75] "The writer definitely did not choose the easy way with the plot: Sahir is dead, she did not sleep with Sahir, there was a breakup with Beril. These are all known from the start. The reader should be careful not to say, 'Well, if the murderer is known, what is the point?'"

[76] "Didn't both Defne and Sahir love Beril the most, despite everything and everyone?"

> "*Evinin kadını, kocasının eşi, çocuğunun anası*" olmak için bankadaki işini bıraktıktan sonra mı büyü bozulmuştu? Karısı çalıştığı zamanlarda "evinin kadınsız" olduğundan yarı şaka-yarı ciddi yakınmış olan Meto, evi kadınlandıktan sonra mı gönlünü dışarılarda gezdirir olmuş ve Defne'nin üzerine o bir türlü dağıtamadığı alacakaranlık hal gelip çöreklenmişti, o dalgınlık, o sürükleniş….
>
> Zamanla bu uyurgezerlik hali onu teslim almıştı. Bir sabaha karşı (Meto'nun uykusu bozulmasın diye) mutfakta, sessizce ağlayarak yazıp (Meto görmesin diye) yırttığı *Doğmamış Çocuğa Ağıt*'tan sonra doğru dürüst bir şey de yazamamıştı.[77] (32)

It is important that her flirtation with her future husband; the period of happiness and love is described as being "out of a novel". On the surface this simile can be seen as indicating a dreamy and exciting period however as the novel progresses these novels and the expectations, they have set are interrogated. Yeğinobalı centers this discussion on realism and romance on Beril's mother who is described as a well–known romance novelist and Defne often frames her work in a pejorative way which casts a shadow on how positive that comparison is here. Defne and Mete's novel-like courtship changes into marriage that succumbs to the difficulties of married life and the literary allusion

[77] The student part at Istanbul Girls' High School, at the Faculty of Letters of the neighboring university, maybe without excitement, but at least without any trouble. Then, the first love, similar to the one in the novels: those dream-like days when she started to love and be loved by Meto (his father's new assistant Metin Engin), who, shortly after her mother's untimely death, appeared before her as an antidote to the loss of her mother. Engagement period, knitted with the sweet tension of being able to love and not be able to make love... Now hse was thinking, no matter what anyone says, perhaps the best days of her life were this engagement period.
(…)
Defne had come to a good place in the bank where she worked, although she did not like her job very much. A few of her stories were published in several magazines, one of which even won an award in a semi-amateur competition. Then…
Was the spell broken after she quit her job at the bank to become "the woman of his house, the wife of her husband, the mother of her child"? Meto, who complained half jokingly and half seriously that his house was "without a woman" had started to look for love outside… A twilight state that she could not dissipate had settled over Defne, that distraction, that drift….

Over time, this state of sleepwalking took over her. She couldn't write anything properly after finishing *The Lament for the Unborn Child*, which she wrote and tore up (so that Meto wouldn't see it) one morning in the kitchen (so that Meto's sleep wouldn't be disturbed).

Defne uses changes from a novel to a short story about her abortion: containing the sorrow she is unable to communicate to her husband in a fragmented literary form.

All of Yeğinobalı's heroines are novel-readers and many of them filter their own life through a literary lens; offer observations of their lives being similar to certain novels, but Defne is the only one among her characters who actively writes and defines herself as a writer. She has won awards; a fact Beril often brings up when she is introducing her new friend to friends. This becomes one of the first signs that Beril wants to encourage Defne into a different role in life; into someone more active and outspoken; someone who achieved success and recognition thanks to her own talent. This encouragement, in turn, makes Defne feel indebted and affectionate towards Beril but rather than pushing her towards writing, their friendship pushes her to emulate Beril, or her own idealized image of Beril.

In *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure* (1972), René Girard argues that one of the dominant motifs of the novel as a genre is the love triangle between two male characters and one female. According to Girard, in such scenarios the relationship between the two male protagonists was often as intense and important as the relationship to the female beloved. Indeed, Girard noticed, women were often chosen in the first place, not because of their individual qualities, but because they were already desired by another man, therefore suggesting that the primary relation in many love triangles was between the two men. In her 1985 book, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick expands on Girard's theory and argues that these love triangles can be more accurately reconceptualised as *homosocial desire*. Girard and Sedgwick both focus on this triangulation as it pertains to male characters however female homosociality or lesbian panic have been present in

many 20th century novels. In her article in which she analyzes Doris Lessing's *Golden Book* alongside works of Charlotte Bronte, Virginia Woold, Fay Weldon, and Anita Brookner, Patricia Juliana Smith explains,

> The conditions of lesbian panic have long been inscribed in narratives by and about women. Most of the influential texts forming the "Female Tradition" delineated by Virginia Woolf, Ellen Moers, Elaine Showalter, and others are generally some variation of the and almost inevitably end with the heroine's marriage. (569)

In *The Golden Notebook,* in which the female protagonists, Anna and Molly seek to define themselves as heterosexual women outside the structures of institutional heterosexuality; "their relationship (becomes) unconsciously lesbian". (Smith 567)

In *Belki Defne*, Yeğinobalı follows this narrative: Even though the four characters at center of the novel seem to be stuck in an unsolvable romantic entanglement, Defne is always certain that Beril is the person she loves all else. This conveyed to the reader in quotes such as: "Defne, 'Benim kesin olarak sevdiğimi bildiğim tek sen (Beril) varsın,' dedi.[78]"(163) "Varsın Beril ona istediğini sorsun, dilediği konuyu açsın, kurcalasın! Defne şu anda bunu umursamıyordu. Yeter ki Beril hep, ona böyle sorular soracak kadar yakınında olsun.[79]" (141) Beril reciprocates this sentiment even bringing up her own jealousy at the prospect of Defne returning to her ex-husband. She even shocks Defne by revealing her fear at the prospect of Defne returning to her ex-husband and imagining scenarios in which they are sister–wives to Sahir or even different world in which they could be a heterosexual couple themselves:

[78] "Defne said, "You (Beril) are the only one I know for sure that I love."

[79] "Let Beril ask her whatever she wants, let her talk about whatever she wants, let her fiddle with it! Defne didn't care about any of that right now. As long as Beril was always close enough to ask her such questions."

