Theorising Turkish Gothic

National Identity, Ideology and the Gothic

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Abstract

Despite increasing critical interest in Gothic in non-Western cultures, Turkish Gothic writing remains an undiscovered area of research within worldwide Gothic studies. My thesis fills this gap by bringing together Glennis Byron's concept of 'globalgothic', historically informed understandings of the Gothic and Turkish national identity to theorise Turkish Gothic as a mode intimately linked to the ideological processes of Turkish identity construction. Central to this thesis is the understanding of Turkish national identity as a fragmented construct due to Turkey's ambivalent relationship with the West over the centuries and its commonly referenced role as a bridge between the West and the East. Accordingly, the thesis begins by positioning Turkey in relation to its historical and cultural ties to the Western Gothic tradition. I reveal the origins of the multidirectional flows of globalgothic between Western and Turkish Gothic traditions, through the examination of selected works from British and American cultures depicting Turkish identity through a Gothic lens. Thereafter, taking particular times of political and social change in Turkey into account, I focus on novels and films from 1923 to 2017, with regards to their employment and transformation of Western Gothic tropes using discussions of Turkish national identity. I argue that Turkish Gothic manifests the nation's anxieties concerning the in-betweenness of Turkish national identity and its ideological repercussions as being either Western and secular or Eastern and conservative. In doing so, the Gothic in Turkey interchangeably becomes a counter-narrative for both ideologies, each demonising and undermining the other, and therefore representing the tension between two poles of the political spectrum in contemporary Turkey. As the definitions of Turkish national identity change according to the emerging political stresses in Turkey, Turkish Gothic will continue to haunt its audiences with the dark undersides of Turkishness.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is the product of the most rewarding chapter of my life. I would have never imagined taking on and pursuing this challenging journey, if it wasn't for the encouragement and support of some very special people.

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I cannot thank enough to my mother who has been so patient throughout the years I spent away from home for my studies. Her stand as a progressive and modern Republican woman has inspired me in every step of this journey and will do so for the rest of my life. I strive each and every day to make her proud as much as I am proud of her. I am also grateful for my large family and closest friends who have believed in and supported me in any way that they can.

The most special thank you goes to my husband, my best friend and confidant, Hamzah. I met him during my first month at Lancaster University in 2012 and since then, we have had the most extraordinary roller-coaster ride together. We understood, supported and always motivated each other to become better researchers. He has been my biggest source of strength at all times and I feel incredibly lucky to have been blessed with a life partner as loving and caring as him. The long nights we have spent studying for our PhDs will remain as some of my dearest memories and I am looking forward to having new ones in the next chapter of our life. I dedicate this thesis to him and to the family we will build together in the future.

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In Search of a National Mode

If you search for Turkish Gothic on Google, definitions are hard to come by, but one of the images retrieved is a black-and-white photograph of a couple standing on a grassy and stony area which seems like a roadside (See Figure 1).[1] In the distant background, there is a mosque with two minarets, a few blocks of apartments, open fields and a dark gloomy sky. This photograph is a reinterpretation of Grant Wood's iconic 1930 painting titled 'American Gothic' which portrays a Midwestern American man holding his pitchfork, symbolising labour, and standing next to his daughter, in front of a house in what is known as Carpenter Gothic style (See Figure 2).[2] Eric Savoy considers the painting as 'an allegorisation of American gothic' and adds, 'like all gothic, it haltingly brings forward the underside, the Otherness, of the narratives of national-self construction'.[3]
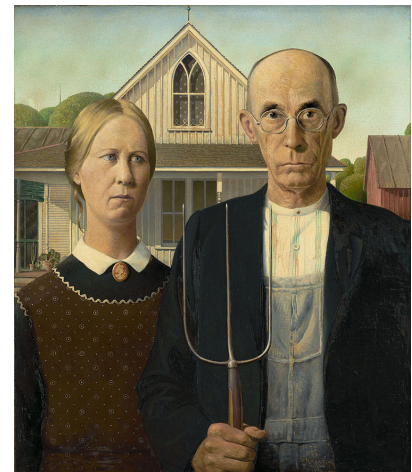
Figure 1. Arif Emrah Orak, *turkish gothic*, Flickr (2009) (on the left)

Figure 2. Grant Wood, *American Gothic*, Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois (1930) (on the right)

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[1] Arif Emrah Orak, 'turkish gothic', *Flickr*, 27 May 2009
  <https://www.flickr.com/photos/orakemrah/3578446504/>.
[2] Grant Wood, 'Letter to Mrs. Nellie B. Sudduth', 21 March 1941,
  <http://www.lettersofnote.com/2009/10/they-are-basically-solid-and-good.html>.
[3] Eric Savoy, 'The Face of the Tenant: A Theory of American Gothic', in *American Gothic: New Interventions in a National Narrative*, (eds) Robert K. Martin and Eric Savoy (Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1998), pp. 17-18.

Savoy suggests that between the American couple in the foreground and the Carpenter Gothic style house in the background, a large narrative gap resides. This gap is where nostalgia for the nation's past and haunting by the historical processes emerge and create a tension. Therefore, the house, Savoy adds, 'allegorizes historical consciousness itself, subject to the imminent irruption, the proximate quality, of the not-forgotten'.[4] The photograph that Google retrieves for Turkish Gothic reproduces similar symbolic meanings to Wood's painting except for it is not a Gothic house, but a mosque with two minarets that is allegorising the nation's historical consciousness. The wasteland between the mosque and the traditional Turkish couple creates a disturbing tension caused by increasing neoliberal urbanisation represented by apartment blocks and conservative values represented by the mosque. As such, the photograph demonstrates a problematic aspect of Turkish national-self construction in the twenty-first century by appropriating the Gothic imagery established in Wood's painting.

Another image retrieved is a parody of Wood's painting featuring the president of the Republic of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and his wife, the first lady, Emine Erdoğan, instead of the American couple (See Figure 3).[5] Erdoğan has a toothbrush moustache and circular glasses evoking the iconic appearance of the late leader of political Islam in Turkey, Necmettin Erbakan — with whom he used to be associated — and holds a light bulb, the emblem of Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party, JDP), of which he is the co-founder. Emine Erdoğan wears her headscarf which has, over the years, become a very controversial symbol of the Islamic ideology that Erdoğan's party represents. The fact that the image dates back to 2012, just a year before the Gezi Park Protests of 2013, reveals why it mocks the Erdoğans' authority and ideology. Utilising Western Gothic imagery in Turkish contexts, this

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[4] Ibid.
[5] 'Turkish Gothic', *Bobiler*, 2012 <https://www.bobiler.org/monte/turkish-gothic--103906>.

composition, together with the first image, draws on the ambivalence that resides at the core of the contemporary Turkish identity and exposes the fears and anxieties of Turkish people in the globalised world. In other words, these images pinpoint the basic codes of Turkishness that are needed to theorise Turkish Gothic.

Figure 3. 'Turkish Gothic', *Bobiler* (2012)

The rise of historically informed criticism since the 1980s enabled Gothicists to move away from generalised psychoanalytic models of fear and anxiety to consider how fear and anxiety played out in specific historical contexts. This theoretical approach, as David Punter and Glennis Byron explain, considers the Gothic as 'a genre that re-emerges with particular force during times of cultural crisis and which serves to negotiate the anxieties of the age by working through them in a displaced form'.[6] Therefore, the revival of the Gothic in symbolic time periods is often read in relation to the changing political and social concerns of that particular age. Such consideration of the Gothic has also been influential in the emergence of globalgothic term in the early 2000s. Coined by Glennis Byron, globalgothic is concerned with 'anxieties attendant

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[6] David Punter and Glennis Byron, *The Gothic* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), p. 39.

upon the processes of globalisation' such as 'the stability of local or national identities and cultures... the impact of transnational capitalism or the workings of technology'.[7] Globalgothic thus distances Gothic studies from its Anglo-American roots and Anglophone corpus by allowing for explorations of Gothic tropes and conventions in other local cultures of the globalised world. Correspondingly, since the emergence of the term, Gothic scholarship has swarmed with contributions from various cultures from New Zealand to Argentina, Canada to Russia, and from cultures that are not necessarily Judeo-Christian or informed by Anglo-European heritage such as Thailand, Malaysia, or Japan. However, a complete study that explores Turkish Gothic has still not been carried out.

Part of the reason behind this gap in Gothic scholarship is the fact that Gothic is an understudied area of academic research in Turkey. This academic deficiency is attributed by some scholars to Gothic's exclusion from high literature in Turkey.[8] Accordingly, until the 1990s, there was no scholarly work regarding Gothic horror either in literature or cinema studies. According to the online academic thesis archive of the Turkish Council of Higher Education, the earliest academic research focusing on 'Gothic' or 'Horror' with regard to literature or cinema dates back to 1994.[9] Since then, eighty-one theses were written in relation to 'Gothic' and 'Horror' and only nine of them were doctoral theses (see Figure 4). Furthermore, the 2000s are by far the most productive time period for Gothic studies in Turkey (see Figure 4).

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[7] Glennis Byron, *Globalgothic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 5.

[8] Emine Tuğcu, 'Romanımızda Korkunun Ayak İzleri' [The Footsteps of Horror in Our Novel], in *Varlık Literature Magazine*, October 2008, p. 3.

[9] *Council of Higher Education Thesis Center* <https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/giris.jsp> [accessed 6 April 2018]. It should be noted that the number of theses currently stored in the archive is 487475 with the oldest thesis dating back to 1959. Researchers can choose to submit their theses to the archive which suggests there may be theses unknown to the database.
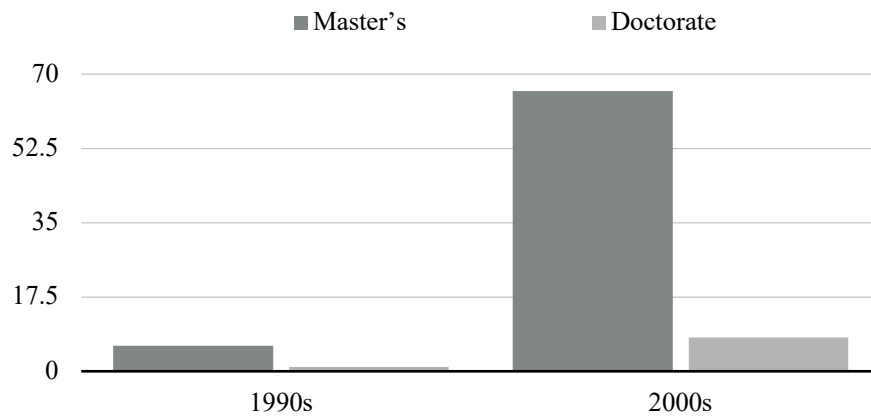
Figure 4. Bar chart illustrating academic research in relation to 'Gothic' and 'Horror' according to degree levels and time periods.

This productivity is particularly visible in research focusing on British & American literature (see Figure 5). The research on Turkish Gothic literature on the other hand, is dramatically low in comparison to research on Turkish Gothic in Cinema & TV (see Figure 5).
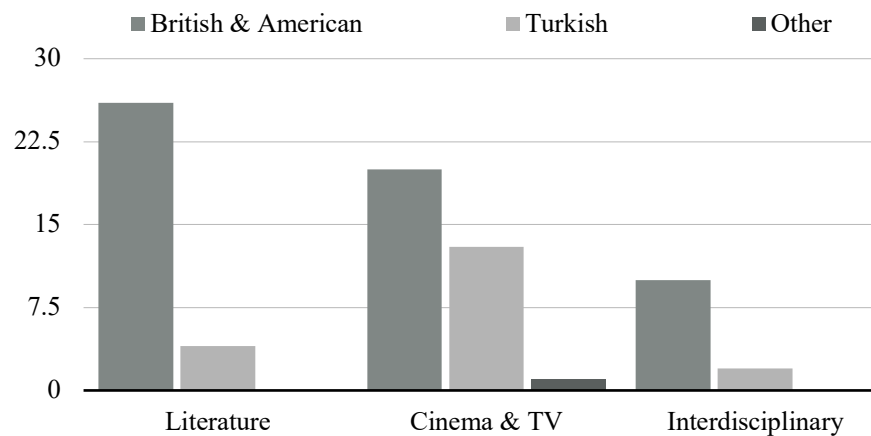
Figure 5. Bar chart illustrating the distribution of research in the 2000s according to medium and cultural context of used material.

What these numbers illustrate is that Gothic studies in Turkey has been expanding rapidly in the 2000s. Inarguably, this expansion is strongly linked to the development of Gothic scholarship in the West as well as Turkey's involvement in processes of neoliberal globalisation. British and American Gothic is the main concern of the field,

mainly due to increasing numbers of translations and mobilisation of Gothic works through globalisation and technological advances. Most crucially, the inefficacy of research on Turkish Gothic signifies a large gap in the literature which, by extension, results in limited numbers of published scholarly works on the topic.

This thesis is the first study to fill this gap in the literature in both Western and Turkish academia. I argue that the lack of definition is the core of the problem. 'Definition of national identity or literary tradition is bound up with the historical forces that shaped that identity or that tradition', Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy write.[10] Therefore, Turkish Gothic needs a definition — a definition that establishes certain characteristics that Turkish Gothic adopted since its first emergence, its prominent themes and motifs, and its involvement with historical and social contexts within Turkey. In order to reach such a definition, it is essential first to define the two words that form Turkish Gothic. Is the word Turkish a simple adjective that defines a group of people who live in Turkey and speak Turkish? Or is it a specific national signifier encompassing a historical heritage, a cultural consciousness, and a collective memory? Is Turkish identity a fixed construct or is it constantly evolving? What about Gothic? How can we read the evolution of the Gothic mode down the ages through the lens of national identity? In what terms can Gothic be characterised as a product of a nation? What makes Gothic national? And what makes Gothic Turkish?

Another problem that arises in defining Turkish Gothic is placing Turkey within a theoretical framework that will allow the analysis of Turkish literary and cinematic culture using Western critical theories. Due to its unique position in between Europe and the Middle East, and its historical development, Turkey and its cultural production can neither be categorised under Post-colonial or Third World studies nor fully fit in

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[10] Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy, 'Gothic Locations', in *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*, (eds) Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy (Oxon: Routledge, 2007), p. 51.

with Western forms of literary and cultural movements. Therefore, I find Byron's term, globalgothic, to be most useful as a theoretical framework which sheds light on the multidirectional flows that have carried Gothic motifs and tropes to the Turkish cultural imagination for decades, if not for centuries. In addition to this, my methodological approach will include comparative and interdisciplinary research regarding both Western and Turkish Gothic narratives in order to show the shifting boundaries between the two Gothic traditions as well as British, American and Turkish national cultures.

In this thesis, I theorise Turkish Gothic as a mode strongly linked to the ideological processes of Turkish national identity construction. By drawing on Gothic criticism, I focus on symbolic time periods when the link between Gothic and Turkish national identity is most prominent. I argue that Turkish Gothic manifests the Turkish nation's anxieties concerning the in-betweenness of Turkish national identity and its ideological repercussions as being either Western and secular, or Eastern and conservative. In doing so, the Gothic mode in Turkey interchangeably becomes a tool of counter-narrative for both ideologies, Gothicising and undermining the other. Moreover, this duality lies at the heart of both Turkish Gothic and Western Gothic texts depicting Turkish identity.

In order to better contextualise my approach in this introduction, I have divided my theoretical discussion into sections that highlight the main components of this thesis. The first section outlines my arguments regarding the limitations of scholarship on Turkish Gothic. The changing definition of Turkish national identity with respects to symbolic time periods, which I will return to throughout the thesis, is my next point of discussion. This section is followed by a detailed theoretical discussion of the Gothic mode and globalgothic by highlighting how their involvement in ideological processes of national identity construction paves the way for theorising Turkish Gothic as a national mode. I should note that the majority of primary texts I use in this thesis are in

Turkish. Indeed, the lack of translated works is one of the main reasons behind the limited numbers of published research on Turkish Gothic in English. The English translations of specific texts are used where available however, I will provide my own translations for other Turkish texts. For convenience, I will use the English titles of Turkish texts thereafter following their first introduction in Turkish.

Gothic Studies in Turkey: The Problem of Definition

The Gothic first appears in Turkish literature in the early twentieth century primarily in the works of Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar. This was a period of painful transformation from an Islamic Empire to a modern nation state with a war-torn homeland and a largely conservative population, the majority of which was illiterate. Therefore, the Turkish intelligentsia of the time utilised literature as a tool in order to educate and enlighten the public. Like the novel form itself, the Gothic was imported from the West which suggests the writers looked up to French and British writers of the nineteenth century and mimicked conventions, adapted stories and reformulated them in Turkish contexts. At its earlier stages, Diane Long Hoeveler remarks, Gothic literature was 'a part of the Western secularisation process'.[11] Early Turkish Gothic served a similar purpose and was involved with popular themes of the period such as positivism, modernisation, nationalism and Turkishness with an attempt to reflect on the secularisation process that was initiated under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey.

In the following decades, the Gothic continued to be involved in ideological formations of Turkishness mainly in novels and B-movies, yet it was widely excluded from mainstream culture, and discredited for being foreign to Turkish audiences. Most

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[11] Diane Long Hoeveler, *The Gothic Ideology: Religious Hysteria and Anti-Catholicism in British Popular Fiction, 1780-1880* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2014), pp. 2-3.

examples remained little known until after the 1980s when the interest in Gothic horror increased due to political and social changes. In fact, the last two decades of the twentieth century were particularly significant for both Turkey and Turkish Gothic. During this period, Turkey embraced neoliberal capitalism and entered the economic, political and cultural flows of globalisation. While the increasing numbers of translations from other languages to Turkish invigorated the literary scene and the publishing sector, technological and scientific advancements facilitated the circulation of cultural products through the Internet, satellite TV and media formats such as VHS. The world was more connected than ever, and for the first time in history, Turkish people, particularly the young generation, felt like a part of a bigger picture.

The history of Gothic scholarship in Turkey started around this time, with writer, researcher, cinema historian, and critic Giovanni Scognamillo. Scognamillo worked in the Turkish cinema industry in several roles after the 1960s, and wrote more than fifty books including fiction, translations and anthologies on Turkish cinema. He also published many articles on Gothic, horror, the fantastic and the occult in various magazines in Turkey. In fact, due to his enthusiasm for Gothic literature and cinema, and his support to younger generations wanting to pursue the same interests, he became to be known as the Count of Beyoğlu, after the old cinema district in Istanbul. Scognamillo's most significant academic contribution to Gothic studies in Turkey is his highly cited book *The Doors of Terror: Introduction to Horror Literature* (1994) which features chapters covering early Gothic literature, Edgar Allan Poe, Gothic monsters, H.P. Lovecraft and Gothic horror cinema. The book is more of a reference work than a monograph as it includes very little commentary and critical analysis. Scognomillo's main purpose is to give an introduction to the Gothic in the Turkish language at a time when the interest in Gothic horror was fast growing in Turkey. In the chapter titled 'To

Be or Not to Be Gothic', Scognamillo gives his own definition of the Gothic mode as follows:

> In our opinion, what is important, what needs to be emphasised, what this movement [the Gothic] presents is the sensation: briefly, the interest that man shows to the unknown and the supernatural, the pleasure that he takes from them. Thereby, the foundation of the Gothic is the atmosphere which is needed to create these senses: fear, anxiety, tension and terror, mystery; and symbols, the ambiance, which is established around the structure and the style of the story. And this ambiance is created and cherished through the words, metaphors, details and uncertainties […] Chateaus, castles, towers and passages, skeletons, chains, torture chambers, ghosts, devils, superstitions, curses, bloody murders, dark souls, vengeance and rapes… All construct the ingredients and inevitable accessories, depict the terms of being Gothic.[12]

In his extended definition, Scognamillo acknowledges the importance of Gothic effects and atmosphere. However, his later remark about the terms of being Gothic is based on a historically specific set of texts and does not allow for change and expansion of the mode over time. After giving a similar definition, David Punter observes 'if this were the only literary meaning of Gothic, the term would be reasonably easy to describe and define'.[13] Yet, as often highlighted by Gothic scholars, the Gothic does not have a one-dimensional and static definition. Hence, Scognamillo's understanding of the Gothic remains limited and lacks the historical integrity needed to cover the main issues of the Gothic down the ages and particularly, in the contemporary world.

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[12] Giovanni Scognamillo, *Dehşetin Kapıları: Korku Edebiyatına Giriş* [The Doors of Terror: Introduction to Horror Literature] (İstanbul: Mitos, 1994), p. 27. [*my translation*]

[13] David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day, Volume I* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013a), p. 1.

Inarguably, Scognamillo's work paved the way for the post-millennial academic interest in Gothic studies in Turkey. Kaya Özkaracalar's short reference work *Gotik* (2005) was also a significant step towards invigorating the field. *Gotik* included a brief section titled 'Gothic in Turkey' in which Özkaracalar names some of the novels and films I will discuss in Chapter Two as Gothic.[14] Apart from Scognamillo and Özkaracalar, there is still a limited amount of published research on Turkish Gothic concerning novels and films. One of the reasons behind this is the fact that it was only in the 2000s that Gothic horror became a popular genre in Turkish cultural production. Before the 2000s, Gothic was considered as the product of low culture by the Turkish intelligentsia. Influenced by the realist movements in British and French literatures in the nineteenth century, and with a commitment to reflect on the problems of a newly founded nation-state, Turkish literature mainly produced social realist novels during the twentieth century. Although authors such as Suat Derviş, Ali Rıza Seyfioğlu and Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, whose novels I will discuss in Chapter Two, showed a great interest in the Gothic mode, their works were not accepted as worthy by the literary elite. A poet from the early twentieth century, Ahmet Haşim, for example, criticises the rising numbers of works with Gothic elements and predicts that they would soon lose their popularity.[15]

Another setback to the emergence of the Gothic in Turkey is the misconception regarding the differences between the philosophies of Christianity and Islam. In one of the most cited pieces of research on Turkish Gothic — which is an unpublished master's dissertation, demonstrating the lack of scholarly criticism — Özge Yücesoy argues that in Christianity men are believed to be born with 'Original Sin' while in Islam humans are pure by birth and judged by their choices in life. Thus, a Turkish protagonist

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[14] Kaya Özkaracalar, *Gotik* [Gothic] (İstanbul: L&M Yayınları, 2005), pp. 62-78.
[15] Ahmet Haşim, 'Bir Genç Kızın Eseri' [The Work of a Young Girl], in *Ne Bir Ses Ne Bir Nefes* [Not a Sound Not a Breath], by Suat Derviş (İstanbul: İnkilap, 1946), pp. 3-4.

assumedly brought up with Islamic tradition would not have an existential conflict with its 'self' as characters of early Gothic literature had. I argue that such comparison between two religions is an over-simplification of Christian tradition and its role in the Gothic. Christianity contains several denominations such as Catholicism, Protestantism or Methodism, which show differences in beliefs and practices. Thus, analysing the role of Christianity in the Gothic tradition cannot be reduced to the issue of existential crisis. Not to mention that religious imageries in various traditional Gothic works were mainly used to criticise Catholicism in particular and religious superstition more generally in the context of Protestant values and the scientific discoveries of the nineteenth century. Moreover, Scognamillo argues that Anglo-Saxon culture is not a necessity for Gothic to emerge and flourish.[16] Gothic has been adopted by cultures outside the Judeo-Christian tradition such as Japan, whose population largely follows the Shinto and Buddhist religions. This suggests that Gothic does not strictly need a specific religious context to evoke fear.

A solution to this problem of difference in religious philosophy was found by Turkish filmmakers of the twentieth century. From the 1950s until the 1990s, Gothic tropes were utilised by many genres in Turkish cinema including sci-fi, parody, and melodrama but four films in particular achieved the classic Gothic atmosphere in Turkish contexts and established a foundational cinematic aesthetic for the Turkish Gothic tradition. The common element of these films was the emphasis given to the *Turkification* process; that is, the ways in which the filmmakers make Gothic conventions Turkish. As I will illustrate in Chapter Four, religious exchange was the most essential part of Turkish Gothic during this period.

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[16] Giovanni Scognamillo, *Korkunun Sanatları* [The Arts of Horror] (İstanbul: İnkilap, 1996), p. 47.

As is seen from the emergence of academic research, the 1990s brought the resurgence of the Gothic in Turkey. As Veli Uğur also suggests, the impact of globalisation, the increasing numbers of translations of Western Gothic horror fiction into Turkish and the popularity of Hollywood Horror films in cinema and on TV were influential in this revival.[17] It can be argued that the advancements in cinema, video/DVD and TV technologies contributed to the development of Turkish Gothic particularly in cinema. Another reason was due to writers' gravitation towards discovering horror motifs from Turkish culture and folklore rather than replicating the film adaptations of Western Gothic productions. Chapter Four elaborates on how this trend became strongly linked to the rise of conservative politics in Turkey. In addition to this, the impact of globalisation, consumer culture, and neoliberal politics also became central to the concerns of Gothic horror in Turkey in the twenty-first century.

Despite the growing quantity of academic research on Turkish Gothic horror, looking for scholarly research that uses the term Turkish Gothic specifically and is published in English has been an inconvenient journey. The first and only article that uses the term Turkish Gothic is Ayşe Didem Uslu's 'Grotesque and Gothic Comedy in Turkish Shadow Plays' published in *Asian Gothic: Essays on Literature, Film and Anime* (2008). The article starts with a close reading of two Hacivat and Karagöz shadow plays whose origin dates back to the sixteenth century. Uslu asserts that the plays 'parody… reason and morality' through 'the carnivalesque and the grotesque, madness and obscenity'.[18] Briefly, these plays are performed with two-dimensional portrayals of the characters Hacivat and Karagöz shadowed on a white curtain and are

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[17] Veli Uğur, *1980 Sonrası Türkiye'de Popüler Roman* [Popular Fiction in Turkey After 1980] (İstanbul: Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2013), p. 235.
[18] Ayse Didem Uslu, 'Grotesque and Gothic Comedy in Turkish Shadow Plays', in *Asian Gothic: Essays on Literature, Film and Anime,* ed. by Andrew Hock Soon Ng (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2008), p. 225.

comprised of the friendly conflicts between the two, who, for Uslu, 'represent the duality of Everymen' of Ottoman-Turkish culture.[19] While other minor characters in the plays are chosen from the different ethnicities within Ottoman society so as to represent a multicultural structure, supernatural characters such as demons, witches, djinns, monsters and the devil are also present in the stories.

Through this reading, Uslu suggests that Turkish Gothic in these plays has 'a redemptive and gleeful nature' which intertwines the horrible and the hilarious making the Gothic and comic indistinct.[20] She claims that although both Western and Turkish Gothic 'exaggerate reality to reveal, ironically, how "shadowy" reality really is', the main difference between the two is the conception of 'the Other'.[21] Western Gothic acknowledges otherness as opposed to self, while in Turkish Gothic the self and the Other exist together as several ethnicities – Others – exist together in the multicultural structure of Ottoman society. Based on this observation, she claims Turkish Gothic 'does not conflate death and chaos with evil but sees such moments as indispensable aspects of life and the universe'.[22] Although Uslu's attempt to bring the term Turkish Gothic into life is promising when her textual analysis is considered, her definition for the term remains vague and limited.

Principally, Uslu uses Turkish Gothic and Ottoman Gothic – in fact, the term 'Middle Eastern Gothic' as well – interchangeably and this is highly problematic. The historical and social heritage of the Ottoman Empire survives in contemporary Turkish culture, but such a usage not only denies possible variations of Turkish Gothic in modern Turkish literature and culture but also leads the reader to question the validity of the term and the reliability of the author's knowledge. This confusion can create a false

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[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid, p. 226.
[21] Ibid, p. 231.
[22] Ibid, p. 234.

assumption that Ottoman culture and Turkish culture have the same characteristics. Secondly, Uslu's definition of Turkish/Ottoman Gothic is unconvincing because of her argument concerning the conception of 'the Other'. Uslu argues that all ethnicities and races – all possible 'Others' of the society – lived happily in her utopian Ottoman society and thus, they were tolerant towards each other. This is self-evidently a simplification of historical relations between ethnicities and races in Turkey. She suggests that since the division between the self and the Other in Ottoman society is not as distinctive as it is in Western societies for whom the Other means the unfamiliar – the uncanny – the essence of Turkish Gothic, then, is 'not the fear of the unknown but the promises it can bring'.[23] Uslu makes a generalisation about Turkish Gothic based on her reading of the Hacivat and Karagöz plays which are to some extent Ottoman equivalents of medieval morality plays. Therefore, while her localized analysis of the plays is intriguing, her analysis cannot be applied to all of the characteristics that Turkish Gothic tradition bears, and her definition of Turkish Gothic remain unsatisfying.

What I understand from the term Turkish Gothic is not limited to literature to start with. Indeed, its origins rest in literature, more specifically, in the novel form, but the term Turkish Gothic refers to a much larger tradition encompassing all kinds of cultural production from novel to art, from metal music to horror film, from photography — as can be seen from the reinterpretation of Wood's American Gothic painting — to TV shows and so on. However, the binding force behind all these various forms is not the fact that they are produced in Turkey, but in what ways they interact with Turkishness in a historical, political and cultural sense. Therefore, in order to shed light on this binding force then, I argue that an understanding of the word 'Turkish' as a national signifier is the key.

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[23] Ibid.

Turkish National Identity and Its Discontents

When defining anything as 'Turkish' such as Turkish coffee, Turkish delight or Turkish bath, what is implied is not only the origin of the product but mostly the cultural heritage that the product belongs to, in what ways it has interacted with Turkish people's lives throughout history and what kind of identity values Turkish people attach to it. Nevertheless, defining Turkish identity is an endeavour as difficult as defining Gothic. There is no simple and stable definition since Turkish identity has been constantly changing and adapting to new contexts throughout history. For the sake of the limited space I have in this thesis, I am particularly interested in symbolic time periods during which Turkish identity and what it means to be Turkish became central topics of discussion in political and social settings.

My first point of reference is the early twentieth century since the origins of what I call the in-between character of Turkish national identity can be traced back to this period; more precisely, to the Turkish nationalism propagated by the Kemalist secular ideology. Kemalism is, at its core, the founding ideology of the Republic of Turkey, based on a set of principles and reforms designed by Atatürk and his comrades in arms in order to fully detach Turkey from its Ottoman roots and redefine Turkish identity.[24] It is noteworthy to mention that my understanding of ideology here is based on Louis Althusser's concept of the ISAs (The Ideological State Apparatuses) which consist of political, religious, educational, cultural and familial institutions of state. For Althusser, the ISAs function primarily by the state's ideology which 'hails or interpellates individuals as subjects'.[25] This suggests that individuals acquire an identity shaped by the values and beliefs of the state's ideology since they are raised and

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[24] Petr Kučera, 'Becoming European: Kemalism as an ideology of Westernism', in *The Politics of EU Accession: Turkish Challenges and Central European Experiences*, (eds) Lucie Tunkrová and Pavel Šaradín (Oxon: Routledge, 2010), p. 18.

[25] Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an investigation)', in *Mapping Ideology*, ed. by Slavoj Zizek (London: Verso, 1994), p. 132.

educated in the state's institutions. Although the rest of the thesis will not be based on an Althuserrian or a Marxist reading of Turkish Gothic texts, I find it essential to draw the similarities between Althusser's concept of the ISAs and the Kemalist ideology's secularisation project which designed Turkish national identity and the institutions of the newly founded nation-state according to Kemalist ideals.

Soner Cagaptay remarks that the secularisation project designed by Kemalism aimed to redefine Turkish identity without its Islamic roots.[26] The first action of the Kemalists was therefore the abolishment of the caliphate on November 2, 1924. The Caliphate was a Muslim tradition of Islamic leadership that dated back to the seventh century. The Ottoman Sultans had been the caliphates of Islam since the sixteenth century and therefore the abolishment of the caliphate was a major step towards eliminating the Islamic heritage. This was then followed by the abolishment of various other religion-related institutions and traditions from the Islamic (Shariat) law to the religious schools in the span of a few years. Another set of dramatic changes occurred in 1928. The Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) first renounced Islam as Turkey's state religion and announced that the Arabic alphabet was to be replaced by Latin alphabet.[27] Hence, Islam was completely banished from the state and its presence in the public domain became nominal.

The next phase of the project was the unification of Ottoman citizens under another identification rather than Islam. Hence, a definition of Turkish nation and Turkish national identity was necessary. According to Anthony D. Smith, a nation is 'a named and self-defined human community whose members cultivate shared myths, memories, symbols, values, and traditions, reside in and identify with a historic

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[26] Soner Cagaptay, *Islam, Suclarism, and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who is a Turk?* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), p. 14.
[27] Ibid.

homeland, create and disseminate a distinctive public culture, and observe shared customs and common laws'.[28] Kemalism's definition of the Turkish nation followed Smith's description in several ways. Anatolia was accepted as the historic homeland of Turks who shared a common cultural heritage with ancient Turkic civilisations of the Central Asia. This was the result of the Turkish History Thesis accepted by historians and scholars during the First Turkish History Congress in 1932. Cagaptay summarises the three main arguments of the thesis as such:

> first, the Turks were the ancestors of all brachycephalic peoples, including the Indo-Europeans, whose origins went back to Central Asia. Second, the Turkish race had created the civilizations in all the lands to which the Turks had migrated. Thus, the contemporary Turks were the inheritors of the glories of the ancient Sumerians, Egyptians, and Greeks, among others. Besides, they were the founders of the earliest civilization in Anatolia through the Hittites. A third implication was that since the Turks were its original autochthonous inhabitants, Anatolia was the Turkish homeland.[29]

As it provided the foundational characteristics of Turkish nationalism, the Turkish History Thesis paved the way for the Turkish Language Reform in 1932. The reform aimed the purification of the Turkish language from Arabic and Persian influences and restoring it to its glorified Turkish origins.[30] Once again, the Ottoman past was rejected and Turkishness was redefined as a construct predating the Ottoman, hence, the Islamic influence.

The secularisation project was not limited to racial identification. As the only political party of the TBMM until 1945, Cumhuriyetçi Halk Partisi (the Republican

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[28] Anthony D. Smith, *The Cultural Foundations of Nations: Hierarchy, Covenant and Republic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), p. 19.
[29] Cagaptay (2006), p. 51.
[30] Ibid, p. 54.

People's Party, RPP) — founded by Atatürk himself — defined the party's, hence Kemalism's, six guiding principles in 1935 as republicanism, nationalism, populism, étatism, secularism, and reformism.[31] These six principles, together with the newly discovered history of Turkish identity separate from the Ottomans defined the operational ideology of the state's apparatuses since the Turkish Constitution of 1924.[32] In light of these principles, Turkey underwent a series of political, economic, legal, social and educational reforms with the ultimate goal of modernisation, even surpassing 'the level of contemporary civilisations', as envisioned by Atatürk.[33] Turkish modernisation was at its core modelled on the West. Andrew Mango remarks that what separated Atatürk from other leading members of the newly founded state was his commitment to Western science and knowledge instead of Eastern values and traditions.

> [Atatürk's] preference for a Western way of life was shared by many, if not most, members of the ruling class, but where many of his contemporaries continued to admire the picturesque and, as some would have it, spiritual qualities of the Orient, he saw only backwardness, shoddiness and dirt.[34]

In accordance with Atatürk's own perception of the West and the East, Kemalist ideology glorified the West, particularly in matters of education, science and art, and was disdainful of Ottoman heritage or anything that was outdated. Although Kemalists strictly opposed and propagated against the imperialist actions of the West, which Turkey learned the hard way during the War of Independence (1919-1923), their

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[31] Ibid, p. 46.

[32] The six principles later became known as the Atatürk's principles and faithfully taught at schools under the course title 'Atatürk's Principles and Reforms', until the JDP (Justice and Development Party) removed the course from school curriculums in 2017.

[33] In his speech on the tenth year anniversary of the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, Atatürk declares his vision in these words: 'We will raise our national culture above the level of contemporary civilisations', Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *Onuncu Yıl Nutku* [The Tenth Year Address] (Ankara, 29 October 1933), *Tbmm*, <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kultursanat/mka_onuncuyil_nutuk.htm> [accessed 9 April 2018].

[34] Andrew Mango, 'Atatürk', in *The Cambridge History of Turkey: Vol 4: Turkey in the Modern World*, ed. by Reşat Kasaba (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 163.

commitment to Westernisation remained intact. In Chapter Two, I will focus on how Gothic genre was put into the service of Kemalist ideology and its vision of Turkishness in various ways.

Kemalist ideology lost its eminence in the second half of the twentieth century soon after Turkish politics proceeded into the multi-party system in 1945 and allowed for different ideologies, some of which were previously suppressed by Kemalists, to be heard in the parliament. In the decades to follow, Kemalist ideology became heavily criticised for being statist and authoritarian. Particularly after 1960 and 1980 coup d'états, Kemalism lost its prestige amongst the majority of the population. With the rise of identity politics in the 1980s, Turkish identity imagined by Kemalism was considered non-inclusive of ethnic and non-Muslim minorities of Turkey. Moreover, some religious groups were already resentful of Kemalist policies regarding their attitude towards Islam and traditional values. Therefore, as a response to the crisis of Kemalist ideology, political Islam or Islamism emerged as a new form of conservatism in the post-1980 period.[35] This period was also marked by Turkey's entrance to the global markets of neoliberal capitalism and its initial application to join the European Union as a full member — although its candidacy was not announced until 1999. At the end of the twentieth century, Turkey was standing in between Europe and the Middle East as a significant political actor in world politics. Particularly after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York on 11 September 2001, Turkey became a crucial ally of the United States in the war on terror.[36]

In the meantime, such developments revealed the urgency to redefine Turkish identity in the global world. Due to the rising popularity of the conservative sentiment,

[35] Haldun Gülalp, 'Modernisation Policies and Islamist Politics in Turkey', in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, (eds) Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (Washington D.C.: The University of Washington Press, 1997), p. 53.
[36] Feroz Ahmad, *Turkey: The Quest for Identity* (Oxford: Oneworld Publication, 2003), p. 178.

Turkish identity was reimagined as containing both Western and Eastern characteristics. The Western character of Turkish identity was linked to Turkey's commitment to Westernisation and represented primarily by secular ideology while the Eastern character symbolised local culture, customs and traditions, and was promoted mainly by the conservative ideology of Islamism. Although neither of the categories had strictly designated boundaries, a homogenous Turkish identity was also not in question. This dichotomous nature of Turkish identity was represented in the country's embraced role as a bridge between Europe and Asia: a characteristic that has been propagated by politicians and opinion leaders since the 1980s. However, this characteristic deeply problematises Turkish national identity as illustrated by Samuel P. Huntington:

> Turkish leaders regularly described their country as a 'bridge' between cultures. Turkey, Prime Minister Tansu Ciller argued in 1993, is both a 'Western democracy' and 'part of the Middle East' and 'bridges two civilisation, physically and philosophically'. […] A bridge however, is an artificial creation connecting two solid entities but is part of neither. When Turkey's leaders term their country a bridge, they euphemistically confirm that it is torn.[37]

Huntington points out that as human artefacts, bridges symbolise in-betweenness and rootlessness. Attributing such a character to national identity is flawed, for it fragments the image of the nation as a unity. Following Huntington's remark, it can be argued that national identity is an existentially troubled notion in Turkey. Turkish national identity is fragmented between the ideals of Westernisation and preserving local traditions and customs some of which directly stem from the country's Islamic heritage.

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[37] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), p. 149.

This ideological fragmentation can best be seen in the results of the Constitutional Referendum which took place on 16 April 2017. The referendum proposed a set of amendments for eighteen articles of the 1982 constitution and aimed abolishing the office of Prime Minister and replacing the parliamentary system with a presidency system extending the rights of the President as the head of the judiciary.[38] The draft of the amendment was prepared by the Council of Constitution formed by deputies from each party in the parliament in accordance with the parties' majority in the parliament. Since the JPD has the majority of the seats in the parliament, more than half of the members of the council were JPD deputies, and the draft was accepted only by the votes of the JPD and Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (Nationalist Action Party, NAP) — two parties representative of the conservative ideology in the parliament. The other two parties, RPP (Republican People's Party) and Halkların Demokratik Partisi (People's Democratic Party, PDP) strictly opposed the proposed amendments through fears of losing the secular values upheld by both parties and ending up with an official dictatorship in the disguise of a presidency.

Indeed, since the JDP's accession to power in 2002, the party's policies and its leader Erdoğan's rhetoric have gradually become more authoritarian, causing Erdoğan to be seen as a dictator at home and abroad. The Gezi Park Protests, which took place in the summer of 2013, have been widely considered as a turning point in Erdoğan's authoritarianism for worse — although the fact that the protests were a major reaction to his increasing authoritarianism is deeply ironic.[39] Not surprisingly, the majority of those who consider Erdoğan as an authoritarian leader and feel marginalised or suppressed under his party's conservative policies are the secularists whose electoral choices

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[38] 'Why did Turkey hold a referendum?', *bbc.com*, 16 April 2017 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-388835seven>.

[39] Simon A. Waldman and Emre Çalışkan, *The New Turkey and Its Discontents* (London: C. Hurst & Co, 2016), p. 74.

majorly lie with the RPP.[40] In the months leading to the constitutional referendum,

Erdoğan and the 'Yes' campaigners have consistently been accused by RPP and PDP of

controlling the media coverage of the 'No' campaign, shutting down meetings and

events, and banning songs related to the campaign. On the referendum day, during the

last hours of the vote count, the Supreme Electoral Council announced that ballots

without an official stamp would also be valid, which infuriated 'No' campaigners since

it allowed for unofficial, hence fake ballots, to be introduced into the system.[41] This

scandalous last-minute decision of the Council was opposed by the 'No' campaigners at

courts, but their applications were rejected.

The results of the referendum showed that the 51.41 percent of the Turkish

population said 'Yes' to the proposed constitutional changes while 48.59 percent said

'No'. Such close percentages suggest that Turkey is a deeply divided country and

Turkish society is torn between secularism and conservatism. Turkey might be seen as

the connecting bridge between two civilisations from outside; but from inside, it suffers

from this state of in-betweenness and the confusion that this fragmented identity creates.

The fragmentation of Turkish national identity can be traced back to the early twentieth

century when Kemalism separated Islam from the definition of Turkishness, but it can

also be observed in the dividedness of the twenty-first century Turkish society.

Therefore, throughout this thesis, I acknowledge Turkish identity as having a

dichotomous nature resultant of the long-lasting tension between secularism and

conservatism. The anxieties and fears, which I will refer to in Chapters Two, Three,

Four and Five in relation to literary and cinematic narratives, originate from this identity

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[40] Ibid.

[41] Jennifer Amur, 'Why Turkish opposition parties are contesting the referendum results', *Washington Post*, 17 April 2017,<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/04/16/heres-why-turkish-opposition-parties-are-contesting-the-referendum-results/?utm_term=.be4800c98192>.

confusion and allegorically allude to the ideological processes of national identity construction in above mentioned critical time periods.

The Gothic and Globalgothic

Similar to Turkish national identity, Gothic is known to re-emerge 'at periods of cultural stress, to negotiate the anxieties that accompany social and epistemological transformations and crises'.[42] This historically informed reading of the Gothic emerged in the late-twentieth century when grand narratives of literary canons and genres were being challenged. Prior to this, Gothic was mainly read within the eighteenth-century and Romantic literary canon, considered as 'minor, low, popular and formulaic'.[43] Once such perception was dismissed, it was revealed that Gothic conventions which first appeared in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) have interacted with historical and cultural contexts alongside various literary forms and interdisciplinary mediums throughout centuries. The Gothic has been in a constant state of flux. As Jerrold E. Hogle notes, the Gothic is now a 'multi-generic and malleable mode of writing and of media' which can be found in any literary forms and genres alongside their visual representatives.[44] Therefore, defining Gothic in one straightforward sentence that will encompass its diverse forms and characteristics remains a controversial endeavour for most contemporary critics.

In this context, Chris Baldick's 'Introduction' to *The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales* (1992) has provided the most influential definition of Gothic so far. Baldick argues:

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[42] Kelly Hurley, *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism and Degeneration at The Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 5.

[43] Fred Botting, *Gothic* (Oxon: Routledge, 2014), p. 16.

[44] Jerrold E. Hogle, 'The Gothic at our Turn of the Century: Our Culture of Simulation and the Return of the Body', in *The Gothic*, ed. by Fred Botting (Cambridge: The English Association, 2001), p. 153.

> For the Gothic effect to be attained, a tale should combine a fearful sense of inheritance in a time with a claustrophobic sense of enclosure in space, these two dimensions reinforcing one another to produce an impression of sickening descent into disintegration.[45]

Baldick's recipe for the Gothic tale includes three main ingredients: a temporal inheritance, a claustrophobic space, and the fragmentation of the subject. These three requisites of the Gothic can be detected in almost every Gothic narrative from the Gothic romances of the eighteenth century to the stock features of modern Horror. Whether it is an ancestral prophecy becoming real, the dead rising from the grave, an evil deed resurfacing after years or the revelation of a traumatic experience from the past, the return of the repressed in Gothic texts always occurs in a closed space: a family mansion, a medieval dungeon, or simply an apartment flat, in which physical imprisonment of the subject becomes increasingly uncanny and claustrophobic eventually causing the slow fragmentation of the subject. The literary and cinematic works I will discuss here, all demonstrate an understanding of the Gothic that can be observed in Baldick's canonical description.

