

**Representing Censored Pasts: State-Violence in Twentieth Century Turkish and Spanish Literature**

by

Başak Çandar

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
(Comparative Literature)  
in the University of Michigan  
2014

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Kader Konuk, Co-Chair, Universität Duisburg-Essen  
Professor Cristina Moreiras-Menor, Co-Chair  
Associate Professor Gottfried J. Hagen  
Professor Anton Shammass

*To the extraordinary memory of my grandmother, Saffet “Safko” Çandar,  
who taught me my words.*

## Acknowledgements

This dissertation began in earnest in 2007 in Barcelona, after one of the most spectacular summers of my life. We had assumed that it would take much shorter and that it would end in Turkey. We were amiss, but I would still like to begin by thanking the memory of that uphill walk, which began this journey.

Throughout the past six years, my committee has been an invaluable source of support and wisdom and I thank them for all their help and kindness. Kader was the reason I came to the University of Michigan, and her brilliant scholarship, her ability to alert me to the most unexpected connections and her friendship have helped me immensely and meant more to me than I can describe here. Despite her busy schedule as the Chair of the Romance Languages Department, Cristina has taken the time to comment on my work and listen to my ideas. I cannot thank her enough for her encouragement and support, without which I would have never ventured into Spanish literature. The classes I have taken with Gottfried and our conversations have been incredibly informative for me. I thank him for sharing his thoughts with me and for his patience, especially with my chapter on *Kar*. Anton has been a constant in my life since the day I began this PhD program. His teaching and his scholarship had a crucial role in my curiosity in this topic and without him I would certainly be living a different, much less interesting life, not the least because he is also indirectly responsible for my meeting Chris. I will miss him dearly and I will always cherish our friendship. I also want to thank Professors Yago Colas, Tatjana Aleksic and Elizabeth Wingrove, who

have been sources of personal and scholarly inspiration and whose friendship I deeply appreciate.

I thank the University of Michigan's Department of Comparative Literature for their continued support, without which this dissertation certainly would not be possible. Nancy Harris has been an endless source of information and kindness, and without her I would not have been able to navigate this process even half as well. I thank her also for meeting me after my very late arrival in Ann Arbor some seven years ago. Mama-duck, you are amazing!

I thank the Barbour Scholarship for providing me with a year in which I could concentrate on my research. During the 2012-2013 academic year, I was a fellow at the University of Michigan's Institute for Humanities, which provided me with a space in which I could work in dialogue and collaboration with other scholars, some of whom have become dear friends. My crook mates Alison DeSimone, Sara Jackson, Brandon Wright, and Rebecca Porte (who has been my favorite person for a very long time): nailed it!

My Ann Arbor friends have been the best comrades. I thank them especially for all the fun we have had even while writing our dissertations: Chris Meade, Shannon Winston, Mei-Chen Pan, Spencer Hawkins, Gen Creedon, Jessica Moorman, Olga Greco (Prawn par excellence), Richard and Anna Pierre, Amr Kamal, Will Runyan: I will miss you all so much. Rostom, I am not entirely sure how I will manage without you, but at least I will always have the memory of your attire on the day I finally got

my driver's license. I also want to thank Mike Kicey, who is my personal hero in many ways. His very patient and thorough comments on my first chapter have informed the way I conceptualized the rest of this project. All parts of this dissertation are indebted to the many conversations I have had with my non-nationalists in arms in Ann Arbor: Neveser Köker, Ali Bolcakan, and Duygu Ula. And finally, YOSE: For a Degree!

I also want to thank John Gasparini and Dan Freeborn – they were so young when they were my teachers, but they are still the teachers I aspire to be every time I step into the classroom.

I had never thought I would one day have an American family, but I do and they are the best second family anyone could have asked for. They have all made my life so much better and so much more entertaining in the past four years. I cannot wait to have many more with them.

My camaraderie with my friends in Turkey has been the most surprising constant in my life. I have been away for so long, and yet they are where I feel most at home. I especially thank them for their patience with a friend who always leaves, and for their teasing, which makes me a better and more inquisitive person. I cannot think of a "me" without them – or at least I do not want to. This dissertation has come at the expense of a reunion with Berkay and Başak, and owes an apology to them. I thank Erdem for all the dancing. Anıl, see above. Most of all and haliyle, I thank Sanem

Gürus Tanyar and Zeynep Darendeliler, who know, understand and, most importantly, criticize me best. I cannot wait for the next reunion, wherever it may be.

My conversations with Tuba and Cengiz Çandar lurk behind these chapters. I can only hope to reach their erudition and match their intellectual curiosity one day. My parents Hülya Çandar and Volkan Çandar have been the best parents imaginable as usual, tirelessly traveling back and forth between Istanbul and cities I happen in that are always more than a direct flight away. They are still slightly confused about the title of the dissertation, but proud of it nevertheless.

Last but certainly not least, I thank Chris - who is my best and without whom I would have given up long time ago. Parks and lots.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Dedication</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapters:</b>	
<b>1. Representing Torture Fictionally: <i>Yaralısm</i></b>	<b>23</b>
Torture Narratives	23
Agency Through Realism	40
Fictionalizing the Inexpressibility of Pain	48
The Dynamics of Representing Torture	52
<b>2. Writing into Pitfalls: <i>Si te dicen que caí</i></b>	<b>59</b>
Writing into pitfalls	59
The Self-Conscious Narrative	66
Storytelling and Violence	74
Representations and Re-presentations of Torture	78
<b>3. Murderous Theater: Violence and Performance in Orhan Pamuk's <i>Kar</i></b>	<b>90</b>
The Literary and the Political	92
A Prescient State/God and its Self-Fulfilling Prophecies	101
Reenactments of Violence	105
Staged Revolution	116
Layered Representations: The Allegorical Impulse	120

<b>4. Between Fiction and History: Juan Goytisolo</b>	<b>130</b>
The Passing Foreigner	134
The Sarajevo Notebook	150
Promises and Limits of Fiction: <i>El sitio de los sitios</i>	158
Violence Elsewhere	168
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>177</b>



## Abstract

*Representing Censored Pasts: State Violence in Twentieth Century Turkish and Spanish Literature* examines literary representations of state-violence in Turkish and Spanish literature through an analysis of five works from the second-half of the twentieth century: *Yaralısın (You Are Wounded)* by Erdal Öz, *Si te dicen que caí (The Fallen)* by Juan Marsé, *Kar (Snow)* by Orhan Pamuk, and *Cuaderno de Sarajevo (Sarajevo Notebook)* and *El sitio de los sitios (State of Siege)* by Juan Goytisolo. While the first two works were written under repressive regimes, the rest are examples from after transitions to democracy. I focus on the challenges of fictionalizing historical traumas, which magnify tensions inherent to literature between fiction and reality, imagination and history. I contend that the works that thematize these difficulties provide the most effective representations by confronting readers with the same dilemmas that trouble their fictional frameworks. Such representations problematize their connections to reality, emphasizing their capacity to expose and reflect on historical contexts.

Individual chapters analyze the ways in which each work negotiates the challenges of fictionalizing state-violence, articulated through the theories of Elaine Scarry, J.M. Coetzee and Shoshana Felman. In these chapters, I am concerned with the the dynamic relationship between state-violence and its literary representations. Through an analysis of these representations, I offer a reflection on the different uses and functions of realism in these works, as well as the links between realism and reenactment.

This project offers a new comparative perspective. Turkey and Spain are not considered within a center-periphery model, or in a hierarchical relationship in which one is the model for

the other, but rather function as alternative voices within Comparative and World Literature that speak to each other from the geographical margins of Europe. Literary production in Turkey and Spain is fueled by national and cultural histories obsessed with a violent past that continues to assert its power in the present even after transitions into democracy. Based on this background, this comparison pushes back against the East/West divide by refusing to conceptualize either context as representative of East or West, arguing instead for equivalence within the comparative framework.

## Introduction

Cons-tan-ti-no-pla está cons-tan-ti-no-po-li-za  
 ¿Quién la des-cons-tan-ti-no-po-li-za-rá?  
 El des-cons-tan-ti-no-po-li-za-dor que la  
                   des-cons-tan-ti-no-po-li-ce,  
 buen des-cons-tan-ti-no-po-li-za-dor será  
                   — Juan Goytisolo<sup>1</sup>

Spanish author Juan Goytisolo concludes his review of Orhan Pamuk’s fourth novel *Kara Kitap* (*The Black Book*) with the tongue twister quoted above. For Goytisolo, the tongue twister captures the novel’s labyrinthine structure and its rich complexities. At the end, he calls Pamuk a “buen des-cons-tan-ti-no-po-li-za-dor,” a good de-constantinopolizer. As these are the concluding remarks of the review, there are no explanations on what this might mean. What does it mean to de-constantinopolize, and what does it mean especially when the de-constantinopolizer is a life-long habitant of Constantinople?<sup>2</sup>

Constantinople, the Spanish word for Constantinopolis, is a politically charged word. Although Istanbul was called Constantinopolis for centuries - the city of Constantine - both during its history as the capital of the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman Empire, following the founding of the Turkish nation-state the city’s name officially changed to Istanbul in 1930, the old title becoming anathema. The Turkish distaste for the name even gave inspiration to a song in

---

<sup>1</sup> Juan Goytisolo, “*El libro negro de Orhan Pamuk: Constantinople Constantinopolizada*,” *Quimera* 207–208 (2001): 200.

<sup>2</sup> The Turkish translation of the work does not even attempt to render “Constantinople Constantinopolizada” into Turkish, leaving the title instead as “Orhan Pamuk’s *The Black Book*.” It similarly leaves the “de” prefix in “deconstantinopolizador” as is, with a note that explains the word is only designed to rhyme and does not have a meaning. However, although in Spanish and English the prefix suggests an undoing, as in “de-construction,” or “de-familiarize,” in Turkish the prefix has no such function and appears foreign, truly meaningless. See Juan Goytisolo, “Orhan Pamuk’un *Kara Kitap*’ı,” trans. Gül Işık. *Defter* 9.27 (1996): 94.

the 1950s that had its own tongue twister.<sup>3</sup> In fact, today one cannot hope to call the city Constantinople in Turkey and claim neutrality: the non-academic uses of the word are considered attempts to undermine the city's "Turkishness," instead championing its Greek past. Of course, the city has been neither Turkish nor Greek but cosmopolitan for centuries, and it went by many names that traveled between different languages: Konstantinoúpolis, Konstantiniyye, Stamboul or Islambol, just to name a few.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, the name "Istanbul" itself derives from the Greek in an ironic demonstration of the constructedness of national histories that claim pure lineages. Who will de-constantinopolize Constantinople, asks the tongue twister. For Goytisolo, it will be someone who can de-nationalize it, instead reclaiming its cosmopolitanism. Pamuk is a "buen deconstantinopolizador" because, like the tongue-twister itself, he can take the city and reconceptualize it through a non-nationalist framework.

Goytisolo's tongue-twister that names, unnames, and renames Constantinople, an already charged name within the Turkish national(ist) history, is especially pertinent for this project that analyzes twentieth century Turkish and Spanish literary representations of state-violence. Not only because it idiosyncratically combines these two cultural contexts, Spanish and Turkish, that are rarely brought together, but also because it playfully gestures towards a de-familiarization and reconceptualization through its evocation of a process of "deconstantinopolizarization." While the word itself might not mean much beyond its enunciatory difficulty, I use it here to mark a practice of challenging nationalist discourses and narratives. The works in this project also defamiliarize and reconceptualize national discourses by challenging official histories through their desire to give voice to silenced stories. In both the Turkish and Spanish contexts,

---

<sup>3</sup> Titled "Istanbul (Not Constantinople), the song's most famous verse repeats: "Istanbul was Constantinople, now it's Istanbul, not Constantinople, been a long time gone, Constantinople."

<sup>4</sup> Demetrius John Georgacas, "The Names of Constantinople." *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 78 (1947): 347–367. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/283503>.

these silenced stories could be multiplied to include many different perspectives. An obvious exclusion in this project is the literatures produced by minorities and/or in minority languages in Turkey and Spain. This exclusion is certainly not due to these works' insignificance, but on the contrary, to the depth and vastness of the subject that simply fell outside of the scope of this project. Instead, I offer analyses of texts that deal with state-violence and mechanisms of repression, which were, of course, directly responsible for the repression of minorities in both contexts.

In the following chapters, I look at two novels from Turkey and a novel and essay collection from Spain. All of these works position themselves against the national and nationalist histories from which they emerge, and in that sense it is reductive, and perhaps even impossible, to see them independently of their national contexts. However, this project maintains that the comparison of these literary works from two disparate contexts will provide insights about the project of representing state-violence fictionally that would not be available were we to look at the works in isolation, solely within their national-contexts. This is, then, a Comparative and World Literature project that approaches Turkish and Spanish representations of state-violence in a historical, contextual, specific and yet comparative manner.

The two novels I consider from Turkey are *Yaralısın (You Are Wounded)* by Erdal Öz and *Kar (Snow)* by Orhan Pamuk. From Spain, I look at Juan Marsé's *Si te dicen que caí (The Fallen)*, and three works by Juan Goytisolo: a short essay titled "Aproximaciones a Gaudí en Capadocia" ("Approaching Gaudí in Cappadocia"), a collection of essays chronicling the siege of Sarajevo, *Cuaderno de Sarajevo (The Sarajevo Notebook)* and its fictional counterpart *El sitio de los sitios (The State of Siege)*. There is an abundance of Turkish and Spanish works that deal with state-violence and many other pairings would have been possible. I chose these texts because

they demonstrate the challenges of fictional representations of violence especially well. In these chapters, I do not offer prescriptive analyses that show *how* state violence should be represented – instead I am interested in examining the dynamic aspect of the relationship between literature and political repression, exposing the ways in which State repression influences literary representations and representation negotiates the binaries and discourses established by repressive regimes. There are always comparative, transnational dialogues going on in literature, but we may not necessarily know what they are or what they could be, unless we read works across national boundaries, language barriers, and historical periods. Comparative Literature and comparative projects such as this one highlight these dialogues and interactions.

### **Terms of Comparison: Spain and Turkey**

Admittedly, this is not a comparison that develops through points of contact between two literary contexts. Although I am personally interested in the interactions between Turkish and Spanish authors such as the review with which I began the introduction, this project does not explore the reception of each literary context in the other. Neither is it an exploration of the kinds of repression experienced in each country. The Turkey-Spain comparison appears most frequently in works of political science, where the autonomous model Spain adopted in 1978 appears either as a viable option for the minorities in Turkey or as a “danger” that Turkey should avoid at all costs for its national unity. The Gezi Protests of the past year in Turkey were also frequently compared to the street protests in Spain, most notably to the Indignados movement. Again, while personally engaged in these reflections, here I am not offering a political analysis but a literary one that focuses on texts that respond to political repression in each context. In my

comparison of Turkish and Spanish literature, I by no means offer one context as the model for the other. In fact, this is precisely the kind of comparative model this project challenges.

In bringing Spain and Turkey together, my project removes these literary contexts from a regional or unicultural consideration to comparatively study the relationship between literature and political violence. The comparison pushes back against the East/West divide by refusing to conceptualize Spain as the “Western” component and Turkey as a representative of the “East,” arguing instead for an equivalence within the comparative framework and pointing out the ways in which these categories of East and West always emerge as ambivalent and changing within Turkish and Spanish cultural histories. Against the background of a “Western Europe,” whose cultural capital puts it at the center of the “West,” both Turkey and Spain appear as peripheral, always insufficiently European. This is the instability that underlies this particular comparison: instead of working within the more familiar center-periphery binary, this project can be more appropriately said to function within a periphery-periphery frame. But even this periphery claim becomes doubtful if the perspective is not stereotypically “Western,” but from Latin America or South Africa, for instance. Given the historical privileging of Europe within the Humanities, geographical proximity and the increased interactions that come with that proximity might make Spain and Turkey seem much less peripheral than literary contexts farther removed from Western Europe. And yet, Turkey and Spain simultaneously emerge as *more* peripheral, or *doubly* peripheral, because their histories do not neatly correspond to a center-periphery binary as it exists within the colonial framework of metropolis-colony. I dwell on this point not because I am trying to make the Turkey and Spain comparison seem singular, but to emphasize the clear inadequacy of these oft-repeated binaries in Comparative Literature, such as center-periphery, East and West.

A comparison of Turkey and Spain also urges us to think about terms of comparison as methodology, and reveals what we can gain through comparisons that are not conceptualized through the already established frameworks. Turkey and Spain are both Mediterranean countries with experiences of repressive, military regimes veering to the right, which distinguishes them from the experience of the Communist Bloc, which is far more widely studied in terms of the relationship between political violence and literature. European fascism either collapsed or became subsumed under the Communist Bloc as a result of World War II: both Spain and Turkey, however, opted to stay out of the Second World War. One inadvertent result was the persistence of fascist and military regimes in both contexts. In both contexts, the nation-state constructed and sustained itself via the repression of Islamic heritage, as evidenced by the rejection of the experience of Al-Andalus in Spain, and the severing of cultural ties with the Ottoman past in Turkey. Language politics have followed a similar trajectory, both Spanish and Turkish reinventing themselves through the elimination of Arabic words and the linguistic influence of Islam.<sup>5</sup> Geographically, Spain and Turkey are relatively close, but they are distant enough that their literary contexts have had few enough contacts that the similarities between their literary treatments of state-violence become more meaningful and significant. The similarities between the ways that these literatures treat state violence can offer significant insights about the relationship between political repression and literature, which has not been discussed with these experiences in mind.

A study of the relationship between political violence and representation undoubtedly draws from the scholarship on the Holocaust and the limits of representation that this scholarship emphasized. My work is indebted to Holocaust and Trauma Studies but there is no explicit

---

<sup>5</sup> I am grateful to Gottfried Hagen and Anton Shammass for bringing these points to my attention.



consideration of the experience of Holocaust in the following chapters. The principal reason for this omission is my desire to look at representations of political violence in the Turkish and Spanish contexts. Authors like Antonio Muñoz Molina from Spain have engaged with the Holocaust in their fictional works – Molina’s *Sefarad* being one example - and Jorge Semprun wrote about the difficulties of representing his experiences as a survivor of the Holocaust in his work *Literature or Life*. Semprun’s ideas in this book, especially his contention that fiction allowed him to narrativize his experiences, have deeply informed my study but fell beyond the scope of the project. However, beyond these examples, the Turkish and Spanish authors I consider here themselves do not refer to the experience of Holocaust in their works, hence my omission.<sup>6</sup> My work, and especially my articulation of the challenges of representing historical trauma is informed by Holocaust, Trauma and Memory Studies, but I present an analysis of the relationship between political violence and literary representation from a comparative viewpoint that has not been focused on before.

In both the Turkish and Spanish literary contexts, repression and institutional violence are important points of emphasis, indicative of the substantial presence of State control in the imaginaries of each country. Both in Turkey and Spain, repressive States emerge in reaction to pluralist tendencies. In both contexts, the State centralizes by repressive means to promote a (ethnic, religious) unity that does not reflect the political or ethnic reality of the population. In Turkey, the nation-state emerges following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and attempts to break ties with the Ottoman legacy. Founded in 1923, the Republic of Turkey constructs an ethnically “Turkish” nation, homogenizing the diverse make-up of the population that had existed under the Ottoman Empire. The population exchange with Greece in 1924 and the

---

<sup>6</sup> One exception is Juan Goytisolo, who refers to the Holocaust as a point of comparison in his attempts to convey the horrors of the Bosnian War. Needless to say, this is a rather controversial comparison that critics of the work have criticized and I discuss this issue in more detail in the fourth chapter.

systematic repression of Kurds can all be interpreted as efforts of the State to protect and perpetuate the myth of homogeneity. In Spain, on the other hand, the Civil War (1936-1939) that led to General Francisco Franco's thirty-six year long dictatorship (1939-1975) was, in many ways, a response to the pluralist agendas of the Second Republic (1931-1939). The 1931 constitution had introduced bold reforms, including granting autonomy to Spain's different regions. While I do not mean to suggest that the concession of regional autonomies was the only trigger of the Civil War and the consequent dictatorship, Franco's slogan "una Patria, un Estado, un Caudillo" (one homeland, one state, one leader) reveals that the Francoist State positioned and constructed itself in reaction to pluralist tendencies.

In both countries, a repressive State exercised an overbearing and pervasive form of surveillance, perpetuating and protecting the myth of homogeneity and leaving little room for dissent. While this State takes the form of a full-fledged dictatorship for over three decades in Spain, repression is less pronounced, yet just as entrenched in Turkey. From its foundation in 1923 until 1946, Turkey went through a single-party period. After transitioning into a multi-party system, however, it experienced three military coups (1960, 1971, 1980). Although the military never took over power indefinitely – the longest it has been in power was three years following the 1980 coup, after which it transferred power over to civilians – the depoliticization measures, as well as the violent repression that accompanied the coups themselves had drastic effects. The coups had different motives in practice, but they were all responses to a perceived threat by the military to the unitary and Kemalist<sup>7</sup> character of the nation.<sup>8</sup> These successive coups made state-violence a deep-rooted reality in Turkey.

---

<sup>7</sup> The official ideology of the Republic of Turkey, developed by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and espousing a secular, unified Turkish nation.

<sup>8</sup> The first coup, which took place on 27 May 1960, was largely heralded as a "liberal" coup. It dissolved the democratically elected Democratic Party government, who were thought to have a conservative, anti-secularist

Turkey and Spain have both been considered successful transitions into democracy within their own contexts. However, they are still marked by highly prescriptive approaches to the past. In Spain, a “pact of forgetting” marked the transition period, turning the crimes of the civil war and the dictatorship into representational taboos. Although the civil war is a pervasive theme in Spanish literature, what remains taboo is assigning blame and ascribing crime.<sup>9</sup> After General Franco’s death in 1975, Spain adopted the so-called “pacto de olvido” (pact of forgetting). According to this implicit agreement, as well as the Amnesty Law of 1977 that followed, there would be no indictment of the crimes committed in the Civil War or during the dictatorship. Thirty years later, with the Ley de la Memoria Histórica of 2007 (Historical Memory Law) Spain officially condemned the atrocities of both the Civil War and the Franco dictatorship, but stopped short of allowing the persecution of the perpetrators.<sup>10</sup>

In Turkey, on the other hand, the perpetrators of the coups protected themselves by introducing an article into the 1982 constitution that granted them immunity. This article protected the perpetrators of the 1980 coup from culpability in the incarcerations, missing people, and widespread torture that followed. In the constitution’s sixth section, the fifteenth article stated the perpetrators – Milli Güvenlik Konseyi (National Security Council) – cannot be blamed or tried. The military constitution stayed in effect for almost three decades (1982-2010), perpetuating an amnesic regime and explicitly forbidding the incrimination of the military. Furthermore, the depoliticization measures and the institutional changes the coups introduced

---

agenda. What is generally called the second coup, which took place on 12 March 1971 was actually a warning from the military, which nevertheless resulted in a military-backed government. The military intervention took place because of what the military called chaos and strife in the population. This coup also marked the first time that torture became widespread in Turkey. Finally, the 12 September 1980 coup resulted in a military takeover that lasted three years and produced a new constitution.

<sup>9</sup> The public and legal reactions to the exhumations of graves (from the civil war and Franco eras) are indicative of the ambivalent relationship with the past.

<sup>10</sup> The legal scandal in Spain caused by Judge Baltasar Garzón’s decision to investigate crimes against humanity during the Franco period, which culminated in his suspension in May 2010 for violating the aforementioned law of amnesty reveals the current restrictions on remembering the past.

(especially in 1980) presented the coups as “necessary” evils initiated to save the country from chaos. Coupled with the constitutional ban, this discourse proved largely effective in preventing the representation of the coups as violent and traumatic events. To this day in Turkey, people born in the aftermath of the 1980 coup claim those who have not lived through the coup cannot and should not refer to it, because it amounts to sensationalizing. In other words, the coups have generated an amnesic society in Turkey, while in Spain the success of the transition to democracy has been predicated on a politics of forgetting or silence.

Given these rigid official approaches to the past and memory in Turkey and Spain, literature in these contexts emerges as a potential means to offer alternative stories and modes of remembering within regimes in which the transition to democracy has not necessarily initiated a process of reconciliation. The relationship between reconciliation and literature has been studied, but generally with either Latin America or in post-genocide regimes, such as Rwanda. This comparative perspective, which brings together two fairly separate and geographically distant literary contexts, can bring new insights into how literature deals with state-repression, and also forces us to reconsider terms of comparison: why we think geographically or historically embedded comparisons are inherently more logical or valuable than geographically or historically proximate ones.

### **Turkey and Spain in the World Republic of Letters**

Censorship, homogenization, violent centralizing tendencies that heavily limited minority voices and stories, torture, and persecution haunt twentieth century Turkish and Spanish literature. In fact, the fame of many Turkish and Spanish authors have been affected by their position as dissident voices: Nazim Hikmet Ran and Federico García Lorca, Orhan Pamuk and

Juan Goytisolo are perhaps the most well-known examples. This is an angle of comparison I want to stress: my decision to bring together these two partially marginal literary contexts are primarily informed by their occupation with a violent past, a violent State, although the similarities in each trajectory's interactions with and within the world republic of letters can also be quite revealing in understanding the struggles of national identity that is at once insecure and self-aggrandizing. Ultimately, one can find many alternative pairings: Spanish and Portuguese literatures, for example, as delineating the Iberian literary experience, Turkish and Greek, or Turkish and Iranian literatures as comparative counterpoints that focus on literary representations of state violence could all be possible and viable alternatives. They certainly make more immediate sense geographically. But if we wish to move away from the national constraints of literature, and want to push back against traditional canonization, bringing together two literary contexts that have many bases for comparison but not much contact, or precedence in comparison, can function as an illuminating comparative approach that reveals the links between state violence, representation, national identity and literary trajectories.

In "The New Capital of Spanish Literature: The Best Sellers," Maarten Steenmeijer gives an overview of the status of Spanish literature in the "world republic of letters" during the twentieth century.<sup>11</sup> Steenmeijer explains that Benito Perez Galdos' 1901 complaint that the Spanish authors cannot have their voices heard outside of Spain continued to be a legitimate one throughout much of the twentieth century, only to be finally transcended by the global success of Spanish religious/historical thrillers.<sup>12</sup> Quoting Ortiz-Griffin, Steenmeijer states that "for most of the world, the history of Spanish literature began with Cervantes and ended with Lorca."<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Maarten Steenmeijer, "The New Capital of Spanish Literature: The Best Sellers" in *New Spain, New Literatures*, Eds. Luis Martín Estudillo and Nicholas Spadaccini, (Nashville: University of Vanderbilt Press, 2010): 81–99

<sup>12</sup> Called *thrall*, or *thriller historic religious adventurer cultural* (Steenmeijer 89).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

Similarly, until the late twentieth century, Turkish literature remained on the fringes of the world republic of letters, to go back to Pascale Casanova's well-known designation,<sup>14</sup> only producing a handful of authors who were translated to other languages and garnered recognition beyond the borders of Turkey. Nazım Hikmet and Yaşar Kemal are the first names to come to mind. Before the rise of Orhan Pamuk as an established global author, which was fermented with his Nobel Laureate in 2006 and which gained him the wrath of many Turks for “writing for the West,” Turkish literature occupied an even more marginal position than Iberian literature, operating as it was in a language spoken by far fewer people, and not having the influence and recognition of a classic like *Don Quijote* in its literary history.

It seems to me, then, that a literary comparison of twentieth century Turkey and Spain also provides an account of national literatures constantly trying to prove themselves, in tense and dynamic relationships with the “world republic of letters,” which parallel the national anxieties vis-à-vis Europe and the West. Steenmeijer contends that the counterpart to the trajectory of Spanish literature is North America: “the mentality of the contemporary Spaniard has much in common with its North American counterpart,” he explains. “Both feel an insistent and irresistible obsession to prove or justify their existence, to take the initiative, to show off, and to continuously renovate themselves. . . . To use a forceful term, both countries have a complex”.<sup>15</sup>

While it might be true that both Spain and the North America have a complex, the comparison itself seems misplaced: publishing houses like *Planeta* and *Random House Mondadori* in Spain have formidable power in the Spanish literary world – including Latin

---

<sup>14</sup> Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, Trans. M.B Debevoise, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> Steenmeijer, “Best Sellers,” 91.

America – and can thus be compared to North American publishing houses<sup>16</sup>. However, North American authors have enjoyed recognition and prestige that very few Spanish authors have been able to match. The American literary tradition has been included in and defined the literary canon in the twentieth century. Henry James, Faulkner, Plath, Updike, Morrison, to name just a few of a very long list of American authors, are frequently included in the great literary canon of the West, and more importantly, define the standards of canonization. The frequent use of their names as marketing ploys justify this point: a relatively unknown author can gain recognition and literary capital to the extent that her work is comparable to one of these well-known American names.<sup>17</sup> Consequently, although the Spanish and North American publishing models reveal many similarities, the use of American literature as a counterpoint seems oddly out of place in drawing up an argument about the slow and limited reception of Spanish literature. It seems much more productive to me in talking about literary worlds on the fringes, to offer the Turkish literary world as a counterpart to Spain, both because of what I would like to call their “partial” marginality and their historically vexed relationship with a hierarchically superior “Europe.” They occupy “partially marginal” positions in the sense that they are not entirely unknown; in fact, they have recently gained considerable success in the global markets. “Good readers,” as Steenmeijer calls avid but non-academic readers,<sup>18</sup> are becoming increasingly familiarized with such names as Orhan Pamuk, Elif Shafak, Javier Marías, and Arturo Pérez-Reverte. Nevertheless, neither literary world has gained enough recognition to be “canonized.”

---

<sup>16</sup> Randolph D Pope, “A Hispanist’s View of Changing Institutions, or About Insects and Whales,” in *New Spain, New Literatures*, (Nashville: University of Vanderbilt Press, 2010): 101.

<sup>17</sup> Latin American authors such as Gabriel García Márquez and Jorge Luis Borges have been similarly canonized and established the literary norm but with the exception of Cervantes, no Iberian author has acquired the same literary capital.

<sup>18</sup> Steenmeijer, “Best Sellers,” 84.

Steenmeijer quotes Spanish author Javier Sierra, who has recently gained acclaim in the global literary markets with his work *La cena secreta* (*The Secret Supper*) as explaining his unexpected fame in terms that belong precisely to the exclusive logic of “canonization” that had denied him and his compatriots “entrance” for so long. Sierra says, “ Spain is a country with a rich history . . . and when it comes to looking for the origins of Western civilization, it is natural that all eyes turn to Europe and the Mediterranean, the very heart of where it all started.”<sup>19</sup> This is precisely the kind of thinking this project wants to move away from and challenge. Especially with regards to Turkey and Spain, two contexts that have championed the superiority of their nation for far too long at far great a cost to anyone who did not fit into the narrative of the glorious nation, such discourses move us back towards a centralizing and repressive canonization model, which pretends to go beyond the national but ends up delimiting itself in equally exclusionary and trite terms. I do not turn to Spain and Turkey as the origins of any civilization or the token examples of the Mediterranean experience, but as literary contexts that have shaped themselves in light of and against such self-aggrandizing and exclusionary discourses, coming from both outside and within their national borders.

### **Representing State-Violence**

Spanish director Alejandro Amenabar’s 1996 film *Tesis* (*Thesis*) begins with a scene of fascination with violence. There is a subway accident and a pedestrian is hit by the train, the bloody remains presumably splayed on the tracks. I say presumably because the film never shows the body, although the camera moves towards it. Instead, it shows other passengers’ fascination with the body, mimicking our own curiosity. They rise on their tiptoes, trying to catch a glimpse of the bloody scene before being ushered away by the police. We meet the protagonist

---

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 92.



Ángela in this moment of macabre curiosity: she too cranes her neck to see the body and the point of view shot follows her gaze, filling us with the same fascination that moves her gaze. But she is pushed away just as she is about to catch a glimpse of the dead body and the camera moves away, leaving the viewers to contemplate their own interest in the gruesome scene. The film becomes more and more violent, but always revolving around individuals' fascination with it, always gesturing towards a sense of complicity on the part of the viewer. The poster for the film shows the terrified eye of a woman, peeking through two fingers as if she is trying not to look at something horrifying, but cannot stop herself.

The problem of voyeurism haunts all representations of violence. As the opening scene of *Tesis* reminds us, violence is fascinating and horrifying at once. However, I contend that fictional representations of state-violence in particular pose unique challenges for the writers and reader. While representations of state-violence are doubtless also representations of violence, and the questions that drive my analyses in the following pages are in part applicable to all representations of violence, they have the added tension of overcoming the gap between fiction and reality. In her seminal work *Body in Pain*, which informs much of the analyses in the first and second chapters especially, Elaine Scarry warns that fictional representations of suffering run the risk of inadvertently appropriating “concern away from others in radical need of assistance,”<sup>20</sup> namely individuals suffering outside of the fictional page, in real life. While postmodernism and poststructuralism have increasingly and convincingly shown the divide between fiction and reality to be shaky at best, which both highlights fiction's ties to reality and the constructedness of what we take to be reality, in representations of state-violence, which focus on atrocities that have indeed happened, the divide between fiction and reality seems both

---

<sup>20</sup> Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985): 11.

in need of strengthening and destabilization. Fictional representations of state-violence must both negotiate the risk Scarry mentions, which requires the affirmation of their fictional status (their condition of “not being real,” being imagined), and insist on their links with history to show that the tortures, the repression and violence they depict are not *just* fabrications.

In his short article “Into the Dark Chamber,” South African author J.M. Coetzee points to another challenge that face fictional representations of state-violence. He argues that the dark torture chamber fascinates the novelist, triggering a novelistic fantasy that cannot help but imagine what goes on in the room. The danger, for Coetzee, is to represent this fascination in a way that turns it into a spectacle. In fictional torture narratives, this becomes especially problematic: the trauma of torture does not only arise from the experience of extreme physical pain, but also from the humiliation of the exposed body, its privacy completely violated, its private functions made forcibly visible. How can a representation subvert this exposure, when it cannot help but expose to the readers the exposed body? And how is the reader supposed to read these representations of violence and trauma, when his or her ability to act is limited through the divide between fiction and reality, and through the act of reading s/he becomes complicit in the aforementioned voyeurism?

I use Elaine Scarry, J.M. Coetzee, and Shoshana Felman to illuminate different aspects of the difficulty of representing state-violence fictionally. Elaine Scarry has famously argued that the experience of extreme physical pain actively destroys and undoes language, taking the person experiencing the pain to a state anterior to language where the verbal articulation of the pain becomes impossible.<sup>21</sup> How, then, can an experience like torture be narrativized? Particularly in the first two chapters I analyze how Öz and Marsé’s texts negotiate this problem. For Coetzee, the problem is less on the linguistic level and more on a conceptual one: state-violence and

---

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 4.

torture are a compromised and unethical system's mechanisms. How can the novel represent these mechanisms without perpetuating and becoming complicit in this unethical system? Or, how can these representations demonstrate a systemic immorality, rather than individual acts of evil and without turning violence into a spectacle, into an object of curiosity or fantasy? Coetzee's postulation points to the potentially compromised and compliant nature of literature, and also gestures towards an ethics of writing that positions itself always with the reader in mind. The problem is not just representing state-violence, but representing it in such a way that communicates its immorality and subverts it by changing its rules. Especially in Coetzee's warning against the erotic fascination with torture we can see a concern with voyeurism and the position of the reader. The reader and the act of reading also become problematized. At this point, I turn to Shoshana Felman's notion of a "hearing you," an audience who knows *how* to listen to and hear a story of trauma. For Felman, the redemptive potentials of narrative can only be actualized in the presence of such a reader/audience.

All five of the works I consider in this project implicitly or explicitly emphasize, demonstrate and reflect upon the complex relationship between fiction and reality, and text and reader. The works I have chosen all carry a disruptive power, but informed by the scholarship of Elaine Scarry, J.M. Coetzee, Michel Foucault and Juan Goytisolo, I have also tried to pay attention to the compromised position of language and literature. Literature has the ability to simultaneously challenge power structures and act within their parameters. This project reflects upon this contradictory function of literature through analyses of Turkish and Spanish representations of state-violence. By limiting my scope to representations of state-violence from the second half of the twentieth century, I focused on the tensions between history and fiction,

and writing and action. I argue that what emerges from the comparison of these works is not only an ethics of writing about historical violence, but also an ethics of reading violence.

Transforming the historical reality of state-repression into the fictional realm raises important questions about the dynamics of representation in general, and between writing and history more specifically. Patricia Waugh explains this relationship especially well through an emphasis on the poststructuralist understanding that our experience of reality is mediated through language. If this is the case, Waugh argues, then the way reality is constructed in fictional narratives can help us reflect on the construction of reality itself, outside the fictional realm.<sup>22</sup> Fictional narratives of state-violence, then, are not entirely separate from testimonial accounts. They draw from these accounts, and despite their constructedness, they can provide insight about the mechanism of such instances of violence, and about the construction and perpetuation of the discourses used in examples of state-violence like torture that demonstrate the regime's power. But they are guided by form and language in a way that testimonies are not (although our analysis of them might focus on these aspects).

In addition to these unique challenges, I distinguish representations of state-violence from representations of individual violence also in that they refer to violence that is used for political means, usually by people or institutions that work for and are protected by the regime in control. In the most superficial terms, while individual violence most commonly occurs *illegally* (even in outrageous representations of it in popular culture or in blockbusters), meaning the perpetrators act against the law and are in danger of being punished for their acts, in instances of state-violence the violence is sanctioned precisely in the sense that the perpetrators either make the law or are above the law. This results in a double enfeeblement for the victim: s/he is powerless not

---

<sup>22</sup> Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction : The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious*. (Florence, KY: Routledge, 1984), <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/umich/docDetail.action?docID=5001577>.

only against the individuals inflicting violence on him/her, but also against a regime that breeds, uses, and protects these perpetrators. In other words, I use state-violence or state-sponsored violence to refer to violence *sanctioned* by the State either openly or covertly, as a means of control. While I acknowledge that “state” itself is a shifting and complex term, demonstrated all too clearly in recent years in Turkey through terms like “Deep State” (“Derin Devlet”) or more recently “Parallel Structure” (“Paralel Yapı”) that designate forces functioning within the State structures but independently or semi-independently of them in a “twilight of legal illegality,” since my main concern is literature and how it responds to political repression, I use the term “State” here to simply refer to the regime in control.

### **Chapter Overviews**

The first chapter analyzes a fictional torture narrative from Turkey, *Yaralısın (You Are Wounded)* by Erdal Öz. I situate the novel among other 12 March Novels, named after the second Turkish military intervention that took place on 12 March 1971, and examine its representation of torture in terms of its simultaneous subversion and perpetuation of official state narratives. I argue that *Yaralısın* is exceptional among 12 March Novels in that it functions primarily as a torture narrative. While the novel has a socialist realist framework like other novels of the period, it uses realism to restore the torture victim his agency. I particularly use theories of Elaine Scarry and J.M. Coetzee to explain the difficulties of fictionalizing torture. Scarry posits that extreme physical pain destroys language, which has significant implications for narratives of torture. Coetzee, on the other hand, draws attention to the various risks of such representations, focusing especially on the tension between representation as an individual act of creativity and its

conditioning by a repressive regime. This chapter is an exposition of the difficulties of *writing* fictionally about state-violence, especially torture.

The second chapter examines Spanish author Juan Marsé's 1973 novel *Si te dicen que caí* (*The Fallen*). In the novel, children reenact past tortures in games and staged performances. The chapter focuses particularly on these instances of reenactment. The novel, I argue, presents readers with an impossible scenario in which the tortured can tell their plight only by being tortured again. These reenactments ultimately function as acknowledgements and demonstrations of the pitfalls of fictionalizing state-violence. *Si te dicen que caí* negotiates the difficulties implicit in such projects by acknowledging and thematizing them self-consciously.

In essence, these reenactments are parodies of realism: their realism is so extreme that actors really carry out torture. The novel insistently blurs this boundary between fiction and reality, presenting its story through tales the children tell each other, called *Aventis*. There is no way to establish the accuracy of these stories, which points to the instability of fiction and exposes it as artifice. Nevertheless, the novel also shows that the artifices of fiction need not preclude reality. The novel then gestures towards both a practice of writing and a practice of reading.

In my third chapter, I continue the discussion of realism taken to absurd extremes, and study reenactment and performance in Orhan Pamuk's 2002 novel *Kar* (*Snow*). In the novel, a staged performance about the secular and Westernizing push of the Turkish Republic turns into a military coup. The soldiers on stage shoot into the audience, taking advantage of the audience's expectation that the fictional world of the performance will remain safely within the bounds of the stage. I argue that these performances simultaneously represent *and* perpetrate the violence of the Turkish state, postulating the violence as an ongoing project. They question the boundary

separating a representation of violence from an instance of violence, prompting us to consider the extent to which each representation is a repetition and a new creation. The blurring of the boundary between fiction and reality also allows the novel to expose and ridicule the Turkish obsession with Europe and Europe's perceived moral and cultural superiority over Turkey.

Finally, the last chapter analyzes Goytisolo's approach to state-violence through his writings about violence *outside* of Spain. I consider three works by Juan Goytisolo: a 1990 travelogue called *Aproximaciones a Gaudi en Capadocia (Approaching Gaudi en Capadocia)*, a 1993 collection of essays that chronicle the siege of Sarajevo, *Cuaderno de Sarajevo (The Sarajevo Notebook)* and its 1995 fictional counterpart, *El sitio de los sitios (The State of Siege)*. I see these works as forming a continuum in which Goytisolo's representations of violence occurring *elsewhere* evolve from one of absence in "Aproximaciones" to a profound yet ambivalent ethics of writing and reading violence in *El sitio de los sitios*. The connections between *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* and *El sitio de los sitios* especially emphasize the tensions between writing and action. The non-fictional account, *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*, attempts to use writing to spur action, shake readers out of their apathy, especially by offering an alternative history that shows the connectedness of violence in Western Europe, and particularly in Spain, to the ethnic violence in Yugoslavia. However, Goytisolo's outside position necessitates the fiction *El sitio de los sitios*. The novel begins with a man, J.G., watching the siege. As he watches, a mortar shell hits his hotel room and he dies. In the story that follows, Goytisolo explores the limits and promises of fiction, insisting both on the inextricable link between fiction and history, and the autonomy and power of fiction that holds the potential – perhaps more so than a non-fictional chronicle – to *move* people, to change them and urge them to act and behave in new ways.

It is not clear that the pitfalls of representing state-violence fictionally are resolvable. It seems to me that they are, in some ways, inherent in the project itself, and cannot even be circumvented, let alone resolved. Consequently, it is the works that thematize this difficulty and self-consciously reflect on their own representations within their plots that provide the most effective representations, because while representing state-violence, they also confront the readers with the same dilemmas that trouble their fictions. Such representations problematize their own connections to reality, which does not diminish their power but on the contrary emphasize their capacity to expose and reflect on historical contexts.



## Chapter 1

### Representing Torture Fictionally: *Yaralısm*

#### Representing State-Violence: Torture Narratives

When discussing fictional representations of state-violence, torture narratives stand out as extreme examples. Through the image of the vulnerable body of the individual against a brutal power that holds the physical and legal means necessary to crush this body and bend it to its will, torture narratives show the alarming discrepancy of power between the individual and the State, played out through the interactions between the tortured and torturers. Torture narratives concern themselves with the moment in which the violence implicit in the State's power against the individual becomes unusually visible. Foucault has analyzed the mechanics of this power in his 1977 work *Discipline and Punish*,<sup>1</sup> and especially focused on torture as a spectacle of power in the famous opening of the book that tells of the lengthy torture and execution of a regicide. But it is a much shorter work by Foucault, a brief essay titled "The Life of Infamous Men," that I think reveals the function of torture narratives most effectively. In the essay, Foucault looks at eighteenth-century "lettres de cachet," penal letters with the king's seal containing a sentencing or an order to obey.<sup>2</sup> The letters typically began the process by which an individual would be imprisoned or institutionalized, although as Foucault shows there were rarely explanations for the

---

<sup>1</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. trans. Alan Sheridan. 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "lettre de cachet", accessed July 22, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/87796/lettre-de-cachet>.

sentences, and the harshest sentences could be passed for the most trivial of offenses. What captures Foucault's interest in these letters is the brevity and insignificance of the lives of ordinary men and women who by a "lightning flash of power" become visible and appear to us, if only briefly, from centuries ago: "lowly lives reduced to ashes in the few phrases that have destroyed them."<sup>3</sup> The letters document the brief but decisive interactions of these lives with power, interactions that unveil the existences of otherwise obscure men and women, as well as the crushing force of the power that falls on them and that will not let them escape. In other words, the letters reveal the destructive and productive forces of power simultaneously.

Fictional torture narratives can be interpreted similarly.<sup>4</sup> The basic function of torture is to display and perform the power of the regime, while demonstrating the sheer powerlessness of the individual against this force. J.M. Coetzee argues in his article "Into the Dark Chamber" that the regime shrouds torture in mystery both to be able to officially deny its existence and to make it more terrifying and effective as a threat.<sup>5</sup> By telling of this experience, fictional torture narratives lay bare the moment that "the lightning flash of power" strikes individuals, making visible the violence implicit in the State's control and power over the individual. I emphasize "fictional" torture narratives here to distinguish the object of my analysis from testimonies of

---

<sup>3</sup> Michel Foucault, "The Life of Infamous Men," in *Power, Truth, Strategy*, ed. Meaghan Morris and Paul Patton, trans. Meaghan Morris and Paul Foss (Sydney: Feral Publications, 1979), 77.