Beril şaraplarını tazeleyip tabaklarına kayısı koyarak, “Ne kadar bencilim değil mi, Defne?” dedi. “Seni yitirmek istemiyorum. Hep buracıkta, yanımda saklamak istiyorum seni.”
Mis kokulu şekerparelerden birini ikiye ayırdı, bir yarısını kendi kadehininin, öbür yarısını Defne’ninkinin içine bıraktı. Sonra kendi şarabını usulca çalkalayarak gözlerini yumup kokladı.
Defne de onun gibi yapıp şarabı uzun uzun koklayarak, “Bu kayısılar, güzel insanların teni gibi kokuyor,” dedi. “Saçmaladığının farkındasın, değil mi, Beril? Ben tutup Meto’ya dönsem bile, ki dönmeyeceğim, sen beni yitirmiş olmazsın ki!”
“Biliyorum, gene de aynı şey değil, be şeker, aynı şey değil. Dedim ya, hep yanımda saklamak istiyorum seni. Hem de sırf kendimi senden sorumlu hissettiğim için değil. Hiç senin kadar yakın bir arkadaşım olmamıştı bundan önce.”
“Benim de!” dedi Defne, kadehinden bir yudum alarak. İçtiği gerçi buruk, kırmızı şaraptı ama içine ılık, şekerli süt gibi aktı…
Beril birden ayağa kalktı, başını arkaya atıp şarabını bir yudumda bitirerek yarım kayısıyı o mor cilalı, uzun tırnaklarının ucuyla kadehten aldı, ağzına attı. Dudaklarının köşesinden bir damla kırmızı şarap çenesine doğru sızmıştı. Beril bu damlayı dilinin ucuyla yalayarak,
“Hiç ayrılmak istemiyorum senden,” dedi. Kayısıyı ağzını şapırdatarak çiğneyip yuttu. “Bazen düşünüyorum da, acaba seni üstüme kuma mı getirsem, diyorum, köylü kadınlar gibi! O zaman her dakika aynı çatında olurduk. Ha, ne diyorsun, paylaşır mıydın Sahir’i benimle?”
(…)
Beril, “Yoksa en basiti kendim erkek olsam da seninle evlenip işi sağlama mı bağlasam?” diye şakrak bir kahkaha attı. [80](198)

[80] Beril refreshed the wines and placed apricots on their plates, "How selfish am I, Defne?""I don't want to lose you. I want to keep you always here, next to me."
She broke one of the sweet-smelling apricots into two and left one half in her glass and the other half in Defne's. Then she closed her eyes and sniffed, shaking her own wine softly.
"These apricots smell like the skin of beautiful people," said Defne, taking a long sniff of the wine, doing the same. “You realize you're being silly, right, Beril? Even if I do get back to Meto, which I won't, you won’t lose me!" “I know, it's still not the same thing, honey, it's not the same thing. I told you, I always want to keep you with me. And not just because I feel responsible for you. I've never had a close friend like you before." "Me neither!" said Defne, taking a sip from her glass. What she drank was red wine, bitter though, but it poured into her like warm, sweetened milk…
Beril stood up suddenly, threw her head back, drank her wine in one gulp, took the half apricot from the goblet with the tips of her long purple-lacquered nails and popped it into her mouth. A drop of red wine trickled down from the corner of her lips to her chin. Beril licked this drop with the tip of her tongue,

As part of her analysis of *The Golden Notebook*, Patricia Juliana Smith argues that Lessing's characters "position themselves outside formal hierarchical structures of exchange yet attempt not only to retain but even to inflate their exchange value as 'special' women. Indeed, as part of their self-envisioned exceptionalism, they participate in a modified exchange of men with the other women in their lives." (571) This modified exchange of men perfectly describes Beril's decision to introduce her step-brother Fikret Pamir to Defne. Fikret is the opposite of Samir in his confrontational attitude, the ease with which he moves through social interactions and his politics but is often described to be the male version of his sister in appearance and demeanor. By facilitating this relationship, Beril gets to keep Defne close by offering a male replacement for herself.

Beril is an ultimately unknowable character which is foreshadowed in the scene Defne sees her for the first time: "Bildiğimiz bir dilde yazılmış ama anlaşılmaz bir şiire benziyor.[81]" (36) Defne never quite understands her request to sleep with Sahir; even years later cannot decide whether was challenging them or was in fact, desperate enough to believe it would help her marriage. Yeğinobalı only allows a few instances in which Beril is shown to be emotionally vulnerable and in one of these instances, she laments her inability to give birth and mocks her younger self for revulsion towards motherhood. Beril's confession added to Defne's decision to have an abortion, in this novel, Yeğinobalı once again turns to her exploration of a women's right to her sexuality and life however unlike any of her other work, *Belki Defne* is heavily invested in examining

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"I never want to leave you," she said. She chewed and swallowed the apricot with a smack in her mouth. "Sometimes I wonder if I should have you as a sister-wife, like peasant women! Then we'd be under the same roof every minute. Huh, what do you say, would you share Sahir with me?"
(…)
Beril chuckled and asked "Or should I just make it simple, be a man and marry you myself?"

[81] "She looked like an incomprehensible poem written in a language we know."

the legacy of mothers. The question of what changes and what remains the same within the time spent between a mother's generation and a daughter's generation is subtly explored throughout the novel.

Beril's mother is a well-known romance writer from the previous generation. When this fact is first given, her work is referred to pejoratively as "karasevda romanları" and looked down upon for being sentimental best-sellers. When Defne finds herself exhibiting symptoms of infatuation, she mocks herself by saying she has turned into a heroine from these novels: "Sahir konusunda 'içli kız'ı oynamayacağına daha ilk baştan karar vermemiş miydi? Beril'in annesinin yazdığı romanlardaki gibi karasevdalara tutulmayacak, ayağı yere basan aşklar yaşıyacaktı hani?[82]" (204) Despite being said in a derisive tone, this quote also ends up giving some credibility to these novels; hyperbolic as they may be, the emotions they depict end up aligning with Defne's feelings and function as precedents. Beril herself is uncharacteristically loyal to her mother's novels:

> Defne, Beril'in kitabına bakınca, Azade Ümran'ın, Beril'in kendi annesinin, bir romanı olduğunu gördü: Gülün Gözyaşları.
> "Şaşırdın mı?" dedi Beril. "Her yaz mutlaka bir kez okurum ben bunu."
> "Ben de ortaokuldayken okumuştum, annemden alıp, çok acıklıydı, sanırım."
> "Bitirince sana veririm, yeniden oku, çok etkileneceksin. Yaz kitabımdır bu benim. Sonbaharda, Kalp Kırılınca'yı okurum; kışın Hüsran Çiçeklerini, ilkbaharda da Şakayık Şarkıları'nı. Onu daha yeni bitirdim." (262)

As we see in Defne's response, these novels are intrinsically related to previous generations of women, they are shared texts that are handed down. In Beril's case, it is

[82] "Hadn't she decided from the very beginning that she wouldn't play the 'silly girl' about Sahir? She would not be infatuated with him like the character in the novels written by Beril's mother."

her mother's literal legacy but her devotion is individual and personal. Her admiration and connection is shown through her repeated readings; a counterpoint to this dynamic is presented with Fikret Pamir and his father's poetry. Fikret Pamir's father Mustafa Mansur Pamir is a well-known poet and Beril's mother's first husband. Fikret, despite not being a writer, is asked to write a biography of his dad by a reputable publishing house to which he enthusiastically agrees. There is no mention of Fikret's own connection to his father's poetry as a reader, in fact the only reference to the deceased poet's life comes from Defne when she recalls a rumor of an affair from her high school days:

> "Lisedeyken, hatta ortaokuldayken Mustafa Mansur Pamir bizim en sevdiğimiz şairdi, Fikret," dedi. "Şiirlerini defterlerimize çekerdik. Daha önceki yıllarda, bizim okulda edebiyat öğretmenliği yapmış, o sırada liseli kızlardan biri ona umutsuzca aşık olup intihar etmiş; bu yüzden çok romantik bir ünü de vardı babanın." Fikret ona bakıp gülümseyerek, "Harika bir ayrıntı; bunu da araştırıp kitaba koyarız," dedi.[83]" (224)

Thereby Yeğinobalı introduced this supposedly accomplished literary figure by an actual sentimental story; his supposed transgressions only glamorize him further. In comparison, Azade Ümran, Beril's mother is named only once in the text; her novels are and even the content of these novels is referenced but it is clear that she is left to be forgotten by the literary institutions that are willing to uphold Mustafa Mansur Pamir's legacy. Fikret's blindness to this double standard is emphasized in his treatment of Defne's writing aspirations. He often brags about her writing in their social circles but

[83] "When I was in high school, even in middle school, Mustafa Mansur Pamir was our favorite poet, Fikret," she said. "We used to record his poems in our notebooks. In previous years, he taught literature at our school, at that time one of the high school girls fell in love with him hopelessly and committed suicide; So your father also had a very romantic reputation." Fikret smiled at her and said, "It's a great detail; We'll research that and put it in the book."

when they are together with this editor, he does not mention it nor does he ask for advice or help in writing the biography as Defne had hoped.