The overarching theoretical framework of this thesis, however, is the term globalgothic. If Gothic, in the twenty-first century, 'lurks in all sorts of unexpected corners' of the world spreading 'like a malevolent virus', as Spooner points out, it is due to the cultural flows of globalisation.[46] From the late 1990s onwards, Gothic studies directed its focus towards these flows and its origins in geographical locations other than Britain and America. What was termed globalgothic by Glennis Byron was the outcome of this major step towards yet undiscovered territory of the Gothic. Having evolved out of series of conferences, seminars, workshops and collaborative research

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[45] Chris Baldick, *The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. xiii.
[46] Catherine Spooner, *Contemporary Gothic* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), p. 8.

carried out by the Global Gothic Network (2008-2009) — a research project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council in the United Kingdom — globalgothic identifies the multidirectional exchanges between Western Gothic mode and globalisation. Byron suggests that contemporary reincarnations of the Gothic depict globalisation as 'dehumanising, monstrous, spectral, cannibalistic, an object of anxiety and suspicion' while globalisation in return reconfigures Western Gothic conventions by enabling its travels beyond the limits of the familiar cultural habitats of the Gothic through translations and adaptations.[47]

> Not only has Western Gothic travelled but one of the effects of the increasing mobility and fluidity of people and products in the globalised world has been a growing awareness that the tropes and strategies of Western critics have associated with the Gothic, such as the ghost, the vampire and the zombie, have their counterparts in other cultures, however differently these may be inflected by specific histories and belief systems.[48]

Byron underlines the necessity of referring back to historical and cultural specifics of a given territory in analysing its local Gothic tradition or how it localised Western Gothic.

In a similar vein, Fred Botting and Justin D. Edwards further argue that through globalisation, archaic figures of the Gothic genre such as ghosts, vampires, witches, zombies and monsters travel around the world while they embrace new meanings: 'they are markers of otherness, articulations of the threatening changes of economic and imperial power, signifiers of techno-scientific innovations, as well as representations of personal and communal losses and traumas'.[49] These new meanings that the Gothic

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[47] Glennis Byron, 'Global Gothic', in *A New Companion to the Gothic*, ed. by David Punter (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), p. 373.
[48] Glennis Byron, *Globalgothic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 3.
[49] Fred Botting and Justin Edwards, 'Theorising Globalgothic', in *Globalgothic*, ed. by Glennis Byron (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), pp. 11-12.

adopts are always connected to geographical territories and national contexts. Thus, the representations of geographical or national identities constructed, developed and conveyed through the Gothic tropes are also vitally important for globalgothic. What Globalgothic does is:

> first, registers the anxieties that arise from national, social and subjective dissolution, including an endless media-critical interrogation of identities, genders, races and classes; second, constructs an otherness that screens out the excesses of anxiety while turning the mirror back on itself… globally, darkly, monstrously.[50]

Botting and Edwards name the three key issues for globalgothic as the national and social anxieties emerging from the new world order that the globalisation process constructed; the representations of identities, genders, races and classes who try to survive in this new world order; and traumas of those national or personal identities.

To theorise Turkish Gothic within the context of globalgothic, this thesis pays particular attention to these key issues mentioned by Botting and Edwards, from beginning to end. Moreover, although globalgothic is intimately related to the post-1980 period – after the emergence of the term globalisation –, it is indeed possible to track down the cultural exchange between the West and Turkey to the late nineteenth century when novel form was first introduced to the late Ottoman literature through translations. Hence, this study takes the beginnings of this cultural exchange into account and consider them as part of the scope of globalgothic. However, if Western Gothic travelled to Turkey carrying its conventions, themes and motifs as Byron, Botting and Edwards remarked, and since as early as the late nineteenth century, when exactly did

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[50] Ibid, p. 23.

Gothic stop being Western? Where does Western Gothic finish and Turkish Gothic start?

I argue that the origins of Turkish Gothic can be found in the Western Gothic tradition. Hegel once remarked that to define itself, the self first needs an 'other' to define: 'Each is for the other the middle term through which each mediates itself'.[51] Just as Turkish identity was constructed by defining the Ottoman Empire as its other in the early twentieth century, the construction of the European identity was also strongly linked to the threat of the Ottoman Turk, aka 'the dominant other' of the European states since the fourteenth century.[52] Iver B. Neumann argues that the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 by the Ottoman Empire triggered the unity of Christendom under the name of Europe against the Ottoman Turk.[53] Moreover, this unity, which Neumann sees as the foundation of the European Union, implemented a political and religious rhetoric against the Turk by drawing on pejorative terms such as infidel, nonbeliever, savage and barbarian. After the mid-seventeenth century, Europe specifically focused on 'barbarian' in its definition of the Turk for as a slowly secularising unity, it no longer defined itself by Christianity.[54] As Neuman suggests,

> civilisation, defined by criteria such as 'humanity', 'law' and 'social mores' seemed to supplant religion in Europe's external differentiation from non-European communities. What took hold was a set of 'intercultural relations' between Europe and 'the Turk', relations that drew a sharp distinction between civilisation and barbarism. [55]

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[51] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 112.
[52] Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other: 'The East' in European Identity Formation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. 39.
[53] Ibid, p. 44.
[54] Ibid, p. 52.
[55] Ibid.

Influenced by Europe's identity construction process, Western Gothic drew heavily on the civilisation versus barbarism dichotomy. In his ground-breaking work, *The Literature of Terror*, Punter names 'the fear of the intrusion of the barbaric' as one of the components of Gothic.[56] The civilised being attacked, invaded or violated by the barbarian Other is a common theme in a wide range of Gothic horror narratives from nineteenth-century vampire fiction to the contemporary post-apocalyptic horror sub-genre. Therefore, my analysis of Western Gothic in Chapter One will further investigate the notion of the barbaric attributed to Turkish identity through the centuries. I will explore how the image of 'the barbar Turk' became a popular villain in Gothic narratives and in what kind of political and social circumstances. I argue that by examining representations of Turkish identity in Western Gothic narratives, it is possible to find a common thread, a bridge, between Western Gothic and Turkish Gothic which will reinforce my theorisation of Turkish Gothic. Moreover, once established, this bridge will shed light on the multi-directional flows of globalgothic.

Chapters Two, Three, Four and Five of this thesis will solely focus on Turkish Gothic in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Intrinsic to my understanding of Turkish Gothic is the relationship between the Gothic and national identity. Indeed, the history of the Gothic is deeply bound up with the concept of the nation and ideological processes of national identity construction. Drawing primarily on the mid-eighteenth century which led to the emergence of Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, Robert Miles argues that 'the Gothic is concerned with expressing, with throwing into a compromised light, historically specific material that was part and parcel of the construction of the Nation, with what was thrown down, in order for the Nation to be built up'.[57] Similar to

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[56] David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day, Volume 2: Modern Gothic* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013b), p. 67.

[57] Robert Miles, 'Abjection, Nationalism and the Gothic', in *The Gothic*, ed. by Fred Botting (Cambridge: The English Association, 2001), p. 68.

Hegel, Miles refers to the concept of 'the Other' and its role in the self-definition of the nation. Manfred in *The Castle of Otranto*, for Miles, is the Catholic Other of the Protestant Britishness which was, at the time, in the process of construction based on the assumption that British identity originally had a Protestant, more precisely liberal and progressive, character.[58] By reinstating Theodore as the legitimate lord of the castle, Walpole restores the British identity which was once under the influence of Catholicism and its outdated practices, manifested in Manfred's dictatorial villainy. Hence, Miles considers 'the relationship between the horrific and nationalism' as 'the most powerful, and fundamental, determinants of the Gothic'.[59]

Following Miles' argument, Chapter Two will focus on selected Turkish Gothic novels of the 1920, a decade during which the Kemalist nationalism had been the dominant state ideology and Turkishness was constructed accordingly. I argue that Turkish Gothic of this period imagines the Ottoman past as though the Catholic other of the progressive and modern Turkish identity imagined by Kemalism. These novels often centralise women characters as the salient symbols of modern Turkish identity and establish a foundational Gothic aesthetic that reconfigures nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Western Gothic themes and motifs in the context of republican Turkey. Moreover, this chapter also reveals the Ottoman Turkishness that both the West and Kemalist ideology strived to shake off as the link between Western Gothic and Turkish Gothic.

Having laid the groundwork for the origins of multidirectional flows of globalgothic in Chapter One and Two, I will go on to explore cinematic origins of Turkish Gothic. My analysis will focus on four Gothic horror films from the second half of the twentieth century when Turkey and the Turkish national identity were undergoing

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[58] Ibid, p. 63.
[59] Ibid, p. 47.

a period of political and social distress as well as an economic and cultural transformation. I argue that the ambivalent position that Turkish identity held during these decades is reflected on the cinematic aesthetics of Turkish Gothic. I consider two films in particular, to play a crucial role in the evolution of Turkish Gothic in the post-millennium. As I have mentioned earlier, contemporary Turkish identity of the post-millennium is marked by the country's assigned role as a bridge between the West and the East, which inherently leads to a sense of not belonging to either. Moreover, the rise of conservative ideology as an alternative to secular Kemalism has deepened the ambivalence of Turkish identity and resulted in the division of the society into supporters of the two ideologies in the twenty-first century. I argue that this tension is mirrored in the twofold character of contemporary Turkish Gothic. Chapters Four and Five address conservatism and secularism respectively, as the main source of anxieties that contemporary Turkish Gothic feeds on.

In Chapter Four, I discuss the rising interest in conservative Gothic narratives, also known as Islamic Horror, which utilise the theme of demonic possession drawing on the figure of the malevolent djinn from Islamic demonology. Islamic Horror has been the most prolific sub-genre of Turkish horror cinema in the twenty-first century. The underlying reason behind the popularity of Islamic Horror films has been identified by critics as the dominance of the JDP's Islamic ideology and its mission to propagate conservatism in Turkey. Academic research on contemporary Turkish Gothic therefore tends to focus on Turkish Horror cinema in relation to Islamic ideology and ignore literary examples of this sub-genre. I argue that the ideological subtexts of Islamic horror films can be traced back to populist Islamic novels of the late twentieth century, which aim to cultivate neoliberal conservatism and to their supernatural versions, which I term conservative Gothic novels. I argue that conservative Turkish Gothic novels embody the anxieties of the conservative segment of Turkish society who sees secular

lifestyles as a threat to their traditional and Islamic values. Hence, these novels serve the conservative ideology by aiming to demonise secularism by constructing the female body and femininity as monstrous and posing a danger to the Islamic values of the conservative ideology.

Once conservative Turkish Gothic narratives, both in novel form and film, have proved to be profitable for writers and filmmakers, and even introduced Turkish Gothic to global markets, they were considered unrivalled and the only way that local motifs and Turkish identity can be conveyed through Gothic horror. Chapter Five takes issue with this perception and argues for the existence of another branch of contemporary Turkish Gothic. Drawing on Linnie Blake's theorisation of neoliberal Gothic as a body of texts that unmasks the dark underside of neoliberal capitalism, I call this branch of Gothic neoliberal Turkish Gothic. Neoliberal Turkish Gothic texts are primarily the products of the secular urban millennials who were born into and grew up in the period of globalisation, neoliberalism and conservatism in Turkey. I argue that these literary and cinematic texts centralise the anxieties of the young and secular Istanbulites who feel estranged and suffocated by the changing fabric of the city under the rapid urbanisation projects and neoliberal governance policies introduced by the JDP. In other words, neoliberal Turkish Gothic represents the Gezi Park spirit, and offers a rending of secular anxieties that arise from contemporary debates regarding issues of urbanisation, globalisation and conservatism in Turkey.

Like the two sides of a coin, Chapter Four and Chapter Five complete and counter each other simultaneously — just as the secular and conservative components of Turkish identity have done so since the foundation of the Republic of Turkey. This dichotomy is ingrained in Turkish national identity and Turkish Gothic more than ever in the contemporary age. Botting remarks that in the contemporary Western culture,

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Gothic 'has become too familiar' and 'seems incapable of shocking anew' due to repetitive use of its images and tropes.[60] Accordingly, the common interpretation of Gothic's ability to reveal repressed anxieties and fears, Botting suggests, has also lost its meaning yielding its terrors to clichéd creeps. Botting's reading of the contemporary Gothic can be valid in terms of the Gothic's current employment in Western popular culture. However, in the case of Turkey, I argue that the Gothic is still meaningful, in fact, urgently needed to explore the emergent fears of a newly globalised Turkish society, caught between two radically opposed world views.

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[60] Fred Botting, 'Aftergothic: consumption, machines, and black holes', in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. by Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 298.

Chapter One

Barbarism Reloaded: Turkish Identity in Western Gothic Narratives

In 2014, a Hollywood film adaptation of Bram Stoker's Gothic tale *Dracula* (1897) was released in theatres with the claim that it tells the 'untold' story of Vlad Tepeş, later known as Dracula. *Dracula Untold* (2014), directed by Gary Shore, was neither a massive hit in the box office nor well appraised by the critics, yet it was a significant adaptation which brought up a controversial topic of discussion at a time when Islam was being harshly scrutinised. The film portrays the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II in such an evil way that in contrast Vlad Tepeş, or Dracula, seems like the ultimate hero who is willing to do anything to defend his family and people including becoming a bloodthirsty vampire. While the heroisation of Vlad Tepeş in the film echoes the importance that Romanians have attached to this historical character, the demonisation of the Ottoman Sultan shows resemblances to the vilification of Islam that has increased after the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001. Thus, the film was immediately characterised as Islamophobic by some critics who considered the scene in which Mehmed II signs his cruel requests from Vlad with 'a bloody thumb-print' right next to an Arabic stamp saying Allah, as an indication for Mehmed II's villainy to be the order of Allah.[61]

Such a characterisation is in line with the worldwide political agenda after the 9/11. However, the vilification of Islam and the Ottoman and Turkish identities is nothing new; it is a recursive and systematic behaviour enacted by the Western world. In fact, Muslims have widely been identified as 'barbaric' and 'evil' by Christendom since as early as the Crusades in the eleventh century. The conquest of Constantinople

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[61] Elest Ali, 'What the historical inaccuracies in *Dracula Untold* tell us about the rise of Islamophobia', *The New Statesman*, 20 October 2014, <http://www.newstatesman.com/culture/2014/10/what-historical-inaccuracies-dracula-untold-tell-us-about-rise-islamophobia>.

in 1453 by the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II was one of the most significant moments in history that pitted Christendom against Islam. This epochal development is often mentioned in relation to the history of the Ottoman Empire and its role within the development of Western civilisation since it enabled Christendom to redefine itself through its 'Other'. For the West was Christian and civilised while the East was Muslim and barbaric. These antitheses were the key elements in the construction of civilisation versus barbarism dichotomy which was consistently used against the Ottoman Empire for centuries until its collapse and which, for Maria Boletsi, was revived again by the Western politics during the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in order to separate '"good" from "bad" guys'.[62] The 'War on Terror' that the USA has been fighting since the beginning of the new millennium is thus, in many ways, a re-enactment of the centuries-long civilisation versus barbarism dichotomy, a contemporary take on an ancient story — very much like *Dracula Untold.*

Dracula Untold may be one of the many contemporary Gothic narratives that adapt the Dracula myth, but it is one of the few that depict its relation to the Ottoman Empire and the 'barbaric' events of 1453.[63] From the late-eighteenth century onwards the Ottoman Turks were used widely in Gothic narratives and most of the time they were Oriental despots, villains, and rapists depicted as evil, dangerous, lustful or grotesque. The representations of the Ottoman Turk and Muslims in these Gothic texts correspond strongly with the civilisation versus barbarism dichotomy that has also been essential to the Gothic mode since its birth. This chapter, thus, will investigate the notion of barbarism, one of the original meanings of the word 'Gothic', in relation to the

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[62] Christian Moser and Maria Boletsi, *Barbarism Revisited: New Perspectives on an Old Concept* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), p. 12.

[63] Since the publication of McNally and Florescu's *In Search of Dracula: The History of Dracula and Vampires* in 1972, a series of films have identified Dracula with the historical Vlad Tepeş who fought against the Turks; such as Dan Curtis' *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1973), Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) and Pearry Reginald Teo's *Dracula: The Dark Prince* (2013). The latter film opens with a pre-credits sequence where the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 is referred to as the year when Ottoman Turk began to threaten the very heart of Christendom.

representation of Turkish identity in Western Gothic texts. I argue that the characterisation of the Muslim Turks as the barbarian 'Other' in these works enables Turkish identity to be read in Gothic terms. Such a reading not only reveals the exact point where Gothic and Turkish identity meet historically, but also paves the way for the theorisation of Turkish Gothic. In order to develop my argument, I will first explore the relationship between the Gothic and barbarism as a theoretical ground and clarify when, why, and how the Ottoman Turks were described as barbaric throughout the centuries. My textual analysis will begin with Gothic texts such as William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786), Lord Byron's *The Giaour* (1813) and the anonymous novella *The Lustful Turk* (1828). I will show how these texts combine Gothic with an orientalist discourse and imagine the Ottoman Turk as an oriental despot. Bram Stoker's novels *Dracula* (1897) and *The Lady of the Shroud* (1909) will be my next point of discussion with regards to their depiction of the Ottoman Turk within the conventions of imperial Gothic tradition. Lastly, I will examine Elizabeth Kostova's *The Historian* (2005) and come back to Shore's *Dracula Untold* by widening the scope of barbarism vs civilisation dichotomy to the post-9/11 discourse on terrorism. I argue that by defining the Ottoman Turk in Gothic terms, these texts repeatedly evoke barbarism vs civilisation dichotomy as a crucial tool of Western self-definition. Therefore, the chapter sheds light on how Gothic becomes a central literary device in the conflict between the West and the East.

The Gothic, Barbarism and the Ottoman Turks

Until the eighteenth century, the word Gothic was mostly used for referring to the Goths — the Germanic tribes who defeated the Roman Empire and changed European history completely — or to a specific part of early British politics. As Rosemary Sweet explains, the use of the word Gothic 'in pejorative terms to describe a form of architecture that had degenerated from the classical norm, architecture which was

deemed to be uncivilized or barbaric' took place in the early eighteenth century.[64] The

return of such an aesthetic in architecture provided another context for the

reconsideration of the 'uncivilised' and the 'barbaric' past through a literary mode. As a

response to the Enlightenment values of reason and rationality, the Gothic novel

depicted the dangerous, barbaric, uncivilised, irrational, superstitious past through its

spaces such as ruins, castles, cathedrals and dungeons; and its characters such as

villains, monks, nuns and aristocrats.[65] Punter remarks that 'the notion of the barbaric'

is one of the three key 'aspects of the terrifying to which Gothic constantly, and

hauntedly, returns'.[66] The notion of the barbaric, Punter argues, can manifest itself as

the fear of 'the past', 'the aristocracy', 'racial degeneracy', and of 'the barbaric not only

from the past but also in the present and even the future'.[67] Overlapping the emergence

of the Gothic, Britain's eighteenth century colonial expansion promoted the fear of

racial degeneracy that Punter emphasises.[68] Therefore, with the help of the Gothic

mode, 'the barbaric or colonized other' became another 'way of constructing a civilized

and progressive sense of selfhood' for British people.[69]

This representation of the 'Other' as non-British or non-European evokes the

notion of the barbarian used in Ancient Greece where the origin of civilisation versus

barbarism dichotomy dates back. In Ancient Greece, all people who did not speak

Greek were considered to speak a language that the Greeks named 'barbar'. In other

words, the origin of the word 'barbar' comes from a linguistic difference between the

Greeks and their 'others'. This difference symbolises a definitive lack in 'others' while

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[64] Rosemary Sweet, 'Gothic Antiquarianism in the Eighteenth Century', in *The Gothic World*, (eds) Glennis Byron and Dale Townshend (Oxford: Routledge, 2014), p. 16.

[65] Andrew Smith, *Gothic Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 3.

[66] Punter (2013b), p. 183-184.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Roger Luckhurst, 'Gothic Colonies, 1850-1920', in *The Gothic World*, (eds) Glennis Byron and Dale Townshend (Oxford: Routledge, 2014), p. 63.

[69] Justin D. Edwards, 'British Gothic Nationhood, 1760-1830', in *The Gothic World*, (eds) Glennis Byron and Dale Townshend (Oxford: Routledge, 2014), p. 60.

it emphasises the normality of the Greeks. For Maria Boletsi, barbarism, barbarian or barbaric, as derived from the word 'barbar', also accommodates the same negative connotations which always contains within itself a 'lack or absence'.[70] She argues that such definitions place the barbarian 'outside the borders of civilisation' and make it seem 'incomprehensible, unfamiliar, uncanny, improper', particularly from the perspective of the civilised.[71] Hence, Gothic and the notion of the barbarian have a strong relationship. Gothic writing is the quintessential form to speak for the improper, unfamiliar and uncanny other of the civilisation — the barbarian.

A significant analysis on barbarism was presented by J. G. A. Pocock who argued that there were two kinds of barbarians in European history. The first one was 'the barbarian as free and virile warrior' which refers to the Germans and Goths who were the barbarians for the Romans since they 'did not inhabit polis or the palace but lived in villages or encampments among forests or open plains'.[72] The second one was 'the barbarian as servile and effeminate subject of an "oriental despot"'.[73] This definition refers to the Persians who were initially defined as barbarians due to the difference in language. For the Greeks, the Persians were barbarians who 'do not live in free cities and are ruled by god-kings living in palaces, who govern them as if they were slaves'.[74] The depiction of these barbarians were stereotypically unfavourable. In Aeschylus's play *The Persians* (472 B.C.E), for example, the Persians are represented as 'coward, soft and luxurious, and servile'.[75] Later, Euripides also used this stereotype in *The Bacchae* (405 B.C.) by making his character Dionysus Eastern, 'exotic and

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[70] Maria Boletsi, *Barbarism and Its Discontents* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), p. 3.
[71] Ibid, p. 4.
[72] J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion: Barbarians, Savages and Empires, Vol.4* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 12.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 45.

effeminate'.[76] The barbarians of the Orient ruled by an 'oriental despot' formed the antithesis of the Greeks who considered themselves as 'virtuous, modest people who treasured liberty above all else'.[77] The societies of the Orient on the other hand were all barbarous, corrupt and immoral; and ruled as slaves by tyrants and despots. This perception of the 'oriental despot' created by the Greeks left a significant legacy since it formed the basis of orientalist discourse.[78]

In his influential book *Orientalism* (1979), Edward Said comments on the understanding of the Orient as the antithesis of the West:

> The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience.[79]

Said's ideas are in parallel with the discourse of civilisation versus barbarism and demonstrate the continuing perception of the Orient from the ancient times. Said acknowledges the previous perceptions of the Orient — specifically the ones in the context of Christianity — yet identifies the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries as the beginning of today's understanding of Orientalism which he defines briefly 'as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having an authority over the Orient'.[80] In order for the West to accomplish this authority over the Orient, several disciplines and cultural forms have been tremendously effective in creating stereotypical negative perceptions. Starting from the early Renaissance, the travels of the European

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[76] Ibid.
[77] Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p, 13.
[78] Pocock (2005), p. 12.
[79] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 1.
[80] Ibid, pp. 3-7.

elites, merchants, ambassadors and writers established the Oriental image as they provided information about the culture and the customs of the Orient through their writings. In particular, the Romantic period brought an immense increase in national and international travelling and, accordingly, cultural exchange which made tales from and about the Orient popular.[81] These developments provided an opportunity for the West to conceptualise, understand and despise the Orient, known as the land of despotism and violence, in textual ways.

Despite the fact that the Ottoman Empire is not widely included in the Orientalist discourse of today, the Ottomans had a significant part in the early development of the concept. As mentioned earlier, the fall of Constantinople was the defining moment for the perception of the Ottoman Turks by Christendom as, in a way, it reminded them of the fall of Ancient Rome with the attacks of the Goths and Vandals. The Ottomans were descendants of the Seljuk Turks who originally came from the steppes of Central Asia as nomads, converted from Shamanism to Islam and soon entered Anatolia in 1071 by defeating the Byzantine army in the Battle of Manzikert. Muslims, then, were already despised by Christendom. However, it was when the Ottoman Empire started to expand its territories and conquered Constantinople, today's Istanbul, in 1453, by ending the Eastern Roman Empire known as the Byzantine Empire, that the Ottoman Turks, hence Islam, became a threat for the Western Christian empires.

Following this pivotal development, during the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries, the leader of the Catholic Church of the time, Pope Nicholas V, denounced Mehmed II the Conqueror as 'the cruellest persecutor of the Church of Christ' and 'the

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[81] Andrew Maunder, *Encyclopedia of Literary Romanticism* (New York: Facts on File, 2010), p, v-viii.

son of Satan'.[82] A few years later, the new Pope Pius II wrote 'As a nation, the Turks are the foes of the Trinity'.[83] In Germany, Martin Luther's treatise named *On War Against the Turk* (1528) portrayed the Turks as 'the devil incarnate: inhumanly violent, treacherous, demonically lascivious' and 'grotesque slaughterers of children, beasts who even ripped unborn babies from their mother's wombs'.[84] By the end of the sixteenth century the Turks were characterised by Cardinal Bessarion — who was born in Trebizond, Turkey and served in Constantinople for years — as 'inhuman barbarians', 'no better than savages', 'ignorant and barbarous', and 'wild beasts' together with many other negative attributes which degraded them to everything that the Western civilisation was supposedly not.[85]

In the late-seventeenth century when the Empire lost its first piece of land for centuries and its military power declined, the Ottoman Empire stopped being a major military threat for Christendom. Nevertheless, they were still a cultural threat and the developments in Western philosophy reconstituted their role for the West. Renaissance and early modern European thinkers like Bruni, Montaigne, Francis Bacon and Humphrey Prideaux — who once denounced Prophet Muhammad as an illiterate barbarian — all were inspired by the Ancient civilisations.[86] As a result, European thought embraced the contrast between Greek freedom and Asian despotism, identifying itself with the former as the successor of great civilisations and the Ottomans with the latter as the central figures of Oriental despotism.[87] In the early eighteenth century, the

[82] Qtd. in Robert Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent: the Renaissance Image of the Turk* 1453-1517 (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1969), p. 31.

[83] Pope Pius, *The Commentaries of Pius II*, in *Smith College Studies in History*, trans. Florence Alden Gragg, ed. by Leona C. Gabel (Northampton Mass.: Dept. of History of Smith College, 1937-1957), p. 116.

[84] Gregory J. Miller, 'Luther on the Turks and Islam', in *Lutheran Quarterly* 14 (2000), p. 84.

[85] These characterisations were made by Cardinal Bessarion as quoted in Paul Jacques Migne Jacques, *Patrologia Greaca* (1857-1858), Vol 161, cols. 665-7; and in Henry Marsh, *A New Survey of the Turkish Empire* (London, 1664), pp. 65-6.

[86] Michael Curtis, *Orientalism and Islam: European Thinkers on Oriental Despotism in the Middle East and India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 32-34.

[87] Lockman (2004), p. 47.

oriental despot was defined by the Enlightenment philosopher Montesquieu as a man who, 'referring everything to himself exclusively, reduces the state to its capital, the capital to its court, and the court to his person alone'. [88] This understanding of the oriental despot became increasingly popular in the following centuries and was used specifically for the Ottoman Empire.[89] As the antithesis of Christendom and the Western civilisation, the Ottomans became oriental despots. They were now 'the new barbarians', 'the bogeyman of Christian Europe'.[90]

The fall of Constantinople was engraved in the history of Western civilisation since it brought back a centuries-old civilisation versus barbarism dichotomy which later became a political strategy for the West to deal with its 'Others' when needed. However, the discourse was revived in later historical time periods by different actors which is, according to Boletsi, a necessary recurrence for the civilised to stay civilised. Boletsi further explains why civilisation needs the barbarian constantly as such:

> …the concept of barbarism refers to an other who is rejected by, and excluded from, civilization. But since civilization constitutes itself by rejecting the barbarian other, the exclusion can never be complete. As a constitutive element of civilization, the excluded is also included, thus destabilizing the hierarchical opposition it is meant to reinforce. In turn, the opposition's inherent instability and the other's subliminal presence provoke repeated and anxious efforts to restabilize the antithesis, ever new attempts to redraw the line between self and other and to expel the barbarian for good.[91]

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[88] Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, tr. and (eds) Anne M. Cohler, Basia C. Miller, and Harold S. Stone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 117.
[89] Curtis (2009), p. 52.
[90] Lockman (2004), p. 42.
[91] Moser and Boletsi (2015), p. 17.

Boletsi identifies the line between the civilisation and the barbarian other as consistently

redrawn because the oppositions need each other to exist. In the past, 'the Greeks, the

Romans, Christianity, Europe, and the West', all had their share from the 'repeated'

efforts of keeping their others outside their boundaries. 'The Persians, the Scythians, the

Gauls and Germans, the heathen Sarazens, the Mongols and Tartars, the Native

Americans', on the other hand, played their role as the barbarians throughout history.[92]

Accordingly, one should not be surprised to see this discourse being reapplied to the

Ottoman Turks by Western statesmen, historians and scholars during the period leading

up to the World War I.

In *Evil, Barbarism and Empire: Britain and Abroad, c. 1830-2000* (2011) Tom

Crook, Rebecca Gill and Bertrand Taithe point at the nineteenth century as the period

when countries like Russia, China, British India and the Ottoman Empire 'fell

awkwardly between two poles of the civilised and the barbarian' in the eyes of the

Western civilisation.[93] During the same period, Cardinal John Henry Newman defined

Christianity as 'the religion of civilisation' and claimed that Islam 'subserves the reign

of barbarism'.[94] The English historian Edward Augustus Freeman also described the

nations of Eastern Europe who were ruled by the Ottoman Empire at the time as being

under the 'barbarian yoke'.[95] This association of the Ottoman Muslim Turk with

barbarism continued until the collapse of the Empire. In fact, Rebecca Gill argues that,

'the disintegrating [Ottoman] Empire' of the 1920s, 'was, for many, the frontier

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[92] Ibid, 15.

[93] Tom Crook, Rebecca Gill and Bertrand Taithe, *Evil, Barbarism and Empire: Britain and Abroad, c. 1830-2000* (London: Palgrave, 2011), p. 20.

[94] "J.H. Newman, 'The Turks in their relation to Europe', in J.H. Newman, *Historical Sketches* (9th edn., 3 vols., London, 1889), I, pp. 202, 199. This reference is drawn from V.L. Morrisroe, ' "The Sword of the Lord": West vs East in the Historical Writings of E.A. Freeman' (PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2010)." This reference was quoted in Tom Crook, Rebecca Gill and Bertrand Taithe, *Evil, Barbarism and Empire: Britain and Abroad, c. 1830-2000* (London: Palgrave, 2011), p. 127.

[95] E.A. Freeman, *The Ottoman Power in Europe: Its Nature, Its Growth and Its Decline* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1877), p. 121.

between civilisation and barbarism'.[96] When the Empire fell and the republic of Turkey was established as a secular and democratic nation-state, Europe breathed a sigh of relief for the first time since the Fall of Constantinople: the bogeyman was finally dead.

This rhetoric of barbarism that lasted for centuries had an impact in art and literature. Emphasising the significance of barbarism in Western cultural imagination, Boletsi argues that 'the barbarian functions as a screen on which both fears, and desires are projected'.[97] The representation of the Turks, Muslims and the Ottomans as barbarous in Western literature dates back to Middle Ages when the Ottoman Turks became a military and religious threat for the Christian West. The most influential text which gave detailed information to the Westerners about the East is *The Arabian Nights*. The oldest manuscript of the text dates back to the fourteenth century and is comprised of folk tales from the oral tradition of the Arab world.[98] According to Saree Makdisi and Felicity Nussbaum, *The Arabian Nights* provided Europe 'a new world for cultural and aesthetic contemplation' through its 'references to sensuality, extravagance, indulgence, violence, supernaturalism, and eroticism', elements which were disapproved of in Enlightenment European society.[99] In particular, the supernatural themes in these Oriental tales established 'the magical opposite' of European modernity, and thus were highly used in Orientalist texts in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Gothic mode of the late eighteenth century picked up on such Orientalist perceptions of the Ottoman Turks and contributed to the definition of British identity as opposed to its 'Others'. As Edwards points out: 'Inspiring a mix of terror and delight, an attraction to exoticism and a simultaneous repulsion from difference, the Gothic representation of the

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[96] Rebecca Gill, "'Now I have seen evil, and I cannot be silent about it': Arnold J. Toynbee and his Encounters with Atrocity, 1915-1923", in *Evil, Barbarism and Empire: Britain and Abroad, c. 1830-2000,* (eds) Tom Crook, Rebecca Gill and Bertrand Taithe (London: Palgrave, 2011), p. 172.
[97] Boletsi (2015), p. 19.
[98] Saree Makdisi and Felicity Nussbaum, *The Arabian Nights in Historical Context: Between East and West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) pp. 1-2.
[99] Ibid, p. 4.

foreign land figures in our ability to conceptualise Otherness'.[100] Orientalist discourse

and the Gothic thus had a cultural collaboration to represent the barbarian, the

antithetical other of the Christian West.

The Despot Muslim/Turk as the Villain in Oriental Gothic Narratives

As Peter J. Kitson observes, it was Orientalism that gave rise to both Gothic and

Romanticism.[101] For him, the Gothic and the Oriental share 'a common concern with

representing the alien and the Other', which is similar to another feature of the

Romantic imagination that is fascinated by the mysteries of exotic, far away and

unknown lands.[102] Kitson comments further on the relationship between the Gothic and

Orientalism as such: 'The despotism and violence of Gothic and Orientalist narratives

often reflect on the eighteenth — and nineteenth — century patriarchal and bourgeois

ideologies, especially the power of men over women'.[103] It is evident in Kitson's words

that the influence of the idea of the oriental despot on the Gothic mode has a specific

focus on the representations of men and women. This is due to the Gothic's obsession

with the villainy of masculinity and the innocence of virgin girls and children as the

determiners of the good vs. evil paradigm.

One of the earliest Gothic novels, William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786) fully

exploits this paradigm and contextualises 'the Oriental despot' idea for later Oriental

Gothic works. *Vathek* can be considered as an orientalised Faustian tale in which

Vathek, the ninth Caliph of the Abassides, sets out on a journey led by the hideous

Giaour, later revealed as the agent of Eblis (Satan in Islam) on earth, in order to achieve

supernatural powers and 'the treasures of the pre-adamite sultans'.[104] The tale is set in

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[100] Edwards (2014), p. 58.
[101] Peter J. Kitson, 'Oriental Gothic', in *Romantic Gothic* (eds) Angela Wright and Dale Townshend
    (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), p. 168.
[102] Ibid, p. 167.
[103] Ibid, p. 167.
[104] William Beckford, *Vathek* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 70.

an Arabian land with references to *The Arabian Nights* throughout and incorporates

magic, sacrifice, supernatural powers and creatures like djinns and ghouls, ending in the

halls of Eblis, the so-called Hell. As Thomas Keymer points out in his 'Introduction' to

the 2013 Oxford World's Classics edition of *Vathek*, the contrast between the grotesque

elements of the tale such as Vathek's despotic, proud, sensual, cruel and greedy

character, the Giaour's appearance 'with his firebrand eyes, hideous laugh, and long

amber-coloured teeth, bestreaked with green'; and the ideal beauty of Nouronihar and

Gulchenrouz demonstrates the good vs. evil paradigm of the Gothic mode.[105] Moreover,

the labyrinth-like interiors of Vathek's palaces and the uncanny description of the halls

of Eblis create further Gothic effects in the tale. Yet, Gothic elements present in *Vathek*

not only reinforce the despotic features of Caliph Vathek but also help situating the East

in binary opposition to the West.

Caliph Vathek is an example of a Gothic villain as much as the Oriental despot.

Gothic villains are predominant in Gothic tradition since Prince Manfred from the first

Gothic novel, Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). As Emma McEvoy

states, Gothic villains are 'figures of awe, imperious, a law unto themselves, a danger to

the young females (and males) around them, outfacing the supernatural with

dangerously flashing eyes […] in positions of power, acting from within the system'.[106]

Vathek, as the ultimate sovereign of his Mussulman subjects, gets his power initially

from the Islamic tradition of Caliphate and then from his ancestor Haroun al-Raschid

who was frequently mentioned in *The Arabian Nights* as the powerful Caliph who

reigned around the eighth century.[107] Thus, he is not only from within the system, he is

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[105] Thomas Keymer, 'Introduction', in *Vathek*, by William Beckford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. xix.

[106] Emma McEvoy, 'The Gothic and the Romantics', in *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*, (eds) Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy (Oxford: Routledge, 2007), p. 24.

[107] Thomas Keymer, 'Explanatory Notes', in *Vathek*, by William Beckford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 97.

the system itself. His power over his viziers and subjects is emphasised throughout the tale. His despotic, stubborn and arrogant character terrifies everyone around him when he does not get what he wants. At these times, it is said that 'one of his eyes become so terrible that no person could bear to behold it'.[108] Like all the other Muslim sovereigns, he has a harem of wives whose beauties he can enjoy whenever he wants to. Alongside his despotism, Vathek is also 'sensual, sybaritic, passive, childish and even lazy' which are again qualities associated with Oriental male stereotypes.[109] Vathek's passive and childish manners are emphasised when his mother Carathis, who is a sorcerer and more ambitious for supernatural powers than Vathek, masterminds Vathek's behaviours in order for him to gain everything the Giaour promised. Historically, the mother of the Sultan or his wife who gave birth to an heir had their own 'despotism' over the slaves within the harem in Muslim dynasties.[110] Carathis' authority, then, exemplifies the harem as a part of stereotypical Oriental discourse.

With all his characteristics, Vathek portrays the quintessential Gothic villain and the Oriental despot. However, this representation of the Oriental despot as the Gothic villain provides another dimension for the understanding of the Orient as opposed to the West. According to Muna Al-Alwan, *Vathek* is an example of, in Edward Said's words, the 'imaginative demonology of the mysterious Orient'.[111] In fact, Al-Alwan claims that the Orient in *Vathek* represents the 'seven deadly sins' in Catholicism.[112] In this respect, Al-Alwan's reading of the tale not only identifies the East with evil but with everything that the Catholic faith prohibits. The Orient in *Vathek* is about pride, greed, lust, envy,

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[108] Beckford (2013), p. 3.
[109] Kitson (2016), p. 174.
[110] Roderick Cavaliero, *Ottomania: The Romantics and the Myth of the Islamic Orient* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), p. 41.
[111] Muna Al-Alwan, "'The Orient 'Made Oriental': A Study of Beckford's Vathek", in *Arab Studies Quarterly* 30:4, (Fall 2008), p.48. Here, Al-Alwan paraphrases Said in his own words. For a stronger effect, I preferred to use Said's own words in Said (2003), p. 26.
[112] Ibid, p. 44.

gluttony, sloth and wrath embodied in Vathek's and his mother Carathis' characters. Al-Alwan further explains his reading of the tale as follows:

> Allegorically, Vathek and his mother Carathis seem to stand for all despotic rulers of the indolent backward East, the children and Gulchenrouz for the helpless naïve Eastern multitudes, and the good Genii for the 'good' European saviours and liberators, who, with their super power and superior culture, take it upon themselves to liberate the people and keep them safe in a state of blissful ignorance and tranquillity.[113]

Al-Alwan's remarks hit the mark on the representation of the East in Vathek and Carathis' characters; however, his interpretation of other characters is overstated when Beckford's depiction of the relationship between the Genii and Prophet Mohamet is considered.

The tale portrays the 'good' Genii as an assistant to Prophet Mohamet who leaves Vathek to himself in the beginning to see where 'his folly and impiety will carry him'.[114] Throughout the story, Vathek does not surprise Prophet Mohamet and 'runs into excess' with the sacrifice of fifty innocent children and his acts against his good Muslim subjects and Gulchenrouz.[115] Thus, Prophet Mahomet's character and the Geniis are representations of true faith and piety. They are, in a way, the opposite of Vathek who exploits the true faith and the opportunities that his religious position brings him. Vathek not only represents the Orient but he is also the antithesis of Prophet Mahomet and his true followers. If so, Al-Alwan's argument places Prophet Mahomet and the Geniis in the position of the West where 'the "good" European saviours and liberators' live and the true faith is. However, Beckford's aim here is neither to despise

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[113] Ibid, p.
[114] Beckford (2013), p. 5.
[115] Ibid.

Islam as a religion nor to praise Christianity but as Kitson suggests, to demonstrate the irrational, dangerous and extravagant ways of the Orient 'in a homogenised fantasy world' as opposed to 'the modern British, scientific, rational, progressive and Protestant self'.[116] This opposition is also evocative of the anti-Catholic tendencies of the Gothic mode as depicted more explicitly ten years after *Vathek* in Matthew Lewis's Gothic novel, *The Monk* (1796). Therefore, Beckford's East is the antithesis of modern Europe and, perhaps, an Oriental version of the medieval Catholic past where the tyranny of religious and political authority steered people's lives into seven deadly sins.

The Gothic mode and the Oriental despot are similarly brought together in George Gordon, Lord Byron's long narrative poem *The Giaour* (1813). As the first one of Byron's famous *Turkish Tales* (1813-1815), which he wrote during his travels to the East, *The Giaour* is one of the most important works of Byron, of early nineteenth-century Orientalism and also of the Gothic mode. The poem tells the story of a Venetian called the Giaour (gâvur in Turkish, meaning infidel) by the Ottoman fisherman who is one of the several narrators in the poem. According to the accounts of the narrators, the Giaour's lover Leila, who was a slave in the harem of an Ottoman master named Hassan, was put in a sack and thrown into the sea as a result of her infidelity to Hassan. Thereupon, the Giaour kills Hassan and his men, to take revenge for her death. Nevertheless, he can't find peace as he blames himself for Leila's death and the poem ends with his confessions to the Priest of the monastery where he resigns himself in remorse.

As one of the earliest portrayals of the Byronic hero, the Giaour character plays an essential role in the story's implementation of the Gothic mode yet is also significant to understand the struggle between the West and the East in which Byron showed great

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[116] Kitson (2016), p. 172.

interest. Byron's Grand Tour included Greece and the western lands of the Ottoman

Empire at a time when Greece was fighting for liberation from the subjugation of the

Turks. In his introduction to the main story, Byron takes his time to give descriptions of

the geography and express his Hellenistic admiration of Greece as well as his

disappointment on seeing its lifeless situation under the tyranny of the Ottoman rule:

'`Tis Greece, but living Greece no more!'[117] Byron's personal commitment to

Enlightenment values of liberty provokes him to construct *The Giaour* using the

discourses of oppression and despotism that were evident in most Orientalist works of

the time. Indeed, as Philip W. Martin observes, not only *The Giaour* but also the

Turkish Tales in general 'draw on a semiology of the Orient that resonates powerfully

with the discourse of despotism'.[118] In this context, representation of the main

characters, Leila the slave girl, the Giaour and Hassan, requires further attention to

understand in what ways the discourse of despotism comes forward.

Byron was a strict supporter of liberty and also an abolitionist and thus was

against the most pervasive ideologies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries:

imperialism and colonialism. Alongside Britain's own colonial aspirations in India and

Napoleon's imperialist campaign, 'the Turkish Empire's subjugation of Greece' for

Byron was another example of imperial tyranny.[119] Moreover, his commitment to these

values is also reflected in *The Giaour* through the character of Leila the slave girl. For

Byron, Leila's captivity in Hassan's harem is similar to Greece's captive spirit under the

hegemony of the despotic Turks. This association between Greece and Leila can easily

be observed through their depictions in the poem. The introduction which works like an

elegy to the beauties of Greece pays specific attention to the beautiful climates and

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[117] Lord Byron, *The Giaour* (London: Thomas Davison, 1813), line 61.
[118] Philip W. Martin, 'Heroism and History: Childe Harold I & II, the Tales', in *The Cambridge Companion to Byron*, ed. by Drummond Bone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 92.
[119] Ibid.

seasons, flowery scents, roses, blooming gardens, nightingales and joyful moments ending with a curse to 'the tyrants who destroy' all these beauties.[120] The description of Leila is also made in a very similar manner emphasising the scent of her cheek and her hyacinthine hair, and the fact that she is 'a soulless toy for tyrant's lust', similar to Greece ruined by tyrants. [121] Moreover, she is described as 'the loveliest bird Franguestan', which is explained as a term for Europe generally in the footnotes.[122] Leila's is an embodiment of Greece, and accordingly Byron's conception of liberty. Therefore, as Matthew J. A. Green observes, her death 'highlights the sociality of the body both because it reaffirms the dominance of the patriarchal Ottoman order and also because, in so doing, it operates metonymically for the Greek loss of spirit'.[123] This suggests that under the rule of the Ottoman Turks, Greece has lost its spirit of liberty similar to Leila who has lost her life and freedom in the hands of Hassan. By portraying Leila as a symbol for Greece and the Giaour as a true believer of liberty like himself, Byron imagines Hassan as the ultimate face of the despotic Ottoman Turk, thereby the actual Gothic villain in the poem.

The depiction of the Giaour and Hassan by Western and Eastern points of view within the poem adds more to this argument. The Giaour is the name given to the Venetian renegade by the Ottoman fisherman. From the fisherman's perspective, the Venetian is an 'Other'; he is not one of them, specifically, not a Mussulman but a Westerner and a Christian:

> I know thee not, I loathe thy race, […]
> Right well I view and deem thee one

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[120] Byron (1813), lines 7-67.
[121] Ibid, lines 490-500.
[122] Ibid, line 506.
[123] Matthew J. A. Green, '"That lifeless thing the living fear": Freedom, Community and the Gothic Body in The Giaour', in *Byron and the Politics of Freedom and Terro*r, (eds) Matthew J. A. Green and Piya Pal-Lapinski (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), p. 19.

Whom Othman's sons should slay or shun.[124]

Hassan, on the other hand, means beautiful and handsome in Arabic. For the fisherman, Hassan, although a stern man, is righteous drowning Leila since, as a slave, she had to obey her master rather than fleeing with an infidel.