<sup>4</sup> I point to "fictional" torture narratives here to distinguish the object of my analysis from testimonies of torture by actual, non-fictional victims. Torture testimonies form an important portion of Trauma Studies, and while my analysis certainly draws from Trauma Studies, I am more concerned here with the literary techniques used to represent state-violence through a fictional framework. I think transforming the historical reality of state-repression into the fictional realm raises important questions about the dynamics of representation in general, and between writing and history more specifically. Patricia Waugh explains this relationship especially well through an emphasis on the poststructuralist understanding that reality is mediated by language. If this is the case, Waugh argues, then the way reality is constructed in fictional narratives can help us reflect on the construction of reality itself, outside the fictional realm. Fictional torture narratives, then, are not entirely separate from testimonial accounts of torture. They draw from these accounts, and despite their constructedness, they can provide insight about the mechanism of torture, and about the construction and perpetuation of the discourses used in torture that demonstrate the regime's power. See Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Consciousness*. (Florence, KY: Routledge, 1984), <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/umich/docDetail.action?docID=5001577>, p.3.

<sup>5</sup> J.M. Coetzee, "Into the Dark Chamber: The Novelist and South Africa," *New York Times* (January 1986): 1–4.

torture by actual victims. Torture testimonies form an important portion of Trauma Studies, and while my analysis certainly draws from Trauma Studies I am more concerned here with the literary techniques used to represent state-violence through a fictional framework. It is entirely possible that fictional torture narratives are based on actual ones, or that they act as testimonies, through fiction, for the their authors who were in fact victims of torture. These overlaps might be important in and of themselves, but regardless, the status of these narratives as novels point to the construction of a fictional framework that suggests an engagement with form and language that is not expected from non-fictional testimonies.<sup>6</sup> Transforming the historical reality of state-repression into the fictional realm raises important questions about the dynamics of representation in general, and between writing and history more specifically. Patricia Waugh explains this relationship especially well through an emphasis on the poststructuralist understanding that our experience of reality is mediated through language. If this is the case, Waugh argues, then the way reality is constructed in fictional narratives can help us reflect on the construction of reality itself, outside the fictional realm. Fictional torture narratives, then, are not entirely separate from testimonial accounts of torture. They draw from these accounts, and despite their constructedness, they can provide insight about the mechanism of torture, and about the construction and perpetuation of the discourses used in torture that demonstrate the regime's power. But they are guided by form and language in a way that testimonies are not (although our analysis of them might focus on these aspects).<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> I am referring here to the distinction between art and life, described by Rene Wellek as “the ontological gap between a product of the mind, a linguistic structure, and the events in ‘real’ life which it reflects.” See Linda Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox*. (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1980), 17.

<sup>7</sup> See Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction : The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious*. (Florence, KY: Routledge, 1984), <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/umich/docDetail.action?docID=5001577>, p.3.

As such, torture narratives differ from representations of individual violence because they recount instances of violence that have institutional support and purpose. The vulnerability of the torture victim does not only arise from his or her physical exposure but also from the victim's knowledge that the rights and laws that would normally protect her against such abuse are suspended, or are being exercised by the same institutions that allow and in fact authorize the torture.<sup>8</sup> This is why these narratives represent *state-violence*.<sup>9</sup> While they grapple with the some of the same questions that affect any representation of violence, the double enfeeblement of the victim in these narratives- both against the torturer and against the system that gives rise to the torture - places unique expectations and limitations on torture narratives. For one, they become susceptible to the violence they expose: censorship is a clear example of an instance when a work that represent state-violence becomes the victim of it. Another example is the persecution of the author for the ideas espoused in his/her novels, at least in the form that they are interpreted by the state.<sup>10</sup> Also, since State repression does not only function through force but also through ideology and discourse,<sup>11</sup> the narratives' modes of representation are not immune to state

---

<sup>8</sup> For example, in Erdal Öz's torture narrative *Yaralımsın (You Are Wounded)*, the torturer tells the narrator "Burada öyle yasalar falan işlemez. Ne anayasa, ne babâyasa yok burada, tamam mı? . . . Her türlü yasanın, her türlü denetimin dışında bir yerdesin şu anda." Erdal Öz, *Yaralımsın*, (Istanbul: Can Yayınları, 1998), 97.

<sup>9</sup> I do not consider here war narratives, or war as a period in which such laws are suspended. Since individual and state-sponsored violence exist simultaneously during war, war narratives or the torture narratives of prisoners of war might provide more complicated representations of violence altogether. What I am suggesting here is that there is a decided difference between representations of torture carried out by psychotic individuals for their own pleasure (there are too many examples of these representations to name, but the highly successful *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* series, or the *Saw* franchise come to mind in recent popular culture), and torture narratives in which the torturers are protected by law, or at least exempt from it, and existing within the State's own mechanisms of power. J.M Coetzee has called this "twilight of legal illegality."

<sup>10</sup> There is a long list of Turkish authors who have been persecuted for their writings, including Halide Edip Adıvar, Nazim Hikmet Ran, Sabahattin Ali, Adalet Ağaoğlu, and in the more recent years, Orhan Pamuk and Elif Şafak.

<sup>11</sup> Here I am especially relying on Althusser's notion that literature can criticize and challenge ideology all the while being part of it. While literature uses the discourses that constitute and form the basis of the ideological apparatus, it can still make the ideological apparatus visible and show ideology as constructed rather than natural. Jale Parla interprets this as literature's ability to call on the readers to distance themselves from the discourses that underlie the ideological apparatus. Parla also mentions that while for Althusser and Macherey literature holds the power to approach ideology from the margins, most that literature and the artist can do is disclose ideology by refusing to be its subject. Quoting Berna Moran, Parla writes "sanatın 'ürettiği şey de, dönüştürülmüş, görünürlük kazanmış ve

repression, both in the sense that they can be targeted by it, and that they can inadvertently perpetuate the discourses underlying repression.

While representations of state-violence are doubtless representations of violence, the state-sponsored aspect of this violence should not be overlooked since it is so essential to the mechanism of torture. In her seminal work *The Body in Pain*,<sup>12</sup> Elaine Scarry describes the mechanism of torture as “conversion of real pain into the fiction of power.” Torture demonstrates and performs an essentially interior experience through the infliction of extreme physical pain on an individual, suddenly making visible the interior biological mechanisms of the person. After this demonstration, torture then converts the suffering of the tortured body into a sign of the regime’s power, creating a “spectacle of power.” The “fiction” that Scarry refers to is this delusory power, which is so contestable that torture is required to create a fiction of it as stable and secure.<sup>13</sup> The link between violence and “the regime’s power” separates torture narratives from representations of individual violence. In the case of fictional narratives of torture, this link also establishes a connection between the fictional world that exists in the novel and reality. Although postmodernism has shown the flimsiness of this separation, fictional representations of state-violence are significant in that even as they can point to the artifice of writing, they compel the readers to consider the extent to which these fictional worlds overlap with history and social traumas. As such, while fictional representations of violence can show us the links between writing and violence, the limits of narrative and representation, etc., fictional representations of

---

dolayısıyla da kendisini ele vermiş ideolojidir” (“what art produces is a recycled, unveiled ideology that has therefore betrayed itself”). See Louis Althusser, “Ideology and the Ideological Apparatus of the State” in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster, (London: New Left Books, 1971), 127-186 and and Jale Parla, *Don Kişot’tan Bugüne Roman* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000), 42.

<sup>12</sup> Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

<sup>13</sup> Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 27.

state-violence also problematize a question that is central for literature: the relationship between fiction and reality, text and history.

In this chapter, I will be focusing on a fictional torture narrative from Turkey that was written in the wake of the 1971 military intervention, *Yaralısın (You Are Wounded)* by Erdal Öz. Published in 1974, the novel has not been translated into English, but was among the most popular novels of the 1970s in Turkey, although it has not retained its popularity in the twenty-first century. In this and in many other aspects that I will discuss below, the novel is representative of the so-called “12 March Novels” in Turkish literature. Named after the second military intervention, or “muhtıra” (“warning”) as it is called in Turkish,<sup>14</sup> the 12 March Novels comprise the works produced between the military ultimatum of 1971 and the brutal coup of 1980. Çimen Günay-Erkol has noted that these novels “settle at the cross-section of the veins of ‘trauma fiction’ and ‘witness literature,’”<sup>15</sup> due to many authors of the period being imprisoned and tortured during the period. Erdağ Göknaç also explains that these novels work with a “realist texture akin to memoir and confessional accounts of witnesses.”<sup>16</sup> *Yaralısın* in particular mixes fiction with memories from Öz’s own imprisonment following the 1971 military intervention, and from his interviews with the three leftist student leaders, Deniz Gezmiş, Hüseyin İnan and Yusuf Aslan, who were executed in 1972 for attempting to overthrow the constitutional order<sup>17</sup>.

Of course, it is impossible (and unnecessary) to determine where testimony ends and fiction

---

<sup>14</sup> In Turkish, “muhtıra” means “warning.” Unlike the military interventions of 1960 and 1980, which were coups that resulted in military’s assumption of power and the suspension of civilian politics, the 1971 military intervention was not a coup but a “warning” by the military to the parliament, which nevertheless ended with the resignation of the government and the installation of a new one by the military. As a result, it is also termed the “coup by memorandum.” For more on the 1971 military ultimatum, see Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London ; New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 258-263; William M Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 153-184; George S. Harris, “Military Coups and Turkish Democracy, 1960–1980,” *Turkish Studies* 12.1 (June 2011): 205. doi:10.1080/14683849.2011.573181.

<sup>15</sup> Çimen Günay-Erkol, “Cold War Masculinities in Turkish Literature : A Survey of March 12 Novels.” (PhD diss., Leiden Univeristy, 2008), 15.

<sup>16</sup> Erdağ Göknaç, “The novel in Turkish: narrative tradition to Nobel prize” in *The Cambridge History of Turkey*. Ed. Reşat Kasaba. 1st ed. Vol. 4. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 495.

<sup>17</sup> Günay-Erkol, “Cold War Masculinities”, 52.

begins, but it would be wrong to overlook this testimonial aspect of *Yaralısin*. As fictional accounts that are also confessional, the 12 March Novels of which *Yaralısin* is part does not exist separately from the reality of the experiences of the authors under repression. In fact, 12 March Novels are characterized by a desire to communicate this “reality of the times,” at times leading to reductive readings that treat these works of fiction only as historical documents.

The phrase “12 March Novels” frequently implies a lack of style, aesthetic concerns replaced instead by ideological considerations. Most Turkish novels produced during this decade use a socialist-realist approach, preoccupied with reflecting the political conundrums of the time especially from a leftist perspective. The right-wing novels produced during the same period are rarely considered in discussions of 12 March Novels, in part because the crackdown following the 1971 military intervention mainly targeted the Turkish left and left-wing student-organizations.<sup>18</sup> Many leftist intellectuals were imprisoned, resulting in the testimonial accounts that make up what are now called 12 March novels.<sup>19</sup> While scholars like Berna Moran and Murat Belge<sup>20</sup> consider this body of works more or less uniform, at least in their socialist-realism and their privileging of ideological concerns over aesthetic ones, others like Çimen Günay-Erkol argue that the variations among these novels resist such homogenizing descriptions<sup>21</sup>. Authors like Adalet Ağaoğlu and Erdal Öz, on the other hand, whose novels are commonly counted among the 12 March novels, reject the designation all together.

---

<sup>18</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 254-256, 258-264.

<sup>19</sup> For a comprehensive look at 12 March Novels that also considers books from the right, see Çimen Günay-Erkol, “Cold War Masculinities in Turkish Literature : A Survey of March 12 Novels.” (PhD diss., Leiden Univeristy, 2008), 12-18.

<sup>20</sup> Murat Belge, “12 Mart Romanları,” in *Edebiyat Üstüne Yazılar*. (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1994). See also Erdağ Göknar, “The Novel in Turkish: Narrative Tradition to Nobel Prize” in *The Cambridge History of Turkey*. Ed. Reşat Kasaba. 1st ed. Vol. 4. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 472-503. Göknar describes the 12 March novels as “oral histories whose content took precedence over their form as they explored and excavated changing relationships and identities in the context of the triangulation between state, society and individual.”

<sup>21</sup> Çimen Günay-Erkol, “Cold War Masculinities” 15-34.

In a 2005 speech titled “On the Changes of 1970-80 in the Turkish Novel,” Aġaoġlu remarks, “I have never accepted March 12 to be a novel genre, but novels and stories dealing with the coup replaced the village novel . . . Just because they were published after March 12<sup>th</sup>, some literary critics have had the tendency of situating my novels in this category. This is wrong.”<sup>22</sup> Aġaoġlu’s rejection stems from her desire to rightfully reclaim the aesthetic value of her works, saving them, in a way, from the reputation of 12 March novels as works that are only historically significant. She explains that her novels experiment with form to find ways to best represent the struggles of individuals who are trying to carve out a space of freedom for themselves under cultural and political repression. Erdal Öz also distanced himself from the 12 March novel designation, highlighting the universality of the questions he delineated in his works. In a 2010 article, Öz insists that the phrase is a rather empty fabrication by the critics of the time (“12 Mart döneminin eleřtirmenleri, 12 Mart edebiyatı diye bir kavram uydurmuşlardı”) and rejects the notion as being incompatible with his understanding of literature (“Böyle bir edebiyat tanımlaması olamazdı”). For Öz, any similarities between the novels of the time should be attributed to the mutual suffering imposed on the authors by the military intervention. Since the oppression and violence of the time affected every area of daily life, the authors of the time had no choice but to represent the troubles of the period.<sup>23</sup>

Aġaoġlu and Öz’s explanations point to an important shortcoming of 12 March novels as a literary category: the designation imposes a particular framework that views the novels only through their value as testaments to the political struggles of the 1970s. Granted, many of these novels in fact prioritize ideological concerns. The dry, straightforward narratives, coupled with

---

<sup>22</sup> Adalet Aġaoġlu, “On the Changes of 1970-80 in the Turkish Novel.” (4 May 2005), [http://www.lightmillennium.org/2005\\_15th/aagaoglu\\_speech.html](http://www.lightmillennium.org/2005_15th/aagaoglu_speech.html)

<sup>23</sup> Erdal Öz, “12 Eylül: Edebiyata Bir Darbe // 12 Mart'ın ve 12 Eylül'ün edebiyatımızdaki yeri.” *Sabit Fikir*, September 1, 2010, accessed July 16, 2014, <http://www.sabitfikir.com/dosyalar/12-eylul-edebiyata-bir-darbe-12-martin-ve-12-eylulun-edebiyatimizdaki-yeri>.



heavy-handed references to class-struggle invite historicist readings. In fact, I would argue that it is impossible to discuss these novels through a solely formalist approach. What I consider reductive and flattening, however, is judging these novels on the basis of their level of correspondence to the “reality” of the times. As Çimen Günay-Erkol has noted, “March 12 novels settle at the cross-section of the veins of ‘trauma fiction’ and ‘witness literature,’”<sup>24</sup> due to many authors of the period being imprisoned and tortured during the period. Their works bear traces of these experiences, narrating life in prison, life under surveillance, or their interrogations. Erdağ Gökner also explains that these novels work with a “realist texture akin to memoir and confessional accounts of witnesses.”<sup>25</sup> As testimonial narratives, then, these novels certainly reflect the historical realities of Turkey leading up to the 1980 coup, but as works of fiction I argue that their worth cannot be judged by their historical accuracy.<sup>26</sup>

Günay-Erkol describes this tendency in 12 March Novels scholarship as “[limiting remarks] primarily to a frame of realism,” but I would argue that historical accuracy as a value judgement is not about a frame of realism. It is, rather, about equating fiction with history, and reducing fiction to a historical narrative. While I contextualize *Yaralısın* and view it as an important narrative that sheds light on the repression of the 1971 intervention, I am mainly interested in *how* it does so. The realism that I will discuss in *Yaralısın* does not mean

---

<sup>24</sup> Günay-Erkol, “Cold War Masculinities”, 15.

<sup>25</sup> Erdağ Gökner, “The Novel in Turkish: Narrative Tradition to Nobel Prize” in *The Cambridge History of Turkey*. Ed. Reşat Kasaba. 1st ed. Vol. 4. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 495.

<sup>26</sup> My approach is in line with Jale Parla’s cogent explanation in *Don Kişot’tan Bugüne Roman* (2000) that “if we judge the text solely through the conditions in which it was written, we would be imprisoning it within that period and this could be seen as the worst thing one could do to literature. . . . The pleasure we derive from a literary text is a combination of being “informed” through that text and being “inspired” by that text” (Parla 28, translation mine). (“Eğer yazın metnini salt yazıldığı koşullar içinde değerlendirmeye kalkarsak, o metni zamana hapsedmiş olacağımız doğrudur ve bu edebiyata yapılacak en büyük kötülük olarak görülebilir. . . . Edebi metinden alacağımız zevk, o metin yoluyla ‘bilgilenmek’ ile o metinden ‘esinlenme’nin karışımı bir şeydir.”) See Jale Parla, *Don Kişot’tan Bugüne Roman* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000), 28.

correspondence to historical events<sup>27</sup>, but suggests a desire to show the world as is. Especially given the lack of historical context in the novel, this desire does not result in an exposition of the historical and political conditions of the time, but in an obsession with describing the claustrophobic world of prison surrounding the narrator. The novel does not experiment with form, presenting instead a fairly straightforward timeframe and narration. While we might consider this a lack of aesthetic concern, this lack is not due to an emphasis on ideology but to the difficulty of the subject matter: torture. *Yaralısin* as a narrative encounters and tries to circumvent the limits of narration when faced with the task of representing torture and extreme physical pain. In her seminal work *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, Elaine Scarry argues that what makes torture possible is the inexpressibility and unsharability of pain. While for the person experiencing physical pain nothing could be more real than this experience, for others the pain of this person can never be confirmed, or experienced. We only accept someone else's pain through empathy. As such, a torturer can go on torturing a person precisely because he is immune to the pain he himself is inflicting on another body. According to Scarry, "whatever pain achieves, it achieves in part through its unsharability, and it ensures this unsharability through its resistance to language." After making this claim, Scarry goes even further, and adds that physical pain does not only "resist" language, but also "actively destroys it, bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to the sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learned."<sup>28</sup> This is the difficulty that *Yaralısin* as even a fictional torture narrative must negotiate. In its attempts to recount the experiences of a torture victim, the novel settles on an obsessive and tediously descriptive language to negotiate the difficulties implicit in representing torture, which I will discuss at length below. Realism, then,

---

<sup>27</sup> Günay-Erkol, "Cold War Masculinities", 20.

<sup>28</sup> Scarry, *Body in Pain*, 4.

becomes a means to restore the victim his subjectivity and agency that torture has destroyed, as evinced by his inability to state his name until the very end of the novel. In this sense the act of narrating in *Yaralısin* can be considered redemptive. It is through the narrativization of the traumatic memory that the nameless torture victim regains his personhood.<sup>29</sup>

There is a way to think of every narrative of torture as holding a disruptive power against the State repression that has occasioned the torture- albeit often short-lived power limited in scope. To the extent that the State silences and/or ignores the victim who wishes to tell of his torture, a narrative of torture always disrupts this denial. In *Yaralısin*, the story of torture that the narrator tells in excruciating detail stands in stark juxtaposition to a scene in court when the narrator is briskly interrupted every time he uses the word “ışkence,” torture<sup>30</sup>, before he is able to even begin a narrative. The narrator is well-aware that he cannot describe his experiences in this courtroom that functions as an extension of the system that made his torture possible. In fact, he assumes that the judge and the prosecutor already know what has been done to him (“bilmiyorlar mı sana neler yapıldığını.”<sup>31</sup>) Compared to this inability to narrate the experience in this “official” space, his harrowing tale directed at the readers reveals the disruptive power I mentioned above. The narrative functions as an alternative to his “official story,” a statement entirely fabricated by the prosecutor that he was forced to sign during his day in court.<sup>32</sup> In this sense, the novel attests to the power of literature to challenge official histories by giving voice to the stories that have been excised from these histories.

---

<sup>29</sup> For a similar reading, see Günay-Erkol, “Cold War Masculinities”, 80-1, 98.

<sup>30</sup> Erdal Öz, *Yaralısin*, (Istanbul: Can Yayinlari, 1998), 140, 143.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 139-144.

Elaine Scarry and Shoshana Felman both argue that narrativization and giving testimony through narrativization can help partially reverse and heal the tortured subject's trauma.<sup>33</sup> Since torture is designed to shatter the voice, agency, and subjectivity of the victim, narrating the event can be redemptive for the victim. While Scarry points to the difficulties implicit in this narrativization, Shoshana Felman emphasizes that the redemptive potentials of narrative can only be actualized in the presence of a reader/audience who knows how to listen. In her 1992 work *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, Felman examines the relationship between trauma, pedagogy, literature and testimony and asks: "How is the act of *writing* tied up with the act of *bearing witness* . . . Is the act of *reading* literary texts itself inherently related to the act of *facing horror*?" In Felman's text, it becomes evident that literature that bears witness can start a process of healing, but only in the presence of a "hearing you," an audience that can listen, and moreover an audience that can listen in the *right* way. The person giving testimony, either orally or through writing, can alleviate the solitude of his/her trauma by becoming "aligned with" other witnesses – Felman quotes Elias Canetti who remarks "In the face of life's horror . . .there is only one comfort: *its alignment with the horror experienced by other witnesses*".<sup>34</sup> However, the act of testifying is a solitary act, because the testimony can only be given by the one who has experienced the trauma. Therefore, while writing and testimony attempt to overcome the solitariness of the one who bore witness, the figure of the witness is inherently solitary – this paralyzing solitariness can only be alleviated (never overcome), and only in the presence of a community willing to hear the story of the

---

<sup>33</sup> See Shoshana Felman and Dori. Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. (New York: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>34</sup> Felman, *Testimony*, 2.

trauma.<sup>35</sup> *Yaralısin*'s nameless narrator accepts the impossibility of mentioning torture in the courtroom also because of this lack of an audience: someone who can hear him the right way.

Felman's concept of the "hearing you" gestures towards an ethics of reading/hearing. It is also a useful concept in demonstrating *Yaralısin*'s position as an inter-coup novel. *Yaralısin* speaks to the trauma unleashed by the military intervention of 1971, but in my opinion it also functions as a signpost that exposes the silence following the 1980 coup. In this sense, "inter-coup literature" can be a more descriptive category for *Yaralısin* than the "12 March Novel" designation. The 1970s novels that deal with the military intervention are subsumed under the homogenizing category of 12 March Novels and defined principally through their relationship to the intervention also because of the lack of such a strong and unified literary response to the next military takeover in 1980, an event that ended a decade of fervent political writing in Turkish literature.<sup>36</sup> By all accounts, the 1980 coup was a much more brutal and decisive intervention: unlike the 1971 ultimatum, the 1980 coup resulted in a military takeover and the establishment of a military regime that lasted until 1983, when the army turned power over to a civilian government. The constitutional changes that were made during these three years proved extremely effective and long-lasting however, dictating political life in Turkey well into the twenty-first century.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>36</sup> I limit this observation to current criticism only because it seems that scholars like Berna Moran or Murat Belge, writing as they were in the 1970s or in early 1980s, could not have been aware of this lack.

<sup>37</sup> In order to depoliticize a highly politicized and polarized society, the military established control over the cultural and political life of the country, appointing officials to control the press, trade unions, education, etc. The army introduced bans on political discussion and strikes of all kinds, and centralized universities through the establishment of YÖK, Yüksek Eğitim Kurulu (Higher Education Authority), that appointed deans and rectors, effectively abolishing the autonomy of higher education (YÖK still exists in the same capacity). The 1982 constitution drafted by the military, exempting the perpetrators of the coup from any legal responsibility, replaced the 1960 constitution. It was only in 2010 that a controversial referendum resulted in the decision to change the constitution, a task that is yet to be carried out as of July 2014. The generals of the coup, Kenan Evren and Tahsin Şahinkaya were sentenced to life in person on June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014, twenty-four years after coup. It was a largely symbolic sentence, since Evren was 97 and Şahinkaya 89. In the decade following the coup, the army emphasized "national unity and cohesion," which resulted in a violent crackdown on everyone considered a dissident, but especially targeting Kurdish citizens.

And yet, the cultural and physical violence unleashed by the coup did not find its way into literature in the 1980s as prominently as it had following the 1971 military intervention. This relative silence surrounding the coup has been an important point of debate in Turkish literature, especially in contrast to the overtly political literature of the 1970s. As Zürcher notes, in the aftermath of the 1980 coup torture became ordinary, “often applied as a matter of course.”<sup>38</sup> The literature of the period, however, could not or would not represent this violence directly. One reason for this silence is the extent of censorship following the 1980 coup. The novels that did engage with the violence of the 1980 coup could not do so openly, making the realism of a work like *Yaralısın*, for example, untenable in this period. Although the works of authors like Bilge Karasu, Adalet Ağaoğlu, and Latife Tekin<sup>39</sup> in the 1980s can be interpreted as responses to the coup, the kind of testimonial literature that had dominated the 1970s only began to emerge in the twenty-first century,<sup>40</sup> with many previously persecuted authors publishing their memoirs or writing novels that narrativize their experiences.<sup>41</sup>

The silence in literature following the 1980 coup points to an important rupture in Turkish literature, which can be demonstrated through an infamous statement by one of the

---

Kurdish was banned in public institutions following the coup, and a bizarre discourse entered Turkish cultural life arguing that Kurds were actually “mountain Turks.” There were waves of arrests and torture was rampant. See Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 279-281. For more on the army’s attempts to present the Kurdish identity as a version of Turkishness, see Murat Belge, “Kart-Kurt Teorisi’nin Tarihçesi” *Taraf* 13 Sept. 2009, <http://www.taraf.com.tr/yazilar/murat-belge/kart-kurt-teorisinin-tarihcesi/7377/>.

<sup>38</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 280.

<sup>39</sup> See especially Adalet Ağaoğlu, *Üç Beş Kişi* (Istanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1984); Bilge Karasu, *Gece*, (Istanbul: Bilge, 1985); Latife Tekin, *Gece Dersleri*, (Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 1986). Except for Tekin’s novel, the works have been translated into English. See Adalet Ağaoğlu, *Curfew*, trans. John Goulden (Austin: University of Texas, 1997); Bilge Karasu, *The Night*, trans. Güneli Gün (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994). Orhan Pamuk’s *Beyaz Kale* (1984) also alludes to the coup in its opening.

<sup>40</sup> See Hülya Göğercin Toker, “Siyasi ve Edebi İktidara Tanıklık Edebiyatı İle Direnmek: O Hep Aklımda.” *Monograf* 45.2 (2014): n. pag. Web. 18 July 2014.

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, Pamuk Yıldız, *O Hep Aklımda* (Ankara: Penta Yayıncılık, 2010); Orhan Miroğlu, *Ölümden Kalıma: Diyarbakır Cezaevinden Mektuplar*, (Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2010);

important novelists of the 1970s, Pınar Kür.<sup>42</sup> In a 2004 interview with *Radikal Kitap*, Kür explained the difference between literary responses to the two military interventions by suggesting that while the victims of repression following the 1971 intervention were innocent, the victims of the 1980 coup lacked this righteousness. She remarked, “12 Mart niye verdi bu ilhamı söyleyeyim. Bir kere yaşıma daha yakındı onlara. Bir de onlar gerçekten çok idealist ve çok masumdular. O masumiyetleri insanın içini yakar. Bir tek adam öldürülmedi 12 Mart’ta. Yani devlet öldürdü de.. Bir tek insan öldürmeden asıldı bu çocuklar, bombalandılar. Sinan, Deniz, Hüseyin, Yusuf, Mahir... Bunlar benim içimi yakan olaylardır. 12 Eylül’de kimse benim içimi yakmadı. Orada da gençler öldü ama onlar biraz yırtıcı geldi bana. 12 Mart’ta olan o masumiyet yoktu onlarda.” (“Let me tell you why [the 12 March intervention] provided this inspiration. First of all, I was much closer in age to [the victims.] And they were really very idealist and very innocent. That innocence can tear you up inside. No one was killed during [the 12<sup>th</sup> March intervention]. I mean, the state killed, of course. These kids were hanged without having killed one person, they were bombed. Sinan, Deniz, Hüseyin, Yusuf, Mahir... These are events that still tear me up inside. No one had that effect on me during 12 September [the 1980 coup]. Young people died there [in that coup] as well, but they seemed more ferocious to me. They lacked that innocence that existed during 12 March”).

The innocence that Kür ascribes to the victims of the 1971 intervention seems to be focused especially on the figures of the three student leaders, Deniz Gezmiş, Hüseyin İnan and Yusuf Aslan.<sup>43</sup> In fact, these three names have turned into symbols of state-repression in Turkey,

---

<sup>42</sup> For analyses of Kür’s 1974 novel *Yarın Yarın* (Tomorrow Tomorrow) through the lens of gender and family, see Günay-Erkol, “Cold War Masculinities”, 174-195 and Ahmet Alver, “12 Mart Romanlarında Aile *Yarın Yarın*, 47’liler” *SDÜ Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 19 (2009).

<sup>43</sup> The “Sinan” and “Mahir” that Kür refers to, on the other hand, were student leaders Mahir Çayan and Sinan Cemgil, both killed by military forces during combat in 1972. Notably missing from Kür’s list of names is İbrahim Kaypakkaya, killed under torture in 1973 at age 24.

seemingly co-opted by all leftist factions. I point this out to emphasize that during the 12 March 1971 intervention, there was indeed a public conscience that considered the victims of state-repression innocent, and therefore undeserving of the violence unleashed upon them. This line of thinking, however, also betrays an insinuation that there are times when state-repression and violence are justified, which is precisely what Kür's controversial statement suggests. She argues that the 1980 coup and the abuses that followed did not incense her as much *because* she found the victims lacking in innocence. For Şükrü Argın, it is this shift in the public conscience that caused the post-1980 reticence in literature. Argın ascribes the absence of a strong literary response following the 1980 coup to a lack of an audience, claiming that the 1980 coup shattered the "social conscience" of Turkey. This fragmentation resulted in a more diverse literary landscape that can be considered the beginning of the Turkish postmodern.<sup>44</sup> As such, the silence following the 1980 coup is also the beginning of more variance within Turkish literature, a shift away from the didactic, socialist realist fiction of the 1970s.<sup>45</sup>

It is important to keep in mind this literary background in analyzing *Yaralısın* and its power and limitations as a fictional narrative. Murat Belge has criticized the novel for presenting a protagonist without history,<sup>46</sup> a man who cannot determine his "guilt;" what positioned him, in other words, against the state. For Belge, 12 March Novels approached the task of presenting the struggles of the leftists during this period in two ways: either by assuming that they were legally guilty but that the laws by which they were so were unjust (according to the social conscience), or by assuming that they were altogether innocent and the enforcers of the laws were entirely

---

<sup>44</sup> For Şükrü Argın, there was a shift in Turkish literature from the traditional to the modern between 1971 and 1980, while the 1980 coup began a shift from the modern to the postmodern. See Osman Akınhay, "Şükrü Argın ile Söyleşi: 'Edebiyat 12 Eylül'ü Kalben Destekledi.'" *Birikim* (2008): 8.

<sup>45</sup> Argın remarks that in order to understand the 1980 coup, we have to talk about horror as well as relief ("Dehşet ve ferahlama'... 12 Eylül'ü anlamak için, birlikte düşünölmeleri imkansızmış gibi görünen bu iki sözcük üzerinde ısrarla durmamız gerektiği kanısındayım"). Akınhay, "Şükrü Argın," 9.

<sup>46</sup> Belge, "12 Mart Romanları," 114.



unjust. Belge argues that *Yaralısın* chooses the second option, creating a character whose innocence is so absolute that he himself cannot understand what he did wrong, stuck in a Kafkaesque story of arbitrary repression and violence.<sup>47</sup> Thinking back to his sentencing, for example, the narrator remembers the verdict, “tutuklanmasına karar verildi,” (“found guilty”) but immediately afterwards asks “Niçin ama niçin?” (“Why but why?”<sup>48</sup>) Belge faults this approach for its de-historicizing effects, as well as its presentation of the torture victim as clueless. Ömer Türkeş also finds the approach misleading: he suggests that representing the torture victim as an innocent character who is moreover sure of his innocence obscures the fact that many of the revolutionaries of the period had decided to revolt knowingly, understanding and accepting that under the current laws they were acting illegally. For Türkeş, their bravery is in fact due to this knowledge.<sup>49</sup> It seems to me, however, that *Yaralısın*’s refusal to name the narrator’s “wrongdoing” is useful to overcome the aforementioned line of thinking that considers state-violence “deserving” in some cases. By presenting a man who does not divulge his name or the reason for his imprisonment, the novel insists that the victim could have been anyone, and the torture would *always* be undeserving and immoral. It also underlines the unpredictability of this overwhelming, brutal power: the state does not choose its victims according to a logic, but finds them arbitrarily.<sup>50</sup> This arbitrariness suggests that the victim could have been anyone - and therefore, that no one is safe from the wrath of this violence - but also points to Elaine Scarry’s

---

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>48</sup> Öz, *Yaralısın*, 44. All translations from the novel mine.

<sup>49</sup> “Eylemlerinin bedelini idam sehpalarında, Kızıldere’lerde, Nurhaklar’da yaşamlarıyla ödeyen devrimci gençler karşılıklarına aldıkları sistemin hukuna göre elbette suçluydular. Ne var ki onlar eylemlerini o hukukun terazisinde tartmayı hiç düşünmemişlerdi. Kısacası romanlarda anlatıldığı gibi, sorgu ve işkencelerin başlarına neden geldiğini bilmeyecek kadar saf değillerdi. İsyancıları bilinçli bir tercihti.” (“The revolutionary youth that paid the price for their actions with their lives in the gallows, in Kızıldere, in Nurhan were of course guilty by the laws of the system they had chosen to oppose. But they had never thought to weigh their actions on the scale of that law. In short, unlike their portrayal in the novels, they weren’t as naïve as not to know why the interrogations and tortures targeted them. Their revolt had been an informed decision.”) See Ömer Türkeş, “47’liler - Füzûzan.” *Radikal Kitap*, 2006. <http://dipnotkitap.net/ROMAN/47liler.htm>.

<sup>50</sup> See also Günay-Erkol, “Cold War Masculinities”, 83.

notion of the “fiction of power” that I mentioned above. The refusal or inability of the victim to divulge his guilt also unveils the flimsiness of the State’s power as demonstrated through the need for torture.

There is a long list of novels produced during the inter-coup period. I focus here on *Yaralısin* because unlike many other novels of the period in which torture is acknowledged but lurks in the background, *Yaralısin* is mainly a torture narrative. Since the narrator is the torture victim, the novel draws attention to its own position between fiction and testimony, and constantly engages with the limits of narration through the victim’s attempts to create a narrative out of this traumatic experience. As such, the novel lays bare the intersections of trauma, memory, representation and language. As I explained above, fictional torture narratives are not immune to the discourses and ideologies that underlie State repression. *Yaralısin* also demonstrates this dynamic relationship between literature and state-violence. To the extent that we consider *Yaralısin* a testimonial account, it holds subversive value: it challenges the official stance that denies torture. Yet, if we look at the means by which the novel narrates torture, a more complex picture emerges in which the novel inadvertently perpetuates repressive discourses. My analysis of *Yaralısin* focuses on how it views and uses narrative vis-a-vis state-sponsored violence, and torture as its most concentrated manifestation. While it is important to see this torture narrative through a historical framework, an analysis of the narrative techniques it uses to do give testimony discloses the shifting relationship between literature and repression.

### **Agency through realism**

*Yaralısin*’s narrator never reveals his personal or political history, and withholds his name until the very last page of the novel. The protagonist is also the narrator, but he uses the

second-person pronoun to refer to himself, a significant narrative technique that implicates the reader in the story, while hinting at the fragmentation in the protagonist's identity. "Nurilerle doluydu koğuş. Az önce silindiği belli, kurumaya yüz tutmuş, üzerinde yol yol izler bulunan bir masanın başına, tahta bir sıraya oturdun," the novel begins ("The cell was full of Nuris. *You* sat on a wooden bench at the head of a table with streaks, slightly damp from a recent wiping").

With this bizarre claim that all the men in the cell were named Nuri, the novel immediately destroys the proper name Nuri as such and posits Nuri almost as a common noun. In fact, when the narrator finally reveals his name at the end of the novel, the reader finds out he too is called Nuri. If the protagonist had a different name before, his torture and his incarceration have eradicated it. A violent State has effectively destroyed his individuality. The opening of the novel is the protagonist's first day in jail, which, the reader quickly realizes, followed weeks of torture. As the protagonist settles into life in prison and begins to communicate with the other prisoners, (none of whom are "political prisoners" like him), he also remembers his detention, interrogation, and torture.

Many of the narrator's descriptions approach his victimized body as a separate entity, almost as if the narrator is looking at himself from the outside. This is an effect of retrospective narration and it highlights for the readers the narrator's fragmentation in the face of traumatic physical pain and humiliation. For the length of the narrative the narrator refers to himself as "you," and cannot claim the subject position and agency posited by the first person singular "I." The man who has been so humiliated cannot be the man used to be, and yet, after telling his story we finally see the narrator telling his name: Nuri. At the end of the novel, he slams the door behind him as he exits the toilet, for the first time impervious to the sound it makes. This is an instance that hints at the narrator's shift from a passive ("edilgen") position to the position of the

subject, both in his ability to provide a name for himself, and in his acceptance of his ability to act. That his name is Nuri just like everyone else in the jail cell suggests, on the other hand, that this newly reclaimed subjecthood is inevitably interpolated through State repression. In Günay-Erkol's reading of the text, Nuri is in fact the protagonist's name and his decision to name the others in the cell as Nuris points to his desire to create a community, to identify with other people around him to overcome the solitariness of his experience as a victim.<sup>51</sup> For Belge, on the other hand, the multiplicity of Nuris is a surrealist move, which carries certain risks in "such" a novel, by which he means a historical novel that attempts to delineate the conditions of the time.<sup>52</sup> I do not agree with either critic, although I find Günay-Erkol's interpretation of identification more compelling. In my opinion, the choice to call everyone in the jail cell Nuri functions to highlight these individuals as subjects under state repression, their individuality and their freedom to not look and act the same eradicated. The narrator's use of adjectives to qualify and describe the Nuris gives them back their individuality and forces the readers to confront them as individuals with their own stories, rather than as just Nuris, undistinguished prisoner prototypes. I am not suggesting that they are innocent or unjustly imprisoned; the narrator certainly never makes that claim. And after hearing their stories of murder, domestic violence, theft, the readers do not have much reason to do so either. But they nevertheless exist in a place marked by State power, directly under its surveillance and control. Their "Nuri"ness, therefore, arises from and reflects this eradication of individuality and agency through control.

Despite its simple framework that moves back and forth between the jail cell and the memories of torture with clearly demarcated chapter breaks, *Yaralısin* remains an incredibly difficult novel to read due to its persistent and meticulous focus on torture as a process. This

---

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>52</sup> Belge, "12 Mart Romanları," 114.

directness and the linearity of the narrative challenge the State's attempts to obscure torture. Capturing the experience in its entirety is impossible – but by bearing witness to his own torture, the protagonist/narrator reclaims the subjectivity and agency the torturers destroy. He describes his torture meticulously, to the minute details of the torture chamber. While this heightens the readers' position as voyeurs, since the torture narrative unfolds as a testimony in *Yaralısın*, told by the fictional torture victim, there is a sense that the victim has control over the reader's prying gaze. Since the victim himself is telling his story and shows an unmistakable desire to connect with the outside world, the readers voyeuristic position is alleviated as the victim/narrator establishes control over at least the narration of his torture. The narration affords the narrator a degree of agency.

The link between narrative and power becomes especially apparent through the victim's obsessive descriptions. Not only does the narrator recount his torture in painstaking detail – positing an impossibly comprehensive and competent memory that I will challenge – but also offers an obsessively detailed account of his current surroundings. He presents details as minute as the streaks on a recently wiped table, the faded color of a prisoner's shirt, and the stains around the hole in a toilet.<sup>53</sup> Even a dying cockroach is described in detail, “sayısız bacaklarını boşlukta oynatırken, kendini sıkıştıran kalın küt parmakların basıncıyla, çıtır çıtır ezilip boşluğa fırlatılıyor” (“moving its countless legs in the void as it is thrown into the emptiness after being crushed, crackling with the pressure of the thick fingers that have squeezed it.”<sup>54</sup>) These particulars are not “necessary” for the development of the story, which makes us question the motives behind imparting such minutiae. We might not believe in a fixed external reality that can be described by language, but it is difficult to ignore the narrator's frantic attempts to impart his

---

<sup>53</sup> Öz, *Yaralısın*, 13, 16, 58.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

violent and repressive reality to us, which adds a unique realism to the novel. This realism becomes the victim's only means of control. The victim's obsession also suggests a desperate need to *communicate* with the outside world that seems impossibly distant, both because of the prison walls that separate the protagonist from the outside, and because the experience of torture has changed him irrevocably, suddenly setting him apart from everyone "outside," who cannot understand his plight due to the incommunicable, private nature of his trauma.<sup>55</sup>

Unlike the other novels studied in this project, *Yaralısim* is not concerned with exposing the artifice of fiction or questioning the boundary separating the fictional from the real. As I suggested above, the censorship and the fragmentation of the social conscience following the 1980 coup initiated the Turkish postmodern. *Yaralısim* falls outside of the postmodernist mode of writing.<sup>56</sup> Nor does *Yaralısim* ascribe to a more traditional understanding of realism in which it tries to describe society as is. It does not even employ a traditional Turkish realism, utilized to expose the ills of society or impart a desired consciousness to the reader. What I refer to as realism in *Yaralısim* can perhaps be better espoused through what it is not. I call *Yaralısim* a realist novel because barring that everyone in the jail cell has the same name, Nuri, it does not contain paranormal or surreal elements. It follows what Wallace Martin terms "natural causality."<sup>57</sup> The events are confined by physical laws and not based on mythical or magical elements, as they would be in magical realism, for example. But, the novel's realism is unique in that it exists to grant the victim a voice and a degree of control when he is physically powerless.

---

<sup>55</sup> This "inside/outside" binary is an important problem for many of the coup novels produced in the 1970s, alluding both to those inside and outside the prison, as well as to those inside and outside the leftist movement. See Belge, "12 Mart Romanları," 99.

<sup>56</sup> Although I agree with Argın that the 1980 coup begins the Turkish postmodern, there were of course novels before this time that had already begun to move in that direction. One such example is Oğuz Atay's masterpiece *Tutunamayanlar* (*The Disconnected*) that was written in 1971.

<sup>57</sup> Wallace Martin, *Recent Theories of Narrative*, (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986).

The narrativization of the trauma, the process of turning the mind-baffling cruelty of this world into words meant to *communicate* that reality become the narrator's only means of resistance.

Of course, realism itself is a convoluted and unstable designation. It can function as a period concept, referring to the literature of the nineteenth century, characterized by the inclusion of ordinary characters from different strata of society in an effort to present an objective "reality." Or, realism can refer to a general attempt to show the world "as is." In both of these definitions, however, we posit that there is a stable external reality outside of the text, and that it can be represented objectively through language. Post-structuralism and deconstruction, among other contemporary theories, have taught us that there is no such thing as a fixed external reality, or objectivity in language. Consequently, with the rise of postmodernism, realism has come to be thought of as arising inevitably from the writing of fiction. Fiction creates its own realism; it writes realism, as Armine Kotin Mortimer convincingly argues:

Because representation is not (or no longer) a reference to a preexisting reality outside the writing, only the writing is real . . . Instead of showing something about the 'real world,' about which, necessarily, an opinion is made or a position taken, as in the old view of realism, writing realism shows us something about the *writing*, which cannot be seen in anything but realism. It shows us writing engaged at the very core of real experience.

Writing is the only real referent that the reader can confidently know while reading."<sup>58</sup>

*Yaralısin* lacks this self-reflexivity. Mortimer suggests that self-reflection characterizes (or should characterize) both writing and reading in the aftermath of the awareness that there is no preexisting reality for realism to capture.<sup>59</sup> The absence of this self-reflection in *Yaralısin* also leads to a lack of acknowledgement of the ethical conundrums that face its project. However,

---

<sup>58</sup> Armine Kotin Mortimer, *Writing Realism: Representations in French Fiction*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2000), 220-1.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

although I agree that the line separating the fictional world from a fixed outside reality is ever shifting, I am hesitant to fully adopt the position that “writing is the only real referent that the reader can confidently know while reading.” It seems that this absolute privileging of the written cannot help but result in the naïve belief that the suffering portrayed in a fictional work is entirely fictional, with no referents among real people who live around us. *Yaralısin* derives its power precisely from the overlaps between its representation and 1970s Turkey. This need not mean that the novel should be read as a historical document, or judged on the basis of its historical accuracy. But the way it constructs its fictional world is not disconnected from the historical conditions of the 1970s. Self-reflexivity does not only emphasize that the writing on the page is the only real referent. It also necessarily implies that this writing that constitutes the fictional world is not less real than what happens outside the limits of the novel. In other words, self-reflexivity helps destabilize the readers’ resolute trust in an external, pre-existing reality, and also conveys the fictional world as capable of containing reality. This, I think, is a very significant recognition for fictional works that deal with state violence.