The underlying conflict Yeğinobalı builds with regards to Defne's relationship to her writing and her relationship to Fikret, reaches its climax when she is introduced to Fikret's close friends Fahrünisa who goes by the name Fahri and her husband Hamit. As a poet who goes by a male name, Fahri reads like Yeğinobalı's own confrontation with the pseudonym Vincent Ewing. When Fikret sums up her upbringing and her life, that story carries the same kind of excess; the same kind of over-the-top capacity for signals of prestige as the biography Yeğinobalı had made up for Ewing in the 1950:

> Babası Fransa'nın güneyinde bir yerlerde konsolosluk yapardı o sıralar. Bizimki bir süre oralarda bir üniversiteye falan gitti, sonra Provence'da, çiftlik sahibi bir kontla evlendi. Şarap imalathaneleri falan vardı, atlar yatlar, erkek uşaklar, özel uçaklar, Afrika'da safariler… Uluslararası sosyetede adı geçerdi. On yıla yakın kaldı orada.[84] (250)

These signs of prestige are undermined through the presence of Defne, a much more honest and yet underrated literary voice who is confounded by the concept of writing in a foreign language:

> Defne, "Şiir mi?" dedi. "Ne güzel! Ben de okumak isterim."
> Hamit, "Fransızca biliyor musun?" diye ona sordu.
> "Hayır. Neden?"
> "Benim karım şiirlerini Fransızca yazar da ondan."
> Defne şaşalamıştı; ister istemez soru sorar gibi Fahri'ye baktı; göz göze geldiler. Fahri onun sorusuna sessizce, evet, öyle, gibilerden başını yana eğip ellerini açarak karşılık verdi.

[84] His father was a consulate somewhere in the south of France at that time. Ours went to a university there for a while, and then married an earl in Provence. There were wineries, horses, yachts, butlers, private planes, safaris in Africa… She was mentioned in international society. She stayed there for almost ten years.

> “Ama neden?” diye sordu Defne. Sesi ister istemez hesap sorar gibi çıkmıştı. Bunu yumuşatmak için, “Yani ben sizin şiirlerinizi asla okuyamayacağım demektir,” dedi.
> Fahri, “Galiba Fransızca benim temperamanıma daha uygun geliyor,” dedi. “Aslında iç dünyama Ruşça’nın daha bile uygun geleceğini sanıyorum ya, ne yazık ki o dili bilmiyorum.”
> (…)
> Hamit: gene de tok bir sesle, “Hem bilirsiniz,” diye konuştu. “İnsan anadilinde söylemeye çekindiği ya da utandığı şeyleri başka bir dilde rahatça söyleyebilir.
> “İşte bu doğru,” dedi Fahri. “Gerçi Fransızca benim neredeyse anadilimdir ama gene de…” Defne’ye bakarak, “Kocamın demek istediği,” diye açıkladı, “kadınca şiirler yazıyorum ben, anlarsınız ya, kiminin erotizm dozu hayli yüksek oluyor, ister istemez.[85]” (245)

Fahri’s statement regarding the eroticism in her work is a statement that is echoed in many of Yeğinobalı’s interviews as well as writing on Yeğinobalı; and yet her comments about Russian being most suitable for her temperament despite having no knowledge of the language makes her motivation ring hollow. In her memoir *Cumhuriyet Çocuğu*, Yeğinobalı remembers that as young girls they would sometimes write certain phrases like “I love him” in English in order to not be embarrassed but

[85] “Is it poetry?” asked Defne. "Lovely! I would like to read them.”
“Do you speak French?”
"No. Why?"
"Because my wife writes her poems in French."
Defne was stunned; she involuntarily looked at Fahri as if asking a question; they came face to face. Fahri answered her question silently, “Yes, I do.” with her head tilted to one side and her hands outstretched.
"But why?" ' asked Defne. Her voice came out as if she was inquiring. "So that means I'll never be able to read your poems," she added, hoping to soften it.
“I think French fits my temperament better,” said Fahri. “Actually, I think that Russian language would be more appropriate for my inner world, unfortunately I do not know that language.”
(…)
"You know," said Hamid, still with a heavy voice. “A person can easily say in another language what he is afraid or embarrassed to say in his mother tongue.
“That's right,” said Fahri. “Although French is almost my mother tongue, but still…” Looking at Defne, she explained, “What my husband means is that I write womanly poems, you know, some of them have high doses of eroticism.”

contends that "bilmediğimiz, (hatta bildiğimiz) bir yabancı dilde söylediklerimiz, sözcüklerin ne dediğini bilsek bile bize yabancıdır; asıl dediklerinin dışında birtakım anlamlar ve büyüler yüklenirler çok zaman.[86]" (103)

After Beril leaves, and Defne returns to her marriage, she hears from friends that Fikret has started a relationship with Fahri. When they meet years later in Defne's husband's funeral, Fikret expresses his disappointment that Defne never continued writing; to which Defne responds by implying that her role as a mother served the same purpose and possibly satisfied her in the same way.

> "Keşke öykülerini de yazmış olsaydın, Defne," diye Fikret, Defne'ye eski Fikret Pamir'i çağrıştırmayan bir hüzünle gülümsemişti."
> "Ama ben roman yazdım, Fikret," demişti Defne, oğlu Ali'nin omzuna sokularak.[87] (309)

In a 2007 interview with Hande Öğüt, Yeğinobalı defends Defne's decision by saying: "Defne boşanınca hayatını yaşıyor ve kendinin farkına varıyor. Ancak sonra kocasına dönüyor. Pek çok kadından tepki aldım, neden kocasına döndü diye. Çünkü Defne anne olmak istiyor, bu yine onun kendi rızasıyla verdiği bir karar.[88]" Yet, this decision being a result of Defne's own agency does not negate the implications of individual sacrifice in this ending. The suggestion that there has to be a choice made between writing and literary self-actualization, and motherhood looms over this scene. In many ways, Defne's story is one of a *novelist manqué*. At the end of *The Golden Notebook*, Anna

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[86] "What we say in a foreign language that we do not know (or even do know) is foreign to us, even if we know what the words say; A lot of times, they are loaded with meanings and spells other than what we actually mean to say."

[87] "I wish you had also written your stories, Defne," said Fikret, smiling at Defne with a sadness that did not remind him of the old Fikret Pamir.
"But I wrote a novel, Fikret," Defne said, hugging her son Ali's shoulder.