> `Tis said he goes to woo a bride
>
> More true than her who left his side;
>
> The Faithless slave that broke her bower,
>
> And — worse than faithless — for a Giaour![125]

As a result of his travels, Byron became accustomed to the customs and traditions of the East and Islam. One of these customs is represented in the fisherman's words, which consider Hassan as a heroic Mussulman who deserves all the glory in Paradise as he was killed by an infidel:

> Whereon can now be scarcely read
>
> The Koran verse that mourns the dead,
>
> Point out the spot Hassan fell
>
> A victim in that lonely dell.
>
> There sleeps as true an Osmanlie
>
> As e'er at Mecca bent the knee; […]
>
> But him the maids of Paradise
>
> Impatient to their halls invite,
>
> And the dark heaven of Houris' eyes
>
> On him shall glance for ever bright;
>
> They come — their kerchiefs green they wave,
>
> And welcome with a kiss the brave!
>
> Who falls in battle 'gainst a Giaour

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[124] Byron (1813), line 191-199.
[125] Ibid, lines 533-536.

Is worthiest an immortal bower.[126]

While the fisherman, from an Eastern perspective, praises Hassan for his bravery, the third-person narrator of the poem describes Hassan, and accordingly the East, within the discourse of despotism. Below, the narrative first mourns for Greece who fell from 'Splendour to Disgrace' and then points out that although the mighty soul of Greece cannot be harmed by foes, this fallen situation strengthened the hands of the villains and the despotic rule.

> `Twere long to tell, and sad to trace,
>
> Each step from Splendour to Disgrace;
>
> Enough—no foreign foe could quell
>
> Thy soul, till from itself it fell;
>
> Yet! Self-abasement paved the way
>
> To villain-bonds and despot sway.[127]

The portrayals of Hassan and the Giaour from two separate perspectives that symbolise the West and the East reveal that Byron's poem is intertwined with the Orientalist discourse of the Romantic age which envisions the East through the image of the Oriental despot. Like Caliph Vathek, the Giaour is an example of the Gothic villain with the same kind of striking terrible eyes: 'I know him by his pallid brow;/I know him by the evil eye/That aids his envious treachery'.[128] However, the Giaour's tragic end and, in a way, his victimisation shares similarities with Vlad Tepeş in Gary Shore's *Dracula Untold*. As the Byronic hero of the poem, the Giaour is more of the victim of the story than its villain. Generally, the Byronic hero, in its simplest sense, is considered as 'an outlaw and an outsider who defines his own moral code, often defying oppressive

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[126] Ibid, lines 729-746.
[127] Ibid, lines 136-141.
[128] Ibid, lines 610-613.

institutional authority' thanks to 'his self-sufficiency and independence, and his egotistical sense of his own superiority'.[129] However, because of the Giaour's victimisation, Peter L. Thorslev considers him as a 'sensitive Gothic Villain'. For him, the Giaour 'has the air of the fallen angel, the gentle soul perverted, the mind born for nobler things'.[130] The Giaour's characterisation as the fallen angel, in this context, invites Western readers to empathise with his tragedy and consider Hassan, the despotic Turkish Muslim, as the main villain of the story. From the reader's perspective, the Giaour committed the act that haunts him in eternity because he was motivated by romantic love and perverted by Hassan's tyranny and wrath. This perspective unfolds the West and East binary that Byron plays with in the poem and once again constructs the East and the Turkish identity in negative terms. However, as Philip W. Martin has shown, Byron, in *The Giaour,* does not see Christianity as 'more enlightened' than Islam but 'condemns the oppressive tyrannies of Christianity and Islam' in general.[131] Considering this, it seems that Byron, who declared his admiration for Beckford's *Vathek*, conceptualises the East from the same perspective that Beckford did, as a backward and violent place ruled by medieval values.[132]

Byron's *The Giaour* had a great influence on many other literary works of the early nineteenth century and beyond, with its mixture of Orientalism and Gothic romance as well as its depiction of the Byronic hero. One of these works that bear the traces of Byron's tale is *The Lustful Turk*, a pornographic novella published anonymously in 1828, which depicts Turkish identity in the same orientalist fashion as earlier works. Mentioned by Said as a note in his *Orientalism*, *The Lustful Turk* is an

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[129] Atara Stein, *The Byronic Hero in Film and Fiction* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004), p. 8.

[130] Peter L. Thorslev, *The Byronic Hero Types and Prototypes* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1962), p. 151.

[131] Martin (2004), p. 92.

[132] In a note appended to line 598 of *The Siege of Corinth* (1816), Byron mentions Vathek as 'a work which I have before referred; and never recur to, or read, without a renewal of gratification'; qtd. in Peter Cochran, *Byron and Orientalism* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), p. 62.

excessive representation of oriental sensuality with references to the Gothic mode, the Byronic hero and the captivity narratives of early European orientalist travel literature. With its epistolary form, the novella tells the story of an honourable English woman's captivity in the harem of the Dey of Algiers, Ali, from the accounts of several narrators. The English woman, Emily Barlow, sets out for her uncle in India upon her parents' insistence. After they sail from England in June 1814, their ship is attacked by pirates and she, along with another woman, is captured by an Algerian corsair who sends her as a present to the Dey. Once Emily arrives at the harem, she becomes a slave for the Dey's lust, at first as a virgin with horror and disgust, later as a woman with full enjoyment.

Although the novella came to be better known by larger audiences after Said's mention of it, it stayed relatively unaddressed by other scholars. In fact, Steven Marcus' *The Other Victorians* (1966) is the only study that investigates the novel in detail. A possible explanation for this may be the fact that the anonymous nature of the publication alongside its pornographic content caused it to be relatively discredited and even forgotten. In her historical investigation of pornography, Lynn Hunt reports that the recognition of pornography as a category of literary representation was closely linked to the gradual process of Western modernisation from the early sixteenth century to the nineteenth century.[133] In early representations, she suggests, 'pornography was most often used as a vehicle for using the shock of sex to criticize religious and political authorities'.[134] This is possibly where Michael Gamer finds 'a strong association between pornography and the Gothic' since Lewis' *The Monk* was also criticised for its

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[133] Lynn Hunt, *The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity 1500-1800* (New York: Zone Books, 1993), pp. 10 -30.
[134] Ibid.

sexual and immoral plot deployed specifically through the religious authority of the Monk representing Roman Catholicism.[135]

As a political authority, the Dey Ali in *The Lustful Turk* answers to the same thematic feature with *The Monk*, but differently with an Orientalist touch. Most of the Orientalist narratives of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are filled with the imagery of the Ottoman harem as a place of sexual slavery and the Sultan in his harem as the master and accordingly 'the role model for a despot'.[136] This Western image of the harem and the Sultan is fully exploited in *The Lustful Turk* in the same way that Beckford and Byron did, by describing Muslim faith and Turkish identity with the barbaric and evil connotations that were also associated with the medieval practices of the Catholic Church in Gothic narratives of the time.

One of the main vehicles that the novel uses in order to convey this association is the representation of the loss of virginity as a religious sacrifice in the name of Allah and the Prophet. In the second letter in the novel, the Dey Ali thanks his friend Muzra, the Dey of Tunis, for his recent present and adds 'The Grecian slave, I rejoice to say again, I found a pure maid; her virginity I sacrificed on the Beiram feast of our Holy Prophet'.[137] Of course, this act is not narrated as joyous by the women. In the fourth letter, Emily writes to her friend Sylvia describing everything that she went through after her arrival at the Dey's harem and portrays the Turks as barbarians:

> You have no doubt heard of the cruel treatment experienced by females who are unfortunate enough to fall into the power of these barbarous Turks […] Oh,

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[135] Michael Gamer, 'Genres for Prosecution: Pornography and the Gothic' in *PMLA*, Vol. 114, No. 5 (October 1999), p. 1051.

[136] Cavaliero (2010), p. 24-46.

[137] Anonymous, 'Letter 2', in *The Lustful Turk* (1828), Wikisource The Free Online Library. <https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Lustful_Turk>.

Sylvia, your poor friend is now the polluted concubine of this most worthless
Turk.[138]

Later she, too, likens herself to a helpless sacrificial animal: 'My petitions, supplications and tears were of no use. I was on the altar, and, butcher-like, he was determined to complete the sacrifice'.[139] The depiction of this scene, for Steven Marcus, resembles 'a rape-murder-sacrifice' scene.[140] The accounts of other slaves whom Emily meets in the harem also describe the intercourse with the Dey as a sacrifice. What is more interesting, however, is that all these slaves — the Italian, the French and the Grecian — are of Western origin and in Emily's words, the sacrifice is like 'a martyrdom' for all. This detail is representative of the fear of falling under the domination of the Oriental despot which was not only what most of the Orientalist works of the time deals with but also a grim myth for Western travellers since, as Cavaliero suggests, being taken as a captive in the harem due to war or piracy 'was one of the most powerful anxieties of Europeans in their resistance to Islamic conquest, and thus the source of sinister legend'.[141] In this context, the account of the Grecian slave is of great significance as it portrays a picture of Greece under the oppression of the Turkish rule in the same manner as Byron's tales.

When *The Lustful Turk* was published in 1828, the Greeks were still fighting for independence from the Ottoman Empire and thus, their influence on Western culture was still prominent particularly thanks to Byron and his tales. As Marcus also remarks, *The Lustful Turk* carries strong traces of Byronism, one of which is the emphasis on slavery versus liberty.[142] Adianti's story not only tells more about her captivity in the

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[138] Ibid, Letter 4.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Steven Marcus, *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth Century England* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2009), p. 198.
[141] Cavaliero (2010), p. 35.
[142] Marcus (2009), p. 209.

harem but also reveals the spirit of Greece under the Ottoman captivity from the very beginning:

> My name is Adianti. I was born in the delightful island of Macaria, where my father was a merchant, called Theodoricus. I am his only child. Like all Greeks or Christians who reside under the power of Turks, my father was obliged to live in a style of the utmost simplicity […] Slavery, the most powerful agent in the degradation of mankind, has given to the modern Greeks a melancholy propensity to indulge in all kinds of gloomy presages and forebodings.[143]

Adianti's introduction recalls Byron's elegiac introduction about Greece in *The Giaour*, while it also sets the tone for the rest of her story, which carries resonances of romance and the Byronic hero through the description of her Greek lover Demetrius:

> He was born for a land of freedom, and one might have predicted from his appearance that he was destined to chafe and struggle not a little under the restraints and mortifications which ever fall to the lot of those who show the least spirit of independence. His stature was tall; he carried his head higher than a Bashaw; he was of easy carriage, and his body as straight as a palm; active and graceful in his walk, clear in his eye, and impatient of insult to the last degree. He was eloquent, poetical, romantic, enterprising and a lover of the arts—he could have achieved great things had his lot been cast in a more happy age and country. Were he now living he would be foremost among the heroes who are defending our religion.[144]

The description of Demetrius shows similarities to Byron's description of his European heroes in his tales: a true romantic lover with a charming and noble appearance, loyal to

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[143] Anonymous, ' Letter 7', *The Lustful Turk* (1828).
[144] Ibid.

his land, race and religion, who cares for freedom and independence and is strictly against oppression. Demetrius, as an embodiment of free Greece, is killed by the Turkish governor Ozman on the day of their wedding and Adianti, as a slave for the Dey, becomes the symbol of Greece under Turkish captivity.

While Demetrius represents the good side of the Byronic hero, the Dey is everything that Demetrius is not: sexual, oppressive, scheming, proud and arrogant. Marcus claims that the Dey also carries features of the Byronic hero but with a specific alteration: 'The guilty, remorseful, brooding, doomed, and conflict-ridden part of the Byronic hero has been deleted. The Dey may be blessed with sensibility, but he is not cursed with a conscience, nor does he suffer from inward conflicts'.[145] Marcus regards this alteration as a necessity of the fictional world of pornography where there is no 'conscience and real conflict'. [146] I would add to his argument that, given the Orientalist parameters of the novel, it is also a contextual attempt at portraying the Dey, the Turks and accordingly the East as an unrepentant despot without conscience or pity. The pornographic content of the novel also reiterates the representation of the Dey as a despot. As Marcus also suggests, the sexual language used in *The Lustful Turk* specifically deals with 'the sexuality of domination, with that conception of male sexuality in which the aggressive and sadistic components almost exclusively prevail.'[147] This is, according to Marcus, very common in nineteenth and twentieth century pornographic literature. By exposing all its virgin female characters to 'violent experiences which ritually include beating, flogging and defloration in the form of rape' in the hands of Turks, *The Lustful Turk* establishes Eastern masculinity as the ultimate

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[145] Marcus (2009), p. 209.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid, p. 211.

Oriental despot and, similar to the earlier works, creates a dangerous and sinful picture of the East.[148]

The Ottomans in the Near East: Bram Stoker's Vampires and Imperial Gothic

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Oriental Gothic was replaced by Gothic tradition which simply worked as a 'blend of adventure story with Gothic elements'.[149] Imperial Gothic, a term coined by Patrick Brantlinger, was a prevailing form from 1880 to 1914 or textually 'from H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) to John Buchan's *Greeenmantle* (1916)'.[150] The form, as Brantlinger suggests, expressed 'anxieties about the ease with which civilization can revert to barbarism or savagery and thus about the weakening of Britain's imperial hegemony'.[151] Brantlinger names the three key themes of the imperial Gothic narratives as 'individual regression or going native; an invasion of civilization by the forces of barbarism or demonism; and the diminution of opportunities for adventure and heroism in the modern world.'[152] Indeed, most Gothic novels that came out during the late-Victorian period accommodate at least one of these themes. The novels of Stevenson, Haggard, Kipling, Doyle, Stoker and Buchan, for Brantlinger, express these themes by showing 'primitive aspects of human nature', 'often in imperial settings'.[153]

In his influential essay 'The Occidental Tourist: Dracula and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonisation' (1990) Stephen D. Arata makes a similar remark when he asserts that late-Victorian popular fiction draws upon the narrative of reverse colonisation in which the 'British culture sees its own imperial practices mirrored back in monstrous

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[148] Ibid.
[149] Patrick Brantlinger, *The Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 227.
[150] Ibid, 229.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid, 230.
[153] Ibid, 231.

forms'.[154] In his essay, Arata focuses on Bram Stoker's famous novel *Dracula* (1897).

Stoker's narrative draws on the political issues of the region known to the British people

as the Near East through its Transylvanian vampire Count Dracula whose ancestor

Voivode Dracula had a historical conflict with the Ottoman Sultan. As a part of the

political agenda in the 1880s and 90s, Transylvania was a consciously political choice

of setting for Stoker.[155] The 'Eastern Question', or in other words, 'what to do with the

states of the Near East once the Ottoman Empire falls' acquired a significant role in

British imperial politics of the time.[156] Moreover, many writers in the nineteenth century

such as Byron — as I have discussed earlier — John William Polidori, Joseph Sheridan

Le Fanu, Jean Charles Emmanuel Nodier and others, used this region in their novels by

combining the politics of the day specifically with the vampire myth. Matthew Gibson

accounts for this by suggesting, 'in the majority of cases, the vampire narrative set in

the Near East is a deliberate and coded practice, which makes use of either careful

dating, or else literary and contemporary allusion, to embed certain political ideas'.[157]

The use of these political ideas relating to the Balkan territories of the Ottoman Empire

in Gothic narratives of the time, shows how significant this region was for the Western

world since it occupied the Eastern Christian border, and for the Ottoman Empire since

it represented the Western border of Muslim expansion for centuries.[158] Thus, the

Balkans was a part of both Orientalist and Imperialist discourses of the West.

This understanding is also echoed by William Hughes when he regards the

region as a space where 'the dual pressures of literary fantasy and political reportage,

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[154] Stephen D. Arata, 'The Occidental Tourist: Dracula and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonisation', in *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (Summer, 1990), p. 623.

[155] Ibid, 627.

[156] Matthew Gibson, *Dracula and the Eastern Question: British and French Vampire Narratives of the Nineteenth Century Near East* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 2.

[157] Ibid, p. 8.

[158] William Hughes, '"To build together a new nation": Colonising Europe in Bram Stoker's *The Lady of the Shroud*', in *Gothic Studies*, Vol. 5. Issue 2, (2003), p. 34.

cardinal forces through which the West constructs and maintains its Others, may meet'.[159] In *Dracula*, the British and the Ottoman Turks meet in the Balkan region through the vampire figure. From the very first paragraph of the novel, Jonathan Harker makes it clear that he is travelling 'among the traditions of the Turkish rule' by hinting at the political authority shaping the region.[160] By discussing the political and historical issues of the Balkan nations and the Ottoman Turk, Stoker creates a background story that assists the characterisation and motivation of his vampire figure. However, while contextualising the Eastern Question on the one hand, Stoker's novel also portrays the Turk within the discourse of barbarism in a similar way to the earlier works discussed previously. This can easily be inferred from the Count's emphasis on slavery. Later in the novel, when the Count talks about his ancestor Voivode Dracula with pride, he tells Harker how shameful it was for his nation 'when the flags of the Wallach and the Magyar went down beneath the Crescent'.[161] He also adds that the Voivode defeated the Turk to save Wallachia after his own brother 'sold his people to the Turk and brought the shame of slavery on them'.[162] In his speech, the Count evokes the age-long conflict between the Cross and the Crescent, representing Christianity and Islam respectively, and characterises the Ottoman Turk as a tyrant enemy and a coloniser of his race. Without referring to the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II, the historical connection between the Wallachian Prince Vlad III and the Ottoman Empire is strengthened by Stoker in a way that demonises the image of the Ottoman Turk.

For Eleni Coundouriotis, however, it is not only the Turk who fought with the ancestors of Dracula who is being demonised in the novel but also the centuries-long Ottoman history of the Balkan region through the Count himself. She argues that

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[159] Ibid.
[160] Bram Stoker, *Dracula, and Other Horror Classics* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2013), p. 7.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid.

Dracula is a symbol for the oppressed Europe under Ottoman rule and thus, needs to be extinguished in order for Ottoman rule to end definitely.[163]

> Stoker's reinvention of the historical figure is driven by his desire to disclaim the Europe that the Count represents. The Count […] symbolizes medieval, Christian Europe re-emerging into modernity, monstrously out of date. To hold this reality at bay, Eastern Europe can be left to linger behind the "iron curtain" of the Ottoman Empire. As this became politically untenable because of the spectacular violence against Christians, Eastern Europe had to be refigured without the traces of its Ottomanization. Brought under the cultural influence of Western Europe, these nations would have to be newly assimilated. Dracula, who fought against the Turks and then survived Ottoman rule, represents both Christianity and the history of Ottoman Europe. His hybridity — an Ottomanized European — results in a dissonant figure fitting uncomfortably, a blasphemous Christian hero.[164]

Coundouriotis' argument relates to the political developments of the late-nineteenth century in the Balkans as well as Britain's foreign policy at the time. After the brutal suppression of the Bulgarians by the Ottoman army in 1876, known as the April Uprising, the public outcry in Europe and the United States caused the Ottoman Empire to lose the very little support that it had from Christian Europe.[165] The 'Eastern Question', in Britain, thus, gained more attention and significance as a sort of propaganda to be used against the Ottoman presence in Christian Europe. This is also why Brantlinger acknowledges *Dracula* as one of the epitomes of imperial Gothic tradition of the period.[166] As a vampire and an Ottomanized European, the Count

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[163] Eleni Coundouriotis, '*Dracula* and the Idea of Europe', *Connotations*, Vol 9, Issue 2 (New York: Waxmann Munster, 2000), p. 149.
[164] Ibid, 153.
[165] Ibid, 149.
[166] Brantlinger (1988), p. 234.

represents the Balkan region as where the West and the East, Christianity and Islam, good and evil, once again, come face to face. By destroying the vampire in *Dracula*, the British characters destroy the Ottoman Empire.

Another vampire narrative by Stoker, *The Lady of the Shroud* (1909), which is considered as a sequel to *Dracula* by Lisa Hopkins, also draws on the idea of the Turk as enemy and shows thematic resemblances to the imperial Gothic tradition by combining travel writing with Gothic elements and political allegory about the Balkan region.[167] Stoker sets his story in the land of the Blue Mountains where 'Albania, Dalmatia, Herzegovina, Servia, Bulgaria looked with lustful eyes'.[168] Having inherited the Castle of the Vissarion dynasty on the Spear of Ivan from his uncle, Rupert Saint Leger travels from England to the Balkan region during the unrest prior to the Balkan Wars. One night, in his garden, he encounters a ghostly woman who wears a shroud and invites her in. Rupert and the lady in the shroud meet several times, fall in love and get married in secrecy. Soon the local community informs Rupert that the daughter of their leader, Teuta, was kidnapped by Turkish soldiers to be taken to the Sultan's harem. Upon the community's request for help to save Teuta, Rupert understands that Teuta is the lady in the shroud, his newly-wed wife whom he has not seen since their wedding. Teuta was thought to have died but was in a state of trance; when she woke up Teuta and the authorities decided to keep her awakening as a secret from the locals in order to protect her from the Turkish Sultan. She kept on living in the crypt and had to go out at times when no one could see her. Thus, her walks at night led to rumours about her being a vampire. Having learned the truth about his wife, Rupert sets out on a chivalric journey to save her from the hands of the Turk. Having saved both Teuta and his father Peter Vissarion with a demonstration of extreme bravery, Rupert becomes the new king

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[167] Lisa Hopkins, *Bram Stoker: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 2.
[168] Bram Stoker, *The Lady of the Shroud* (London: Rider and Co., 1909), The Project Gutenberg Ebook, released on October 2007, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3095/3095-h/3095-h.htm>.

of the Blue Mountains and the story ends with a celebration of the union of the Balkan nations against the Turks and other threats.

In *The Lady of the Shroud*, Stoker does not keep the Turkish threat in the background story as he does in *Dracula*. The Turks are not often voiced and their existence in the novel as characters is very limited; however, they are the enemy constantly feared and talked about by the main characters. This becomes evident specifically after the kidnap of Teuta. The Archbishop of the Eastern Church in the Blue Mountains informs Rupert's aunt, Janet MacKelpie, about the vampire story, the kidnap of Teuta and Rupert's plan to save her in a letter which demonstrates possibly one of the most anti-Turk statements in the novel:

> At any rate, they had captured her, and through devious ways amongst the mountains were bearing her back to Turkey. It was manifest that when she was on Turkish soil the Sultan would force a marriage on her so as eventually to secure for himself or his successors as against all other nations a claim for the suzerainty or guardianship of the Blue Mountains […] Failing the getting the Voivodin safe to Turkish soil, the ravishers might kill her! This would be entirely in accord with the base traditions and history of the Moslems. So, too, it would accord with Turkish customs and the Sultan's present desires.[169]

The Archbishop's assessment of the situation evokes the image of the Sultan's harem as prison and the despotic culture of the Muslim Turks. In the hands of the Turk, the Voivodin Teuta can expect to experience the worst treatments: she might be a sex slave in the harem; bear the Sultan's children who may end up as the enemy of her race; or be killed by the soldiers before she even gets to Turkey. All of these, for the Archbishop, are possible and 'traditional' outcomes of being captured by the Turks.

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[169] Ibid.

In all aspects, the Voivodin Teuta, or in other words, the Lady of the Shroud, is another woman implemented as the embodiment of a nation. As Hughes suggests, the Castle of Vissarion that Rupert inherited is not only an estate: 'To possess Vissarion is, in a sense, to possess the nation that surrounds it', because the castle is: 'a national synecdoche, the symbolic heart of an ancient Balkan tradition of racial and familial pride'.[170] Like the title of Voivode, the castle is also hereditary and thus is the home of the Voivodin Teuta. This is why she was drawn to the castle in her night walks in the first place. If the castle is the heart of the nation, Teuta rightfully owns it by birth. When the chief of the locals, for example, comes to seek for help from Rupert to save Teuta, he says: 'Come with us now in our nation's peril. Help us to rescue what we most adore'.[171] Later, in a letter to Janet MacKelpie, the Archimandrite of Spazac writes: 'There was not a man in the Blue Mountains who would not have given his life for the Voivodin Teuta'.[172] Consequently, the mission of saving Teuta from the hands of the Turk is like fighting for and saving one's nation. In fact, it is a symbolic crusade against the Turks as it is understood from the Archimandrite's words: 'We of the Blue Mountains do not lag when our foes are in front of us; most of all do we of the Eastern Church press on when the Crescent wars against the Cross!'[173] Stoker's perception of Islam in the novel, again, shows a mixture of Orientalist and Imperialist discourses since the representation of the threat of a Muslim Turk demonises the Ottoman Sultan and makes the Turks 'the undoubted villains' of the novel.[174]

The most significant motif of the novel, the shroud, also has a symbolic meaning for the nation. Teuta walks around in a shroud in her night walks because she is considered dead and has to keep the secret that she is alive by wearing her shroud all the

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[170] Hughes (2003), p. 37.
[171] Stoker (1909).
[172] Ibid.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Lisa Hopkins, 'Bram Stoker's *The Lady of the Shroud*: Supernatural Fantasy, Politics, Montenegro and Its Double', in *English Literature in Translation,* Vol. 57, Issue 4 (2014), p. 531.

time like a corpse. However, this is not only the usual shroud in which dead bodies are wrapped. There is a parallel between her shroud and the Islamic veil that Teuta avoids taking. The veil for the women in the Ottoman harem used to be worn to cover and protect themselves from the male gaze when they go out of the harem. It was, in a way, to silence and even delete their existence outside the borders drawn by the Sultan. For Teuta, the shroud is like the Islamic veil, it is a shield for her, a protection from the Turk, a cover to hide her existence when she goes out of her crypt at night. She chooses the shroud, to be known and live as dead, to delete her existence for her own country, instead of being a prisoner, a slave in the Ottoman harem. Her shroud thus symbolises how shameful to be taken as a wife by the Sultan is for her. In a broader respect, it is a symbol, for the nation, of choosing to fight and die if necessary instead of living under the aggression of the Turk. Even after she becomes the new Queen of Vissarion, Teuta continues to wear her shroud for local and national appearances. In his letter to Rupert, Admiral Rooke mentions the shroud as 'the costume which all her nation has now come to love and to accept as a dress of ceremonial honour'.[175] Later, Rupert persists that she should wear the shroud at an international event saying that: 'It is a thing for us all to be proud of; the nation has already adopted it as a national emblem — our emblem of courage and devotion and patriotism'.[176] The shroud, in the end, becomes 'a mark of her virtue', 'a symbol of moral purity and self-sacrifice', as Gibson observes.[177]

The Lady of the Shroud uses the image of the Turk as enemy in a way that evokes the Orientalists of the previous ages, but within the limits of the concerns of the political agendas of the day. The political allegory in the novel represents the Ottoman Empire and the Turks, in general, as imperialist tyrants. It is as if the real vampires of the novel are the Turks, and just as Count Dracula was in England to suck Britons'

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[175] Stoker (1909).
[176] Ibid.
[177] Gibson (2006), p. 107.

blood, the Turks are there to suck the blood of the Balkan nations. As Victor Sage argues, *The Lady of the Shroud* 'plays on traditional (but apparently outdated) British fears of Turkey'.[178] This is not only a novel about the Balkan conflict but also a promoter of the upcoming British intervention in the hegemony of the Ottoman Empire. Considered in this way, *The Lady of the Shroud* does read like a sequel to *Dracula*. Once again, Stoker uses imperial Gothic to support the British propaganda aiming to delete the Ottoman existence in the Balkans for good.

Demonising the Ottoman Past or the Return of the Barbarian

The discourse of barbarism was revived once again after the Cold War period, but this time had a specific name and target. Islamophobia was first defined as 'dread or hatred of Islam' and 'unfounded hostility towards Islam' in 1997 by the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia formed by the Runnymede Trust.[179] The aim of this commission, according to Todd H. Green, was 'to analyze the discrimination experienced by many Muslims in Britain and to make policy recommendations to the government that would help combat this discrimination'.[180] Indeed, as a result of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Iranian Revolution of 1979, negative perceptions of Muslims and Islam increased in the West.[181] Furthermore, the fatwa issued by the Islamic leader of Iran against Salman Rushdie following the publication of *The Satanic Verses* (1988) created more controversy among Muslims and 'gave rise to a backlash against Muslims in Britain'.[182] All these developments contributed to the atmosphere of

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[178] Victor Sage, "Exchanging Fantasies: Sex and the Serbian Crisis in *The Lady of the Shroud*," in *Bram Stoker: History, Psychoanalysis and the Gothic*, William Hughes and Andrew Smith, eds. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1988), p. 116.

[179] Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia, *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All* (London: Runnymede Trust, 1997), pp. 1-4.

[180] Todd H. Green, 'What is Islamophobia?', in *The Fear of Islam: An Introduction to Islamophobia in the West* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2015), pp. 10-11.

[181] Ibid, p. 11.

[182] Ibid.

cultural racism towards Muslims in the Western world but the attacks on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 was a culminating point for anti-Islam rhetoric in the United States. On the day of the attacks, in his 'Address to the Nation', the United States President George W. Bush said 'America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world'.[183] Four days later, on September 15, he referred to Al-Qaeda, the Islamist extremist terrorist organisation who performed the attacks, as 'a group of barbarians'.[184] Once again, the civilisation vs. barbarism discourse was at work. The war on Terror that America started after the attacks redefined America as the cradle of civilisation and Islamist extremist terrorism as the barbarian of the twenty-first century.

The return of the discourse of barbarism after 9/11 had tremendous impact on the Gothic mode's representation of cultural trauma, war, and the 'Other' through Gothic monsters such as vampires, zombies, werewolves, demons, shapeshifters and many more. Linnie Blake considers the Gothic of this period as reflecting 'the national zeitgeist' of America through these monsters that signified 'the dark forces against which the [American] nation must struggle'.[185] These dark forces were, in other words, the new barbarians of the American society in the post-9/11 world and mostly conveyed through invasion narratives, which called forth the re-emergence of the previously discussed nineteenth-century sensation, imperial Gothic. Adapting Brantlinger's idea of imperial Gothic in his recent study, *The American Imperial Gothic: Popular Culture, Empire, Violence* (2014), Johan Höglund investigates American Gothic narratives

[183] George W. Bush, 'Address to the Nation on the Terrorist Attacks', *The American Presidency Project,* online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, 11 September 2001 <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=58057>.
[184] George W. Bush, 'Remarks in a Meeting With the National Security Team and an Exchange With Reporters at Camp David, Maryland', *The American Presidency Project*, online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, 15 September 2001 <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=63199>.
[185] Linnie Blake, 'Vampires, Mad Scientists and the Unquiet Dead: Gothic Ubiquity in Post-9/11 US Television', in *The Gothic in Contemporary Literature and Popular Culture: Pop Goth*, (eds) Justin D. Edwards and Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet (New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 39.

which 'accompanied and mapped the development of the American imperial state' from the late-eighteenth century to the present with a specific focus on the post-9/11 era. He argues that the imperial Gothic of this period reinforces the use of civilisation vs. barbarism discourse in the disguise of an existentialist good vs. evil conflict that America — as the empire of archetypal modernity, democracy, and freedom — holds against its barbaric enemies with the help of the Gothic mode.

> The Imperial Gothic in both its extroverted and its introverted forms is a mode of writing capable of supporting the building of empire and the fortification of imperial borders with the help of gothic metaphor. It imagines global conflict as a Manichean struggle between good and evil and in its American guise, it typically suggests that the gothic Other must be contained through perpetual military violence. [186]

For Höglund, American imperial Gothic does fundamentally the exact same thing the British imperial Gothic that Brantlinger described once did: it 'depicts the Other that inhabits the frontier space as not only a primitive barbarian but also a gothic and monstrous creature'.[187] British imperial Gothic narratives frequently referred to the primitive Eastern threat as the Other. Hence, as I have discussed, the Ottoman Empire left a mark on the most influential vampire narratives of the time. American imperial Gothic, on the other hand, has very little to do with the image of the Turk as the Other. After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the republic of Turkey has developed strong relationships with the West and indeed, become military allies with the United States particularly after the World War II. Moreover, although it has a predominantly Muslim population, Turkey took its stand against Islamic extremism as a foreign policy and has

[186] Johan Höglund, *The American Imperial Gothic: Popular Culture, Empire, Violence* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2014), p. 90.
[187] Ibid, p. 85.

worked side by side with the West in line with this purpose. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that Turkey is absent in the analyses of American imperial Gothic narratives that Höglund offers in his study while Afghanistan and Iraq take the stage frequently. However, one British imperial Gothic narrative which has been adapted into several media for decades fills this gap thanks to its reincarnations in the post-9/11 American imperial Gothic: that is, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*.

The American author Elizabeth Kostova's international bestseller *The Historian* (2005) draws inspiration from *Dracula,* a novel which Brantlinger once considered as an example of imperial Gothic. Kostova's novel centres around the medieval conflict between Vlad III and the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II, who conquered Constantinople. It provides a long story of three generations of historians who, upon receiving an empty book with a dragon print in the middle, set out on a quest to find the owner of the book, Vlad III, not only in the archives of several libraries in Turkey, Bulgaria and Hungary but also in real life. The novel spreads over a time period from the 1930s to the early 2000s and is narrated by several characters in a way that revives the epistolary form of Stoker's Gothic tale. Nevertheless, Kostova's novel is not another adaptation of Stoker's text, but rather uses it as inspiration to tell a completely different story about family history, academic research and Dracula. Mentioned as 'Turk-killer', 'Turk-slayer' and 'one who kills Turks' several times in the novel, Dracula is, of course, the real source of evil in the story; however, the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II is shown to be as evil as Vlad III in the eyes of the most Western characters.[188] Deriving from the momentous conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and its aftermath, this perception of good vs. evil is reutilised in the novel to introduce the West vs. the East conflict in post-9/11 America.

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[188] Elizabeth Kostova, *The Historian* (London: Sphere, 2006), pp. 21-28-116.

Kostova's novel opens with a foreword written by the young woman that the sixteen-year-old, unnamed narrator of the main story will grow up to be. Having found a letter addressed to herself in her father's library at sixteen, this young girl narrates the story of a History Professor Bartolomeo Rossi (her grandfather), his master's degree student Paul (her father), his daughter Helen Rossi (her mother) and their search for the tomb of Dracula. In 'A Note to the Reader', she explains her story as 'a search for history' that continues generation after generation.[189] She admits that as a historian she did not only use the diaries, letters, archives and documents that she already has relating to his family's search but also as an academic she did her research on the near history and adds: 'The glimpses of religious and territorial conflict between an Islamic East and a Judeo-Christian West will be painfully familiar to a modern reader'.[190] This early revelation sets the main focus of the whole novel that is hidden behind the Dracula myth. From this very first moment, the novel aims to follow the conflict between the West and the East or the Cross and the Crescent until its origin which, for Kostova, is the conquest of Constantinople that all her characters keep coming back to rediscover.

The main story starts when postgraduate student Paul shows the book he received to his supervisor Professor Rossi. Having revealed that he received a copy of the same book years ago, the Professor mysteriously disappears that night and Paul, together with Rossi's daughter Helen, an anthropology student, sets out on a journey to find him. At their first stop, in Istanbul, Paul gazes at the city in admiration because of its '*Arabian Nights* quality'.[191] After this Orientalist remark, however, Paul's admiration is revealed to be for the Byzantine rather than the Ottoman Empire. While reading that '*Istanbul* is a Byzantine word that meant *the city*' from his guidebook, he remarks: 'You

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[189] Ibid, vii.
[190] Ibid, viii.
[191] Ibid, 199.

see, even the Ottomans couldn't demolish Constantinople […] Byzantine Empire lasted from 333 to 1453. Imagine — what a long, long afternoon of power'.[192] Paul's words seem to reopen old wounds for Helen whose country, Romania, stayed under Ottoman rule for centuries. She comments:

> The conquest of Constantinople in 1453 by Mehmed II was one of the greatest tragedies in history. He broke down these walls with his cannonballs and then he sent his armies in to pillage and murder for three days. The soldiers raped young girls and boys on the altars of the churches, even in Saint Sophia. They stole the icons and all the other holy treasures to melt down the gold, and they threw the relics of the saints in the streets for the dogs to chew.[193]

Contrary to Paul, who is an American and supposedly does not have much knowledge or ancestral experience about the Ottoman Empire, Helen knows what it means to have a national history influenced immensely by the Ottoman hegemony. The Ottoman 'sediment' that she believes her nation still carries is not only the reminder of their sorrowful past but also of the fallen Eastern Roman Empire that once threatened Christendom. The way she narrates the events after the conquest shows what an evil tyrant she thinks Sultan Mehmed II was.

Conversely, the Turkish Professor Turgut Bora, whom Paul and Helen meet unexpectedly in a café in Istanbul, mentions a story which asserts that it was the Byzantine who was evil: 'there is a story that the most bloodthirsty of the emperors of Byzantium were vampires, that some of them understood the Christian communion as an invitation to quaff the blood of mortals'.[194] While the Western characters Paul and Helen believe in the atrocities of the Ottoman Sultan and cherish the history of the

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[192] Ibid, 203.
[193] Ibid, 203-204.
[194] Ibid, p. 214.

Byzantine Empire, Turgut Bora reminds them of the stories that Turkish people were told about the evilness of the Christian Byzantines. To put it differently, the two opposite perspectives on the Venetian infidel and the Ottoman Sultan that I have discussed earlier in Byron's *The Giaour* re-emerge here once more as the Byzantines versus the Ottomans. Indeed, both at heart represent the same West vs. East debate. Boletsi's discussion of barbarism also supports this representation by asserting that civilization essentially defines itself by defining the Other as barbaric and evil.[195] Later when Helen reminds Turgut that the Sultan 'enslaved more than fifty thousand' Byzantines after the conquest, he accepts the conquest 'was not so delightfully done' but defends the Ottoman tolerance to other religions and races and adds 'our Sultans were not monsters'.[196] This dialogue reconstitutes the image of the Ottoman Sultan as a slave master, an evil despot in Helen's eyes and as a tolerant but successful leader in Turgut's eyes. In a way, both sides define the other as evil to assure themselves that they are 'the good one'.

The image of the Sultan as an evil despot is revisited when Paul wanders inside the Topkapi Palace. He explains his feelings in the corridors of the Ottoman Empire as such:

> …everywhere I sensed something sinister or perilous, which could simply have been the overwhelming evidence of the sultan's supreme power, a power not so much concealed as revealed by the narrow corridors, twisting passages, barred windows, cloistered gardens. At last, seeking a little relief from the mingled sensuality and imprisonment, the elegance and the oppression, I wandered back outside to the sunlit trees of the outer court. Out there, however, I met the most alarming ghosts of all, for my guidebook located there the executioner's block

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[195] Boletsi (2013), p. 15.
[196] Kostova (2006), pp, 295-296.

and explained in generous detail the sultan's custom of beheading officials and anyone else with whom he disagreed. Their heads were displayed on the spikes of the sultan's gates, a stern example to the populace. The sultan and the renegade from Wallachia were a pleasant match, I thought, turning away in disgust.[197]

The Topkapi Palace, the home of the Ottoman Empire for almost four hundred years, is certainly gothicised in Paul's words. It is likened to a mediaeval castle with its 'narrow corridors, twisting passages, barred windows, cloistered gardens' and Paul feels himself standing in the dungeon of that Gothic castle as if he is the prisoner. Surrounded by the ghosts of the people beheaded and spiked, Paul believes that the Sultan was as evil as his enemy Vlad III. He even seems to understand why Vlad III, who spent his childhood in that very palace as a sort of prisoner, turned out to be as evil as he was.

Moreover, this comparison is not the first or the last. Later in the novel, upon hearing a story about Ottoman cruelty by Helen's aunt Eva in Budapest, Paul makes a remark which, again, compares the Sultan's cruelty to Vlad's, however, this time, he seems more certain who is the superior evil.

The Ottomans again, I thought — how clever they were, and cruel, such a strange mixture of aesthetic refinement and barbaric tactics. […] Vlad Dracula's fight against them, like that of many of his Christian compatriots, had been the struggle of a David against a Goliath, with far less success than David achieved.[198]

Paul's 'perverse admiration for Dracula' as he puts it, derives from his perception of the Sultan as the giant oppressor and of Dracula as the ultimate underdog. The fight

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[197] Ibid, pp. 311-312.
[198] Ibid, p. 333.

between Goliath, a giant Palestinian warrior, and David, an Israeli shepherd, is a biblical story from the Old Testament's Book of Samuel. In modern English, the phrase 'David and Goliath' is 'used to describe a situation in which a small or weak person or organisation tries to defeat another much larger or stronger opponent'.[199] According to Edward A. Gosselin, however, as of the Pre-Renaissance period, the story was interpreted by Christian scholars as the fight between Christ and Satan.[200] Paul's words therefore define the Sultan as a superior evil to Dracula, and reconstitute their fight as between Christianity and Islam rather than Christ and Satan. This is also why, while travelling from Istanbul to Budapest, Paul observes the region as where the good encountered the evil for centuries:

> There is something vastly mysterious for me about the shift one sees, along that route, from the Islamic world to the Christian, from the Ottoman to the Austro-Hungarian, from the Muslim to the Catholic and Protestant. […] I would also see it alternately as benign and bathed in blood — this is the other trick of historical sight, to be unrelentingly torn between good and evil, peace and war.[201]

Clearly, by representing the Sultan Mehmed II as an evil despot, his palace as a Gothic castle, his conquest as barbaric and his religion as Satanic, Kostova echoes previous examples of the civilisation vs. barbarism dichotomy used against the Ottoman Empire. However, interestingly, until the end of the novel America is kept separate from all these, from 'the West' that Paul keeps referring to. Alan S. Ambrisco considers this situation as promoting 'America's myth of itself as a pacifist nation and safe haven'

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[199] 'David and Goliath', *Oxford Learner's Dictionaries Online*
<http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/american_english/david-and-goliath>.
[200] Edward A. Gosselin, 'Two Views of the Evangelical David: Lefevre d'Etaples and Theodore Beza', in *The David Myth in Western Literature*, (eds). Raymond-Jean Frontain and Jan Wojcik (Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1980), p. 57.
[201] Ibid, p. 316.

while registering Europe as a 'terror-ridden' region.[202] He argues that Kostova's novel 'presents Dracula as a terrorist and tyrant' who reappears 'in history's most violent moments'.[203] Although Dracula's evil deeds are surely emphasised throughout the novel, the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II is considered guiltier than Dracula in perpetuating evil in the world. If Dracula is a terrorist as Ambrisco suggests, then Kostova's novel demonstrates him to be the apprentice of Sultan Mehmed II. Earlier in the novel, for example, while the sixteen-year-old unnamed narrator, reads about Vlad III in a library, she learns that Vlad III learned his torture technique, 'impaling', from the Ottomans as he was brought up in the Ottoman palace.[204] Höglund maintains that *The Historian* does not depict the vampire figure as the embodiment of the East as Stoker's *Dracula* does and thus is less an example of imperial gothic.[205] However, when all previous points taken into account, I argue that Dracula in *The Historian* does not merely represent the West or the East, but is an embodiment of the centuries-old West vs. East, good vs. bad, civilisation vs. barbarism conflict which turns up at the door of the United States in the post-9/11 world as shown in the Epilogue of the novel.

The novel seems to have a happy ending: after a series of troublesome efforts that the main characters show, Dracula is killed by Helen; our unnamed narrator, her father Paul and her mother Helen are reunited; and the evil seems to have perished from the world. However, in the Epilogue, our unnamed narrator, now an elderly history professor, looks over Philadelphia from her hotel window thinking about Dracula after receiving the empty dragon book which has been Dracula's way of calling out for his

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[202] Alan S. Ambrisco, 'Suicide, spectral politics and the ghosts of history in Elizabeth Kostova's *The Historian*', in *Horror Studies 6.1* (2015), p. 29.

[203] Ibid, p. 28.

[204] Ibid, 40.

[205] Johan Höglund, 'Catastrophic Transculturation and Gothic Modernity in *Dracula* and *The Historian*', in *Transnational Literature Vol. 5 no. 1* (2012) <https://dspace.flinders.edu.au/xmlui/bitstream/handle/2328/26432/Catastrophic_Transculturation.pdf ;jsessionid=9E138C21D59FF98A4F51F0DA9D244115?sequence=1>.

service throughout the years. Apparently, Dracula is not dead. Still gazing over the city, she says, 'I could see the federal building that had been bombed the month before'.[206] This little detail at the end of the book, as Ambrisco argues, transforms America from a safe haven, 'from a peace-loving and peace-keeping' country to a place doomed to be haunted by the 'ghostly violence from Europe's past'.[207] This is, indeed, the same violence that developed out of the West vs. the East conflict which has been around since ancient Greece. Kostova Gothicises the West vs. East conflict in the novel. By imagining Dracula as the defender of Christian Europe and the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II as the evil Eastern despot, Kostova returns to the beginning of terrorism that spread the evil in the first place. Once again, the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, which 'is the worst date in history' for Dracula himself, serves as the starting point of the civilisation vs. barbarism rhetoric.[208]

As 'a modern Gothic travel narrative', Kostova's *The Historian*, I argue, is far more an example of American imperial Gothic than Höglund initially claimed.[209] The fall of the safe and peaceful American empire, the adventures of the main characters in Turkey, Bulgaria and Hungary, the constant fear of Dracula's existence and the possibility of his invasion through terrorism, all demonstrate the features of imperial Gothic narratives that Brantlinger described. *The Historian* does not refer to the present-day Islamic threat as much as the other American imperial Gothic narratives discussed in Höglund's study, but demonises its origin in the West, the Ottoman Empire. This is the view that is present in Gary Shore's *Dracula Untold* as discussed in the beginning of this chapter. It is as if all evil in the world, including vampirism, has a reason to justify

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[206] Kostova (2006), p. 700.
[207] Ambrisco (2015), p. 30.
[208] Kostova (2006), p. 632.
[209] Höglund (2012), p. 8.

itself except for the evil despot from the East who can best be embodied in the Ottoman Sultan and his conquest of Constantinople.