As Murat Belge points out, *Yaralısin*’s protagonist always appears passive and acted upon.<sup>60</sup> The narrative reflects this passivity with the prevalent use of passive voice. The protagonist remembers being dragged on stone steps<sup>61</sup> and later senses “being dragged” in a hallway.<sup>62</sup> Or he sees straps being tied and tightened around his ankles.<sup>63</sup> Scarry explains this passivity as characteristic of attempts to verbally define physical pain. She argues “the feeling of pain entails the feeling of *being acted upon*, and the person may either express this in terms of the world acting on him or in terms of his own body acting on him.” This absolute passivity also

---

<sup>60</sup> Belge, “12 Mart Romanları,” 114.

<sup>61</sup> Öz, *Yaralısin*, 124. (“Enli taş basamaklardan sürüklenerek indirilişin”)

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 109. (“Ayak bileklerine de kayışların geçirilip sıkıldığını görüyorsun.”)



adds to the fiction of power created through torture by emphasizing the “obsessive, self-conscious display of agency” acted out by the torturers and the regime they represent.<sup>64</sup> In *Yaralısın*, the passivity of the protagonist, which the language emphasizes through the use of passive voice (*edilgen*), demonstrates the protagonist’s feeling that the whole world is acting upon him. The protagonist can only be acted upon because in torture he quite literally lacks all means of action, since he is tied, stripped and constantly abused. When the torturers put wires around his penis, the protagonist says, “Don’t,” but he cannot effectively stop them. Looking at his tortured body from a retrospective distance, he narrates, “It’s impossible for you to prevent it. Your hands and arms are tied. You are trying to spare yourself, hide yourself with all your body, but it’s futile.” His hands are tied, literally and figuratively.<sup>65</sup> The obsessive descriptions afford a field of control to this brutalized man. Completely exposed and without agency, he observes compulsively. He watches and judges. His narrative that conveys every small detail around him becomes his only claim to an agency and voice; the realist narrative becomes his attempt to regain subjectivity. His detailed descriptions constitute the text’s struggle to make verbal sense of torture and pain. The torturers treat him as a spectacle, seeing and touching him from whichever angle they please, but he returns their gaze and exposes them in his narrative.

The torturers themselves have no control over these observations and descriptions. Having turned the victim into a passive spectacle, now they themselves become the spectacle. They appear completely exposed to the protagonist, who reads their appearance to figure out who they are. He sees two people, “sağda, ayakta, yanmayan sobanın başında, *dar gelirlili oldukları belli*, her türlü buyruğu gözü kapalı yerine getirecek görünüşte, kişiliksiz, ikisi de oldukça iri, biri kırçıl, biri damalı ucuz kumaştan ceketler giymiş iki kişi” (“two big people, one wearing a

<sup>64</sup> Scarry, “The Body in Pain,” 16, 27.

<sup>65</sup> Öz, *Yaralısın*, 112.

grayish jacket and the other a jacket made out of *cheap checkered cloth*, standing on the right, near the unlit stove. *It is clear that they are of small means*. They seem to lack personality; they look like they could blindly carry out any order.”<sup>66</sup> The protagonist’s gaze picks out even the cheap cloth of their jackets. In another instance, he comments on the “donuk, çirkin, mat, çapaklı” (“dim, ugly, lusterless, *crusty*”) eyes of a torturer.<sup>67</sup> Consequently, although the descriptions of torture turn the readers into spectators, the narrator also insists on turning the torturers into spectacles, inviting the readers to judge them. Interestingly, what we are asked to judge is not only their inhumanity and the vileness of their acts, but seemingly trivial details pertaining to their personal hygiene, their clothes, etc. In short, the narrator invites us to pry into their worlds, probing into *their* privacy as well.<sup>68</sup>

### **Fictionalizing the Inexpressibility of Pain**

These obsessive details of the narrative also help circumvent the inexpressibility of pain. Pain’s resistance to language, as Scarry argues, makes writing about torture especially difficult because the victim’s experience is marked by extreme physical pain. Because the protagonist cannot describe pain, he cannot describe the torture per se. Instead, he can only depict, passively, what the torturers are doing to him. The narrator manages to tell his experience of torture only through detailed descriptions of the objects and acts involved in the torture. However, despite

---

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 97. Emphasis mine.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>68</sup> Çimen Günay-Erkol interprets these observations as indicative of an anxiety about masculinity, or about emasculation. She points out that many of these observations focus on the lack of hygiene. For example, during torture the narrator sees one of his torturers wipe his snot with his sleeve and calls him “Pis!,” “Filthy!” (199) He exclaims similarly after seeing the oily skin of one of the torturers (202). For Günay-Erkol, this concern with hygiene point to a “Bihruz Bey syndrome,” Bihruz Bey being the protagonist of Rezaizade Ekrem’s 1896 novel *The Carriage Affair*. Bihruz Bey is the prototype dandy in Turkish fiction, overly charmed by the West and effeminate. She writes “the March 12 novels carry out a cultural critique of hypermasculinity, by using excessive masculinity as a metaphor for the abuse of power that permeated the society, and [they] reveal a contemporary account of the “Bihruz bey syndrome.” (2). I find Günay-Erkol’s interpretation thought-provoking, but I instead emphasize the agency and sense of superiority these descriptions provide the otherwise dominated narrator.

these detailed descriptions of the torturers' acts, he cannot describe his pain, instead using words that define its incommunicability like "inexplicable" (*anlatılmaz*). When he is waiting in the van for his turn, he tries to imagine the pain inflicted on the man being tortured as he waits, but he cannot. After seeing the magneto in the torture room, he attempts to imagine electrocutions, but "olacak şey değil. [Düşünemiyor] bile" ("it is impossible. [He] cannot even think of it."<sup>69</sup>). According to Scarry, "the verbal strategies for overcoming [the assault of pain on language] are very small in number and reappear consistently: [they] revolve around the verbal sign of the weapon." In an effort to describe the pain, the narrator uses his obsessive realism and describes the weapons and machines that inflict pain. For example, he describes in detail the wires coming out of the magneto the torturers use to electrocute him: "Kablo, ucuna doğru daha ince iki kabloya ayrılıyor, biri kırmızı, biri sarı gibi. Kabloların uçları sıyrılmış, çıplak bakır telleri görünüyor" ("the cable splits into two cables towards the tip, one red, one yellowish. The tips of the cables have peeled off; their bare copper wires are visible."<sup>70</sup> This description of the wires in the middle of a torture narrative seems bizarre at first, but the narrator has no other way to communicate the pain these cables then generate. As Scarry explains, the focus on the weapon remains one of the few verbal strategies to objectify and convey pain. The problem is that this emphasis can also push pain further into invisibility.<sup>71</sup>

*Yaralısın* circumvents this problem by conveying the persistent traces of torture. The reader sees the protagonist after his torture, and although the protagonist cannot communicate the pain he has experienced, the traces on his body constantly remind him and the reader of torture. After his torture, the protagonist remarks, "Kurtulsan bile, hiçbir zaman eski sen olamazsın artık.

---

<sup>69</sup> Öz, *Yaralısın*, 110.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>71</sup> Scarry, "The Body in Pain," 13.

Bittin sen” (“even if you survive, you can never be your old self again. You are finished.”<sup>72</sup>) Torture has eradicated his subjectivity, as shown by his refusal or failure to name himself. He doesn’t have a name anymore; he is not himself. He, as he knew himself, has been destroyed by torture. After his last and near fatal torture, the narrator thinks, “Kurtuldun o çılgın sürüden. Yaralısın” (“You have escaped that crazy mob. You are wounded”<sup>73</sup>). “Wounded” becomes a potential name for this man whose personal history, and perhaps even personality, has been eradicated. The novel’s title “*You Are Wounded*” is not only an observation, then, but also a designation, because surviving torture also means being wounded permanently. Ironically, “you are wounded” can also be read as an accusation, which is the basic element of the syntax of interrogation and torture. By focusing on this irreversibility and the endurance of torture’s trauma, *Yaralısın* does not allow the readers to look away from the pain of the narrator/protagonist. Although the narrator can only describe the sources of pain – and only the automaton ones at that since he cannot understand his torturers – this doesn’t necessarily obscure an already removed, interior experience but reveal its trauma instead. Perhaps we cannot grasp and share his pain, but we see what it does to him as a subject afterwards.

What does partially does obscure the pain is an inevitable part of the work: its fictionality. Scarry remarks that “there is always the danger that a fictional character’s suffering will divert our attention away from the living sister or uncle who can be helped by our compassion in a way that the fictional character cannot be.” Or, if artists convey suffering too successfully, there is the danger that they will “collectively come to be thought of as the most authentic class of sufferers, [inadvertently appropriating] concern away from others in radical need of assistance.”<sup>74</sup> In other

---

<sup>72</sup> Öz, *Yaralısın*, 206.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>74</sup> Scarry, “The Body in Pain,” 11.

words, a fictional rendition of torture, and therefore of pain and violence, will inevitably risk obscuring the suffering of real torture victims.

In Jeffrey Eugenides' 2011 novel *The Marriage Plot*, a pretentious undergraduate named Thurston claims that "books aren't about 'real life.'<sup>75</sup> Books are about other books," professing his agreement with Barthes that "the act of writing is itself a fictionalization, even if you're treating actual events." He is, as it turns out, discussing Peter Handke's novel *A Sorrow Beyond Dreams*, which deals with the suicide of the author's mother. Eugenides' fictional class then discusses whether we could consider such an emotionally traumatic event only as a literary trope. Although Thurston's reaction is meant to parody the cynicism of the pretentious semiotic, it embodies the reaction Scarry warns readers against and no representation of torture can circumvent. If books are not about real life, how can these narrativized representations of torture matter beyond and outside of the literary? How can a fictional account of torture overcome the emotional detachment that Thurston, as a type of reader, displays? The fictionality itself allows for this detachment, turning the pain of the protagonist into a mere literary trope, with no substance other than its significance within the text. Thurston's reaction is the reaction that Scarry warns against when she cautions that fictional accounts can divert the attention away from victims in need of radical assistance. But what is the torture narrative hoping to achieve? If the novel that deals with torture is only approached as a didactic tool, it will always fail. In other words, if it is meant to spur readers into action, inspire them to actively fight state violence, the novel will always fall short precisely because the more insistent it is in depicting torture, the more difficult it is to read. *Yaralısin* is not an "easy" novel – there are no pleasant events, no resolution, no happy ending in either. They both force the reader into contemplating the position of the torture victim (as well as the torturer).

---

<sup>75</sup> Jeffrey Eugenides, *The Marriage Plot*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011).

Despite the absence of a clear political content, *Yaralısm* presents the readers with the testimony of a torture victim, whose ordeal attests to the violence of the Turkish state. And this is one of the most powerful aspects of *Yaralısm*: it recounts the tale of a marginalized, silenced torture victim, whose story is denied by the State and remains buried under layers of official narratives. The sheer scarcity of torture narratives – fictional or otherwise – despite the prevalence of torture throughout Turkey’s modern history gives *Yaralısm* subversive power. The use of realism is also innovative in the novel, partially undoing the complete subjugation of the victim. However, the text also replicates the State’s approach towards the victims in more than one instance.

### **The Dynamics of Representing Torture**

In *Yaralısm*, the resolve to endure torture appears as a human resistance against dehumanizing conditions. Since the protagonist finds himself completely defenseless during torture, stripped and all of his limbs tied, this mental determination to endure without confessing becomes one of few means of defiance. As Murat Belge also points out, *Yaralısm* conceptualizes the tension between the victim and torturer as an “existential” (*varoluşsal*) problem. For the protagonist, resisting physical pain is an attempt to justify his existence, his humanity. He thinks that confessing (or simply “talking”) would degrade him to the point that he would lose what makes him human, make him “ayaklarlar altında sürünen, yaltaklanan, yalvaran, köpekleşen biri” (“a person who crawls under others’ feet, sucks up to them, begs and becomes a dog<sup>76</sup>). When he considers the implications of giving in to his torturers, he remarks that he fears “walking among people while fostering a humiliated, crushed, squashed, sticky and disgusting insect” within him. Confessing is equated with losing humanity, becoming a lowlife, a disgusting insect. Before the torture starts, as he is being detained in a disgusting hut covered in human waste the protagonist

---

<sup>76</sup> Öz, *Yaralısm*, 93.

feels a sudden longing for wet pebbles on a beach. This unexpected sensation makes him realize his own humane emotions (*insanca duygular*), showing him that “yitirilmeyen, yitirilmemesi gereken şeyler olduğu” (“there are things that are not lost, that should not be lost<sup>77</sup>). His resolve to endure with dignity, without giving in to the torturers, becomes an attempt to keep those humane emotions.

The protagonist’s constant struggle to keep silent also functions as a barrier between him and the torturers. It is his attempt to resist becoming one of “them.” When stuck in a van with blindfolds, torturously waiting for his “turn” to be tortured, he accepts a cigarette from one of the presumed torturers and immediately chastises himself for it, because in order to maintain the distance between himself as a human being and the torturers who seem to him to have lost their humanity he realizes that he must reject everything that comes from them, even kindness.<sup>78</sup> The determination to resist confession thus becomes an attempt to resist the torturers and the system that allows and necessitates their existence. whatever system they belong to. Especially in the protagonist’s sudden understanding that everything coming from “these men” should be turned down, there seems to be a political consciousness’ that Belge nevertheless feels lacking. At these moments, the protagonist recognizes that “these men” are not just torturers, but symbolize a larger system that stands behind them. Similarly, when the judge decides on his arrest after the trial, the narrator asks himself, “her şey, o yağlı yüzün ortasına yapışmış etli iki dudağın arasından dökülecek bir çift söze mi bağlı?” (“does everything depend on a couple of words that fall from the two fleshy lips stuck on the middle of that greasy face?”) He then quickly realizes “olamaz. Konuşan oymuş gibi görünse de, ses başkasının. Arkada, yüzünü göstermek istemeyen başka birilerinin sesleri var” (“it cannot be. Even if it seems like he is the one talking, the voice

---

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 76.

belongs to someone else. There are others in the background who don't want to show their faces"<sup>79</sup>). This seems like a clear recognition that torture and repression in fact belong to a political and historical context.<sup>80</sup>

The cruelty of the torturers and their seeming inhumanity force the protagonist to hold on to an idealized humanity to assert his difference from "these men." When he realizes that the torturers want him to scream, he thinks, "Bağırmaşın onları kızdıracaksa -. Öyleyse bağırmmamak, direnmek, bir anlam kazanıyor şimdi" ("If not screaming will make them mad-. Well then not screaming, enduring gains some meaning now"<sup>81</sup>). In fact, at various points the protagonist actually takes pride in being the victim, because his position as the victim emphasizes his distance from the figure of the torturer.<sup>82</sup> He remarks, "Vurulan olmak, vuruyor olmaktan daha güzel, çok daha güzel" ("To be the one being hit is better, much better than being the one hitting"<sup>83</sup>). The protagonist realizes that he is now a passive individual, a victim, always acted upon and never acting, and fully owns that position. His refusal to speak seems like a pointed exaggeration of the passivity forced upon him. By accepting the silence and passivity the torturers impose, he reclaims the agency to remain human and resist what he deems inhuman.

On many levels, then, the resolve to remain silent functions as an important act of resistance in *Yaralısın*. However, the emphasis on "confession" as the element that will make or break the man has very troubling implications. The association of confession with defeat actually replicates a line of thinking propagated by state repression. Elaine Scarry mentions in *Body in*

---

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>80</sup> Similarly, as he's being dragged through a hallway after being tortured, bloodied and almost unconscious, the protagonist hears the men in the jail cells along the hallway – presumably all political prisoners –yelling at the torturers, calling them merciless tyrants. Someone far away suddenly screams "Down with the Fascists," prompting the whole hallway to scream in unison (125). This is an instance of strong political consciousness, but Belge explains that the "individual enters Fascism's oppression as a misfortunate and ahistorical being" (Belge 115).

<sup>81</sup> Öz, *Yaralısın*, 197.

<sup>82</sup> On the figure of the victim, see Justin Crumbaugh, "Are We All (Still) Miguel Ángel Blanco? Victimhood, the Media Afterlife, and the Challenge for Historical Memory," *Hispanic Review* 75.4 (2007): 365-84.

<sup>83</sup> Öz, *Yaralısın*, 91.



*Pain* that in post-totalitarian regimes, when torturers are brought to justice, they use their knowledge of whether the victims confessed against the testifying victims.<sup>84</sup> Similarly, in *Yaralısin* the protagonist realizes that when other military officers find out he has not “talked,” they sound “full of defeat.” He senses in their absurd question, “niye konuşmadın len?” (“why didn’t you talk, eh?”) an inferiority towards the man who did not talk.<sup>85</sup> Confession thus equals defeat while not talking signals victory, a moral superiority over torturers and the state. Faced with such inhumane treatment as being beaten with rods and electrocuted for hours, giving in and talking would be human reactions that attest to the limits of the body. The reader lauds the endurance and strength of the protagonist as well as his unflinching desire to maintain his dignity in the face of impossible conditions. However, his association of confession with betrayal and inhumanity perpetuates the binaries established by the immoral system that resulted in the use of torture. The notion of “not talking” as victory implicitly and unjustly labels the many torture victims who did confess under extreme physical pain as losers. It seems almost absurd, and tragically so, that confession rather than torture becomes equated with immorality and being inhumane. There is no easy solution for this quandary: the protagonist’s use of the silence that is imposed on him to reclaim agency is a subversive move that turns the torturer’s weapon against the torturer. However, likening a man who confesses during torture to an insect imitates the mechanism of repression, even though the narrator only equates *his own* potential confession with inhumanity. This simultaneously provocative and conformist stance gives a glimpse of the difficulties of writing about torture. Even as the narrative subverts the mentality behind torture, it can inadvertently propagate it.

---

<sup>84</sup> Scarry, “The Body in Pain,” 330.

<sup>85</sup> Öz, *Yaralısin*, 131.

A similar problem emerges at the end of the novel when the protagonist finally shares his experience with one of his cellmates. At the end, Gilay Nuri recognizes that the scars on the victim's body are wounds from torture. He asks the protagonist what he told "them," and upon hearing that he has not talked under torture Gilay stands up and embraces him, kisses him on the cheeks and remarks, "All this will be answered for someday."<sup>86</sup> ("Bir gün bütün bunların hesabı sorulmaz mı?"). Gilay feels overjoyed upon learning the protagonist hasn't buckled and talked under torture, but we can't help asking what his reaction would have been if the protagonist had indeed "talked." Would his suffering not matter then? Would it not be necessary to answer for the pain of someone who collapses under extreme pain? For Çimen Günay-Erkol, the focus on not talking is not only an existential question, but also one that is tied to Turkish understandings of masculinity. In this sense, Gilay Nuri who otherwise shows no political consciousness or an interest in leftist ideology does not praise the protagonist's resistance as a political act, but as a manly one.<sup>87</sup>

As I mentioned above, unlike the novels that I will analyze in the following chapters, *Yaralısın* is not a self-reflexive novel. By self-reflexive, I mean novels that problematize representation and writing by referring to and making visible their own processes of writing. Although *Yaralısın* must always grapple with the difficulties implicit in representing the experience of torture and extreme physical pain, it does not do so in a way that makes these issues apparent to the reader. Instead, the narrator presents a story based on his memory which does not question the capacity of his memory. The amount of detail he includes in his torture narrative suggests that he has not forgotten any part of his ordeal and other than in instances where he completely blacks out from pain, he does not give the readers any reason to think there

---

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 253.

<sup>87</sup> Günay-Erkol, "Cold War Masculinities", 79-81.

might be gaps in his story. While this might indicate the severity of his trauma by showing us that he is *unable* to forget any of the details, this treatment of memory as an unquestionably reliable source of information introduces new problems to the text. Trauma and Memory Studies have commented extensively on the instability of the testimonial narrative, the complexities of the witness position, and the unreliability of memory. In my opinion, these are not questions that can be resolved *per se*, but the novel's lack of reflection on these problems makes it less likely to recognize its own limitations, making it less able to position itself against the discourses sustained by state repression. The absolute grasp on the past is, for example, what the State claims to have. Equating confession with loss of humanity might be the protagonist's means of resistance, but it is also a line of thinking that doubly victimizes the tortured. It is important here to note that these quandaries do not concern actual testimonies of torture victims. It makes perfect sense that a torture victim would not be primarily concerned with the ethics of representation. I mention these difficulties because *Yaralısin*, despite its historical value and its position in between fiction and testimony, is a novel. Öz's rejection of 12 March Novels, in fact, was about recovering this fictional status and insisting on the novel being judged precisely as that: a novel. And it is on this basis that I introduce these quandaries here.

These shortcomings do not reduce the destabilizing force of the novel that derives from the act of writing about torture *openly*, despite the State's attempts to deny, ignore, or silence such stories. However, they are significant limitations arising from a lack of self-reflexivity. In other words, while *Yaralısin* manages to circumvent some of the difficulties implicit in its task, I think its major shortcoming is the lack of acknowledgement that these problems exist. Considering its milieu and the literary world it belongs to, *Yaralısin* remains an exceptionally courageous novel.

I find it impossible to utilize a solely textual methodology in discussing torture narratives: the kind of reading they call for is precisely the kind of reading Thurston refuses to engage in. One task of the fictional torture narrative, then, is to circumvent emotional distance and emphasize the link between the narrative and “real life.”<sup>88</sup> *Yaralısin* is a fictional account but it is also a reflection of real life, whether we subscribe to the idea of a fixed external reality or not. The text creates reality in its own framework, but this does not mean this reality does not mimic real life. One does not need to know the historical specifics of 1970s Turkey to approach the novel, but the reading it demands requires shedding the naiveté that these events *only* happen in fiction, to fictional characters.

---

<sup>88</sup> On desensitization to others’ pain, see Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), 53-73.

## Chapter 2

### Writing into Pitfalls: *Si te dicen que caí*

“When children play, though they’re amusing themselves, they take it very seriously. It’s important . . . Literature is like that—it’s a game, but it’s a game one can put one’s life into. One can do everything for that game.”

Julio Cortazar<sup>1</sup>

“Telling a story well, that means: so as to be understood. You can’t manage it without a bit of artifice. Enough artifice to make it art.”

Jorge Semprún<sup>2</sup>

### Writing into pitfalls

Fictional representations of state-violence magnify the tensions inherent to all literary representations. They compel readers to reflect on the relationship between imagination and reality, fiction and history, and demonstrate both writing *and* reading to be far from neutral, innocent acts. Torture narratives in particular make difficult demands on the reader: unable to act but also participating in the exposure of the tortured body through the act of reading, the reader is pushed into the position of the voyeur. As postmodernism and metafictional modes of writing have insistently shown reading is never a passive or neutral act, but fictional representations of torture especially complicate the role of the reader as the reader becomes both a probable voyeur and a potential “hearing you” to receive the hushed stories of torture.

---

<sup>1</sup> Jason Weiss, “The Art of Fiction: Interview with Julio Cortázar.” *The Paris Review*, Fall 1984, <http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/2955/the-art-of-fiction-no-83-julio-cortazar>.

<sup>2</sup> Jorge Semprún, *Literature or Life*, trans. Linda Coverdale, (New York: Penguin Books, 1998).

In a short 1986 article titled “Into the Dark Chamber,” J.M Coetzee discusses the challenges inherent in fictionally representing torture.<sup>3</sup> For Coetzee, the difficulty facing the author is how to represent torture on his own terms, without inadvertently perpetuating the discourses of the regime that uses torture. By hiding torture, Coetzee argues, the State triggers the novelistic fantasy, prompting the author to start imagining what goes on beyond the closed doors of the dark torture chamber. The representations that arise from this imagination are compromised from their conception, because instead of ignoring the dark chamber that is designed to terrorize not only the victim inside but everyone outside as well, these representations respond to torture. “The problem that troubles the novelist,” Coetzee writes, is “how to justify a concern with morally dubious people involved in a contemptible activity; how to find an appropriately minor place for the petty secrets of the security system; how to treat something that, in truth, because it is offered like the Gorgon’s head to terrorize the populace and paralyze resistance, deserves to be ignored.”<sup>4</sup> From this already undermined beginning, the novelist must find ways to then imagine and represent the torture chamber on his own terms, without inadvertently sustaining the regime’s presentation of it. Although Coetzee finds all of the works he examines wanting in one way or another in their approach to torture, he presents Nadine Gordimer’s 1977 novel *Burger’s Daughter* as an effective and ethical representation of torture.<sup>5</sup> After witnessing a poor black man flogging a horse, Burger’s daughter decides to leave South Africa, precisely because she realizes that she lives in a society in which the morality that would have allowed her to intervene has been destroyed by pervasive brutality. According to Coetzee, the scene reveals an episode of “torture without the torturer”: an affliction that affects the entire society and destroys the criteria that allow us to make moral judgments. In such a

---

<sup>3</sup> J.M. Coetzee, “Into the Dark Chamber: The Novelist and South Africa,” *New York Times* (January 1986): 1–4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Nadine Gordimer, *Burger’s Daughter*, (New York: Viking Press, 1979).

society, the gaze of the author is meaningless because the choice is limited to looking on in horrified fascination or turning away.<sup>6</sup> In a world that poses only this binary, representing the scene is meaningless because the author will always be forced to perpetuate the binaries presented by the State.

Gordimer's account is the type of representation Coetzee advocates because it manages to free itself from the rules posed by the State. The problem is not framed through individuals anymore, but in terms of a widespread violence that reaches everyone by creating an inhumane society that incapacitates moral judgments. Coetzee points out that the only "appropriate" way of representing torture is to imagine it on one's own terms, without replicating the rules of the system: "the true challenge is how not to play the game by the rules of the state, how to establish one's own authority, how to imagine torture and death on one's own terms."<sup>7</sup> But as the previous chapter's analysis of *Yaralısin* has shown, it is usually impossible to discern this line between "one's own terms" and "the rules of the state" since these disruptive and compliant forces can occur simultaneously. A representation can be disruptive and yet inadvertently perpetuate the discourses and binaries circulated by the repressive regime whose violence it wants to challenge and expose. As I explained, in *Yaralısin* this contradictory dynamic is best seen in the novel's descriptions of the victim's resolve not to speak under torture. This resolve and the victim's obsessive descriptions restore the agency and subjectivity that torture has destroyed. Yet, to the extent that this resolve presents itself as a dignified act *unlike* confessing under torture, which the victim insistently describes as a possibility that would undermine his value as a human being, this resolve is also very much in line with a discourse that the regime behind the torture poses:

---

<sup>6</sup> Coetzee, "Dark Chamber," 4. The argument recalls Hannah Arendt's contention in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* that Eichmann's sheer ordinariness and banality in the face of the extraordinariness of the crimes he committed threw into chaos the moral, philosophical, ethical and legal categories available to *judge*. See Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, (New York: Penguin Classics, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

those who confess during torture are ignoble. It seems to me that despite Coetzee's insistence on the necessity of imagining torture "on one's own terms," because of the multiple dynamics present in every representation this is a task that falls outside of the author's control. However, representations that thematize and acknowledge their own limitations and through this thematization force *readers* to confront the dilemmas implicit in their projects are not only more viable, but also produce more effective representations of torture and state-violence. In fact, I would argue that Gordimer's representation is successful precisely because it demonstrates through the dilemma of Burger's daughter the author's predicament in fictionally representing systemic, institutional violence.

It is perhaps clear at this point that I am espousing a certain degree of self-reflection and self-consciousness in fictional representations of state-violence. This characteristic is of course what defines metafiction. Linda Hutcheon describes metafiction as fiction *about* fiction, "fiction that includes within itself a commentary on its own narrative and/or linguistic identity."<sup>8</sup> She argues that in metafictional texts, the emphasis is not on literature as *product*, as in the case of realist novels, for example, but instead on literature and storytelling as *process*. Similarly, Patricia Waugh describes metafiction as a mode of writing that highlights its own status as constructed "in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality."<sup>9</sup> In both definitions, metafiction suggests textual self-consciousness, rather than functioning as a mere period designation describing postmodernism.<sup>10</sup> I mention this especially because it is this textual self-consciousness that I see as capable of producing less compromised representations.

---

<sup>8</sup> Linda Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox*, (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1980), 2, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Consciousness*. (Florence, KY: Routledge, 1984), <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/umich/docDetail.action?docID=5001577>, p.2.

<sup>10</sup> As both Waugh and Hutcheon are quick to explain, metafiction is not only limited to postmodernism but characterizes many earlier texts, the most famous examples being *Don Quixote* and *Tristram Shandy*.



The uncertain relationship between fiction and reality has important implications for fictional representations of state-violence, and in fact for every fictional work. It informs the reading experience: are these *simply* words on a page that create an imaginary world divorced from reality, or are these historical realities narrativized, ordered into a story? Needless to say, the scholarship on this particular relationship as it affects the construction and interpretation of the fictional world is extensive. What I want to highlight are the implications this uncertainty holds for representations of state-violence, which position themselves *against* monolithic understandings of history and truth, but which are not divorced from reality by any means in that the violence they represent *does* very much exist outside of the text and even targets these texts themselves through censorship, book-burnings, the persecution of the author, etc. By reflecting on this uncertain relationship between fiction and reality, self-conscious representations of state-violence gesture towards an ethics of reading.<sup>11</sup> As Linda Hutcheon articulately explains, in metafiction “this fact [that language is representation of a fictional ‘other’ world] is made explicit and, while he reads, the reader lives in a world which is forced to acknowledge as fictional. However, paradoxically the text also demands that he participate, that he engage himself intellectually, imaginatively, and affectively in this co-creation.” As a result, metafictional texts display what Hutcheon calls a “two-way pull,” focusing inwards through self-reflection, and also outwards through the demands placed on the reader.<sup>12</sup> This two-way pull is precisely what helps metafictional representations of state-violence overcome the aforementioned dilemma between being judged only on the basis of their historical accuracy and showing state-violence as only fictional. Instead of resolving the dilemma for the reader, these texts urge the readers to work

---

<sup>11</sup> Metafiction and self-conscious texts are not exactly synonymous, as Hutcheon demonstrates in great detail through her focus on different modes and degrees of metafictional writing in *Narcissistic Narrative*. Yet, it is clear that *all* metafictional texts display some degree of textual self-consciousness, which is why I use the terms synonymously here.

<sup>12</sup> Hutcheon, “Narcissistic Narrative,” 7.

through this predicament just as the novels themselves must. Linda Hutcheon argues that metafiction is especially valuable because it re-positions the reader as an *active* participant in fiction, rather than a passive observer (reader) of the events that take place in the works. The readers must acknowledge the process of writing - the artifice of fiction - and simultaneously recognize its links with and impact on lived experience.<sup>13</sup>

In this chapter, I will analyze Spanish author Juan Marsé's 1973 novel *Si te dicen que caí* as a metafictional representation of state-violence that thematizes the literary and ethical pitfalls implicit in the project of fictionalizing state-violence. The novel could only be published in Spain in 1976, three years after its publication in Mexico and a year after the death of Franco and the end of the thirty-five year long dictatorship. In his introduction to the second edition, Marsé explains that while he was writing the novel, he was convinced it would never be published because "el régimen franquista parecía que iba a ser eterno y una idea obsesiva y fatalista se había apoderado de [él]: la de que la censura, que aún gozaba de muy buena salud, nos iba a sobrevivir a todos, no solamente al régimen fascista que la había engendrado sino incluso a la tan anhelada transición . . . Instalándose ya para siempre, como una maldición gitana de Caudillo, en el mismo corazón de la España futura"<sup>14</sup> ("the Franco regime gave every appearance of being eternal and [he] had been possessed by an obsessive, fatalistic idea: that censorship, which was still enjoying excellent health, was going to survive all of us, not only the Fascist regime that had engendered it but also the long-yearned-for transition")<sup>15</sup> As pessimistic as it was, this conviction allegedly helped Marsé to rid himself of self-censorship. In fact, violence is ubiquitous and occupies all levels of this very convoluted narrative. It pervades all layers of the story: Ñito, the

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>14</sup> Juan Marsé, *Si Te Dicen Que Caí*. 2nd ed., (Barcelona: Debolsillo, 2009), 7.

<sup>15</sup> Juan Marsé, *The Fallen*, trans. Helen Lane, (London: Quartet Books, 1994), xi. All translations of *Si Te Dicen Que Caí* from Helen Lane. For the rest of the citations, I will use one footnote that will note the page numbers for both the original and the translation. The original will be referred to as STDQC and the translation as "Fallen."

caretaker who begins to speak to the readers at the opening of the novel autopsies a cadaver as he tells his story; the slum kids that dominate his memories play games of torture and reenact past tortures on a theatre stage; the most influential and respected man in the kids' neighborhood, a nationalist ex-Lieutenant named Conrado encourages the prostitution of the children, while his assistant Justiniano hunts the kids to interrogate them about the whereabouts of an elusive prostitute named Ramona; an underground group of anti-Francoist forces organize increasingly violent attacks; and the memory of the Civil War taints all the characters and directly contributes to the violence of this fictional world.

Although the novel is not a torture narrative like *Yaralısın*, it conveys a world irrefutably marked by state-violence, a morally corrupt society that is not only trying to recover from the Civil War, but also suffering under a dictatorship. It is a society in which denunciations, sexual exploitation, and violence have become commonplace. Yet, as I will show, the novel is also, and perhaps principally a story about storytelling. It opens with the words “Cuenta que,” “he tells that.” The readers find out about the act of storytelling before the story itself, and storytelling and narration frequently function as the plot. In fact, the story that Ñito begins is a story about stories and storytelling. *Si te dicen que caí* thus functions like a *mise en abyme*, a story [the novel] about a story [Ñito's narration] about stories and storytelling [the aventis]. The novel is unmistakably self-conscious about the *process* of telling a story, turning the novel into a metafiction that insistently refers to its fictionality. As such, the novel has an unmistakable self-consciousness about the *process* of fiction, the relationship between fiction/imagination and reality, and through its focus on voyeurism, problematizes the role of the reader.

Reading *Si te dicen que caí* alongside Coetzee's “Into the Dark Chamber” is perhaps a curious choice, since the novel can be said to fall into *all* the traps listed by Coetzee: it eroticizes

violence, turns violence into a spectacle, and frequently replicates binaries and discourses established by an authoritarian, violent regime. Yet, I argue that the novel falls into these pitfalls *self-consciously*. It acknowledges and demonstrates the challenges of representing state-violence fictionally by thematizing the process of representing state-violence. Within the novel itself, children try to represent state-violence through oral stories called *aventis*, or through disturbing games of torture and staged plays in which they reenact past tortures. As a result, representation of state-violence becomes a theme in the novel as the novel's characters frequently engage in similar attempts. The readers are thus forced to confront and reflect upon the aforementioned dilemmas. Instead of passively falling into the pitfalls outlined by Coetzee, the novel purposefully *writes into* them.

### **The Self-Conscious Narrative**

The novel presents its story through “*aventis*,” or (fragments of) stories told by a gang of slum-kids, *kabileños*, living in the destitute post Civil War neighborhoods of Barcelona in the 1940s. The events unfold through these tales the children tell each other, with narrators and timeframes shifting continuously, often without any indications on the page to mark the shifts and with different narrators frequently contradicting each other or presenting alternative endings to different story lines. This complex narrative structure blurs the boundary between what is actually happening in the novel and what only takes place in the stories its characters tell each other. The novel begins with the memories of a hospital caretaker Ñito who is remembering and recounting his past as he prepares to autopsy a cadaver, the dead body of a man he recognizes from his past. The narrative begins to shift back and forth between Ñito's present and his past through his memories, but it is important to note that it is at first difficult to ascertain that the

flashbacks indeed go back to *Ñito*'s memories. At first, *Ñito* and the slum-kids appear disconnected, but as the story develops we understand that *Ñito* was actually one of the slum-kids, Sarnita, who is the main storyteller among the children, and the cadaver in front of him is the dead body of his old friend, Java. In fact, it is Java's dead body that triggers *Ñito*'s memories<sup>16</sup> and he begins to tell the story of this past world to his sole audience Sister Paulina, a nun who also grew up in the same neighborhood. The recollections, however, are not told chronologically or and they do not always unfold through *Ñito*'s words. Instead, the memories appear through the *aventis*, the accuracy of which is left ambiguous throughout the text. The readers' assumptions about the reliability of children as narrators only heighten the ambiguity.

The narrative is frequently interrupted by unknown speakers, urging Sarnita to continue his story, the limits and structure of which are never clear: "Cuenta, Sarnita, cuenta."<sup>17</sup> These interruptions usually come as a surprise, because each story goes through so many narrators that it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to keep track of whose story is being told and by whom. Although the translated text refers to Sarnita as the "story-teller," in the original he introduces himself to his interrogator Justiniano as, "yo, Antoñito Faneca, para servir a Dios y a usted, pero nadie me llama por el nombre, antes me decían el hijo de la 'Prenada' y luego el '*Aventis*."<sup>18</sup> This is the first and only time that his full legal name appears, Antonio Faneca, shedding light on the diminutive *Ñito*. However, as he also emphasizes, *no one* calls him that: instead, they first referred to him as the son of the Pregnant Woman, and then as "*Aventis*." Although his

---

<sup>16</sup> Maria Silvino Persino frames the entire novel as an act of reading the body based on this initial scene. Aránzazu Ascunce goes a step further and suggests that the novel's structure follows the four steps of the autopsy, the visual examination, the microscopic examination, removal of organs, and final report. *Ñito*'s flashbacks to his past are all part of this dissecting examination in this framework. See Aránzazu Ascunce. "The Dissection of Memory in Juan Marsé's *Si te dicen que caí*," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 85.1 (2008): 15–32 doi:10.3828/bhs.85.1.2 and Maria Silvina Persino, "*Si te dicen que caí*: una lectura de los cuerpos," *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* 25.3 (1991): 57–71.

<sup>17</sup> Marsé, *STDQC*, 15.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 265.

extraordinary imagination and cognizance distinguish Sarnita as the principal storyteller, the stories include other “contributors,” as the other kids also participate in the creation of *aventis*. As a result, each story contains a multitude of voices. Ñito’s stories are always undercut with new, sometimes not immediately relevant stories, creating a maze of storytelling within *Si te dicen que caí*. The overall picture, what one might call “a plot,” is constantly developing via the intersection of these stories. *The* plot of the novel, if we can talk about such a thing in *Si te dicen que caí*, only becomes revealed at the very end. In many ways then, the novel presents us with a reading game: the story is revealed only when it is over. As the notion of a reading game suggests, in order to make sense of the story the readers have to shed their passive role and become active participants, arranging and interpreting this cacophony.<sup>19</sup>

In “*Si te dicen que caí*: The Self-Reflexive Text and the Question of Referentiality,” Diane Garvey also points out that there is no *one* story or plot in the novel.<sup>20</sup> There is, however, a thread that holds the different voices together. This overarching storyline is a quest to find Ramona.<sup>21</sup> Different characters are after Ramona for different motives, but all the narrators in the novel become obsessed with her whereabouts and her story, turning her into an elusive and almost mythical character whose most recognizable feature is her scars. Ramona used to be a maid at Lieutenant Conrado’s house, the son of a famous Nationalist and a peeping tom who used to secretly watch Ramona’s sexual encounters with her fiancé Pedro. When Ramona’s

---

<sup>19</sup> Linda Gould Levine, “*Si te dicen que caí*: Un calidoscopio verbal,” *Journal of Spanish Studies: Twentieth Century* 7.3 (1979): 310.

<sup>20</sup> Diane I. Garvey, “Juan Marsé’s *Si Te Dicen Que Caí*: The Self-Reflexive Text and the Question of Referentiality,” *MLN* 95. 2 (1980): 376.

<sup>21</sup> For similar interpretations of Ramona as the central aspect of the plot, see Danielle Pascal-Casas, “La Función Estructural Del Teatro En La Novelística De Juan Marsé,” *Anales De La Literatura Española Contemporánea* 13.1/2 (1988): 126 and María Silvina Persino, “*Si te dicen que caí*: Una Lectura De Los Cuerpos,” *Revista De Estudios Hispánicos* 25.3 (1991): 57-71. Shirley Mangini Gonzales mentions that the character of Aurora/Ramona, as well as that of Menchu/Carmen are based on a real-life prostitute, Carmen Broto, whose murder in Barcelona in the 1940s made the news. Although the official report concluded Broto was murdered for her jewels, much like Carmen in *Si te dicen que caí*, many suspected the regime was involved. Shirley Mangini Gonzales, “*Si Te Dicen Que Caí*: A Chronicle of Post-Civil War Spain,” *International Fiction Review* 12.2 (1985): 92.

Republican uncle Artemi Nin hears about Conrado's voyeurism, he leads a squad into Conrado's household during the Civil War to take revenge, but mistakenly kills Conrado senior as Ramona looks on, too terrified to correct the mistake. Artemi Nin is later killed by a firing squad, and Ramona begins her life as a sick and miserable prostitute. The readers meet her first in Conrado's bedroom as she is paid to have sex with Java. Conrado watches behind a curtain in a repetition of the act that traumatized Ramona and triggered the chain of events that comprise *Si te dicen que caí*.

As Sarnita tells Justiniano, “todo el mundo anda tras ella por diversos motivos, pero usted reflexione, camarada, ate cabos y verá: parece un complot, a que sí” (“everybody's after her [Ramona] for different reasons, but you add them up, comrade, tie up loose ends and you'll see: it seems like a plot”).<sup>22</sup> The quest to find Ramona brings together all the different stories in the novel - not necessarily into a “plot,” but as Sarnita says in the original, into a “complot”: a conspiracy, especially one that works against someone or something in order to destabilize. Conrado, his mother Señora Galan, and Justiniano are looking for Ramona for revenge, although they tell Java that they need to find her in order to help her. They pay Java to find her whereabouts, but Java seems to be after Ramona for his own motives: sometimes it seems as if he is in love with her, yet the text also hints that Java's brother Marcos, who is in hiding, is having an affair with Ramona. The slum-kids are fascinated by Ramona's elusiveness and they try to catch a glimpse of her in the city both in order to help Java and to prolong the Ramona storyline that they have been hearing about from Java and Sarnita. The quest for Ramona thus functions as a storyline of the novel that we hold in our hands (the central plot of the many plots in *Si te dicen que caí*) and in the novel (the storyline of the most persistent and exciting *aventis*).

---

<sup>22</sup> Marsé, *STDQC*, 271; “Fallen” 264.

For the slum-kids, the quest for Ramona is quite literally an act of creating a story. The more information they find out about Ramona, the longer they can draw out the Ramona story.

*Kabileños* begin to “play” games of torture in the neighborhood precisely because of their obsession with Ramona and their desire to hear more stories about her. During these so-called games of torture, the slum-kids interrogate the girls in the neighborhood to obtain information about Ramona, for whom Java is searching. They use torture, in other words, to sustain a fiction, the *aventis* that they love so much. This hints at an important connection between violence and fiction that is fundamental to the mechanism of torture as it is used by the State. As I mentioned before, Scarry explains that torture is used to sustain the “fiction of power.”<sup>23</sup> The mechanism and structure of torture thus inherently carries a repetitive and violent production of narratives. The novel demonstrates this connection through the interrogations and tortures carried out by the slum-kids, for the purpose of lengthening the Ramona story. While torture also solidifies their power in the neighborhood, their main ambition is to create and sustain a narrative.

Stories hold an important place in these children’s lives. The creation and exchange of the *aventis* is their favorite pastime, “un juego bonito y barato que sin duda propició la escasez de juguetes” (“a game that didn’t cost anything and was doubtless a consequence of the fact that there were no toys to play with in the neighborhood”).<sup>24</sup> The *aventis* are the children’s attempt to make sense of and express the violence and trauma of the perverse world around them, which is dominated by Conrado. Conrado emphasizes the harsh criticism the novel puts forth against the hypocrisy and perversity of the Franco regime: as a nationalist war hero confined to the wheel chair after injuries sustained in the civil war, Conrado represents the “winning” side of the Spanish Civil War. Along with his Falangist aide Justiniano Conrado is the disingenuously

---

<sup>23</sup> Scarry, “Body in Pain,” 27.

<sup>24</sup> Marsé, *STDQC* 38; “Fallen” 29.



charitable and devout face of Francoism. While keeping an outwardly respectable profile running charities and directing the girls' orphanage in the neighborhood, Conrado secretly encourages their prostitution, especially of Java. Capitalizing on the poverty of the neighborhood, Conrado has his assistant Justiniano find young prostitutes to perform violent sexual acts with Java, as he directs and watches behind closed curtains, unable to move but deriving sexual pleasure out of watching. As the director/spectator of numerous staged acts of sexual violence, Conrado is the voyeur par excellence in the novel. The kids who later perform tortures on the theater stage are in many ways following his example in becoming directors of violence.