[88] "When Defne gets divorced, she lives her life and realizes herself. But then she returns to her husband. I got reactions from many women, asking why she returned to her husband. Because Defne wants to be a mother, this is a decision she made of her own free will."

and Molly do not change their position dramatically; they are unable to live the free life they had imagined for themselves. The novel ends ambiguously, with Molly taking a decision to marry again a rich businessman she does not love and Wulf, who used to suffer from a writer's block and giving up writing all together and working as a marriage counselor. Defne and Beril's ending echo Lessing's ending; The period of their lives where there was seemingly a lot of potential for "maybe"s end and they become stuck in the roles they have chosen for themselves.

CHAPTER VI: WOMEN PLOTTING THEMSELVES: *GAZEL* (2007)

Nihal Yeğinobalı's final published novel, *Gazel* (2007) is the stylistic and thematic culmination of all the Yeğinobalı novels that came before, from its adoption of the gothic imagery to its treatment of social issues regarding women's position in society. She also uses the motif of two women, in this case sisters, who represent two different paths in terms of womanhood and sexuality. Yet, there is one major difference in the characterization of the protagonist compared to her predecessors: *Gazel*'s protagonist Serap is much more conservative with regards to sexuality and believes in the holiness of female virginity. Yeğinobalı was asked about the choice of writing a novel that plays into the deification of virginity and she responded by defending Serap's position as another facet of women's self-determination over her body:

> Bakirelik bir zayıflık değil Serap'ta, bilakıs korunma mekanizması. Eril hakimiyetin ikiyüzlülüğünü ortaya çıkarmak için ironik olarak kullanıyorum. Serap erkeğin istediği oyunu oynamıyor, onun dayattığı kurallarla değil kendine göre yaşıyor mahremiyetini ve cinselliğini. … Dokunulmak istemiyor, çünkü kadın hep dokunulan, sergilenen olmuş. Arkadaşıyla yaptığı hayali konuşmada dediği gibi bakire olmanın kolay, kadın olmanın zor olduğunu düşünüyor.[89] (Interview with Hande Öğüt 2007)

Gazel starts in 1948 in Mirganköy, İstanbul. Mirganköy is quite possibly a fictional variation of Emirgan as it is located in a cove, far away from central

[89] "Virginity is not a weakness in Serap, on the contrary, it is a protection mechanism. I use it ironically to expose the hypocrisy of masculine domination. Serap does not play the game that the man wants, she lives her privacy and sexuality according to herself, not by the rules imposed by her. … She does not want to be touched, because the woman has always been touched and exhibited. As she said in her imaginary conversation with her friend, she thinks being a virgin is easy and being a woman is hard."

İstanbul. The cast of characters who all live in yalis, are the wealthiest in all her Turkish novels:

> Mirganköy'ün yalıları aslında iki tanedir; iki taneydi, daha doğrusu. Birincisi, Çengelköy tarafındaki, köye adını veren Mirgani Abbas Paşa'nın görkemli saray yavrusu yalısı. İkincisi de Kanlıca çıkışındaki, özgün mimarisinin duru ve soylu yalınlığıyla göz kamaştıran, kimilerinin Mirgani Yalısı'ndan bile güzel bulduğu Abutlar Yalısı. İkisi de, yerli yabancı mimarların, tarihçilerin, sanatçıların, gelip gezdikleri, inceledikleri, resimlerini yapıp üstüne tezler yazdıkları birer sanat ve tarih tapınağıydı[90]. (93)

With this description, Yeğinobalı creates a setting that is not only glamorous but culturally and historically significant. Since the main cast of characters are descendants of the people who have built these spaces; the quality of the space is used to create an image of its inhabitants as well. The exclusivity of this place and the interconnectedness of its inhabitants become more apparent when outsiders such as Gazel and Gazneli are introduced.

The first chapter is from the perspective of Serap Andelip, a young woman who is 19 years old, waking up in the middle of the night, as she goes on her balcony and views the moon, we get a sense of her relationship with her natural environment and how she situates herself in it. She considers herself to be a holy maiden, a being whose cognitive and sensitive powers are heightened due to her virginity. When she looks at the moon, she describes an almost erotic relationship with this all-seeing eye, which functions as a figurehead of the male-gaze in this moment:

[90] There are actually two mansions in Mirganköy; there *were* two rather. The first one is the magnificent mansion of Mirgani Abbas Pasha, after whom the village is named, on the Çengelköy side. The second is Abutlar Mansion at the exit of Kanlıca, dazzling with the pure and noble simplicity of its original architecture, which some find even more beautiful than Mirgani Mansion. Both were temples of art and history, where local and foreign architects, historians and artists visited, studied, painted and wrote theses.

> Balkonda durduğu yerde Serap bu kırmızı ışığın kendi damarlarına da sızdığını, karşı ufuktan ona doğru bakan o göksel çehreyle kendi arasında bir bağ kurulduğunu hissetti. Gerçi kendisi Yahya Kemal'in şiirindeki Leyla gibi "gece koyda çıplak yıkanıyor" değildi, gene de, uzaktan onu gizemli gülümseyişiyle süzen bakış, o aynı bakıştı, her şeyi gören, bilen ama söylemeyen.[91] (10)

Her use of the "washing naked in the cove" is compounded with the image of being watched is reminiscent of the myth of Diana, the goddess of hunters who is caught washing herself in the river and punishes her onlooker Actaeon for trespassing on her purity. From Diana, Yeğinobalı takes us to another Ancient Greek maiden, Iphigenia; Serap remembers reading about Iphigenia in class, a story that helps her justify her belief that virginity in a woman has been celebrated and even worshiped in so many cultures in so many time periods that it must carry some intrinsic value. She concludes that "Tanrılar da, tıpkı şu dünyadaki ölümlü erkekler gibi, bakirelere düşkündüler![92]" (12). However, her spiritual musings quickly go from this timeless and ancient quality to a more pressing concern which is that while virginity is celebrated in women it is only so for a small window of time: "En az yirmi bir yaşına kadar her yönden 'bakire' kalmak kararını yeniden pekiştirdi. Ama yirmi birini de pek geçirmemeye bakmalıydı. Çiçek ve meyve gibi bakirenin de tazesinin makbul olduğunu bilmez

[91] Where she stood on the balcony, Serap felt this red light seeping into her own veins as well, establishing a connection between herself and the celestial face looking towards her from the opposite horizon. Although she was not "bathing naked in the bay at night" like Leyla in Yahya Kemal's poem, however, the look that gazed at her from afar with her mysterious smile was the same look, the one who sees everything, knows but does not tell.