As a post-9/11 American adaptation, *Dracula Untold* is fully inspired by the conflict between the Prince of Transylvania Vlad III and the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II and embeds the myth of becoming a vampire as a necessary price to pay in order to defeat the evil Turk. In the opening story of *Dracula Untold*, Vlad's son tells the audience how the paths of two sides of the conflict crossed way before 1453.

> In the year of our Lord, 1442 the Turkish sultan enslaved one thousand Transylvanian boys to fill the ranks of his army. These child slaves were beaten without mercy, trained to kill without conscience, to crave the blood of all who defied the Turks. From among these boys, one grew into a warrior so fierce that entire armies would retreat in terror at the mention of his name. The Impaling Voivode. Son of the Dragon. Sickened by his monstrous acts, Vlad came to bury his past with the dead and returned to Transylvania to rule in peace. His subjects called him Prince. I called him Father. But the world would come to know him as Dracula.[210]

In a manner of predicting the troublesome years to come under the hegemony of the Ottoman Sultan, the opening serves as an explanation for the primary reason of Vlad's anger towards the Turks. As a previous slave who killed relentlessly for the Turk, Vlad is represented as a homesick repentant and a peaceful Prince whose only wish was to protect his subjects who 'live in enough fear of the Turks' return'.[211] He later emphasises his wish for peace when Hamza Bey, a soldier of the Sultan, unexpectedly arrives at the Easter celebration in Vlad's court and asks for one thousand boys to be

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[210] *Dracula Untold*, dir. by Gary Shore (Universal and Legendary Pictures, 2014).
[211] Ibid.

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[210] *Dracula Untold*, dir. by Gary Shore (Universal and Legendary Pictures, 2014).
[211] Ibid.

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taken for the Sultan's army. In order to convince Sultan Mehmed, with whom he grew up as brothers in the Ottoman court, Vlad goes to the Ottoman camp nearby.

In this scene, the military power, the wealth and the magnificence of the Ottoman Empire of the time are depicted in detail to show the audience that Dracula cannot compete with the Sultan. The camera first shows the vast land that the Ottoman camp is situated and far too numerous military tents. Seeing the camp, Dumitru, Vlad's comrade in arms, comments: 'Soon the entire world will be Turk'.[212] Inside the Sultan Mehmed's tent, almost everywhere is plated with gold, from the table on which the war territory is engraved to the Turkish coffee cups. When the Sultan Mehmed asks for Vlad's son also to be taken to the court alongside the one thousand boys, Vlad's helplessness before the Sultan is highlighted once more in his beseeching tone. This is the scene where the audience sees the bloody thumb-print next to the 'Allah' stamp. However, though considered as Islamophobic by Elest Ali, this scene and the film as a whole establishes more than just the vilification of Islam. In order to protect his people and save his own son from the fate he endured for years, Vlad has no other choice but to seek a supernatural solution to defeat his enemy. This is the way that the film demonises the Ottoman Sultan and justifies Vlad's violent comeback as a vampire; as Dracula.

According to Boletsi, the rhetorical antithesis between civilisation and barbarism 'unleashes a dynamics of increasing violence against the barbarians'.[213] The civilisation vs. barbarism dichotomy allows the civilised to take violent action in order to protect itself from the barbarian threat. For Höglund, the violence against the barbarian is a necessary outcome in imperial Gothic narratives because 'the gothic Other can only be exorcised through violence'.[214] The War on Terror that the United States commenced

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[212] Ibid.
[213] Moser and Boletsi (2015), p. 17.
[214] Höglund (2014), p. 64.

after the 9/11 attacks is another example of this sort of violence. *Dracula Untold* makes use of this rhetoric by making Prince Vlad turn into a vampire for protection from the barbarian that is the Ottoman Turk.

After crushing the Ottoman army with a demonstration of supernatural strength, Vlad, now as Dracula, faces the Sultan and kills him with his vampire bite. Years later, his son remembers him as such:

> The Turks never conquered the capital of Europe. Prince Vlad Dracula was a hero but there are no pictures, no statues of him. I am his legacy. His sacrifice taught me that even after the darkest night, the sun will rise again.[215]

Hence, Dracula's vampirism becomes a heroic sacrifice, a necessary price to pay for the future of his country just as the War on Terror was considered necessary for Americans' safety. However, the last scene where Dracula unexpectedly encounters Mina's reincarnation who talks in an American accent in between skyscrapers evokes the end of *The Historian* where American safety is compromised. This open end of the film leaves an unanswered question: has Dracula come to America to fight against the threat of evil known as Islamic terrorism in the post-9/11 world or, once again, to repent and leave the evil past behind?

Conclusion

Having provided a theoretical ground which elucidates the relationship between the word 'barbarian', Gothic and Turkish identity, this chapter has examined some of the most well-known British and American Gothic narratives which make use of the image of the Ottoman Turk as barbaric and evil. The literary analyses of Beckford's *Vathek,* Byron's *The Giaour* and the anonymously published *The Lustful Turk* demonstrated that

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[215] *Dracula Untold.*

the combination of the Gothic mode and the Orientalist discourse of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries embodied the idea of oriental despotism in the image of the Muslim and Turk. In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the same train of thought continued with Bram Stoker's two vampire narratives *Dracula* and *The Lady of the Shroud*. I have argued that, considered within the civilisation vs. barbarism dichotomy, these works represent the Ottoman Turk as the embodiment of evil that Christian Europe needs to shake off because by pushing the barbarian out of its borders, Europe can redefine itself as safe and fully Christian. Similarly, in the twenty-first century, the civilisation vs. barbarism dichotomy has become intimately related to the word of terrorism after the 9/11 attacks. Drawing on Johan Höglund's analyses of American imperial Gothic narratives of the post-9/11 era, I have argued that Elizabeth Kostova's novel *The Historian* and Gary Shore's film *Dracula Untold* legitimise the deeds of the vampire and demonise the Ottoman past of Turkey and the Sultan Mehmed II by persistently going back to the conquest of Constantinople, the most destructive moment in history for the West. In the post-9/11 world, the good is — as always — versus the evil; the East is still the anti-thesis of the West; civilisation is once more threatened by barbarism; and the Ottoman Turks are again 'the Other'.

This Gothic otherness attached to the identity of the Ottoman Turk is what has interweaved Gothic and Turkish identity for centuries, and therefore is the genesis of Turkish Gothic. The Western perception of the Ottoman Turks as despots, barbarous and evil, provides an insight into the cultural flows which carried the conventions of Western Gothic to the Turkish cultural imagination in the early twentieth century, when modern Turkish identity was constructed by othering the Ottoman past and favouring Western values. By reading the identity of the Ottoman Turk in Gothic terms, Western Gothic paves the way for Turkish Gothic to find its ultimate Gothic other, the Ottoman Empire. Chapter Two will investigate further how early Turkish Gothic novels

canonised modern Turkish identity and the secularisation project while Gothicising its Ottoman past and the Islamic heritage attached to it, using a wide range of nineteenth century Western Gothic themes.

Chapter Two

Gothicising the Ottoman Past: Turkish Gothic Novel in the 1920s

The traces of the Western Gothic tradition in Turkish literature can be tracked down to the first quarter of the twentieth century. This period saw the presence of a nationalist discourse in politics, education, social life and cultural production including literature. Particularly, after the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, the nationalist discourse exalted Turkish identity and its origins independent from the Ottoman Empire, consecrated the Turkish War of Independence as an epic of bravery, castigated the Empire, announced the Sultan as a traitor and assured the nation that Kemalist ideology and the regime of the Republic were the ultimate answers to save and advance Turkey. The Kemalist ideology and its vision of Turkishness were intensely propagated in the novels of the 1920s. In fact, Azade Seyhan argues that the roots of Kemalist nationalism can be observed more clearly in literature than in politics.[216] This is due to the fact that the Turkish novel was seen 'as a vehicle for social reform' and was put to the service of the Kemalist ideology 'to ensure the empire's safe passage from a traditional, Muslim, eastern community to a modern, westernized society'.[217] Therefore, canonical Turkish novels of the 1920s such as Halide Edip Adıvar's *Ateşten Gömlek* (The Daughter of Smyrna, 1922) and *Vurun Kahpeye* (Hit the Whore, 1926), and Reşat Nuri Güntekin's *Çalıkuşu* (The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl, 1922) and *Yeşil Gece* (The Green Night, 1928) were constructed within the nationalist discourse supporting the principles and reforms of Kemalism and reiterating the supremacy of modern Turkishness over the backwardness of Ottoman traditionalism.

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[216] Azade Seyhan, *Dünya Edebiyatı Bağlamında Modern Türk Romanı: Kesişen Yazgıların Hikayesi* [Tales of Crossed Destinies: The Modern Turkish Novel in a Comparative Context], trans. Erkan Irmak (İstanbul: İletişim, 2014), p. 33.
[217] Jale Parla, 'The Wounded Tongue: Turkey's Language Reform and Canonicity of the Novel', in *PMLA*, Vol. 123, No. 1 (2008), p. 28.

The Gothic novel first appeared in Turkish literature amidst this nationalist atmosphere. The early Turkish novels of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century utilised fantastic and supernatural elements. However, Gothic novels as derived from the conventional Western form did not emerge until the 1920s and even then, they were limited in numbers. Moreover, there were only a handful of Gothic novels which were deeply influenced by the nationalist discourse and its othering attitude towards the Ottoman past. These novels infused Western Gothic conventions with delicately cultivated subtexts of secular Turkishness and gothicised the Ottoman past in line with Kemalist ideals. The Gothicisation of the Ottoman past in these early Gothic novels, I argue, shows similarities to the anti-Catholic sentiment of the nineteenth century British Gothic novel. Hoeveler considers the anti-Catholic sentiment of this period as a result of Protestant Britain's need for an 'other' to define its own modern and secularised self.[218] Hence, 'a reactionary, demonized and feudal Catholicism is created' in Gothic novels 'in order to stand in opposition to the modern Protestant individual'.[219] In the case of Turkish Gothic novels, the 'other' against which modern Turkishness defined itself was the Ottoman past, which represented superstitious beliefs, religious corruption, backwardness and ignorance.

In this chapter, I will discuss selected Gothic novels by Suat Derviş, Ali Rıza Seyfioğlu and Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar as the representatives of this anti-Ottoman and secular Gothic aesthetic. My discussion will begin with Derviş' novel *Ne Bir Ses Ne Bir Nefes* (Not a Sound Not a Breath, 1923). In her novel, Derviş draws on female Gothic tradition and uses a love triangle consisting of a father, a son and a young woman, as an allegory for the Turkish nation's transformation from Ottoman traditionalism to Kemalist modernity. Seyfioğlu's *Kazıklı Voyvoda* (The Impaling Voivode, 1928), an

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[218] Hoeveler (2014), p. 3.
[219] Ibid.

unauthorised adaptation of Stoker's *Dracula*, shows a similar nationalist subtext. The novel embodies the Ottoman past and the imperialist West in Dracula's lust for Turkish blood and places Turkish women at the centre of the patriotic war between the Count and the Turkish men. Lastly, Gürpınar's *Mezarından Kalkan Şehit* (The Martyr Risen from His Grave, 1929) tells a ghost story and establishes its nationalist tone while criticising the failures of the Ottoman Empire in the World War I through the supposed ghost of a deceased soldier, who is the manifestation of the Turkish nation's traumatic memories. The anti-Ottoman and secular Gothic aesthetic of these novels, I argue, not only resembles the Western Gothic's negative perceptions of the Ottoman Turk against which Western identity was defined, but also lays the foundations of Turkish Gothic.

Female Gothic and the Nation: *Not a Sound Not a Breath* (1923)

Suat Derviş was one of the first feminists in Turkey and a distinctive figure among early Turkish women writers due to her political ideology. Derviş was born into an educated upper-class Ottoman family and grew up reading Western literature. She attended Berlin University and lived in Germany until 1932. During and after the World War II, Derviş had close relations with the leftist ideology and was imprisoned twice in 1944 and 1971 for her involvement with communist groups, student rebellions and revolutionary movements of the 1960s and 70s. She died in 1972 when she was still in prison. Having a life intertwined with ideological politics influenced Derviş' literary fame as well. Her name and works were excluded from textbooks and most literature anthologies until the 1990s when Turkish women's literature became a topic of academic interest. Although her novel *Fosforlu Cevriye* (Radiant Cevriye, 1968) subsequently became one of the most canonical works of twentieth-century Turkish literature, her earlier novels have

remained mostly unexamined as they were published serially sometimes under pseudonyms.[220]

Four of these early novels, *Kara Kitap* (Black Book, 1921), *Ne Bir Ses Ne Bir Nefes* (Not a Sound Not a Breath, 1923), *Fatma'nın Günahı* (Fatma's Sin, 1924) and *Buhran Gecesi* (The Night of Depression, 1924) have received considerable attention since their reissue in a collection in 2014. The novels revolve around the experiences of female protagonists mostly without giving any specific historical or social context and draw on the Gothic mode as a tool to reflect the changing role of women in the Turkish society of the early twentieth century and the impact of this change on women's psychology. Serdar Soydan considers Derviş' use of Gothic 'as a conscious or an unconscious reaction to the developments that laid the foundations of the republic and fictionalised modernisation as a great project which had to succeed as soon as possible'.[221] In doing so, Soydan evokes a popular understanding of the Gothic as 'the dark underside of modernity'.[222] In a collection of conference proceedings on Derviş' personal and literary life, Hazel Melek Akdik also reads these novels with respect to their Gothic motifs and points to the strong link between Gothic's emergence and modernity.[223]

Indeed, all four of Derviş' novels are Gothic romances. *The Night of Depression*, for example, tells the story of a woman named Zehra who walks the Earth as a ghost after having been convinced by the Devil to kill her beloved husband and commit suicide. In *Black Book,* the story follows Hasan, a man with grotesque features, who

[220] Saliha Paker and Zehra Toska, 'Yazan, Yazılan, Silinen ve Yeniden Yazılan Özne: Suat Derviş'in Kimlikleri' [Writing, Written, Deleted and Rewritten Subject: Identities of Suat Derviş], in *Toplumsal Tarih* [Social History], Issue 39 (March 1997), p. 21.
[221] Serdar Soydan, 'Sunuş: Suat Derviş, Bir Türk Gotiği' [Foreword: Suat Dervis, A Turkish Gothic], in *Kara Kitap* [Black Book], by Suat Derviş (İstanbul: İthaki, 2014), p. 12. [*my translation*]
[222] Botting (2002), p. 281.
[223] Hazel Melek Akdik, 'Suat Derviş'in İlk Romanlarında Gotik Unsurlar' [Gothic Elements in Suat Derviş' Early Novels], in *Yıldızları Seyreden Kadın: Suat Derviş Edebiyatı* [The Woman Watching the Stars: Literature of Suat Derviş], ed. by Günseli Sönmez İşçi (İstanbul: İthaki, 2015), p. 220.

falls obsessively in love with his cousin Şadan. Şadan gets frightened and mentally disturbed by Hasan's unrequited love and obsession. At the end of the novel, while Hasan commits suicide, Şadan goes insane and dies in fear. *Fatma's Sin* is concerned with Fatma leaving her husband upon his confession of love towards his ex-lover. The novel depicts Fatma's despair and insanity using Gothic motifs and atmosphere. However, I argue that *Not a Sound Not a Breath* differs from the others with a subtext corresponding to the political and social transformation of Turkey in a much more nuanced way. Published in a time of change from a deteriorating Islamic empire to a modern republic, I argue that the novel can productively be read as an example of female Gothic, which uses a love triangle between a father, a son and a young woman as an allegory to depict the Turkish nation's entrapment in-between two patriarchal regimes.

Not a Sound Not a Breath is narrated by Zeliha, a young orphan girl who marries Osman, a middle-aged man with a strong belief in reincarnation. Osman's unstable psychology is revealed when his son Kemal, whom Osman has not seen for a long time, comes to live with him after his mother's sudden death. Osman writes his diary that he is afraid that Kemal will steal Zeliha from him as he did several times in their past lives. Upon reading Osman's diary, Zeliha feels trapped between the father, whom she considers as sick, and his son, who deeply falls in love with her. She increasingly feels helpless and frightened by the rivalry between the father and son, which results with Kemal's tragic death in Osman's hands.

By depicting Zeliha as a helpless young woman confined to Osman's authority, Derviş draws on the conventions of female Gothic. Although the term was first coined in 1976 by Ellen Moers to comprise Gothic works written by women since the eighteenth century, Female Gothic has become a popular topic of debate in Gothic studies, particularly in the 1980s. My reading of *Not a Sound Not a Breath* follows

Diana Wallace and Andrew Smith in understanding female Gothic 'as a politically subversive genre articulating women's dissatisfactions with patriarchal structures and offering a coded expression of their fears of entrapment within the domestic and the female body'.[224] Accordingly, I read Osman's character as the symbol of patriarchy in the novel and Zeliha as the Gothic heroine whose 'passive and persecuted' character represents what Botting calls 'an image of loss and suffering'.[225] Moreover, Zeliha and Osman's changing relationship throughout the novel evokes the stereotypical plot of Female Gothic narratives. Punter and Byron explain this plot structure as such:

> Initially, she [the female protagonist] is usually depicted enjoying an idyllic and secluded life; this is followed by a period of imprisonment when she is confined to a great house or castle under the authority of a powerful male figure or his female surrogate.[226]

This plot is employed in *Not a Sound Not a Breath* with slight differences. Zeliha lives an upper-class life in Osman's house: safe and indulged but also dull and confining. She does embroidery, plays the piano and spends her days watching the changes in nature through her window. Zeliha is not physically imprisoned by Osman, as Gothic heroines in female Gothic narratives usually are, but she increasingly feels childish, powerless and fearful of Osman's troubled psychology.

Zeliha is very young, inexperienced and timid while Osman is old, sturdy and very sophisticated. Osman loves Zeliha deeply but is also unsecure about the age difference between the two. For Zeliha, Osman is more like a father figure who has taken her under his protection. She loves him compassionately, respects him and strives to please him, but she has always been afraid of Osman. Coupled with the pain of

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[224] Diana Wallace and Andrew Smith, *The Female Gothic: New Directions* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 2.
[225] Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 131.
[226] Punter and Byron (2004), p. 279.

unrequited love and jealousy, Osman becomes unpredictable and edgy which raises the suspenseful tension in the house. In an evening, while observing Osman's behaviours, Zeliha admits her fear as such: 'There are such mysterious shadows on his face which looks completely dreadful with his dark and overgrown moustache. I always look at my husband's mysterious face over his bulky body with a feeling similar to fear'.[227] Zeliha's perception of Osman as a fearsome man deepens after she reads Osman's diary and learns about Osman's beliefs in reincarnation.

Osman writes in his diary that at the moment he first saw his son Kemal, he remembered him from his past life: 'I remember who Kemal is, who he was almost four hundred years ago before he became my son. I remember very well that back then, Kemal pierced my throat with his dagger, that I died in his hands'.[228] Osman continues:

> I remember dark, shadowy and walnut veneered old palaces. I remember old furnishings. Then, I remember concerts given by guitars, at the feet of women, wearing red shoes and dresses in gold tulle with silver embroidery, and sitting on high back chairs. And I remember, in such nights, that a red-haired woman sitting in front of me would bend down towards him and talk to one of the guitarists young men with movements which dangles and shines the precious jewel in the chain placed in her red hair. I remember this young man, who looks at this woman with loving eyes, having the face of Kemal and that we shared long hostile looks.[229]

Osman's description of his past memories regarding his relationship to Kemal and Zeliha with details that illustrate old palace settings, court dresses and entertainment, shows that the Gothic motifs of doubling and the returning past are at work here. The

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[227] Suat Derviş, 'Ne Bir Ses Ne Bir Nefes' [Not a Sound Not a Breath], in *Kara Kitap* [Black Book] (İstanbul: İthaki Yayınları, 2014), p. 15. [*my translation*]
[228] Ibid, p. 53.
[229] Ibid.

red-haired woman in Osman's memories and the guitarist, who slits Osman's throat with a dagger, are the past doubles of Zeliha and Kemal. Due to its persistence in the returning past, Gothic mode, Spooner highlights, 'is disposed to evoke circularity', which suggests a repetition of the past.[230] Osman is therefore afraid of, indeed, haunted by the thought of this vicious cycle in which he is repeatedly being killed by Kemal for Zeliha.

Having read Osman's diary entries and learned why Osman has been acting strangely around Kemal and that he is willing to kill his son for her, Zeliha is terrified and convinced that Osman is a sick man. She looks at herself in the mirror and sees that her clothes are indeed reminiscent of old times. She starts to untie her puff-sleeved, many-skirted, tight-waisted, taffeta dress:

> My slow fingers untie the dress with a growing hurry and fear as if they are tearing it. Now the dress lies beneath my feet like a blue cloud. I am wearing a thin shirt. I am no longer that woman who brings anxieties to Osman. I am now a new woman with a silk shirt and bushy armfuls of hair on her shoulders. I am the woman of my century. There is nothing left in me from that old woman. Osman was right. These dresses made me look like women of old times. No, I no longer look like that woman. Nothing left from that woman. Except… yes, except for the colour of my hair. I will never dye my hair again. When it finds its own colour, Osman will be fine, he will be healed.[231]

Zeliha's taffeta dress and her red hair represent her sexuality which she has to hide or even destroy in order to heal Osman. If she can be a modern woman, a woman of the twentieth century, by wearing low-waisted dresses and silk shirts, she believes that

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[230] Catherine Spooner, *Fashioning Gothic Bodies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 200.
[231] Derviş (2014), p. 69.

Osman will no longer remember his past-life memories when he looks at her. Thus, at the cost of changing who she is, she will be pure and honourable again in Osman's eyes. This way, not only Osman but also Kemal and she as well, will be released from this deadly rivalry. The modernity that Zeliha looks forward to embracing through her modern clothing is her only hope for salvation.

Zeliha's description of Osman as 'a sick man' and her attempt to heal him by becoming 'modern' refer strongly to the novel's subtext which reveals the fight between Osman and Kemal over Zeliha as an allegorical fight for the salvation of the Turkish nation in the early twentieth century. The year that Derviş' novel was published was a time of fundamental change for modern Turkey as I have discussed earlier. Osman's past memories, which haunt not only him but also Zeliha and Kemal, can therefore be associated with the Ottoman past of the modern Turkish nation. Zeliha's constant characterisation of Osman as 'a sick man' is also evocative of the Ottoman Empire's last decades when the empire was often described and even illustrated as 'the sick man of Europe' by Western states (See Figure 6). Therefore, Osman symbolises the Ottoman Empire engulfed in its own past while the modern and secular values of the new republic are mirrored in Kemal's character. For Kemal, Zeliha deserves a young and passionate lover like himself rather than a man whom she loves with a paternal affection.

Kemal's character is representative of the new Kemalist ideology whose initial reforms were about unchaining the nation from the remnants of the Ottoman past by replacing the 'sick man' with a younger and more modern governance system. When Zeliha changes her look 'to heal Osman', it is Kemal who acknowledges how much her appearance has changed and compares her to the women in fashion magazines. This change in Zeliha's appearance not only reflects the changing roles of women of the time, but also evokes Dress Reform, which was initiated later in the same decade, in
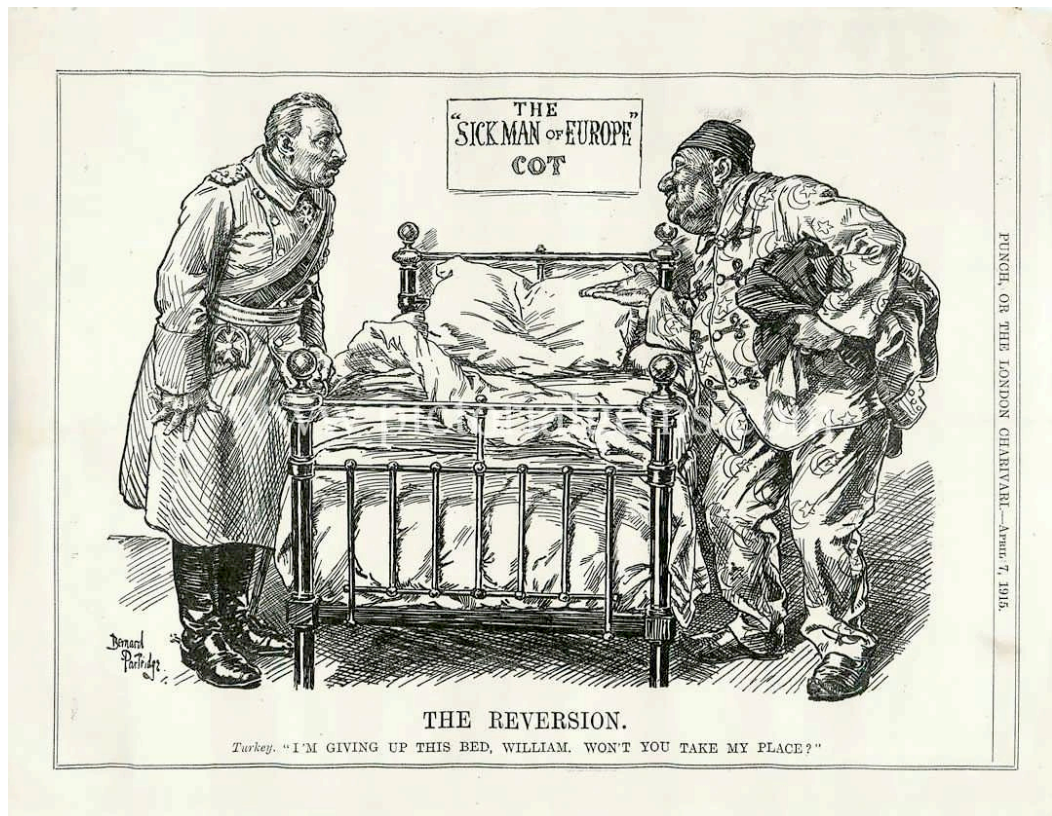
Figure 6. Bernard Partridge, 'Boor and Sycophant', in *Punch Magazine* (7 April 1915).

order to modernise the Turkish nation further. Kemal's appreciation of Zeliha's change of style therefore can be read as an appreciation of modernity as opposed to traditionalism. By showing no signs of commitment to the past but a deep interest in modernity, Kemal represents the young republic.

Lastly, Zeliha serves as the embodiment of the Turkish nation and the country stuck in between the power battle between the Ottoman Empire and the Kemalist regime. The feminisation of the nation is in fact a common allegory to be found in national literatures since the spread of nationalism in the eighteenth century. Nira Yuval-Davis observes that 'a figure of a woman, often mother, symbolizes in many cultures the spirit of the collectivity, whether it is Mother Russia, Mother Ireland or Mother India'.[232] In Chapter One, I have shown how Gothic texts such as *The Giaour*

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[232] Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation* (London: Sage, 1997), p. 45.

and *The Lady of the Shroud* employed the image of the nation as a woman in similar ways for Greece and the Balkan nations. Similarly, the word *Anavatan* (Motherland) is often used in nationalist discourses in modern Turkey alongside *Devlet Baba* (Father State) as the construct which protects Anavatan and the rights of its citizens.[233] This family triangle further elucidates why Mustafa Kemal, the founder of Modern Turkish Republic was given the surname of Atatürk, meaning the Father of Turks. Moreover, this family metaphor can also be found in the patrimonial regime of the Ottoman Empire in which the throne descends from father to son, hence, as Max Weber explains, regulating 'the authoritarian relationship of father and children'.[234] However, Ottoman Sultans started killing their sons with the fear of being overthrown as early as the fourteenth century. In the fifteenth century, Sultan Mehmed II enacted the law known as 'Nizami Alem' (The Order of the State) permitting the Ottoman Sultans to kill those men closest to the throne in line to avoid a fight for the throne until the seventeenth century. The novel alludes to this tradition in Osman's belief in his repeated fate of being killed by Kemal in all his previous lives. Hence, Zeliha becomes the throne, the object to rule and control in the eyes of both Osman and Kemal.

In an unexpected turn of events, the end of the fight between Osman and Kemal turns out to be the opposite of what happened in Turkey's past. Although they both decide to kill each other in order to have Zeliha, ultimately it is Osman who is successful. Osman kills Kemal with an antique dagger which was Kemal's gift. Zeliha describes the scene with terror:

> Two men are breathing inside like animals, like hungry wolves. I am listening to a voiceless and terrible struggle, panting, breathing, slight screeches and groans.

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[233] Sam Kaplan, *The Pedagogical State: Education and the Politics of National Culture in post-1980 Turkey*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 14.

[234] Max Weber, *Economy and Society, II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), p. 1107.

Something falls down. Then, a terrible silence for a second […] a victory cry

and then the noises that an animal makes when its throat is being slit, growling,

sounds of arms and legs hitting the ground and then again, a silence that is

horrible like death and long like eternity. […] A heavy curtain opens slowly in

darkness. And there in front of it, Osman's terrifying and dreaded head appears.

[…] 'It's all over now, you love me', he mutters. I struggle to escape his

clutches. To scream… to scream… and I want breath to scream.[235]

Zeliha's comparison of Osman and Kemal to animals reveals the monstrous nature of

the transgressive males and emphasises Zeliha's innocence. When the curtain opens, it

opens Zeliha's eyes to Osman's real nature as well. For the first time in the novel,

Zeliha is empowered to get away from Osman as Osman gets closer to her with his

bloody hands. For the first time, by articulating that she wants to escape, Zeliha tries to

unchain herself from Osman. Zeliha's account of the events from behind the curtain

climaxes the long-lasting suspense of the novel.

By making Zeliha narrate the horrific event from behind the curtain, Derviş

limits the reader's perception of events to Zeliha's point of view. It is the psychological

terror that Zeliha experiences that Derviş wants to emphasise, not the tragedy of Osman

and Kemal. On the other hand, the use of the curtain separates the world of men from

the world of women and creates a much deeper insight into the veiling of women in

Ottoman society. Derviş draws a parallel between the veil and the curtain revising the

imagery attached to their use in Gothic texts to conceal and reveal what needs to be seen

and unseen.[236] The veil is traditionally used to limit men's gaze with respect to women

and is a symbol of religious commitment. However, unlike the function of the veil, the

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[235] Derviş (2014), p. 100.
[236] Catherine Spooner, 'Masks, Veils and Disguises', in *The Encyclopaedia of the Gothic*, (eds) William
Hughes, David Punter and Andrew Smith (Blackwell Publishing, 2013), Blackwell Reference Online
<http://www.literatureencyclopedia.com.ezproxy.lancs.ac.uk/subscriber/book.html?id=g97814051829
04_9781405182904> .

use of the curtain in the novel conceals the men's world from the women's gaze and becomes a reminder of women's place and the Turkish nation's subdued state in Ottoman society. If the curtain represents a concealment, Zeliha is not allowed to see Osman and Kemal's fight. In other words, the Turkish nation becomes a veiled woman who is not allowed to meddle in the Sultan's decisions or who is blind to the fact that the Empire is monstrous. When the curtain is opened, and Osman's monstrosity is revealed, Zeliha's terrified state perhaps echoes the tragic end that the Turkish nation will face if she lets the sick Empire destroy the hope of freedom, reform and modernity.

Derviş' early novels have often been considered outside the republican literature canon and not reflective of the nationalist discourse of their time.[237] *Not a Sound Not a Breath* on the other hand, uniquely alludes to the transition from an Islamic Empire to a modern nation-state. The novel uses conventions of the female Gothic tradition to depict Zeliha's anxieties in relation to the patriarchal order. Anne Willams argues that female Gothic is a 'revolutionary' mode which 'does not merely protest the conditions and assumptions of patriarchal culture' but 'unconsciously and spontaneously rewrites them'[238] By representing the Ottoman past through the delusions of a distressed and monstrous patriarchal figure and connecting Zeliha's anxieties to those of the Turkish nation's, Derviş, perhaps unconsciously, draws on the revolutionary nature of female Gothic as well as of the 1920s.

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[237] Feryal Saygılıgül, 'İlk Dönem Romanları Üzerinden Suat Derviş'i Anlamaya Çalışmak' [Understanding Suat Derviş Through Her Early Novels], in *Yıldızları Seyreden Kadın: Suat Derviş Edebiyatı* [The Woman Watching the Stars: Literature of Suat Derviş], ed. by Günseli Sönmez İşçi (İstanbul: İthaki, 2015), p. 210.

[238] Anne Williams, *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 138.

Vampire's Lust for Turkish Blood: *The Impaling Voivode* (1928)

Another Gothic novel which was influenced by the nationalist discourse of the 1920s, in fact much more overtly than *Not a Sound Not a Breath,* was Ali Rıza Seyfioğlu's unauthorised adaptation of Stoker's *Dracula*, titled *Kazıklı Voyvoda* (The Impaling Voivode, 1928).[239] As I have shown in Chapter One, the publication of *Dracula* coincided with the time when Britain was faced with the anxieties of a changing world evoked by the political, social and scientific advancements of the late-nineteenth century. A great deal of literary criticism, therefore, represents Dracula and accordingly his successor vampire figures as the reflection of political and social anxieties of a particular culture in a particular period of time.[240] This applies to Seyfioğlu's novel as well. When *The Impaling Voivode* was published, the Republic of Turkey was only five years old and nationalist propaganda was at its peak. Seyfioğlu was a reformist who did not appreciate the narrow-mindedness that the Ottoman state adopted before its collapse. Consequently, after the foundation of Turkey he started to work as a translator and wrote on Turkishness, nationalism, and Mustafa Kemal's great leadership.[241] The timing of the publication of Seyfioğlu's novel coincides with the years during which the definition of Turkish national identity began to be constituted by the Kemalist regime through reforms and disengagement from the Ottoman influence.

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[239] *Kazıklı Voyvoda* is the novel's original name when it was first published in Ottoman Turkish, a form of Turkish written using Perso-Arabic script. The novel is known to have been reissued in modern Turkish in the early 1930s after the adoption of the Latin script in 1928. In 1997, on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of Stoker's *Dracula*, the novel was revised and reissued by Giovanni Scognamillo. However, the title of the novel in this new print was *Dracula in Istanbul*, alluding to the 1953 film which I discuss in Chapter Three. Similarly, the 2017 English translation of the novel reuses the same title, quite likely to appeal to international audiences. In this thesis, I have chosen to refer to the novel's original name primarily to prevent Seyfioğlu's novel to be confused with the film *Dracula in Istanbul*. Moreover, as I illustrate in my analysis, the original title efficaciously reflects the nationalist discourse that the novel incorporates.

[240] See Stephen D. Arata (1990), Fred Botting (1995), Andrew Smith and William Hughes (2003), Smith (2007).

[241] Osman Yıldız, 'Ali Rıza Seyfi Seyfioğlu', *TUBAR* 12 (2002), pp. 89-109.

The Impaling Voivode's nationalist discourse has previously been pointed out by scholars.[242] However, how this nationalist discourse interacted with Seyfioğlu's depiction of the first vampire of Turkish literature remains unexplored. In my reading of the novel, I explore this point. I argue that Seyfioğlu's adaptation makes a significant addition to the anti-Ottoman and secular Gothic aesthetic, by imagining Dracula as the representation of the Ottoman past and Western imperialism — two constructs that the Kemalist regime defined as the enemy of the Turkish nation. Additionally, like *Not a Sound Not a Breath*, the novel centralises female characters as the embodiments of the Turkish national identity that is contaminated by the vampire's lust for blood.

In order to elucidate the construction of the nationalist discourse in *The Impaling Voivode*, it is necessary to look into the particulars that make Seyfioğlu's novel the first literary adaptation of *Dracula* written outside Western culture.[243] The plot of *The Impaling Voivode* reads in a similar manner to the original text although Renfield's character is removed from the plot and Dracula never encounters Mina. However, in order to translate the cultural references and appeal to Turkish audiences, Seyfioğlu makes further adjustments in the text. He replaces English names of the characters with Turkish names and shifts the setting of the story from nineteenth-century Britain to the Istanbul of the 1920s. This change has often been regarded as a form of Turkification, which I will discuss further in Chapter Three, or an abridged translation.[244] However, some of the cultural changes that Seyfioğlu made proved crucial for his nationalist discourse to make sense.

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[242] Pelin Aslan Ayar, *Türkçe Edebiyatta Varla Yok Arası Bir Tür: Fantastik Roman* (1876-1960) [A Rare Genre in Turkish Literature: Fantastic Novel] (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015), p. 264.

[243] The first literary adaptation of *Dracula* in the world is the Icelandic adaptation, *Makt Myrkranna* (Powers of Darkness, 1900) written by Valdimar Ásmundson and published with a preface by Stoker himself. See: Colin Fleming, 'The Icelandic Dracula: Bram Stoker's vampire takes a second bite', *The Guardian*, 19 April 2017 <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/apr/19/icelandic-dracula-bram-stoker-translator-powers-of-darkness-valdimir-asmundsson-makt-myrkranna>.

[244] Özkaracalar (2005), p. 62.

The most significant change occurs in relation to religious references. As Victor Sage suggests, 'the horror novel is shaped by the language, imagery and assumptions of a Christian consciousness'.[245] In an attempt to create a Turkish Gothic tale, Seyfioğlu replaces Dracula's Christian references with those of Islamic tradition throughout the novel.[246] In doing so, he does not seek for an appreciation of Islam or piety but simply refers to religion as a traditional aspect of Turkish national identity while still regarding himself as a modern man. For example, when the Transylvanian villager in Bistritz gives Azmi (Jonathan Harker) a crucifix for protection from bad spirits and demons, he finds this offering off-putting and compares his relationship with religion and modernity to that of a Protestant Christian:

> I was quite taken aback by this. My position was rather awkward. Was this woman offering me the cross to kiss, or was she handing it to me so that it might protect me from the evil I might encounter? To tell the truth, I could not bring myself to kiss the piece of wood even to please this poor, decent woman. Aside from being difficult and embarrassing for a young Muslim, it was also a distasteful position for a rational man. Even a Protestant Christian, were he in my place, would hotly refuse. [247]

Azmi's hesitation in the face of a crucifix reflects a possible response of a Muslim man. However, his comparison of his stand as a rational man to a Protestant Christian is rather significant considering the parallel between the anti-Catholic and the anti-Ottoman discourses of Western and Turkish Gothic texts.

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[245] Victor Sage, *Horror Fiction in the Protestant Tradition* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), p. 16.
[246] This practice later became a common method in the adaptation processes of Turkish Gothic horror films (see Chapter Three).
[247] Ali Rıza Seyfioğlu, *Dracula in Istanbul*, trans. by Necip Ateş (USA: Neon Harbor, 2017), p. 10.

Nevertheless, after reminiscing about her deceased mother, who used to drag Azmi to visit tombs of Muslim personages to pray, and the *Enâm* she gave him to wear around her neck, Azmi shows an appreciation of traditional beliefs and customary practices which are familiar to Turkish readers.[248]

> I took the Enâm, so that its rather large, amulet-shaped case showed beneath my wool scarf between my shirt and undershirt, and said to her pleasantly: 'Madam, do not worry. See, I have the holy word, the book of the great God around my neck. This will protect me'. The woman answered: 'Very good, very good; but this the crucifix will not hurt either. Keep it. And she added with unexpected solemnity and conviction: 'All of them are one, all the same! All one, all one! Allah is one, everything, everyone is one…'[249]

The exchange of religious iconography established through replacement of the Christian cross with the triangular Muslim amulet and the appreciation of traditional beliefs is later intensified when Dr. Resuhi (Van Helsing) remarks:

> He [the vampire] is also afraid of the Holy Quran and the soil from the grave of our Prophet. In fact, the Christian nations use their crosses to protect themselves against vampires. In short, the sacredness of religion is considered a weapon against vampires everywhere.[250]

Seyfioğlu replaces the cross with the amulet and the Bible with the Qur'an, but the old woman's and Dr. Resuhi's words regarding the sacredness of every religion, indicates that Seyfioğlu's purpose in this exchange was not to praise Islam over Christianity, or take a stand for religion instead of modernity, but to create an atmosphere that is

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[248] Enâm or Enâm-ı Şerif is a triangular shaped, usually leather bounded amulet which contains some of the most popular and important chapters, or surahs from the Qur'an on a folded piece of paper.
[249] Seyfioğlu (2017), p. 11.
[250] Ibid, p. 126.

familiar to traditional Turkish readers of the 1920s. Therefore, it can be argued that the religious references in *The Impaling Voivode* do not feed on the Islamic dogma associated with the Ottoman past but draw on a more spiritual understanding of religion identified with traditions and customs which were considered as a part of modern Turkish national identity.

Another significant quality of Seyfioğlu's adaptation is its rather strong emphasis on the link between Dracula and the historical figure of Vlad Tepeş. As Punter and Byron suggest, Gothic fiction deals with 'the impossibility of escape from history', combined with the fact that the 'past can never be left behind' and will manifest itself constantly 'to exact a necessary price'.[251] In Seyfioğlu's adaptation, this relationship with the past is fully exploited, more so, in fact, than in Stoker's text. Since Dracul is a name for a dynasty in Transylvanian history, there is still controversy about which of the Wallachian rulers named Dracul that Stoker got his inspiration from.[252] However, the one that inspired Seyfioğlu was definitely Vlad Tepeş, who was considered an enemy of the Ottoman Empire in the fifteenth century. The Ottoman side of the story tells that having stayed in the Court as captive for years, Vlad was sent to his motherland, Wallachia, and soon started to show disloyalty to the Sultan. He became one of the cruellest tyrants in world history due to his famous method of impaling people. Records show that he would order his soldiers to strip the skin from Turkish captives' feet, pour salt on them and make goats lick them. Once he reportedly even had several women's breasts hacked off and had their children's head stitched to their bosom instead.[253] A Western account also suggests that 'Dracula may have used "germ warfare", as he reputedly paid Wallachians infected with diseases such as syphilis or

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[251] Punter and Byron (2004), p. 55.
[252] For a discussion on the topic, see Collins (2011).
[253] Ahmet Şimşirgil, *Kayı 2: Osmanlı Tarihi, Cihan Devleti* [Kayı 2: Ottoman History. A World State] (İstanbul: KTB Yayınları, 2012), pp. 86-185.

tuberculosis to dress as Ottomans and enter enemy camps, thus spreading disease to the Turks'.[254]

These atrocities and more committed by Vlad Tepeş are emphasised in *The Impaling Voivode* through Dr. Resuhi's seven-pages speech to the vampire hunter team composed of Azmi, Mr. Turan (Arthur), Doctor Afif (John) and Mr. Özdemir (Quincey). In his speech, Dr. Resuhi explains in great detail how Vlad's method of impaling led to his name 'Impaler Voivode' by the Turks and resorts to historical facts from the period of the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II.

> When Mehmed II took power in the year 865 of the Hegira calendar [1461 in the Gregorian calendar], the people of Wallachia, his own Christian population, sent a desperate petition explaining that Dracula's terror had reached an unbearable level. Since their situation and his evil intentions were already known, the Ottoman Empire wished to strike this man with the hand of discipline. He did not accept the offer of reconciliation, but crossed the Danube river and the Turkish border with a hundred-thousand-man army he gathered from various other nations. He began to drown Bulgaria in fire and blood, sparing no village, town, or city. Our government not only sent an army against Dracula, but they also sent a light fleet of twenty-five galleys and one hundred and fifty longboats to the Danube, commanded by Yunus Bey. However, this monster Dracula had provided for everything. He was a stubborn and daring warrior. He set traps, defeated the army in a sudden raid, and tore down the light fleet. If you examine the historical records, you will see that Dracula captured both Captain Yunus

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[254] Matthew Beresford, *From Demons to Dracula The Creation of the Modern Vampire Myth* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008), p. 84.

Bey and the Vidin Keep Hamza Bey, and impaled both of them, leaving them on either side of the Danube river after severing their hands and feet![255]

As is seen, Dr. Resuhi's speech is full of historical details that Stoker did not include in his novel. Such detailed historical facts bring to mind Seyfioğlu's extensive knowledge, as a historian, on the history of the Ottoman Empire and its naval accomplishments. Dr. Resuhi's speech takes the reader to the mid-fifteenth century, just after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453. I have demonstrated in Chapter One, how this incident repeatedly used as a point of reference by Western scholars and writers regarding the conflict between the West and the East, or more precisely between Christian Europe and the Ottoman Turks. In this context, *The Impaling Voivode* can be read as a counter-narrative to Western adaptations of *Dracula* since it imagines Dracula and his relationship to Mehmed II from the Ottoman perspective. While the Western accounts I discussed in Chapter One depicted the Ottoman Empire as the evil oppressor and justified Dracula's vampirism as a sort of protection mechanism from Mehmed II, *The Impaling Voivode* represents Dracula as a tyrant and a blood shedder who killed not only the Turks but also his own people and other Balkan nations.

The Impaling Voivode depicts Dracula as the nemesis of the Ottoman Empire, but the fact that he was a Western nemesis also plays a significant role in the construction of the novel's nationalist subtext. To explore this point further, I would like to return to Arata's theory of 'reverse colonization', which I briefly touched on in Chapter One. Considering the rise of imperialist ideologies in Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century, Arata interprets *Dracula* as 'a narrative of reverse colonization', which 'expresses both fear and guilt' as 'the coloniser Britain sees its own imperial practices mirrored back in monstrous form'.[256] In *The Impaling Voivode,*

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[255] Seyfioğlu (2017), p. 127.
[256] Arata (1990), p. 623.

however, Dracula is the coloniser, the Western imperialist who tries to colonise Turkey and thus the Turkish national identity. Furthermore, Arata states that 'in the heart of the reverse colonization narrative is the fear of seeing Britons ultimately dissolving into Romanians or vampires or savages'.[257] By extension, Seyfioğlu's use of nationalism reveals the fear of 'dissolving into Westerners' since what Turkish people tried to do in the War of Independence was precisely to prohibit their national identity from being lost to the imperialist aspirations of the Western world.