When telling Sister Paulina about the *aventis*, Ñito says these stories were “un reflejo de la memoria del desastre, un eco apagado del fragor de la batalla” (“a reflection of their [the slum kids'] memories of disaster, a muffled echo of the deafening din of battle”).<sup>25</sup> In other words, the *aventis* bear the marks of the “outside” world. *Si te dicen que caí* continuously undoes the supposedly stable boundary between fiction and reality: it is impossible to tell what “actually” happens to the characters in the novel, and what only takes place in the children's imaginations. Everything is fictional; these lives are simply words on a page. But, if there is nothing separating the lives of the slum-kids from the “fictional” *aventis* that they tell, we are forced to conclude that the *aventis* in fact reveal the kids' reality. The storyteller never knows “the real truth,” “aquella turbia materia que no conseguía elevarse, desprenderse del fondo de la historia”(“that murky material that never managed to take wing, to come unstuck from the bottom of the story”).<sup>26</sup> The stories tell *of* this truth then, but can never directly articulate it.

The *aventis* are the children's attempt to make sense of and express their daily life. They are marked by the poverty, abjection, and violence of the gloomy world of post Civil War

---

<sup>25</sup> Marsé, *STDQC*, 38; Marsé, *Fallen*, 29.

<sup>26</sup> Marsé, *STDQC*, 175; Marsé, *Fallen*, 167.

Barcelona, and although the kids cannot always make sense of the repression they see around them, what they witness and weave into their stories reveal the marks of dictatorship. Linda Gould Levine and Danielle Pascal-Casas both point out this relationship between the stories told by children and the external world. In “*Si te dicen que caí: Un calidoscopio verbal*,” Levine argues that the mixture of *aventis* with the realities of post civil-war Spain results in text whose chaotic structure perfectly reflects the senselessness that pervaded the time period.<sup>27</sup> According to Pascal-Casas, the corruption and moral degradation of the children duplicate “*un mundo adulto corrupto.*”<sup>28</sup>

The confusion between the stories clearly indicated as “fictional” and the rest of the narrative constitutes the greatest challenge of the novel. Since the novel unfolds through the *aventis*, it is hard to dismiss them as lies or as mere fabrications of children, because that requires dismissing the entire story of the novel. As a result, the reader has to forgo the distinction and accept the amalgamation of *aventis* and reality as the only truth in the story. If, however, the distinction between “fictional” and “reality,” “imagination” and “truth,” as well as between “story” and “experience” fall apart within the novel, what to do with the “fictional” status of the novel we hold in our hands? The distinction between the fictionality of the novel *Si te dicen que caí*, and the historical “reality” of Francoist Spain also becomes uncertain. The novel self-consciously postulates the impossibility of disregarding fictional narratives such as *Si te dicen que caí* as “merely” imaginary, unconnected from the external “real” world.

Ñito explains that as Java perfected the technique of telling *aventis*, he increasingly incorporated the outside world into them:

---

<sup>27</sup> Levine, “Calidoscopio,” 309.

<sup>28</sup> Pascal-Casas, “Teatro en la Novelística de Juan Marsé,” 129.

Con el tiempo, Java perfeccionó el método: se metió él mismo en las historias y acabó por meternos a nosotros, y entonces el juego era emocionante de veras . . . Java aumentó el número de personajes reales y redujo cada vez más el de los ficticios, y además introdujo escenarios urbanos de verdad, nuestras calles y nuestras azoteas y nuestros refugios y cloacas, y sucesos que traían los periódicos y hasta los misteriosos rumores que circulaban en el barrio sobre denuncias y registros, detenidos y desaparecidos y fusilados. (In time, [Java] perfected the method: he put all of us into his stories, including himself, and then it got really exciting . . . As time went by, Java increased the number of real persons and decreased the number of fictitious characters, and besides that his stories started having real setting, our own streets and rooftops and hiding places and sewers, and incidents reported in the newspapers, and even the mysterious rumors going the rounds in the neighborhood concerning denunciations, house-to-house searches, and people who had been arrested or had disappeared without a trace or been shot to death.)<sup>29</sup>

What makes the *aventis* a “fun” or worthy game is precisely this connection to reality. The misery and violence of this post Civil War world shape the *aventis*. Sarnita’s explanation shows that although the *aventis* are fabricated, their fabrication is indeed closely tied to reality. They respond to and feed off of the lived experience of the children. This reflection on the process of creating *aventis* also functions as a (self-conscious) commentary on the novel’s own processes of fiction. *Si te dicen que caí* similarly tells a story that is at once an invention and a reflection of reality. The narrative emphasizes its own artifice and constructedness by “[drawing] on its own text to create more text.”<sup>30</sup> For example, there are repeated references to a rug in Conrado’s room that depicts a battle scene. Each time the rug appears, the framing story disappears and the battle

<sup>29</sup> Marsé, *STDQC*, 39 ; Marsé, *Fallen*, 30.

<sup>30</sup> Garvey, “The Self-Reflective text,” 384.

scene unfolds, always harking back to the torture and execution of one of the novel's characters, Artemi Nin, Ramona's uncle who had set out to kill Conrado. Consequently, the readers are urged to recognize that the words on the page are products, and the novel as such is an artifice. Yet, even though Conrado tells his maid Fueguiña who is insistently scrubbing the rug "no restriegues tanto con la escoba, que las manchas de sangre en la arena no son de verdad, tontita" ("don't sweep so hard with your broom; the blood stains aren't real, you little goose,"<sup>31</sup> through the repeated descriptions of the rug that take on a story of their own, the text suggests that the blood stains are as real or fictional as any other story in the text. There is no "real" or "truth" that separates the lives of the slum kids from the scenes of battle on the rug.<sup>32</sup> While the novel uses such instances to comment on and emphasize its fictionality, it also establishes an undeniable link with external reality and historical events through the descriptions of Barcelona neighborhoods<sup>33</sup> and allusions to events reported in the media in the 1940s, such the assassination of Carmen Broto whose murder is referenced through the assassination of a character named Menchu.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, *Si te dicen que caí* hints at a process of creation very much like Java's technique of storytelling, a process of fabrication that nevertheless tells of reality.

### Storytelling and Violence

The *aventis* incorporate an affliction in this society that Sarnita and Java call "espionitis," in which everyone is obsessed with spying, spreading rumors and denouncing each other. The

---

<sup>31</sup> Marsé, *STDQC*, 208; "Fallen," 200.

<sup>32</sup> Garvey, "The Self-Reflective text," 385.

<sup>33</sup> For the novel's typographical construction of Barcelona, see Ascunce, "Dissection of Memory," 21-26.

<sup>34</sup> Gonzales, "A Chronicle of Post-Civil War Spain," 92.

word is translated as “spy mania”<sup>35</sup> and “that fear of being spied on,”<sup>36</sup> but the original “espionitis” captures both the obsession and the fear, the suffix “-itis” postulating the mania as a pathological affliction, and the root “espión” bringing to fore the act of spying, *espiar*. The *aventis* build on this affliction and create stories based on rumors. As Ñito explains, the *aventis* “[recrearon] intrigas que todos conocíamos a media y a de oídas: hablar de oídas, eso era contar *aventis*, Hermana” (“[recreated] things that we had all heard rumors about: *talking about rumors, that’s what ‘telling stories’* meant, sister”).<sup>37</sup> To tell *aventis* is to recreate, recirculate, and enrich “rumors” that constantly circle around in this society. The denunciations that Ñito mentions as having made their way into Java’s stories are a common occurrence in this world, as they are in most dictatorships. Therefore, in this case society itself participates in storytelling, creating rumors and denouncing fictional crimes. The neighborhood women spread rumors in food queues, for example,<sup>38</sup> while the kids from a wealthy neighborhood gossip about Luis’ father being “a Red” and his mother a whore<sup>39</sup> and one of the slum-kids, Tetas, instinctively tries to protect himself when interrogated by Justiniano by spreading rumors about Susana.<sup>40</sup> As Sarnita says, “todo son denuncias y chivatazos, redadas y registros” (“It’s all a matter of denunciations, of ratting to the police, of dragnets and searches”).<sup>41</sup>

If the *aventis* in fact meant circulating and telling of these rumors, then the *aventis* become a result and symptom of precisely a society afflicted with “espionitis.” The *aventis* are possible in this “espionitic” society, because they are informed and occasioned by denunciations and rumors. As a result, in *Si te dicen que caí* story-telling and creativity emerge as results of the

---

<sup>35</sup> Marsé, “Fallen,” 59.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 298.

<sup>37</sup> Marsé, *STDQC*, 39; “Fallen,” 30.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 191; 183

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 178; 171.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 217; 208.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 75; 66.

repressive conditions imposed by the dictatorship. This becomes especially clear in Sarnita and Java's attempts to create a never-ending story for Señora Galan, Conrado's mother, who is using Java to find the whereabouts of Ramona. Every time Java brings valuable information to her Galan pays him, prompting Sarnita to help Java create a new stories to take advantage of Señora Galan for as long as possible. The creation of different Ramona *aventis* to feed Galan is a direct response to the system that is always on the hunt for someone, an effort to function within its rules while abusing and subverting it. A perfect example, then, of Coetzee's claim that the State that unleashes repression and violence also creates the preconditions for the novel exposing these instances of violence. The *aventis* become forceful examples of literature occasioned by, perpetuating, yet simultaneously disrupt the rules of the system.

The disruptive power of *aventis* becomes especially visible through Sarnita's use of the stories. Sarnita's *aventis* at once appropriate and undermine official ideologies. When asked about the torture of one of the orphan girls during his interrogation by the Falangist Justiniano, Sarnita immediately adopts the regime's own narrative about torture: "¿Torturas, la Gota de Agua, la Campana Infernal, la Bota Malaya, el Péndulo de la Muerte...? Usted ha visto *Los Tambores de Fu-Manchú*, camarada, esto sólo se ve en el cine y aun así es mentira, son dobles ("Tortures, the Water Torture, the Malayan Boot, the Death Pendulum, the Infernal Bell? You've seen *The Drums of Fu-Manchu*, comrade, that sort of thing only happens in the movies and even then it's not real, they're doubles").<sup>42</sup> Sarnita's statement leaves no room for torture to ever be considered real. More importantly, it takes advantage of the convenient illusion that fiction is entirely separate from reality. Here, accusations of torture are denied on the basis of their unlikelihood – condescendingly, Sarnita tells Justiniano that he is confusing movies with real life – and (artistic) representations of torture can be overlooked precisely because they are

---

<sup>42</sup> Marsé, *STDQC*, 267; "Fallen," 260.

“fictional.” In this line of thinking, torture can never be real – it is always imagined, fabricated. But, as Sarnita is well aware, the *aventis* he himself tells weaken this supposedly clear distinction between fiction and reality and show that fictionality does not always or necessarily preclude truth. In fact, Sarnita himself had pointed out to Justiniano that his tales were not “lies:” “no el mentiras, sino el *aventis*,” “not lies, but *Aventis*.

In order to deny Justiniano’s accusations – which the reader knows to be true since the boys have been torturing and interrogating girls at the orphanage to obtain information about Ramona– Sarnita first highlights the preposterousness of these accusations, then argues that even if the accusations are true, they cannot be proven: “nobody can say they’ve seen us,” he remarks. This is, of course, the logic behind the “dark chamber.” No one sees torture take place, except for torturers and the victims. Susana denounces the slum-kids, but as Sarnita remarks, no one can vouch for her. He subtly praises the system by implying that these outrageous acts of violence could never take place in this society; “pero qué cosas, camarada . . . en qué país vivimos?” he asks. People must be imagining violence due to the trauma of the Civil War.<sup>43</sup> What is so striking about Sarnita’s replies to Justiniano is his ability to immediately appropriate the state’s own narrative about torture: no one has seen it, therefore it cannot be real. However, his replication of the systematic refusal to acknowledge torture serves to trick Justiniano, the man of the regime. Sarnita turns state narratives on their head, using their line of thinking to wrestle himself out of an interrogation. The neighborhood is talking about these “stories” of child torturers, but Sarnita is perfectly aware of the shaky boundary between stories and reality and denounces the rumors as fabrications, reproducing Justiniano’s attitude towards his own stories. When Justiniano had failed to understand *aventis* as something more than lies, Sarnita had mocked him for being too

---

<sup>43</sup> Marsé, *STDQC*, 267; “Fallen,” 260.

blinded by his position of power.<sup>44</sup> Now, he adopts the same approach towards the stories circulating in the neighborhood in order to mislead Justiniano. However, Sarnita is also trying to cover up and deny the torture(s) that he and his friends carried out. In that sense, although he is replicating the stance of the dictatorship in order to deceive it, he is also perpetuating the repression he is trying to save himself from because he has also been the torturer and the interrogator behind closed doors, an instance in which the disruptive and compliant clearly occur at once. I suggest that Sarnita's use of the *aventis* can therefore be interpreted as *Si te dicen que caí*'s demonstration and acknowledgement of this quandary. These contradictory forces are always at play in *Si te dicen que caí*, forcefully demonstrating the complex ethical challenges implicit in fictional representations of state-violence, but refusing to resolve them.

### **Representations and Re-presentations of Torture**

The ability of *aventis* to convey this misery while *not* telling the truth but not lying either suggests the failure of ordinary means of narrativization in the face of such pervasive trauma. Their ability to blur the boundary between reality and imagination gives them power to capture the incommunicable: the darkness and suffering surrounding the slum-kids. The kids cannot just give a straightforward account of their neighborhood; instead they have to create a fiction, act as storytellers to intimate it. Only a fictional account – not the truth, but not a lie either – can describe the misery of this world while also conveying a sense of its beauty for these children, suggested through Ñito's deep nostalgia for this bygone destitute world. As fictions, the *aventis* grant the children a sense of control, unlike reality that remains chaotic and unpredictable.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> Marsé, *STDQC*, 265; "Fallen," 258.

<sup>45</sup> Persino, "Lectura de cuerpos," 62.



Sarnita's insistence that in the movies torture is not real because the victims are *acting* is taken to its logical extreme in children's staged reenactments of torture. As I explained before, the children sometimes "play" games of torture, and sometimes stage performances of past instances of violence from the Civil War. In both scenarios, they claim that the victims as well as the torturers accept the terms of fictionality. Tetas explains to Justiniano, "Sí que [Susana] lloriqueaba, sí que debía estar atada al respaldo de la silla era su papel de prisionera en la función . . . a ratos se echaba a gimotear y a chillar, era su papel y nosotros no teníamos por qué extrañarnos" ("Sure [Susana] was wailing, sure she had to be tied to the back of the chair, it was her role of prisoner in the play . . . [F]rom time to time she started to moan and scream, it was her role so there was nothing surprising to us about that").<sup>46</sup> Tetas thus justifies Susana's torture by emphasizing that the torture was not "real," even though the elements that comprise torture were carried out in actuality: they do, after all, inflict extreme pain on Susana to obtain information from her while she is stripped of all means of physical resistance. According to Tetas, there is nothing out of the ordinary here, since the *kabileños* were acting out their part in the play as torturers and Susana's actions – her cries, her pain, her protests – were also predictable and befitting, since the child torturers already expected her to reveal signs of pain in her *role* as the victim. This bizarre notion of "consensual complicity" invites readers to reconsider the boundary between fiction as a field of inventions/lies and the supposed stability of nonfiction as narratives of the "real." The division is introduced by the juxtaposition of someone victimized and abused versus an actor playing, consensually, the part of a victimized individual.

The *kabileños* interrogate and torture various girls from the orphanage, including Juanita and Fueguiña, who have already been through torture during the Civil War. The torture sessions, in other words, have a repetitive and mimetic aspect. Sarnita's play, for example, is a replication

---

<sup>46</sup> Marsé, *STDQC*, 220; "Fallen," 211.

of Fueguiña's torture by the Moors during the Civil War. Realism at its logical extreme, these plays stage past tortures through new ones, with performers turning into actual victims or eager torturers that inflict pain on the bodies in front of them. In fact, when Sister Paulina is describing Sarnita's play, she keeps confusing reality with the play. She fails to recognize Luis' mask as a real one, describing it as "dos círculos morados como un antifaz, ¿o era un antifaz de verdad?" ("two purplish circles *like a mask, or was it a real mask*") and explains that the marks on the back of one of the girls "parecían correazos de verdad" ("looked like real lash marks").<sup>47</sup> She refers to the Moors on stage, when she actually means children masquerading as Moors. And she finally remarks, "pues eso representaban . . . la galleguita se interpretaba a sí misma con lagrimas de verdad" ("but that's what they were acting out . . . that little girl from Galicia was playing herself with real tears").<sup>48</sup> Her insistence on describing the play as real hints at this disturbing distortion of boundaries between reality and performance. This is a play, as Sister Paulina recognizes, but the actresses are playing themselves and their own trauma.

How, then, are we to distinguish "real" torture and performances of it, especially when torture utilized by the State relies on its performative power to terrorize people? Elaine Scarry explains that the purpose of torture is "the production of a fantastic illusion of power" and describes torture as "a grotesque piece of compensatory drama."<sup>49</sup> If "real" torture – presumably conducted by the "real" authorities against those perceived as threats – relies on a performance of power and authority, what exactly is the difference between torture and these performances of it the children carry out? To make matters more complicated, the children use torture to the same end as the State: to terrorize and obtain information from unwilling speakers to maintain a fiction of power.

---

<sup>47</sup> Marsé, *STDQC*, 230; "Fallen," 239.

<sup>48</sup> Marsé, *STDQC*, 240; "Fallen," 231.

<sup>49</sup> Scarry, "Body in Pain," 28.

Elaine Scarry maintains that extreme physical pain *destroys* language. The incommunicability of pain has immense consequences for Scarry, who argues that this is precisely why “one person can be in the presence of another person in pain and not know it – not know it to the point where he himself inflicts it, and goes on inflicting it.”<sup>50</sup> In fact, although to have pain is to have certainty – in other words, physical pain is so undeniable to the person experiencing it that there can be no doubt about its existence – to hear about pain is to have doubt, because those who are not experiencing pain can only *empathize* with the other person’s experience. The incommunicability of pain, its active assault on language, creates an insurmountable experiential gap between the body in pain and those around it, which makes possible the infliction of pain on other bodies. In its crudest terms, this is the basis of the difference between the *torturing* body and the *tortured* body. The only reason the torturing body can go on inflicting pain on the tortured body is that it is immune to the pain inflicted on another person.

Scarry argues that art that takes torture as its subject can function as “a diminution of pain, a partial reversal of the process of torture itself”<sup>51</sup> because verbal representations of torture must find ways to circumvent the incommunicability of pain to articulate it as an experience. The reenactments of torture staged by children in *Si te dicen que caí* take the challenge of representing torture to its logical extreme and confront readers with an impossible scenario in which the tortured can communicate their plight only by being tortured again. These reenactments *demonstrate* (and amplify) the insurmountable distance between experiencing physical pain and witnessing the experience of physical pain. The child torturer-actors can go on inflicting pain on the child victim-actors because of this distance – supposedly willing

---

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 50.

participants in what Maria Silvina Persino calls “torturada teatralizada.”<sup>52</sup> One could argue that the reader-spectators can go on reading and watching for similar reasons.

The reenactments of torture in the text draw their strength from an enmeshing of reality and fiction. After all, even though they are performances on a stage, they are also simply words on a page. Even as words on a page, however, they circumvent the verbal incommunicability of pain by describing in writing a scenario of re-presentation. The victims on stage, the orphan girls Juanita and Fueguiña, are reenacting their past tortures with the slum-kids as their torturers. The reenactments mark the only time in the novel these experiences are articulated, which then postulates a horrifying dilemma: the price of articulation in this case is a repetition of pain and violence within a new and different context. The incommunicability of pain and torture are amplified to such a degree that their representation requires their repetition.

There are different ways to interpret this dilemma: in a way, this is a mockery of the *attempt* to communicate trauma. It is also, simultaneously, a forceful demonstration of the sheer difficulty (perhaps the impossibility) of articulating the experience of torture, and a likening of the articulation of trauma to a new form of suffering. That the children are staging the reenactments on a hidden stage with no audience other than Sister Paulina who only accidentally witnesses them turns the readers into the audience of these performances. The distance between the readers’ world as reality, and the world within the novel as fiction collapses, because what we are reading on the page – a staged reenactment of torture – is also a self-reflexive commentary on what it might mean for victims to articulate the experience of torture, and for those who listen. Reading this fictional account is akin to hearing about an experience of pain precisely because the distance with the body in pain is maintained. As a result, by urging readers to reflect on these dynamics, the reenactments destroy the fictional illusion that allows readers to remove

---

<sup>52</sup> Persino, “Lectura de cuerpos,” 61.

themselves from the unfolding narrative. Elaine Scarry had warned that “there is always the danger that a fictional character’s suffering will divert our attention away from the living sister or uncle who can be helped by our compassion in a way that the fictional character cannot be.”<sup>53</sup> By destabilizing the boundary between the fictional and real, *Si te dicen que caí* forces readers to contemplate the tortured bodies of Juanita and Fueguina as real, and just as in reality, without the recourse to their experiences of pain.

In order to convey torture, the kids literally reenact it. But this parody of realism – the plays are so realistic that they *really* carry out torture – also emphasizes the ethical challenges for the reader. The paralytic voyeur Conrado’s position in the novel and his passive observation of acts of violence disturbingly parallels our own. The theatrical productions of torture in *Si te dicen que caí* force the readers to confront these difficult questions, but do not resolve them in any way. In fact, as we realize the disturbing similarity of our position to Conrado’s, we also understand what is at stake in ignoring these traumas. The insistence on silence and closure enables their perpetuation. But the text seems to suggest that not only those who do not look, but also those who look are complicit: Conrado is innocent in that he never participates in acts of violence, but he instigates them, watches them with pleasure. There is no way to read a story about torture without becoming a voyeur of sorts– this is the ethical pitfall and complicity the reader implicitly accepts upon reading.

This distance and the notion of complicity are supported by the lack of an emotional response in the torturers and the victims. Except for the rehearsal Paulina accidentally witnesses, neither the torturers nor the victims acknowledge the trauma and the pain. There is no consideration or acknowledgement of the victims’ experience; the slum-kids certainly do not reflect on the victims’ experience, and the narrative does not divulge any details about what these

---

<sup>53</sup> Scarry, “Body in Pain,” 11.

supposedly willing victims think during or after the torture sessions.<sup>54</sup> Sarnita's performance, for example reenacts Fueguiña's rape by the Moors during the Civil War<sup>55</sup> and the murder of her family. As Persino explains, the evocation of these traumas through the play constitutes a rare instance of acknowledged pain. At the end of the play, "en [sus] ojos había el espanto y el horror *de verdad* . . . El mismo de entonces con toda seguridad, y una ansiedad vengativa, sanguinaria" ("in her eyes there was genuine terror and horror . . . the same as back then, it's certain, and a bloody urge for vengeance").<sup>56</sup> However, when the kids interrogate Fueguiña outside of this theatricality, she remembers the past but her eyes "no revelaban miedo ni curiosidad, solamente desdén o asco" ("[reveal] neither fear nor curiosity, only scorn or disgust."<sup>57</sup> Although physical pain is imminent, which would normally produce fear as Persino says, Fueguiña looks at her torturers without fear or shock. The trauma in Fueguiña therefore becomes visible through an absence. We can read it only through the lack of fear and curiosity in her eyes. This lack is described as a lack of life in another instance in the text. Right before she burns the parish altar, Fueguiña turns to Java "un cirio en cada mano y en medio de sus ojos de agua de pantano, *ni asustados ni nada, muertos*" ("a candle in each hand and in the middle her swampwater eyes, *not afraid or anything, dead*").<sup>58</sup> There is no pain here, fear or curiosity – Fueguiña's absolute lack of emotion in the face of trauma expresses her lack of life. Like many other characters in the novel, she is described as going through life without life, irreversibly traumatized by crimes never acknowledged by others.

---

<sup>54</sup> Persino, "Lectura de cuerpos," 62.

<sup>55</sup> It is not clear in the text whether this coincidence between Juanita and Fueguiña's stories indicates the pervasiveness of sexual violence towards kids during the Civil War, or if this is another instance of the amalgamation of characters that Diane Garvey mentions.

<sup>56</sup> Marsé, *STDQC*, 241; "Fallen," 233.

<sup>57</sup> Marsé, *STDQC*, 147; "Fallen," 138.

<sup>58</sup> Marsé, *STDQC*, 74; "Fallen," 65, emphasis mine.

Once again revoking Shoshana Felman's concept of a "hearing you," these instances reveal that there is no hearing you to empathically hear Fueguiña's story, to the extent that the concept underlines the acknowledgement of pain and trauma to begin a process of healing. When Sister Paulina accidentally catches a glimpse of its performance, she looks away and later calls Fueguiña a bad lot. The kids know of the trauma but cannot process it as such. The readers, then, are the only ones who can constitute a hearing you as spectators, but the narrative complicates this response by referring to Fueguiña's disturbing complicity, which is emphasized when she in turn becomes Susana's torturer. Persino calls this the masochistic complicity of the tortured.<sup>59</sup> Fueguiña's interrogation by the kids is the replication of another trauma: Ramona's torture. Fueguiña accepts the role but *requests* Java to be the torturer, telling him, "el fuego sabes que no me asusta, pero que no me toque nadie más que tú o me voy" ("you know I'm not afraid of fire, but don't let anybody else but you touch me or I'm leaving").<sup>60</sup> This stipulation fortifies her *acceptance* and she continues to direct the torturers, asking them to rip her clothes a certain way, for example. Since the text does not reveal her thoughts during this torture game, it is impossible to understand her position fully. Perhaps this is her way of undoing her trauma in which she had absolutely no control; by directing the torturers, perhaps Fueguiña is attempting to reclaim agency. But regardless, her acceptance of the role posits a disturbing complicity and destabilizes our understanding of torture and victimhood. Torture becomes a play for both the torturers and the victim in this instance, but it entails actual infliction of physical pain. However, the kids treat it as pure spectacle and not only the torturers and the victims, but the readers as spectators also

---

<sup>59</sup> Persino, "Lectura de cuerpos," 62.

<sup>60</sup> Marsé, *STDQC*, 152; "Fallen," 143.

become complicit through their inability to act, especially because the text denies acknowledging Fueguiña's trauma, preventing the readers from becoming a compassionate audience.<sup>61</sup>

After Juanita's torture Sarnita asks, "¿Es verdad que un moro te pichó en tu pueblo, golfanta, y delante de tu padre?" ("is it true that a Moor raped you in your town, you tramp, right in front of your father?").<sup>62</sup> The offhand posing of the question and its cruelty suddenly remind the readers that this is no ordinary "game." These willing participants are actually traumatized victims being brutalized again, this time by their peers. But the slum-kids, although they have knowledge of these traumatic stories, cannot seem to grasp the tragedy they entail. Sarnita's question is followed by laughter from the other children present. However, Juanita walks away without a reaction, calling them beasts but also nonchalantly telling Luis how to cure ringworms on her way out. Not only do the slum-kids fail to recognize Juanita's tragedy, but we, as readers, are also prevented from forming an emotional connection with her since she refuses to show any emotion. While we become spectators for Juanita's suffering, the text denies us that natural (but also potentially useless) empathy with her trauma that would alleviate our ethical conundrum as spectators complicit through watching. This insensitivity, and the children's inability to grasp the damage and emotional intensity of these games also remind us that these torturers are just children. The trauma they weave into their games is beyond their capacity to process. Their insistence on playing such games despite this inability then becomes indicative of the trauma of an entire society.

However, the staging of torture can also be thought of as communicating the incommunicable. To use James Epstein's words, the plays function as "extra-linguistic

---

<sup>61</sup> Persino, Garvey, Pascal-Casas and Shirley Mangini González all point out the question of voyeurism in the novel, which is embodied by Conrado, director of legitimate orphanage plays, clandestine sex shows, and peeping-tom. Each time the reader assumes his point of view, s/he is positioned as a spectator/voyeur.

<sup>62</sup> Marsé, *STDQC*, 52; "Fallen," 43.



expressions” of the inexpressible and allow the unsharable to be shared through reenactment<sup>63</sup>

The plays literally *show* the traumas of the past, which the victims cannot articulate both because of pain’s tendency to destroy language as Scarry argues, and because there is no “hearing you” to direct their stories towards. The re-presentations of torture provide a platform that gives “extra-linguistic expression” to the inexpressible, making “the unsharable shared.”<sup>64</sup> Their stories are taboo in this regime since they were victimized by the winners. Both Fuegoña and Juanita were raped by the Nationalist Army, while Ramona was tortured by the Falangists. The only permissible discourse about the Civil War would require them to blame their own families, rather than their aggressors. During a conversation between upper class families that support the Franco regime, someone perfectly summarizes this discourse. Talking about the inauguration of a Social Assistance Home for the orphans of Republicans shot to death by firing squads, the unidentified speaker says, “Estos niños no son responsables, y queremos que un día se digan sin rencor: si la España falangista fusiló a nuestros padres, es que se lo merecían” (“these children are not responsible and we want them one day to be able to say without rancor: if Falangist Spain shot our fathers, they deserved it”).<sup>65</sup>

In this regime, how can the victims articulate their trauma? Who will listen to them? The stories of the victims are hushed, as evident in Conrado’s mother’s advice to Java not to speak of these unhappy memories. Their trauma ignored in the name of a feigned closure. The result is the replication of these traumas. The staging of the plays becomes the only way to communicate and reveal these stories, but they traumatize the victims further. In order to tell their stories, the victims must undergo the trauma once again. I am not arguing that this is the motive behind the

---

<sup>63</sup> James Epstein, “‘The Shrug of Horror’: Creole Performance at King’s Bench,” *Settler and Creole Reenactment*, Eds. Vanessa Agnew and Jonathan Lamb, Palgrave MacMillan, 2009: 100.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>65</sup> Marsé, *STDQC*, 233; “Fallen,” 225.

slum-kids' desire to stage these tortures – their motives range from the release of physical aggression as Persino argues, to the desire to sustain the *aventis* with more information, which parallels the dictatorship's desire to maintain its own fictions through torture and repression. However, the text confronts the readers with this impossible scenario in which the tortured can tell their plight only by being tortured again. *Si te dicen que caí* thus presents the readers with a powerful demonstration of the difficulty of talking about and narrating State-violence in a society that is still repressed by that violence.

Rather than resolving the dilemmas highlighted by Coetzee, then, the reenactments of torture by children in *Si te dicen que caí* perform their complexity. The “staging” of torture plays on an actual theatre stage with supposed actors and actresses symbolically suggests complicity. When watching a play, we assume that the actors understand their actions as “roles” that present a story but that exist outside of reality. In other words, we assume each actors' acceptance of the boundaries of the play and their knowing participation in the performance. We do not expect them to engage in actual violence when the play requires the performance of violence. We expect to see a realistic fight scene, but not a real fight. But *Si te dicen que caí* challenges this boundary between reality and performance, meanwhile questioning *our* complicity in the acts as spectators.

*Si te dicen que caí* engages with the difficulties of fictionalizing torture and state violence by writing directly into the pitfalls signaled by J.M Coetzee. To circumvent the eroticization of violence and the voyeurism it invites, the novel presents a scene of staged violence, first under the directions of a voyeuristic sexual predator, and then improvised by children who reenact the traumas of the Civil War by perpetrating them again in a disturbing parody of realism. In other words, instead of trying to avoid the ethical dilemmas that arise from representing violence — a potentially futile task — *Si te dicen que caí* acknowledges and

embraces them instead, which turns the text into a self-conscious demonstration of these dilemmas.

### Chapter 3

#### Murderous Theater: Violence and Performance in Orhan Pamuk's *Kar*

“I’ve seen the future,  
brother  
It is murder.”  
- Leonard Cohen

Performance and reenactment, repetition and novelty, and the tendency to take realism to its absurd extreme are significant techniques to represent state-violence in Orhan Pamuk’s 2002 novel *Kar*<sup>1</sup> (*Snow*).<sup>2</sup> *Kar* does not focus on particular, sexualized instances of violence that are prevalent in *Si te dicen que caí*, instead presenting less individual and more patently institutionalized instances of violence.<sup>3</sup> But as in *Si te dicen que caí*, the narrative that recounts state violence is a layered one that continuously and consciously plays with the boundary separating reality and fiction. *Kar*’s narrator, the fictional Orhan Pamuk, constructs the story out of the protagonist Ka’s notes and journal entries about his time in Kars, which rely on Ka’s conversations with the habitants, and out of his own interviews with people in Kars four years later. The story is thus a reconstruction of different stories, told by different people at different times with different agendas, recounted to the readers through the viewpoint of the fictional Orhan Pamuk. The narrator himself is aware of this layered perspective, frequently complicating the idea of neutral representations through characters that demand to talk *directly* to the readers.

---

<sup>1</sup> Orhan Pamuk, *Kar*, (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Orhan Pamuk, *Snow*, trans. Maureen Freely, (New York: Vintage International, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Writing in the early 21st century Turkey, Pamuk did not encounter the same immediate threats of persecution and censorship as Marsé did in 1973’s Spain, of course, which could explain the more individual nature of violence in *STDQC* as opposed to the clearly institutionalized violence of *Snow*. However, it would be wrong to assume that Pamuk was writing entirely free of the threat of persecution and harassment.

One of the characters, Fazıl, tells the narrator Pamuk, “Beni Kars’ta geçen bir romana koyarsanız, benim hakkımda, bizler hakkında söylediklerinize okuyucunun hiç inanmamasını söylemek isterdim onlara” (“if you write a book set in Kars and put me in it, I’d like to tell your readers not to believe anything you say about me, anything you say about any of us”<sup>4</sup>). Coming at the end of the novel, Fazıl’s words insistently point to the novel as artifice, but simultaneously hide his own fictionality as a character. Furthermore, Orhan Pamuk fictionalizes himself, making himself the narrator and protagonist Ka’s old friend. Although the narrator only discloses his first name, Orhan, his references to himself as the author of *Kara Kitap (The Black Book)*<sup>5</sup> and *Masumiyet Müzesi (The Museum of Innocence)*,<sup>6</sup> as well as a character’s mention of his daughter Rüya<sup>7</sup> blatantly work Orhan Pamuk the author into the novel. As Sibel Irzik suggests in “Allegorical Lives: The Public and the Private in the Modern Turkish Novel,” the novel self-consciously addresses its own allegorical impulse through these musings about the filtered, subjective nature of representation. Staged plays, unexpected performances, and reenactments populate *Kar*’s fictional framework, concurrently demonstrating violence and the difficulties of its demonstration, while putting forth what I consider a bold criticism of state-violence and ideology in Turkey.

As in *Si te dicen que caí*, I find reenactment and performance successful in circumventing the challenges of fictionalizing violence because in the process of representing violence, they simultaneously draw attention to representation as yet another instance of violence, while highlighting questions of voyeurism and complicity. As a result, reenactment and performance

---

<sup>4</sup> I will be providing quotes from *Kar* in the original first, followed by the translation in parenthesis. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are from Maureen Freely’s edition. The citations for each quote refer to the page numbers of the Turkish and English editions respectively. In cases where the page numbers in the original and the translation correspond, I provide one page number only. Pamuk, *Kar*, 427; Snow, 426

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 427; 426.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 258

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 428; 426

used within the narrative framework have the potential to *demonstrate* the challenges of fictionalizing violence. Reenactments rely on repetition, implying that this violence has happened before, and in that sense they gesture towards the past and suggest an *ongoing* project of violence. On the other hand, their unpredictability indicates a new, current production of violence in the attempt to represent it. Like the staged tortures in *Si te dicen que caí*, Kar's staged performances are representations and perpetrations of violence, prompting us to consider the extent to which each representation is a repetition/reenactment, and a new creation. Furthermore, these staged acts of violence turn the audience and readers into inadvertent witnesses, raising questions of complicity.

### **The Literary and the Political**

In his foreword to the newly edited volume on Pamuk's writing, *Global Perspectives on Orhan Pamuk: Existentialism and Politics*, Sander L. Gilman affirms the widespread belief that Pamuk won the Nobel Prize in 2006 for "clearly" political reasons, rather than literary ones.<sup>8</sup> Although Professor Gilman's affirmation is not meant to undermine Pamuk's merit as a Nobel Laureate, which is frequently the case in such statements in Turkey, it nevertheless reinforces a distinction between politics and literature. Orhan Pamuk is not an overtly political author: his novels do not always engage with obviously political questions, and he himself insists he has always approached politics with suspicion and at times indifference. However, all his novels focus on the social tensions, historical baggage, and emotional dilemmas of the Turkish national imaginary, which, I argue, highlight distinctly political concerns. Questions revolving around

---

<sup>8</sup> Gilman writes, "Pamuk's global celebrity status was both acknowledged and unpinned by his Nobel Prize of 2006, given, as many have been recently awarded, *more for clearly political rather than literary concerns*." Mehnaz Mona Afridi and David M Buyze, Eds., *Global Perspectives on Orhan Pamuk: Existentialism and Politics*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012): xvi.

Orhan Pamuk's literary merit versus the appeal of his politically charged extratextual statements to Western audiences inevitably foreground questions regarding the limits of the political and the literary. What do we call literature? What are literary merits? Who decides the canon, since the Nobel Prize for Literature itself creates a certain canon of authors that we might describe as "global authors" or even "conscientious" authors. There seems to be an insinuation beneath claims that Pamuk received the award for "(extratextually) political and not literary" reasons that literary merit inevitably precludes political concerns and political engagement inhibits literary quality.<sup>9</sup>

How do we distinguish the literary from the political? On the most superficial level, works that engage with social and historical concerns that underpin a nation cannot help but address issues that are constantly represented in the political arena. In more theoretical terms, I prescribe to theorists like Linda Hutcheon and Chantal Mouffe, who insist on the inextricable entanglement of the political and artistic. Hutcheon asserts that "all cultural forms of representation - literary, visual, aural - in high art or the mass media are ideologically grounded, they cannot avoid involvement with social and political relations and apparatuses." For Hutcheon, "postmodern art cannot but be political, at least in the sense that its representations are anything but neutral," and while Pamuk's work has been defined as postmodern,<sup>10</sup> I think the

---

<sup>9</sup> A very common phrase in Turkish public discussions on such matters is "siyaseti siyasetçilere bırakın:" "Leave politics to politicians," which appears in another form when there are attempts to initiate discussions about past traumas. When a group of historians initiated a conference discussing the "Armenian question" in September 2005, they were told by the government to leave history to historians. While in Gilman's preface and other similar approaches to his Nobel prize, the distinction between literature and politics is meant to underline what is seen as Pamuk's conscientious stance towards Turkey's political problems, such distinctions set by official statements demarcate the role of the intellectual to a narrow framework, and deny the "non-specialist" the right to an opinion. In other words, we must be wary of such distinctions because they frequently function as less overt forms of censorship.

<sup>10</sup> There has been more than enough written on postmodernism and postmodernist fiction in the past four decades. I bring up the term here because Western critics have frequently defined Pamuk's work as postmodernist, comparing him to Borges and Calvino especially. Pamuk's novels do engage with concerns that have come to be defined as postmodern: the shifting divide between reality and fiction, the attention to linguistic constructs, a focus on history as fiction, etc. (His 1984 novel *White Castle* fits the postmodernist description especially well). However,

argument can be extended beyond the postmodern mode to all literary representations.<sup>11</sup> At least in the aftermath of postmodern studies and poststructuralism, which have put inverted commas around many notions hitherto considered natural as Hutcheon points out, it is difficult for any cultural production or representation to claim neutrality and divorce itself completely from political relations, although the degree of political engagement differs. Mouffe, on the other hand, argues that “one cannot make a distinction between political art and non-political art, because every form of artistic practice either contributes to the reproduction of the given common sense — and in that sense is political — or contributes to the deconstruction or critique of it. Every form of art has a political dimension.”<sup>12</sup> Precisely because of this intrinsic entanglement, discussions about the political basis of Pamuk’s Nobel prize seem redundant, since literary representation need not - and more often than not can not - exclude political concerns. Such debates are also emblematic of the Turkish official ideology prescribes a limited and clearly demarcated field of activity to authors.

Interestingly, Pamuk is simultaneously criticized for not being political enough, an argument that betrays a restrictive understanding, this time of the political. While many assert that Pamuk received the Nobel for political reasons, he is also criticized because his novels are

---

postmodernism in Pamuk’s case has also been about marketing his work to a Western public not overly familiar with Turkish literature. The English editions of his novels abound with comparisons to Borges, Calvino, Eco and Nabokov. In short, thinking about postmodernism is useful here because he Pamuk himself is in dialogue with postmodernism, both within his literature, and in the marketing of his literature.

<sup>11</sup> Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism*, (London: Routledge, 1989): 3.

<sup>12</sup> Chantal Mouffe, “Every Form of Art Has a Political Dimension,” *Grey Room 2* (2001): 99, 100. Mouffe has published extensively on “the political,” and her assertion here extends her notion of the political as an ever-present possibility that can emerge out of *all* relations and designates the interpellation of subject positions. It does not originate from a fixed point - in this case from art - but is always inherent in all relations as a possibility. I read her statement here about the relationship between art and the political as implying the impossibility of art not to contribute to the interpellation of subject positions in some way; the impossibility of art to remain neutral. However, I do not mean to suggest that the vision of the political invoked in *Snow* would fit Chantal Mouffe’s notion of (agonistic) politics. If anything, *Snow* presents us with a world aligned with a Schmittian antagonism, where the opposing factions try to eliminate one another to create a homogenous political unity. For more on the “political,” see Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political*. (London: Routledge, 2005) and Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, (London: Verso, 1985), especially Chapter 3.



not political enough; or, in other words, for playing it too safe against the State in Turkey. It is useful here to recall the 12 March Novels: as the quintessential “political novels” of Turkish literature, these novels set the standard of political literature in Turkey. Thus, when Orhan Pamuk’s works are criticized for not being political enough the insinuation is that they do not fit into a framework of writing defined by the leftists politics of the 1970s.<sup>13</sup> In the polarized aftermath of the 1971 and 1980 military interventions when many Turkish authors were jailed or severely rebuked by the military regime for their writings, the fact that Pamuk stayed clear of the state’s wrath until his trial for denigrating Turkishness in 2005, coupled with his privileged upbringing continue to make him an easy target for such criticism.<sup>14</sup> In these particular accusations about a lack of political engagement, the issue seems to lay in a posited equivalence between the political and politics, where to be political means to discuss politics, and “politics” only refers to current policies. Arguably, none of Pamuk’s works take a stance against the government or specific government policies, but almost all of them challenge, parody and problematize the foundational principles of Turkey, namely Kemalism.<sup>15</sup>

As this chapter shows, Pamuk’s 2002 novel *Kar* functions as an especially sharp criticism of the Turkish State and of these foundational principles. I choose *Snow* as my focus primarily because of its engagement with performance as a strategy to represent violence. This is not exactly the same type of “writing into pitfalls” that *Si te dicen que caí*’s reenactments of

---

<sup>13</sup> When I mentioned my intention to include Pamuk in my dissertation on representations of state violence, a common reply among Turkish students and academics was a sarcastic “good luck finding any in Pamuk’s work.”

<sup>14</sup> One might be tempted to think about these endless discussions about Pamuk being political or apolitical, literarily capable or simply a marketing genius, as parts of the experience (or even performance) of reading Pamuk. My intention here is not to downplay such criticisms, but to point to a set of assumptions and presumptions that follow the Turkish reader into Pamuk’s texts.

<sup>15</sup> Kemalism is the foundational ideology of Turkey, suggesting a commitment to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s thought, reforms, and vision, all of which are seen as inviolable. For more on Kemalism as Turkey’s foundational ideology, see Murat Belge, *Kemalizm*, Ed. Ahmet Insel (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001); Jacob Landau, *Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey*, (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1984); Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, (London: Tauris, 2004).

torture had performed. Rather, the staged performances themselves are representations of state-violence, in which the violence becomes unleashed once again. In that sense, these performances function similarly as the staged performances of torture in Marsé's novel: in representing state-violence they perpetrate the violence once again, which in turn destroys the illusion that representations (including the novel we hold in our hand) can be neutral. I also chose this novel because it is Pamuk's most *recognizably* political novel. In fact, the performances in question demonstrate the aforementioned debates on the relationship between art and politics, as an ex-communist actor takes political art to its extreme and stages a coup during a performance, to then argue that he staged the coup only to be able to perform his masterpiece to the city of Kars. This exaggerated entanglement of politics and art (not *the political* and art, necessarily) raises questions about artistic autonomy and complicity.

Pamuk criticism, especially from within Turkey, reveals less about Pamuk and his work than the anxieties of the Turkish national identity and sense of belonging. Even in his own alma mater, Robert College, my own introduction to Orhan Pamuk in the mid 1990's was lukewarm: the Turkish literature teacher insisted that Orhan Pamuk writes in English and then translates his books to Turkish, another common accusation I have since heard many times. Not only does this accusation diminish Pamuk's literary merit by suggesting he cannot *actually* write in Turkish, but it also highlights the anxieties about him not being Turkish enough, or rather, having a much too Turkish anxiety of his own: writing with a Western audience in mind. In "Those Outside the Scene: *Snow* in the World Republic of Letters," Nergis Ertürk suggests that the novel is self-conscious about its literary audience and argue that as exilic and transnational characters, the protagonist Ka and the narrator Orhan "register the presence of an implied European reader".<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Nergis Ertürk, "Those Outside the Scene: *Snow* in the World Republic of Letters," *New Literary History* 41.3 (2010): 638, 640.