[92] "The gods were also fond of virgins, just like the mortal men in this world!"

değildi![93]" (13) Within this first chapter her thoughts are drawn from her own life to that of her sister when she notices a small cigarette light belonging to two people in conversation on the side of the road. She deduces that it must be her older sister Zerrin and the man she is dating; Serap bemoans what she considers to be her older sister's carelessness: "Aptal, gözükara, güzel ablam benim…[94]" (14)

With the second chapter, Yeğinobalı switches the narrative perspective to Zerrin and by doing so makes the secondary female character talk for herself for the first time in her novels, the first sign of Zerrin being a more fully rounded character and a dual protagonist. We see that Zerrin is indeed with her boyfriend Esat and is frustrated by his nonchalant attitude towards the risk of them being found out. When Esat tries to calm her by saying that Serap is too innocent to understand anything even if she sees them, he inadvertently angers Zerrin more bringing up innocence which for the older sister means he does view women in two categories: the innocent and pure virgin and the sexually experienced woman who is no longer worthy of those titles. She tries to berate him for his views and for "taking advantage of her" but is reminded by Esat that their sexual relationship is not one of misuse or exploitation; it is an act of love and therefore mutual. Zerrin's reaction to this reminder reveals her own ambivalent feelings:

> Hayır, Esat'la sevişmiş olduklarını unutmuyordu, keşke unutabilseydi! Esat'la birbirlerinden bir an bile ayrılmak istemeyerek, İstanbul sokaklarını rüya içinde ele ele dolaştıkları o baş dönmeli, balgünleri… o ilk öpüşmeler,

[93] "She reaffirmed her decision to stay a 'virgin' in every way until at least the age of twenty-one. But she had to make sure she didn't pass the twenty-one too long. She was aware that only a fresh version, much like flowers and fruit, was acceptable!"
[94] "My stupid, foolhardy, beautiful sister…"

> çekingen, beceriksiz ve bir o kadar kan-kaynatıcı… sonra elin ellerinle, dudağın dudakla kenetlenmesi yetmez olunca, Esat'a dokunmak ve kendini dokundurtmak (galiba en çok da dokundurtmak) için dayanılmaz, sancılı bir zonklayış başlamıştı etinde.[95] (16)

Two things are important in her admission: first is the reveal of social guilt and anxiety that apparently came with admitting her own desires and acting upon them. With the first line of this quote, she implies that she would have preferred a scenario in which she was a passive receiver of his sexual urges as if her agency in the act has branded her a type of woman she should not have been. The second clue has to do with the concept of letting herself be touched, much of the sexual encounters Yeğinobalı writes has a quality of voyeuristic enjoyment. Her female characters are described as allowing the figure of the trespassing onlooker in Diana's myth, the freedom to enjoy their body and thereby enjoying their own bodies themselves. In W*ays of Seeing* (1972), John Berger has discussed the way in which the display of women in the visual arts and publicity images results in a woman's self being split into two. Berger explains the way in which a woman is almost continually accompanied by her own image of herself by focusing on the representation of the female nude in art history:

> Men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed is female. Thus, she turns herself into an object of vision: a sight. (47)

[95] "No, she wasn't forgetting that she and Esat had made love, if only she could! Those dizzying, balmy days where they wandered the streets of Istanbul hand in hand in dreams, not wanting to be separated from each other for even a moment with Esat... those first kisses, shy, clumsy and just as blood-boiling... then when it's not enough to clamp your hand with your hands and your lips with your lips, Esat' An unbearable, painful throbbing had begun in her flesh to touch and make herself touched (perhaps that most of all)."

As I have discussed in chapters examining *Genç Kızlar* and *Eflatun Kız*, this aspect of being looked at is an intrinsic quality of romance narratives. As Tania Modleski explains in *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass Produced Fantasies for Women* (1982), it is this quality that underpins the ubiquitous use of the third-person narrative in romance novels. As Modleski explains, women as a passive and sometimes even unwilling participants in sexual relations has been present in the genre since its inception, there are even earlier examples notably the relationship between Pamela and Mr. B. in *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded* (1740) by Samuel Richardson which is often called the ancestor for the modern romance novel. This aspect of female imagination has been explored in Yeğinobalı's earlier novels notably in the chapter analyzing *Genç Kızlar,* and Mark raping Tonia in *Eflatun Kız* but it is the most prominent *Gazel*, as it is hinted at from the very first chapters, but it will only escalate further in Serap's fantasies of rape later in the book. These sections and their importance will be analyzed later in the chapter.

As Zerrin leaves this scene and walks home, she briefly considers taking her own life by jumping into the sea and "giving herself to Gazel" which is thematically tied to the previous dynamics; it displays another desire to use her agency to surrender control of herself to a man. Here we learn of the titular Gazel, a young man who was drowned in a late-night boating accident and whose body never surfaced which made the residents believe that he has become a ghostly presence ruling over the sea. Their conviction has been strengthened over the years as a couple of accidents took place; one notable example being the drowning of three fishermen and a young Rum girl. But it is not merely the

stories of accidents that keep the myth of Gazel alive in people's minds; Haldun Abut, a painter who is nicknamed Vango Haldun after Van Gogh exclusively paints this otherworldly figure: "Gazel, onun Gazel dediği ama fırçasının hiçbir zaman tam olarak biçimlendirmediği bir hayalet figür, sık sık görülür, daha doğrusu ima edilirdi.[96]" (99)

Haldun's paintings are surreal, involving creatures and beings that disturb the onlooker which is most prominent in the work he draws of a baby that is deformed to look like a fish.

> "Bu… bu ne, Haldun Abi?"
> "Ben de emin değilim," dedi Vango. "Balık-çocuk, işte, ya da çocuk-balık, ne bileyim…"
> Yasemin kıs kıs gülerek, "Gazel'in çocuğuymuş," diye araya girdi.
> Serap dudaklarını kıpırdattı ama sesi çıkmadı. Tuvaldeki resmi bakıyor ve, "Hayır, değil! Zerrin'in çocuğu bu!" diye haykırmadığı için susuyordu.
> Aslında çocuk, hatta bebek bile değil, dölüt gibiydi, balıkla insan yavrusu karışımı. Ne var ki, baktıkça balık değil, kesinkes insan olduğu görülüyordu. Vango sürüdeki diğer balıkları, ifadesiz, dümdüz, olağan balık yüzleri ve sığ düğme balık gözleriyle, profilden çizmişti. Ancak bu küçüğün yüzünü, balıksı biçimini bozmaksızın, cepheden göstermişti. Öbürlerinin arasında bu küçük yaratığın yüzü öylesine insan ve her şeye karşın öylesine çocuk'tu ki! Serap o minik çehrede bir şaşkınlık ve ürküntü okuduğuna yemin edebilirdi: bir bayram yerinin kalabalığında annesini kaybetmiş bir ufaklık… [97](158)

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[96] "Gazel, a ghostly figure he called Gazel but never fully formed by his brush, was often seen, or rather implied."

[97] "This… what is this, Haldun Abi?"
"I'm not sure either," said Vango. "Fish-boy, at work, or boy-fish, I don't know…"
"Gazel's child," Yasemin interrupted, snickering.
Serap moved her lips, but no sound came out. She was looking at the painting on the canvas, "No, it's not! This is Zerrin's child!" She was silent because she could not shout.
Actually, it wasn't a child, not even a baby, it was like a fetus, a mixture of fish and human offspring. However, as he looked, it was seen that he was definitely human, not a fish. Vango had drawn the other fish in the pack in profile, expressionless, straight, with the usual fish faces and shallow button fish eyes. However, he had shown this little boy's face from the front, without distorting his fish-like shape. Among

Despite not knowing the circumstances Serap intuitively knows that what she is looking at is in fact Zerrin's baby. The scene describing Zerrin having a miscarriage by herself in the hamam behind her house and then surrendering the fetus to Gazel is presented to the reader in fragmented chapters that disrupt the flow of the novel. Yeğinobalı's description of this traumatic event has shades of the gothic as a young woman is tortured in isolation in an enclosed space that is both part of the home and a separate area.