On the other hand, Dracula's coming to Istanbul can also be read as an act of revenge deriving from the vampire's own nationalist spirit. The night that Azmi finds out that Vlad is actually the ancestor of the Count sheds further light upon this idea and Dracula's interest in his country's history, particularly in regard to its connection to Ottoman history:

> As he [Dracula] talked of this country's [Transylvania's] history, and in particular its wars, he spoke with rage, strength, and enthusiasm, as though he had been personally involved in the events. But I also noticed how he restrained himself and tried to give a milder tone to his words and behaviour. He specifically wished to bypass or gloss over events centered around the Turkish Empire. This seemed only natural; could he behave otherwise with a Turk? He would not have felt it appropriate to vaunt or glorify his namesake, who perpetrated terrible, bloody cruelties and tortures on Turks; who broke his oath, his word of honor many times and earned such sinister nicknames as Devil Voivode and Impaler Voivode, even if the man is a hero of sorts for Transylvanians.[258]

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[257] Ibid, p. 631.
[258] Seyfioğlu (2017), pp. 33-34.

Dracula's enthusiastic speech on Transylvanian history and his omission of details about the Ottoman Empire provide a second dimension to Arata's theory. As Azmi also states above, Vlad is still regarded as a national hero in Romania. In fact, in 1976, a commemorative stamp was issued by the Romanian Dictator Nicolae Ceauşescu in honour of Vlad to mark the 500th anniversary of his death.[259] On the other hand, the Ottoman Empire ruled in many regions and many nations fell under the hegemony of the Empire during its reign, including Transylvania. Thus, from Dracula's viewpoint the Turks have been the enemies of his race for centuries: they are the imperialist power, the primitive 'Other' who once tried to colonise his people, and he is the noble warrior of his land who has to revenge his ancestors. When viewed in this manner, Dracula's intentions in Istanbul can be interpreted as illustrative of 'reverse colonization', as he inwardly believes that the Turks deserve this punishment after all. Therefore, in Seyfioğlu's adaptation, the Count and the Turks switch roles repeatedly; each becomes the coloniser and the colonised at the same time.

In his patriotic speech, however, Dr. Resuhi does not attach any guilt or fear to the Ottoman Empire or the Turks in general. He continues to talk about Dracula's horrible deeds and establish him as the coloniser of the Turkish nation. He first illustrates how the messengers of Sultan Mehmed II refused to remove their turbans in front of Dracula and as a result, their turbans were nailed to their heads. Reading this incident as an act of patriotic heroism on the messengers' part, Dr. Resuhi calls these messengers, 'our brave fathers who bequeathed this country to us with their blood, their swords and their unwavering heads as a source of eternal pride and sacred value'.[260] Although the turban is a religious symbol, Dr. Resuhi emphasises that the messengers' refusal to remove their turbans does not stem from religious faith but from 'national

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[259] Beresford (2008), p. 77.
[260] Seyfioğlu (2017), p. 129.

pride and the Turkish honor'.[261] He concludes his speech by promoting the nationalist

discourse of the 1920s and emphasising that Dracula's lust is indeed for the Turkish

blood.

> Who could doubt the future of nations that hold an unwavering faith in their
> pride, honor, and nationality? The thing we call 'the ideal' is this faith that we
> wish to inspire in our youth. […] Is it not strange, my friends? We shall prevent
> a monster, who centuries ago did not tire of drinking Turkish blood, from
> drinking Turkish blood in Istanbul; and we shall destroy him who could not be
> destroyed by the armies of any nation.[262]

Seyfioğlu's own nationalistic ideas are resounded in Dr. Resuhi's patriotic speech which

reminds the readers that the faith in the nationalistic pride, in Turkishness, is much more

significant than the religious faith. By valuing Turkishness over religion, Seyfioğlu

represents the Kemalist regime's detachment from Islamic tradition of the Ottoman

Empire for the sake of uniting the country under national identity.

As Dr. Resuhi remarks in his speech, Turkish blood is the salient symbol of

Turkish national identity. Atatürk's famous words directed at the Turkish nation: 'The

power you need, is present in your noble blood', also reiterates the strong link believed

to exist between race and blood.[263] Moreover, the red colour of the Turkish flag, the

national emblem of Turkish identity, was also considered as a representation of the

Turkish blood that was shed by the soldiers in the Turkish War of Independence. By

referring to Turkish blood as a symbol of Turkish identity and therefore, what is

targeted by Dracula, the novel draws on the nationalistic discourse of its time and once

again imagines Dracula as an enemy of Turkishness. For example, having understood

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[261] Ibid, p. 132.
[262] Ibid, p. 133.
[263] Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *Nutuk: Cilt 2* [The Address: Book 2] (İstanbul: MEB Yayınları, 1969), p. 898.

that he is in the Impaling Voivode's castle with his grandson Dracula, Azmi writes in his diary: 'I was aiding this unthinkably horrible monster to come to Istanbul and my beloved country! There this devil would drink Turkish blood and create a land of devastation like the cursed Impaler Voivode who lived centuries ago'.[264] As a nationalist who believes that the blood represents the nation and the race, Azmi thinks of the tortures that Vlad carried out upon Turkish people in this castle and gets furious both at himself, as he is about to help his grandson Dracula move to Istanbul, and also at Dracula because of his endless lust for Turkish blood.

The Impaling Voivode further addresses Dracula's lust for Turkish blood through its female characters. According to Carol Senf, in *Dracula*, Stoker represents Lucy and Mina in a binary position which reflected the anxieties concerning the New Woman movement and its ambition of sexual equality for women at the risk of deviating from motherhood duties.[265]

> In Stoker's binaristic vision of femininity, Lucy's unholy inversion of motherhood is eventually displaced by Mina Harker's return to racial purity, after her partial contamination by the Count, and her final role is to retreat from her intellectual position as the sifter of textual evidence and to serve instead as mother to a future generation of Anglo-Saxons safe (for the moment) from the invasive threat of foreign blood.[266]

Senf argues that while Lucy represents the sexual transgression of the New Woman, Mina becomes the face of the traditional female roles as well as the appropriate woman of the Anglo-Saxon race. In Seyfioğlu's adaptation, the binary position of Güzin (Mina)

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[264] Seyfioğlu (2017), p. 48.

[265] Carol Senf, '*Dracula* and Women', in *The Cambridge Companion to Dracula*, ed. by Roger Luckhurst (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 117.

[266] Ibid.

and Şadan (Lucy) persists but with slight changes. The novel portrays Güzin as an ideal Turkish girl who is educated, modern, perfect wife material and also as nationalist as the Turkish men when her nation is under threat. In her last diary entry, Güzin writes:

> When I read our nation's glorious history with tearful eyes, and saw the cruelties and murders committed by this unprecedented monster who had many names, like Dracula, Black Devil and Impaler Voivode, I cursed myself for not being a Turkish sipahi [cavalryman] living 400 years ago.[267]

Güzin is thus the image of the new Turkish woman with her nationalist sensibilities. Later, Azmi writes about his astonishment, which turns into admiration of Güzin's strong personality, when he realises that instead of preventing him from going to this war, she supports him and the others since she, herself, is also a true nationalist.

> But my Güzin, delicate as a rose, tender as a hyacinth, turned out to be as tough as steel — no, as though as a true Turkish girl. Turkish girls… What qualities should be described to differentiate them? The easiest is the pride and enthusiasm she shows when she sees her husband charging against dangerous challenges and obstacles![268]

The emphasis given to the idea of the 'Turkish girl' shows that for Seyfioğlu, a Turkish girl is a girl like Güzin who is educated and sophisticated in different subjects, helpful and caring towards her loved ones, open minded to new ideas, and brave and loyal to her country and race. However, when Güzin wants to join them in this war with 'the enemy of her race', the men do not allow her.[269] Dr. Resuhi says that she should stay at home and wait for them but never lose her faith in God. Thus, for Seyfioğlu, another feature of the 'Turkish girl' is that she is always in the background, as she obeys the

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[267] Seyfioğlu (2017), p. 123.
[268] Ibid, p. 134.
[269] Ibid, p. 136.

men and prays at home similar to Mina in *Dracula*. This shows that Seyfioğlu's version of the new Turkish woman's identity combines both modernisation and the traditional roles of the woman and feeds heavily on Turkish nationalism.

Şadan, on the other hand, is not as ideal as Güzin and becomes the actual victim of the Count's irresistible attacks. According to Arata, 'Dracula not only endangers the personal identity of individuals, but also Britain's integrity as a nation'.[270] Moreover, as Botting also claims, 'Dracula manages to realise his plans of colonisation through women and their bodies'.[271] In Seyfioğlu's adaptation, however, Güzin remains unaffected and Şadan is the only vessel for Dracula to reach the Turkish blood. Şadan is easily victimised by Dracula because of her various weaknesses. She never acts like an unvirtuous girl, but she is shallow by comparison to Güzin. Şadan cannot go further than being a beautiful woman, while with her intellectuality and nationalist spirit, Güzin embodies the modernised face of Turkish women. As a result, Dracula can drink, colonise and contaminate the Turkish blood, accordingly the Turkish national identity, only through Şadan, who represents not only the shallow housewife, but also the shallow-mindedness of the Ottoman Empire. The fact that unlike Mina in Stoker's text, Güzin never encounters Dracula and remains unharmed, indicates that she is the ideal Turkish woman representing modern Turkey. Arata argues that 'reverse colonization narratives are obsessed with the spectacle of the primitive and the atavistic' and sees Dracula as the Eastern uncivilised, primitive 'Other' who threatens the modernisation in Britain at the time.[272] In comparison, *The Impaling Voivode* imagines Dracula as a Western imperialist threat which cannot do any harm to modern Turkish national

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[270] Arata (1990), p. 630.
[271] Botting (1996), p. 98.
[272] Arata (1990), p. 624.

identity, since it is protected by those who value national pride and honour, and who is thus bound to remain in the dusty pages of the Ottoman history.

The Ghost Story and Politics: *The Martyr Risen from His Grave* **(1929)**

Ottoman history re-emerges as part of the anti-Ottoman subtext of yet another Gothic novel within a year of *The Impaling Voivode*'s publication. Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar's *Mezarından Kalkan Şehit* (The Martyr Risen from His Grave, 1929) brings insight to the Battle of Sarikamish (22 December 1914 – 17 January 1915), fought between the Ottoman Empire and Russia in the World War I, by dwelling on Gothic conventions such as the ghost story, the haunted mansion and the explained supernatural. The novel has previously been discussed by Özkaracalar and Aslan Ayar in relation to its use of Gothic conventions, however the nationalist and anti-Ottoman subtext of the novel has not been fully explored.[273] Gürpınar's other novels such as *Cadı* (The Witch, 1912), *Gulyabani* (The Bogeyman, 1913), *Ölüler Yaşıyorlar mı?* (Are the Dead Alive?, 1932) and *Dirilen İskelet* (The Skeleton That Rose, 1946) make prominent use of Gothic conventions while also reflecting the author's understanding of arts for the people's sake through discussions of the invalidity of superstitious beliefs against the rational values of the twentieth century modernity. In *The Martyr Risen from His Grave*, Gürpınar persists in his rational and didactic stand, yet he also uses the novel as a tool of anti-Ottoman propaganda. I argue that the novel stands out as the most explicit combination of Turkish identity and the Gothic mode in Gürpınar's works and serves as one of the centrepieces in defining the anti-Ottoman Gothic aesthetic.

In brief, the novel starts with the protagonist Şevki leaving degenerate city life behind and moving to a rural neighbourhood at the invitation of his friend Kadri. One day, while he walks around the town, he hears someone singing and playing the piano

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[273] Özkaracalar (2005), p. 62; Aslan Ayar (2015), pp. 182-188.

from a mansion that is believed to be haunted. Rumour has it, the lady of the house is a beautiful fairy who enchants men and her grandmother is visited every Friday by her deceased grandson, Şevket. As a rational and positivist person who does not believe in spirits and other superstitions, Şevki makes up his mind to meet the household and solve the mystery. Eventually, he falls in love with the lady of the house, Şahika, and they get married. After Şevki moves in to the so-called haunted mansion, he witnesses one of the spirit's visits in the garden and follows the tracks of the spirit to the graveyard. He comes back with Şevket's undershirt and lots of unanswered questions. Believing that someone is behind the mystery, Şevki reads Şevket's diaries which he kept during the Battle of Sarikamish where he died. Soon, the mystery is revealed by letters sent by Şevket's close friend in the military, Muzaffer.

Gürpınar's novel draws on various Gothic conventions and reconfigures them within the atmosphere of modernisation, positivism and secularism in Turkey in the 1920s. According to Julia Briggs, 'the Gothic more often follows romance in locating its events in exotic or bizarre settings, whereas the ghost story often takes place in a very mundane and often urban context'.[274] In Gürpınar's interpretation, however, it is possible to observe a mixture of both. Şevki's friend Kadri invites him to a neighbourhood which is in Istanbul but distinctively far away from the chaos and the degeneration of the city, a place of seclusion where Şevki finds opportunity to connect with nature again. Having arrived in this mundane neighbourhood which establishes the requirement of the ghost story form, Şevki's discovery of the haunted mansion and the rumours about its beautiful fairy mistress establish the bizarre setting that the Gothic form demands. In addition, Briggs points out that ghost stories 'are partly characterized by the fact that their supernatural events remain unexplained'.[275] In fact, Gürpınar is

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[274] Julia Briggs, 'The Ghost Story', in *A New Companion to the Gothic*, ed. by David Punter, (Malden: Blackwell-Wiley, 2012), p. 181.
[275] Ibid, p. 177.

generally considered to give rational explanations at the end of his novels to support his own positivist world view and thus, his novels are associated with the explained supernatural device often used by Ann Radcliffe.[276] In *The Martyr Risen from His Grave* however, the letter that the household receives from Muzaffer, though it seems to explain the mystery at first glance, promises an intriguing twist.

The letter comes from Şevket's fellow soldier Muzaffer, who bears a striking resemblance to Şevket. He explains the mystery as a promise given to a brother to relieve the pain of his mournful family. Every Friday, thus, Muzaffer wears his uniform and comes to see Şevket's grandmother to keep his promise. However, there is another reason why Muzaffer is so determinedly faithful to his promise for years. Having fought on separate fronts for three nights, Muzaffer saw Şevket for the last time as a ghost at the hour of his death. He explains the experience as such:

> When there was nothing around except for me and the tent, a shadow moved beside me. I turned and saw Şevket before me from end to end. […] His face was very pale. He looked at me with a sorrowful smile and said – with his sweetest voice: 'I died a martyr. My grandmother called me, I went and saw her. You haven't forgotten our agreement, have you? From now on, you will see that poor woman, but not as common to the alive. God created our image as identical, now I entrust my soul to you. Henceforth, I will live in you. You will appear to my grandmother secretly at some nights in my shape and soul as Şevket. You will make her believe that I rise from my grave.' Oh my God, what was I seeing, what was I hearing… I hurled myself and held Şevket's hands. His skin was like ice. Am I the dead one? Or Şevket? Can the living talk to the dead?

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[276] Özgür Çiçek and Irmak Ertuna-Howison, 'Literature for the People: Paranormal Mysteries of Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar', in *CLUES: A Journal of Detection*, Vol 30/2, Fall (2012), p. 8.

He disappeared before my eyes melting like a cinematic ghost. Then I looked

down and saw that I am holding a tin pitcher in my hands. The coldness in my

palms comes from that.[277]

Muzaffer's letter explains the mystery behind the martyr's visits to the mansion on

Fridays but what he experienced is evidence for the possibility of the supernatural.

However, the resolution of the mystery behind the ghost in the mansion does not give a

rational explanation to the ghost in the battlefield. Therefore, in contrast with his other

novels, in *The Martyr Risen from His Grave*, Gürpınar follows the conventions of the

ghost story and leaves room for the possibility of the unexplained supernatural.

Another 'constant element' of ghost stories for Briggs, 'is the challenge they

offer to the rational order and the observed laws of nature'.[278] Şevki's character is the

symbol of this rational order which is challenged by the ghost of Şevket and the end

which does not explain the supernatural with rationality. Therefore, the theme of

superstition vs. science pervades the novel. Early on in the novel, upon hearing about

the haunted mansion, Şevket manifests his rational and positivist stand as such:

One should be cautious about believing in this kind of rumours. All ungrounded,

incorrect and superstitious convictions reserve a place in people's minds through

these rumours. We, the enlightened children of this century, should strive for

eradicating such beliefs rather than reinforcing them.[279]

Şevket is an intellectual who believes that people needs to be educated about the

invalidity of superstitious beliefs in the twentieth century. He is in fact the voice of

Gürpınar himself who regarded literature not as a product of the high culture but as a

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[277] Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Mezarından Kalkan Şehit* [The Martyr Risen from His Grave] (İstanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2012), pp. 178-179. [*my translation*]
[278] Briggs (2012), p. 176.
[279] Gürpınar (2012), p. 23.

tool for educating the Turkish society. In an article he wrote as a response to a critic, Gürpınar writes: 'There are millions of people who approach us begging for improvement… Literature cannot be for common people. What nonsense! People are swamped with ignorance, the whole nation is doomed to vanish, and we should watch from afar, is that it?'.[280] Gürpınar's strong reaction to those who criticise him for not following the art for art's sake movement, echoes Şevket's words and show Gürpınar's passion for promoting scientific knowledge, rational thinking and positivism against the superstitious beliefs of traditional Turkish society. However, as Tuğcu argues, Gürpınar used the supernatural 'not only to ridicule superstitions and emphasise positivist thought but also to express his philosophical inclinations and political ideology'.[281] Indeed, all of Gürpınar's novels draw on social issues of its time implicitly; but *The Martyr Risen from His Grave* explicitly refers to the collective memories of the World War I.

Indeed, the World War I has been a rich source for ghost stories in the Western world as well. Briggs suggests that:

> In an age haunted by the unnumbered ghosts of those who died in horror and pain at the hands of other human beings, the ghost story can only figure as a form of light relief. Perhaps because we tame horrors and make them manageable by writing about them, some of the twentieth century's darkness has been drawn into its ghost stories.[282]

The ghost story, as Briggs explains, provided a means of processing the horrors of war and healing those who are affected by the atmosphere of death, pain and trauma. Accordingly, in Gürpınar's novel, the visits of the ghost of her deceased grandson serve as a solace for the old grandmother in the house. According to Şahika, her grandmother

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[280] Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, A Response to Today's Critics *Cadı Çarpıyor* [The Witch is Haunting] (İstanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2013), p. 241. [*my translation*]
[281] Tuğcu (2008), p. 6.
[282] Briggs (2012), p. 183.

was already psychologically unstable but once she received the news of the horrible death of her grandson in the war, she got worse. Every Friday, after the night prayer, she goes out to the garden and invites her grandson in tears reciting the prayer. She even makes the servants prepare his favourite meals and iron his favourite clothes.[283] However, the fact that the ghost is a martyr is a significant detail since the Qur'an says: 'And say not of those who are slain in God's cause, 'They are dead': nay, they are alive, but you perceive it not'.[284] This association of martyrs with a form of the living which cannot be perceived by people, provides a comprehensible interpretation of the ghost figure for Muslim readers of the time. It also explains why the grandmother invites Şevki with the prayer on Fridays. Friday is the sacred day of the week for Muslims and believed to be the day that God grants whatever the believers ask for. Therefore, the grandmother sees her grandson's visits as God's grace for herself rather than ghostly apparitions.

Focusing on the symbolism of the ghost figure in Charles Dickens's stories, Andrew Smith suggests, 'the ghost story is an allegory' which refers to 'wider issues relating to history, money, and identity'.[285] Similarly, the allegorical function of Gürpınar's ghost story reveals Gürpınar's own criticism of the Ottoman Empire's failed war strategy. According to the novel, Şevket dies in the Battle of Sarikamish which is ingrained into Turkish people's collective memories as one of the most tragic incidents that happened during the World War I. Historical records show that out of around a hundred and twenty thousand soldiers who were sent to fight against the Russian army in the Battle of Sarikamish, tens of thousands froze to death on the mountains before

[283] Gürpınar (2012), pp. 65-72.
[284] *The Qur'an*, 'The Cow (Al – Baqara)' (2:154), trans. M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 17.
[285] Andrew Smith, *Ghost Story, 1840-1920: A Cultural History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), p. 33.

even entering Sarikamish. This bitter defeat caused the Ottoman Empire to lose its grip on the Caucasus region during the war and had further repercussions which are linked to the so-called Armenian genocide by some scholars.[286] In Gürpınar's novel, Şevki first mentions the battle with great grief and respect to the martyr once he sees the portrait of Şevket.

> I could nearly imagine his [Şevket's] red blood flowing over the white snow of Sarikamis and these two colours [white and red] dropping on the surface of Turkish flag at that divine moment. […] I was touchingly proud of my brother in law's glorious death.[287]

I have already evoked the link between Turkish blood and Turkish flag while discussing *The Impaling Voivode.* Drawing on the same metaphor, Gürpınar identifies the blood of Şevket which spread over the snowy mountains of Sarikamish with the colours of the Turkish flag. Hence, the sacredness of being a martyr by dying for one's nation is emphasised in order to create the consciousness of national identity. If 'ghost stories represent the return of the repressed in its most literal and paradigmatic form' as Briggs remarks, then, through the figure of the ghost, Gürpınar establishes a discourse of national identity which returns from the snowy mountains of Sarikamish to haunt the Turkish people of the 1920s.[288]

As one of the soldiers sent to Sarikamish to fight, Şevket writes about the conditions of war in his diary. He blames his commander in chief, Enver Pasha, for his unrealistic battle plans and poor decisions, which led him and his friends to their tragic end in Sarikamish.

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[286] Richard Holmes and Martin Matrix Evans, *Battlefield: Decisive Conflicts in History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 168.
[287] Gürpınar (2012), p. 69.
[288] Briggs (2012), p. 178.

I don't think Enver will be questioned in this world, because this superfluous creature, who does not acknowledge any authority rather than himself, would run away as soon as he understands that he will be exposed to the threat of being questioned. […] Enver, who thinks of himself as a military mastermind, is indeed a fox. He is a living disaster risen to the rank of commander in chief all by himself like a poisonous mushroom without being verified by any victory. Enver is deprived of all capacity for thinking and his military incompetence is like an ill omen. Enver has not had his share from any education, moral and humanistic virtues. He found the way to get himself to a position in history through his perverse talents. While he ruins, burns and kills, no one could say a word of objection.[289]

Şevket's words about Enver Pasha's lack of knowledge, his military incompetence, unintelligent decisions and corrupted values seem to reflect the Kemalist hostility towards the Ottoman pasha. Enver Pasha was the Empire's war minister from the beginning of the World War I until he fled the country in 1918 due to his continuous failures as a commander. He disliked Mustafa Kemal, who used to be his inferior in the battle field and opposed his vision of modern Turkey. In return, Mustafa Kemal considered Enver Pasha as a destructive figure for the future of modern Turkey because of his aspirations of reviving the Ottoman Empire. This hostility between the two resulted in the 'condemnation and demonisation of Enver Pasha's memory by official Kemalist histography'.[290] In a similar vein to the Kemalist vision of Enver Pasha, Şevket castigates his commander during the war. Having read his brother-in-law's diary, Şevki flames with rage towards Enver Pasha and likens him to a vampire-like

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[289] Gürpınar (2012), p. 132.
[290] Dietrich Jung and Wolfango Piccoli, *Turkey at the Crossroads: Ottoman Legacies and a Greater Middle East* (London: Zed Books, 2001), pp. 175-6.

creature saying, 'his pleasure was death and his food was blood'.[291] Here Gürpınar uses Şevket's war memories in order to Gothicise the Ottoman past and practices.

Şevket continues his words by comparing himself and his friends to 'a flock of sheep' who are being sacrificed recklessly for the vain hopes of Enver Pasha.[292] Gürpınar's comparison of Turkish soldiers to a herd of animals here evokes the sacrificial lamb metaphor in relation to martyrdom, which is an analogy present both in Islam and Christianity. Just like the act of sacrifice makes the animal sacred, dying in war for one's country also makes the dead sacred. Gürpınar once again sacralises martyrdom in Şevket's words: 'Martyrs, whose bodies are exploited by the country, constitutes the highest degree of humanity. If the martyr's body did not get bloody and buried, would there be such a thing as homeland?'[293] Gürpınar emphasises the sacredness of Turkish soldiers who died and became martyrs in Sarikamish and the War of Independence which freed Turkey from the Ottoman Empire as well as Western imperial aspirations. Therefore, Gürpınar accords with the nationalist discourse of the decade.

Şevket's diary is brimming with criticism and condemnation of Enver Pasha's decisions during the World War I and his failure to take responsibility afterwards. The denigration of Enver Pasha and implicitly of the Ottoman state not only reinforces the Turkish identity discourse that Gürpınar concentrates his novel on but also declares sublimation of martyrdom, a very significant aspect in the construction of Turkish national identity of the period. As a Gothic novel which draws on the ghost story form, *The Martyr Risen from His Grave* becomes an allegorical narrative which captures the ideological atmosphere of the 1920s. As Briggs observes, 'the ghost has provided a

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[291] Ibid, p. 144.
[292] Gürpınar (2012), p. 133.
[293] Ibid, p. 176.

powerful imagery for the darkness of the past and its inescapable historical legacies'.[294] By creating the ghost figure as a martyr, Gürpınar establishes the return of the past through the collective memories of the Turkish people. Therefore, the novel constitutes one of the benchmarks of Turkish Gothic and its anti-Ottoman and secular aesthetic.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined selected examples of the early Gothic novels in Turkish literature which transform Western Gothic tropes into being 'Turkish' through the use of a nationalist discourse which corresponds with the discussions regarding Turkish nation and national identity in the 1920s. I argued that in her novel *Not a Sound Not a Breath,* which draws on the female Gothic tradition, Suat Derviş resorts to allegory and attributes her female protagonist the role of the entrapped Turkish nation, caught between a despotic husband named Osman representing the Ottoman past and his young son Kemal representing the modern Kemalist ideals. Although the novel does not end with a confirmation of Kemalist modernisation, Derviş' depiction of Osman as a sick man and a monstrous murderer Gothicises the Ottoman past and contributes to the anti-Ottoman Gothic aesthetic. Similarly, Ali Rıza Seyfioğlu's fascinating adaptation of *Dracula*, *The Impaling Voivode*, plays with the anxieties of its time by depicting the vampire count as the representation of both the Western imperialism and the Ottoman past, two significant threats to the modern and secular Turkish national identity that was being constructed in the 1920s. The novel serves as a counter-narrative to Western Dracula narratives by depicting the fight between Dracula and Sultan Mehmed II from the Turkish perspective for the first time. Lastly, Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar's *The Martyr Risen from His Grave* draws on the conventions of the ghost story and the Battle of Sarikamish fought during the World War I. The novel uses the ghost figure as the return

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[294] Briggs (2012), p. 185.

of the traumatic memories of the nation and to criticise the Ottoman war strategies which led the country and its sacred soldiers to their downfall.

As I have argued earlier, these works together form a recognisably Turkish aesthetic for the theorisation of Turkish Gothic by using the historical, political and social anxieties of the Turkish nation throughout the most essential years of nation building. This strong connection that the Gothic mode established with Turkish identity and national anxieties from the very first moment that it appeared in Turkish cultural production, is significant for the Turkish Gothic narratives I will discuss in the following chapters. Through my analysis in this chapter, the origins of Turkish Gothic are revealed as not only 'made in Turkey' but also as intertwined with allegories, symbols and metaphors of a national identity which was constructed by a political discourse castigating the Ottoman past and canonising the modern republic. The Gothic in Turkey was born from these basic codes of anti-Ottoman and secular Turkishness. Therefore, Turkish Gothic must be further theorised according to this aesthetic. However, Turkish national identity is never static and due to political and social developments, is constantly changing and evolving. In my theorisation of Turkish Gothic, I carefully take into account how this foundational Gothic aesthetic interacted with the changing ideologies and meanings of Turkishness since the 1920s. The following chapter therefore, focuses on the second half of the twentieth century when the Kemalist vision of Turkishness was challenged by the rise of conservative politics, and investigates how Turkish Gothic, this time in cinema, adapted to the changing conditions.

Chapter Three

Turkifying the Gothic in Turkish Cinema after 1950

Gothic cinema in Turkey emerged during the rise of Yeşilçam, the Turkish Hollywood, in the 1950s. As observed by Savaş Arslan, while Yeşilçam served the Kemalist ideology and reproduced its vision of Turkishness, it also depicted traditional religious motifs next to modern images in correlation with the rise of conservative politics after the 1950s.[295] This double-mindedness, Arslan argues, generated the ambiguous character of Turkish cinema, which was later furthered by the process of *Turkification*.[296] Turkification, Arslan explains, 'involves not only a translation and transformation of the source but also a limited adaptation of it based on the premises of the republican modernization and westernization programs'.[297] Indeed, Yeşilçam drew heavily on Turkifications of primarily Hollywood films, as copyright law was then non-existent in Turkey. These films were *Turkified* in that the settings would be modern Istanbul; the characters' Anglophone names would be replaced with common Turkish names, and Turkish cultural references would supplant their Western equivalents.

According to Arslan, the dynamics of Turkification are best visible in Turkish Gothic horror films due to their 'attempt to domesticate themes often nonexistent in Turkish culture'.[298] Here, Arslan refers to religious, largely Catholic motifs, which are prominently used in Gothic horror texts. In limited numbers of Gothic horror films made in Yeşilçam, these motifs would be adjusted in order for the films to appeal to Turkish audiences. Thus, traditional and Islamic motifs were used alongside the references to modern Turkish identity and Kemalist vision of westernisation. This

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[295] Savaş Arslan, *Cinema in Turkey: A New Critical History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 80.
[296] Ibid.
[297] Ibid, p. 46.
[298] Ibid, p. 163.

suggests the end results of Turkification in Yeşilçam were neither strictly secular nor fully conservative, but existed in between the two, similar to the Turkish identity.

This 'in-between' position of Turkish cinema and identity can also be understood through the concept of hybridity. Historically used in biology and racial discourse, hybridity has become one of the most controversial terms in post-colonial discourse since the 1990s. The term is commonly used to refer to the exchange between cultures of the coloniser and the colonised which results in a new transcultural, thus hybrid, mixture.[299] For Homi K. Bhabha, these two cultures meet in a liminal and an in-between space, the 'Third Space of enunciation' as he calls it, where cultural boundaries are blurred and finding an authentic and 'pure' cultural identity becomes impossible.[300] The identity that emerges from this third space is therefore a hybrid one, containing 'difference and sameness' simultaneously, since hybridity, Robert J. C. Young observes, 'makes difference into sameness, and sameness into difference, but in a way that makes the same no longer the same, the different no longer simply different'.[301]

Although Turkey has never been officially colonised, and therefore, is not considered to be a part of the post-colonial discourse, Turkey's alliance with the West, particularly after the World War II, have generated colonial concerns. Between the years 1948-1950, Turkey received 74 million dollars economic aid from the US under the Marshall Plan.[302] This aid not only helped rebuild the country entirely, but also sparked off various criticism towards the Republican People's Party (RPP) for putting Turkey under the domination of the US.[303] Accordingly, this alliance had a massive

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[299] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 119.
[300] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Oxon: Routledge, 2004), p. 55.
[301] Robert J. C. Young, Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 24-25.
[302] Nurgün Koç and Bedriye Koç, 'Affects of Marshall Plan on Turkish Economy', *Sociology Study 7/2* (February 2017), p. 92.
[303] Ibid, p. 106.

impact on Turkish society due to a clearly visible Americanisation in social and cultural areas, including the Turkish cinema industry. It is this strengthened cross-cultural exchange with the US that prompted Turkish filmmakers to American productions. The processes of Turkification applied to these productions and the in-between Turkish national identity that emerges from their reading therefore carry a hybrid nature.

Keeping Arslan's remarks regarding the in-between Turkish national identity that the Turkification process creates and the in-betweenness of cultural hybridity in mind, I will, in this chapter, examine four Gothic horror films which left significant marks in the evolution of a distinctively Turkish Gothic tradition in Turkish cinema. The first vampire film of Turkish cinema, *Drakula İstanbul'da* (Dracula in Istanbul, 1953) directed by Mehmet Muhtar, demonstrates a Turkification process engendered through the shift in time, place and religious references. Though adapted directly from Ali Rıza Seyfioğlu's adaptation *The Impaling Voivode* discussed in Chapter Two, the film is deprived of Seyfioğlu's nationalistic subtext. Nevertheless, it is an innovative transcultural adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* with unprecedented details regarding the depiction of the vampire on screen. Directed by Yavuz Yalınkılıç, *Ölüler Konuşmaz Ki* (*The Dead Don't Talk*, 1970) remained a fairly unknown Gothic horror film until 2001. The film is a fascinating case of Turkification because unlike *Dracula in Istanbul*, it is not based on an Anglo-American plot or story. Rather, it attempts to create a native Gothic atmosphere by hybridising the 'undead' creature using folkloric beliefs in Turkish and Balkan cultures. The film introduces the earliest scene of Islamic exorcism in a Gothic horror film, developing a motif later used in another transcultural adaptation, *Şeytan* (1974), globally known as the Turkish Exorcist. *Şeytan* follows the same pattern as *Dracula in Istanbul*: it relocates the plot of William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* (1973) to Istanbul and tailors the themes of the original film to the context of 1970s Turkey when discussions of reinstating traditional Islamic values — which were

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once suppressed by Kemalist ideology — were escalated. Kutluğ Ataman's *Karanlık Sular* (The Serpent's Tale, 1993) which depicted the changing fabric of Istanbul in the 1990s using urban Gothic aesthetics differs from its predecessors since it doesn't invoke the Turkification of Western Gothic conventions and therefore becomes the precursor of change and development in Turkish Gothic.

I argue that these four films not only reflect the changing ideological processes of Turkish identity construction during the second half of the twentieth century, but also contributed to the aesthetics of the early Turkish Gothic novels to which contemporary Turkish Gothic narratives return for inspiration. The processes of Turkification implemented in each film results in a hybrid of Western and Turkish cultures, yet they show distinct differences in terms of ideological tendencies which correspond with the secular and conservative identity of Turkish cinema interchangeably. Through the reading of these films, it is possible to mark the initial breaking point of Turkish Gothic tradition into two complementary branches in the post-millennium as secular and conservative.

Screening the Vampire in *Dracula in Istanbul* (1953)

The first Turkish film to achieve the Gothic atmosphere in Turkish cinema was director Aydın Arakon's *Çığlık* (*The Scream*, 1949). What makes *Çığlık* differ from its successors is the fact that its plot is not directly adopted from a Western production but draws on Gothic conventions affiliated with British Gothic novels such as Willkie Collins' *The Woman in White* (1859), J. Sheridan Le Fanu's *Uncle Silas* (1864), and their Hollywood adaptations in the 1940s. The film tells the story of a doctor who is stranded on a stormy night in a mansion wherein a man drives his young niece to madness over the question of rightful inheritance. As the name of the film suggests, the screams of the victimised girl reverberate with the mysterious and dark atmosphere of

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the film's aesthetics. According to Scognamillo and Demirhan, upon release, the film failed to create suspense, terror or excitement and was thus considered to be an unsuccessful first attempt at the Gothic horror genre.[304] Nevertheless, on the newspaper advertisements composed by Atlas Film for the movie's release, *Çığlık* is described as 'a revolutionary film which will keep its audience under its influence for days' and 'a masterpiece of Turkish film-making'.[305] In addition, the poster presents the film as 'the great Turkish film' and emphasizes the word 'Turkish' by using bold and capitalised letters. *Çığlık* is no longer available for investigation: it was either lost or destroyed in a fire in the building of the production company.[306] However, the fact that Atlas Film tried to market the Gothic as a new national genre that would appeal to Turkish audiences, demonstrates a significant aspect of the evolution of Turkish Gothic.

Due to *Çığlık*'s unavailability, *Dracula in Istanbul* directed by Mehmet Muhtar, can be viewed as the earliest Turkish Gothic horror film. The film is a reinterpretation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, as the original story line does not fully change, but the modifications that result from the process of Turkification create a new retelling of the Dracula myth which makes it a transcultural adaptation. Linda Hutcheon argues that 'stories adapt just as they are adapted, and that alterations are therefore the necessary and inevitable outcome of creativity'.[307] One of the basic alterations in the process of transcultural adaptation is again a shift in time and place. As the title hints, in *Dracula in Istanbul*, the destination of Dracula changes from England to Istanbul, as it also does in Seyfioğlu's novel, and the story takes place in the 1950s instead of the late-nineteenth century. Apart from the Turkification of time and place, *Dracula in Istanbul* also

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[304] Giovanni Scognamillo and Metin Demirhan, *Fantastik Türk Sineması / Fantastic Turkish Cinema* (İstanbul: Kabalcı, 2005), p. 63.

[305] 'İlk Korku filmimiz Çığlık ne zaman gösterildi?' [When was our first horror film Çığlık released?], *Öteki* Sinema [Other Cinema], 13 November 2014 <http://www.otekisinema.com/ilk-korku-filmimiz-ciglik-ne-zaman-gosterildi/>. [*my translation*]

[306] Ibid.

[307] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 31.

changes the cultural associations constructed within the original text and creates a contextually coherent Dracula story for Turkish audiences of the 1950s.

The unprecedented representation of the historical connection between Vlad Tepeş and Dracula in *Dracula in Istanbul* has been already suggested by several Western scholars.[308] When Azmi (J. Harker) and Dracula spend their first night in the castle, Dracula tells Azmi that everybody is afraid of him as they think him cruel like his ancestor the Impaling Voivode. While Azmi wanders around the ancient castle, the audience sees steel armour and swords that would remind them of medieval knights. In this context, the setting also helps the audience to recognise the connection between the Count and Vlad. As Julie Sanders suggests, adaptation can constitute a simpler way of making texts 'relevant' or easily comprehensible to new audiences and readerships.[309] Thus, the purpose of this connection is obviously to engage the attention of and create a sense of familiarity for Turkish viewers. However, when the shift in religion is shown on the screen, a new dimension is added to the altered cultural associations.

The director and scriptwriter of *Dracula in Istanbul* drew inspiration from Stoker's novel, but the main source text was Seyfioğlu's adaptation. Therefore, the shift from Christian to Islamic tradition retains Seyfioğlu's use of religious imagery with slight differences. In the very beginning of Stoker's novel and Seyfioğlu's adaptation, a Transylvanian woman warns Jonathan Harker and gives him a cross to protect himself. In *Dracula in Istanbul*, when the woman warns Azmi not to go to Dracula's castle, he shows his Enâm – as discussed in Chapter Two – to show that he does not believe in superstitions and says: 'I only believe in my Allah'.[310] In Stoker's text and Browning's *Dracula*, the cross on Harker's neck prohibits Dracula from biting him when he gets a

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[308] Silver and Ursini (1997), p. 155; Hopkins (2005), p. 107; Joslin (2006), p. 47.
[309] Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 19.
[310] *Drakula İstanbul'da* [Dracula in Istanbul], dir. by Mehmet Muhtar (And Film, 1953). [*my translation*]

paper-cut. In *Dracula in Istanbul*, however, the cross is replaced with an Enâm in the same scene. Furthermore, instead of the Bible and holy water, Dr. Naci (Van Helsing) gives pocket-size Qurans to the vampire hunter team for protection. This change in religious traditions and iconography makes it easier for the Turkish audience to empathise with Azmi and the other characters.

Although religion is regarded as the ultimate way to scare away the vampire, garlic also plays a significant role in this war against Dracula. In Dracula's castle, Azmi meets a male servant who looks like a mixture of Renfield, the hunchback of Notre Dame and Frankenstein's assistant Igor in Universal's adaptations. Azmi gives him his cigarette case and in return for the favour, the servant saves his life by winding a bunch of garlic around his neck and is himself violently killed by Dracula because of this. Dr. Naci states that Şadan (Lucy), who was bitten by Dracula and is still under his effect, can only be killed by filling her mouth with garlic and staking her in the heart. Azmi also uses garlic several times to scare away Dracula and to save Güzin (Mina) from getting bitten. At the end of the film, Azmi throws away all of the garlic inside their house and on Güzin's neck, saying that he is fed up with garlic and its smell. Güzin's reaction here adds a comical effect to the idea of garlic as a weapon: 'But I could have used them for stuffed eggplant!'.[311] Stuffed eggplant is an authentic Turkish recipe that contains a lot of garlic. This last scene portrays an aspect of Turkish identity by defusing the threat of the vampire with domestic humour calculated to appeal to the national audience.

Dracula in Istanbul was also the first time that the vampire in its visual form was introduced to Turkish audiences. Peter Hutchings suggests that 'the history of the Dracula story is a history of constant reinterpretation'.[312] Likewise, creating Dracula's

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[311] *Drakula in Istanbul.*
[312] Peter Hutchings, *Dracula: A British Film Guide* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), p. 79.

character is itself a reinterpretation. While Max Schreck creates a monstrous vampire figure in *Nosferatu*, Bela Lugosi portrays the aristocratic face of the vampire in Browning's adaptation. Although Atıf Kaptan's baldness resembles Nosferatu, he can be associated with Bela Lugosi's Dracula rather than with Nosferatu, as he wears a tuxedo and, in some scenes, a cloak that helps him to change into a bat. Turgut Demirağ, the producer of *Dracula in Istanbul* – who studied in the USA and worked in Paramount Studios – admits that he was influenced by Bela Lugosi and Max Schreck and explains his casting decision in an interview: 'I chose Atıf Kaptan for Dracula deliberately because his facial features, eyes, looks, physical appearance, and acting talent were the most appropriate for this character'.[313] Indeed, like all the other vampire films, Kaptan's eyes and looks play a significant role in creating the Dracula character, as the hypnotic influence of the Count's looks are used in the film.

Another significant feature of this Turkish-made Dracula was that he had fangs. In *Dracula: A British Film Guide* (2003) Peter Hutchings claims that Dracula's fangs were first shown in *Horror of Dracula* (1958):

> Hammer's poster offered something new as well. The fangs, for example. Lugosi had not worn fangs; nor had any of his vampiric successors […] To find a befanged vampire, you would have had to track down a critically acclaimed but hard-to-see German film from 1922, F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Terror*, and even there the fangs were different, rodent-like incisors rather than the more dignified canine fangs sported by the Hammer Dracula.[314]

It is true that Nosferatu had fangs, but they were two front teeth like a rabbit's or a rat's and not retractable. Contrary to Hutchings's argument, *Dracula in Istanbul* was the first

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[313] Scognamillo and Demirhan (2005), p. 64. [*my translation*]; Turgut Demirağ makes it clear that the main source for the plot was Seyfioğlu's and Stoker's novels not Browning's film. Film was only used for inspiration to visualise the characters.
[314] Hutchings (2003), p. 7.

film that showed Dracula with his fangs. These fangs were both retractable and could even be seen when Dracula's mouth was closed. In fact, just before the title sequence, the audience sees Dracula's wide open dull eyes as if they are hypnotising and then, they see his fangs with a pullback shot. Within the film, Dracula's fangs are seen a few more times when his hunger for blood is aroused, particularly in the paper cut scene and his scenes with Şadan and Güzin.

Vampirism and sexual desire are two concepts that have been associated with each other since the birth of the modern vampire narrative in the nineteenth century and they have been repeatedly discussed and developed into new dimensions through adaptations. With the influence of rising interest in gender identity and queer studies in the early 1970s, discussions about sexuality in *Dracula* and other vampire narratives have also expanded. The vampire's hunger for blood has since been read as a representation of his sexual desire for both females and males and its bite is sometimes considered as an act of sexual intercourse as much as a way of survival. William Hughes comments on this as such:

> In its sexualized quest for blood … the vampire is capable of disrupting what have been culturally perceived as discrete patterns of sexual behaviour, and of evading the taboos that polarise heterosexuality and homosexuality. The vampire represents, in this sense, the liberation of those sexual activities or desires that have been allegedly proscribed or censored in society or repressed within the self.[315]

Arguments relating to the discussion of sexuality in *Dracula* particularly target the arrival of Dracula when the three sirens are about to drink Harker's blood. This scene is

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[315] William Hughes, 'Fictional Vampires in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', in *A New Companion to the Gothic*, ed. by David Punter (Malden: Blackwell-Wiley, 2012), p. 199.

not included in Browning's 1931 adaptation. Seyfioğlu's novel adaptation, on the other hand, includes this particular part of the story in which Dracula reprimands the sirens for touching Harker, who belongs to him. In *Dracula in Istanbul*, this scene is also offered; although there is only one woman, it is reproduced in the same spirit. The siren comes into the room where Azmi fell asleep and tries to kiss Azmi. Having witnessed this scene, Dracula scolds her and emphasises that Azmi belongs to him. After her departure, Dracula awakens Azmi and compassionately helps him to stand up and walk to his room. Neither Turkish cinema nor Turkish audiences were ready for a homosexual reading of Dracula at the time and it would be problematic to argue that the scene reflects Dracula's desire specifically for a male when this kind of discussion was non-existent even in Western scholarship. However, it is still apparent that Dracula's desire for blood is reflected through his tenderness towards Azmi in this scene.

In Chapter Two I discussed Dracula's desire for blood in the context of race and nation in Seyfioğlu's novel adaptation. In *Dracula in Istanbul* however, Dracula's desire for blood is associated with female sexuality. While in Seyfioğlu's adaptation, Güzin was a teacher's assistant with a deep interest in history and was also portrayed as the perfect modern Turkish woman, in *Dracula in Istanbul*, Güzin is a showgirl. When the story shifts from Transylvania to Istanbul, the audience sees a flashing sign for Güzin's show and a big stage with a closed curtain. When the curtain is opened, Güzin starts to do the cha-cha dance in a special frilled costume. In another scene, Güzin becomes a belly dancer and dances in an oriental song with a palace setting behind. As is widely known, belly-dancing is still a popular dance in Turkey and a part of Turkish culture. Scognamillo and Demirhan suggest that 'for years what represented Istanbul on the silver screen were beautiful belly dancers dancing in front of a palace setting'.[316] In this respect, Güzin's profession not only emphasises sexuality but also shows the

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[316] Scognamillo and Demirhan (2005), p. 65.

emphasis given to cultural heritage in the process of Turkification when creating a transcultural adaptation.