The text itself is thus a testament to this anxiety, which occupies much of the Turkish criticism about Pamuk's work, as well as Orhan Pamuk himself by his own admission.<sup>17</sup>

*Kar* performs these anxieties throughout. The highly self-conscious, insistently reflexive text presents a world full of stage anxiety, with characters constantly thinking about their position with regards to the State and to an imaginary Western audience. *Kar* recounts exiled poet Kerim Alakuşoğlu's three days in Kars, a small northeastern Turkish city bordering Armenia. The poet's real name is mentioned once in the novel, in line with his strong preference that he be called Ka. A political exile living in Frankfurt, Ka returns to his hometown Istanbul after twelve years abroad to attend his mother's funeral, and decides to travel to Kars to report the suicides of young veiled women. These young women have been committing suicide at an alarming rate, leading certain characters in the novel to describe the phenomenon as an infection.<sup>18</sup> However, as Ka begins to talk to the families of the deceased and city officials, he moves away from their stories and instead becomes implicated in the factions and tensions between Islamists, State officials, politicians and intelligence officers in the city, all the while going through an intense romantic affair with his university friend, İpek (Silk), a recent divorcee running a hotel with her father and her sister Kadife (Velvet). Ka later finds out that both İpek and Kadife have had affairs with the mysterious and elusive Islamist terrorist Lacivert (Blue), who Ka meets on several occasions. As a snow storm shuts off all access to and from Kars, Ka finds himself imprisoned among this maze of characters with shifting and obscure loyalties and motives. During the snowstorm, a theater troupe led by the ex-communist actor Sunay Zaim stages a play

---

<sup>17</sup> See Orhan Pamuk, "Kars'ta ve Frankfurt'ta," *Babamın Bavulu*. Cağaloğlu, İstanbul: İletişim, 2007, especially pages 69-71. For Ertürk's explanation of this performance, see Ertürk, "Those Outside the Scene," 634-640. For an analysis of Turkish criticism's obsession with "lack" vis-a-vis Europe, see Nurdan Gürbilek, "Dandies and Originals : Authenticity, Belatedness , and the Turkish Novel." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102.2 (2003): 599-628.

<sup>18</sup> The "suicide girls" are based on statistics for suicide among veiled women in Turkey. For more on "suicide girls" and politics of veiling, see Colleen Ann Lutz Clemens, "Suicide Girls: Orhan Pamuk's *Snow* and the Politics of Resistance in Contemporary Turkey," *Feminist Formations*, 23., (Spring 2011): 138-154.

that turns into a deadly coup, and unknown forces take over the city, creating a state of emergency and holding the city hostage.<sup>19</sup> When the snow subsides and order is established, Ka is “sent” out of the city, but his lover Ipek refuses to follow him after she becomes suspicious of his involvement in Lacivert’s assassination. Ka returns to Frankfurt and tries to continue writing poetry, but realizes the poems only “came” to him in Kars. Four years after he returns to Germany, he himself is assassinated, prompting his novelist friend Orhan Pamuk to retrace his footsteps in Frankfurt and in Kars. The text we hold is this fictional Orhan Pamuk’s tale of Ka’s story in Kars.

*Kar* is often read as a miniature portrayal of Turkey, the city of Kars foregrounding the political factions and tensions within Turkey. While this allegorical reading is indeed appealing, I argue that the actual representation of state violence happens through the layered representative structure of the narrative and the notion of performance. Everything in *Kar* stands for something else: better put, places and events in Kars are more often than not masks. This is not a secret that only the readers are privy to, but an acknowledged fact by the fictional habitants of Kars. In fact, the person who at first fails to understand this “symbolic” landscape of Kars is an outsider: Ka. The Society of Animal Enthusiasts is actually a cockfight ring, the play of the theater troupe a coup, innocent bystanders intelligence agents. As a result, there is a constant attempt in *Kar*’s

---

<sup>19</sup> Kars’ temporary isolation by a snowstorm, which drives the main events of the novel, is a clear allusion to Cevat Fehmi Başkut’s play *Buzlar Çözülmeden* (1965) (*Before the Ice Melts*). *Buzlar Çözülmeden* functions as a diegetic and non-diegetic reference point for the novel: diegetic through Sunay Zaim participation in a staging of the play in the course of the novel, and non-diegetic in the novel’s borrowing of a small but significant part of the play’s plot. Although a comparison of both works is beyond the scope of my chapter, I find the relationship between the two works fruitful to keep in mind. When winter cuts off the city’s ties with the outside world in *Buzlar Çözülmeden*, madmen who have recently escaped from the nearby asylum take over, but act so “honorably” and “sanely” that when the actual State officials arrive and remove them, there is an uprising to retain the madmen as officials. In both works, the men who take over the city during its temporary isolation are madmen, but while they kill, plunder, and torture in *Kar*, in *Buzlar Çözülmeden* they manage to establish a utopian order and end “injustice,” essentially performing the duties of an ideal State. This striking difference could well be read as a testament to what Turkey went through politically and the increase in State violence - or at least its visibility - between 1965 and 2002, a period marked by two coups, a decades long fight against terrorism and a particularly violent State of Emergency established in the 1990s in Eastern Turkey. There are no scholarly works focusing on this interesting relationship between the two works to my knowledge.

Kars<sup>20</sup> to *read* events and people the *correct* way, to discern what is obscured behind the mask.

In other words, the readers are reading the characters of Kars read and decipher the events around them, because fiction is not only in the book we hold, but also created and circulated within the hierarchies of Kars' social landscape.

I focus on Sunay Zaim's deadly performances to discuss *Kar*'s representation of state violence. The first performance starts out as a "play" and turns into a shooting and functions as a "real" takeover of the city. Ruthless, arbitrary and absurd, this performance reenacts State violence, creating fictions, obscuring the "actual" player behind the fiction and making reality and play indistinguishable. At the end, the fictional is reality, and reality loses its meaning since everything it is comprised of unknowingly or cunningly slips in and out of the fiction/performance. This blurring is heightened in the second performance, which ends with Sunay Zaim's fictional murder that actually kills him. My reading of *Kar* highlights the performative aspect of the novel, as it pertains to both diagetetic and non-diagetetic elements, what Ertürk calls "theatricality as both topic and frame."<sup>21</sup> Performance is present in the fictional framework of the novel and also constitutive of its fiction. Through the notion of performance, the novel points to the distinctions between fate and agency, reality and fiction, art and politics,

---

<sup>20</sup> The visual link between the protagonist, Ka, the name of his book of poems and the name of the novel, *Kar*, and the name of the city, Kars, will be immediately clear. This visual cue hints at the interconnectedness of events in the novel, in a style that Sibel Erol describes as "encapsulation," which she explains through the ingenious image of Russian dolls. Bede Greig Roselli calls the link "an alliterative string." See Sibel Erol, "Reading Orhan Pamuk's *Snow* as Parody: Difference as Sameness," *Comparative Critical Studies*, 4.3 (2007): 428, 430 and Bede Roselli, "Youth, Masculinity and the Shattering of Sight in *Snow*," in *Essays Interpreting the Writings of Novelist Orhan Pamuk: The Turkish Winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature*. Ed. Nilgun Anadolu-Okur, (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2009): 79-95.

<sup>21</sup> Ertürk, "Those Outside the Scene," 645.

which all enact its self-conscious, unique and in my opinion highly daring representation of state violence.<sup>22</sup>

While Nergis Ertürk also points to this performative aspect of the novel, saying the novel “makes itself a stage,” for Ertürk this theatricality suggests first and foremost a concern about representation, “on which local characters assume, deflect, defy, or bring into crisis the ‘voicing’ or agency available to them.”<sup>23</sup> The staging represents the attempts to talk to a transnational other.<sup>24</sup> I argue, on the other hand, that the novel employs performance to represent political violence, engaging with the anxieties surrounding the position of the individual against the State, and the Turkish ambivalence towards the West. The performances reenact political violence: to use Sibel Erol’s helpful explanation, “fiction in [*Snow*] is anti-mimetic; *it creates reality rather than reflecting it.*”<sup>25</sup> In other words, the performance in question is not *only* a reflection of state-violence in Turkey. It is both a reflection and example; a mimetic mirroring *and* an instance of it.

*Kar*’s characters, including the poet Ka who supposedly does not care for politics yet finds himself at the belligerent intersection of Kars’ political factions - “a satirical self-representation?” we might be tempted to ask - appear crushed under a sense of predetermination that leaves them no room to escape their “fate.” While certain characters in the novel, like the Islamist terrorist Lacivert, or the young Islamist student Necip, interpret this predetermination as God’s will, or fate, what becomes increasingly apparent to the reader is that the omniscience behind the events can just as well be attributed to an all-knowing, ever-watching State. This confusion between an omniscient God and an omniscient Institution performs, in turn, one of the

---

<sup>22</sup> The novel presents a plethora of binaries, as will be evident from the above sentence. This can be interpreted as an example of the logic of oppression, which arranges the world and its subjects within that world in a Manichean fashion.

<sup>23</sup> Ertürk, “Those Outside the Scene,” 640.

<sup>24</sup> Ertürk writes, “what *Snow* itself stages is the internal political theater of performance ‘under Western eyes.’” (642)

<sup>25</sup> Sibel Erol, “Reading Orhan Pamuk’s *Snow* as Parody: Difference as Sameness,” *Comparative Critical Studies* 4.3 (2007): 418.

foundational tensions of modern day Turkey between religion and secularism that both vie for citizens' faith and loyalty. The notion of performance highlights this ambiguity between agency and predetermination. Although there is always a script and director, as Sunay Zaim's performance suggests there is also always an excess within performance.<sup>26</sup>

The question of agency and representation are foregrounded through performance. Performances in *Kar* remind the readers that violence does not just happen; it is deliberate. The self-fulfilling prophecy, so common in the novel, is possible precisely because the ones prophesying are the ones who wrote the events into action. A performance of tautology, then: the ex-communist, new coup-leader actor Sunay Zaim's play is supposed to warn the people of Kars against the impending violence, but does so by instigating the violence itself to then be proven "right" about his premonition that violence is coming.

### **A Prescient State/God and its Self-Fulfilling Prophecies**

The ambiguity between premonition and effect functions as a harsh criticism of the State in *Kar*. It also creates what Sibel Erol calls anti-mimetic representation. Much like the *aventis* in *Si te dicen que caí*, which are not only inventions but stories that also create a new reality, in *Kar* fiction has a direct effect on reality: stories - in the form of rumors, reports, and oral and written tales - engender and prompt reality. As a result, omniscience acquires a new dimension: are

---

<sup>26</sup> Here I find Jonathan Lamb's theories about reenactment very helpful, which can be applied to Sunay Zaim's performance as well. Lamb writes, "However in the excitements, trials, and conflicts of the reenactment it is often possible to observe the germ of something that is not quite shapely or symmetrical, something that can skew the whole performance and leave it looking not at all as we had expected. We can call it contingency, chance or accident; but whatever we call it, if it grows from a germ into an event, it takes history out of our hands and turns it into History, a painful and surprising force with its own drift and meaning, and perhaps too fiercely obscure to be really known at all. When History happens to us in this unpredictable way the passions of reenactment become very powerful indeed, and instead of possessing the past we are possessed by it" (Agnew and Lamb 1).

premonitions seeing into the future, or are they actually *making* the future?<sup>27</sup> The local newspaper *Serhat Şehir Gazetesi* (*Border City Gazette*), prides itself on its journalism because it always reports events before they happen. At first, Ka mocks this absurd form of “predictive” journalism, especially when the newspaper reports that Ka reported his latest poem during a festivity at the National Theater, since he has not written a poem and the event itself is scheduled for the day after. Ka tells Serdar Bey, the owner and editor of the newspaper, that there is a mistake. Serdar Bey replies: “O kadar emin olmayın . . . Pek çok olay sırf biz önceden haberini yaptığımız için gerçekleşmiştir. Modern gazetecilik de budur.” (“Don’t be so sure. . . . Quite a few things do happen only because we have written them up first. This is what modern journalism is all about”).<sup>28</sup>

Since it is so difficult to discern the tone of *Kar*, the readers cannot easily grasp the nature of this bizarre journalism. Ka himself is ambivalent about spiritual explanations, engaging in endless debates about God with Kars’ habitants, yet overwhelmed by a desire to *believe*. His obsessive concern with “the hidden symmetry of life” is indicative of this desire to believe in a God that has already created a unique structure for his life, a destiny. What is at stake in his quest to discover the hidden symmetry is discerning the existence of a symmetry that structures *everyone’s* life. For Ka, the hidden symmetry *is* God: “Dünyanın gizli simetrisine dikkat kesilmiş, insanı daha uygar, daha ince kılacak bir Allah var,” he insists (“there is a God who pays careful attention to the world’s hidden symmetry, a God who will make us all more civilized and

---

<sup>27</sup> The confusion between prediction and responsibility recalls a famous scene from *The Matrix* (1999) that conveys the confusion quite clearly. When Neo sees the Oracle, the Oracle mysteriously tells him that he should not worry about the vase. This is a seemingly irrelevant comment but when Neo asks “what vase” and turns around, he knocks over a vase and mumbles a confused “sorry,” prompting the Oracle to tell him, “I told you not to worry about it,” bringing us full circle in the now destabilized cause-effect cycle. For Neo, the event proves the prescience of the Oracle. “How did you know?” he asks. The Oracle, however, emphasizes the possibility that her warning might have caused the event: “what’s really going to bake your noodle later on is” she says, “would you still have broken it if I hadn’t said anything?” *Kar* constantly plays with this distinction between a predetermined (thus open to prescience) fate, and events shaped by individual sovereignty.

<sup>28</sup> Pamuk, *Kar*, 34; *Snow*, 29.



refined”).<sup>29</sup> This is, in a way, a secular prayer: in another reflection of the East/West, religion/secularism divide that underpins the Turkish identity, Ka wishes to find a civilized, refined God, who, as he is careful to note, is not among the people in Kars.<sup>30</sup> Ka’s ambivalence towards spirituality - his tendency to belittle believers and religious faith in general even as he desires to believe in God - underpins the entire text, making it increasingly difficult to interpret the novel’s use of prescience. Is the newspaper’s prescience a mockery of religion and those who believe it, or does Serdar Bey really see the future somehow? This is the question we are forced to ask in the fulfillment of the poem prophecy.

When Ka reads his newly written poem some sixty pages after the newspaper report, we are prompted to ask whether he would have written the poem at all had the newspaper not predicted it.<sup>31</sup> In the 2006 New York Times profile on Pamuk, Charles McGarth describes Serdar Bey’s newspaper as “Borgesian,” “in which events begin to take place precisely because they have been written down first.” The ambiguity surrounding the newspaper’s prescience in the novel allows for this Borgesian reading, while also fitting well into the idea of a “hidden” religious or spiritual symmetry behind human lives, a destiny that can be foreseen. However, as Serdar Bey admits the source of his newspaper’s predictive power, the reader begins to see the secular aspects of this prescience. As with many supernatural seeming events in the novel, the prescience of the newspaper begins to appear as part of State control and surveillance. Serdar Bey explains, “Biz de meslek icabı bu telsizden polisin konuşmalarını dinleriz. Gazetemizde çıkan haberlerin yüzde doksanını bize Kars valiliği ve emniyet verir” (“For professional reasons, we listen in on police communication with this transistor radio. Ninety percent of the news we

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 101; 97.

<sup>30</sup> “Ama burada sizin aranızda değil o Allah.”

<sup>31</sup> In Kars, the poems “come” to Ka as if through divine inspiration. He writes the poem in question without any apparent thought about whether he would be humiliated if he cannot write a poem as announced to the whole city, so the prophecy of the newspaper seems to *create* the event.

print comes from the office of the governor and the Kars police headquarters.”<sup>32</sup>) The moment of magical realism is interrupted with this explanation, turning into an affirmation of prevalent State surveillance instead.

The newspaper does not exactly predict events. They “know of” them because they are either consciously producing said events, or they are complicit with power structures that do. Things begin to look especially suspicious when we find out that the newspaper predicted a murder: why can the newspaper predict but not prevent a murder? Why, for example, is everyone in Kars convinced that the police and the State know everything, but have no trust in their ability to prevent atrocities? Talking about a poisonous syrup that is sold in the city, Ipek’s sister and Lacivert’s lover Kadife (Velvet) tells Ka that the Turkish secret services know about everything that go on in the city including the syrup, but they do not do anything to stop it. This is, then, an all knowing, all seeing State that constantly monitors but nevertheless refuses to save its citizens from harm. When Ka asks whether they also know of their meeting, Kadife explains that they do not, even though one day they will definitely find out. She adds, “Kars’taki tek özgürlük zamanı bu geçici zamandır. Kıymetini bilin” (“This is the only time we’ll ever be free in Kars. Appreciate it”)<sup>33</sup>. She thus posits the immediate present as the only time the individual can break free of the constant surveillance and omniscience of the State. The now, which exists between State’s short-lived ignorance and its eventual knowledge, is when the individual can have a claim to sovereignty and therefore the only moment outside of “predictability.” In light of Serdar Bey’s admission and Kadife’s explanations, predictions begin to seem like self-fulfilling prophecies and prescience/omniscience appear as aspects of a politically suspect and violent system.

---

<sup>32</sup> Pamuk, *Kar*, 30; *Snow*, 25.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 218, 219.

The effects and responsibility of this system become brutally clear in Sunay Zaim's performance. In a particularly violent (and highly ironic) self-fulfilling prophecy, Sunay Zaim predicts chaos and violence from the audience, and in order to fulfill this premonition provokes them and responds to their largely non-violent jeering by firing into the crowd and staging a coup. His use of "real" violence in a "fictional" performance blurs the boundaries between fiction and reality further, recalling Sibel Erol's contention once again that in *Kar* fiction *creates* reality, much like in *Si te dicen que caí*. The violence unleashed during the performance in turn demonstrates the violent project of a violent system.

### **Reenactments of Violence**

There are many obvious instances of state violence in *Kar*, when characters emphasize their fear or distrust of the State. When Ka begins to talk to the families about the "suicide girls," some families let him in their homes readily, but others fear him because they suspect he might be a State official.<sup>34</sup> Especially because the story takes place in an Eastern city, with different minority populations like the Kurds and Armenians, the fear of the (nation-) State can be felt everywhere. The novel also discusses torture as an instrument of state-violence, both in the aftermath of the coup in Kars through the torture of religious youth in the city, and through Ka's own torture in chapter thirty-eight. Yet, the elaborations and discussions of state-violence and its mechanisms occur through the staged performances, not through torture. For one, torture is dealt with only through Ka's perceptions, who witnesses torture only to be faced with his *own* sense of guilt, *own* fear of complicity, *own* desire to escape Kars. This is very much in line with Ka's general inability to sympathize with suffering outside his immediate concerns. To be sure, the novel presents torture as a horror, but Ka, perhaps to save himself the trauma, *aestheticizes* what

---

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 18; 12.

he witnesses when he is taken to the old Veterinary School now used for torture to identify suspects. He does not identify anyone, but he can neither acknowledge torture as such: “Bakıyordu ama gözünün önündekileri değil, kafasının içindeki bir rengi görüyordu. Bu renk en çok kırmızıya benzediği için bu odaya kırmızı oda diyecekti” (“he could not see what was in front of him; all he could see was the color inside his head. Because the color was something close to red, he would call this the red room”)<sup>35</sup>. He imagines the people he sees to exist in a dream world. He calls another room the “yellow room,” because the rooms conjures dreams of places he has never visited.<sup>36</sup> We are led to believe by the narrator that Ka has in fact written more details of this experience in his journals, but the narrator decides to “spare” the readers the details. Torture appears familiar to Ka, as he can *sense* the nature of tortures inflicted in each cell, understanding, for example, that one group of boys had been beaten during the coup’s early hours, before the instruments could be set up.<sup>37</sup> This familiarity suggests that torture is indeed acknowledged by Ka as a common manifestation of state violence. However, it is either aestheticized (as in the case of Ka) or censored (as in the narrator’s case). The difficulty of its expression is acknowledged, but torture as such is not tackled by any means other than through Ka’s tendency to care about others only to the extent that they provide materials for his art.

As a result, in the novel torture largely functions to emphasize Ka’s self-involved dedication to his art and the “repetitive” aspect of Zaim’s coup that immediately sets up torture chambers, denies its existence in the very building it takes place, and sets it aside as someone else’s business.<sup>38</sup> It is especially striking that even when Ka himself is tortured at the end of the novel, what actually traumatizes him is not the beating, but the revelation that his lover Ipek has

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 185.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 184.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 200; 201.

had an affair with Lacivert. He does not find the torture “unbearable” up until this point, especially because he realizes the torturers distinguish him from the laymen of Kars and would not inflict permanently damaging or visible tortures. He also thinks the beating will earn him added affection from Ipek. Most importantly, he feels *proud* that he can finally act the part of the political prisoner who does not disclose information despite the beating.<sup>39</sup> Yet, Ka also feels that this pride would have been more valuable twenty years ago; he finds his own thinking “outmoded.”<sup>40</sup> In a tragicomic extension of Ka’s self-involvedness, what proves traumatic for him in his torture is the interrogator’s disclosure that Ipek had a secret affair with Lacivert for years (that intelligence officers had monitored). It is this statement that makes Ka “talk;” this is the one part of his interrogation that he remembers for years to come.<sup>41</sup> Torture, then, appears only in relation to Ka’s personal life, personal, artistic thoughts.

I focus on performances and reenactments of state-violence as putting forth the novel’s political commentary because while the references to state-violence and torture simply gesture towards state-violence, the staged performances that I analyze here engender and repeat violence in the process of representing it. As I have shown in my discussion of *Si te dicen que caí*, representations of violence through performances raise significant questions about the difficulties of representing violence and historical trauma. I am interested in these performances both because of their simultaneous embodiment of repetition and novelty, and because of their ability to foreground the interactions between actors and spectators, which reveals a harsh critique of the relationship between the State and its subjects.

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 355.

<sup>40</sup> This is a clear reference to the world of the 1970s – a world captured by *Yaralısin* – where torture, as explained by Murat Belge, is an *existential* problem.

<sup>41</sup> Pamuk, *Kar*, 356.

The ambiguities between prescience and planning that I emphasized earlier are demonstrated especially well through the performances. These performances are scripted but have unpredictable and uncontrollable consequences that are nevertheless *contingent* on the said scripts, rather than appearing as spontaneous occurrences. In a 2010 article, Edith Hall emphasizes that live-theatre is special precisely because it exists in between contingency and scripted, uncontingent events.<sup>42</sup> She explains that the interaction between actors and spectators emphasize the contingency, since “the performance must always interact with the responses (or lack of them) evinced by the audience, which will be different at each performance, and no one gesture or phrase can *ever* be performed in an absolutely identical manner.”<sup>43</sup> Keeping in mind Edith Hall’s description of live performances as semi-contingent,<sup>44</sup> I argue that the staged performances in *Kar* reveal the novel’s take on state violence by contextualizing the violence and pointing to its directors, rather than presenting it as prevalent but spontaneous.

Performance is a contested term, especially due to its flexibility and applicability to a wide variety of actions, enactments, representations, which are not always compatible. In postmodernity, performance has gained a limitless characteristic. Baz Kershaw describes this characteristic as an excess, a limitlessness in comparison to the perceived ‘limits of theater.’<sup>45</sup> Judith Butler’s notion of performativity as it relates to subject formation has expanded and

---

<sup>42</sup> Edith Hall, “Towards a Theory of Performance Reception,” in *Theorising Performance: Greek Drama, Cultural History and Critical Practice*, Eds. Edith Hall and Stephe Harrop (London: Duckworth, 2010): 22.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>44</sup> Of course, it is important to keep in mind that Hall’s argument is formulated with actual live performances in mind, not fictional representations of them for fictional audiences in novels. However, I do not think this textualization, which would normally flatten the performance by eliminating the crucial actor/spectator interaction, functions all that differently in the novel since within the fiction the actors stage a play, the audiences respond and react, etc.

<sup>45</sup> Baz Kershaw argues that theatre reinforces class hierarchies that are already present and functions too comfortably as “a marginal commodity in the capitalist cultural market-place.” For him, the radical can more appropriately emerge out of the excesses of performance, especially in performances “beyond theatre. Baz Kershaw, *The Radical in Performance: Between Brecht and Baudrillard*, (London: Routledge, 1999): 5- 22.

complicated the term “performance” even further.<sup>46</sup> The performance I refer to in *Kar* appears on a theater stage and designates a blend of scripted and improvised acts on a stage, in front of an audience. In other words, in this chapter I insist on retaining a rather basic understanding of performance, one that “requires two groups of people, the doers . . . and the onlookers, who have to assemble at a certain time and place in order to share this situation,” as described by Erika Fischer-Lichte.<sup>47</sup> As Fischer-Lichte explains, the interaction between the actors and the spectators is of utmost importance, since the performance “arises out of their encounter and interaction.” Since Sunay Zaim’s performances begin on stage but erupt onto the world of the audience, this interaction and encounter gain added significance in *Kar*.

I am not trying to equate theater and performance or limit the scope of performance to only the theater stage, but I contend that Sunay Zaim’s violence is so deadly precisely because it counts on an audience that has taken for granted the distance between their positions as passive spectators and the theatre stage. Their belief in this distance assures them that the fictional events they see on stage cannot infringe on their reality as anything other than short-lived entertainment. Zaim’s play is able to turn into a coup and violently take over Kars, killing audience members in the meantime, because the audience insists on this naturalized distinction. The performances in *Kar* that I will be discussing are scripted theatrical plays performed on a stage, which then break the bounds of that stage and spill into the “real” life of the spectators. This is also the anti-mimetic quality of the performance in question. It collapses the distinction between fiction and reality, and instead engenders *real* violence; real in the sense that it leads to the death of some

---

<sup>46</sup> Performativity could describe the identity formation of many characters in *Kar*, always performing a particular self with imaginary interlocutors and judges in mind. Lacivert, for example, is unable to formulate responses without calculating the image his responses will project for his audience. He is always on a stage in front of various spectators, performing different aspects of his self depending on his audience. He performs his identity, but his reception rather than his performance constitutes his self. Performativity becomes especially important to understand *Kar*’s self-conscious approach to the allegorical impulse, which I discuss at length in the next section.

<sup>47</sup> Erika Fischer-Lichte, “Performance as Event: Reception as Transformation.” In *Theorising Performance: Greek Drama, Cultural History and Critical Practice*, (London: Duckworth, 2010): 29.

characters, establishes a siege of the city, and functions as a coup carried out by soldiers, who first appear on a stage but shatter the security of the fiction by actually firing into the audience.

The Border City Gazette reports Sunay Zaim's play a day before it takes place, in the same article that reports Ka's poetry recital into being. The newspaper announces that the play will be the main event of the night. Titled *Vatan Yahut Türban*, My Fatherland or My Headscarf,<sup>48</sup> the play is supposedly an adaptation of an old Republican play called titled *Vatan Yahut Çarşaf*, My Fatherland or My Scarf<sup>49</sup>. The play is a glorification of secularist ideals and a warning against Islamization, in which a veiled woman is saved from "darkness" by civilized, secular men, and ends up burning her veil as an act of her newfound enlightenment and independence. Sunay Zaim's coquettish wife Funda Eser, repeatedly described by the text as "lewd," plays the part of the veiled woman. The narrator explains that the play had been staged throughout Anatolia in the 1930s but had been forgotten by the end of the 1950s. The play is old-fashioned but, but as a typical example of didactic Republican art, it is specifically specifically designed to demonstrate its message as clearly as possible to the "ignorant" audience, in need of enlightenment. There is no ambiguity about the heroes and villains, or about the juxtaposition of Islam and the new Republic of Turkey.

It is ironic that this very soundly structured play should create such chaos and tension, even before the actual unleashing of violence. The narrator — who has not witnessed the events

---

<sup>48</sup> The title *Vatan yahut Carsaf* is an allusion to Namık Kemal's famous 19<sup>th</sup> century play *Vatan Yahut Silistre* (*Fatherland, or Silistria*), a patriotic play revolving around the Russian siege of the castle of Silistria and its defense by the Ottomans.

<sup>49</sup> In Turkish, the original name of the play is *Vatan Yahut Çarşaf*, while the new name is *Vatan Yahut Türban*. Çarşaf literally means "sheets" and is used to designate the black chador women wear. Türban, on the other hand, specifically means "headscarf," but is different from "başörtüsü," another word that designates headscarf. While başörtüsü is considered an apolitical and traditional manner of veiling, türban is considered a political manifestation of the hijab. For more on the semantics of türban and başörtüsü, see Ali Çarkoğlu, "Women's Choices of Head Cover in Turkey: An Empirical Analysis," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 39.3 (2009): 450-467; Elisabeth Özdalga, "The Veiling Issue," in *Official Secularism and Popular Islam in Modern Turkey* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1998); Ayşe Saktanber and Gül Çorbacıoğlu, "Veiling and Head-Scarf Skepticism in Turkey," *Social Politics* 15.4. (2008): 514-538



of the night but reconstructed them through a video recording and interviews with many witnesses including Funda Eser — points out that the moment the veiled actress walks on stage, the audience becomes confused.<sup>50</sup> The play is so outmoded that the audience does not expect to see such a literal take on the question of “Fatherland or Headscarf.” Then they become confused because while the title of the play uses the word *türban*, suggesting “siyasal İslamcılar” (“political Islam,”)<sup>51</sup> Funda Eser is wearing a *çarşaf*, a burka, as in the original play from the 1930s. There is something anachronistic about the play, which makes its symbolic structure puzzling for the audience. Similarly, when Sunay Zaim says, “Acılar içinde!” (“They’re in torment!”) people assume he delivered an incomplete line, because they cannot understand to whom “they” refer: ““Eskiden bu sözle halk, millet akla gelirdi; şimdiyse Karşılılar bütün gece seyrettikleri şeylerin mi, kendilerinin mi, Funda Eser’in mi, yoksa Cumhuriyet’in mi acılar içinde olduğunu anlamadılar” (“In the old days, this would have been a reference to the people or the nation, but [this] audience was not sure if this man was referring to them or to Funda Eser or to the entire Republic”).<sup>52</sup> The anachronism arises out of a desire to perform an old, oft repeated play without altering its references to fit the new historical context. As a result, although it is a repetition, the incongruity of the repetition transforms the play into something new and different in its reception.<sup>53</sup>

The unveiling and the eventual burning of the veil are supposed to be performances of secularism: a dramatic shedding of the repression of Islam, and embrace of the Westernization

---

<sup>50</sup> Pamuk, *Kar*, 147.

<sup>51</sup> Pamuk, *Kar*, 147; *Snow*, 148. Note that the original says the word recalls “political Islamists,” while the translation says “political Islam.”

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>53</sup> Vanessa Agnew suggests “reenactments go wrong because they try to simplify complex historical processes and conflate current social and political concerns with earlier ones.” See Vanessa Agnew and Jonathan Lamb, *Settler and Creole Reenactment*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009): 298. Similarly, Fischer-Lichte insists that “the performance as event is unique and *cannot be repeated*. It is *impossible for exactly the same constellation between actors and spectators to occur another time*.” Fischer-Lichte, “Performance as Event,” 37.

promised by the Republic of Turkey. But Eser's reputation as a lewd belly dancer – and her belly dancing from earlier in the evening - overtakes her impersonation. When she throws off her veil and burns it in an embrace of secularist ideals, the audience is confused by seeing a “lewd belly dancer” emerge from under the veil, and what is designed to be a glorification of secularist ideals thus becomes read by many audience members as revealing the decadence of a civilization manifested by the West. The audience is not impervious to the symbolic meaning behind the acts on the stage; their confusion does not derive from their inability to understand the play. The problem is their inability to distinguish Funda Eser's persona from that of the woman she plays on stage. Her reputation confuses her role, creating an unforeseen puncture within the performance. This slippage is neither deliberate nor predictable. It spontaneously arises out of the anachronism of the play and it is contingent on the audience's particular reception of it. The confusion suggests that performance always retains a particularity that remains unpredictable and new, emerging out of the specific interaction between the actors and the audience in a specific moment in time. The particularities of the encounter depend on the setting of the production, the make-up of the audience and the dynamics among them, which inevitably affect their reactions to the play. Thus, the existing factions and tensions within Kars, as well as the conflicting attitudes towards the violent but paternal legacy of the State, condition the audience's reception of the performance and its symbolic structure.

There is something interesting in the confusion Funda Eser creates. She defies the expectations of the audience, but her accidental subversion of the allegorical expectations placed on her character by different factions in the audience happens without any awareness on her part. The text itself is quite unforgiving towards her. While Sunay Zaim is described as strikingly

handsome,<sup>54</sup> his ridiculousness tempered by his good looks, Funda Eser is mocked for being a middle-aged, plump coquette who is unaware of her own ridiculousness.<sup>55</sup> It is this reputation as a coquette which muddles the symbolic clarity of her *fictional* character.

As I mentioned earlier, there is a constant attempt in Kars to *read* events; to distinguish the mask from what it is obscuring, to discern who or what is behind the exterior. The audience's confusion about Funda Eser seems to arise from similar concerns: since they are so accustomed to attributing acts to different factions, the clash between her real life reputation and the role she assumes confuses the audience because they can neither read the play as a message from secularist factions nor as a parody of secularist fervor staged by Islamists. Had the narrative granted Eser any awareness of this confusion, we might have cast Funda Eser as a subversive character who resists the polarization of Kars. But she remains oblivious, both to the confusion she creates and to the tensions the performance unleashes in Kars. The habitants, on the other hand, sense the danger of staging this play in front of such polarized factions. In a tragicomic plea after the burning of the veil, the manager of the telephone company tells Funda Eser the audience has understood the gist of the play and to please wrap it up: "Kızım, Atatürkçü piyesinizi çok beğendik. Ama yetişir artık. Bakın herkes huzursuz, halk da galeyana gelecek" (My dear girl! We have all enjoyed your tribute to the ideals of Ataturk. But we've had enough now. Look, the audience is upset; we're in danger of inciting a riot").<sup>56</sup> As a habitant of Kars familiar with the city's dynamics, the manager understands the processes triggered by the performance. In fact, after the veil is burned, many in the audience leap up in horror, because

---

<sup>54</sup> Pamuk, *Kar*, 155.

<sup>55</sup> Orhan Pamuk's female characters are beyond the scope of my chapter, but I would like to emphasize that his rather hostile characterization of female characters is not isolated to *Kar*.

<sup>56</sup> Pamuk, *Kar*, 151.

they sense that “Her şey olabilirdi artık” (“Now anything could happen”).<sup>57</sup> As the narrator points out insistently, the majority of the audience had gone to the play simply to be entertained. In light of the violence that follows, the emphasis on the audience’s desire to experience the performance as *just* a form of entertainment, as a make-believe world to take their mind off real life, takes on a tragic quality.<sup>58</sup>

When the violence does start, it goes unnoticed for quite a while because of the aforementioned inability to distinguish reality and performance. The infringement of the real on the fiction and the excesses of fiction confuse the audience to such an extent that they cannot grasp violence as violence. Sibel Erol interprets the violent performance as eliciting laughter, noting that “when the characteristics of these crazy ‘heroes’ appear exhibited by self-righteous zealots [Sunay Zaim] in the novel, their naive idealism becomes ironic, and the source play is turned into a parody that elicits laughter.”<sup>59</sup> Erol’s reading of parody and irony are supported by the asides heard intermittently from audience members, making fun of the characters on stage. But I would like to emphasize that the performance in question is also a tragic moment in the play, when the good faith of the audience who has come to the theater to experience performance as entertainment is betrayed by the actual violence unleashed upon them to emphasize a message they have already received (namely, about the threat of Islam, goodness of the nation, and necessity of secularism). When Sunay Zaim’s dramatic soliloquy briskly turns into a warning to stay put and an order to the soldiers suddenly flanking him to fire into the audience, he swiftly moves from actor to dictator. As the soldiers fire into the audience, not only does the actor turn into a dictator, but the site of theater turns into a site of massacre.

---

<sup>57</sup> Pamuk, *Kar*, 151; *Snow*, 150.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 150; 154.

<sup>59</sup> Erol, “Difference as Sameness,” 415.

The shift ironically undermines the “sound dramatic structure” of the play because Zaim’s use of violence is designed to demonstrate the play’s message more forcefully. The narrator reveals later that Sunay Zaim had initially refused to include armed men in his performance, but had later been unable to resist the argument that “sanattan anlamayacak ayak takımına karşı silah kullanabilen adam gerekebileceği” (“he might need a man experienced with guns to control any lowlifes in the audience who were unlikely to appreciate the nuances of ‘modern art’”).<sup>60</sup> In other words, Zaim resorts to violence precisely because of his condescending attitude towards the audience as ignorant, incapable of understanding his art. Keeping in mind the early Turkish Republic’s approach to intellectuals as disseminators of State ideology, the figure of Sunay Zaim, actor turned dictator, exposes the questionable position of the intellectual as the upholder of State ideology.<sup>61</sup> His decision is an extension of the mandate of official ideologies that limit individual thinking and dissent.

If we think of Fischer-Lichte’s claim that no *one* individual or group can control the performance,<sup>62</sup> which is driven by dynamic interactions (script as well as the encounter with the audience; an uncontingent text as well as contingent improvisations), we can read the violence instigated by Zaim as an attempt to limit unpredictability, direct interpretation, define the nature of reception. The staged coup moves the performance from a contingent and volatile field to a forcefully controlled one, establishing control over the audience. The shooting eliminates the audience’s freedom in interpreting the play how they will, instead imposing a monolithic understanding. Interpretation (and therefore reception) of the play is no longer meaningful

---

<sup>60</sup> Pamuk, *Kar*, 161; *Snow*, 160.

Interestingly, the original only suggests that guns might be necessary against lower classes who might not understand “art,” not necessarily “the nuances of modern art.” That specification seems to have been added in the translation process.

<sup>61</sup> Later on, Ka tells Sunay Zaim that he knows Zaim has carried out the coup not only for politics, but also for its aesthetics and art. The coup performance also foregrounds the art/politics binary, then, and takes the distinction to the other extreme where art is nothing if not in service of politics, which eliminates the autonomy of the artist.

<sup>62</sup> Fischer-Lichte, “Performance as Event,” 30.

because it is defined and mandated by armed men on stage. According to Edith Hall, the semi-contingency of live-performance is its “political potential,” because it makes intervention possible.<sup>63</sup> The coup kills this potential, reinforcing the already prevalent attitude in the novel that in Kars change is unlikely.

Sunay Zaim’s attitude towards the audience also implies a justification of violence as “educational.” The performance utilizes violence as a precaution lest the audience fails to react properly, but instead the soldiers fire into the audience preemptively. This strange logic parallels that of the self-fulfilled prophecies I discussed earlier: the violence here responds to a *potential* threat and then justifies itself as necessary by pointing to the chaos that it creates itself. When Ka later tells Sunay Zaim that he has not seen any palpable terrorist threats in Kars, Sunay Zaim says: “bu ülke ancak yüreklere din korkusu salınarak hakkıyla yönetilebilir. Her zaman bu korkunun haklı olduğu sonradan çıkar ortaya”<sup>64</sup> (“this country can be led adequately only through spreading the fear of religion. *The fear will always eventually prove right*”)<sup>65</sup>. Within this logic, the use of violence is *always* justified.

## Staged Revolution

When the religious fanatics attack the enlightened woman in the play, setting up the scene for the Republican hero to arrive and save Funda Eser, the violence that exceeds the stage also

---

<sup>63</sup> Hall, “Theory of Performance Reception,” 25

<sup>64</sup> Pamuk, *Kar*, 202.

<sup>65</sup> I use my own translation here because in the English the original meaning is completely changed. The English translation reads, “Above all, they [Islamists] know that the only way they’d ever get to run this country is by terrorizing us. Over time, our fears turn out to have been well founded” (203). In the original, Zaim asserts that the country can be ruled sufficiently only by spreading the fear of religion. He uses passive voice, not specifying who would do the ruling, but implying it to be like-minded individuals since he himself has used the threat of religion as a reason to take over the city. While the intentions behind the change might be innocuous, its effects are decidedly not. In the original, Pamuk’s text positions itself against the official ideology of Turkey, whereas the official English translation of Pamuk, a World Literature figure, reinforces the clear-cut lines between secularists as the good guys and the Islamists as power-hungry terrorists.

begins. The title of the chapter is telling: “Sahnedeki İhtilal” (“Revolution on Stage”). There is in fact a revolution on stage, but it is not only a staged one. Its intrusion into the world beyond the theater stage moves it out of the fictional into the real. It starts as a theater performance, but turns into a reenactment and repetition of state violence. When Sunay Zaim enters the stage as the Republican meant to save Funda Eser from fanatics, he addresses the audience and remarks, “Cumhuriyet’e, özgürlüğe, aydınlığa uzanan eller kırılır” (“Those who seek to meddle with the Republic, with freedom, with enlightenment, will see their hands crushed”).<sup>66</sup> His words are interpreted as a soliloquy in the play, but two soldiers appear on each side of the actor while three others come through the aisles. Again trying to keep the performance in the fictional realm, the spectators assume the soldiers are part of the performance, their guns props. Sunay Zaim, who has just found out about the assassination of the director of Institute of Education declares “bu alçak cinayet Cumhuriyet’e, laikliğe, Türkiye’nin geleceğine son saldırı olacaktır” (“this lowly murder will be the last assault on the Republic and the secular future of Turkey”)<sup>67</sup> with which the soldiers fire their first shots into the crowd.

Zaim’s words situate the violence within the ideology of the Turkish State, and posit this coup on stage as a *repetition*.<sup>68</sup> However, his words also mark the beginning of something new as deviations from the original script. With the first round of shots entertainment turns into assault but the audience discerns this shift only after the fourth round of shots, precisely because of their self-assured expectation that the performance will remain within the bounds of the fictional. The narrator explains, “Tiyatro deneyimi kısıtlı Karşılılar bunu Batı’dan gelen moda bir sahneleme yeniliği olduğunu hissettiler” (“A number of Kars residents - out of touch as they were with

---

<sup>66</sup> Pamuk, *Kar*, 155.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>68</sup> The Turkish army is traditionally seen as the protector of laicism in Turkey against what is considered a perpetual threat of fundamentalism.

modern theatrical conventions - took it for yet another bit of experimental staging”)<sup>69</sup> There is something profoundly sad in this description of the naive audience: they maintain their faith in the performance as entertainment and interpret their legitimate suspicions as an inability to grasp new art conventions – yet another result of their distance from Istanbul and the capital. The poignancy of the audience’s *refusal* to understand what is actually happening is summed up by Necip’s words. Right before he is hit, he shouts, “Durun, ateş etmeyin, silahlar dolu!” (Stop! Don’t fire; the guns are loaded!”).<sup>70</sup> Necip’s words reveal his assumption that the soldiers are actors playing their parts, unaware that their guns are real. He does not address the audience to point out the guns are loaded but instead warns the soldiers, who he thinks must be killing people unknowingly. But these interpretations do not work for a play that has taken realism to its extreme by killing audience members. As in *Si te dicen que caí*, where the performances of children make a mockery out of realism by staging plays that are so real that they actually carry out torture, Sunay Zaim’s performance also takes realism to its extreme by killing audience members.<sup>71</sup> Here, though, what the play ends up reenacting is quite different from its original intention: in the attempt to perform the glory of the Turkish Republic against the evils of religion, it reenacts its violence.

The text parallels the audience’s naiveté, using descriptions that reinforce the confusion between reality and fiction. After the second round of shots the audience watches and laughs as a student collapses “gerçek bir ölü gibi,” like a real corpse.<sup>72</sup> Although the narrator knows the student has in fact died, he maintains the uncertainty in the text. The shooting soldiers are described as “*sahnedeki erler*,” the soldiers on stage. This adds to the ambiguity: are they on

---

<sup>69</sup> Pamuk, *Kar*, 156.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>71</sup> Funda Eser’s later statement to Ka that in their troupe, “it’s not the players who make the masterpiece, it’s the audience” (205) begins to seem especially sinister after this vicious invasion of the audience’s world.

<sup>72</sup> Pamuk, *Kar*, 156.



stage as actors? Are they role-playing? Or are they actual soldiers on a stage, the “onstage” describing merely a location? Their initial appearance seems as a continuation of the performance but as they shoot, they violate the world of the audience, which throws their identity and authenticity into confusion.

If, as Edith Hall argues, the “one thing everyone *always* recognizes in a play is *the presence of acting*,” the shooting interrupts the play by altering the meaning of “acting.” The soldiers onstage cease to act in the mimetic sense and instead “act” to carry out actions dictated not by a theatre director, but by a general. Sunay Zaim’s insistence to continue the performance as if it was still contained by the fictional world intensifies the confusion. After eighteen seconds of shooting, he turns to them and thanks them for carrying out their duty. Here, the soldiers’ duty can refer to their role in the play *Vatan yahut Türban*, or to their duty as Zaim’s soldiers. After thanking the soldiers, Zaim helps Funda Eser to her feet, positioning himself both as the hero of the Republican play and as the savior of Kars.<sup>73</sup>

Considering the discourses surrounding the role of the Turkish army both during and after the coups as a “savior,” an institution that intervenes violently when *necessary* for upholding the tenets of secularism and the unitary structure of the nation, Sunay Zaim’s switch from general ordering the soldiers to fire into the crowd to heroic savior of the Republic functions as a very harsh criticism of State ideology, the army, and state-violence in Turkey. Zaim shouts, “Bu bir oyun değil, başlayan bir ihtilaldir . . . Şerefli Türk ordusuna güvenin! (“This is not a play; it is the beginning of a revolution. . . . Put your faith in the great and honorable Turkish army!”). His<sup>74</sup> declaration solidifies the repetitive aspect of the performance as another instance of State violence in the continuum of benevolently violent coups.