> Zerrin, mermer zemine serdiği perde ve kilim parçalarının üzerine yüzüstü abanmış ve tırnaklarıyla dişlerini bu kumaşlara geçirmiş olmalıydı. Çünkü sonradan ağzının içinde ve tırnaklarının altında, el dokuması bir eski yün perdenin liflerini bulacaktı. Ve o geceden sonra kaç yıl, ne zaman küçük bir bebek görse ya da bir doğum haberi alsa, damağında, çamaşır sabunu kokan eski yün kumaş tadı duyacak ve tırnaklarını, üniversite çevrelerinde bile çok konuşulmuş olan o kan kırmızı renge bir daha hiç boyamayacaktı. (91)

> Kurnanın kenarına iğretice ilişip binbir zahmetle eteğini yukarı doğru sıyırıyor (karpuz kırmızısını kalın ketenden, o çok kıymetli, yeni döpiyesinin eteği, yıllar öncesinin bu sabahında giymiş olduğu), donunu lastiğinden tutup aşağı indirmeye çalışıyor, bükülü dizlerinden geçiremeyince yarım yamalak doğruluyor ve alnından, ensesinden akan terlere, karnının içini çiğ parçalara bölen sancıya bakmaksızın kumaşı çekeleyip ayaklarına kadar indiriyor, sonra kurnanın üstüne dömelip son bir canhavli gayretle ıkınıyor,
> …
> Başını dizlerine doğru eğip ellerini apışarasına uzatıyor ve tam o anda bacaklarının arasından dışarı kayan yumuşak, sıcak, som bir şeyi avuçlarının içine alıyor.
> İnanmazlıkla ellerine bakakalıyor; karanlıkta hiçbir şey görmüyor ama avuçlarının içine tam sığan o şey öyle

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the others, this little creature's face was so human and yet so childish! Serap could have sworn she read surprise and fright on that tiny face: a little boy who lost his mother in the crowd of a festival place...

> sıcacık ki, hem yumuşak hem de diri, şurupta ısıtılmış, ipek kabuklu bir meyve sanki![98] (96)

With the return of the fetus Yeğinobalı plays with the notion of the return of the repressed as she had in *Sitem*. In this body of water that infamously never gives back the drowned bodies, this symbol of shame is the only thing that returns. While Haldun seems to view it in an entirely fantastical lens, women in the novel deduce that it must be a fetus and realize that Zerrin had a pregnancy out of wedlock. With this Yeğinobalı merges the uncanny, disturbing tone that veils the text with the real dangers of gender oppression; no matter how artistically rendered, the presence and the reappearance of the fetus, presents a real threat to Zerrin in a way revealing that while Yeğinobalı can play with the fantastical elements of the Gothic novel, the prevailing sense of danger and paranoia are caused by real life issues regarding women's position in society.

Despite his ubiquity in people's thoughts after his death, Gazel is an outsider to Mirganköy. His arrival as a found orphan, a member of an ethnic

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[98] Zerrin must have leaned face down on the pieces of curtains and rugs she had laid on the marble floor and had dug her nails and teeth into these fabrics. For later she would find the fibers of a hand-woven old wool curtain inside her mouth and under her fingernails. And no matter how many years after that night, whenever she saw a small baby or received news of a birth, she would taste the old wool cloth smelling of laundry soap on her palate and would never paint her nails that blood red color that was so talked about even in university circles. (91)

She clings to the edge of the basin imperceptibly and pulls her skirt upwards with great effort (the skirt of her very precious new dress, made of watermelon-red thick linen, the one she wore this morning years ago), tries to pull her panties from the elastic, when she can't get it down from her bent knees, she stands up half-heartedly, and the flowing flowing from her forehead and neck. Regardless of the sweat, the pain that cuts the inside of his stomach into raw pieces, she pulls the fabric down to her feet, then gets down on the basin and pushes with one last fervent effort,

…

She bends her head to her knees, stretches her hands over her groin, and at that moment grabs something soft, warm, solid, which slides out between her legs.

She stares at her hands in disbelief; sees nothing in the dark, but that thing that fits perfectly in her palms is so warm that it is both soft and alive, heated in syrup, like a fruit with a silky skin! (96)

minority that is described in the quote below is reminiscent of Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* (1847).

> "Gazel'i Yasemin'in babası Süha Bey savaş sırasında, Kars'ta bulmuştu. 'Ermeni Mezalimi'nin yerle bir edip dumanı tüten bir yığıntıya çevirdiği köylerin birinde, kanlı ve korkunç ölümlerden kurtulabilmiş birkaç canlıdan biri, üç-dört yaşlarında, zayıf, esmer oğlan çocuğu.
> 'Kaburgaları sayılıyordu, safi göz kalmıştı sanki,' diye anlatırdı Süha Bey. 'Ölmüş annesinin kucağında. Anne, buncağızı korumak için bağrına basarken vurulmuştu, besbelli, şakağındaki kurşun yarasından hala kan sızıyordu; komitacılar bunu da öldü sanıp bırakmış olsalar gerekti. İyice büzülüp sokulmuş, anasının bedeniyle adeta bütünleşmişti. Ölünün kollarının arasından zorla söküp aldım onu. Bu kez de bana sarıldı, sımsıkı; dört kollu küçük, kara bir ahtapot sanki mübarek, yapıştı mı bırakmayan dikenli bir kara çalı![99]" (51)

His existence before and after his death shakes the fixed structures of the novel's world. He functions in much the same way Heatchliff does in Bronte's plot:

> An unquiet and contradictory presence, Heathcliff can be seen as a trope of radical displacement: lacking a knowable origin… Heathcliff comes from outside, from the other, introducing an instability into the world that precariously incorporates him, and he is never stably lodged in any of the social places he assumes. (Vine 1994, 341)

Indeed after his arrival he and the young daughter of the household Fazıla begin an intimate romantic relationship which becomes a cause of grief and insanity for Fazıla after Gazel's early death. Fazıla's love for Gazel, denies difference and

[99] "Yasemin's father Süha Bey had found Gazelle in Kars during the war. In one of the villages destroyed during the 'Armenian Atrocities' and turned into a smoking mound, one of the few creatures that survived the bloody and horrific death is a thin, dark boy of three or four years old.
'His ribs were visible, it was as if his face was only made up of his eyes,' Süha Bey would recall. 'In the arms of his dead mother. The mother had been shot while she was hugging her baby to protect her, obviously blood still oozing from the gunshot wound to her temple; Soldiers must have thought he was dead and left it. He had shrunk and snuggled into his mother's body. I forcibly ripped him from the dead woman's arms. This time he hugged me, tightly; A small black octopus with four arms is like a blessed, thorny black bush that sticks out!"

the binaries that force them apart. They share an intrinsic bond that resembles that of Catherine and Heathcliff. After his death, Gazel's unreal presence becomes a crucial part of each character's psyche: they live with the belief that there is a non-human, non-deity specter around them that is aware of all the darker aspects of their minds, representing all that they forcibly inhibit. Gazel presents an otherworldly presence or even a threat to the residents' psyche; his lover Fazıla as the unusual feminine is also an othering presence due to her challenging stature towards patriarchal structures. We view her through the eyes of the younger female characters in the novel and she presents a threat, a potential future and are both uncomfortable and pitying around her:

> Böyle zamanlarda Serap hem onun adına utanır hem de ona acırdı: bir felaket yüzünden benliğinin ayarları bozulmuş, gençkızlığını yaşayamadığı için şimdi kadınlığına da sahip çıkamayan bahtsız ve yapayalnız bir kul.[100] (45)

As Serap hinted at during her musings in the first chapter virginity is a double-edged sword for a woman: a young woman is asked to protect it and therefore protect the possibility of a safe and respectable future for herself but should also know when to give it up so she can fulfill her passage into a woman.