This shift from teacher's assistant to lead dancer makes Güzin the central object of Dracula's sexual desire. The first encounter between Dracula and Güzin takes place in Güzin's house. Güzin comes home from work and starts to undress herself. In this scene her sexual desirability is stressed, particularly when she goes to the bathroom and takes off all her remaining clothes to get into the foamy bathtub. The camera pans down to her legs and the audience understands that she is completely naked. While having her bath, she hears some noises and goes to check wearing her bathrobe. All of a sudden, Dracula appears in front of her. The camera shows Dracula's eyes in an extreme close-up shot and Güzin faints dramatically. Just as the Count is about to feed on her, Azmi arrives and scares Dracula away with garlic. However, the climax occurs when Dracula finds Güzin towards the end of the film. After completing her performance, Güzin is about to leave the theatre when she sees Dracula waiting for her on the stage. The hypnotising influence of Dracula's eyes is stressed again with a close-up shot and Dracula starts speaking slowly with his deep voice: 'You are an amazing creature. I am going to drink your blood bit by bit. Tonight, you will dance only for me'.[317] The piano starts to play itself, which is a cleverly conceived detail for its time, and Güzin dances for Dracula in a white dress representing her purity and virtue as an engaged woman. Having watched her in admiration, Dracula's sexual desires are heightened, and he gets closer to Güzin to bite her. Once again, Azmi comes to save his fiancée and scares the Count away with garlic. In both scenes Güzin's beauty and sexuality are represented through her body. Moreover, Güzin's scenes of belly-dancing complete the process of Turkification whilst adapting the work from one culture to another.

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[317] *Drakula in Istanbul.*

Another reason for this creative alteration in the adaptation process was of course due to commercial concerns and the situation in the film industry. The 1950s were the years of development and innovation for Turkish cinema. Until the end of the World War II, Turkish cinema was mostly controlled by people from the theatre industry. It was only after 1945 that Turkish cinema increased its film production. Until then, Egyptian films with songs and dance became one of the most popular genres of the time.[318] Influenced by Egyptian cinema, the Turkish melodrama form was constructed. This is a form in which women are portrayed as sufferers who find themselves singing on the stage at some point during the film. In *Dracula in Istanbul*, too, the effect of these Egyptian films and the melodrama form are both perceivable. While Şadan portrays the woman who suffers, Güzin portrays the woman on the stage, and both are victimised by Dracula. Therefore, while adapting a Western literary myth, *Dracula in Istanbul* combines one of the most popular genres of the Turkish cinema of the time with a fresh genre for the Turkish audience: Gothic.

Even though *Dracula in Istanbul* seems quite simple and superficial in effects by today's standards, for its time, it had a high budget and proved profitable.[319] The producer, Turgut Demirağ, remarks that 'the shooting took seven weeks and that all indoor scenes and a few outdoor ones were shot on a set'.[320] The art director of the film, Sohban Koloğlu, says that he and his crew 'made an extra effort for the bats and armour, for Dracula's downhill scrambling, and for the model of Dracula's castle'. He also adds that one of the main deficiencies of the equipment was a fog machine, and to create fog, especially in cemetery scenes, 'a group of thirty or more people from the crew with at least three cigarettes in their mouths had to lie down on the floor and puff

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[318] Arslan (2011), p. 67.
[319] Scognamillo and Demirhan (2005), p. 64.
[320] Ibid.

smoke during the shooting'.[321] Nevertheless, the film could still not avoid some harsh criticism. In one of the most popular cinema magazines of the time, *Yıldız*, Sezai Solelli criticises the film in his column 'The Man on the Luxurious Chair' claiming that the film is 'neither scary nor funny'. He also criticises the cinematography, suggesting it is too dark.[322] However, the cinematography of the film is what creates the Gothic atmosphere. As a black and white film, *Dracula in Istanbul* immediately gives a classic Gothic horror impression. Scognamillo and Demirhan accepts the film as the first trial in Turkish cinema into creating a Gothic horror atmosphere.[323] Particularly in the scenes that take place in Dracula's castle, *Dracula in Istanbul* succeeds in conveying some basic conventions of the Gothic such as the representation of the mediaeval past, the fear of the unknown and more importantly, the figure of the vampire as the Gothic monster.

The Gothic atmosphere that these conventions create was rather new for Yeşilçam and thus, it is normal for critics and audiences to be less impressed with this unusual style. For the Turkish audiences who preferred melodramas about family and romance more than any other genre, Gothic horror was rather foreign. Hence, filmmakers had to wait almost twenty years to make another Gothic horror film. Another reason for this long break signals a period of time shaken with political, ideological and social conflicts. The 1960 coup d'état resulted in the execution of three government officials including the prime minister Adnan Menderes who, according to the Kemalist military, became too authoritarian and thus acted against the secular state. The progressive constitution of 1961 paved the way for a more libertarian atmosphere

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[321] Ibid, p. 66.
[322] Qtd, Ibid, p. 68.
[323] Ibid, pp. 68-71.

within the industry and provided an experimental platform for many filmmakers.[324]

Some directors took advantage of this freedom and moved towards 'social realism' by

discussing previously taboo issues which, according to Dönmez-Colin, 'reflected the

search for identity in a period of rapid transition from traditionalism to modernism'.[325]

In the meantime, countless B-movies were shot with the 'pile them high, sell them

cheap' attitude that engendered 'a cinematographic inflation'.[326] Soon, the advent of

frequent TV broadcasts in 1968 and the ongoing rise of colour film productions from

the mid-1960s had tremendous effects on the film industry. The tension between right-

wing and left-wing politics in Turkey, fuelled mainly by university students, moved to

the streets which led to a perception that the streets were unsafe for women and

children. TV was then perceived as a safer form of entertainment for families and the

film industry was forced to rethink its target audience. Thus, the 1970s became the

golden years of Yeşilçam B-movies.

Making the Undead Turkish in *The Dead Don't Talk* (1970)

The Dead Don't Talk, directed by Yavuz Yalınkılıç, is a hidden gem of Turkish Gothic

which uniquely combines the B-movie aesthetics of Yeşilçam and the Turkification of

Gothic conventions as seen in *Dracula in Istanbul*, using a supernatural creature from

Turkish and Balkan folklores. Upon release, the film did not achieve box office success

which partially explains why there is no archival information about the film's

production details or interviews conducted with anyone involved with the shooting

process. Lost and forgotten for almost thirty years, the film was rediscovered in 2001 by

a young cinema writer, Sadi Konuralp, in an old depot of Lâle Film studios.[327] Since its

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[324] Gönül Dönmez-Colin, *Turkish Cinema: Identity, Distance and Belonging* (London: Reaction Books, 2008), p. 36.
[325] Ibid, p. 38.
[326] Giovanni Scognamillo, *Türk Sinema Tarihi / Turkish Cinema History* (İstanbul: Kabalcı, 2010), p. 160. [*my translation*]
[327] Sadi Konuralp, 'Unutulmuş bir Türk Korku Filmi / A Forgotten Turkish Horror Film', in *Geceyarısı Sineması Dergisi*, Vol. 12, Winter 2002, p. 1.

rediscovery, *The Dead Don't Talk* has been criticised for its convoluted storyline and its assumed misuse of the Gothic horror genre. In one of the few articles that mention the film, Özkaracalar describes it as 'uneven' with a 'rather incoherent' plot which 'might be seen as involuntarily adding to the force of the movie, puzzling the audience to such a degree that logic and rationality are abandoned'.[328] Indeed, *The Dead Don't Talk* suffers from some inconsistencies of plot, which results in moments of confusion. However, the film still conveys a comprehensible narrative using B-movie Gothic aesthetics.

The budget for *The Dead Don't Talk* was much lower than *Dracula in Istanbul* and its successor *Şeytan.* Although colour film stock was available in 1970, *The Dead Don't Talk* is shot in black and white with a largely unknown cast in an old mansion in the largest of the Prince Islands in the Marmara Sea near Istanbul. Shooting a film outside Istanbul on an underpopulated island with a small cast and limited locations are all consistent with B-movie production values. In fact, the Princess Islands were historically used as a place of exile for disgraced and sick Byzantine royals and have been populated mostly by Greeks, Armenians and Jews. The historical buildings on the Islands are mainly monasteries, churches, convents and orphanages built in the styles of Christian architecture. Thus, the location conveys a Gothic atmosphere: the island is depicted as a small town, secluded, foreign and mysterious. This sense of mystery is represented in the first scene, which resembles Jonathan Harker's journey to Transylvania in Stoker's *Dracula* as well as other European Gothic texts set in foreign and threatening locations.

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[328] Kaya Özkaracalar, 'Between Appropriation & Innovation: Turkish Horror Cinema', in *Fear Without Frontiers: Horror Cinema Across the Globe*, ed. by Steven Jay Schneider (Godalming, England: FAB, 2003), p. 212.

The film opens with the arrival of a couple, Melih and Oya, on the town. While they walk with their bags on the street, a horse-drawn carriage stops, and a mysterious driver invites them into the carriage. He tells the couple that they will not find a place to stay except Mr. Adem's mansion, for it is 'the fifteenth of the month', and that he will return home before dark.[329] The emphasis on 'the fifteenth of the month' is reminiscent of 'the fifth of May' mentioned in Stoker's *Dracula*: Jonathan Harker is warned by an elderly Romanian lady that 'It is the eve of St. George's Day. Do you not know that tonight, when the clock strikes midnight, all the evil things in the world will have full sway?'.[330] St. George's Day is celebrated by many Christian churches around the world as a feast day, but according to Stoker's personal notes, he based his interpretation on the Eastern Orthodox tradition of Transylvania which he read about in Emily Gerard's *Transylvanian Superstitions* (1885).[331] The fifteenth of the month mentioned in the film has no known referent in Turkish or Islamic cultures and it is simply used for its sinister effect and superstitious implications. In fact, throughout the film, whenever someone mentions the fifteenth of the month, a church bell rings in the background, creating a Gothic effect that portends danger. Oya worries about the driver's fear of 'the fifteenth of the month' and the threatening aspects of their journey, but Melih reassures her that 'superstitious beliefs are outdated in this world' and, at any rate, he carries a gun for protection.[332]

As the film continues, it is revealed that the main setting of the film, Mr. Adem's mansion, is haunted — most probably by the recently deceased Mr. Adem. The haunting is not explicit but is implied when the mysterious butler, Hasan, welcomes the

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[329] *Ölüler Konuşmaz Ki* [The Dead Don't Talk], dir. by Yavuz Yalınkılıç (Objektif Film, 1970). [my translation]
[330] Stoker (2013), p. 9.
[331] Bram Stoker, *Bram Stoker's Notes for Dracula*, eds. Robert Eighteen-Bisang and Elizabeth Miller (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Pub, 2008), p. 121.
[332] *The Dead Don't Talk.*

couple, saying: 'the spirit of Mr. Adem will be pleased'.[333] However, the spirit of Mr. Adem is not a spirit or a ghost: he is a *hortlak*. According to Turkish mythology and Anatolian folklore, *hortlak* is the name given to a restless spirit of the dead, a dead person who rises from the grave at night.[334] The meaning of *hortlak* derives from the Turkish word meaning 'to rise from the dead' or *hortlamak*. The main characteristics of the *hortlak* are similar to other undead creatures, including the ghouls of Arabian narratives, the zombies of African diasporic stories and the vampires of Balkan and Russian folklore. In different regions of Anatolia, it is believed that an evil person who dies can rise from the grave as a *hortlak* and haunt people who angered him during his life. A *hortlak* can sometimes run very fast, ride a horse, use a gun, attack, beat up and abduct people. It has an ugly, horrific face, sometimes carries a stick and is dressed in a burial robe or disguised as an animal.[335] The *hortlak* in Turkish folklore, which sometimes resembles a zombie, corresponds to the figure of the vampire in the Balkans; in fact, archival documents and travelogues composed by Ottoman governors and travellers about incidents relating to belief in these creatures go back to the Middle Ages. In the sixteenth century, an Islamic leader of the Ottoman Empire, Shaykh Al-Islam Mehmed Ebusuud, proposed a fatwa on what to do if a corpse arises from his grave as a *hortlak*. His instructions include staking the corpse to the ground, then, if all else fails, the head should be cut off and the body should be burned.[336]

In *The Dead Don't Talk,* the similarities between vampires, zombies and *hortlaks* lead to the figure of the undead as a hybrid form. In the film, the *hortlak* rises from the grave while two townsmen dig grave plots; he walks very slowly, holding his

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[333] Ibid.

[334] Mehmet Berk Yaltırık, 'Türk Kültüründe Hortlak-Cadı İnanışları' [Ghoul-Witch Beliefs in Turkish Culture], in *Journal of History School (JOHS)*, XVI, (December 2013), p. 200.

[335] İsmet Veli Eyüboğlu, *Anadolu İnançları* [Anatolian Beliefs] (İstanbul: Toplumsal Dönüşüm Yayınları, 1998), pp. 104-105.

[336] Mehmet Ertuğrul Düzdağ, *Şeyhülislâm Ebussuud Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16. Asır Türk Hayatı* [16th Century Turkish Life in Light of the Fatwas of Shaykh Al-Islam Ebussuud] (İstanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1972), pp. 197-8.

hands up, resembling the American-style zombie of the 1970s. However, the *hortlak* also laughs and constantly speaks — loudly and strangely — thus displacing him from the traditional American zombie narrative. During their first night in the mansion, Melih and Oya are attacked by the *hortlak*. Melih fires his gun into the creature, who simply says, 'I have a scar in my head, right, while they were nailing my coffin, the nails cracked my skull. But my head does not hurt. I won't die. Bullets won't do anything to me'.[337] In Turkish folklore, the *hortlak* can only be kept in the grave when the coffin is opened up and the corpse is nailed to the ground.[338] This echoes the *hortlak*'s comment about a nail cracking his skull, but it also reminds us the necessity of a piercing tool in killing zombies and vampires. The audience does not see Melih and Oya after this scene and despite the presence of any bloodshed, assumes that the *hortlak* killed them.

After the audience is introduced to the haunted mansion and the *hortlak* figure, the film's main character, Sema, arrives at the town. In the background, the audience hears Krzysztof Komeda's infamous song used in the beginning of Roman Polanski's *Rosemary's Baby* (1968). Having established its B-movie standards with the stolen soundtrack, the film introduces Sema's character who is depicted as an educated young woman who comes to this small tranquil town as the new teacher. Upon arrival at the mansion, she encounters the same peculiarities as Melih and Oya. During her first night, she is frightened by the howling of wolves, and the next day a young hunter, Kerem, tells her that, according to the townsmen, between fifteen and twenty girls have been killed by the *hortlak*. Sema is dismissive: she does not believe in *hortlaks*, djinns or fairies. Later, amongst friends, Kerem expresses his thoughts on the matter: 'I am surprised to hear such stories in a century when people are going to the Moon'.[339] And when asked if he is afraid of the *hortlak*, Kerem answers: 'I don't believe djinn, fairy,

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[337] *The Dead Don't Talk.*
[338] Celal Beydili (Memmedov), *Türk Mitolojisi-Ansiklopedik Sözlük* [Turkish Mythology-Encyclopaedic Dictionary] (Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 2005), p. 435.
[339] *The Dead Don't Talk.*

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hortlak stories. For me things that I can see with my own eyes and hold with my own hands are important'.[340] Once again, the film aligns Sema and Kerem with rationality; they are dismissive of superstitious belief systems.

Later in the film, Kerem attends a meeting wherein the *hortlak* is described as a vampire-like figure. During the meeting, the Imam (Islamic priest) recounts a real-life *hortlâk* story, something he experienced during his youth. He says,

> You know, these stories take place in the Balkan countries. We are from Varna. We used to go dove hunting when we were young. Mr. Rüstem was one of the leading persons in the town. But in each hunt, we would come back with one less person. Then we consulted religious authorities. They told us that we have a living dead among us. Crazy Rıza heated up an iron stake and staked Mr. Rüstem's heart with it. So, our town got rid of the *hortlak*.[341]

In his speech, the Imam refers to his past, and to a town which was ruled under the Ottoman Empire. Under Ottoman rule for almost four centuries, Varna was presented to Bulgaria by Russia after the Russo-Turkish Wars of the late-nineteenth century. Referring to his past in Varna, the Imam also discusses Turkey's modern history and, by associating this *hortlak* story with the Balkan states, highlights how Yalınkılıç was inspired by the vampire of Balkan folklore.

Furthermore, when the *hortlak* captures Sema for the first time, the creature is scared of the amulet that she wears around her neck. This triangular amulet, also known as Enâm, which was first used in *Dracula in Istanbul,* carries prayers from the Qur'an and is as powerful against the vampire as the crucifix was in Stoker's novel. By using the same motifs as *Dracula in Istanbul* did, *The Dead Don't Talk* reminds the audience of the vampire myth and emphasises the role of religion when confronting the undead. It

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[340] Ibid.
[341] Ibid.

is important to note that the word *hortlak* is also used in *Dracula in Istanbul*, and in order to overcome the *hortlak,* Dr. Naci (the Turkish Van Helsing) suggests driving a stake through the heart of the creature, cutting off its head and filling its mouth with garlic. This summarizes the conclusion of *Dracula in Istanbul*, but in *The Dead Don't Talk* we see a scene of religious exorcism for the first time in a Turkish film.[342]

During her second night in the mansion, Sema is once again attacked by the *hortlak.* She goes to the school principal, Mr. Nuri, for help but finds that he is under the influence of the *hortlak.* Sema then turns to Kerem, his friend Remzi and the Imam to fight the *hortlak.* She traps the creature in Mr. Nuri's house and the Imam silently reads from the holy scripture while Kerem and Remzi hold up the Qur'an to disempower the *hortlak.* Here, the audience hears the tunes of an Islamic hymn in the background which reinforces the reading of the scene as an exorcism. Frightened by the holy books that surround him, the *hortlak* exclaims the following: 'Did you hear? The voice of my friends! They are calling for me. The screams of my friends, the dead! They are burning somebody again. My corpses…'.[343] These lines echo the famous speech uttered by Dracula in Bram Stoker's novel: 'Listen to them, the children of the night. What music they make!'.[344] After the *hortlak* utters his speech, he moves closer to Sema's head, and then he is interrupted by the morning call to prayer from the local mosque. The use of Islamic prayer in a Gothic horror film in Turkey starts with this scene in *The Dead Don't Talk.* The exorcism scene is not carried out as dramatically as it is in *Şeytan* (or in other Turkish Gothic horror films of the twenty-first century), yet *The Dead Don't Talk* is the first of its kind: the undead is expelled through Islamic ritual. At the end, the *hortlak* melts away, leaving behind his shoes, coat and hat as the

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[342] Kaya Özkaracalar, 'Horror Films in Turkish Cinema: to Use or not to Use Local Cultural Motifs, That is not the Question', in *European Nightmares: Horror Cinema in Europe Since 1945*, (eds) Patricia Allmer, Emily Brick and David Huxley (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), p. 252.
[343] *The Dead Don't Talk.*
[344] Stoker (2013), p. 19.

sun rises on the horizon reminiscent of the end scene of *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* (1922). The result is a hybrid undead creature that mixes attributes of vampires, zombies, *hortlaks* and some Islamic demonology.

Despite its Islamic conclusion, *The Dead Don't Talk* takes a more nuanced stance when it comes to the characterisation of Sema. Sema is welcomed to the mansion by the butler, Hasan, who is a character with allusions to Renfield in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* as well as the hunchbacked servant in *Dracula in Istanbul*. Hasan serves the *hortlak* but he also tells his own story to Sema, as he did to Oya and supposedly to every woman who came to stay in the mansion. He guides them to the basement and reveals a female portrait from behind a curtain. He says,

> This is you maybe. Maybe not. But it does not matter. She was beautiful too once. But she is soil now. She does not even hear. I, on the other hand, I am living for her. […] I am living for beauties like her. But they are all leaving me. They leave me and go away.[345]

The use of portraits, pictures and paintings is a common element found in much early Gothic fiction such as Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, Lewis' *The Monk* and Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797). Kamilla Elliot characterises Gothic fiction as 'the mother ship of literary picture identification'.[346] She suggests that the repeated presence of these portraits signals the social identity and class status of the subject in the pictures and relates directly to the contexts of the novels. The function of the portraits in *The Dead Don't Talk* however pertains to the development of the plot and the characterisation of Sema. For Oya and Sema become linked to the figure in the portrait, identifying themselves with her beauty and death. By showing them the portrait, Hasan

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[345] *The Dead Don't Talk.*
[346] Kamilla Elliott, *Portraiture and British Gothic Fiction: The Rise of Picture Identification, 1764-1835* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2012), p. 6.

prophesies their downfall, and when faced with the portrait, the women experience fear, terror, doubt, loss and the repetition of history. Thus, the portrait signals the end of the female characters, and yet Sema refuses to bow to the inevitable and plays a significant role in defeating the *hortlak*. Unlike other female characters who preceded her in the film, Sema manages to run away from the confines of the mansion and lures the monster out to the ritual that wipes him off the face of the earth. Moreover, in doing so, she wears a white nightgown which conventionally represents the purity of the female character in Gothic fiction. Therefore, Sema acts as the Gothic heroine who escapes from her villain while Kerem becomes the chivalric hero who helps saving her and the town. As Komeda's 'Lullaby' plays in the background, the film concludes with Sema and Kerem walking hand-in-hand into the future which signals an appreciation of rational thought rather than a strict praise of religious ideology.

The Changing Ideology of Turkish Gothic: *Şeytan* (1974) and *The Serpent's Tale* (1995)

The process of Turkification which hybridised Western tropes with Turkish and Balkan folklores in *The Dead Don't Talk* took an unexpected turn with the release of *Şeytan*. Once the worldwide reputation of William Friedkin's horror blockbuster *The Exorcist* (1973) spread to Yeşilçam, within months, the producer Hulki Saner hired director Metin Erksan to make an adaptation of Friedkin's *The Exorcist* for Turkish audiences. Erksan was an acclaimed director whose film *Susuz Yaz* (*Dry Summer,* 1963) won the Golden Bear Award at the 1963 Berlin Film Festival. Yet, *Şeytan* was his first attempt at the Gothic horror genre. Working for the Saner Film Production Company, Erksan is known to have travelled to London to see Friedkin's film in cinema and read William Peter Blatty's 1971 novel of the same name, which he initially planned to adapt for his

own film.[347] Nevertheless, *Şeytan* came out as an almost identical remake of Friedkin's film which was released in Turkish cinemas in 1980.[348] Even the soundtracks of *The Exorcist* were religiously used throughout the film. The plot also follows *The Exorcist* very closely; however, similar to the Turkification process of *Dracula in Istanbul*, Erksan adjusts a few character traits and the religious references such as the replacement of holy water and the Bible with Zemzem water and the Qur'an. As a result of these adjustments and due to changing ideological stresses in Turkey, *Şeytan* becomes the first Gothic horror film to draw on conservative ideology in Turkish cinema.

Özkaracalar points out that the plot of *The Exorcist* makes total sense in an Islamic setting such as that of *Şeytan*.[349] Indeed, as a divorced single parent, Ayten (Chris in *The Exorcist*) is an unconventional woman to appear in Yeşilçam and thus fits well to the role of the modern westernised woman.[350] She and her daughter Gül (Regan) live a noticeably upper-class life in a large house with Gül's governess Suzan and two other servants. While Ayten is shown playing tennis, Gül's ballet classes and her interest in sculpture — an art form which is considered rather Western in Turkey and frowned upon in Islamic thought — illustrate their westernised life-style. Such lifestyles were dominantly contextualised in Yeşilçam as the antithesis of lifestyles of those poor, modest and pure-minded Turkish people who were represented as believers in the traditional sense without being associated with piety or radicalism. Hence, it can be argued that Ayten and accordingly Gül are figures outside the traditional norms and representative of the secular elite in Turkish society.

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[347] Scognamillo (2010), p. 221.
[348] Scognamillo and Demirhan (2005), p. 71.
[349] Özkaracalar (2003), p. 214.
[350] Ibid, p. 163.

Unlike *The Exorcist* in which Chris and Regan are openly registered as non-believers, the religious dispositions of Ayten and Gül remain obscure. In *The Exorcist*, when the medical committee informs Chris about Catholic exorcism as the last resort to treat Regan, one of the doctors asks Chris if she or her daughter is a believer. Chris firmly says 'No' and is shaken by the idea of exorcism: 'You are telling me that I should take my daughter to a witch doctor? Is that it?'.[351] This scene plays a significant role in the film since it establishes the science versus religion conflict for the first time. In *Şeytan* however, the scene plays out in a different manner. The doctors neither question Ayten's religious beliefs nor refer to the proposed treatment as a religious exorcism. Accordingly, the scene includes no mention of either Catholic or Islamic practices regarding demonic possession. This shift in the scene, though it is surely one of the outcomes of the process of Turkification, creates an obscurity with regard to Ayten and Gül's religious identity. Earlier in the film, Ayten finds a book titled 'Satan: Under the Light of Modern Perspectives on Mental Diseases, the Case of Demon Possession and the Rite of Exorcism in Universal Religions' in the attic. When the inspector Kadri Ertem (the Lieutenant Kinderman) comes to Ayten's house regarding the death of Ekrem (Burke), he sees the book and asks Ayten if she believes in such matters. Here, Ayten answers 'No, I don't' but this is an answer given in the context of the book and therefore, does not account for her religious beliefs.[352]

Another obscurity in the film results from the characterisation of Tuğrul Bilge (Father Karras), as pointed out by Özkaracalar and Arslan.[353] Bilge is a psychologist who left his profession and took an interest in religious beliefs on demon possession and exorcism. He is also the author of the book that Ekrem finds at Ayten's house. In *The Exorcist*, Father Karras was portrayed as a priest estranged from his religion and thus,

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[351] *The Exorcist*, dir. by William Friedkin (Warner Bros, 1974).
[352] *Şeytan*, dir. Metin Erksan (Saner Film, 1974). [*my translation*]
[353] Özkaracalar (2012), p. 252; Arslan (2011), p. 164.

the restoration of Catholic faith was effectuated through Father Karras' character. In

Şeytan however, Bilge has no previous attachment to Islam or religious clergy. His

positivist character is emphasised in his reply to Ekrem's questions regarding his book:

'These [practices] remained in the sixteenth century. I wrote what I know, not what I

believe. Believe in science'.[354] Once faced with possessed Gül, Bilge starts to question

what he knows and what he believes similar to Father Karras. Yet, Bilge's

transformation does not refer to the restoration of faith as Father Karras' does in *The*

Exorcist, because Bilge was not a believer to start with. In this context, the three

protagonists of *Şeytan*, Bilge, Ayten and Gül, can be considered as the proponents of

secular ideology since they represent Western science, positivism and life styles as

opposed to Eastern traditions, religious belief and practice.

Nevertheless, just as the end of *The Exorcist* indicates the reconfirmation of

Catholic faith, the end of *Şeytan* establishes, as Özkaracalar states, 'the reconfirmation

of Islam's power and validity'.[355] Before setting out for a long journey, Ayten and now

de-possessed Gül visit a mosque wearing headscarves. The camera shows the grandiose

interior of the mosque while centralising Ayten and Gül's entrance. As they walk in, the

audience hears, a surah from the Qur'an is being recited in the background. Gül notices

the Imam who helped Bilge to find the exorcist — who was also the archaeologist in the

beginning of the film — and runs towards him. The scene where Regan kisses Father

Dyer's hand is echoed here. Gül kisses the Imam's hand in the traditional Turkish way

and the Imam caresses Gül's head. The film ends with the camera moving around the

mosque interiors while Mike Oldfield's soundtrack for the film *Tubular Bells* plays in

the background one last time.

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[354] *Şeytan*.
[355] Özkaracalar (2003), p. 214.

By reconfirming Islam's legitimacy through the ending, *Şeytan* strongly counteracts with the secular dispositions of the Kemalist ideology. In this respect, Iain Robert Smith remarks that *Şeytan* 'highlights the failings of the rationalist, secular discourse' that Atatürk's reforms disseminated in Turkey and "explicitly celebrates Islam for being able to defeat the 'evil' forces in the world".[356] Here, Smith refers to the increasing criticism towards the Kemalist ideology in the second half of the twentieth century. In addition to this, the rise of right-wing politics and pro-Islamism in social and cultural contexts has also been effective in Yeşilçam's ambivalent ideological stand during the 1970s. For Arslan, this ambivalence is reflected in *Şeytan* through slippages created by the process of Turkification. Arslan mentions several slippages in the film such as Gül's speaking in Turkish and Latin interchangeably when possessed, whereas in a film which includes Islamic exorcism, Satan is expected to be solely Eastern and speak in Arabic. He argues that Satan in the film is thus 'aligned with both the West and the East'.[357] Hence, Arslan claims, the slippages created by the process of Turkification in *Şeytan* causes Turkish identity to disappear completely and thus the film results in being neither Western nor Turkish, but in-between.[358]

The arguments of Smith and Arslan correspond to each other in that they both indicate the presence of an ambivalent Turkish identity in *Şeytan* as a result of Turkification. Nevertheless, although several obscurities and slippages in the film prevent audiences from making hard-edged inferences, the end of the film openly celebrates an Islamic or religious Turkish identity. This is why *Şeytan* is a transitional film for Turkish Gothic tradition. Although Islamic exorcism or the presence of a religious authority as the saviour of the victim from the evil forces were first used in

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[356] Iain Robert Smith, 'The Exorcist in Istanbul: Processes of Transcultural Appropriation Within Turkish Popular Cinema', *PORTAL Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies* 5.1. (2008), p. 10.
[357] Arslan (2011), p. 164.
[358] Ibid, p. 167.

The Dead Don't Talk, unlike *Şeytan*, the end of the film does not highlight a religious revelation in the characters' part. This is a trend which started in *Şeytan* and, as I argue in Chapter Four, continues in conservative Turkish Gothic narratives in the post-millennium. *Şeytan* is the first Gothic horror film to depart from the Kemalist ideology and therefore, marks a milestone in the development of Turkish Gothic tradition.

The 1980 coup d'état inflicted a heavy blow to Turkish political, social and cultural life including the cinema industry. In fact, Turkish cinema was considered dead during the post-1980 period only to liven up once more in the years leading up to the new millennium. During these two decades, there have been a few films which drew on plots of renowned Hollywood films. *Çirkin Dünya* (Ugly World, 1974) and *İntikam Kadını* (Woman of Vengeance, 1979) for example, are associated with Hollywood rape-revenge films of the 1970s such as Wes Craven's *The Last House on the Left* (1972) and Meir Zarchi's *I Spit on Your Grave* (1978).[359] *Biri Beni Gözlüyor* (Someone is Watching Me, 1988) and *Kader Diyelim* (Let's Say It is Fate, 1995) also have similar plots to Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980) and Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) respectively.[360] Nevertheless, all of these films were ultra-low budget productions, achieved no commercial success and some were not even released in cinemas.

The only noteworthy film to mention that belongs to these lost decades is director and contemporary artist Kutluğ Ataman's debut feature *Karanlık Sular* (The Serpent's Tale, 1993). Ataman was one of the victims of the 1980 coup. As a left-wing student, he was imprisoned and tortured for documenting events during and after the coup.[361] Once he was released, he moved to the US and studied a BA in Film and an MFA at the University of California, Los Angeles. Ataman's film marks the end of

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[359] Alexandra Heller-Nicholas, *Rape-Revenge Films: A Critical Study* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2011), pp. 84 -147-151.
[360] Özkaracalar (2011), p. 252.
[361] Mark Prince, 'Ataman's Logos', *Art in America Magazine*, 26 January 2011 <https://www.artinamericamagazine.com/news-features/magazines/kutlug-ataman/>.

Yeşilçam, which was long gone by that point, and the beginning of the new Turkish cinema which became more apparent towards the end of the 1990s. Turkey was already a part of the neoliberal capitalist system by the end of the century and Turkish national identity was undergoing a process of transformation in the face of the globalising world. Accordingly, the new Turkish cinema, as Dönmez-Colin remarks, was 'in search of new economic, aesthetic and thematic models interpreting Turkish national and personal identity in the modern world'.[362] With its multi-layered narrative which directly makes allusions to the crisis of Turkish identity, *The Serpent's Tale* demonstrates the early signs of this search for a new aesthetic model using Gothic.

The plot of *The Serpent's Tale* centres around a search for an ancient manuscript. Lamia, an old woman of Ottoman descent believes that his son Haldun, who died years ago and left behind a manuscript, is still alive. Haldun is a vampire now and contacts Richie Hunter to get a hold of the manuscript back at his mother's mansion. Hunter, an American who wants to deliver the manuscript to his boss, promises Lamia he will find Haldun. In the meantime, Lamia's close friend Haşmet, who is a businessman, is after her mansion for insurance money, and a false prophet is leading an ancient order to find the manuscript. For Özkaracalar, these parallel storylines and each character, metaphorically relates to components that shaped Turkish identity at the time:

> For instance, the old woman with her mansion symbolises the Ottoman heritage which was the target of the bourgeois Republican regime intent on burning bridges with the past to integrate with the Western world. Consequently, her businessman family friend symbolises the Turkish bourgeoisie and Republican regime, his American colleague symbolises the US imperialism, and so on. And

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[362] Dönmez-Colin (2008), p. 180.

the main protagonist, the old woman's ghostly son, can be said to reflect the trials and tribulations of the tortured Turkish psyche under stress from all these forces pulling it in different directions.[363]

To develop Özkaracalar's point further, *The Serpent's Tale* can be considered to demonstrate the increasing fragmentation of the Turkish identity under the neoliberal system of the post-1980 period. As I will argue in Chapter Five, this fragmentation is best represented in the changing fabric of Istanbul since the 1980s. Accordingly, the most significant character in *The Serpent's Tale* is in fact the city of Istanbul.

The film tells an urban Gothic tale portraying Istanbul as a city of decay. Urban Gothic is a subgenre of Gothic fiction which became prominent in nineteenth-century British fiction and focused particularly on the horrors of the modern metropolis. As Robert Mighall highlights, urban Gothic is 'not just a Gothic in the city, it is a Gothic of the city. Its terrors derive from situations peculiar and firmly located within, the urban experience'.[364] For Sara Wasson, it is the 'disorienting, labyrinthine and claustrophobic cities' which evoke the Gothic effects that reveal those terrors of urban experience.[365] *The Serpent's Tale*'s depiction of Istanbul is reflective of this urban Gothic aesthetic. The city's labyrinthine streets, ancient secret passages, claustrophobic crypts, misty graveyards and even several unusual mosque shots combine the architectural specifics of urban Gothic in the film. Moreover, a strong reference to the city's thousands-of-years-old architectural heritage and its slow destruction by neoliberal capitalism pervades the subtext of the film. Hence, the conflict between the old and the new or the ancient and the modern, is centralised in the film through architectural structures.

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[363] Özkaracalar (2011), p. 253.

[364] Robert Mighall, *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 30.

[365] Sara Wasson, *Urban Gothic of the Second World War: Dark London* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010), p. 3.

Lamia and Haşmet's heated discussion regarding Lamia's mansion is a depiction of this conflict. Haşmet tries to convince Lamia to stage a fire for the insurance money but she strictly refuses to bring any form of destruction to her ancestral mansion. Haşmet offers to build a new house 'with all the modern conveniences: a swimming pool, a jacuzzi' but cannot manage to convince Lamia who wants to hold on to her heritage.[366] In another scene, Richie Hunter is looking at the restoration plans of an old Ottoman structure with a woman who seems like the restorator. When the woman asks Hunter what he thinks of the plans, he answers: 'I am not sure. Do they have to keep the old one?'.[367] The woman tells him that the building has historical value, and therefore, it has to stay. Hunter answers: 'Even if it stays, it is not the same building anymore. What is the point?'.[368] Later, Lamia observes the stone walls of an old church with her friend Stefan. By pointing out the damage, she says: 'It's the invasion Stefan, they are taking everything away from us'.[369] As can be inferred from these scenes, Lamia's character symbolises Istanbul's old architectural aesthetics which are under the threat of increasing urbanisation projects. At the end of the film, Lamia's ancestral Ottoman mansion burns with the spirit of the old Istanbul.

The Serpent's Tale differs from its predecessors in that it does not draw on any Western storyline and therefore did not go through the process of Turkification. Although the film uses Gothic elements and motifs, these are well embedded in the storyline in a multi-dimensional fashion which makes them look neither Western nor Eastern but distinctively Turkish. In *The Serpent's Tale*, a strong link is constructed between Turkish identity and Gothic. This link does not derive from Turkification, but from careful engagement with components of Turkish identity and their metaphorical

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[366] *Karanlık Sular* [The Serpent's Tale], dir. by Kutluğ Ataman (Temasa Film, 1993). [*my translation*]
[367] Ibid.
[368] Ibid.
[369] Ibid.

attachment to characters in the film. In this respect, *The Serpent's Tale* marks the beginning of another trend in Turkish Gothic which I will further explore in Chapter Five.

Conclusion

The Gothic horror films discussed in this chapter interact with the changing definitions of Turkish national identity in the second half of the twentieth century and thus, form the basic codes of a cinematic Gothic aesthetic which has made significant contributions to the development of Turkish Gothic tradition. *Dracula in Istanbul* is the first Gothic horror film to go through the process of Turkification and come out as an unprecedented transcultural adaptation of *Dracula*. Significantly, although the film reflects cinematic trends of its time, it does not give reference to any ideological or religious sentiment and therefore remain indifferent to the political and social changes in Turkey. Unlike *Dracula in Istanbul, The Dead Don't Talk* is not a Turkified film since it does not mimic but reinvents Western Gothic tropes and motifs in a Turkish context without a particular Western storyline. The film also depicts the first Turkish undead as a hybrid derived from beliefs in Turkish and Balkan folklores. Although *The Dead Don't Talk* presents the first scene resembling an Islamic exorcism, the end of the film aligns itself with a more positivist stand and implicitly supports secular ideology.

The dynamics of Turkification initiated in *Dracula in Istanbul* were later applied to another adaptation, *Şeytan,* with slight differences. Despite several inconsistencies as a result of Turkification, the end of the film marks a departure from Western and secular Turkish identity and becomes associated with pro-Islamist and conservative sentiment that was on the rise in the post-war period. *The Serpent's Tale*, which was released twenty years later, presents a much more nuanced Turkish identity than its predecessors since, like *The Dead Don't Talk*, it reinvents Western Gothic tropes and motifs in a

Turkish context rather than 'Turkifying' a Western text. The film engages with Gothic in a refined way and handles the conflict between tradition and modernity through the transformation of Istanbul under the new world order which Turkey was a part of. *Şeytan* and *The Serpent's Tale* are the most significant Turkish Gothic horror films to reflect the search for a new Turkish identity under the changing political, economic and social dynamics in the late twentieth-century. Therefore, these films demonstrate the breaking point for the Turkish national identity and become the precursors of the secular versus conservative polarisation which has shaken Turkey at its core in the post-millennium. In the next chapter, I will look into the conservative side of the coin which I consider to be a continuation of the pro-Islamist discourse first appeared in *Şeytan*.

Chapter Four

Conservative Turkish Gothic: the Demonisation of Secularism

The early twenty-first century in Turkey is marked by the return of the repressed Islamic Turkish identity. The JDP's (Justice and Development Party) accession to power in 2002 revived pro-Islamist ideology and redefined Turkish national identity in relation to its Islamic roots. Turkish Gothic, as a mode inherently intertwined with national identity, quickly picked up on this newly defined Turkishness. Drawing on the pro-Islamist tendencies first appeared in *Şeytan*, Turkish Horror films that use the motif of the malevolent djinn proliferated and by 2015, horror became the third most popular genre of Turkish cinema.[370] Such phenomenal success was rather unexpected considering only a handful of Gothic horror films were produced in the previous decades (see Chapter Three). The growing interest in the Islamic supernatural therefore redefined horror in Turkey and assisted raising global interest in Turkish Gothic through DVD releases with English subtitles and reviews in popular virtual platforms such as Dread Central or Horror News Network. The reasons behind the popularity of Islamic Horror films vary from the global upsurge of Gothic horror and technological developments in film production, to the mobilisation of culture due to globalisation, and the need to disentangle the genre from Western influence by including local motifs. However, the uncontrollable rise of Islamist ideology in Turkey has been the most significant determinant of Islamic Horror's sudden boom.

The association between the Islamic discourse in Turkish Horror cinema and the rise of Islamist ideology has already been made by several Turkish film scholars, though they seem to have different perspectives on whether secularists' or Islamists' anxieties

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[370] Kaya Özkaracalar, 'İslami korku filmlerinin ideolojik/siyasi topoğrafyası'[The Ideological/Political Topography of Islamic Horror Films], *İleri Haber*, 13 February 2016, <http://ilerihaber.org/yazar/islami-korku-filmlerinin-ideolojiksiyasi-topografyasi-50243.html>. [*my translation*]

these djinn narratives actually represent. For example, Özkaracalar argues that Turkish horror films with Islamic themes have formed an intrinsically Turkish canon and adds: 'To associate the emergence of a trend in which films with Islamic motifs were determinant and absorbing after 2004 with the rise of the JDP in politics is a natural — and in many ways a valid — argument'.[371] Although the ideological subtexts of these horror films are bilateral for Özkaracalar, some films released in 2015 — the most prolific year for Turkish horror film so far — contribute to the ideological apparatuses of Islamist propaganda.[372] On the other hand, Zeynep Şahintürk also acknowledges the impact of the JDP's Islamic policies on the horror genre's big leap and argues that djinn possessions depicted in films such as *D@bbe* (2006) are the manifestations of secular anxieties about being ruled by theocratic Islamic Sharia law.[373] Şahintürk's remark echoes Arslan's arguments saying that Islamic motifs are representations of the directors' fear of Turkey's Islamicisation.[374]

Conversely, Gizem Şimşek's view on the topic bear similarities to Özkaracalar's but she argues strongly for the conservative subtexts of the djinn-themed films. In *Horror and Religion in Cinema: The Analysis of the Djinn Figure in post-2000 American and Turkish Horror Films* (2016) Şimşek examines the use of the djinn figure in American and Turkish Horror films in the context of semiotics. She argues that while American djinn-themed horror films accentuate orientalist perspectives of American culture toward the East, their Turkish equivalents pursue the aim of popularising conservatism and strengthening religious beliefs through the use of the djinn figure.[375]

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[371] Ibid.
[372] Ibid.
[373] Zeynep Şahintürk, 'Djinn in the Machine: Technology and Islam in Turkish Horror Film', in *Digital Horror: Haunted Technologies, Network Panic and the Found Footage Phenomenon*, eds. Linnie Blake and Xavier Aldana Reyes (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2016), p. 96.
[374] Arslan (2011), p. 258.
[375] Gizem Şimşek, *Sinemada Korku ve Din: 2000 Sonrası Amerikan ve Turk Filmlerinde Cin Unsurunun Çözümlenmesi* [Horror and Religion in Cinema: The Analysis Of the Djinn Figure in post-2000 American and Turkish Horror Films] (İstanbul: Pales Yayınları, 2016), p. 273. [*my translation*]

In her reading of six Turkish horror films between 2004 and 2011, Şimşek also acknowledges that women are depicted as the main site of djinn possession and thus conceptualised as 'the other' in the films.[376] However, she does not clarify the political and sociological infrastructures of the association between djinn-themed horror films and Islamic conservatism of the post-millennium.

Despite opposing views, there is no doubt that all scholars agree on the impact of Islamic ideology on Turkish horror film, yet none of them take the literary origins of the Islamic subtexts into consideration. Hitherto, the figure of the djinn can be found in Turkish literature, folklore, and mythology, and is often associated with superstitious beliefs. Signs of ideological subtexts which correlate with Islamic tradition and politics in Turkey are hard to discern in these accounts. Therefore, they are distinctly different from those used in djinn-themed horror films and novels. In this chapter, I will argue that the ideological subtexts of the Islamic Horror films can be traced back to populist Islamic novels, which aim to cultivate conservative sentiment, and to their supernatural versions, which I term, conservative Gothic novels. Similar to Şimşek's reading of horror films, the central women characters of conservative Gothic novels are the embodiments of 'the others' of the moral Turkish society imagined by the JDP's Islamist ideology in the post-millennium, but they also communicate with a much larger — indeed global — perception of the feminine as dangerous, evil, demonic and monstrous. In order to explain further the ideological subtext attached to this universal theme, I will draw on the conservative nature of Horror genre and Barbara Creed's theory of the monstrous-feminine. Elaborating on the Islamist ideology's perception of women, I will demonstrate the dynamics that represent female sexuality as Gothicised manifestations of secular Turkish women. Conservative Gothic narratives discussed in this chapter are respondent to the Turkish Gothic of the 1920s which imagined the

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[376] Ibid, p. 219.

Turkish woman as modern and nationalist subjects of the Kemalist regime. By redefining women, Islamist ideology redefines Turkish national identity of the post-millennium and how it is represented in conservative Turkish Gothic.

Conservative Islamic Ideology, the Female Body and the Gothic Horror

To elucidate the strong link between the Islamic discourse of conservative Gothic and the JDP's conservative policies, one should first track down the rise of conservatism in Turkey. The year 2002 was a turning point for the JDP; however, the roots of the Islamic ideology that the party stands for, date back to the Turkish parliament's first experience with the multi-party system in the 1950s (see Introduction). Since then, the Turkish public often voted for right-wing parties whose ideologies were consonant with the traditional and religious values of Turkish society.[377] Particularly after the 1980 coup d'etat, the socialist movements of the 1960s and 70s were suppressed by the military junta (1980-1983) and there was an atmosphere of tolerance for alternative movements quickly formed by Muslim brotherhoods and Sufi orders which had been banned after the foundation of the republic.[378] Meanwhile, Turkey had entered 'the global circuits of capital' applying neoliberal policies in economy and strengthening relations with the US and the Middle East, which enabled it to regain its faded geopolitical significance for the West and to build cultural relations under the roof of religion with the East.[379] The 1990s were thus influenced by these developments and witnessed a growing propaganda of religious values in politics and social life.