---

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 160; 161.

The performance as reenactment creates a new instance of state violence, killing audience members, establishing a curfew and setting up what amounts to a dictatorship in the city of Kars, while simultaneously *replicating* the past coups. The performance is a new moment of violence, within a new context, but it is also a repetition of the past. Ka's musings about the familiarity of what should have been extraordinary reveal this new performance as part of an enduring project of violence that has its roots in official discourses and stances internalized by the society. Sunay Zaim, after all, is correct that this is no play: the potential for this violence had always existed in Kars.

### **Layered Representations: The Allegorical Impulse**

*Kar* constantly reminds readers of the fictional illusion, essentially inviting the readers to question the fictional narrator's representation of other characters, as well as the larger representational project of the novel (both as a particular example, and as illustrative of the artifices of fiction in general). Characters like Necip and Fazil remain aware of the possibility of their fictional distortion at the hands of unreliable narrators. Necip challenges Ka's ability to understand him by invoking their class differences and his own marginality as a habitant of Kars: "Benim inandığım inanmazsın çünkü sen İstanbullu bir sosyetiksin," says Necip ("[You don't believe what I believe] because you belong to the intelligentsia").<sup>75</sup> Fazil, on the other hand, directly tells the narrator Orhan he would like to talk to his readers. He argues that the his westernized readers will be tempted to believe the narrator's characterizations of Fazil and his friends, if only to prove to themselves that they *can* like such characters, Islamists from Kars.

---

<sup>75</sup> Pamuk, *Kar*, 106; *Snow*, 103. Maureen Freely translates "sosyetik" as "intelligentsia" but intelligentsia connotes a political grouping whereas "sosyetik" designates a more shallow, class-based and fashion oriented identity. Freely also takes out "İstanbulu," "İstanbulite," altogether from the sentence, instead opting for "intelligentsia in Turkey." However, the original description of Necip marks Ka very clearly as being high-class *and* from Istanbul, unlike Necip.

Fazıl adds, “Ama benim bu sözümü koyarsanız akıllarında bir şüphe kalır” (“but if you would put in what I’ve just said, at least your readers will keep a little room for doubt in their minds”)<sup>76</sup>.

The self-conscious acknowledgement of the subjectivity of representation fulfills two contradictory roles here: it plants a doubt about the biases informing the representations of the novel, and it strengthens the narrator’s reliability for having included the caveat.

As the Turkish readers will immediately recognize, the combination of Necip and Fazıl’s names, which Necip reveals as pseudonyms, yields Necip Fazıl (Kısakürek), the famous Islamist author who was repeatedly persecuted by the State for his poems, plays and novels that were considered anti-secularist and hostile to Atatürk. Yet, much like Necip and Fazıl, it is difficult to characterize Kısakürek as solely an Islamist. While he was certainly that, his earlier works and ideas are decidedly more Westernized, and his erudition certainly allowed him to be in dialogue with many of the Western (and within Turkey, Westernized) intellectuals of the time. In fact, in the short story Necip shows Ka, Necip and Fazıl read *Büyük Doğu* by Kısakürek. Necip and Fazıl are similarly ambiguous characters, who both accept Ka and Orhan as welcome interlocutors for their own stories. When Ka arrives in Kars, Necip marks him as a haughty outsider, whose views nevertheless fascinate him. Necip uses Ka as his reader<sup>77</sup> and shares with him his secrets such as his anxiety about atheism. In turn, Ka uses Necip as the “muse” for his poems, using his words verbatim in at least one of them.<sup>78</sup> The reader senses the narrators’ tenderness towards Necip and Fazıl and despite naiveté as young men, they are the only characters to openly challenge Ka and Orhan’s biases as upper class men from Istanbul. Their misgivings about their representation as shaped by these narrators who are so unfamiliar with their reality mark the first instances of the novel’s allegorical impulse and anxiety.

---

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 428; 425.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 106; 103.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 146. .

This anxiety becomes especially clear through the figure of Hans Hansen, who becomes the recipient of stories about Sunay Zaim's violence and lays bare both the novel's self-conscious approach to representation and its anti-mimetic fiction. I am indebted to Sibel Irzik's reading of *Kar* in "Allegorical Lives: The Public and the Private in the Modern Turkish Novel" for pointing out the novel's self-conscious approach to its own allegorical impulses.<sup>79</sup> Irzik complicates Fredric Jameson's notion of national allegory in Third World novels by presenting the conflation of the private and public as indicative of a repressive and invasive State in the case of Turkish literature, rather than a sign of collective consciousness as Jameson would argue.<sup>80</sup> Irzik demonstrates that the entanglement of the private and public in Turkish novels, including in *Kar*, is a self-conscious *critique* of the allegorical impulse and a means to represent the oppressive expectations of official ideology. Jameson's "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism" has been widely criticized for its homogenizing tendencies and its insistence on a uniform "Third World."<sup>81</sup> Irzik's critique is refreshing in its desire to retain the notion of national allegory while insisting on complicating and particularizing it. She describes the allegorical impulse as an assumed or demanded correlation between an individual and their national destiny, either by the State that wishes to see its subjects accept and espouse official ideologies, or by a

---

<sup>79</sup> Sibel Irzik, "Allegorical Lives: The Public and the Private in the Modern Turkish Novel," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102.2(2003): 551–566.

<sup>80</sup> See Fredrick Jameson, "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism." *Social Text* 15 (1986): 65–88. Jameson views the conflation of private and public as favorable compared to the fragmented subjectivities in Western texts. His overarching argument, which has been criticized by many and for good reason, is that "all third-world texts are necessarily allegorical, and in a very specific way: they are to be read as . . . national allegories" (69). Despite Jameson's claim that he uses "third world" as a descriptive category, we should recognize that Third-World does not describe any one thing or a fixed geographical border, since there is no homogenous Third-World with a unified experience. As a result, Jameson's descriptive category either does not describe anything, or describes too many things at once.

<sup>81</sup> For a well-known critique of Jameson's notion of Third World literature, see Aijaz Ahmad, "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the "National Allegory"" *Social Text* 17.Autumn (1987): 3–25. For an examination of the paradoxical function of "Third World" in Jameson's theory, see Santiago Colas, "The Third World in Jameson's Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism." *Social Text* 31/32.Third World and Post-Colonial Issues (1992): 258–70. For a reexamination of the potentials of Jameson's concept of allegory, see Imre Szeman, "Who's Afraid of National Allegory? Jameson, Literary Criticism, Globalization." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 100.3 (Summer 2001): 803–27.

Western audience.<sup>82</sup> Needless to say, the nature of the imposition is quite different in both cases, but its refusal to grant the characters individuality and particularity is the same.

*Kar* acknowledges and parodies the Turkish assumption of always being on a stage in front of a Western audience, for their appraisal, reproach, and mockery. The characters talk, act and think with a European audience in mind, while simultaneously rejecting European claims of superiority. The anxiety is related to their knowledge that they cannot control their representation, especially at the hands of more powerful others. These tendencies are taken to their extreme through the figure of Hans Hansen, a fiction created by Ka. Ka tells the habitants of Kars that he will deliver their message to Hans Hansen, supposedly a German journalist interested in Turkish affairs. What the habitants cannot know but the readers know from the beginning is that Hans Hansen is the name of a clerk at a Kaufhof department store in Frankfurt. The fiction within the fiction, the figure of Hans Hansen renders visible the novel's own fictionality and blurs the line separating reality and fiction, while exposing the characters' anxiety about their own allegorization. Hans Hansen is the anti-mimetic fiction that *creates* reality instead of reflecting it.

Much like an author in the process of writing a fiction, Ka writes Hans Hansen into being and presents him as “real,” a journalist willing to hear the thoughts of Kars' habitants. This fictional journalist triggers a “real” chain of events in the fictional landscape of *Kar*. Representatives from various marginalized groups in Kars secretly convene to draft a declaration against Zaim's coup, to be published in Hans Hansen's German newspaper. Through the metafictional figure of Hans Hansen, then, the boundary between reality and fiction is exposed as unstable and the process of representation made visible. At the same time, Hans Hansen as a figure enables the self-conscious commentary on the allegorical impulse. During the writing of

---

<sup>82</sup> Irzık, “Allegorical Lives,” 556.

the declaration to be sent to Hans Hansen, we witness individuals' desire to perfect their own image to a "European other" as potential representatives (or allegories) of an entire nation. They try to construct an image of themselves that can be easily deciphered by this other. They preempt Hansen's reduction of their particularity to allegories of a Third World or national experience, and try to take control of their own representation.<sup>83</sup> The characters' attitudes towards this invisible Hans Hansen, whose power derives from his European identity and his position in the West, recall Sibel Irzik's notion of a self-conscious critique of the allegorical impulse.<sup>84</sup>

The "actual" Hans Hansen is a sales clerk in Frankfurt who sold Ka his beloved charcoal-gray coat, which functions as a conspicuous marker of incongruity in the story, an external sign of Ka's foreignness in Kars. Ka claims to remember Hansen's name because it sounds typically German to him.<sup>85</sup> Hans Hansen is thus a parodically allegorical character from the beginning. He signifies a hyperbolic invocation of "Germanness" from a Turkish viewpoint. "Hans Hansen" as a name is so *clearly* German that there could be no confusion over its origins in Ka's mind and he remembers him precisely because he is so stereotypically German.<sup>86</sup>

When Lacivert asks Ka about his connections in Western newspapers Ka uses Hans Hansen as his imaginary Western connection. Strangely enough, Lacivert, who has been so

---

<sup>83</sup> Seen in this light, Fazıl's statements also function as a warning against reading the novel allegorically, as a representation of the "Third-World" experience. Fazıl, like many others in the text, draws a line between the narrator and himself, since both Ka and the narrator are representatives of the "first world" within Turkey as upper class Istanbulites, whereas he considers himself to inhabit Turkey's "third world," both as a resident of a secluded small Eastern city and as the member of a marginalized group.

<sup>84</sup> For Nergis Ertürk, the drafting of the declaration is indicative of a minority literature trying to speak to the World, to be on the World stage. Ertürk, does acknowledge the process of typification though, saying "Alongside the disgrace of the marginalized, with their unfulfilled desires for recognition and political agency, *Snow* sets representational politics itself, in which subjects must allegorize themselves as "types" if they want to be visible in a public sphere". Ertürk, "Those Outside the Scene," 642.

<sup>85</sup> Pamuk, *Kar*, 177.

<sup>86</sup> Hans Hansen is perhaps an allusion to Nabokov's infamous Humbert Humbert in *Lolita*, whose careful construction of himself as poet and his abuse of Lolita as a love story are contingent on the reader's willingness to imagine him as a character. He pleads to the reader: "Please reader: no matter your exasperation with the tenderhearted, morbidly sensitive, infinitely circumspect hero of my book, do not skip these essential pages! Imagine me; I shall not exist if you do not imagine me; try to discern the doe in me, trembling in the forest of my iniquity; let's even smile a little." Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*, (New York: Vintage International, 1997): 129.

mistrusting of this Western connection immediately accepts the name Hans Hansen as sufficient proof, and declares he has a statement for Hans Hansen condemning the coup. Ka notes that if the declaration is signed by “Islamists,” the European newspaper would not publish it even though the declaration is against an undemocratic coup, and suggests including a liberal ex-Communist and a Kurdish nationalist to create the illusion of plurality. This conversation marks, therefore, the beginning of a construction of an image of Turkey *appropriate* for consumption in the West, which does not necessarily correspond to an external reality, but a West that reflects the image of Europe as it exists in the Turkish imaginary as a mechanism of judgement; an other against which the Turkish identity is constructed and evaluated. On a more practical level, the declaration to the West also functions as a circuitous route to file grievances against the Turkish State. As Lacivert mentions in his first meeting with Ka, Turkish newspapers only take notice of a local event if the Western media write about it first.<sup>87</sup> Europe as represented by Hans Hansen is not only a foil to the Turkish identity but also the only meaningful interlocutor available to the people of Kars.

The drafting of the declaration reveals the anti-mimetic process in action. Hans Hansen as a fiction *creates* a whole of chain of events, beginning with the decision to draft a declaration for publication in Germany, continuing with the gathering of different factions of Kars to *produce* a declaration together designed to garner attention from European readers, and instigating a series of conversations about Europe that then perform the Turkish anxieties about European perceptions of Turkey. The figure of Hans Hansen reveals the process of writing as a production. Lacivert’s question, “who is this Hans Hansen anyway” prompts an answer from Ka that demonstrates the process of fiction writing. Ka embellishes his fiction with details as minute as the color of the curtains in Hansen’s house, where he says he was invited once. Unlike Lacivert

---

<sup>87</sup> Pamuk, *Kar*, 74; *Snow*, 78.

and Kadife who are listening to Ka, we know the distinction between the actual and fictional Hans Hansen, but the scene forces us to confront the fact that as words on a page, Lacivert, Kadife and Hans Hansen are not that different: they are as real and fictional as each other. In fact, Ka is not any more or less fictional than Hans Hansen. This scene in which Ka imagines a life for Hans Hansen and turns that imaginary setting into a story destabilizes the novel because it collapses the distinction between fiction and reality. It makes us simultaneously trust and doubt *Kar* as a story. By exposing the whole novel as a production, the scene reinforces the distinction between reality and fiction to a certain extent, insisting that the world of the novel is not the same as the world we see around us; the world of the novel has a design and symmetry behind it, controlled by the author who deceives us into experiencing it as real. But by drawing attention to the fictionality of *every* story, the scene also prompts us to question the lines separating reality and fiction.

Ka's descriptions of Hansen, as well as Lacivert's inquiries reveal their own attitudes towards Europe and Europeans. In this framework, Hansen becomes the token European, and begins to stand in for a whole process of typification. Ka laments that Hansen never invited him again, absurdly remarking that he longed for the objects in Hansen's house.<sup>88</sup> Given our knowledge that Ka barely had any friends in Germany, Hansen's refusal to invite him again gains poignancy, invoking Ka's exilic experiences with and in Germany. But the longing to look at the dresser, sit at the table, and converse about bread eating habits also creates a parody of the adulation of all things European.

The declaration meeting builds on the image of this token European, and acts out anxieties about Europe, revealing the characters desire to control their inevitable reduction to a type. Essentially, the meeting is a debate about what to say to the European other, if s/he were to

---

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 232.



listen. Kadife and Ipek's father, Turgut Bey, joins the meeting as an ex-communist,<sup>89</sup> and states he is at the meeting to prove to Europeans that rational democrats exist in Turkey. When a young man mocks him for his concern over his image, Turgut Bey dares everyone in the room to announce what *they* would say to the "West" if given the opportunity.<sup>90</sup> His ultimatum postulates the imaginary Western interlocutor. The imaginary newspaper he imposes on everyone inadvertently serves exactly the same purpose that Hans Hansen has served the readers of *Kar*: it exposes the characters' ambivalence towards Europe, the main interlocutor to the Turkish identity.

The scene is intensely parodic in that it underlines the naiveté of these individuals in thinking that Europe cares, listens and hears. A man stands up and shouts, "Arkamdan korkak diyeceksiniz. Korkak sizsiniz. Korkak sizin Avrupalılarınız. Onlara öyle dediğimi yazın" ("You'll call me a coward behind my back, but you're the cowards. And these Europeans of yours, they're the biggest cowards of all. You can go ahead and quote me").<sup>91</sup> What creates the parody here is the assumption that this isolated, individual rebuff will matter somehow, that this is in fact a debate with two sides rather than a monologue.<sup>92</sup> What complicates the parody is the description of the man uttering these words. He is a cook, whose older brother had been taken by the police for political activities and never returned. In order to marry his beautiful sister-in-law, he tries to secure a death certificate for his disappeared brother, but is dismissed by all state institutions, and joins a group of the families of the disappeared, "bir intikam istediğinden çok, *konuyu bir tek*

---

<sup>89</sup> Since different factions join the meeting to create the illusion of plurality, it is important that each person be a recognizable type, a clear representative of a faction.

<sup>90</sup> Pamuk, *Kar*, 272.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 275.

<sup>92</sup> To be clear, I don't mean to suggest that Turkey's interactions with Europe are inane or one-sided, but the scene clearly suggests the inequality in the relationship. The declaration is being written for a fictional/imaginary European, after all.

*onlarla konuşabildiği için*” (“not out of any desire for revenge *but simply because they were the only people willing to listen to him*”).<sup>93</sup>

How to read this bizarre background? This man whose naive belief in a sympathetic interlocutor makes him the butt of the Hansen joke is also a victim of state-violence. But even calling him that is complicated, because his anger does not arise from the disappearance of his brother but from an outlandish mixture of private and public problems. He thus resists being typecast as *the* victim of State-sponsored violence; his story demands the particularity of his singular story, while also highlighting the prevalence of State violence as an institutional problem that reaches every citizen (but need not necessarily erase their particularity in an instance of added violence).

The scene of the declaration is so powerful precisely because of this curious amalgamation of the traumatic and the humorous. There is much in the scene to require a historical reading: the references to the disappeared in Eastern Turkey during the State of Emergency of the 1990s and the allusions to the author Aziz Nesin who had angered many by calling the majority of Turkey stupid and barely escaped the Sivas massacre of 1993 all position the scene within a historical context. But there are also idiosyncratically humorous instances that underlie the parody: the endless lectures about Turkey and the West, the ridicule of every dramatic moment are comical. The absence of any recognition of absurdity heightens the parody. There is much to convince the readers that the novel should be read allegorically, but these ridiculous moments interrupt and resist that allegorical reading.

The State, of course, is present in the meeting too. Proof of its particular “prescience” that I discussed earlier, not only are there actual informants in the meeting who function as the sources of hearsay, which in turn constitutes the bulk of the information that forms the State’s

---

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 275; 274. Emphasis mine.

prescience, but the State is actually “listening” through a microphone. We find out that there is a lamp in the shape of a Bakelite fish in the room, and one of its eyes holds a microphone.<sup>94</sup> This is a display of paranoia, especially emphasized by the reader’s knowledge that the meeting is motivated by a fiction. The State listens to everything, is aware of everything, but stuck in a Bakelite fish, it lacks the capacity to distinguish between useful and useless information.

---

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 268.

## Chapter 4

### Between Fiction and History: Juan Goytisolo

Much has been written about the prolific career of Juan Goytisolo. The exhaustive criticism that exists on his works points out his commitment to a position of dissent, especially in relation to his home country, Spain. Although mainly known in the international community as a novelist, since his first novel in 1954 Juan Goytisolo has also published many works of non-fiction, including autobiographical works, essay collections, and travel writings.<sup>95</sup> What binds together wide-ranging works is what we might call Goytisolo's literary project, a project committed to undoing nationalist narratives of homogeneity to recover a prolific hybridity and impurity.<sup>96</sup>

In *Cultura Herida*<sup>97</sup> (2000), Cristina Moreiras points out that Goytisolo's literary project is marked by a critical reflection of the present and a struggle against forgetting. Similarly, Jorge Carrión states that Goytisolo has devoted himself to develop an ethics of "writing *against*," using "una estética de la oposición: una contra-estética evidentemente basada en un contra-lenguaje"

---

<sup>95</sup> For his autobiographical works, see *Coto vedado* (1985) and *En los reinos de Taifa* (1986); for some examples of his travelogues, see *Campos de Nijar* (1960), *Pueblo en marcha* (1962), *Estambul Otomano* (1989), *Aproximaciones a Gaudi en Capadocia* (1990) *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* (1993). For essay collections, see *El furgón de cola* (1967), *Disidencias* (1977) *Libertad, libertad, libertad* (1978), *Cronicas Sarracinas* (1981), *Contracorrientes* (1985).

<sup>96</sup> In Goytisolo's works, impurity emerges in multiple senses: as contamination, as obscenity, as vulgarity. Goytisolo does not so much try to remove the negative associations with impurity, as show them as more historically and culturally accurate. For more on contamination in Goytisolo, see Stanley Black, *Juan Goytisolo and the Politics of Contagion: The Evolution of a Radical Aesthetic in the Later Novels*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001): 17.

<sup>97</sup> Cristina Moreiras, *Cultura Herida: Literatura y Cine En La España Democrática*, (Madrid: Ediciones Libertarias, 2002): 148.

(“an aesthetic of opposition: a counter-aesthetic evidently based in a counter-language”).<sup>98</sup> What Goytisolo positions himself against is not only the Franco regime and its repressive nationalist-Catholic discourse, but nationalist narratives and discourses as such. For Goytisolo, nationalist myths of purity and homogeneity cause forgetting by stifling centuries of cultural syncretism and hybridity. In a 1984 *El País* article against minority nationalisms, Goytisolo argues, “No hay así en los grandes autores ni en los periodos más fructuosos y ricos de una literatura influjos unívocos, ni esencias nacionales, ni tradiciones exclusivas: sólo poligénesis, bastardeo, mescolanza, promiscuidad” (“Neither in great writers nor in the most fruitful and rich periods of a literature are there univocal influences or nationalist essences or exclusive traditions: there is only polygenesis, bastardization, mingling, promiscuity”).<sup>99</sup> In Goytisolo’s writings, struggling against forgetting takes the form of re-creating this “polygenesis, bastardization, mingling, [and] promiscuity.” Perhaps with the exemption of his early works like *Duelo en el paraíso*, in his works there is a pronounced desire to explore syncretism as a way to challenge official stories. The difficulty of many of his works can be said to arise from this desire. For example, the demanding intertextuality<sup>100</sup> of his most acclaimed work, the Álvaro Mendiola trilogy, can be interpreted as a literary manifestation of cultural diversity, and an attempt to resist monolithic narratives.<sup>101</sup>

---

<sup>98</sup> Jorge Carrión, *Viaje Contra Espacio: Juan Goytisolo Y W.G. Sebald*, (Madrid : Iberoamericana , 2009): 36. All translations mine unless otherwise noted.

<sup>99</sup> Juan Goytisolo, “Abandonemos de una vez el amoroso cultivo de nuestras señas de identidad.” *El País* 10 April 1984.

<sup>100</sup> Many scholars, from Linda Gould Levine to Randolph Pope have tried to put together anthologies for the Mendiola trilogy, excavating the countless references. For some examples, see Linda Gould Levine, *Juan Goytisolo, La Destrucción Creadora*, (México: J. Mortiz, 1976); Michael Ugarte, *Trilogy of Treason: An Intertextual Study of Juan Goytisolo*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1982); Stanley Black, *Juan Goytisolo and the Poetics of Contagion: The Evolution of a Radical Aesthetic in the Later Novels*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001).

<sup>101</sup> The trilogy consists of *Señas de identidad* (1966), *Reivindicación de conde Don Julián* (1970), and *Juan sin tierra* (1975). All three novels have been translated to English. See Goytisolo, Juan. *Marks of Identity*. Trans. Gregory Rabassa. London: Serpent’s Tail, 1988; Goytisolo, Juan. *Count Julian*. Trans. Helen R. Lane. London: Serpent’s Tail, 1989; Goytisolo, Juan. *Juan the Landless*. Trans. Peter R Bush. Champaign: Dalkey Archive Press, 2009.

Cristina Moreiras points out that an important aspect of Goytisolo's writing is to investigate the past to better understand the present. For Goytisolo, this process of better understanding the present almost always takes a dissident quality, turning into a process of understanding the present *in spite of* official narratives. Goytisolo uses the past not only to understand the present, but to challenge the myths that populate it. This process of understanding the present requires a certain violence to *undo* the present as constructed by official narratives. A clear example of the destructive force in Goytisolo's writing is his approach to language. He has argued for the need for a semantic struggle to recover language from oppressive systems like the Franco regime. In *El Furgón de cola* (1967) Goytisolo writes, "tarde o temprano la experiencia nos obligará a reconocer que la negación de un sistema intelectualmente opresor comienza necesariamente por la negación de su estructura semántica" ("sooner or later we will be forced by experience to recognize that the rejection of an intellectually repressive system needs to begin with the rejection of its semantic structure").<sup>102</sup> Yet, the result of this semantic struggle is a notoriously difficult reading experience. The Álvaro Mendiola trilogy presents the most obvious examples of his attempt to recover language. Consisting of *Señas de identidad* (1966), *Reivindicación de conde Don Julián* (1970), and *Juan sin tierra* (1975), the trilogy uses a demanding syntax and creates a rhizoid intertextuality designed to subvert and parody the myths of a homogenous Spain. As the trilogy makes clear, this process of recovery entails a violent attack on language to defile its supposed purity. Emphasizing the violence of the process Michael Ugarte refers to the trilogy as a "break with [Goytisolo's] earlier mode of writing, a transformation that initiates an *aggressive and violent process of textual contamination*," "a *linguistic [war] that seeks to annihilate the text* that embody post-civil-war society as well as

---

<sup>102</sup> Juan Goytisolo, *El Furgón de Cola*, (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1982): 32.

those that represent the totality of Spanish culture,”<sup>103</sup> and “an attempt at verbal suicide.”<sup>104</sup> The attack is especially apparent in the last page of the trilogy, written entirely in Arabic.<sup>105</sup> Goytisolo himself has insisted that the assault on language is his manner of breaking with the linguistic traditions of Spain: “el escritor, cuando quiere romper con esta tradición, no se puede apoyar en una corriente lingüística popular; tiene que hacer un acto de violación individual, lo cual es mucho más difícil. Por eso . . . tengo que hacer una operación solitaria, una traición personal, una violación propia.” (“The writer, when he wishes to break with this tradition, can’t sustain himself with common language; he has to undertake an individual act of violation, which is a much more difficult task. For this reason, I have to carry out a unique operation, an individual betrayal, a distinctly personal violation”).<sup>106</sup>

This undoing of language in the trilogy, as well as the lack of punctuation and the demanding intertextuality found in the books are stylistic and literary choices, but it is important to emphasize that their *function* is a struggle against nationalist, assimilationist rhetorics and legends. Although the works of the trilogy reflect formalist concerns, the historical and literary references in the texts suggest that it is unproductive to read Goytisolo *only* through a formalist frame. His works demand a historical reading in addition to the more immediate concerns with form.<sup>107</sup> The trilogy itself demonstrates Goytisolo’s growing awareness that the struggle against the Franco regime also had to have a linguistic component. Goytisolo’s formal choices and his linguistic decisions are therefore historically determined responses to Francoism. Commenting

---

<sup>103</sup> Ugarte, “Trilogy of Treason,” 51, 73. Emphasis mine.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 145.

<sup>105</sup> The shift from Spanish to Arabic is supposed to symbolize the achievement of a complete alienation from Spain. However, various critics have noted that this project results in failure, since the writer goes on writing in Spanish in later novels, and Spain remains the central concern throughout the trilogy.

<sup>106</sup> Ugarte, “Trilogy of Treason,” 53.

<sup>107</sup> For more on a historically attuned formalism and aesthetically conscious historicism, see Marjorie Levinson’s overview of trajectories within New Criticism and New Historicism, “What Is New Formalism?” *PMLA* 122.2 (2007): 558. Print.

on the later works, Stanley Black also mentions that despite a continuing formal commitment, Goytisolo is primarily committed to social improvement through writing and literature.<sup>108</sup> It would be wrong, therefore, to interpret Goytisolo's literariness as only an aesthetic choice. Especially through his experiments with language, Goytisolo positions himself against and resists state repression.

### **The Passing Foreigner**

In this chapter, I will be focusing on two later works by Goytisolo, a collection of essays on the siege of Sarajevo titled *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*<sup>109</sup> (1993) and its fictional counterpart, the 1995 novel *El sitio de los sitios*,<sup>110</sup> to interrogate this process of reconciliation between a semantic and formal commitment to *undoing* (undoing language, fictional conventions, History with a capital H as an official narrative) and *creating* an affect that can then spur social awareness. These two commitments are contradictory because while the latter requires clarity and ease of communication, the former frequently results in an extremely demanding reading experience, as any reader of the Álvaro Mendiola trilogy can attest. The task of spurring action and demanding responsibility problematizes, in turn, the traditionally passive role of the reader. In other words, the tension between these two forces in Goytisolo's literary project - namely, between his formal and social commitments - magnifies a question that is inherent to literature: the relationship between the author and the reader, and the link between fiction and reality.

---

<sup>108</sup> Black, "Contagion," 17.

<sup>109</sup> Juan Goytisolo, *Cuaderno De Sarajevo: Anotaciones De Un Viaje a La Barbarie*, (Madrid: El País, 1993). *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* literally translates to "Sarajevo Notebook." Its official translation appears in Juan Goytisolo, *Landscapes of War: From Sarajevo to Chechnya*, trans. Peter R Bush, (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2000). The translation is in fact a combination of *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*, *Argelia en el vendaval*, and *Paisajes de guerra con con Chechnia al condo*. The Bosnia section is comprised of the translation of the *El País* articles, therefore leaving out the marginalia, the photographs and the "Epilogue" that are found in the book.

<sup>110</sup> Juan Goytisolo, *El Sitio de Los Sitios*, (Madrid: Alfaguara, 1995).



As an example of war writing, *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* struggles with the image of the reader as a *passive* recipient of words. The text's ability to shake this reader out of inaction and urge him to act is a question that plagues all war chronicles. If not to move the reader to either take action or form a moral and/or ethical opinion, why write about war? To bear witness? To turn the passive role of the witness into an active one by inscribing what one sees, or simply to incite outrage and action? The very act of chronicling a war through writing - and especially to do so contemporaneously with the war as Goytisolo did with his *El País* essays that were published *during* the siege of Sarajevo - signals a belief in narrative's ability to move beyond the page and effect action. And yet, as Antonio Monegal points out in "Writing War: The Bosnian Conflict in Spanish Literature," "the disaster of war" escapes representation. Quoting Evelyn Hinz, Monegal writes, "literature invariably distorts and *domesticates* the violent and irrational nature of war<sup>111</sup>." The construction of the narrative structures the violence. In *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*, then, the battle is two-fold. Given the apathy surrounding the siege of Sarajevo at the time, Goytisolo must communicate the violence and atrocity in Sarajevo, and must do so in such a way as to shake the readers out of apathy and compel them to act. The first task proves especially difficult because of Goytisolo's privileged position as the foreign journalist, in Sarajevo only for a brief period and, most importantly, able to leave when he wants. Despite his efforts to sympathize with the suffering habitants of Sarajevo, his entrapment in the city is temporary and this temporariness creates an insurmountable experiential bridge between him and the victims of the siege. This is a position Goytisolo is all too aware of and problematizes throughout the text.

---

<sup>111</sup> Antonio Monegal, "Writing War: The Bosnian Conflict in Spanish Literature," in *The Conscience of Humankind*, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000): 386.

The outsider position holds an ambivalent place in Goytisolo's works. As he himself explains, his literary project is committed to a "operación salutífera de desidentificación y apertura, de crítica radical de lo propio y comprensión generosa de lo ajeno" ("a beneficial operation of dis-identification and opening, of a radical critique of the self and a generous understanding of the other").<sup>112</sup> The radical criticism of the self requires a position of dissidence, a distancing with the most familiar. It demands that Goytisolo remain in the position of the outsider, especially in relation to Spain. Jorge Carrión explains that real and metaphorical exile from the country of origin functions as the moving force behind Goytisolo's process of radical criticism.<sup>113</sup> This is perhaps most evident in Goytisolo's travel writings, in which Goytisolo continues to comment on Spain through the image of the other.

*Cuaderno de Sarajevo* is part of this tendency. Even though it primarily concerns itself with Sarajevo, it is also Goytisolo's commentary on Spain. The siege and its injustice remind Goytisolo of the bombing of Madrid during the Spanish Civil War.<sup>114</sup> The attack on Sarajevo is first and foremost an attack on the possibility of coexistence and cosmopolitanism in Goytisolo's conception, which then recalls the destruction of heterogenous Spain in favor of a Catholic nation-state.<sup>115</sup> Ever fascinated by the mestizo, the syncretic, the irrevocably impure, Goytisolo's observations of the siege also function as the mourning of a hybrid, and therefore prolific culture. The full title of the work reads *Cuaderno de Sarajevo: Anotaciones de un viaje a la barbarie*, or *Sarajevo Notebooks: Notes from a journey into barbarism*.<sup>116</sup> The barbarity he alludes to in the

---

<sup>112</sup> Goytisolo, "Abadanemos."

<sup>113</sup> Carrión, "Viaje Contra Espacio," 32.

<sup>114</sup> Goytisolo, "Cuaderno," 97.

<sup>115</sup> Jorge Carrión points out that in Goytisolo's writing, criticisms of Spain and commentary on cosmopolitanism go hand in hand: "[en la narrativa de Goytisolo] lo anti-español se convierte en defensa del cosmopolitismo" (135.)

<sup>116</sup> "Barbarie" can be translated as cruelty as well, but I think it is significant that Goytisolo does not choose "crueldad," for example, but decides to use "barbarie," a word that is used more frequently in discussions of Europe and its others, as the antonym of civilization. The barbarism he alludes to is not only the cruelty of the besiegers, but also refers to apathy and inaction from the West that always conceives of itself as the antithesis to barbarism.

title is thus not only limited to physical violence, but also marks the systematic destruction of diversity and hybridity in the name of a nationalist essentialism that insists on homogeneity and fixed identities. As the reader goes through *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*, it becomes increasingly clear that Goytisolo is mourning the loss of this hybrid culture not only in Sarajevo, but also in Spain.<sup>117</sup> The European apathy towards Sarajevo's plight, on the other hand, finds its parallel in Franco's victory in trampling the democratically elected Second Republic during the Spanish Civil War.<sup>118</sup>

The references to Spain serve a pointed purpose in *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*, as I will explain in detail shortly. They challenge the claims about the singularity of the Bosnian War and its violence. In fact, *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* as a whole can be read as rejecting the notion of singularity and incomparability with relation to violence. Goytisolo does not shy away from invoking the memory of the Holocaust in *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*, accusing the intellectuals who call for moderation on both sides - such as Elie Wiesel - of having forgotten the lessons of Auschwitz.<sup>119</sup> Considering the controversy surrounding any comparison to the Holocaust - a reaction that insists on the Holocaust's incomparable singularity - Goytisolo's multiple references to World War II, and particularly his criticism of a Holocaust survivor for wavering in the face of genocide are highly controversial claims. They highlight Goytisolo's partisan view of the Sarajevan war, in which the aggressor and victim are demarcated absolutely in his mind.<sup>120</sup> Given the rather ethically dubious arguments the critics of such comparisons make to prove their

---

<sup>117</sup> Goytisolo, "Cuaderno," 56, 109-113.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 17, 90.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>120</sup> Scholars like Inger Enkvist and Ribeiro de Menezes have criticized Goytisolo for this partisan view. According to Ribeiro de Menezes, Goytisolo's open affinity towards the Bosnian side and his view of the Serbs as the only culpable side in the war "[reinforce] the very ethni-nationalist divisions Goytisolo claims to abhor" (226). However, this partisan stance is a result of Goytisolo's belief that calls for "mutual moderation" that do not chastise the aggressors are directly culpable for leading to inaction.

imprudence, Goytisolo's rejections of singularity seem especially appropriate.<sup>121</sup> Goytisolo's references to the Holocaust in *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* cross into a taboo territory of comparison, where to compare anything to the Holocaust is seen as sacrilege and therefore the reference loses its power in that it is categorically rejected by so many. The methodology in *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* also initiates a debate about singularity of historical traumas in general.

Yet, the aforementioned tendency to talk about Spain through Sarajevo, or to talk about the self through the other, have conflicting effects. Jorge Carrión argues that both *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* and *El sitio de los sitios* constitute an "exploración de lo propio a través de lo ajeno (también contra-propio)" ("exploration of the self through the other [and also counter-self]").<sup>122</sup> The problem is Goytisolo's seeming lack of awareness about the cultural violence implicit in this move. The conceptual link Goytisolo draws between the Balkan Wars, the siege of Sarajevo and the Spanish Civil War in *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* is a *personal* link according to Carrión, but its subjectivity is not questioned in the book. In *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*, Goytisolo writes "nuestra guerra civil y el cerco y bombardeo de Madrid se impone como una realidad insoslayable"<sup>123</sup> ("comparison with the Spanish civil war and the siege and bombing of Madrid struck me as unavoidable")<sup>124</sup> ('Landscapes' 47)]. They are unavoidable realities ("una realidad

---

<sup>121</sup> Menezes writes of Goytisolo's evocation of the Holocaust: "'The equation of 'ethnic cleansing' in Bosnia with the Holocaust, for instance, has been questioned. To suggest a mismatch is not to deny that 'ethnic cleansing' occurred; it did. But conflating the situation in Bosnia with the systemic killing of an estimated nine million people in Nazi Germany is misleading" (224). Yet, she never explains what this comparison exactly misleads. She only quotes BBC's Bosnia correspondent at the time, John Simpson, who suggests that the analogy with Nazi concentration camps and the camps in Omarska and Trnopolje did not work because "the skeletal figures weren't inside the barbed wire, for instance, they were *outside* it" (224). In my opinion, this explanation is seriously unethical. Talking about "skeletal figures" in camps, we find ourselves in a discussion of whether they remained inside or outside barbed wire.

<sup>122</sup> Carrión, "Viaje Contra Espacio," 140.

<sup>123</sup> Goytisolo, "Cuaderno," 97.

<sup>124</sup> Goytisolo, "Landscapes," 47.

In the following citations from the book, I will provide one footnote noting the page number of the original, followed by the page number of the translation. In the case of the Epilogue, translations are my own.

insoslayable”), argues Carrión, *only* if you are a Spaniard, and Goytisolo does not interrogate this personal position (“no la problematiza”).<sup>125</sup>

In order to interrogate the position of the outsider and Goytisolo’s attitude towards it, I will turn to a rarely studied Goytisolo work, *Aproximaciones a Gaudí en Capadocia*<sup>126</sup> (1990). Published three years before *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*, the travelogue consists of six essays that recount Goytisolo’s travels to Turkey, Egypt and Morocco. At times, the essays follow the conventions of travel writing by narrating the traveler’s observations in new cities and pointing out possible sites of interest for the readers. More often than not, however, it is impossible to ascertain whether the traveler-narrator is in fact the author of the travelogue, Juan Goytisolo, or a fictional character. Frequently, the essays do away with verisimilitude to create fantastical scenarios that perform instances of cultural bastardization, making the familiar unfamiliar for the readers while simultaneously alleviating the strangeness of these far away lands, which all happen to be in Muslim countries.

It is especially the first essay of the book, “Aproximaciones a Gaudí en Capadocia” that demonstrates the conflicting effects of Spain’s overbearing presence in Goytisolo writings about the other. The essay embodies Goytisolo’s process of “dis-identification” and his commitment to a “generous understanding of the other.” As in *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*, Goytisolo sees continuities and similarities between cultures and traditions that are generally seen as antithetical; he strives to undo the East-West divide and reclaim the mutual influences of supposedly clashing traditions.

The title of the essay itself posits an unusual coupling between the Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí and the historical Anatolian region of Cappadocia. The narrator meets a hermit

---

<sup>125</sup> Carrión, “Viaje Contra Espacio,” 140.

<sup>126</sup> Juan Goytisolo, *Aproximaciones a Gaudí En Capadocia*, (Madrid: Mondadori España, 1990). The work has not been translated to English. The title roughly translates to “Approaching Gaudí in Cappadocia.”

who tells him that Gaudí lives in the caves of Cappadocia. Gaudí becomes thus defamiliarized, displaced to Anatolia, but Cappadocia simultaneously becomes a familiar land for Spanish readers, full of Gaudí's works and thus akin to Barcelona. In fact, in the beginning of the essay the narrator remarks, "De modo imperceptible, la distancia de Capadocia a Barcelona se anula: el espacio mirífico en el que se mueve le conduce insoslayablemente a la creación auroral de Gaudí" ("imperceptibly, the distance between Capadocia and Barcelona disappears: the staggering space in which one moves unavoidably directs him to the aural creation of Gaudí")<sup>127</sup>.

This statement is very similar to the one Carrión had criticized in *Cuaderno de Sarejevo*, where Goytisolo had written that in besieged Sarajevo the Spanish civil war and the bombing of Madrid imposed themselves as "una realidad *insoslayable*." This time, the landscape of the historic Anatolian town unavoidably directs the traveler and his readers to Gaudí, "el espacio mirífico . . . le conduce *insoslayablemente* a la creación auroral de Gaudí." The assertion of an unavoidable ("insoslayable") association with Spain reaffirms the predominance of Spain - and in this case has the unintended effect of erasing the place being narrated - but the Goytisolan fantasy that unfolds in the essay also serves to highlight cultural hybridity as the condition for art and beauty. And what better place for this fantasy than Cappadocia, the ancient region that has hosted many different cultures and religions, including the Romans, the early Christians, Greeks and Armenians. It was only with the 1923 forced population exchange between Greece and Turkey that the region became predominantly Turkish, Muslim and homogenous. In this landscape with its famous fairy chimneys, Goytisolo sees Gaudí's art everywhere and imagines the long-deceased Catalan architect to be living in Cappadocia, hiding from everyone. Gaudí appears frequently in Goytisolo's works, as one of the few Spanish artists Goytisolo considers a predecessor to his work and thought. In "Aproximaciones a Gaudí en Capadocia," he once again

---

<sup>127</sup> Goytisolo, "Aproximaciones," 10. All translations from the book are mine.

uses the image of Gaudí, this time to point to cultural hybridity as the inspiration for artistic imagination.

The story that unfolds in “Aproximaciones a Gaudí en Capadocia” is quite an idiosyncratic travel narrative; travelogue, autobiography and fiction at once. After informing the readers that he has been to Cappadocia twice, once in 1979, “unas semanas después del golpe militar que remató a la malherida democracia turca” (“a couple weeks after the military coup that ended the badly injured Turkish democracy”) and then once again six years later, the narrator reveals that in his first visit he came upon a hermit’s abode, which he can describe in detail thanks to a Polaroid he took. As Goytisolo’s other travel writings suggest including the essays in *Aproximaciones*, this touristic invasion of the hermit’s privacy is quite an uncharacteristic move for Goytisolo the traveler, but otherwise the readers have no reason to suspect the truthfulness of the account. Things only begin to seem out of the ordinary when the traveler-narrator sees a scribble on a column, “*Ahir senyor, avui pastor,*” and asks, “¿No había dicho o escrito Gaudí algo parecido?” (“Hadn’t Gaudí said or written something similar?”)<sup>128</sup>

When the traveler-narrator returns to Cappadocia six years later at the beginning of the third section of the essay, he just wants to find the hermit. Already at this point, three pages into the narrative, Cappadocia as an actual, lived-in place disappears, giving way instead to a magical tale, in line with the timeless, fantastical emotions it evokes in the traveler. This is, of course, a common enough experience in travel writing; as Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1979)<sup>129</sup> famously argued, the traveler does not necessarily see what is *there*, but what he imagines the place to be. In fact, “Aproximaciones a Gaudí en Capadocia” can be interpreted as an exaggerated, perhaps even self-conscious manifestation of Said’s claim.

---

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>129</sup> Edward W Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

The narrator finds the hermit in his cave, in the same exact position that he had left him in six years ago, as if no time had passed.<sup>130</sup> As the narrator had described in the previous section, the hermit's home has a "retrato en color de Ataturk."<sup>131</sup> Ataturk portraits are a common sight in Turkey, obligatorily hung in all public offices and decorating the walls of many Turkish homes as a sign of patriotism and devotion to the "father" of the nation.<sup>132</sup> That one of these portraits should appear in this isolated cave parodies the prevalence of Ataturk portraits in Turkey, but also marks the hermit's home as Turkish, assigning a national belonging of sorts to the hermit. But now in this second visit, the hermit turns to the narrator and addresses him in Spanish, asking "¿Es usted catalan?" What follows is a lengthy discussion with the hermit about the implausibility of Gaudí's presence in Cappadocia, and a psychedelic quest to meet the "maestro."

According to Carrión there are, in simplified terms, two types of travelers in travel writing: those who are pro-spatial ("pro-espaciales") and those who are counter-spatial ("contra-espaciales"). The pro-espaciales travel without questioning their own culture, national identity or traditions, and they perpetuate the political practices of their countries while traveling, either by defending or practicing them. Not surprisingly, Carrión suggests Rudyard Kipling as emblematic of this category of travel writers. Against this politically compromised position, the contra-espaciales travel and write in such a way as to reject the concept of "espacio heredado," "inherited space." Carrión places Goytisolo and Sebald in this category<sup>133</sup>. In this juxtaposition of pro and counter spatial travel writers, Goytisolo's position as the questioning traveler-writer becomes also a position of dissent, a "contra" not only towards space, but a more defining

---

<sup>130</sup> Goytisolo, "Aproximaciones," 13.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>132</sup> Ataturk, the last name that General Mustafa Kemal assumed with the Surname Law of 1934, literally means Ancestor Turk or Father Turk. According to national myth, this is the last name the nation gave Mustafa Kemal, adopting him as the father of all Turks (of the new Turkish Republic).