As an openly gay man, Vango Haldun himself is an outsider to the residents of the cove. He has a precarious position in the neighborhood: People emphasize their tolerance for his sexuality and his "husbands" but it is also known his wealth and family name that keeps him protected in the community as he is only remaining member of the Abut Family, the owner of the Abutlar Yalısı

[100] "At such times, Serap was both ashamed and sorry for her: an unhappy and lonely soul whose self was distorted by a disaster and who could not claim her womanhood now because she had not been able to hold on to her youth."

that is one of the two landmarks of the cove. At the start of the book, he introduces his guest, a builder named Gazneli who has started living with him. Everyone assumes that Gazneli is romantically linked with Haldun but neither Haldun nor his guests confirm this. In fact, Gazneli never speaks; the reason for this silence is never explained in the novel. Whether he is mute or whether he is purposefully silenced by the text is left open-ended. Much like Gazel, Gazneli also represents an ethnically and culturally other, who "exists always at the threshold, as an in-between identity, remaining forever an ambiguous construct that proves difficult to understand." (Hannon 226) His otherness is summed up by his name and is emphasized by the "şark çıbanı" in his face. In the absence of familiar modes of representation, such as origin and name, Gazneli is reduced to a blank slate on which insecurities and desires of those around him are imprinted.

With the entrance of Gazneli, Serap's relationship with sex transforms into perhaps the most daring example in all of Yeğinobalı's novels. Enthralled by his presence, Serap starts to have fantasies about Gazneli raping her which is described as a desire that has been long dormant in the "dungeons" of her mind (186). Reminding the reader of Zerrin's wish that she could blame her sexual relationship on Esat taking advantage of her, this fantasy stems from a desire for having the right to choose being taken away from the young woman so she can indulge in desires she has long harbored without losing her own view of herself. The use of the word "dehliz/dungeon" here again ties with Gothic imagery. Dungeons are a common motif in Gothic novels; they are where women are locked away in as a way to get rid of them or as a way to get them to succumb to the desires of the patriarch. However, this line describes a dynamic in which

Serap imprisoning herself, in her subservience to patriarchal ideals of purity she becomes the prototypical Gothic villain, evil patriarch who imprisoned the young maiden such as Montoni from *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794).

Early followers of Freud tended to character-ize women's desire as masochism, a masochism thought to be biologically ordained. Women's very anxieties about pain which they revealed, for instance, in nightmares about rape, were construed by Freud as "proof" of women's repressed wish to be physically overpowered. This sort of generalization on women can rightfully amuse, annoy or infuriate readers however, the issue of rape in female imagination has been one that has been a staple in academic research on the genre and even female writing at large[101]. There is a lot of discussion about the reasons why sexual violence or the trope of "rape-and-forgive" as Ema Klugman names it[102], has been a prevalent part of the romance genre; why it has a female readership; whether these tropes strengthen damaging assumptions regarding women's masochism and thus harm discussions of real social situations, but one point that seems to be agreed upon is that "the so-called masochism pervading these texts is a 'cover' for anxieties, desires, and wishes which if openly expressed would challenge the psychological and social order of things." (Modleski 20) In this novel, Yeğinobalı also uses these intrusive thoughts and fantasies to examine the anxieties, suppressed desires and wishes of her protagonist.

In many ways Serap is a more self-aware version of Miss Bee from *Genç Kızlar*; she is aware of the performance of femininity, respectable and loveable

[101] See Hazen (1983)
[102] See Klugman (2017)

femininity she offers in society whereas Miss Bee is more of a conventional take on the romance heroine, a young woman who is perfectly desirable to those around her but is never aware of this fact herself. As Tania Modleski says, romance heroine can never be aware of her charms, her beauty or her desirability; while she is special she is never allowed to be aware of that fact or she would become narcissistic in the eyes of the male romantic interest and the reader. However, Serap is described as being aware of her own desirability and she even bluntly explains it to her marriage suitor. When Mirgani, the son of the wealthiest family in the cove, a bureaucrat who has returned from living abroad asks for Serap's hand in marriage, she refuses due to finding him old and insincere which only increases her value in his eyes. She explains that she knows he wants to marry her because she is a virgin and is the traditionally appropriate choice for an experienced man looking to settle down: "Yeniyim, gıcır gıcır, hiç kullanılmamışım, el değmemiş yani, kızoğlankız, hani, o ne demekse.[103]" (138) She is also aware that her refusal will not deter him but only prove her worth to him and spur him in his pursuit, even though that is not her goal.

From the very start of the novel Serap situates herself in a long lineage of maidens, and strategically means to use this as a way to secure her future, an attitude that is rendered sympathetic by the text, by showing us that virginity is indeed a form of capital in patriarchal society. In the eyes of those around her, Serap's awareness of her position and her conscious performance does not distinguish her from the conventional, unsuspecting romance heroine; the result is the same, she is deemed more respectable in society compared to her older

[103] "I'm new, brand new, never used, untouched so, undefiled, you know, whatever that means"

sister. Even the ticket salesman working at the port remarks upon the pride he feels at Serap's upbringing, even though he has nothing to with it:

> Serap, annesi Nerime Hanım'ın uysal, masum huylarını aldığı için uzun süre çocuk kalmış ve çocuksuz Zeki Bey onu galiba kendi (olmayan) kızı yerine koymuştu. Zerrin'in tersine Serap'ın, adı hiçbir dedikoduya karışmadan on dokuzuncu yaşını bulmuş olmasından Zeki Bey kişisel bir övünç duyuyordu.[104] (66)

With this brief scene Yeğinobalı reveals the intricacies of a young woman existing in public and the communal implications of even her most private acts.

Serap's tendency to be an observer to her own life is also shown to be helpful. Especially when she is persuaded to spend a day with Mirgani so they can get to know one another, she calms her nerves by filtering their days through a novelistic lens:

> Roman okur gibi diyordu içinden… Roman okumak onun çok sevdiği ve iyi yaptığı bir şeydi. İçinde bulunduğu durum da on dokuzuncu yüzyıl İngiliz romanlarına benzemiyor değildi! Erkek kahraman, evlenmek istediği kıza büyük bir resmilik ve bir o kadar da açıklıkla "kur yapıyordu" işte. Jane Austen'lerin, Thackery'lerin yazmış olabilecekleri bir erkek sanki, bir hayli ilginç ve çelişkili bir tip: bir yandan kozmopolit bir meslek ve Batılı bir yaşam biçimi seçmişken öbür yandan evleneceği kızı önce annesinden isteyecek kadar eski-tarz! Bakalım "roman"daki kızın gönlünü kazanmak için nasıl bir davranış sergileyecekti bu gezintide?[105]

[104] Serap remained a child for a long time because she inherited the docile and innocent habits of her mother, Nerime Hanım, and childless Zeki Bey probably put her in the place of his (non-existent) daughter. Zeki Bey took personal pride in the fact that Serap, unlike Zerrin, had reached the age of nineteen without being involved in any rumors.