Ali Çarkoğlu and Ersin Kalaycıoğlu comment that in the 1990s, terms such as believers, faithful, oppressed, identity and laicism became common features of political

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[377] Ali Çarkoğlu and Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *The Rising Tide of Conservatism in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 3.
[378] Ibid, p. 9.
[379] Yıldız Atasoy, *Turkey, Islamists and Democracy: Transition and Globalization in a Muslim State* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005), p. 151.

rhetoric.[380] In addition, religious orders and communities which were once oppressed and banned by the Kemalist regime after the 1920s gained visibility, 'as if they were legal and conventional part and parcel of the polity in Turkey'.[381] For Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu, the developments that led Islamist ideology to the 1990s and Turkey to the accession of the JDP government in the early 2000s form the basis of Turkish conservatism which, as an adjective, became synonymous with *Muslim* in Turkey.[382] They argue that the political rhetoric of Turkish conservatism in the early twentieth century divided the society into 'a new left-right definition that underlines the religion versus secularism debate more intensively'.[383] Indeed, this is this polarisation which best defines Turkish national identity in the post-millennium.[384]

The populist Islamic novels that became one of the mainstream tools of propaganda for Islamist ideology since the 1980s are invaluable sources to understand the impact of this conservative rhetoric on the cultural production in Turkey. Written by Ömer Okçu under the pseudonym of Hekimoğlu İsmail, *Minyeli Abdullah* (Abdullah from Minya, 1967) served as a template for subsequent texts. As Uğur summarises, *Minyeli Abdullah* tells 'the problems of Muslims who live in a "secular" country'.[385] The main character of the novel, Abdullah, is a man of faith who sets an example for all Muslims around him with his way of life. Through his character and his family's troubled life, the novel highlights fighting and eventually dying for one's religion.[386] Encouraged by the developments of the period, post-1980 Islamic novels however, stand much firmly against secularism which is mostly defined through the use of

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[380] Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu (2009), p. 4.
[381] Ibid.
[382] Ibid, p. 25.
[383] Ibid, p. 4.
[384] I will further discuss the secular side of this polarisation in Chapter Five.
[385] Uğur (2013), p. 86.
[386] Ibid, p. 88.

alcohol, gambling, extramarital affairs and the revealing attire of women.[387] They also

abstain from the traditional understanding of Islam in Turkey which does not

necessarily entail veiling and is content with fasting, occasional prayer and the

celebration of Eid holidays.[388] Instead, these novels promote an orthodox Sunni Muslim

identity highlighting the necessity of being pious and a true Muslim in every stage of

life.[389]

Women and the veil are the most significant symbols of the Islamic ideology

that the populist Islamic novels envisage. After the 1980 coup d'état in Turkey, veiling

was banned in public service and government buildings including universities,

engendering deep resentments within the supporters of Islamist ideology. Protests

staged by female university students introduced further controversies and pit secular

women against Islamist women initiating polarisation in society.[390] Veiled and unveiled

female bodies can be seen as the ultimate embodiment of the struggle between secularist

and Islamist ideologies. This is because the veil, as Nilüfer Göle suggests, is 'the most

salient emblem' of contemporary Islamist movements in the Middle East.[391] Veiling is

the ultimate metaphor for the self-identification of contemporary Islamist movements.

Göle suggests, through the veiling of women, the movements draw a line between

themselves and their "Other" which is the modern secular thought deriving from the

West.[392] This analogy between the dichotomies of unveiled/veiled women and the

West/the East is strikingly applicable in the case of Turkey. Some of the best-selling

Islamic novels therefore, touch on the issue by defining veiled women as opposed to

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[387] Ibid, p. 86.
[388] Ibid, p. 87.
[389] Ibid, pp. 86-93.
[390] Nilüfer Göle, T*he Forbidden Modern: Civilisation and Veiling* (Ann Arbor: The University of
    Michigan Press, 1996), p. 85.
[391] Ibid, p. 1.
[392] Ibid.

secular and unveiled women through the theme of 'women on a quest'.[393] In these novels, secular or non-believer female characters go on a quest of self-exploration, mostly with the help of a pious male companion, only to find their true calling in veiling because it is indicated that only then a woman can be a true Muslim.[394] Their lives become dichotomous, before and after the veil, which allegorically represents the dual nature of Turkish national identity as a whole. Therefore, the female body becomes a site through which Islamic and secular identities are defined in these novels.

As Göle suggests, Islamist ideology regulates the female body and sexuality in Muslim societies according to the boundaries of religious doctrines in order to sustain the social order:

> Social morality is defined by religious rules, and it operates mainly upon the regulation of women's sexuality. The preservation of honour — that is, loyalty to moral codes in relation to women's sexuality — is a necessary condition of the social order. Since women's sexuality is regarded as a threat to the social order, women must be isolated from men and covered with veils.[395]

Women's sexuality, for Göle, is the antithesis of societies ruled by religion and serves as a space of control to keep the order within society. Fatima Mernissi makes a similar remark when she says women are 'the embodiment of destruction, the symbol of disorder' in Islam: 'The woman is *fitna*, the uncontrollable, a living representative of the dangers of sexuality and its rampant disruptive potential'.[396] For Mernissi, this is one of the main reasons of veiling in Muslim societies: to restrain women from disrupting the

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[393] Among many others, novels such as Emine Şenlikoğlu's *İmamın Manken Kızı* (The Imam's Fashion Model Daughter, 1997) and *Hristiyan Gülü* (Christian Rose, 2000), and Halit Ertuğrul's *Kendini Arayan Kadın* (The Woman in Search of Herself, 2004) and *Aradığını Bulan Kadın* (The Woman Who Found Herself, 2004) centralise this theme.

[394] Uğur (2013), p. 100.

[395] Göle (1996), pp. 52-53.

[396] Fatima Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Muslim Society* (London: Al Saqi Books, 1985), p. 44.

social order and creating chaos with their sexual needs. Then, veiled women become synonymous with social order in Muslim societies while unveiled women are the creators of disorder, 'the others' who disrupt and corrupt the society.

It can be inferred from Mernissi's comments that women are considered as outsiders and a threat to the patriarchal order in strictly Islamic contexts. Analogically, Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu comment on women's centrality to religious conservatism and the patriarchal structure in Turkey:

> the Turkish Sunni Muslim tradition critically shapes its social conservatism around the status and position of women in society, whereby honor and integrity of the family is defined through the women in the family. Hence, women become a subject of protection and control, and are to be protected from the encroachment of strangers, in particular unrelated men, in the eyes of the tradition bound in Turkey.[397]

As Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu explains, conservatism in Turkey feeds on the patriarchal order. Islamic dogmas on gender inequality endorse traditional roles of women as the housewife and the child bearer while men remain as the breadwinner head of the household. Women are considered in need of being provided for at home, protected outside and controlled perpetually. How they are perceived by the patriarchal order shapes the ways in which they should and should not behave in private and public spheres.

The JDP's political rhetoric has explicitly promoted this religious and patriarchal control of women under the guise of 'familism', a social policy which places family values over individual interests in society. Ece Öztan argues that, 'familisim' is one of

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[397] Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu (2009), p. 56.

the most significant elements of 'neoliberal and conservative policies' of the JDP, and primarily concerned with 'reproduction, sexuality and the female body'.[398] Through regulations and comments targeting the private lives of women and their familial roles as well as their behaviour in public, the JDP and particularly the president Erdoğan, established an anti-feminist stand reinforced by conservative rhetoric. For example starting from 2004, municipalities governed by the JDP handed out booklets specially designed for newly-married couples and contained accounts of religiously appropriate sexual intercourse.[399] Erdoğan himself repeated several times his advice for women to have at least three children, raising the number to five in 2017 for those living in Europe.[400] He also stated several times that he does not believe in gender equality because it is against 'nature'.[401] In another instance, he compared abortion to 'murder', announcing that he is also against birth control and Caesarean births.[402] Thereupon, the JDP government proposed laws limiting women's abortion rights which even prevented victims of sexual assault from getting abortion regardless of their age. Having received heavy criticism from both secular and conservative sections of the society, the laws were withdrawn but discussed controversially in national and global media.[403] These regulations and comments on female sexuality and reproductivity echo Mernissi's

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[398] Ece Öztan, 'Domesticity of Neoliberalism: Family, Sexuality and Gender in Turkey', in *Turkey Reframed: Constituting Hegemony*, eds. İsmet Akça, Ahmet Bekmen, and Barış Alp Özden (London: Pluto Press, 2014), p. 174.

[399] Sarıkaya, E. and Özcan Z.Y. *Aile Sağlık Rehberi* [Family Health Guide] (Ankara: Çankaya Municipality, 2005).

[400] 'Turkish PM pushes for "three children incentive", *Hurriyet Daily News*, 10 February 2013, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-pm-pushes-for-three-children-incentive.aspx?pageID=238&nID=40811&NewsCatID=338>; 'Three children not enough, have five: Erdoğan to Turks in EU', *Hurriyet Daily News*, 17 March 2017, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/three-children-not-enough-have-five-erdogan-to-turks-in-eu.aspx?PageID=238&NID=110942&NewsCatID=510>

[401] 'Turkish President: "Equality between men and women is against nature"', *Independent*, 24 November 2014, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/turkish-president-equality-between-men-and-women-is-against-nature-9879993.html>

[402] 'No Muslim family should engage in birth control: Erdoğan', *Hurriyet Daily News*, 30 May 2016, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/no-muslim-family-should-engage-in-birth-control-erdogan.aspx?PageID=238&NID=99840&NewsCatID=338>

[403] Öztan (2014), p. 184.

arguments and demonstrate that the efforts of intervention in women's feminine identities in their private and public lives have their origins in the Islamic doctrines.

In addition, Erdoğan and his cabinet have continuously been criticised for dividing women by referring to veiled women as 'our veiled sisters', 'our veiled daughters' and unveiled women as simply women.[404] Such a divisive rhetoric accentuates the JDP's alienating attitude towards unveiled women. In this context, Öztan claims that 'the JDP sees itself as the father of the family, society, the nation and even the region, backed by fantasies and desires of a new Ottomanism'.[405] As a paternal figure taking veiled women under its wings and 'othering' unveiled women outside the familial and national boundaries, the JDP and its conservative rhetoric redefine the ideal Turkish woman which was once defined by Kemalist secular ideology. Under the rule of conservative politics, the ideal Turkish woman of the twenty-first century Turkey is defined by her familial roles, her veil and her stand against secularism, similar to the one imagined by the populist Islamic novels.

The similarities between populist Islamist novels and conservative Gothic narratives, as I call them, are striking, so much so that these Gothic narratives can be read as the supernatural alternatives of the Islamic novels. The major common thread between the two is the representation of the female body. Female characters become central to the plot structure through their unveiled bodies, which become convenient vessels for sexual transgressions and djinn possessions. The unveiled modern woman stands as the antithesis of the ideal Turkish woman of the twenty-first century. Her way of life, which includes alcohol, pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relationships, revealing clothes or simply independence from patriarchy, becomes a demonic threat to

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[404] 'Lawmakers wearing headscarves attend session in Turkish Parliament for first time', *Hurriyet Daily News*, 30 October 2013 <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/we-will-not-fall-into-trap-of-the-veiled-deputies-turkeys-main-opposition-says.aspx?pageID=238&nid=57118>.
[405] Öztan (2014), p. 179.

the other traditional characters of these novels and allegorically, to the Islamist ideology.

The dominance of heterosexual perspective in conservative Gothic narratives is also evocative of the patriarchal order that the Islamist ideology constructed in Turkey. All the authors of the novels and scriptwriters and directors of the films are men. This fact contextualises conservative Gothic as an example of male Gothic engendering a male gaze for the readers of the novels and viewers of the films. As Williams points out male Gothic 'focus[es] on female suffering, positioning the audience as voyeurs who, though sympathetic, may take pleasure in female victimisation'.[406] The heterosexual male gaze that pervades these narratives objectifies the unveiled, secular and modern female body to the extent of perversity, a characteristic that associates male Gothic with pornography.[407] In these narratives, detailed descriptions of erotic encounters, female masturbation, sex and rape are used alongside religious sermons and conservative messages. Moreover, central to the plot structure, the djinn possessions envisage the sexuality of the unveiled woman as monstrous and therefore projects her as the other of the conservative Turkish society and the status quo.

Etymologically, the origin of the word djinn (also known as genii, ginn, jann, jinn, shayatin, shaytan) dates back to pre-Zoroastrian folkloric traditions in Persia but the most prolific use of the concept can be found in polytheist and Islamic Arab cultures. According to the Qur'an, the djinns are spirit-like creatures made of smokeless fire. They are the third creation of Allah alongside angels and humans. They can see humans but are invisible to the human eye unless they shape shift to an animal or a human. Their progenitor is Iblis (Satan — also known as Şeytan) but since the djinns

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[406] Williams (1995), p. 104.
[407] Ibid, p. 105.

have free will like humans they can be either good or evil. In the Qur'an, The Jinn surah mentions a group of djinns' acknowledgement and acceptance of the Qur'an upon hearing a recitation and converting to Islam.[408] These are mostly considered as believer djinns and even known to help human race at times.[409] The subject of conservative Gothic however, is the malevolent djinn who is associated with demons and known to trespass human world through magic and witchcraft, which usually cause a possession or being struck by the djinn (meaning being deformed or killed with all the bones broken).[410]

Although Turkish djinn beliefs largely derives from Arabic culture and Islamic demonology, the influence of pre-Islamic Shamanistic tradition can still be observed in issues such as, the types of the djinns, protection from the djinns and the vessel of communication with the djinns named as *cinci hoca* (the master of djinns).[411] Therefore, the literary and cinematic narratives in Turkey show variances in representation as much as the diverse folktales. Despite their different representations of the djinns, all Gothic narratives discussed in this chapter converge on their conservative Islamic subtexts. These narratives refuse to praise sorcery, magic and mediumship in the name of Islam since such practices are strictly forbidden in the Qur'an. Therefore, the characters' appeals to these practices in the event of a djinn possession do not solve anything, instead worsen it. Science and positivism, too, cannot help the characters. Similar to populist Islamic novels, conservative Gothic narratives highlight messages about the

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[408] *The Qur'an* (2005), p. 393.

[409] The story of King Solomon who controlled djinns with a magical ring to build his temple is mentioned in the Bible and the Qur'an.

[410] Rosemary Ellen Guiley, *The Encyclopaedia of Demons and Demonology* (New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2009), p. 68.

[411] Thierry Zarcone, 'Shamanism in Turkey: Bards, Masters of the Djinns and Healers', in *Shamanism and Islam: Sufism, Healing Rituals and Spirits in the Muslim World*, eds. Thierry Zircon and Angela Hobart (London; New York: I.B. Taurus, 2013), pp. 178-179.

importance of a moral and pious way of life alongside a strong faith in Allah and the Qur'anic prayer in fighting against the djinn possessions.

The existence of such reactionary values in Gothic texts might seem strange since Gothic has been characterised by many writers, critics, and scholars as Protestant, anti-Catholic and progressive rather than conservative throughout the centuries.[412] Recent Gothic scholarship, however, tends to re-evaluate this understanding. Having analysed a comprehensive number of Gothic novels and chapbooks written between 1785 and 1829, Maria Purves argues that these Gothic texts 'use Catholic materials to elevate the virtues of orthodoxy and piety in Christian belief' and portray 'Catholic characters displaying heroic qualities in narratives depicting the superior advantages of pious Christian conduct, or religious enthusiasm, over 'worldly' sensibility'. [413] Purves does not contest 'the fact of Gothic's anti-Catholicism' but gives a new impulse to the 'orthodox' categorisation of the Gothic 'as a genre systematically promoting a tradition of English/Protestant anti-Catholicism', by arguing for the existence of a pro-Catholic sentiment in some Gothic texts.[414] In other words, not all Gothic works of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century were anti-Catholic for Purves. There was also a pro-Catholic strain of Gothic writing influenced mainly by conservative ideologies of the period.

Consequently, for Purves, 'the Gothic novel became, in places, a vehicle of counter-revolutionary religious sentiment'.[415] These texts, as she argues, 'use Catholic motifs positively, in narratives that set out to persuade the reader of the moral superiority and sublimity of Christian devotion'.[416] The 'value of orthodoxy and

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[412] See Hoeveler (2014).

[413] Maria Purves, *The Gothic and Catholicism: Religion, Cultural Exchange and the Popular novel, 1785-1829* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p. 17.

[414] Ibid, pp. 13-204.

[415] Ibid, p. 170.

[416] Ibid, p. 56.

traditions in matters of faith' pervade these texts, promoting a conservative point of view.[417] For instance, while the anti-Catholic Gothic writing imagined the convent as imprisonment, pro-Catholic writers used it as 'a safe haven', and monks and nuns who are imagined as the oppressors and the oppressed by the anti-Catholic sentiment, become symbols of chivalric nobility, piety, and devotion for conservative Gothic writers.[418] Although Hoeveler firmly believes in the dominance of the Gothic's anti-Catholic characteristics and considers these chapbooks and texts that Purves refers to as 'a few exceptions' and 'not ones that the elite would have endorsed', she also acknowledges a Gothic tradition 'sometimes appearing conservative and sometimes liberal' as a consequence of the pro-Catholic sentiment that some texts insinuate.[419] Thus, the Gothic imagination of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries seem to reflect a dualism in representation. Both sides of the argument demonise each other in order to reflect their own political and religious ideology through the use of the Gothic imagination. Both sides imagine the Gothic writing as a tool to define 'the other', the evil, the barbarian, or the monstrous.

The Gothic representations of an ideological duality that juxtaposes the oppositions of conservative and secular anxieties, which had a massive impact on the British society of the period, directly relates to how I define Turkish Gothic of the post-millennium. Turkish Gothic, too, registers the same secular and conservative duality in its subtexts as a genre very much intertwined with the changing definitions of Turkish national identity and its dichotomous nature entrapped between secularism and Islamism. Conservative Turkish Gothic narratives use Gothic horror motifs in order to convey Islamic messages that praise religious piety over secular lifestyle to its readers and audiences through the image of the possession of the unveiled woman. If the

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[417] Ibid, p. 18.
[418] Ibid, p. 126.
[419] Hoeveler (2014), p. 3-4-10.

primary objectives of populist Islamic novels are to inform the readers about the struggles of people defending Islamic ideology, to express anti-Western and anti-secular ideals of Islamism and to guide young women on their journey of self-identification as a true Muslim, conservative Gothic narratives aim the same objectives except they also demonstrate what happens to the women who don't follow the Islamic ideology.[420] In other words, conservative Gothic instructs conservative women not to go astray from the right path of Islam by showing them the results of such endeavours. The djinns are used actively as a tool of propaganda in order to provoke and inflame anxiety to the conservative Turkish readers concerning their belief that religion and pious values are being overthrown by secular and modernised lifestyles.

The conservative Gothic tradition, as I have mentioned earlier, is strongly linked to Turkish horror film as much as to the Gothic novel tradition. Horror, as scholars such as Clive Bloom and Noël Carroll suggest, was born out of the Gothic tradition.[421] Accordingly, I consider Turkish horror film as part of the larger Turkish Gothic tradition, and those Turkish horror films which use the Islamic supernatural and the malevolent djinns — also known as Islamic Horror films — as part of the conservative Gothic tradition. Therefore, Islamic subtexts of conservative Gothic tradition also draw on the 'innately conservative' and 'reactionary' tendencies of the horror sub-genre, as pointed out by Stephen King.[422] The main purpose of the horror story, King suggests, 'is to reaffirm the virtues of the norm by showing us what awful things happen to people who venture into taboo lands'.[423] King particularly talks about monstrosity and how it represents what conservative society is most afraid of. Through the destruction of

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[420] Uğur (2013), pp. 85-117.
[421] Clive Bloom, *Gothic Horror: A Reader's Guide from Poe to King and Beyond* (London: Macmillan, 1998), p. 2; Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 4.
[422] Stephen King, *Danse Macabre* (New York: Gallery Books, 2010), p. 185.
[423] Ibid, p. 421.

monstrosity, normality is restored, and a lesson is taught to those who are deemed abnormal. Since monstrosity is often seen as what threatens the normality, the symbolic order and the status quo, King likens the writer of horror fiction to an agent of the status quo.[424] Indeed, similar to the Turkish Gothic of the 1920s, conservative Gothic novels and films serve the status quo of the post-millennium, of the JDP and the patriarchal Turkish society. Tracking down the beginnings of the conservative Gothic tradition, the following sections will provide a further look into the Islamic discourse of these Gothic texts and conservative messages given through the image of the unveiled female body possessed by djinns.

Raped by the Djinn: The Sense of a Beginning for Conservative Gothic

In the evening of December 14, 2004, a fire broke out at a cinema in G-Mall shopping centre in Istanbul, Turkey. The TV channels reported the fire as breaking news and the reporters on the scene interviewed some of the most well-known TV and cinema artists who were in the cinema for the premiere of the horror film *Büyü* (Dark Spells, 2004) directed by Orhan Oğuz. The footage of those celebrities running around in panic with their faces exposed to the smoke dominated the news, contributing to the rumours about the film being cursed by some supernatural cause since the shooting first started.[425] Although it was announced that the cause of the fire was the candles used for an atmospheric horror tunnel leading to the screening halls, many regarded the event as a hoax fabricated by the producers in order to publicise the first djinn-themed horror film of Turkish cinema.[426] Nevertheless, having reached a little over half a million viewers, *Dark Spells* remains the most sensational djinn-themed horror film of Turkish

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[424] Ibid, p. 41.
[425] 'Faciadan Dönüldü' [Catastrophe Averted], *Hürriyet*, 15 December 2004
    <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/faciadan-donuldu-281466>.
[426] 'Büyü tuttu rant elde edecekler' [The spell is casted, they will earn], *Haber 7*, 16 December 2004
    <http://www.haber7.com/guncel/haber/67601-buyu-tuttu-rant-elde-edecekler>.

cinema.[427] Of course, such a success was not only an outcome of its publicity. It was the shocking content of the film, as much as the fire at the premiere, which caught the national media's attention.

The film follows a group of archaeology students travelling to a deserted far eastern village in Turkey in order to find an ancient Artuqid manuscript but instead, they unearth a decades old curse eventuated by a primordial black magic which summons djinns to haunt the village once again. *Dark Spells* has several sexual scenes which centre around female characters under the influence of the supernatural, yet one scene in particular where one of the female archaeologists is raped by a djinn in her sleep stands out as the most iconic scene of the whole film. There is a precedent for this scene in Turkish television: in 1999, a similar rape scene appeared on TV in a series named *Sır Dosyası* (The Secret File), a rip off of the American sci-fi TV series *The X-Files* (1993-2002). In the third episode of the show titled 'Gece gelen' (The One That Comes at Night), a widow is raped twice by 'an unseen presence' and gets pregnant however, the word djinn is never mentioned. Despite their hesitations, the detectives Sedat and Alev approach the case as a secret affair rather than a paranormal incident and the case gets closed. The rape scene in *Dark Spells*, however, is strictly associated with djinns summoned by the black magic done in the village. The references to occult, Islamic tradition and the Qur'an in the film are unprecedented in Turkish cinema.

There is an explicit precedent for djinn-themed horror and the 'raped by a djinn' motif, however, in the conservative Gothic novels of the early twenty-first century. Orhan Yıldırım's debut novel, *Ecinni: Aykırı Dünyayla İlişkiler* (Djinni: Relations with the Other World, 2003) is the precursor of conservative Gothic novels in Turkey and the first djinn-themed narrative to contain the rape motif. Yıldırım uses first-person

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[427] 'Büyü' [Dark Spells], *The Box Office Turkey* <https://boxofficeturkiye.com/film/buyu-2004193>.

narrative to tell the story of a young educated man named Arif who ends up in a village near a mountainous area of north-eastern Turkey on his way to a city on a stormy day. In an old deserted house where he takes shelter, Arif meets Zühal, the beautiful daughter of Hasan who is the owner of the largest farm in the village. Zühal tells Arif that the house is haunted by djinns and that he should never enter the house again. Despite this strange warning, Arif decides to stay in the village and quickly wins the affection of Hasan. He employs Arif, who is a graduate of agricultural engineering, as the manager of the farm. Soon Arif and Zühal develop feelings for each other, but Arif holds back from Hasan and treats her like a sister. Zühal, on the other hand, falls deeply in love with Arif and becomes obsessive about the fact that her love is unreciprocated. One night, at a gathering among friends, Zühal suddenly disappears and later is found half-naked in the haunted house. Thereafter, the plot unfolds. It is revealed that Zühal is haunted by the djinns in the deserted house and raped several times by the djinns disguised as Arif. Throughout the novel, Arif, Dursun and the half-wit Imam of the village try to rescue Zühal from the djinn possession with the help of the Qur'an.

The rural setting of *Djinni* reflects the characteristics of conservatism in Turkey such as patriarchal hierarchy, family ties and communal lifestyle. Uğur considers this choice of setting as imitative of the American Gothic tradition.[428] Indeed, one of the crucial components of American Gothic tradition is its focus on the landscape. Bernice M. Murphy suggests that the 'negative depictions of the countryside and its inhabitants' are more substantial in American gothic narratives than any other national tradition.[429] I would adapt Uğur's argument in that the choice of the setting establishes a conservative framework for the Gothic conventions to effectively serve their purpose in terms of the representation of women. This is because the countryside represents the core of Turkish

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[428] Uğur (2013), p. 240.
[429] Bernice M. Murphy, *The Rural Gothic in American Popular Culture: Backwoods Terror and Horror in the Wilderness* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 9.

conservatism and its strong connection to traditional Islamic values which contextualise women as submissive to men and expect them to be meek and moral in a religious context. The same expectation can be found in *Djinni* as well. The male characters of the novel are presented as the protectors and saviours of women and the village. Arif's comments while he observes little girls playing in the field under a rainbow seem to confirm the perception of traditional gender roles in the village: 'The superiority of men was indisputable in this region. The authority belonged to men. Even the right to speak belonged to men. Thus, although superstitious, girls would like to cross under the rainbow to become men'.[430] Such a portrayal of gender inequality in the countryside evokes stereotypical perception of women as inferior, insufficient and incomplete as opposed to men.

Conveniently, Zühal's mother and her friend Serap, are both portrayed as moral and domestic characters. In fact, Arif's first impression of Zühal's mother perfectly fits the characterisation of good veiled women in conservative Gothic: 'once the door opened I came across a radiant face. […] I shake hands with the veiled cherub-like woman whom I passed by. It is a Turkish tradition, I instantly kissed her hand'.[431] Arif associates the veiled woman with divine light and shows his respect by coding her as 'good' along the lines of traditional values. On the other hand, Zühal's characterisation is made according to her beauty and her sexual attributes.

Williams emphasises that the role of the woman in male Gothic narratives 'is inseparable from her identity as a sexual being, either as subject or object', and thus she is considered as a sexual Other.[432] During their first encounter in the haunted house, Arif feels enchanted by Zühal's unmatched beauty and sexualises her in an erotic

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[430] Orhan Yıldırım, *Ecinni: Aykırı Dünyayla İlişkiler* [Djinni: Relations with the Other World] (İstanbul: IQ Yayıncılık, 2003), p. 123. [*my translation*]
[431] Ibid, p. 16.
[432] Ibid.

manner: 'Saying "Oh my God!" to myself, I was astonished. She had deep blue eyes, wavy hair. Her rain-drenched breasts were not fitting into her shirt, the nipples of her full breasts were obvious'.[433] Just as they are about to leave the house, Arif continues to observe Zühal's breasts in detail: 'We were face to face, her wet shirt was stuck to her body and her full breasts were blatantly obvious. She wasn't wearing anything except for the shirt on top and she couldn't hide her full breasts even though she tried.'[434] Here, Zühal's appearance is represented completely out of the traditional Islamic norms of the village. She is thus the antithesis of the veiled woman and immediately coded as 'the sexual Other' in the conservative imagination.

As Barbara Creed points out 'a strong sense of the vulnerability of the body and its susceptibility to possession' and 'the graphic detailed representation of bodily destruction' are central to narratives about female subjects being possessed by the devil.[435] The main reason behind Zühal's possession in *Djinni* however, is not only her physical vulnerability but also her spiritual weaknesses. Zühal's religious faith is not strong enough to fight against the possession of the djinns. Arif comments on this after Zühal's first attempt at suicide:

> As a matter of fact, humans are the most precious and wisest of the living creatures. Then, why are we afraid of these entities [the djinns]? The only thing we have to do is to have will power and faith. Unfortunately, Zühal couldn't do this. She couldn't overcome her fear, control herself, be faithful and determined.[436]

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[433] Ibid, p. 11.
[434] Ibid.
[435] Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (Oxon: Routledge, 1993), p. 31.
[436] Ibid, p. 183.

In addition to her spiritual weakness, Zühal also has a soft spot for Arif. She is so much in love with Arif that Arif thinks the only reason why Zühal gets possessed by the djinns is her fear of losing Arif: 'She was simply bewitched. Her attachment to me was dangerous'.[437] The characterisation of Zühal as spiritually weak and obsessively in love does not have a moral place in the conservative imagination and bear no resemblance to any other female character in the novel. Zühal is thus represented as more prone to evil transgressions than any other female character, particularly when her sexuality gains a transcendental and evil nature after her initial possession by the djinns.

Having been found in the haunted house for the first time in a state of trance, Zühal explains to Arif that she had sex with a djinn thinking it was him.[438] From then on, she is identified with both sexual and supernatural danger. At first, Arif's descriptions of Zühal's possessed states are limited to his horrified response yet as the possessions and rape become more frequent, they also become more sexual which change Arif's thoughts about Zühal's character:

> Zühal was in front of me in a horrifying state. I got goose bumps. I was ashamed of myself. She was half naked. Her breasts were obvious, and she was moaning with pleasure. I was so ashamed that I didn't know what to do. […] Witnessing her lustful moans infuriated me. […] I lost my temper and clutched her throat to kill her.[439]

During another possession, Arif becomes even angrier towards Zühal calling her a 'slut':

> She was at the climax of pleasure, moaning. Instead of witnessing such a shameful scene, I would happily fall down into a deep well. She was half naked

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[437] Ibid, p. 126.
[438] Yıldırım (2003), p. 74.
[439] Ibid, p. 173.

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and seemed like having sex as if she had someone on her. But there was no one.
[…] Was she satisfying herself? […] I was furious. I wanted to kill Zühal. […]
'May Allah damn you! You dirty slut! I will destroy you. […]' I said.[440]

Although Arif assures himself that it is the possession of the djinns that cause Zühal's
sexual behaviours in the state of trance, he can't help but react to these scenes of
perversity which are for him 'immoral'. Zühal's 'bodily destruction' is thus represented
through her being raped by the djinns. Drawing on Julia Kristeva's notion of 'the
abject', Creed defines the possessed body as 'a figure of abjection in that the boundary
between self and other has been transgressed'.[441] Likewise, Zühal's body becomes the
abject where the border between the djinn realm and our own world is traversed. This is
why she is called *ecinni* (djinni — a person who becomes a part of the djinns' realm
through possession) by the villagers. She is no longer fully human. She is 'the Other',
the one who belongs to the djinns. Tracing the trend back to Lewis' *The Monk*,
Williams argues that a woman's virtue is established as her most valuable asset in male
Gothic narratives and by having it destroyed because of 'her "female nature" as curious,
inconstant, disobedient, weak', the woman is blamed and 'punished as a fallen
woman'.[442] Thus, the epithet of ecinni is a representation of Zühal's fallen state.

While establishing the 'Otherness' of the female body and sexuality through
Zühal's possession, the novel also concentrates on the construction of conservative
religious sentiment through the belief in djinns with references to the Qur'an and the
ways to defeat them. The origin of the djinns is first explained by Arif's friend Zeki
who gives examples from Qur'anic verses. Later, whenever Arif and his friend Dursun
are confronted with the possessed Zühal, they pray from the Qur'an or hold the Qur'an

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[440] Ibid, pp. 202-203.
[441] Creed (1993), p. 32.
[442] Williams (1995), p. 105.

against Zühal while reciting. Throughout the novel, the only way to overcome a djinn haunting is revealed to be prayers from the Qur'an and a strong faith. However, a clear distinction is made between Qur'anic exorcism and sorcery. The characterisation of Deli Hafiz (the previous Imam of the village who became a half-wit after years of practising exorcism) is prominent in this context. When Deli Hafiz comes to the haunted house to save Zühal, Arif witnesses an exorcism which is done only with prayers from the Qur'an. Then, he expresses his observations about Deli Hafiz:

> Deli Hafiz was a genuinely devout person, away from evil thoughts, never involved with affairs such as amulets, magic, witchcraft, mediumship. He knew that in his own sacred book and faith, such affairs were superstitions. In order to destroy the djinns, he used the Holy Qur'an, and prayed and beseeched Allah from his heart with deep sincerity. He wrote verses about the djinns from the Qur'an and burnt them. In the eyes of the villagers, he was a true friend of Allah.[443]

Arif sees Deli Hafiz as a pious Muslim and separates his efforts in expelling the djinns from the practices that are forbidden by Islam. Later, Deli Hafiz too warns Arif and Zühal against such forbidden practices: 'I have nothing to do with magic, sorcery, and witchcraft, don't believe those who are called the master of djinns, there is no place for such things in our religion. […] I only take shelter in Allah's profundity'.[444] He confirms that the only way to defeat and be protected from the djinns is faith. Such a distinction is evocative of the populist Islamist novels messages promoting orthodox Islam as the true path in religious belief.

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[443] Yıldırım (2003), p. 136.
[444] Ibid. p. 230.

The exorcism of Zühal is also carried out by Deli Hafız using prayers and verses from the Qur'an. Compared to the detailed descriptions of Zühal's several possessions, the exorcism scene seems very banal except for the motif of the serpent used. Referring to the story of the Original Sin, Creed describes the serpent as 'Christian symbol of woman's disobedience, unbridled sexual appetite and treachery'.[445] In the Qur'an, the story of the Original Sin is told in a similar manner to the Bible and the serpent is considered Satan in disguise. During the exorcism of Zühal, Arif says: 'The djinn came out of Zühal's mouth like fog. It became a serpent on the floor and got away from a hole'.[446] Thus, it was Satan that possessed Zühal and the djinns are just a vessel. Also, the motif of the serpent evokes the same sexual connotations as suggested by Creed. Arif continues to describe the aftermath of the exorcism when Deli Hafız talks to Zühal on why this happened to her: 'He said to her that her faith was weak, and thus the djinns haunted her and also because of her desires and fancies as a beautiful girl'.[447] If the djinns possessed Zühal because of her sexual desires towards Arif, the same desires are exorcised with the djinns in the form of the serpent. When Arif observes Zühal who is listening to Deli Hafız, he says that she had 'an exhausted, innocent and shy attitude'.[448] Arif's description of Zühal as innocent and shy reinforces the fact that she is now free of her desires. Creed suggests that 'one of the major boundaries traversed' in possession narratives 'is that between innocence and corruption, purity and impurity'.[449] The djinn possession caused Zühal to transgress from innocence to corruption and from purity to impurity revealing her sexual desires as a young woman. Through the exorcism, Zühal, 'the abject' is purified and can now be 'proper' for the conservative society she lives in. Nevertheless, there is no salvation for Zühal and no happy ending for her and Arif: she

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[445] Creed (1993), p. 33.
[446] Yıldırım (2003), p. 251.
[447] Ibid.
[448] Ibid.
[449] Creed (1993), p. 32.

commits suicide leaving a note for Arif saying she doesn't deserve him as she is now marked for life as Ecinni.

The exorcism of Zühal together with the fact that her saviours are male characters relates to the structures of the populist Islamic novels as much as the 'traditional exorcism narratives'. Christopher J. Olson and Carrie Lynn D. Reinhard explain the essential focus of these narratives as the portrayal of woman as 'both the monster and the damsel in distress'.[450] A traditional exorcism narrative

> routinely portrays a girl or young woman as both a threat to those around her and a victim of forces beyond her control. These narratives commonly situate the possessed girl or woman as some dreadful thing that a male saviour (e.g., priest, rabbi) must dispel or repress, thereby restoring so-called normal (e.g., patriarchal, heteronormative, colonial) life.[451]

The same plot structure is apparent in *Djinni.* Zühal becomes the monster and the damsel in distress interchangeably throughout the story yet is rescued by the Imam in the end. In doing so, the Imam dispels and suppresses Zühal's desires and restores her to the conservative life of the village.

Djinni is neither a masterpiece of Turkish literature nor the best work of Yıldırım but is the foundation of conservative Gothic narratives of the post-millennium. The novel promotes conservative morals which warn young women about the dangers of unsupervised affairs and sexual desires by insinuating that such feelings should be repressed and can only arise in a woman under the influence of evil, conceptualising the woman with desires as evil. There are lessons to be learned from the novel for readers such as not to walk around at night in deserted places as djinns might haunt you, or to

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[450] Christopher J. Olson and Carrie Lynn D. Reinhard, *Possessed Women, Haunted States: Cultural Tensions in Exorcism Cinema* (London: Lexington Books, 2017), p. 3.
[451] Ibid.

have strong faith in religion and not to give in to your desires. Thus, as the source of evil which frightens conservative Turkish society, the djinn motif in *Djinni* is developed through an ideological subtext.

The use of the djinn as a transgressive border between the self and the Other, or in a broader sense, between two binaries that represent good and evil, generates several disguises for conservative anxieties to be projected in fiction and film but rape motif is the most prominent of them all. Representations of rape in fiction and film, according to Horeck, serve 'as a scenario through which questions are posed about masculine and feminine identity, sexuality and sexual difference, and the origins of culture'.[452] In *Djinni*, Yıldırım establishes the origin of culture in the village as of Islamic nature and creates a conservative perception of femininity through Zühal's rape. The novel poses questions about Zühal's sexuality and Arif's role as the male saviour only to serve the conservative sentiment. However, *Dark Spells* needs a more attentive reading to detect which side the film actually serves: conservative or secular. The rape scene in *Dark Spells* has previously been read as a projection of folkloric stories and myths about djinns falling in love or getting married to humans.[453] This is not incorrect: such myths certainly have an impact on the depiction of human relations with the djinns in any djinn-themed narrative. Even in *Djinni*, Arif reminds himself of folkloric stories centring on djinns falling in love with humans. However, as Horeck notes, 'images of rape function as the site of collective identification' and thus, the portrayal of rape in djinn-themed horror films has broader cultural connotations rather than only referring to folklore and myths.

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[452] Tanya Horeck, *Public Rape: Representing Violation in Fiction and Film* (Oxon: Routledge, 2004), p. 9.
[453] Şimşek (2016), p. 225.

The rape scene in *Dark Spells* is only one of the outcomes of a centuries-old dark magic regenerated by Zeynep, a woman who is in love with her best friend's husband. The film opens with the story of the initial dark magic carried out seven hundred years ago by an evil sorcerer in order to wipe out girls in the village. By depicting this unspeakable deed in the introduction, the film positions its own story within the binary of the past vs. the present. In doing so, the past is depicted as barbaric and evil, returning to haunt the archaeology team in the present. After this introduction, the spectators are introduced to the team consisting of four females Ayşe, Aydan, Ceren and Sedef and two males Cemil and the Professor, who is also Sedef's father. Other characters are Tarık, who is married to Ayşe, and Zeynep, who is a close friend of Ayşe but deeply in love with Tarık. Considering the appearances of women and the half-empty wine glasses on the dinner table, it can be assumed that the team represent the secular sentiment perceived by the conservative imagination. The scene opens with Ayşe's translation of the Arabic manuscript shown in the introduction. Sedef and Cemil listen to her while they gaze upon the manuscript which is hanging on the wall of Ayşe's dining room. Ayşe explains to them that the writing is the verse 102 from the surah Al-Baqara in the Qur'an which says '…whoever gained this knowledge [magic] would lose any share in the Hereafter'.[454] At the dinner table, the team talks about their excavation plans in Dengizhan village. The Professor says that although the Artuqids were among the earliest Muslim Turks, there are several influences dating back to pre-Islamic period in their religious practices. This information is used to establish the dark magic done by the sorcerer as belonging to the pre-Islamic practices of the barbaric past. The Arabic manuscript which strictly forbids the perks of the afterlife for those who deal with magic also supports the idea that the magic in the film is not seen as a part of Islamic tradition though Qur'anic prayer is the way to protect oneself from it.

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[454] *The Qur'an* (2005), p. 13.

The rape of Aydan occurs on the team's first night in the village. Although everyone spends the night restless because of the already regenerated spell, Aydan is chosen for worse by the djinns. Interestingly, the only thing that separates her from the other women is the fact that she doesn't have a significant male figure in her life. Ayşe is married; Sedef has her father, the Professor, with her and Ceren is very much attached to her boyfriend as understood by her constant phone calls. Therefore, as a secular woman independent from the patriarchal system, Aydan is not only coded as vulnerable but also as a threat for the conservative sentiment. Although the djinn is conceptualised as an unseen entity by the characters and the spectator, during the rape, Aydan directly looks at the camera revealing that the scene is a point-of-view (POV) shot in which the spectator witnesses the rape through the eyes of the djinn. In horror film, this technique is often used to hide the identity of the killer until it is finally revealed in the end; however in *Dark Spells,* since the djinn is already an unseen entity, giving it a point-of-view personifies the djinn.[455] In film theory, there are opposing views on the use of the POV shots assigned to the victimiser in horror films whether it is a supernatural monster or a vicious killer. While Roger Ebert argues that the POV shot is a technique that enables the spectator to identify its own sadistic and/or misogynist desires with the killer/monster, others such as Robin Wood, Kaja Silverman and Carol J. Clover note that the identification can also be directed at the victim.[456] Considering slasher films, Peter Hutchings offers a more nuanced viewpoint highlighting that the multiple pleasures provided for the spectator through POV shots make these films open to different interpretations.[457] Supporting Hutchings, Berys Gaut remarks that 'Once we construe identification as a matter of imagining oneself in a character's situation, the

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[455] Murray Smith, *Engaging Characters: Fiction, Emotion, and the Cinema* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 157.
[456] Ebert (1981); Wood (1989); Silverman (1980); Clover (1992).
[457] Peter Hutchings, *The Horror Film* (Essex: Pearson, 2004), p. 198.

issue becomes pertinent of which aspects of the character's situation one imagines oneself in'.[458] What is significant then, is not whom the spectator identifies himself with, but of which aspects of the victim or the victimiser the spectator feels drawn to.

Once Gaut's approach is adopted, the purpose of the rape in *Dark Spells* demonstrates a duality depending on the sentiment that the spectator associates himself with. Such an argument, however, is incomplete without a consideration of the male gaze that all conservative Gothic narratives inherently possess. Laura Mulvey argues that when a woman becomes the main object of a film, the camera adopts a male or masculine gaze with which the spectator identifies and eventually gains erotic pleasure from the image of the woman.[459] Indeed, all women in *Dark Spells*, one way or another, are associated with eroticism. The spectators see the half-naked bodies of the old sorcerer and another woman who carry out the first magic ritual in the very beginning of the film. In this scene, the sorcerer beats the woman's breasts with a prod to get blood out for the magic while the woman's highly sexualised screams echo in the village. The women in the archaeology team are consistently sexualised through their bodies as they wear shorts and strappy tops revealing their breasts at times. Ayşe's half-naked body is shown after a shower while Ceren's half-naked body becomes the main focus point during her sex scene with Cemil under the influence of the spell. During the rape, Aydan only wears a strappy top and a nude-coloured underwear which makes her seem almost naked at the bottom. The extent of sexualisation in *Dark Spells* establishes the cinematic gaze as having a masculine identity similar to that of voyeur readers of male Gothic narratives.

[458] Berys Gaut, *A Philosophy of Cinematic Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 258.
[459] Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings,* eds. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 833-844.

Mulvey also remarks that the woman 'displayed for the gaze and enjoyment of men, the active controllers of the look, always threatens to evoke the anxiety it originally signified': castration.[460] In order to break off from or suppress the castration anxiety, the male gaze either chooses voyeurism, associated with sadism and the wish for the woman's punishment, or fetishistic scopophilia which glorifies the female body erotically. The sadistic-voyeuristic gaze in horror film is achieved by the spectator, usually through an active male character within the story such as a powerful killer or a monster. In this context, because the POV shots make the djinn a character, and the rape of a young girl makes this character a male, the male spectators who watch the rape of Aydan in *Dark Spells* can identify themselves with the djinn. Further, the direct look of Aydan at the camera while she struggles to be freed from rape reinforces the djinn's personification. Following Linda Williams argument, as a consequence of this direct look, the djinn becomes an 'insidious form of the many mirrors patriarchal structures of seeing hold up to the woman'.[461] The rape of Aydan in *Dark Spells* thus can only be explained by the spectator's gender. A male spectator who lives his life according to the patriarchal values of Turkish society will identify himself with the djinn, see the women characters, and in particular Aydan, through a sadistic-voyeuristic gaze and regard the rape as a deserved punishment for not abiding by the rules of the patriarchy. A female spectator on the other hand, will identify herself with Aydan and recognise her victimisation by the patriarchal order as resembling her own.