<sup>133</sup> Carrión, "Viaje Contra Espacio," 27. Carrión later states that this "proyecto contra-espacial" had begun with Goytisolo's 1962 travel narrative *La Chanca* (122).



articulation of his political position. Carrión writes that Sebald and Goytisolo's travel writings attack the totalitarian regimes that have shaped them through "estrategias lingüísticas y formales de alta exigencia literaria" ("highly demanding linguistic and formal strategies").<sup>134</sup> Goytisolo's travel writings, then, are very much a part of his literary and political project of attacking and undoing certain nationalist and official discourses.

In the narrator's conversations with the hermit and the search for Gaudí that follows, this political component becomes more and more visible. The narrator Goytisolo begins to stammer when asked if he is Catalan: "No; es decir, sí. . . . Bueno, en realidad, no" ("No; I mean, yes. Well, in reality no").<sup>135</sup> That Goytisolo cannot identify with a national or ethnic belonging is as much a result of family history as of his politics, of course. Gaudí appears as similarly suspicious of national identities. The hermit explains that the "maestro" especially dislikes Catalans, although he does not much like the foreigners in search of him either. "Pero los catalanes le molestan más" ("But the Catalans annoy him the most").<sup>136</sup> The Cappadocian/Goytisolan Gaudí rejects nationalist thinking: it is precisely the most familiar that he most strongly rejects.

In fact, this elusive Gaudí is quite similar to Goytisolo in his preferences and dislikes: "el espacio físico y cultural del Islam le fascinaba. . . . Su inspiración no fue nunca renacentista ni neoclásica: él buscaba, como Cervantes y Goya, la España profunda y la halló en los estratos ocultos del enjundioso mestizaje mudéjar. . . . Rechazó y se alejó de la [verdad] de sus paisanos. . . . Europa no podía aportarle ya nada: por eso se vino aquí" ("The physical and cultural space of Islam fascinated him. . . . His inspiration was neither Renaissance nor neoclassical: he searched, like Cervantes and Goya, the profound Spain and he found it in the hidden parts of a substantial

<sup>134</sup> Carrión, "Viaje Contra Espacio," 46.

<sup>135</sup> Goytisolo's mother was Catalan, but he only learned to speak the language as an adult, while living in France. See Jaggi 2000.

<sup>136</sup> Goytisolo, "Aproximaciones," 14.

Mudejar hybridism. . . . He rejected and isolated himself from the truth of his countrymen . . . Europe could not contribute anything anymore: so he came here”).<sup>137</sup> Goytisolo is describing himself here as much as one of his intellectual idols. The hermit’s descriptions of Gaudí also detail Goytisolo’s thought: the emphasis on cultural hybridity as the basis of any worthwhile art, the idea that contemporary Spain and Spanish culture are masking the “deeper” or “profound” Spain, which is ironically found in the Middle East and North Africa, and finally the notion that exile is necessary to explore the self and understand one’s culture.

The essay, then, anticipates the subjective connections of *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*, which was published only three years later. For Carrión, Goytisolo’s project is fundamentally linked to Spain. His criticisms of Spain drive his work.<sup>138</sup> “Aproximaciones” is a demonstration of this observation because although outwardly a piece of travel writing about Capadoccia, it is really more about Goytisolo’s quest for an artistic and cultural lineage into which he can insert himself, and his desire to claim the heterodoxy and eclecticism of Gaudí’s works as standing outside of any national belonging. Ironically, although the essay advocates moving away from national understandings of culture and art, it nevertheless presents a very Spanish view of the region where the landscape turns into the work of Antoni Gaudí, and the only man who interacts with the narrator speaks Spanish. The regions as it exists in Turkey disappears, along with its inhabitants, instead giving way to a magical land that stands outside of time and space.

This is the kind of travelogue that can lose sight of the place in question to instead narrate what the author *imagines* it to be, precisely because there is no urgency of the kind that plagues *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*, the travelogue of a besieged city. In *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*, the magical

---

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 19,20.

<sup>138</sup> “La propia literatura de Goytisolo no se entiende si no se enfrenta a España. El hispano-escepticismo y la heterodoxia sólo pueden existir junto con lo hispano y la ortodoxia” (“The literature of Goytisolo cannot be understood if it’s not put together with Spain. The skepticism towards the hispanic and heterodoxy can only exist with the hispanic and orthodoxy”).

language of “Aproximaciones”, the arrays into fiction, and the postmodern blurring of the distinction between fiction and reality will disappear. Given the apathy surrounding the siege of Sarajevo, in the Bosnia essays Goytisolo must make Sarajevo appear as real as possible, removing from his narrative anything that might be considered fictive in order to demand action for a *real* catastrophe. The textual traps that Goytisolo so frequently lays out for his readers cannot exist in *Cuaderno*, which, as a call to action, must be as clear and communicative as possible. Of course, to the extent that any account is subjective, the Sarajevo in *Cuaderno* is narrated through Goytisolo’s thoughts and biases. But it is *there*. There is a Sarajevo that Goytisolo is trying to recount, with its burned buildings, its suffering habitants and its rich past. In “Aproximaciones,” on the other hand, there is no Turkey whatsoever, despite the ominous background within which Goytisolo moves around Ürgüp in the beginning.

The disappearance of Cappadocia as a region *in Turkey* is fitting given Goytisolo’s overall project of rethinking history and culture through non-national frameworks. The essay reclaims Cappadocia as a place through which many different cultures and religions passed, and the region emerges almost as frozen in time. Yet, Goytisolo *is* in Turkey and this is a very significant time in Turkish history. Goytisolo briefly acknowledges as much at the beginning of “Aproximaciones a Gaudí en Capadocia,” saying his first visit to Cappadocia occurred just a couple weeks after the military coup (“unas semanas después del golpe militar que remató a la malherida democracia turca”).<sup>139</sup> The day after he arrives in the town of Ürgüp, Goytisolo the traveler-narrator realizes he cannot move around town as he pleases due to a massive census (“el empadronamiento masivo”) that imposes a national curfew.

Perhaps it is this curfew that confuses Goytisolo. He dates his first trip to Cappadocia 1979, supposedly a couple weeks after the coup. But the last Turkish military coup occurred in

---

<sup>139</sup> Goytisolo, “Aproximaciones,” 10.

September 1980, its brutality firmly placed it in the Turkish collective memory. The census Goytisolo mentions in fact took place on October 12<sup>th</sup>, 1980, exactly one month after the coup. The few articles that discuss “Aproximaciones a Gaudí en Capadocia” do not comment on this mistake.<sup>140</sup> Admittedly, for any reader not from Turkey the mistake is fairly minor, the date only off by one year. Yet for any Turkish reader it is quite significant, owing to the brutality of the 1980 coup and the longevity of its effects. As of June 2014, the 1980 coup is still being discussed in newspapers, with two of the generals behind the coup having received life-long sentences and stripped of their ranks, a largely symbolic indictment since both men are in their 90s.<sup>141</sup> The mistake demonstrates the disappearance of Turkey in the essay as an actual place that happened to be going through one of the most violent and crushing periods in its history at the time of Goytisolo’s visit. As the landscape of Cappadocia takes the traveler “unambiguously” back to Barcelona and to Gaudí, the violence-torn Turkey of 1980s recedes from view. The bizarre encounter with a soldier that Goytisolo recounts at the beginning gives a fleeting sense of this violent world that the traveler will then leave behind in search of Gaudí in the caves: the narrator is stopped on his way out of the hotel by a “centinela con bayoneta” and trapped inside with fifty Germans. He decides to try his luck nevertheless and makes his escape: “decidí no resignarme a su suerte y tentar la aventura: atravesé corriendo la calle sin atender a los gritos del áscari y me metí de rondón en la vecina comisaria de policía. A voces, reivindicué mi libertad natural, el derecho inalienable del turista a moverse y curiosarse” (“I decided not to resign myself to their fate and give myself to adventure: running, I crossed the street without paying attention to the

---

<sup>140</sup> For two works that discuss the travelogue, see Carrión, “Viajes contra Espacio,” Randolph D. “El Espacio Interrogante de Capadocia: El Aprendizaje de La Identidad En La Obra de Juan Goytisolo” in *Un Círculo de Relectores: Jornadas Sobre Juan Goytisolo En Lund*, Ed. Inger Enkvist, (Lund: Instituto de Estudios Almerienes, 1999).

<sup>141</sup> Selahattin Sönmez, “Evren ve Şahinkaya’ya Müebbet.” *Hürriyet* 18 June 2014.

soldier's screams, and unexpectedly ended up in the neighboring police station. I loudly defended my liberty, the inalienable right of the tourist to move and poke around").<sup>142</sup>

Because Goytisolo mixes the imaginary with the plausible so freely in the essays, it is hard to say whether we can take him at his word when he recounts this confrontation. After all, this encounter is followed by an even more bizarre one with the hermit. But it is the flippancy with which Goytisolo narrates this experience, and his sarcastic evocation of his inalienable rights as a tourist that make this passage stand out. The Turkish newspaper *Milliyet* from the day after the curfew explains that during the census the military and police raided many previously marked homes to arrest numerous "suspicious individuals." In fact, the 1980 coup was followed by massive waves of arrests and widespread torture.<sup>143</sup> The newspaper also points out that those prisoners sentenced to death in the Mamak Military Prison stated their occupations to census officials as "prisoners of death" ("ölüm mahkumu").<sup>144</sup> That none of this should appear in Goytisolo's text or merit commentary beyond the phrase "la malherida democracia turca" is remarkable, given Goytisolo's politics and his general position of dissent. It is reasonable to assume that in 1980 Goytisolo would be unaware of the extent of the violence going around him in Turkey, but the travelogue was published a full ten years later in 1990.

I do not mean to suggest that any travel narrative taking place in Turkey in the 1980s should have concerned itself primarily with the coup. But it does seem curious and out of character for Goytisolo to be in Turkey so shortly after the coup, in the thick of its furor, and remain so oblivious and apathetic. What little makes its way into the narrative out of this violent backdrop does so almost playfully, and only to the extent that it inconveniences Goytisolo the tourist. The deserted streets strike him as post-apocalyptic, gives him "impresión de ser los

---

<sup>142</sup> Goytisolo, "Aproximaciones," 10.

<sup>143</sup> Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London ; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 278-280.

<sup>144</sup> "45 Milyonu Geçtik." *Milliyet* 13 Oct. 1980.

últimos ejemplares del extinto *homo sapiens*; captación intensa, con los cinco sentidos, de manifestaciones y signos de vida orgánica posteriores a la catástrofe. . . .” (“the impresion of being the last examples of the extinct *homo sapiens*; the intense captivation, with the five senses, of the manifestations and signs of life before the catastrophe”).<sup>145</sup> The forcefully emptied streets suggest disaster, but the traveler-narrator is almost charmed by them, captivated by the ominous serenity surrounding him and talking about this political disaster in fantastical terms. There is no coup or Turkey here, no politics and barely any history; only a landscape that keeps taking the traveler back to Spain. The impertinence with which this brutalized Turkey is described - precisely as if nothing much notable was happening around - recalls Jorge Carrión’s contention that Goytisolo predominantly uses travel writings to discuss Spain. One gets the sense that the title of the essay is especially fitting: the place of travel is there mainly to bring the traveler closer to the legacy of Gaudí.

It is also significant that Goytisolo’s narrator is invoking his rights as a tourist here, and cherishes his time alone in the streets. It is an instance in which the position of the outsider is cherished, even though three years later in *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* it will be precisely what he wants to overcome and the essays will be filled with the stories of Sarajevo habitants. Goytisolo is especially suspicious of European tourists in the *Cuaderno* essays: he begins the book with a discussion of war tourism that take Europeans to war-torn cities, allowing them to “safely” experience the thrill of violence. A scathing image of the European tourist emerges, utterly untouched by the suffering of others.<sup>146</sup> Thinking about the tourists that populate the Adriatic coast while the siege of Sarajevo continues, Goytisolo writes: “Tumbados en la playa o al borde de las piscinas de los hoteles de tres o cuatro estrellas, ¿pueden ignorar lo que ocurre a cien

---

<sup>145</sup> Goytisolo, “Aproximaciones,” 11.

<sup>146</sup> Goytisolo, “Cuaderno,” 12.

kilómetros de distancia? (“Lying on the beach or around the pools of three or four-star hotels, can they ignore what is happening a hundred kilometers away?”).<sup>147</sup> The image of apathetic tourists immediately recalls the Spanish Civil War for Goytisolo:

Su indiferencia sauria o reptil, ¿no es la misma que acogió en 1939 en las playas de Argelés a los republicanos españoles agotados y hambrientos, hacinados tras las alambradas? ¿Sabían aquellos franceses, que negaban un cántaro de agua a los derrotados y hacían muecas de asco al hablar de los *rojos*, que el fascismo triunfante en la Península se adueñaría un año después de su propia patria y pagarían así las consecuencias de la política de no intervención, del cínico cruzarse de brazos ante la Republica avasallada? (Isn't their saurian or reptilian indifference the same as [that which] greeted hungry exhausted Spanish Republicans in 1939 [the year the Spanish Civil War ended and the Franco dictatorship began] on the beaches of Argelès, herded behind the barbed-wire fences? Did those French citizens who refused the defeated a jug of water and grimaced in horror as they spoke of the “reds” realize that the fascism victorious in the Peninsula would a year later take possession of their own land?)

But isn't Goytisolo's traveler-narrator in “Aproximaciones” quite similar to this image of a tourist who is cruelly self-absorbed and oblivious? Isn't chasing Gaudí in the mountains while a military regime rages on and thousands are rounded up and tortured similar to the kind of apathy Goytisolo chastises so poignantly in *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*? Goytisolo's tendency to talk about Spain through his travel writings has been studied, but I think “Aproximaciones a Gaudí en Capadocia” provides an instance where its ethically dubious effects are especially clear. The discord of the Gaudian fantasy at such a fraught moment in Turkish history is only apparent to Turkish readers, precisely because the coup appears solely in one sentence. The difference in

---

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 17.

tone that exists between this narration of Turkey and the later observations of Bosnia in *Cuaderno* demonstrates how Goytisolo's writing and his formalist susceptibilities change to create a text that is primarily committed to spur action. But just as importantly, "Aproximaciones a Gaudí en Capadocia" also reveals the effects of Spain's overbearing presence in Goytisolo's works about elsewhere.

### **The Sarajevo Notebook**

As in "Aproximaciones a Gaudí en Capadocia," the multiple references to Spain in *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*<sup>148</sup> also serve a purpose that is in line with Goytisolo's overall literary and political project. They incorporate Bosnia's story back into the history of Europe from which it has been ostracized, due in large part to its hybrid identity (European and Muslim; Christian, Jewish and Muslim, etc.) The book consists of the essays Goytisolo published in the Spanish newspaper *El País* during his trip. As its title suggests, the book is designed to mimic a notebook. The printed edition is thus notebook sized, interjected with twenty four pages of photographs that document both the horrors of the siege of Sarajevo and Goytisolo's presence in the city. The pages have wide margins with notes in Goytisolo's own handwriting, which is at times difficult to read as if he had quickly jotted down notes in the margins of the book we are holding. According to Antonio Monegal, the notes in the margins are designed to overcome the position of outsider and add authenticity to the testimony. While this is certainly the case, I think their most important function is their demonstration of engagement and commitment. The marginalia, like the Epilogue, are additions: they were not published in *El País* as part of the original series. Their effect is primarily performative and visual: while they add information, the choice to keep

---

<sup>148</sup> Unless noted otherwise, all translations of *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* are from Juan Goytisolo, *Landscapes of War: From Sarajevo to Chechnya*, trans. Peter R Bush, (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2000).



the notes in Goytisolo's handwriting suggests a personal reaction and participation. In the face of appalling silence and apathy, through meticulous marginalia Goytisolo performs involvement and reaction, both through the content of the essays and visually through the unique addition of marginalia. Engagement, after all, is what *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* sets out to demand.

Given it is a collection of *El País* essays, a practical reason for the presence of Spain in the book has to do with the intended audience. The allusions to Spanish history render the history of the Balkan Wars more "familiar" for Spaniards, and the need to respond more urgent. The references to Spain can thus be interpreted as bolstering Goytisolo's call for action. These comparisons create a history of fascism in Europe, making it impossible to see the Sarajevan siege as separate from the history of Europe, or its violence singular. What Goytisolo emphasizes as a fundamental similarity between the history of Spain and Bosnia is the language of nationalism and the desire to glorify a homogenous "we" that supposedly goes back to the beginning of history. Both in Bosnia and in Spain, Goytisolo argues, this language posits an understanding of history as predetermined. The desire to see Al-Andaluz as an interruption of the fated course of "español eterno" is indicative of the desire to interpret history as destiny.<sup>149</sup> This mythological notion of history is the basis for Serbian claims that four centuries of Ottoman presence in the Peninsula were an interruption. Four centuries can be maintained as an interruption only through the belief in a predetermined course of history. Goytisolo remarks that there are too many similarities between the War in Yugoslavia and the Spanish Civil War, and the xenophobic calls for the expulsion of "others" sound too "familiar" for Spaniards to remain oblivious<sup>150</sup>: "Las razones alegadas para justificar la limpieza homogeneizadora . . . suenan familiarmente a *nuestros* oídos" ("the alleged reasons that are supposed to justify the

---

<sup>149</sup> Goytisolo, "Cuaderno," 111.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

homogenizing cleansing . . . sound familiar to *our* ears”).<sup>151</sup> With “*nuestros oídos*,” Goytisolo once again makes clear the emotional and subjective connection he has with Sarajevo. Here the connection appears not only as *personal*, but also *national*. It is not only through Goytisolo’s personal history that Spain and Sarajevo are linked - this personal connection will appear clearer in *El sitio de los sitios* - but through their national and cultural histories. Yet it is the singularity of a national history that Goytisolo challenges through the interweaving of Sarajevo and Spain.

In the Epilogue of *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*, Goytisolo provides a genealogy of the ethnic violence in the Balkans and locates the emergence of violent nationalisms in Yugoslavia in 1990s in a long line of such incidences in the history of Europe. This is a significant gesture that re-inscribes the violence of the Balkans into a larger genealogy of European fascism and challenges its singularity. The comparisons establish a continuum, highlighting similarities between geographically and historically disparate instances of violence, but they also challenge Europe’s historical narrative of progress, in which only a select few go through history advancing further and further towards in civilization, leaving behind those peoples predisposed to violence. By juxtaposing the violence of Sarajevo to instances of violence in Western Europe, Goytisolo does not only re-inscribe Bosnia in a long history of fascism and violence in Europe, but also destroys the supposed exceptionalism of Western Europe.

The Epilogue is an instance in which the histories of Spain and Sarajevo intermingle, especially through their violence. Despite being set apart by centuries and different historical contexts, these violent histories share a similarity in their use of a nationalist language and their desire to glorify a homogenous “we” that supposedly goes back to the beginning of history. For Goytisolo, this similarity is of utmost importance since it compels the readers to think about fascism as ongoing and the emergence of extreme nationalism as threatening *even* in Europe.

---

<sup>151</sup> Translation and emphasis mine.

Such comparisons deny readers the luxury to think that what was happening (has happened) in Sarajevo could never happen in Europe again.<sup>152</sup>

Goytisolo provides violent juxtapositions that bring together cultures and traditions that are generally seen as antithetical. Thus, in *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* he places Spanish and German fascism on a continuum, and connects these to the emergence of ethnic violence in Sarajevo. He compares the burning of the library of Sarajevo, with its Arabic manuscripts and Ottoman works, to the burning of Arabic manuscripts by Cardinal Cisneros in the fifteenth century. Talking about propaganda on Serbian television, for example, Goytisolo mentions a public announcement in which a traditionally dressed young Serbian woman kisses the mortar throwing grenades at the “Turks” in Sarajevo. He writes, “La mitología serbia ha resucitado el tiempo glorioso de las Cruzadas,” (the Serbian mythology has resurrected the glorious epoch of the Crusades”) adding that the victory in Serbia for those who champion racial purity and redistribution of the population along ethnic lines must make Jean-Marie Le Pen in France happy.<sup>153</sup> Sarajevo thus appears as both the return of the logic of the crusades and as part of European fascism, the comparison making temporal and geographical leaps.

In “Ética, Estética y Política en *Paisajes Después de la Batalla y El Sitio de los Sitios de Juan Goytisolo*”, Inger Enkvist criticizes these juxtapositions as ignoring the rise of cosmopolitanisms in Europe, and ignoring too much history in order to chastise “the West” for its apathy and arrogance.<sup>154</sup> She argues that Goytisolo’s harsh criticisms of European xenophobia do

---

<sup>152</sup> Maya Jaggi’s 2000 profile on Juan Goytisolo for *The Guardian* quotes him as saying, “I was convinced that after the Second World War and the Holocaust some things were impossible in Europe. But I discovered in Yugoslavia that my conviction was wrong; everything is possible.” See Maya Jaggi, “Scourge of the New Spain,” *The Guardian* 12 Aug. 2000. <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2000/aug/12/internationalwriting.books>

<sup>153</sup> Goytisolo, “Cuaderno,” 77.78.

<sup>154</sup> Inger Enkvist, “Ética, Estética y Política en *Paisajes después de la batalla y El sitio de los sitios* de Juan Goytisolo,” in *Un Círculo de Electores: Jornadas sobre Juan Goytisolo en Lund*, Ed. Inger Enkvist. (Lund: Instituto de Estudios Almerienes, 1999): 29-53.

not correspond to the current realities of Europe.<sup>155</sup> But Goytisolo's project, his desire to emphasize continuities rather than focusing on differences should be seen through the framework of his overall project. He overlooks the deviations precisely because they have been invoked *ad nauseum* to demonstrate the singularity of Balkan violence (and the singularity of Muslim violence in general in the aftermath of 9/11).<sup>156</sup> This supposed singularity enabled European apathy towards Bosnia. Goytisolo asks, "Dónde están los Hemingway, Dos Passos, Koestler, Simone Weil, Auden, Spender, Paz, que no vacilaron en comprometerse e incluso combatir, como Malraux y Orwell, al lado del pueblo agredido y inerme?" ("Where are the Hemingways, the Dos Passos, Koestlers, Simone Weils, Audens, Spenders, and Paz, who did not hesitate to become engaged and even fight, like Malraux and Orwell, on the side of the bullied and the defenseless?")<sup>157</sup> Part of the reason there was no such intellectual presence in Sarajevo was the belief in Sarajevo's singularity, its otherness.

In *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*, while rejecting the singularity of Sarajevo's violence, Goytisolo is also writing against the singular exception of Western Europe. It is not that violence in Sarajevo is exactly the same as the violence in Spain, or that the experience of fascism in Germany, Spain, and Bosnia are one and the same. It is that the Balkans are not *not* Europe, their violence not *not* "our" violence. Europe is not the singular exception, neither is there an originary "Europe" against which the Balkans can be deemed insufficient, other. Inger Enkvist for one falls into this trap by defending this Europe against Goytisolo's charges, while not once challenging her own assumption that Sarajevo is not Europe. When she writes that "los malos son los

---

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>156</sup> What Enkvist criticizes here is an attitude that underpins Goytisolo's literary and political project. Goytisolo himself openly declares his sympathetic bias towards the other, which always goes hand in hand with what he calls a "operación salutífera de desidentificación," "a beneficial operation of dis-identification," and comes with an exceptionally demanding critical approach towards the familiar.

<sup>157</sup> Goytisolo, "Cuaderno," 98.

occidentales y los buenos los no occidentales”<sup>158</sup> in *El sitio de los sitios*, it goes without saying that these “los no occidentales” are the Sarajevans, and more specifically, the Muslim Sarajevans. Enkvist suggests that even though Goytisolo chastises the West, the victims of many totalitarian regimes have indeed turned to the West for refuge and found it, somehow ignoring that many of those victims were indeed victims of totalitarian regimes *in* Europe, as in the case of Spain, Germany, and Sarajevo.<sup>159</sup>

The commentary on Spain through Sarajevo allows Goytisolo to advance his view of history. Through the comparisons, Goytisolo historicizes the violence in Sarajevo and presents a history of European fascism. For Goytisolo, the war in Sarajevo *is* the return of European fascism. Cristina Moreiras points out that in *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*, Goytisolo forces the readers to confront the idea that “Sarajevo *es* el retorno de los espectros del pasado; Sarajevo *es* el horror inquisitorial y el horror fascista redivides” (“Sarajevo *is* the return of the ghosts of the past; Sarajevo *is* the inquisitorial horror and the fascist horror revived”).<sup>160</sup> In other words, Goytisolo insists on seeing ethnic nationalisms in the Balkans and the consequent violence as part of European history instead of an anomaly that Europe cannot comprehend. He reinscribes the supposedly singular Balkan Wars back into European history, insisting that the fascism wreaking havoc in Sarajevo is the result of xenophobic, fascist and culturally violent tendencies that have existed and continue to exist in Europe. This is not a smoothing over of differences, a non-historical look that equates different experiences of violence and repression: rather, it is a Benjaminian notion of history in which the events of the past - then (i.e: fascism in Spain) -

---

<sup>158</sup> Enkvist, “Ética, Estética y Política,” 37.

<sup>159</sup> “Dónde han buscado protección las víctimas de los muchos totalitarismos? Pues, en Occidente y no en las diferentes sociedades encerradas en su cultura.” (40)

<sup>160</sup> Moreiras, “Cultura Herida,” 170.

continue to reverberate in the present - now (i.e. the siege of Sarajevo).<sup>161</sup> In “On the Concept of History,” Benjamin asks, “is there not an echo of those who have been silenced in the voices to which we lend our ears today?” Goytisolo’s literary project, as demonstrated in his methodology in *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*, tries to hear and see these traces of past violence in the present, rejecting the notion of a linear progression of history in which the past stays behind and does not touch the present in empty homogenous time.

Despite these functions in the text, however, the references to Spain also solidify Goytisolo’s outsider position. As I explained, this is generally a cherished position for Goytisolo both in his fiction and non-fiction, but in *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* this position imbues the text with an insufficiency that will necessitate the fictional response to the siege, *El sitio de los sitios*.<sup>162</sup> As Goytisolo narrates the victimization of Sarajevo and its habitants in *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*, he also bewails the privileges enjoyed by the International Peacekeeping Forces, the foreign journalists, and himself. He is all too aware of the habitants’ distrust of outsiders, who as one character in *El sitio de los sitios* says “vienen aquí de excursión, a compadecerse de nuestros sufrimientos y fotografiarlos”<sup>163</sup> [“come here on a sight-seeing trip, to pity our sufferings and photograph them”).<sup>164</sup> Goytisolo wishes to avoid this kind of passing through, because at best it suggests passivity, but more frequently turns into voyeurism. His presence in the city brings him closer to the experience of the habitants. The cruelty of the siege turns daily life and mundane activities like walking into deathly threats. When he mentions that nobody can feel safe in the

---

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>162</sup> See Moreiras, “Cultura Herida,” 172; Monegal, “Writing War,” 388; Ribeiro de Menezes, “Dilemmas of a Committed War Journalist,” 223.

<sup>163</sup> Goytisolo, “Sitio,” 140.

<sup>164</sup> Juan Goytisolo, *State of Siege*, trans. Helen Lane, (San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, 2008): 105. All translations from the novel are from this edition. In the following citations from the book, I will provide one footnote noting the page number of the original, followed by the page number of the translation.

city, saying “nadie, absolutamente nadie, puede sentirse a salvo en ningún punto de la ciudad,”<sup>165</sup> the gap between him and the habitants of Sarajevo diminishes. Nevertheless, he cannot overcome the inherent privilege of being an outsider witness: unlike the habitants of Sarajevo, he is free to leave the city when he pleases. His identity as a “foreign journalist” gives him certain privileges that further set him apart, such as the the bullet-proof vest that he is obliged to wear to board United Nations planes. He writes of “El odio creciente al chaleco antibalas – obligatorio para tomar los aviones de UNPROFOR – que me privilegia y distingue del resto de los sitiados” (“Growing hatred of the bullet-proof vest - compulsory to board UN planes - which privileges me and separates me out from the rest of the besieged”)<sup>166</sup>.

Goytisolo brings up such advantages bestowed on foreigners also to show the inadequacy of the International Peacekeeping Force, who in Goytisolo’s account do more to keep themselves and foreigners comfortable than actually help the habitants of Sarajevo, lest their aid be seen as playing favorites between the besiegers and the besieged. But primarily, his privileges affirm his outsider position as a witness watching the siege, a position that always comes with the risk of voyeurism and turning the suffering of the Sarajevans into a spectacle to be watched from a safe distance. Through his call to action, Goytisolo wants to overcome this position and become involved. As I noted above, the marginalia perform participation on the textual level. But what Goytisolo really strives for is the eradication of this safe distance altogether. For Goytisolo, everyone who allows the violence in Sarajevo to continue is complicit in the barbarity: he wants to acknowledge this complicity by shedding his privileges and becoming equally susceptible to the city’s violence.

---

<sup>165</sup> Goytisolo, “Cuaderno,” 27

<sup>166</sup> Goytisolo, “Cuaderno,” 104; “Landscapes” 50.

### Promises and Limits of Fiction: *El sitio de los sitios*

This is precisely what happens in *El sitio de los sitios*. The novel opens with a scene of witnessing: a man only identified as J.G. arrives at a hotel in a besieged city and begins to watch a woman cross an avenue surrounded by snipers through a hole in his hotel room wall. As J.G. watches the woman, a mortar hits his room and kills him. J.G., of course, shares his initials with Juan Goytisolo. That he dies in the act of watching one of the habitants of the besieged city signals the transformation of the outsider/passive observer that Juan Goytisolo had been in *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* into a victim of the siege, collapsing the gap between Goytisolo and Sarajevo's habitants that marks *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* with a sense of insufficiency. Cristina Moreiras writes, "Donde termina *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* y su poder de denuncia comienza *El sitio de los sitios* y su poder de transformar el espectáculo del horror en la realidad del horror" ("Where *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* and its denunciatory power end, *El sitio de los sitios* and its power to transform the spectacle of horror into the reality of horror begin").<sup>167</sup> *El sitio de los sitios* negotiates the outsider status of the witness by collapsing the gap between the spectator and spectacle, and figuratively suggests the impossibility of leaving Sarajevo untouched. In this sense, the explosion that kills J.G in *El sitio de los sitios* picks up from where *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* had left off: at the end of the last essay Goytisolo had written: "Nadie puede salir indemne de un descenso al infierno de Sarajevo. La tragedia de la ciudad *convierte el corazón, y tal vez el cuerpo entero de quien la presencia*, en una bomba presta a estallar en las zonas de seguridad moral *de los directa o indirectamente culpables*, allí donde pueda causar mayor daño" ("Nobody can emerge unscathed from the descent into the hell of Sarajevo. The city's tragedy *transforms the heart and perhaps the whole body of whoever witnesses it*, into a bomb that is ready to explode in the moral security zones of *those directly or indirectly responsible*, wherever

---

<sup>167</sup> Moreiras, "Cultura Herida," 172.



it can cause most damage”)<sup>168</sup>. That *El sitio de los sitios* begins by killing the outsider witness to Sarajevo’s tragedy recalls this claim that the city’s tragedy transforms everyone who witnesses it. J.G. as the spectator is not an active participant in the violence but implied in it through his watching. His death that occurs during the act of witnessing brings the readers back to *Cuaderno*’s claim that passive observation is impossible.

*El sitio de los sitios* almost reads like a detective novel, as J.G.’s cadaver disappears and a Spanish Major from the International Peacekeeping Force in the besieged city of S. investigates the whereabouts of the body and the man’s identity. Unlike a conventional murder mystery in which the detective tries to find the murderer, in *El sitio de los sitios* the detective figure must find the dead body, the death itself a commonplace occurrence in the besieged city. This twist recalls Goytisolo’s cynical contention in *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* that UNPROFOR is only good at taking care of dead bodies (“Ponga usted el cadáver. Unprofor se encarga del resto”). The obsession with the death of the Spaniard undermines the usefulness International Peacekeeping Force in the besieged city. In his second report, the Major nonchalantly mentions that the only un-identified victim of the day according to records was an eight year old boy, whose body is not claimed by anyone for hours because his parents had already died in the siege.<sup>169</sup> The inclusion of this off-hand remark not only gives us a brief insight into the horror of the siege, but also emphasizes the absurdity of such special attention for the death of an outsider, when the habitants of the city who die by the hoards get no such notice.

Although J.G.’s corpse disappears, he leaves behind a manuscript and a collection of poems that the Major consults in his search for the “truth.” The novel shifts between different narratives and narrators, the Major’s reports interspersed with a series of dream diaries, the

---

<sup>168</sup> Goytisolo, “Cuaderno,” 106; “Landscapes,” 52. Emphasis mine.

<sup>169</sup> Goytisolo, “Sitio,” 42; “Siege” 31.

author of which never become clear, and the tale of a siege in Paris. A textual puzzle emerges as the readers learn that the manuscript that was supposed to have been written by J.G. was in fact written by another narrator in the novel, with the sole purpose of throwing the Spanish Major off track. The disappearance of J.G.'s cadaver was similarly orchestrated as vengeance from the Major, seen as ineffectual and thus complicit in the siege of the city, and as vengeance against "la brutalidad de la Historia." As the Major comes across references to himself as a fictional character in J.G.'s manuscripts, he loses his mind, is removed from his position and interned at a mental institution. Yet, even the masterminds of this plot lose track of the identity of J.G. and watch themselves become fictional characters in the notebooks in turn. At the end, nothing is certain: the narrators lose sense of the textual game they initiate; the Major never finds out who tricked him and why, and various possible identities are attributed to J.G. He might be an old Moroccan who secretly traveled to Bosnia;<sup>170</sup> he might be the reincarnation of a Moroccan saint, Ben Sidi Abú Al Fadaíl;<sup>171</sup> or an alter-ego of the Major's Spanish uncle Eusebio, "rojo, poeta y maricón" ("Red, poet and faggot")<sup>172</sup> who was arrested during the Spanish Civil War, interned at a mental asylum and then escaped. At the end, we simply do not know.<sup>173</sup> It is not only the readers but also the novel's characters who become lost in a maze of textual games that undermine their reality.

---

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 170.

<sup>173</sup> To extend the uncertainty and metafiction further to his "initiated" readers, in his 1997 novel *Las semanas del jardín* (itself the title of a lost work by Cervantes), Goytisolo takes up the Eusebio character again, with various narrators writing about his life and offering two different hypotheses for his disappearance in the Civil War. For more, see Marco Kunz, "Egocentrism and Polycentric Writing: The Inscription of the Author in *Las Semanas Del Jardín*," in *Juan Goytisolo: Territories of Life and Writing*, ed. Stanley Black, (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006): 95–125.

Various critics have noted that as the alter-ego of Juan Goytisolo, the death of J.G. symbolizes the Barthesian death of the author.<sup>174</sup> The death of the author allows for the birth of the reader in Barthes' conception. In *El sitio de los sitios* as the alter-ego of Juan Goytisolo dies in the opening chapter, the text turns into a reading game with the protagonists themselves reading their way through the numerous mysteries of the novel. Marco Kunz explains that there is a continuous process of fictionalization in the novel, with each story that is accepted as "real" within the fictional world of *El sitio de los sitios* revealing itself to be yet another textual fabrication by one character or another.

*El sitio de los sitios* is not only about war and violence but also about literature, the power and limits of fiction, and fiction's links with lived experience. Through a story of texts, it speculates about the relationship between the readers and text, a question already postulated by *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*. If the partisan, journalistic writing of *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* betrayed a belief in the ability of writing to effect change, *El sitio de los sitios* takes this belief to the extreme and portrays a world ruled by fiction. Goytisolo mentions in a 1991 interview that he cannot distinguish fantasy and reality. The blurring of reality and fantasy, a move that is most frequently associated with postmodernism, does not only highlight the constructedness of reality, but also the power of fiction. Despite being about and intimately linked to Sarajevo *El sitio de los sitios* also insists on fiction as serving a purpose other than a merely mimetic representation of reality. In *El sitio de los sitios*, Goytisolo theorizes about the role and task of fiction, developing an ambivalent ethics of reading and writing. He tries to carve out a space for fiction that is autonomous, independent of and not responsible to the "real world," while simultaneously trying

---

<sup>174</sup> See Kunz, "Egocentrism and Polycentric Writing," 95; Stanley Black, "Introduction," in *Juan Goytisolo: Territories of Life and Writing*, ed. Stanley Black, (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006): 18; Linda Gould Levine, "En Torno a Juan Goytisolo: Un Círculo de Lectores," in *Un Círculo de Relectores: Jornadas Sobre Juan Goytisolo En Lund*, ed. Inger Enkvist, (Almeriense: Instituto de Estudios Almerienses, 1999): 128.

to establish a connection between this fictional world and historical traumas, lest the readers think the violence and injustice of this world *only* exist in the story. The result is an unsettling text that leaves no room for certainty and yet forces the readers to reflect upon the indisputability of systemic, institutional and cultural violence. Goytisolo's attempts to simultaneously emphasize the uncertainties of fiction and yet insist on its links with history in the text signal the difficulties implicit in representing historical violences fictionally.

The death of J.G., in this sense, also symbolizes the collapse of the distance between the reader and the text. As the witness spectating the experience of the woman crouching through the Avenue of Snipers, J.G.'s position is akin to not only Juan Goytisolo's outsider position in *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*, but also to the position of *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*'s readers. When he is killed in the act of watching, the scene we are reading overtakes its spectator, moves across the safe distance between itself and J.G. and kills him. Similarly, the act of reading irreversibly changes the Spanish Major. The texts he reads, his encounter with his fictional self first land him at a mental asylum, and then lead to his rejection of the Peacekeeping Force. Recovering the repressed memories of his childhood during the Spanish Civil War, the Major pledges allegiance to the Bosnian resistance. This surprising turn of events seems to suggest - perhaps even a little heavy-handedly - the power of fiction. It is a textual set-up that finally draws the Major out of his military-induced stupor and gives him a conscience. It is an instance in which writing has a palpable effect, changes people, spurs action.

Two habitants of the besieged city are behind this textual plot that change the Major's life. A historian currently working as a receptionist at J.G.'s hotel and his Hispanist friend who spends most of the siege trapped in his apartment, writing stories about a besieged Parisian district that are also part of *El sitio de los sitios*. The historian has spent the past twenty years of

his life working on a minor and elusive Moroccan Saint, Ben Sidi Abu Al Fadail, but has lost all his work and the documents on the Saint with the burning of the library in Sarajevo, an event to which Goytisolo had dedicated an essay titled “Memoricide” in *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*. When he enters J.G.’s room after the explosion, the historian finds J.G. Dead but sees a manuscript titled *In the Shadow of Ben Sidi Abu Al Fadail*. It is a moment of recuperation: “Era como si me estuviera leyendo a mí mismo! Los versos coinciden literalmente con los reproducidos en mi tesis! . . . Las demás composiciones del poemario . . . Me devolvían al núcleo central de mi estudio, al fruto de veinte años de investigación brutalmente talados” [“It was as though I were reading my own work! The verses coincided word for word with the ones I had copied out in my dissertation! . . . The other compositions of the collection of poems, brought me back to the central theme of my study, to the fruit of twenty years of cruelly destroyed research.”<sup>175</sup> Hiding the manuscript and the body for fear that he will lose his only remaining connection with the mystic, the historian plans a ruse with the help of his friends at the hotel. His Hispanist friend writes a new manuscript to throw off the Major and places it in the deceased’s room.

The manuscript placed in J.G.’s room contains sections that the Hispanist copies from a green notebook sent to him by a friend in Spain, who bought it from a secondhand bookstore. The notebook contains writings by a J.G. - hence the initials given to the deceased - imprisoned in a mental asylum at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War for homosexuality.<sup>176</sup> When the Major regains his repressed memories of the Spanish Civil War, he will describe his uncle Eusebio who show striking similarities with the writer of the green notebook. However, when the Major is taken off duty and the manuscript recovered, the protagonists realize that it is not the

---

<sup>175</sup> Goytisolo, “Sitio,” 116, 117; “Siege,” 86.

<sup>176</sup> Goytisolo, “Sitio,” 127.

same manuscript that they had planted in J.G.'s room.<sup>177</sup> Among other marginalia, a title has been added to it: *Zona Sotadica*. As the Hispanist explains, the phrase is coined by Richard Burton, "autor de un excelente relato de la peregrinación musulmana a la Meca," on whom Juan Goytisolo himself has written prolifically. The real confusion arises when the Major acknowledges the link between Burton and Juan Goytisolo, writing in his report that Sir Richard Burton's "vida y milagros divulgó en nuestra patria el autor de *Coto Vedado*" ("life and miracles were put before the public in our homeland by the author of *Forbidden Territory*").<sup>178</sup> The re-insertion of Juan Goytisolo into the text complicates the fiction/non-fiction divide, but also functions as his re-birth. J.G. the alter ego dies, but Juan Goytisolo as the author of such texts like *Forbidden Territory* exists separately from this alter-ego, and this independent existence is confirmed by one of the characters in the text that he himself has written.

How is it possible that the mystic's writings and the historian's dissertation show up in the dead man's room? Who is the dead man? Is the Major's uncle actually the man to whom the green notebook belonged? And if so, how to explain this bizarre coincidence? And finally, who altered the already doctinated manuscript placed in the dead man's room? These mysteries are never resolved in the novel.<sup>179</sup> The masterminds behind the initial ruse, the Historian and the Hispanist become increasingly lost in this textual maze and their confusion parallels that of the readers. Like the readers, they try to find "logical" solutions to these mysteries - they try to find a stable referent in the texts they read through which they can solve the mystery. But all possible

---

<sup>177</sup> Goytisolo, "Sitio," 111, 148.

<sup>178</sup> Goytisolo, "Sitio," 43; *Siege*, 32.

<sup>179</sup> Some critics like Enkvist complain about the degree of uncertainty in the novel. Enkvist writes. "Un efecto destacado de SS [*El sitio de los sitios*] es lo laberintico, los datos no explicados. Se le esconde al lector si los personajes son los que creemos que son, si mueren o no, si el comandante enloquece o no, si los santos musulmanes y sus descendientes están en Sarajevo o no, etcétera" ("a prominent effect in [the novel] is that of a labyrinthine text, the unexplained information. It is hidden from the readers whether the characters are who we believe them to be, whether they die or not, whether the Major goes insane or not, whether the Muslim saints and their descendants are in fact in Sarajevo, etc") (37, translation mine).

and “realistic” explanations are shown to be false with the emergence of new texts. At the end, many of these uncertainties maintain their mystique, leaving ample room for the unlikely, the spiritual, the paranormal, the fictional. I see this uncertainty as creating an autonomy for fiction, for its ability - and even its right - to stand apart from lived experience.

Yet, through its links with *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*, and the numerous autobiographical insertions that bring the readers back to Juan Goytisolo the author, the novel also makes it very difficult for readers to consider it “just” fiction. If such interweaving of the fictional and the historical demotes the stability of non-fictional modes of writing, it also does the opposite: point to the reality of fiction, the non-fiction within fiction. Like Stuart Davis explains, the uncertainties of *El sitio de los sitios* emphasize the artifice of fiction.<sup>180</sup> But they also reveal the possibility that fiction is not simply a world detached from lived experience, standing outside of history. The ability of texts to change people suggests this link between fiction and reality, and insinuates the power of fiction. The historian explains the reasoning behind their ruse in similar terms: “Victimas de la brutalidad de la Historia, nos vengábamos de ella con nuestras historias, tejidas de ocultaciones, textos interpolados, lances fingidos: *tal es el poder mirífico de la literatura*” (“Victims of the cruelty of history, we took vengeance on it with our histories, woven out of ambiguities, interpolated texts, fabricated events: *such is the marvelous power of literature*”<sup>181</sup>). The marvelous power of literature here is its ability to speak to, challenge, and transform history, not its complete disconnect from it. Yet, its power is not limited to its links to history: that the writers themselves lose control over the texts they produce emphasizes this field of autonomy, the ability of words and texts to take on meanings not originally intended, circulate

---

<sup>180</sup> Stuart Davis, “Life, Death and the Name: The Case of Juan Goytisolo,” *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 41.4 (2005): 370.

<sup>181</sup> Goytisolo, “Sitio,” 155; Siege,” 116. Emphasis mine.

beyond control, have unforeseeable consequences.<sup>182</sup> *El sitio de los sitios* problematizes the tension between violence as a spectacle and its spectators. As such, it problematizes and theorizes about *representing* violence, especially historical violence. Goytisolo himself openly establishes the link between *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* and *El sitio de los sitios* through a note placed at the end of the novel. The note reads:<sup>183</sup>

Con mediano valor y algunos puntos de civismo, el escritor estuvo dos veces en Sarajevo durante los peores días del cerco: el horror e indignación de cuanto vio le consumen aún y tuvo que recurrir a la ficción para huir y curarse de las imágenes que a su vez le asediaban. Tal es el poder de la literatura.

Pero el sitio continúa y trescientas mil personas siguen atrapadas en la otrora hermosa ciudad sin ninguna posibilidad de huida ni curación a la vista. Tal es el límite final de la literatura.

(With average courage and a speck of civility, the author has been in Sarajevo twice during the worst days of the siege: the horror and indignation of what he has seen still haunt him and he had to resort to fiction to flee and cure himself of the images that had besieged him. Such is the power of literature. But the siege continues and three-hundred thousand people continue to be trapped in the once beautiful city, with no possibility of escape or healing in sight. This is the final limit of literature.)