[105] She felt like she was reading a novel… Reading novels was something she loved and did well. The situation she was in was not unlike those of nineteenth-century English novels! The male hero was "courting" the girl he wanted to marry, with great formality and just as much openness. He was the kind of man who might have been written by Jane Austens or Thackery: on the one hand, he had chosen a cosmopolitan profession and a Western way of life, on the other hand, he was so old-fashioned that he spoke to the mother of the girl he wished to marry first his! Let's see what kind of behavior he would display in order to win the heart of the girl in the "novel"?

With this scene Yeğinobalı shows the potential in these novels as guidebooks for young women, especially for those who live sheltered lives like Serap and do not have the privilege of learning through accumulated experience. Serap even moves her body and arranges her physicality to parallel a novel heroine, and slowly gains comfort throughout their conversation thanks to her solution:

> Romandaki kız böyle bir gülümseyişi yanıtsız bırakamazdı elbet. O da erkeğin yüzüne bakarak dudaklarını aralamadan, şöyle bir gülümsedi. Gülümseyince değişen tek kişi Mirgani değildi ya! Serap Andelip böyle hafifçe, hınzırca gülümsemenin romanındaki kızın o sarı kaplan yavrusu gözlerine de pek yaraştığını bal gibi biliyordu![106] (129)

Again, we see that once she steps into the shoes of this heroine, she can view herself, recognize what makes her attractive from her smile to her eyes. By allowing this twice-fictionalized scene Yeğinobalı plays with the use of third-person narration in romance novels. As Tania Modleski explains this is used to render a vivid and attractive picture of the heroine to the reader without narrative schizophrenia.

> In romance, most of the writing is 'personal,' third person […] few doubts about the heroine's thoughts and feelings are introduced, women can freely view the fantasy as their fantasy[...] generally the third person must be used, for at certain points the writing necessarily becomes 'apersonal,' precisely those points at which the woman's appearance is noted. (47)

In this scene, Serap starts seeing herself as the person she pretends to be thus becoming that young woman, and her description of her physical features does create a picture for the reader, for example the description of her eye color at the

[106] "Of course, the girl in the novel could not leave such a smile unanswered. She looked at the man's face and smiled, without parting her lips. Mirgani wasn't the only one who changed when he smiled! Serap Andelip knew very well that such a slight, wicked smile would suit those yellow tiger cub eyes of the girl in the novel! "

bottom of the quote is the first time the reader is given this information and with this detail not only do we get a clearer image of our protagonist but also brings up a predatory dynamic between the couple. The mention of a tiger cub, despite its infant state, implies that it is Serap who is in pursuit, who is circling and observing the person in front of her. Ultimately, Serap's solution injects comfort into her interaction with Mirgani and renders the man more comprehensible and ultimately loveable for her; the novel ends with them married.

As her previous novels have shown, Yeğinobalı centers her stories around more than one female character thus offering different shades of possibilities. While Serap's method of fictionalizing her own life makes it easier for her; Fazıla presents the darker side of this tendency. Fazıla reveals to Serap that she was the one who overturned the boat causing the accident which killed Gazel. She was a young girl living with her older sister and her husband when her brother-in-law started raping her. In order to save herself and elope with her lover Gazel, young Fazıla arranged a boat ride with the three of them late at night. When she tipped the boat in order to kill her rapist, she did not know that Gazel could not swim and therefore inadvertently killed him. She explains that the girl she has raised as her niece is in fact her own daughter as a result of sexual assault and that it is her belief that Gazneli is Gazel who has returned to take her finally. There is a clear association with Gazel and Gazneli from their names to their backgrounds however in her conviction to read the situation in one way; Fazıla ignores the reality including Gazneli's presumed sexuality. In the end, in her deluded state she ends up killing him in a boat ride as well and dying alongside him. While on the surface Gazneli and Gazel embody the forces of

Gothic fiction that disrupt civilized society, the symbolic monster that threatens the fabric of society that has excluded them, Yeğinobalı turns this trope on its head by making these men the victim of the young virginal women.

CONCLUSION

My goal with this thesis was to create the kind of source I had looked for when I had first come across the work of Nihal Yeğinobalı: A source that meaningfully engaged with the themes and narrative choices in her novels. I first learned Nihal Yeğinobalı's name when I saw that she had translated the edition of *Mansfield Park* (1814) I was reading years ago. Perhaps because of this initial impression, even when I started reading her own novels, I kept making connections with Austen and other novelists she had translated such as Charlotte Bronte, Margaret Mitchell and Doris Lessing. In this thesis I aimed to explore these connections in order to, not only provide a comprehensive study on Nihal Yeğinobalı's oeuvre but also to explore the influence of these female writers in Turkish literature. The focal question of this thesis started out as an attempt to understand how Yeğinobalı could fit within conceptualizations of literary history and canonization; and then narrowed down to genre and female writing as the most relevant subjects to help answer this question. Yeğinobalı's experiments, her literary output can only be understood fully if her engagement with genre writing and with female novel tradition are examined. This examination was my goal with this thesis. I am aware that a master's thesis was not enough space to link these texts, theories and chapters in necessary detail. It was only after I started writing the thesis, did I realize that even only half of her novels would be enough to produce a thesis topic. But since my aim from the very beginning was

to talk about Nihal Yeğinobalı's work in whole, I could not give up any of her novels.

Within the six chapters of this thesis, I wrote about the evolution of the term world literature and different methods offered as a way to study comparative literature. Beginning with Goethe's conceptualization to the responses and definitions offered by critics like David Damrosch, Franco Moretti and Wai-Chee Dimock, I tried to find a theoretical framework that could help situate Nihal Yeğinobalı within a network of world literature. Arguing that the concept of genre was most helpful in understanding her kinship with novelists from different eras, different national backgrounds; I aimed to analyze her novels and offer close readings that revealed the extent and meaning of these connections. With the comparisons I drew, I tried specifically to not assume or imply a hierarchical relationship between these works: I do not consider *Belki Defne* to be a Turkish *Golden Notebook* or consider *Sitem* and *Gazel* to be belated responses to the tradition of the Female Gothic. Removing considerations of predecessors and descendants, allowed me to focus on the texts themselves. By looking at the texts; I argued that from the start of her career Yeğinobalı examines the potentials of female sexuality and pleasure as it pertains to her female characters as well as to the romance genre which has historically been discussed as a way to appeal to female readers and their desires. While *Genç Kızlar* and *Eflatun Kız* work well within the borders of this genre, with *Sitem,* Yeğinobalı leans heavily on uses of gothic machinations adultery, imprisonment, and murder as a way to clarify and reclaim gothic conventions in distinctly political, feminist ways. By her association with both genres,

Yeğinobalı exposes the negotiation of women's public chastity and private sexuality; through the figures of Sitem and Gazel, she displays the full extent of their creative or destructive powers of the repressed.

Nihal Yeğinobalı's exploration of plural and sometimes contradictory experiences of inhabiting a female body or a body that society perceives as feminine should be considered an indispensable part of female writing in Turkish. I chose to consider her work by looking at the affinities between texts not through national literatures but through genres. There is so much more that can be done with her work and there are many more female novelists in Turkish who deserve to be read and analyzed in detail. I hope this thesis can be a meaningful contribution to such an endeavor.

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