---

<sup>182</sup> When the ruse begins, neither the historian nor the hispanist can foresee the changes the Major goes through. The Hispanist asks, “ cómo compaginar los conocimientos de teología medieval y erudición latina con la figura de un simple oficial de carrera, alumno corriente y moliente una típica Academia Militar?” (“how to bridge the gap between the knowledge of medieval theology and Latin erudition displayed in the footnote [of the manuscript] and the figure of a mere regular army officer, an average, run-of-the-mill product of a typical military academy?”). But the interplay of the texts along with the Major’s personal history cause him to change his opinions of the siege drastically. This is the problematization of the “personal” link that Carrión had found lacking in *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*. Goytisolo, “Sitio,” 147; Siege,” 110.

<sup>183</sup> The note was curiously left out of the 2002 Seix Barral edition of the book. The only English translation of the novel, the 2002 *City Lights* translation by Helen Lane, also leaves out the note, drastically changing the interpretation of the novel by the readers of these later editions.



The author who has witnessed the horror in Sarajevo *had to* resort to fiction to cure himself of these images. The note postulates fiction as release and relief; fiction here functions as sustenance. But according to the note, the limitation of fiction is that it cannot extend this escape to the besieged in Sarajevo. Antonio Monegal had argued that “the insufficiency of the testimony in *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* is confirmed by the novel *El sitio de los sitios*,” but as this final note shows, *El sitio de los sitios* also fails to overcome this insufficiency and ends instead on a note of deficiency. The recourse to fiction, after all, only provides a cure for the witness who has been able to escape. The deficiency is heightened when we consider that Goytisolo does not place the note at the beginning of the novel, but rather at the end. Despite the novel’s efforts to create an autonomous field for fiction, the note emphasizes the gap between fiction and reality - or rather, fiction’s inability to change the plight of people trapped in a besieged city. The note tries to negotiate this limitation by insisting that the readers consider what is happening in the non-fictional Sarajevo once the novel is over, identifying the novel as a response to a historical event. Goytisolo’s note tries to urge the readers to connect the dots between the fictional, *El sitio de los sitios*, and the chronicle of war, *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*.

The note also reasserts Goytisolo’s position of privilege, which he was careful to declare in *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*. In the note, he uses the verb “asediar” to describe his haunting by what he has witnessed, meaning to molest but also to besiege. “Asediar” establishes a parallel between the besieged in Sarajevo and the witness to the siege. Yet, while Goytisolo as the witness has recourse to fiction, the besieged continue their plight in Sarajevo “sin ninguna posibilidad de huida ni curación a la vista.” Therefore, the note affirms Goytisolo’s position of privilege.

## Violence Elsewhere

I see *Aproximaciones a Gaudí en Capadocia*, *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* and *El sitio de los sitios* as forming a continuum in which Goytisolo's representations of violence occurring *elsewhere* evolve from one of absence in *Aproximaciones* to a profound yet ambivalent ethics of writing and reading violence in *El sitio de los sitios*. While *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* and *El sitio de los sitios* reveal Goytisolo's struggles with representing violence occurring "elsewhere," as a text published only three years before *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* *Aproximaciones* presents a very different attitude towards the persona of the "passing foreigner." There is no desire to write "desde dentro" here - the habitants are invisible, the landscape only brings the traveler back to Spain. In *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* the outsider position haunts Goytisolo, especially to the extent that it embodies a position of privilege. It is not only the insufficiency of the testimony of an outsider that bothers Goytisolo, but also the idea that witnessing the suffering of others without acting on their behalf is tantamount to voyeurism. There is an anxiety throughout *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* that the descriptions of the horror in Sarajevo will turn the suffering of the victims into a spectacle. This is why Goytisolo repeatedly writes about, and in fact begins the chronicle with a description of war tourism, of "clientes ávidos de sensaciones fuertes" The image returns in *El sitio de los sitios*, when one of the characters talks about a 'corredor turístico,' a tourist route, where "los amantes de sensaciones fuerte podrían viajar sin peligro a las cordillera que ciñen la ratonera y disfrutar allí del excitante espectáculo de su bombardeo, con derecho a participar en el mismo si tal fuera su pulsión o deseo?" ("those fond of powerful sensations would be able to journey without risk to the mountain heights that surround the rattrap and there enjoy the thrilling

spectacle of its bombardment, with the right to participate in it if such were their inclination or desire”)<sup>184</sup>.

This anxiety of voyeurism leads to *El sitio de los sitios*, which begins with an explosion that kills the voyeur. The explosion nevertheless symbolizes the elimination of the safe distance between the spectacle and spectator, a manifestation of Goytisolo’s repeated claims in *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* that no one can leave Sarajevo unmarked. It is important to note, also, that it is not only the explosion that collapses this gap between the witness and the event being witnessed, but also a personal and intimate connection that recalls Goytisolo’s understanding of the past repeating itself in the present. As J.G watches the woman crossing the Avenue of the Snipers with a bag in her hand, he begins speculating on the bag’s contents, the narrator begins to imagine she is carrying food to her four children: “cuatro, había escrito cuatro?” (“four, had he written four?”) he immediately asks himself.<sup>185</sup> For readers familiar with Goytisolo’s autobiographical works *Coto vedado* and *En los reinos de taifa*, the descriptions of the woman unquestionably evoke Goytisolo’s descriptions of his mother, who died in an air raid during the Spanish Civil War.<sup>186</sup> Her bag survived, with presents in it for her four children. In Spanish, the blending of the fictional victim J.G and the author Goytisolo can take place also at a linguistic level: the first and third person imperfect take the same form, making “había escrito” both a first

---

<sup>184</sup> Goytisolo, “Sitio,” 180, 181; Siege,” 134.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>186</sup> Goytisolo’s tendency to include autobiographical information, and create intertextual links between his own works creates two groups of readers: the initiated and uninitiated Goytisolo readers. As a result, the experience of reading Goytisolo including his *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* and *El sitio de los sitios* drastically differs depending on the readers’ familiarity with Goytisolo’s oeuvre. In other words, the degree of Spain’s presence in Goytisolo’s works would vary depending on whether or not the reader is an initiated Goytisolo reader. In “*La Cuarentena y El sitio de los sitios* de Juan Goytisolo: Intertextualidad, creación y recreación aurorial” (2000), Genaro J. Pérez touches upon this distinction between initiated and un-initiated readers of Goytisolo, saying “es indispensable que el lector, para poder responder intelectualmente al texto, tenga una preparación literaria adecuada para reconocer y explicar el juego de intertextos que proliferan en dichas novelas (como en casi todos los escritos de Goytisolo en las últimas décadas)” (391). Stuart Davis comments on this specific instance in *El sitio de los sitios*: “To a first-time reader of Goytisolo’s work, the details the narrator gives as he muses on the woman have no significance outside the text, but for those who know his autobiography Goytisolo signposts his relationship to his text. . . .” (Stuart 4).

and third person assertion. Her image returns at the end of the novel, only to assert the irreversibility of loss: “Se repite el pasado y reimprime en presente: nadie escapa al destino y natural crueldad. Las manos delicadas asidas al bolso no existen sino en tu mente. No necesitas abrirlo para saber qué contiene. Las notas del piano no volverán a sonar” (“The past is being repeated and reprinted in the present: no one escapes fate and its natural cruelty. The delicate hands clutching the bag exist only in your mind. You do not need to open it to know what is inside. You will never hear the notes being played on the piano again”). Since<sup>187</sup> the loss of the mother was in fact a result of the Spanish Civil War, the blending of fiction and autobiography in these instances is especially incisive: it once again brings together the Spanish Civil War and the siege of Sarajevo, but this time through a personal loss. It is an instance in the novel when lived experience impresses itself upon fiction. In addition to the siege of Sarajevo, the inclusion of the loss of Goytisolo’s mother makes it especially difficult to read the novel as separated from history.

The problem in *Cuaderno de Sarajevo* had been about how to use writing to effect action. *El sitio de los sitios* tries to answer this question through a broader interrogation of the links between fiction and reality, or more specifically, of how to retain the link between history and fiction while also maintaining a degree of autonomy for fiction. War writing amplifies the already complicated relationship between writing and reality, “confronting the conflict inherent in the difference between experience and representation.”<sup>188</sup> This is a conflict inherent to all writing about lived traumas, especially fiction. Fiction dealing with lived wars, historical traumas, state-violence, etc. must negotiate the tension between the reality of the events and its own fictionality. In order to maintain its status as fiction, a story that *need not* correspond to lived

---

<sup>187</sup> Goytisolo, “Sitio,” 182; Siege,” 135.

<sup>188</sup> Monegal, “War Writing,” 388.

experience, it must distinguish itself from a historical narrative, and yet, the depressing reality of the traumas it recounts places a certain ethical imperative not to completely sever their its with “reality.” It seems politically and morally compromised to suggest, for example, that a novel about the siege of Sarajevo is “just fiction,” without drawing attention as Goytisolo does in his author’s note to the lived experience of besieged Sarajevo as existing independently of this fictional world. As Monegal points out, “the desire or the need to account for the experience of war illustrates the tension between history and story, between reality and fiction.”<sup>189</sup> As the fictional counterpart to *Cuaderno de Sarajevo*, *El sitio de los sitios* enacts this tension, and interweaves history and story, reality and fiction

---

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 386.

## Conclusion

As an organized political community, State is inherently violent. State formation entails a constant and violent process of inclusion, exclusion and identification. In that sense, “state-violence” almost appears a redundant designation, since there can be no State without violence. Yet, I find “state-violence” a significant thread in the works that I analyze here. It signifies a violence perpetrated by the State against its own citizens, which instances of torture especially magnify in the form of individual encounters between the torturer and tortured. But it also points to a more pervasive and insidious system of violence, permeating language and ideology. In fact, as the first two chapters will have made clear, the physical violence that happens during torture, perhaps the most intense example of state-violence unleashed upon the individual, is always coupled with literary and linguistic violence. Analyses of *literary* representations of state-violence bring together these two levels, the physical and literary. In these works, the physical violence produced on individuals is represented through language which itself is not immune from the violence of the state, and in fact frequently becomes coopted by it. An analysis of literary representations of state-violence, then, is very much about the complex relationship between language and representation.

Perhaps, then, Juan Goytisolo’s tongue-twister is even more pertinent than it seemed at first: Cons-tan-ti-no-pla está cons-tan-ti-no-po-li-za /¿Quién la des-cons-tan-ti-no-po-li-za-rá?/ El des-cons-tan-ti-no-po-li-za-dor que la/ des-cons-tan-ti-no-po-li-ce,/ buen des-cons-tan-ti-no-po-li-za-dor será. It suggests a constant movement through language: as the word Constantinople assumes minute changes through prefixes and suffixes, its meaning drastically changes and it comes to represent much more than a place; through the tongue-twister, it displays a shifting process of representation through language, akin to the changes from Constantinople, Konstantinoúpolis, Konstantiniyye, Islambol, Stamboul, Istanbul, İstanbul. And these linguistic

changes are never neutral; more often than not, they signify violent political shifts. The transformation from Constantinople to Istanbul, for example, represents the Turkish nation-state in making, which, far from being an innocent process, happens at the expense of thousands of lives, forced displacements and population exchanges. Goytisolo's tongue-twister is even more important as an epilogue to the previous chapters, because it encapsulates a representation of state-violence through linguistic representation.

In the history of both the Turkish and Spanish nation-states, linguistic (and cultural) violence plays an important role in the formation of the State. Certainly, this is part and parcel of any nation-state formation, but in the cases of Turkey and Spain linguistic purification in the service of the nation-state entailed the excision of Arabic: to reject the Islamic past of the Ottoman Empire and remake a "European" country in the case of Turkey, and to bolster the Catholic identity by erasing the experience of Al-Andalus in the case of Spain.

The two works analyzed in the first two chapters, *Yaralisin* and *Si te dicen que caí* do not engage with this linguistic violence, certainly in part due to their more immediate and therefore more urgent experience of state-violence. Both novels were written *under* the threat of state-violence. Pamuk and Goytisolo, however, are much more attentive to the history and violence of language. Goytisolo especially has written extensively on linguistic violence, talking about the need to re-semanticize language to recover it from the repressive regimes that utilize it. The most extreme example of this process is in the last page of his 1975 work *Juan sin tierra*, itself a rejection and undoing of the myths that sustain Spain as a nation-state. In a linguistic representation of this rejection, the last page of the novel is written entirely in Arabic. Goytisolo seems especially aware in his works that even while exposing and condemning state-violence, his words can never stand outside of it, especially as he uses Spanish. Regardless of the authors' consciousness of the complicity of language, the linguistic representations of state-violence can

never remain outside of and immune to state-violence, adding yet another layer to the inherent challenges of representing state—violence. And this is precisely the danger that J.M. Coetzee warns against, in my opinion, in his insistence that authors must find ways to represent torture on their own terms.

A focus on the role of language in state-violence, and of linguistic violence in general as it functions alongside political violence, can open up many new questions. One imminent question, of course, is the ethics of criticism: the scholar writing about the complicity of language in representations of state-violence is not immune from using this language either. Turkish is my native language, but having been educated in the Turkish system towards the end of the twentieth century, my Turkish vocabulary is very much indicative of the violent purges and excisions that underpin contemporary Turkish. Turkish authors like Bilge Karasu, and to some degree Elif Shafak, have magnified this disconnect between Turkey's present and history as it functions within language through using an exaggeratedly "pure" or "Turkified" language (as in the case of Karasu), or "reverted" back to a vocabulary rich with words of Arabic and Persian origin (as in the case of Shafak, most notably in her first and untranslated novel *Pinhan*). Similarly, as a critic who does not speak Arabic, Goytisolo's *Juan sin tierra* performs the violent excision of the Arabic history of Spanish extremely well for me, the last page of the novel appearing completely indecipherable. As these examples from Karasu, Shafak and Goytisolo reveal, such texts carry a defamiliarizing effect even for speakers reading them in their original languages, and this effect is very much related to the linguistic aspects of state-violence.

Within the framework of Comparative Literature, a discipline that always privileges original language study, and in the backdrop of recent debates between Comparative and World Literature, this issue of the many reiterations of what we call "original language" is especially prolific and pertinent. Comparative Literature privileges and prioritizes original language study.



It proceeds from the understanding that works of literature speak to each other across historical and national boundaries, but it assumes that the scholar can uncover this transnational dialogue only through a focus on the works in their original languages. As such, the terms of comparison are always limited by personal and contingent factors: how many languages does the scholar know, and which literary worlds has s/he had the time and experience to study. “In his article “Sincerely Yours,” Tobin Siebers begins the subsection “What Can I Know?” with “very little.” He writes, “the task of acquiring multicultural knowledge, of becoming deeply informed about more than one literature and culture, is enormous.”<sup>1</sup>

World Literature has emerged from within Comparative Literature as a response to this limitation. In its aims to account for the texts of the world, it often works through translation and drastically opens up the canon through the objects of study that it makes available through translation. Suddenly, one is not bound by the necessity of learning a language and becoming familiar with cultural codes, but can turn instead to translation for studying literature. But translation itself can be violent, and perpetuate the same binaries and cultural hierarchies that drive canonization processes. Furthermore, as the relationship and tensions between violence and representation indubitably show, and as I tried to underline in mentioning the defamiliarizing effects of certain texts even when read in the original, there are representations and experiences that escape translation. Such texts, in my opinion, can best be approached within frameworks that bring together the critical tenets of Comparative Literature *and* World Literature, approaching these disciplines as complimentary rather than antithetical. Juan Goytisolo’s *Juan sin tierra*, for example, has a very specific role within the national context of Spain, but it calls for readings that go beyond the national and open up to a larger historical, geographical, *and* linguistic framework.

---

<sup>1</sup> Tobin Siebers, "Sincerely Yours," *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism* (1995): 201.

The ethics of criticism that I mentioned above forcefully come into play in the relationship between Comparative and World Literature. In its focus on original language study, Comparative Literature has inadvertently prioritized more populous or universal languages, at the expense of smaller or more isolated ones. Spanish, of course, is one of the more frequently studied languages within the discipline, while the visibility of Turkish literature is much more limited. And when smaller languages are in fact studied, the existing and aforementioned frameworks within the discipline, such as center-periphery, metropol-colony dictate which small languages will have more scholarly capital. In this sense, this particular study has pushed back against one of the violent aspects of Comparative Literature criticism, by thinking outside of the established and canonized frameworks of comparison.

## Bibliography

- Abrams, Philip. "Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State (1977)." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1.1 (March 1988): 58–89. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6443.1988.tb00004.x.
- Afridi, Mehnaz Mona and David M Buyze, eds. *Global Perspectives on Orhan Pamuk: Existentialism and Politics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
- Agamben, Giorgio. *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*. Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. New York: Zone Books, 2000.
- Agnew, Vanessa. "History's Affective Turn: Historical Reenactment and Its Work in the Present." *Rethinking History* 11.3 (2007): 299–312.
- . "Introduction: What Is Reenactment?" *Criticism* 46.3 (2004): 327–339. doi:10.1353/crt.2005.0001.
- Ağaoğlu, Adalet. "On the Changes of 1970-80 in the Turkish Novel." Speech. New York, 4 May 2005, [http://www.lightmillennium.org/2005\\_15th/aagaoglu\\_speech.html](http://www.lightmillennium.org/2005_15th/aagaoglu_speech.html)
- . *Üç Beş Kişi*. Istanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1984.
- Ahmad, Aijaz. "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the "National Allegory"". *Social Text* 17 (1987): 3-25.
- Akınhay, Osman. "Şükrü Argın ile Söyleşi : 'Edebiyat 12 Eylül'ü Kalben Destekledi.'" *Birikim* (2008): 1–13.
- Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and the Ideological Apparatus of the State." Translated by Ben Brewster. In *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, 127-186. London: New Left Books, 1971.
- Alver, Ahmet. "Postmodern Responses to the September 12<sup>th</sup> 1980 Military Coup D'Etat in Turkish Literature." *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi* 30, no. 1 (2000): 68–82. <http://journals.istanbul.edu.tr/iutded/article/viewFile/1023022368/1023020903>.
- . "Türk Edebiyatında Unutulan Sesler: 12 Eylül 1980 Askeri Darbe Sonrası Türkiye." *International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic* 30, no. 1 (2000): 68–82.
- Appadurai, Arjun. "Dead Certainty: Ethnic Violence in the Era of Globalization." *Development and Change* 30.1 (2000): 68–82.
- Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. Penguin Cl. New York: Penguin Books, 2006.

- Ascunce, Aránzazu. "The Dissection of Memory in Juan Marsé's *Si te dicen que caí*." *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 85.1 (January 01, 2008): 15–32. doi:10.3828/bhs.85.1.2.
- Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author." Translated by Stephen Heath. In *Image / Music / Text*, 142-147. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977.
- . *S/Z: An Essay*. Translated by Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang, 1975.
- . "The Reality Effect." Translated by Richard Howard. In *The Rustle of Language*, 141–148. Oxford: Blackwell, 1986.
- Başkut, Cevat Fehmi. *Buzlar Çözülmeden*. İstanbul: İnkılâp ve Aka Kitabevleri, 1965.
- Belge, Murat. "12 Mart Romanları." In *Edebiyat Üstüne Yazılar*, 98-118. İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1994.
- . "Kart-Kurt Teorisi'nin Tarihçesi." *Taraf*, September 13, 2009. <http://www.taraf.com.tr/yazilar/murat-belge/kart-kurt-teorisinin-tarihcesi/7377/>.
- Belge, Murat and Ahmet Insel, eds. *Kemalizm*. Çağaloğlu, İstanbul: İletişim, 2001.
- Black, Stanley. "Introduction." In *Juan Goytisolo: Territories of Life and Writing*, edited by Stanley Black, 5–28. Peter Lang, 2006.
- . *Juan Goytisolo and the Poetics of Contagion the Evolution of a Radical Aesthetic in the Later Novels*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001.
- . "The Author as Hero in the New World Order: The Power of Fictionality in Goytisolo's *El Sitio de Los Sitios*." In *Heroism and Passion in Literature: Studies in Honour of Moya Longstaffe*, 233–244. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004.
- Booth, Wayne. "Why Ethical Criticism Can Never Be Simple." *Style* 32.2 (1998): 351-364.
- Bora, Tanıl. "Nationalist Discourses in Turkey." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102.2 (2003): 433–451.
- Brooks, Geraldine. "The Book of Exodus: A Double Rescue in Wartime Sarajevo." *The New Yorker* no. December 3 (2007): 74–83.
- Brown, Catherine. "What Is 'Comparative' Literature?" *Comparative Critical Studies* 10, no. 1 (2013): 67–88.
- Burns, John F. "To Sarajevo, Writer Brings Good Will and 'Godot.'" *The New York Times*, August 19, 1993. <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/08/19/world/to-sarajevo-writer-brings-good-will-and-godot.html>.

- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Can, Kemal. "Etik Bir Deger Olarak Siddet." *Birikim* 30, no. 1 (2000): 68–82.
- Çarkoğlu, Ali. "Women's Choices of Head Cover in Turkey : An Empirical Assessment." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 29, no. 3 (2009): 450–467.
- Carrión, Jorge. *Viaje Contra Espacio: Juan Goytisolo Y W.G. Sebald*. Madrid: Vervuert, 2009.
- Carter, Imogen. "Why Bosnia Are Thanking Susan Sontag." *The Guardian*, April 04, 2009. <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2009/apr/05/susan-sontag-godot-sarajevo-bosnia>.
- Casanova, Pascale. *The World Republic of Letters*. Translated by M. B. DeBevoise. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- "Ceremonia de Entrega Del Premio Cervantes 2008: Discurso de Juan Marsé." Accessed July 27, 2014. <http://estaticos.elmundo.es/especiales/2013/cultura/juan-marse/discurso-cervantes.pdf>.
- Çınar, Alev. "National History as a Contested Site: The Conquest of Istanbul and Islamist Negotiations of the Nation." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43. 2 (2001): 364–391.
- Clemens, Colleen Ann Lutz. "'Suicide Girls': Orhan Pamuk's *Snow* and the Politics of Resistance in Contemporary Turkey." *Feminist Formations* 23.1 (2011): 138–154. doi:10.1353/ff.2011.0005.
- Coetzee, J M. *Giving Offense: Essays on Censorship*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- . "Into the Dark Chamber: The Novelist and South Africa." *New York Times* (January 1986): 1–4.
- Colas, Santiago. "The Third World in Jameson's Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism." *Social Text* 31/32 (1992): 258-70.
- Cook, Alexander. "The Use and Abuse of Historical Reenactment: Thoughts on Recent Trends in Public History." *Criticism* 46.3 (2004): 487–496. doi:10.1353/crt.2005.0002.
- Copjec, Joan. *Radical Evil*. New York: Verso, 1996.
- Crumbaugh, Justin. "Are We All (Still) Miguel Ángel Blanco? Victimhood, the Media Afterlife, and the Challenge for Historical Memory." *Hispanic Review* 75, no. 4 (2007): 365–384. doi:10.1353/hir.2007.0031.
- Damrosch, David. *What Is World Literature*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003.

- Davis, Stuart. "Life, Death and the Name: The Case of Juan Goytisolo." *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 41, no. 4 (September 28, 2005): 365–374. doi:10.1093/fmls/cqi024.
- . "Narrative Battles: War and Memory in the Novels of Juan Goytisolo." *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 86, no. 4 (July 01, 2009): 521–536. doi:10.1353/bhs.0.0068.
- Delgado, Elena L. "Settled in Normal: Narratives of a Prozaic (Spanish) Nation." *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies* 7, no. 1 (2003): 117–132. doi:10.1353/hcs.2011.0158.
- Delgado, Elena, Jordana Mendelson, and Oscar Vázquez. "Introduction: Recalcitrant modernities—Spain, Cultural Difference and the Location of Modernism." *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 13, no. 2–3 (August 2007): 105–119. doi:10.1080/14701840701776173.
- Eckstein, Barbara. "The Body, the Word, and the State: JM Coetzee's 'Waiting for the Barbarians.'" *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 30, no. 1 (2000): 68–82.
- Enkvist, Inger. "Ética, Estética Y Política En Paisajes Después de La Batalla Y El Sitio de Los Sitios de Juan Goytisolo." In *Un Círculo de Relectores: Jornadas Sobre Juan Goytisolo En Lund*, edited by Inger Enkvist, 29–53. Lund: Instituto de Estudios Almerienes, 1999.
- . "Juan Goytisolo: A Special Kind of Orientalism." *Readerly/Writerly Texts* 5 (1998): 15–71.
- . , ed. *Un Círculo de Relectores: Jornadas Sobre Juan Goytisolo En Lund*. Lund: Instituto de Estudios Almerienes, 1999.
- Epps, Bradley S. *Significant Violence: Oppression and Resistance in the Narratives of Juan Goytisolo, 1970-1990*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.
- . "Thievish Subjectivity : Self-Writing in Jean Genet and Juan Goytisolo." *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* 26.2 (1992): 163–181.
- Epstein, James. "'The Shrug of Horror': Creole Performance at King's Bench." In *Settler and Creole Reenactment*, edited by Vanessa Agnew and Jonathan Lamb, 94-107. Palgrave MacMillan, 2009.
- Erika Fischer-Lichte. "Performance as Event: Reception as Transformation." In *Theorising Performance: Greek Drama, Cultural History and Critical Practice*, xiii, 305 p. London: Duckworth, 2010.
- Erol, Sibel. "Reading Orhan Pamuk's Snow as Parody: Difference as Sameness." *Comparative Critical Studies* 4, no. 3 (2007): 403–432. doi:10.1353/ccs.2008.0010.
- Ertürk, Nergis. "Those Outside the Scene: Snow in the World Republic of Letters." *New Literary History* 41.3 (2010): 633–651.

- Eugenides, Jeffrey. *The Marriage Plot*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011. Kindle edition.
- Felman, Shoshana., and Dori. Laub. *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. 2nd ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.
- . *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. Edited by Donald F. Bouchard. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980.
- . “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History.” In *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, edited by Donald F. Bouchard, 139–165. Cornell University Press, 1980.
- . “The Life of Infamous Men.” In *Power, Truth, Strategy*, edited by Meaghan Morris and Paul Patton, translated by Meaghan Morris and Paul Foss, 76–91. Sydney: Feral Publications, 1979.
- Frohlich, Margaret Gates. “The Violent Narration of ‘Pure’ Spain: National Identity and Treason in Reivindicación Del Conde Don Julián by Juan Goytisolo.” *Romance Review* 13 (2003): 55-68.
- Garvey, Diane I. “Juan Marsé’s Si Te Dicen Que Caí: The Self-Reflexive Text and the Question of Referentiality.” *MLN* 95.2 (1980): 376-387.
- Gazarian Gautier, Marie-Lise. “Juan Goytisolo.” In *Interviews with Spanish Writers*, 137–150. Elmwood Park: Dalkey Archive Press, 1991.
- Georgacas, Demetrius John. “The Names of Constantinople.” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 78 (1947): 347–367.
- Gies, David Thatcher., ed. *The Cambridge History of Spanish Literature. History of Spanish Literature*. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521806183>.
- Gonzales, Shirley Mangini. “Si Te Dicen Que Caí: A Chronicle of Post-Civil War Spain.” *International Fiction Review* 12.2 (1985): 92–96.
- Gordimer, Nadine. *Burger’s Daughter*. New York: Viking Press, 1979.
- Goytisolo, Juan. “Abandonemos de Una Vez El Amoroso Cultivo de Nuestras Señas de Identidad.” *El País*, April 10, 1984.
- . *Aproximaciones a Gaudí En Capadocia*. Narrativa Mondadori. Madrid: Mondadori España, 1990.

- . *Contracorrientes*. Editorial Montesinos, 1985.
- . *Coto vedado*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2008.
- . *Count Julian*. Translated by Helen R. Lane. Reivindicación Del Conde Don Julian.English. London: Serpent's Tail, 1974.
- . *Cuaderno de Sarajevo: Anotaciones de Un Viaje a La Barbarie*. El Viaje Interior. Madrid: El País : Aguilar, 1993.
- . *Duelo En El Paraíso* . destinolibro, 1955.
- . *El Furgón de Cola*. Biblioteca Breve ;393. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1982.
- . “El Libro Negro de Orhan Pamuk: Constantinopla Constantinopolizada.” *Quimera* 207–208 (2001): 193–200.
- . *El Sitio de Los Sitios*. Madrid: Alfaguara, 1995.
- . “In Memoriam F.FB.” *El País*, 1975.
- . *Juan the Landless*. Translated by Peter R Bush. Champaign: Dalkey Archive Press, 2009.
- . *Juan sin tierra*. Madrid: Grijalbo, 1998.
- . *Landscapes of War: From Sarajevo to Chechnya*. Translated by Peter R Bush. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2000.
- . *Marks of Identity*. Translated by Gregory Rabassa. Señas de identidad.English. London: Serpent's Tail, 1988.
- . “Orhan Pamuk'un Kara Kitap'ı.” Translated by Gül Işık. *Defter* 9, no. 27 (1996): 81–94.
- . *Reivindicación de conde Don Julián*. Madrid: Alianza, 1999.
- . *Señas de identidad*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2007.
- . *State of Siege*. Translated by Helen Lane. San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, 2008.
- Göğercin Toker, Hülya. “Siyasi ve Edebi İktidara Tanıklık Edebiyatı İle Direnmek: O Hep Aklımda.” *Monograf* 45, no. 2 (2014). <http://monografjournal.com/files/toker.pdf>.
- Gökner, Erdağ. *Secular Blasphemies: Orhan Pamuk and the Turkish Novel*. A Forum on Fiction 45, no. 2 (July 2012): 301–326. doi:10.1215/00295132-1573985.



- . *The Novel in Turkish: Narrative Tradition to Nobel Prize*. In *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, edited by Reşat Kasaba. 1st ed. Vol. 4. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 472-503.
- Günay-Erkol, Çimen. “Cold War Masculinities in Turkish Literature : A Survey of March 12 Novels,” PhD diss., Leiden University, 2008.  
<https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/handle/1887/13287>.
- Güneş, Aslı. “Murat Belge İle Sanat ve Edebiyat Üzerine Söyleşi.” *Birikim* (2010).  
<http://www.birikimdergisi.com/birikim/makale.aspx?mid=646>.
- Gürbilek, Nurdan. “Dandies and Originals : Authenticity , Belatedness , and the Turkish Novel.” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no. 2 (2003): 599–628.
- Hale, William M. *Turkish Politics and the Military*. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Hall, Edith. “Towards a Theory of Performance Reception.” In *Theorising Performance: Greek Drama, Cultural History and Critical Practice*, edited by Edith Hall and Stephen Harrop, 10–29. London: Duckworth, 2010.
- Harris, George S. “Military Coups and Turkish Democracy, 1960–1980.” *Turkish Studies* 12. 2 (June 2011): 203–213. doi:10.1080/14683849.2011.573181.
- Hart, Kimberly. “Images and Aftermaths: The Use and Contextualization of Atatürk Imagery in Political Debates in Turkey.” *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 22.1 (1999): 66–84. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1525/pol.1999.22.1.66/full>.
- Herzberger, David K. *Narrating the Past: Fiction and Historiography in Postwar Spain*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995.
- . “Split Referentiality and the Making of Character in Recent Spanish Metafiction.” *MLN* 103.2 (1988): 419–435.
- Hierro, Manuel. “La Memoria Sitiada de Juan Goytisolo En El Sitio de Los Sitios.” *Antipodas* 8-9 (1996): 144-154.
- Hile, Rachel E. “The Spanish Tragedy as Intertext for Orhan Pamuk’s *Kar* (Snow).” *Mediterranean Studies* 18, no. 1 (2009): 143–167.
- Hooper, John. *The New Spaniards*. New York: Penguin Books, 1995.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1980.
- . *The Politics of Postmodernism*. New Accents. London ; New York: Routledge, 1989.
- İleri, Suphi Nuri. *Yeni Edebiyat*. İstanbul: Scala Yayıncılık, 1998.

- Ilie, Paul. "Dictatorship and Literature: The Model of Francoist Spain." *Ideologies and Literature: Journal of Hispanic and Lusophone Discourse Analysis* 4.17 (September 01, 1983): 238–255.
- Irzik, Sibel. "Allegorical Lives: The Public and the Private in the Modern Turkish Novel." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102.2 (2003): 551–566.
- . "Orhan Pamuk's Snow: Reimagining the Boundaries between East and West, Art and Politics." In *Europe and Its Boundaries: Words and Worlds, Within and Beyond*, edited by Andrew Davison and Himadeep Muppidi, 189-202. Lenham: Lexington Books, 2009.
- Iser, Wolfgang. *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.
- Jaggi, Maya. "Scourge of the New Spain." *The Guardian*, August 12, 2000.  
<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2000/aug/12/internationalwriting.books>.
- Jameson, Fredrick. "Metacommentary." *PMLA* 86.1 (January 13, 1971): 9–18.  
doi:10.1126/science.ns-11.258.13.
- . *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982.
- . "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism." *Social Text* 15 (1986): 65-88.
- Karasu, Bilge. *Gece*. Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1998.
- Kemal, Namık. *Vatan Yahut Silistire*. Istanbul: Oğlak Yayıncılık, 2002.
- Kershaw, Baz. *The Radical in Performance: Between Brecht and Baudrillard*. London ; New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Khoury, Elias. "The Novel of Ambiguity." *Al-Ahram Weekly On-Line*, October 2006.  
<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2006/817/cu4.htm>.
- Kunz, Marco. "Egocentrism and Polycentric Writing: The Inscription of the Author in Las Semanas Del Jardín." In *Juan Goytisolo: Territories of Life and Writing*, edited by Stanley Black, 95–125. Peter Lang, 2006.
- Kür, Pınar. *Söyleşi*. By Müge İplikçi. *Radikal Kitap*, 3 April 2004.
- Kyd, Thomas. "The Spanish Tragedy." Edited by J R Mulryne. London: Methuen Drama, 2009.
- Labanyi, Jo. *Myth and History in the Contemporary Spanish Novel*. Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

- . “The Ambiguous Implications of the Mythical References in Juan Goytisolo’s ‘Duelo En El Paraíso.’” *The Modern Language Review* 80, no. 4 (1985): 845.
- . “The Construction/Deconstruction of the Self in the Autobiographies of Pablo Neruda and Juan Goytisolo.” *Forum for Modern Language Studies* XXVI.3 (1990): 212–221. doi:10.1093/fmls/XXVI.3.212.
- LaCapra, Dominick. *History and Memory After Auschwitz*. Cornell Paperbacks. Cornell University Press, 1998.
- Laclau Ernesto and Chantal Mouffe. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. London: Verso, 1985.
- Lamb, Jonathan, Vanessa. Agnew, eds. *Settler and Creole Re-Enactment*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Landau, Jacob. *Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 1984.
- Levine, Caroline. “For World Literature.” *Public Books*, 2014. <http://www.publicbooks.org/fiction/for-world-literature>.
- Levine, Linda Gould. “En Torno a Juan Goytisolo: Un Círculo de Lectores.” In *Un Círculo de Relectores: Jornadas Sobre Juan Goytisolo En Lund*, edited by Inger Enkvist. Almería: Instituto de Estudios Almerienses, 1999.
- . *Juan Goytisolo, La Destrucción Creadora*. México: J. Mortiz, 1976.
- . “Si te dicen que caí: Un Calidoscopio Verbal.” *Journal of Spanish Studies: Twentieth Century* 7.3 (1979): 309–327.
- Levinson, Marjorie. “What Is New Formalism?” *PMLA* 122.2 (2007): 558-569.
- Loureiro, Ángel G. *The Ethics of Autobiography: Replacing the Subject in Modern Spain*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2000.
- Marsé, Juan. *Confidencias de Un Chorizo*. Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1977.
- . *Si Te Dicen Que Caí*. 2nd edition. Barcelona: Debolsillo, 2009.
- . *The Fallen*. Translated by Helen Lane. London: Quartet Books, 1994.
- Martin, Wallace. *Recent Theories of Narrative*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986.
- Martin-Estudillo, Luis, and Nicholas Spadaccini, eds. *New Spain, New Literatures*. Vanderbilt University Press, 2010.

- McCalman, Iain and Paul A Pickering, eds. *Historical Reenactment: From Realism to the Affective Turn*. Reenactment History. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- McHale, Brian. *Postmodernist Fiction*. New York: Methuen, 1987.
- Monegal, Antonio. "Aporias of the War Story." *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 3.1 (March 2002): 29–41. doi:10.1080/1463620020127004.
- . "Writing War: The Bosnian Conflict in Spanish Literature." In *The Conscience of Humankind*, 383–391, 2000.
- Monegal, Emir Rodríguez. "Destrucción de La España Sagrada: Diálogo Con Juan Goytisolo." *Mundo Nuevo* 12 (1967): 44–60.
- Montenegro, N. "El Juego Intertextual de Si Te Dicen Que Caí." *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos* 5, no. 2 (1981): 145–155.
- Moreiras, Cristina. *Cultura Herida: Literatura y Cine En La España Democrática*. Madrid: Ediciones Libertarias, 2002.
- Moretti, F. "Conjectures on World Literature." *New Left Review* 1 (2000): 54–68.
- Mortimer, Armine Kotin. *Writing Realism: Representations in French Fiction*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.
- Mouffe, Chantal. "Every Form of Art Has a Political Dimension." *Grey Room* no. 02 (2001): 98–125.
- . *On the Political*. Thinking in Action. Abingdon ; New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Moyn, Samuel. "Torture and Taboo: On Elaine Scarry." *The Nation*, 2013. <http://www.thenation.com/article/172677/torture-and-taboo-elaine-scarry?page=0,5>.
- Muñoz-Molina, Antonio. *Sefarad*. Madrid: Punto de Lectura, 2006.
- Nabokov, Vladimir. *Lolita*. New York: Vintage International, 1997.
- Nelson, Maggie. *The Art of Cruelty: A Reckoning*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2011.
- Neyzi, Leyla, ed. *Nasıl Hatırlıyoruz?: Türkiye'de Bellek Çalışmaları*. Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları. İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası, 2011..
- Öz, Erdal. "12 Eylül: Edebiyata Bir Darbe // 12 Mart'ın ve 12 Eylül'ün Edebiyatımızdaki Yeri." *Sabit Fikir*, 2010. <http://www.sabitifikir.com/dosyalar/12-eylul-edebiyata-bir-darbe-12-martin-ve-12-eylulun-edebiyatimizdaki-yeri>.
- . *Yaralısın*. İstanbul: Can Sanat Yayınları, 1974.

- Özdalga, Elisabeth. *The Veiling Issue, Official Secularism and Popular Islam in Modern Turkey*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1998.
- Pamuk, Orhan. *Babamın Bavulu*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007.
- . *Beyaz Kale*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985.
- . “Giro Hacia El Autoritarismo.” *El País*. June 08, 2013.  
[http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2013/06/08/actualidad/1370704243\\_783846.html](http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2013/06/08/actualidad/1370704243_783846.html).
- . *Kar*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002.
- . *Snow*. Translated by Maureen Freely. New York: Vintage International, 2005.
- . *The White Castle*. Translated by Victoria Holbrook. New York: Vintage, 1998.
- Parla, Jale. *Don Kişot'tan Bugüne Roman*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000.
- Pascal-Casas, Danielle. “La Función Estructural Del Teatro En La Novelística de Juan Marse.” *Anales de La Literatura Española Contemporánea* 13. 1/2 (1988): 119-133.
- Pérez, Genaro J. “La Cuarentena Y El Sitio de Los Sitios de Juan Goytisolo: Intertextualidad, Creación Y Recreación Autorial.” *Letras Peninsulares* 14.3 (January 01, 2001): 391–403.
- Persino, Maria Silvina. “Si Te Dicen Que Caí: Una Lectura de Los Cuerpos.” *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* 25, no. 3 (1991): 57–71.
- Pope, Randolph D. “A Hispanist’s View of Changing Institutions, or About Insects and Whales.” In *New Spain, New Literatures*, edited by Luis Martin Estudillo and Nicholas Spadaccini, 99–117. Nashville: University of Vanderbilt Press, 2010.
- . “El Espacio Interrogante de Capadocia: El Aprendizaje de La Identidad En La Obra de Juan Goytisolo.” In *Un Círculo de Relectores: Jornadas Sobre Juan Goytisolo En Lund*, edited by Inger Enkvist. Lund: Instituto de Estudios Almerienes, 1999.
- . “Post-Final Thoughts on Juan Goytisolo and His Impossible Autobiography.” *Neohelicon* 30 (2003): 163–181.
- Priede, J. “Sarajevo, Diary of an Exodus.” *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos* 668 (2006): 122.
- Resina, Joan Ramón, ed. *Disremembering the Dictatorship: The Politics of Memory in the Spanish Transition to Democracy*. Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000.
- Ribeiro de Menezes, Alison. “Juan Goytisolo’s Cuaderno de Sarajevo : The Dilemmas of a Committed War Journalist.” *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 12. 2–3 (December 01, 2006): 219–231. doi:10.1080/14701840601085055.

- Robins, Kevin. "Interrupting Identities: Turkey/Europe." *Questions of Cultural Identity* (1996).
- Rocha, Carolina. "Bearing Witness Through Fiction." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 30. 1 (2000): 68–82.  
<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1029&context=clcweb>.
- Roselli, Bede Greig. "Youth, Masculinity and the Shattering of Sight in Snow." In *Essays Interpreting the Writings of Novelist Orhan Pamuk*, edited by Nilgun Anadolu-Okur, 79–97. Edwin Mellen Press, 2009.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.
- Saktanber, Ayşe and Gül Çorbacıoğlu. "Veiling and Head-Scarf Skepticism in Turkey," *Social Politics* 15.4. (2008): 514-538
- Saussy, Haun, and American Comparative Literature Association. *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006.
- Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Semprun, Jorge. *Literature or Life*. Translated by Linda Coverdale. New York: Penguin Books, 1998.
- Siebers, Tobin. "Sincerely Yours." In *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, edited by Charles Burnheimer, 195-205. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.
- Simkin, Stevie. *Revenge Tragedy*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.
- Six, Abigail Lee. *Juan Goytisolo: The Case for Chaos*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.
- Slaughter, Joseph. "Narration in International Human Rights Law." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 30, no. 1 (2000): 68–82.
- Sluka, Jeffrey A. *Death Squad: The Anthropology of State Terror*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000.
- Smith, Sidonie and Julia Watson. *Reading Autobiography*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.
- Sontag, Susan. "Godot Comes to Sarajevo." *New York Review of Books*, 1993.  
<http://www.nybooks.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/articles/archives/1993/oct/21/godot-comes-to-sarajevo/?pagination=false>.
- . *Regarding the Pain of Others*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003.
- Sotomayor, Carmen. *Una Lectura Orientalista de Juan Goytisolo*. Madrid: Fundamentos, 1990.

- Spires, Robert C. *Beyond the Metafictional Mode: Directions in the Modern Spanish Novel..* Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1984.
- Steenmeijer, Maarten. "The New Capital of Spanish Literature: The Best Sellers." In *New Spain, New Literatures*, edited by Luis Martin Estudillo and Nicholas Spadaccini, 81–99. Nashville: University of Vanderbilt Press, 2010.
- Su, Hüseyin. "Nobel Edebiyat Odulu Kime Verildi?" *Hece* 10, no. 119 (2006): 3–10.
- Szeman, Imre. "Who's Afraid of National Allegory? Jameson, Literary Criticism, Globalization." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 100.3 (Summer 2001): 803-27.
- Tekelioğlu, Orhan. "Edebiyatta Tekil Bir Ulusal Kanonun Oluşmasının İmkansızlığı Üzerine Notlar." *Doğu Batı: Düşünce Dergisi* 22 (2003): 65–77.
- Toole, David. *Waiting for Godot in Sarajevo : theological reflections on nihilism, tragedy, and apocalypse*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1998.
- Tesis*. Directed by Alejandro Amenábar. 1996. US: Tanelorn Films, 2011. DVD.
- Türkeş, Ömer. "47'liler - Füzulan." *Radikal Kitap*, 2006.  
<http://dipnotkitap.net/ROMAN/47liler.htm>.
- Ugarte, Michael. *Trilogy of Treason: An Intertextual Study of Juan Goytisolo*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1982.
- Uslu, Didem A. "A Melancholic Postmodern Mock-Hero in the Middle of Political Carnavalesque Madness: The Journalis-Poet Ka in Snow." In *Essays Interpreting the Writings of Novelist Orhan Pamuk*, edited by Nilgun Anadolu-Okur, 111–135. Edwin Mellen Press, 2009.
- Vilarós, Teresa M. *El Mono Del Desencanto: Una Crítica Cultural de La Transición Española (1973-1993)*. Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 1998.
- Waugh, Patricia. *Metafiction : The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious*. Florence, KY, USA: Routledge, 1984. <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/umich/docDetail.action?docID=5001577>.
- Weiss, Jason. "The Art of Fiction: Interview with Julio Cortazar." *The Paris Review*, 1984.  
<http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/2955/the-art-of-fiction-no-83-julio-cortazar>.
- Žižek, Slavoj. *The Metastases of Enjoyment: Six Essays on Woman and Causality*. New York: Verso, 1994.
- Zürcher, Erik Jan. *Turkey: A Modern History*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 1998.