The reading of the rape scene reveals that although *Djinni* and *Dark Spells* resolve in different ways, they are the cultural products of the patriarchal order in Turkey and aligned with conservative values. In *Dark Spells*, Ayşe's life is only spared by the djinns due to the Surahs of Nas and Falaq (prayers known as protection from evil

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[460] Ibid, p. 840.
[461] Linda Williams, 'When the Woman Looks', in *The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film,* ed. by Barry Keith Grant (Austin: the University of Texas Press, 2015), p. 64.

by Muslims) that she starts reciting against the possessed Sedef, and the Islamic amulet she carries on her neck. However, the film ends with Ayşe in a mental hospital and Sedef, still possessed, waiting outside the hospital. Once again, there is no salvation for female characters. As the earliest examples of conservative Gothic, the common thread of *Djinni* and *Dark Spells,* alongside female characters being raped by djinns and the strong belief in the power of religion and Qur'anic prayer, is their persistence in victimising women at the hands of the patriarchy and their refusal to empower women whether secular or conservative.

Male Gothic and Monstrous Mothers in Şafak Güçlü's Novels

In the years to follow, one of the two screenwriters of *Dark Spells* became the foremost representative of conservative Gothic fiction. Şafak Güçlü, who started his career as an extra in TV series, wrote djinn-themed novels depicting female protagonists as victims and victimisers simultaneously. His three novels *Lohusa: Ümmü Sübyan* (Puerpera: The Mother of Infants, 2014) and *Siccin: Amel Defteri* (Siccin: The Book of Deeds, 2015) reflect similar characteristics to populist Islamic novels and the early examples of conservative Gothic. In these novels, Güçlü portrays women who are clearly not religious as deviant subjects and promotes piety, strong belief in Islam and the Qur'an rather than tolerating occult rituals in order to fight against djinns. Following the trend he created in *Dark Spells,* the women in Güçlü's novels are mostly secular and unbeliever, and thus, they are projected as inherently evil and monstrous. Moreover, *s*imilar to *Djinni* and *Dark Spells*, these novels also conceptualise the readers as voyeurs who take pleasure from the long accounts of the sexual experiences of these women.

The pornographic content and the constant female victimisation in Güçlü's novels once again evoke the conventions of the 'male Gothic' tradition and the concept of the monstrous-feminine. Additionally, these monstrous women have traumas relating

to their nuclear families. Family is one of the earliest and much-used conventions of Gothic fiction but according to Agnes Andeweg and Sue Zlosnik, Gothic family 'is not the safe refuge of the ideological construct of the private sphere but the site of threat, particularly […] for its female members'.[462] Andeweg and Zlosnik emphasise that in Gothic, family is always represented as dysfunctional, opposed to its common perception as a safe haven, and this dysfunction mainly affects its female members. Williams suggests that the patriarchal family structure represents the symbolic order and therefore becomes a central theme in male Gothic narratives. [463] Through the restoration of the symbolic order, male Gothic establishes a 'conservative' family structure.[464] Therefore, within the patriarchal family structure, the father is always representative of the symbolic Order and the conservative sentiment, while the mother always gains subversive and evil connotations. I argue that Güçlü's novels follow this pattern of the patriarchal Gothic family and blame its dysfunctions on the mothers' perverted lifestyles, once again associated with alcoholism, extra-marital sexual relationship and revealing clothing. Güçlü's dysfunctional families and mothers are the opposite of the idealised family and women's roles imagined by the JDP's conservative policies regarding the nuclear family.

Güçlü's first novel *Puerpera* sets a precedent in terms of representation of sexuality and familial dysfunctions. It consists of two parallel storylines which conjoin at the climax of the novel. The first one follows Furkan, a repentant man who is now trying to redeem his past life of sin by being a pious Muslim and helpful to others. After a series of nightmares featuring a woman turning into a djinn while holding someone else's baby, Furkan believes he is haunted by djinns and sets on a journey to Istanbul in

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[462] Agnes Andeweg and Sue Zlosnik, *Gothic Kinship* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 1.
[463] Williams (1995), p. 87.
[464] Ibid, p. 93.

order to find help. The woman Furkan sees in his nightmares is Seda, a young pregnant woman. As Seda gets closer to her due date, she starts having hallucinations and seizures in which she is threatened by a fair-skinned, red-haired, tall woman who wants to take away her baby. This woman is the djinn named Ümmü Sübyan. The hauntings worsen once Seda gives birth to a baby boy. Meanwhile, Furkan meets a saint-like man named Father Rıza and together, they try to find Seda in order to save her from the djinn. With the help of her mother in-law Nagehan who is also a pious believer and her charlady Emine who inherited a special Qur'an from her saint-like grandmother, Seda manages to survive for forty days.[465] On the fortieth day, Ümmü Sübyan attacks Seda's house and burns everyone inside including Seda. When Father Rıza and Furkan arrive at the scene, Father Rıza starts reciting from the special Qur'an he received from Emine while Ümmü Sübyan shows them the pact she made with Seda years ago in a vision-like flashback. Nevertheless, Father Rıza and Furkan manage to expel Ümmü Sübyan. The novel ends with a twist where months later, Ümmü Sübyan takes her baby from Father Rıza and Furkan, disguised as the baby's father Yusuf.

As an example of conservative Gothic, *Puerpera* incorporates praise of piety and religious faith and critique of secular lifestyles and occult practices. The praise of piety and critique of occult practices are made through Father Rıza's warnings to Furkan. Although Furkan comes to Istanbul in order to meet a hodja (master of djinns), he first encounters Father Rıza, a pious wise man, who warns Furkan about the dangers of such practices: 'If you want to expel the demons inside you, you should appeal to Allah not

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[465] According to the belief mentioned by Father Rıza, the blood of the new-borns remains angel-like for forty days. It also takes forty days for the wounds of the mother to heal. Therefore, both the mother and the baby are vulnerable during the first forty days after birth. After the fortieth day, the baby becomes fully human and the mother parts from her postnatal state. Although this is a fictional explanation, the number forty has significance in Islam as well as in Judaism and Christianity. In Turkey, the fortieth day of a new-born is celebrated with prayers from the Qur'an, the dead are remembered with prayers forty days after they die, and weddings in fairy tales continue for forty days and nights.

to quack exorcisers. You shouldn't participate in the sin of those sorcerers and push yourself into torment'.[466] Having warned Furkan, Father Rıza continues to give examples from the Qur'an about the fact that such practices are strictly prohibited in Islam and convinces Furkan that his dreams are signs that show Allah will be testing his repentance. Throughout the novel, whenever Furkan loses hope or faith because of the haunting nightmares, Father Rıza guides him by preaching about piety and giving examples from the Qur'an. The charlady Emine also plays a similar part in Seda's life. She teaches Seda the most powerful prayers for protection from the djinn.

The initial critique of secular lifestyle is made through Seda and her husband Yusuf. Although she is pregnant, Seda keeps drinking alcohol, goes out at night and dances till sunrise in bars with Yusuf. The couple is represented as the antithesis of Islamic values. This can be inferred from Yusuf's strict refusal of his mother's invite to *iftar* (the breaking of the Eid fast), saying that such beliefs are for poor people and there is no point in joining them since they don't believe in religion.[467] Here, the novel characterises Seda and her husband Yusuf as non-religious, immoral and also disrespectful to the traditional values of Turkish society. The fact that this conception is made in relation to alcohol and going to bars at night for entertainment evokes the conception of secularism in populist Islamic novels. A similar critique is made about the TV series which Seda's charlady Emine and her husband watch in the evenings. Emine's husband's thoughts on the TV series are narrated as such: 'Twisted relationships, infidelities and lifestyles with multiple secret affairs in these TV series, which tell an utterly different world than the traditions and customs, societal rules, and moral norms that they have learned from their elders, were signalling to a Turkey that

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[466] Şafak Güçlü, *Lohusa: Ümmü Sübyan* [Puerpera: Ümmü Sübyan] (İstanbul: Hiç Yayınları, 2014), p. 75. [*my translation*]
[467] Ibid, p. 19.

they didn't recognise'.[468] While the couple continue to watch the TV which portrays a female character being unfaithful to her husband, the criticism about the culture is quickly directed at the woman and she is condemned by Emine's husband. Here, Emine's husband contemplates that the lives presented in the TV series corrupt the society.[469] Using a conservative and patriarchal perspective, the novel portrays Turkish popular culture as decadent and women's immorality as its main cause.

Through Seda's characterisation, the novel makes a much broader critique of female sexuality as the source of evil in the society. Seda's traumas relating to her family's past reveal that her femininity gains a monstrous nature once she makes the pact with Ümmü Sübyan. The traumatic events start with her parents' divorce and her mother's marriage to a man who turns out to be an alcoholic. Soon, her stepfather starts beating and sexually abusing Seda's mother. Believing that it will rescue her mother, Seda too agrees to her stepfather's abusive requests. She is raped and beaten many times. By revealing Seda's past, the novel establishes that she comes from a corrupt family life intertwined with alcoholism and sexual perversity. Thus, family is not a safe haven for Seda, it has dangerous and perverse connotations. Moreover, the absence of Seda's biological father allows the corruption of the patriarchal structure and poses a threat not only to the remaining family members but also to the society as a whole. The vulnerability of the fragmented family is thus an opportunity for supernatural transgressions.

Seda's first encounter with the supernatural occurs when she witnesses her mother's magic ritual where she summons the djinn Ümmü Sübyan. After an abusive moment, Ümmü Sübyan offers Seda salvation for her family on the condition that she gives her first-born to the djinn, to which Seda agrees. With Ümmü Sübyan's help, Seda

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[468] Ibid, p. 214.
[469] Ibid, p. 215.

kills her step-father with an axe. Having witnessed the act, Seda's mother blames herself for summoning Ümmü Sübyan and commits suicide. This traumatic event not only marks Seda for life, but also signifies her separation from the patriarchal structure of the nuclear family. Seda begins to be guided by Ümmü Sübyan who teaches her spells and charms to seduce men while using their power and money for maintenance and education as well as to lead a luxurious life as she wishes. With Ümmü Sübyan's help, Seda's body and sexuality become a weapon for her to use against men until one day, she re-enters the patriarchal family structure by getting married and becoming pregnant. According to Ümmü Sübyan, once Seda got married, she forgot about the pact concerning Seda's first born. This is why the hauntings of Seda start closer to her due date, specifically, after an unexpected bleeding she experiences at a night club where she encounters Ümmü Sübyan. Symbolising the abjection of her maternal body, the bleeding also initiates Seda's characterisation as the monstrous-feminine.

As discussed by Williams, 'the focus of horror' in male Gothic 'is not merely "the female" in general, but more specifically, her most mysterious and powerful manifestation as mother or potential mother'.[470] Williams echoes Kristeva's consideration of the maternal body as 'abject'. For Kristeva, due to her connection with 'nature', the maternal body is an unstable entity where 'desires hold sway and constitute a strange space'.[471] Because of this instability, at the time of the mother's separation from her child, which is described as 'a violent, clumsy breaking away' by Kristeva, the maternal body becomes the abject. Based on this, Creed suggests that the child's struggle 'to break away from the mother, representative of the archaic maternal figure, in a context in which the father is invariably absent', signals the abjection of the

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[470] Williams (1995), p. 106.
[471] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 14.

maternal body, which is constructed as the monstrous-feminine in horror texts.[472] As a broad term which encompasses various representations of the dangerous woman figure such as the *femme fatale*, the maternal body, the archaic mother, phallic woman and the castrated female, the monstrous-feminine relates directly to 'sexual difference' and 'castration anxiety' as imagined by 'patriarchal and phallocentric ideology', and calls forth 'an encounter between the symbolic order and that which threatens its stability'.[473]

As an 'Other' of the symbolic order, Seda's monstrosity is strictly connected to her femininity which surfaces monstrously whenever she encounters Ümmü Sübyan and thus constantly threatens the patriarchal society. In fact, Ümmü Sübyan too, is defined by her femininity. The female djinn is described as tall, beautiful, attractive, fair skinned and red-haired.[474] She wears tight, black clothing which reveals her breasts.[475] She is defined in a similar way to sexualised Gothic figures such as the female vampire or the witch. Moreover, she is imagined as a maternal being since what she desires more than anything is Seda's baby. The similarities between the two female characters thus indicate that as the main source of Seda's monstrosity, Ümmü Sübyan is the doppelgänger of Seda.

As a literary device, the doppelgänger became a common device in late nineteenth-century Gothic fiction and appeared in many novels, the most well-known of which is Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886).[476] According to John Herdman, the doppelgänger, or the double, is defined as 'a second self, or alter ego, which appears as a distinct and separate being apprehensible by the

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[472] Creed (1993), p. 44.

[473] Barbara Creed, 'Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine: An Imaginary Abjection' in *The Dread of Difference: Gender and Horror Film*, ed. by Barry Keith Grant (Austin: the University of Texas Press, 2015), pp. 38-42.

[474] Güçlü (2014), p. 21.

[475] Ibid.

[476] John Herdman, *The Double in the Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990), p. 14.

physical senses (or at least, by some of them), but exists in a dependent relation to the original'.[477] In *Puerpera*, Ümmü Sübyan is described as a djinn completely distinct from Seda, appearing in various places to various people, but her existence is also strictly connected to Seda's due to the pact. As Herdman argues, in this dependent relationship the double who characteristically has 'a supernatural or subjective aspect', often becomes the Master who 'comes to dominate, control and usurp the functions of the subject'.[478] Indeed, Ümmü Sübyan is the superior one in her relationship to Seda. Whenever she appears, Seda either commits a horrible deed possessed by Ümmü Sübyan's supernatural powers or suffers in an abject way which highlights her helplessness before Ümmü Sübyan. The original and the double for Herdman, also demonstrate similar physical traits, 'often to the point of absolute identity'.[479] Though Ümmü Sübyan and Seda are not described as physically identical, they both share the characteristics of the monstrous-feminine. This is most reflective in a sequence where the character of the two females almost merges together during a sexual experience.

A day after the birth, Seda and her family come back home with her new born son. The same night, after her husband falls asleep, Seda feels like going out to the garden to have some fresh air. While she walks by the shed in the garden, she hears strange voices and stops to listen. Soon, she notices that the voices belong to a man and a woman having sex. Thinking that the voices belong to an immoral young couple, she starts thinking of a way to banish them but soon, the voices get so passionate that she starts listening to them with curiosity and pleasure. As the voices get higher and more passionate, Seda is aroused:

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[477] Ibid.
[478] Ibid.
[479] Ibid.

It was as if she was possessed by an entity and drawn to this secret sin involuntarily. Her thumb, her index and middle fingers were spread out and touching around her body. […] The moans coming from inside were increasing and getting stronger. Now, Seda was also adapting to the rhythm. Her quiet moans were simultaneous with the shrieks of pleasure. While she was touching her body, she was becoming one with the woman inside.[480]

Soon, Seda starts to masturbate by touching 'her womanhood'.[481]

The situation was out of control. The voice inside her was becoming more immoral and forcing her to do shameless acts. Suddenly, she imagined herself being with them. The fair skinned woman was kissing her neck touching her body while she was on the man having pleasure. Seda was quite wet. She was about to lose her control for good. Her short moans were becoming shrieks of pleasure mixed with the woman's voice. She knew that soon, the warmth inside her would bring her to the climax of pleasure and she would orgasm. Her eyes were closed, and she handed herself over.[482]

This sequence, which continues for four long pages in the novel and ends with Seda's comprehension of the fact that the woman is indeed Ümmü Sübyan, signifies the symbolic union of the original and the double in the common ground of sexuality. Here, Seda's monstrosity once again is associated with femininity and abjection. As Punter puts it, the doppelgänger is 'the mask of innocence' providing the subject a place where the repressed desires can be freed.[483] Ümmü Sübyan is thus an agent who enables Seda to free her repressed sexual desires. However, as a maternal being who has now found a

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[480] Güçlü (2014), p. 124.
[481] Ibid, p. 125.
[482] Ibid.
[483] Punter (2013b), p. 1.

place in the symbolic order, Seda refuses to merge with Ümmü Sübyan once she recognises her and runs away from the shed in horror.

A similar sequence is found in Güçlü's second novel *Siccin* which follows Eda, a woman who leaves her troubled life behind and settles down in a tranquil village. However, she soon receives warnings from Ebe Ana (the Mother Midwife), a fearsome advocate of morality in the village, who thinks Eda is immoral because of her revealing attire and has to leave before she causes anyone to sin, in a sexual sense. In a visit she pays to Eda's house, Ebe Ana says, 'Here, is a quiet, virtuous and religious place, you'd better not forget!'.[484] The novel justifies Ebe Ana's attitude by explaining that Anatolia in general and small villages like this one specifically are attached to traditional and religious values in order to protect themselves from strangers.[485] Hence, Eda is the stranger, in fact the sexual other. When she goes out to the village market for shopping, the village men lay eyes on her and make sexual comments about her body. A man named Adem says: 'I bet she is burning furiously inside! Besides what good those urban men be, they are all ungainly. A man should be like me, should wrap and rip like a wrestler. […] You'll see I'll eat her up!'.[486] Eda's beauty, her bodily figure and her revealing clothes become the main concern of the village men. The novel presents her as the sexual other whom the men look at with lust and the women are scared of.

Nevertheless, Eda decides to stay in the village regardless and befriends a young village girl named Müzeyyen. With Eda's encouragement, Müzeyyen starts to discover her beauty and sexuality which is signified by the black satin nightgown that she finds in Eda's wardrobe. Having noticed her excitement, Eda gives the nightgown to Müzeyyen thinking that it will help her realise her womanhood before she gets married

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[484] Şafak Güçlü, *Siccin: Amel Defteri* [Siccin: The Book of Deeds] (İstanbul: Hiç Yayınları, 2015), p. 46. [*my translation*]
[485] Ibid, p. 47.
[486] Ibid, p. 89.

to her fiancé Ömer. The same night when she gets back home, Müzeyyen looks at her reflection in the mirror wearing the nightgown. At the same moment, Eda too is looking at her reflection in the mirror wearing the exact same nightgown in white. The women start to watch their bodies in detail and soon both are aroused simultaneously. The narrative here shifts from Eda to Müzeyyen and from Müzeyyen to Eda continuously giving an account of each woman masturbating herself.[487] While the women get closer to the climax, the narrative reveals a doubling similar to the one in *Lohusa*:

> Two women were united in one body and one fantasy. Now, on a large bed, two souls were living the same lust in one body. On the bed in the middle of the dark room, in the midst of tens of men, they were living the climax of pleasure in a single body. The shrieking woman was now becoming Eda and then Müzeyyen.[488]

Herdman argues that 'divided, split or schizophrenic characters' are not actual doubles but the term 'may become appropriate if and when their division gives rise to a second, sensibly apprehensible personality (even if apprehensible only to the subject), which can occur for instance in the case of a hallucination fictionally presented as a distinct personage'.[489] When the masturbation sequence becomes a hallucinatory vision during which the women are raped by multiple men the doubling of Müzeyyen and Eda reveals itself for the first time. Moreover, they are watched by djinns surrounding the bed, which signifies the presence of a demonic force. Eda is the one presented as more sexual, thus more dangerous, and Müzeyyen is the innocent village girl, as the demonic force seems to be somehow caused by Eda since the beginning of the novel. Indeed, the fact that she is running away from a past that is never revealed, and the strange events

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[487] Ibid, pp. 139-140.
[488] Ibid, p. 145.
[489] Herdman (1990), p. 15.

she encounters in the village, signal a connection with the djinns for the reader. However, the colour-coded nightgowns hint that the source of the evil might actually be Müzeyyen rather than Eda. The black satin nightgown represents Müzeyyen's repressed sexuality. Through the demonic force surrounding her, Müzeyyen's sexuality becomes monstrous.

Nevertheless, at the end of the novel, it is revealed that the main character is indeed Müzeyyen, and Eda is just a personality she created in her mind to rescue herself from her inevitable tragic end. Until the end, however, Eda is presented as a distinctly separate character. She is one of the two who believes in Müzeyyen and tries to save her from the angry villagers when they want to force her to marry right after she gets raped. The other one is the Islamic priest of the village mosque who is characterised on the side of the good and dies while trying to help Müzeyyen.

The end of the novel reveals the tragedy behind Müzeyyen's family in a similar manner to *Puerpera* because like Seda, Müzeyyen makes a sort of pact with the djinns in order to be freed from the life her mother Türkan brought on her. As the story goes, after her husband's death, Türkan starts using alcohol and goes astray. She leaves her little daughter Müzeyyen with her mother in law, Ebe Ana, every night and goes out to have sexual congress with men. One night she even gives sleeping pills to Müzeyyen and leaves her in the forest to die. That night, while her mother spends a lustful night in the woods with her lover, Müzeyyen is protected by djinns although she doesn't know about it. In time, she grows up to be a beautiful young girl and her mother's lovers start to assault Müzeyyen. Witnessing the deeds of her daughter-in-law and her granddaughter's situation, Ebe Ana gives Müzeyyen the book of deeds named Siccin where she can write down the names of those who abused her. One night, Müzeyyen goes near the well in the forest to meet with the boy she is in love with, Ömer. However, she encounters five drunk boys from the village. The boys repeatedly rape

Müzeyyen. Once she regains consciousness, she starts writing the names of the boys in Siccin repeating: 'Damn you all! May the cursed djinns of Siccin rip you all apart! May the djinns of Siccin drink your blood! Damn you all!'[490] At that moment, the djinns become her helpers. The same night, Müzeyyen tells what happened to Türkan but instead of believing her daughter, Türkan beats her and tells her that she will marry Ömer regardless. On her wedding day, the djinns stop Müzeyyen's suffering by burning down the whole village.

Although, *Siccin* brings an ambivalence to the malevolent djinn figure by making djinns the protectors and avengers of Müzeyyen, both *Puerpera* and *Siccin* centre around mothers and daughters who are considered immoral and deviant in the conservative imagination due to their active sexual life whether it is a first experience, rape, or lustful sex. The female body is objectified in various ways and the maternal body is considered as abject. Conventional to conservative Gothic texts, female characters in both novels cannot have a proper salvation. In *Lohusa*, Ümmü Sübyan kills Seda and her in-laws, and although Father Rıza and Furkan initially save the baby boy, Ümmü Sübyan takes the baby away in disguise of Seda's husband Yusuf. In *Siccin*, too, although the whole village is said to have been burnt to the ground, Müzeyyen ends up in the mental hospital. Although these novels marginalise and demonise the female protagonists, they intrinsically blame the mothers and the fragmented family for the daughters' deviance. According to Ruth Bienstock Anolik, in Gothic narratives, 'the figure of the mother exerts social control and order, providing the resistance to deviance that is beneficial to society but detrimental to narrative'.[491] Thus, excluding the good mother from the text, by making her truly evil or completely

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[490] Güçlü (2015), p. 331.
[491] Ruth Bienstock Anolik, 'The Missing Mother: Meanings of Maternal Absence in the Gothic Mode', *Modern Language Studies* 33.1/2 (2003), p. 27.

omitting her, 'allows for a narratable deviance to flourish in the Gothic text'.[492] By destroying the social stability of the mother figure, these novels present the deviance of female protagonists as deriving from their mothers, and the mothers as evil due to the absence of their husbands, who are the representative of the symbolic order.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the Gothic novels of Orhan Yıldırım and Şafak Güçlü, and the Horror film *Dark Spells* with regards to their conservative subtexts which correspond to the Islamic ideology in Turkey and the JDP's conservative policies focusing on the female body, sexuality and family. Yıldırım's novel *Djinni* and the film *Dark Spells* establish the first examples of conservative Turkish Gothic. Both works demonstrate a misogynist approach and centralise female characters as sexual Others who are raped by djinns due to their inferior and weak natures as women, and their non-religious ways of life which leave them unprotected from djinn possessions. Following the same misogynist tone, Güçlü's novels focus on the dysfunctional Gothic family. The female protagonists in *Puerpera* and *Siccin* are depicted as monstrous-feminine due to their repressed sexualities. Nevertheless, the monstrosity of these female characters is linked to their mothers and their fragmented families which are usually corrupted by alcoholism.

This emphasis on the destruction that alcohol brings demonstrates that conservative Gothic tradition reproduces similar themes to populist Islamic novels and draws on Gothic horror's conservative nature. However, contrary to horror conventions which emphasise the restoration of the symbolic order once the Gothic monster, in this case the djinn, is expelled, the end of the conservative Gothic narratives is much more ambivalent. There is no salvation for those women who go astray from the rightful path.

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[492] Ibid, p. 28.

They either die or can never be normal since the djinn possession leaves a psychological mark. Moreover, the restoration of the symbolic order is also problematical. In Güçlü's novels in particular, the djinns are not fully expelled, and a return to normality is not entirely possible. In this way, Western conventions of Gothic horror are reconfigured in conservative Turkish Gothic. The strictly othering tendencies of conservative Gothic narratives towards non-religious women promote the JDP's conservative policies. Therefore, conservative Turkish Gothic serve the status quo and constructs the anxieties of conservative Turkish society by deliberately provoking and threatening them through the figure of the djinn.

Chapter Five

Neoliberal Turkish Gothic: from Istanbul with Anxieties

Post-millennial Turkish Gothic's appeal to folkloric themes and Islamic demonology is not the only outcome of the exhaustive transformation that Turkey underwent trying to adapt to the influences of the global neoliberal system and the rising tide of conservatism. Since conservative Turkish Gothic represents a departure from the appropriations and imitations of Western texts by utilising local motifs, it is popularly believed to be an authentic Turkish tradition that offers familiarity to Turkish audiences. However, Turkish national identity has been imagined as a synthesis of Western and Eastern identities since the late 1990s. Therefore, limiting authentic Turkishness to the utilisation of folklore and Islamic demonology negates the Western component of Turkish national identity. This chapter takes issue with this limitation and proposes the existence of another branch of Turkish Gothic which has emerged roughly in the 1990s, as a result of the arrival of cultural globalisation and neoliberal capitalism, and developed simultaneously with conservative Turkish Gothic in the post-millennium. The Gothic aesthetics of this branch were initially introduced in Ataman's film *The Serpent's Tale*, which I discussed in Chapter Three, and later spread to underground literature, popular and youth cultures. However, they reached their current, rather dissident, form in the 2000s when the neoliberal policies of the JDP (Justice and Development Party) government became central to the concerns of the polarised Turkish society.

As opposed to the rural settings of conservative Gothic texts, I argue that this other branch of Turkish Gothic demonstrates the characteristics of a counter-tradition that is closely interwoven with experiences of urbanisation. Its characters are representations of the oppressed and anxious secular Turkish people whose traumas and existential crises arise from the physical and psychological constraints of living in a

neoliberal global city, that is, Istanbul. I consider this branch of Turkish Gothic as a quintessential example of neoliberal Gothic as discussed by Linnie Blake. In *Neoliberal Gothic: International Gothic in the Neoliberal Age* (2017), Blake and Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet argue that neoliberal Gothic texts 'expose and critique the material actualities' of the current neoliberal system.[493] Neoliberal Turkish Gothic operates along the same lines and gives voice to dissident sensibilities of the secular Istanbulites whose lives have been affected heavily by the ills of the neoliberal system. In doing so, differently to other strains of Turkish Gothic, neoliberal Turkish Gothic narratives challenge the status quo and reflect a revolutionary spirit representative of the Gezi Park protests.

In order to frame my theorisation of neoliberal Turkish Gothic, the chapter will begin with a discussion of neoliberalism as an economic and political project, its implementation in Turkey under the JDP's authoritarian rule and in what ways Turkish Gothic engages with this global hegemonic system. Accordingly, I will theorise neoliberal Turkish Gothic regarding its focus on Istanbul's neoliberal transformation, its allegiance with the oppressed secular sentiment and its approach in tackling contemporary understandings of the Gothic mode. Through the examination of Hakan Bıçakcı's novels *Apartman Boşluğu* (The Apartment Shaft, 2008) and *Doğa Tarihi* (Natural History of (a Woman), 2014), I will explore how young, secular Istanbulites are represented as Gothicised embodiments of the psychologically fragmented neoliberal self. In a similar vein, the Taylan Brothers' film *Küçük Kıyamet* (The Little Apocalypse, 2007) and Ceylan Özgün Özçelik's *Kaygı* (Inflame, 2017) depict the dark underside of neoliberal urbanisation in Istanbul and how Istanbulites are psychologically affected by the transformation of the city's fabric through the use of

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[493] Linnie Blake and Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet, *Neoliberal Gothic: International Gothic in the Neoliberal Age* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), p. 3.

Gothic effects. These films reveal the return of repressed national traumas in order to reveal the dysfunctions of the neoliberal system in Turkey. All the novels and films I discuss in this chapter explore the ills of the neoliberal system in Turkey through a Gothic lens and serve as the second side of the coin for the analysis of Turkish Gothic in the twenty-first century.

Neoliberalism, the Gothic and Secular Anxieties in Contemporary Turkey

The transformation that the contemporary world has been undergoing since the 1970s is widely considered to be the result of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism first emerged as a theory of political economic practices in the aftermath of the World War II based on the ideas of a group of academics, economists and thinkers led by the political philosopher Friedrich von Hayek. In essence, neoliberalism promised worldwide economic prosperity and better living conditions 'by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade'.[494] Having stayed on the outskirts of the mainstream politics for a while, the theory became widely recognised by economic institutions and global think tanks following the 1970s recession in the Western world.[495] Henceforth, changes towards neoliberalism in economic, political and social policies pervaded the US and Britain, under the leadership of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, respectively. In a span of two decades, neoliberal policies gradually spread to other parts of the world. For neoliberalism was never only about economy, it was a new way of structuring the world.

Although neoliberalism failed to live up to its initial promise of worldwide prosperity, the free market policies contributed to the advancements in science and

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[494] David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 2.
[495] Ibid, p. 22.

information technologies, the increase in quality of financial services, as well as the emergence of new cultural industries.[496] Coupled with these advancements, globalisation also gained unprecedented momentum in the 2000s. National borders became blurry; multiculturalism increased, identities multiplied and cultural flows transformed people's lifestyles. A new era of connectivity through technology, media and culture was introduced by global neoliberalism and had a massive impact on people's daily lives regardless of where they are located in the world. For many scholars, these developments strengthened neoliberalism's hegemonic status. As David Harvey underlines, neoliberalism 'has pervasive effects on ways of thought to the point where it has become incorporated into the common-sense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world'.[497] From politics to urbanisation, to national security, to education, to healthcare, and to cultural industries, neoliberal policies are implemented in every stage of social life so that they can be normalised, standardised and registered by the society as common sense. Hence, neoliberalism is the new global norm, it is the dominant logic of the twenty-first century.

As a part of the global neoliberal system for over three decades, Turkey has also been experiencing the domino effect of the system's challenges, instabilities and threats. Neoliberalism, as a set of economic changes, was first presented to Turkish politics just before the coup d'état in 1980; however, it received opposition from the unions, academics, politicians and the public.[498] During three years of the repressive military regime (1980-1983), opposition was conveniently silenced, and neoliberalism was slowly integrated into economic policies.[499] Nevertheless, the Turkish economy was not

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[496] Ibid, pp. 157-159.
[497] Ibid, p. 3.
[498] Fikret Senses, 'Turkey's Experience with Neoliberal Policies since 1980 in Retrospect and Prospect', in *The Making of Neoliberal Turkey*, (eds) Cenk Ozbay, Maral Erol, Aysecan Terzioglu and Z. Umut Turem (Surrey: Ashgate, 2016), p. 16.
[499] Ibid.

fully ready to accommodate all neoliberal policies and governments that came to power were not able to manage this new system efficiently.[500] In the following two decades, Turkey experienced constant instability in economy and politics. The impact of the Kurdish problem, the 1999 İzmit earthquake — which I discuss in detail later in this chapter— and the biggest economic crisis in Turkish history in 2001 affected the public's confidence in Turkish politics and the workings of neoliberalism in Turkey after the 2000s.[501]

The JDP's accession to power in 2002 was the beginning of the neoliberal age in real terms in Turkey. Echoing David Harvey's consideration of neoliberalism as a hegemonic discourse, İsmet Akça, Ahmet Bekmen and Barış Alp Özden claim that the JDP's main objective has been to build 'a specific type of neoliberal hegemony that mixes various Islamic and conservative motives with neoliberal policies and ideology'.[502] In its first five years in power, the JDP followed this objective while also pledging loyalty to democratisation and the EU membership processes. Thus, the party received full support from various segments of the society including the urban bourgeoisie, Muslim conservatives, the secular middle class and the unorganised and poor working classes.[503] However, since the 2011 elections, which strengthened the party's electoral dominance, the JDP's conservative and neoliberal policies gradually became more authoritarian.[504] In retrospect, this change towards authoritarianism was not surprising since fundamentally neoliberalism incorporates authoritarian tendencies which were even more visible after the global crisis in 2008.[505] The JDP's

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[500] Ibid.
[501] Ibid, p. 17.
[502] İsmet Akça, Ahmet Bekmen and Barış Alp Özden, *Turkey Reframed: Constituting Neoliberal Hegemony* (London: Pluto Press, 2014), p. 3.
[503] İsmet Akça, 'Hegemonic Projects in Post-1980 Turkey and the Changing Forms of Authoritarianism', in *Turkey Reframed: Constituting Neoliberal Hegemony*, (eds) İsmet Akça, Ahmet Bekmen and Barış Alp Özden (London: Pluto Press, 2014), p. 31.
[504] Ibid, p. 45.
[505] Ian Bruff, 'Neoliberalism and Authoritarianism', in *The Handbook of Neoliberalism*, (eds) Simon Springer, Dean Birch and Julie MacLeavy (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), p. 107.

authoritarianism was particularly troubling for secular groups who were not content with the party's conservative interventions in their lifestyles. The restrictive regulation on the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages, anti-abortion regulations, promotion of childbirth and the introduction of religious courses into the educational system are some of the many conservative policies that caused dissenting opinions to rise amongst secular groups in Turkey.[506]

As stated by İsmet Akça, the JDP's version of authoritarianism is rather strict: it 'does not accept any social, political and even individual opposition or critic as legitimate. It rather blames them as being not part of the national will, being an attack to the national will, if not terrorist acts'.[507] This accusatory rhetoric became especially apparent during the Gezi Park Protests in 2013 when then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan pejoratively named the protestors as 'a handful of *çapulcus*'. Historically, *çapulcu* was used as a synonym for vandals, looters or robbers in Mongolian languages. Likewise, the modern dictionary of the Turkish Language Association defines the word as 'those who act against the order, who disturb the order'. The Gezi Park protestors too stood against the JDP's order and its deal with a high-profile construction company to renovate the Gezi Park at the expense of destroying the last green space in central Istanbul. In the span of a few weeks, over 2.5 million people in 79 cities joined the protests and became *çapulcu*, to use Erdoğan's own words. The protests demonstrated that there is a major group of people, mainly the young and the secular, who feel oppressed by the JDP's conservative authoritarianism. Harvey remarks that 'the idea of the right to the city […] rises up from the streets, out from the neighborhoods, as a cry for help and sustenance by oppressed peoples in desperate times'.[508] In this sense,

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[506] Ibid.
[507] Ibid.
[508] David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to Urban Revolution* (London: Verso, 2012), p. xiii.

similar to the spirit of other occupy movements that preceded them, the Gezi Park Protests were exemplary due to their creation of agency for the urban citizens. The protests were the collective outcry of the urban seculars and young professionals who became estranged by the neoliberal authoritarianism that supports the constant restoration, gentrification, construction and destruction of public spaces, and so paralyses people's daily lives.

In a turbulent age, the Gothic mode offers the quintessential metaphors to unmask the dysfunctions of societies. As the latest incarnations of the Gothic mode, neoliberal Gothic texts project these dysfunctions to mirror the dark side of global neoliberalism. For Blake, these texts present

> a highly gothic rendering of the monstrous dislocations that free market economics have inflicted on selfhood and society in our own, global-imperial age and, hence, a sustained exploration of the trauma wrought to global ecology, society and selves by the vicissitudes of post-1970s global capitalism.[509]

Neoliberal Gothic encapsulates the general character of the contemporary society and its subjects whose anxieties and traumas shed light on the conditions that global neoliberalism produce. In doing so, neoliberal Gothic utilises Gothic monsters as representations of globalisation and the multiplicity of subjectivities in the neoliberal age, or rediscovers various Gothic tropes such as the haunted house, the ghost and the gothic body in neoliberal contexts. Neoliberal Gothic texts also invent alternative ways of defining the neoliberal culture in Gothic terms such as monsterising governments, ecology or advancements in science and technology.

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[509] Linnie Blake, 'Neoliberal Adventures in Neo-Victorian Biopolitics: Mark Hodder's Burton and Swinburne Novels', in *Technologies of the Gothic in Literature and Culture: Technogothics*, (ed) Justin D. Edwards (New York & Oxon: Routledge, 2015), p. 167.

It can be argued that neoliberal Gothic is a continuation of the concept of globalgothic that serves as one of the theoretical grounds of this study. Neoliberalism is now a global hegemony and its discontents are not limited to a single geography. Yet, different regions experience globalisation and neoliberalism differently. When cultural contexts change, the discontents of societies shift. Thereby, neoliberal Gothic is transfigured and synchronised to each culture's own perception of the neoliberal system.

From this point of view, my theorisation of Neoliberal Turkish Gothic has three basic codes or characteristics that represent the discontent of Turkish people living in a neoliberal world under a neoconservative regime. The first and foremost characteristic is Neoliberal Turkish Gothic's emphasis on Istanbul as a multicultural, densely populated global city. Urban policies have been central to the objectives of global neoliberalism and cities have been designed as 'urban enterprise zones' everywhere since the 1970s.[510] The transformation of Istanbul — from an exhausted third-world city with a faded glory, to a world-class neoliberal city embodying various industries working in the global market — has been a continuous and conscious venture implemented by neoliberal policies since the 1980s. Çağlar Keyder comments on the changing face of Istanbul as such:

> As in other globalising cities of the Third World, Istanbul has experienced the shock of rapid integration into transnational networks and markets and witnessed the emergence of new social groups since the 1980s. A thin social layer of a new bourgeois and professional class has adopted the lifestyle and consumption habits of their transnational counterparts. Globalised lifestyles, shopping malls,

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[510] Roger Keil, 'Urban Neoliberalism', in *The Handbook of Neoliberalism*, (eds) Simon Springer, Dean Birch and Julie MacLeavy (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), p. 388.

gated communities and gentrified neighbourhoods that replicate similar ones in other globalising cities are stock features of the literature on the new city.[511]

As Keyder illustrates, during the last couple of decades, Istanbul transformed into a global city where capital accumulates. The excessive urbanisation resulted from migration from rural areas and enabled plurality, hosting various classes, ethnic identities and polarised lifestyles. Women became more involved with work life, graduates of higher education increased, and consumerism took over every stage of people's daily lives. The multiplicity of differences in sexual preferences, political ideologies, and lifestyles made Istanbul the reflection of newly defined Turkish national identity as both Western and Eastern, and its cityscape the symbol of Turkey in global markets.

As a consequence, Istanbul has also gained a significant potential for the tourism industry. Particularly since it became one of the European Capitals of Culture in 2010, Istanbul's global image has been drawn as 'a charming city' that appeals to both Western and Middle Eastern tourists by addressing its location as a bridge between the West and the East in promotional campaigns and adverts.[512] Long shots of the Bosphorus, Istanbul's business centres and historical landscapes have been frequently used as transition images in Turkish TV series that have been sold to various parts of the world. Nevertheless, neoliberal Gothic is not interested in this charming picture of Istanbul. Neoliberal Gothic aims to shed light on the Istanbul of the çapulcus. It exposes the dark side of the city: what the tourist gaze won't look at and won't see. The city's ambivalent character stuck in between the West and the East, the past and the present, tradition and modernity registers Istanbul as a site of in-betweenness for its inhabitants.

[511] Çağlar Keyder, 'A brief history of modern Istanbul', in *The Cambridge History of Modern Turkey*, ed. Reşat Kasaba (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 516.
[512] Dilek Özhan Koçak, 'The City of the Tourist: Istanbul as an Imaginary City', in *Whose City is That?: Culture, Design, Spectacle and Capital in Istanbul*, (eds)Dilek Özhan Koçak and Orhan Kemal Koçak (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2014), pp. 261-268.

Namely, neoliberal Gothic narratives gothicise Istanbul — sometimes as a claustrophobic space, other times as the scene of a natural disaster — but always, as the source of nightmarish fears and deep-rooted anxieties within contemporary Turkish society.

Secondly, neoliberal Turkish Gothic texts not only reflect the anxieties of the secular segment of the Turkish society, but also are produced by young and well-educated professionals who align themselves against the JDP's neoliberal and conservative policies regarding urbanisation, gender equality, freedom of speech, human rights, the body and identity politics. The writers and filmmakers whose works I will discuss in this chapter are those who either personally attended the Gezi Park protests or show their support to the Gezi spirit in one way or another. In this context, neoliberal Gothic texts form a counter-tradition to the kind of conservative Gothic texts I discussed in Chapter Four, whose subtexts are in line with the political sentiment propagated by the JDP and Erdoğan. On the other hand, these two traditions also complete each other since they embody the Turkish national identity of the twenty-first century imagined as both Eastern and Western, Islamic and Secular, conservative and progressive at the same time. That being the case, neoliberal Gothic texts revolve around characters who are represented as Western, secular and progressive. The protagonists of this tradition feel marginalised, oppressed or alienated within the constraints and principles of the neoliberal system. Each of these characters may well be one of the Gezi Park protestors themselves if they were to live in a non-fictional Turkey.

Lastly, neoliberal Turkish Gothic texts are not entirely Gothic in the traditional sense but follow a subtle aesthetic that focuses on moments of Gothic affects. Xavier Aldana Reyes' affective approach to the Gothic is very useful in this case since it allows for the reading of certain texts 'that seek to convey a gothic experience but may not rely

on this mode representationally'.[513] Aldana Reyes suggests that affectively Gothic texts imagine the Gothic as 'a form of experience' that instantly catches the attention of the readers due to the particular emotions and effects it evokes.[514] Thus, universal emotions such as 'external threat', 'death' and 'pain' lie at the core of the Gothic experience, which differs from culture to culture based on how such emotions are perceived by a given society.[515] In my reading of neoliberal Turkish Gothic texts, I adopt an affective approach as I am concerned with the Gothic experiences that these texts offer rather than identifying the Gothic tropes and conventions they entail. These Gothic experiences are shaped by emotional responses — which correlate with the anxieties of Turkish readers and audiences in the neoliberal age — given to moments that are affectively Gothic for Turkish people.

Alienation, Fragmentation and the Neoliberal Self in Hakan Bıçakcı's Novels

The changing cultural logic of the post-1980 period has facilitated the process of globalisation in the Turkish novel tradition. In the early days of the Republic, the novel served the ideological aspirations of the newly founded nation-state (see Chapter Two) while in the second half of the twentieth century it was involved in socio-political commentary influenced by socialist, feminist and existentialist movements and by modernist and postmodernist trends of the period. In the post-millennium, Turkish novel became a commodified component of the global image of Turkish national identity. Following Orhan Pamuk's receipt of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2006, various other contemporary Turkish novels were translated for the global book market while canonised Turkish novels of the previous periods were republished in new editions. Furthermore, Turkish writers began to experiment with new genres and styles of writing

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[513] Xavier Aldana Reyes, 'Gothic Affect: An Alternative Approach to Critical Models of the Contemporary Gothic', in *New Directions in 21st Century Gothic: The Gothic Compass*, (eds) Lorna-Piatti-Farnell and Donna Lee Brien (New York & Oxon: Routledge, 2015), p. 19.

[514] Ibid, p. 20.

[515] Ibid, p. 17.

in keeping with the global interest in crime thrillers, the detective story, science fiction and horror fiction.

According to Göknar, the post-millennium can be defined as the period of transnationalism and transgression for the Turkish novel.[516] Mostly written by writers who were born in the 1960s and 1970s, post-millennial Turkish novels, for Göknar, reflect the *Zeitgeist* of global neoliberalism and its impact on the transformation of Turkish identity in the twenty-first century. He remarks that the writers of this period cross national boundaries and the limits of traditional genres with an underlying critique of the neoliberal system:

> The first generation to grow up within the neo-liberal system that was established after the 1980 coup, these writers are tacticians of resistance on an individual rather than social or historical scale. These authors have little conviction in monolithic ideologies, but they do have an inkling of the market of identities and a multitude of sites of power influencing one's choices. In short, there is a new relationality in these works, a new way of seeing the regional and international world of which Turkey has become a part. These young authors are redefining what it means to be a 'Turk' beyond national identity.[517]

Göknar refers to the Turkish novel's close — yet problematic — relationship with socio-political subtexts in previous decades and claims that post-millennial writers are separate from their antecedents in that their works are not motivated by a particular ideology. In spite of their apolitical first impression, the works of these writers demonstrate an awareness of the neoliberal system's dysfunctions and discrepancies which are critiqued through skilful use and mixing of contemporary styles of writing

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[516] Göknar (2008), p. 499.
[517] Ibid, p. 501.

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and genres.

Hakan Bıçakcı is one of the young writers whose novels are in tune with the transnational and transgressive character of the post-millennial Turkish novel that Göknar specifies. In 2010, Bıçakcı was listed as one of 'the twenty best Turkish young writers under 40' by Turkish Newsweek.[518] He has published seven novels: *Romantik Korku* (Romantic Fear, 2002), *Rüya Günlüğü* (Dream Diary, 2003), *Boş Zaman* (Spare Time, 2004), *Apartman Boşluğu (*The Apartment Shaft, 2008), *Karanlık Oda* (Dark Room, 2010), *Doğa Tarihi* (Natural History (of a woman), 2014), and *Uyku Sersemi* (Sleepy, 2017); two short story collections: *Ben Tek Siz Hepiniz* (Me Against All of You, 2011) and *Hikayede Büyük Boşluklar Var* (There are Huge Gaps in the Story, 2015); and an illustrated novella: *Otel Paranoya* (Hotel Paranoia, 2017). His novels generally revolve around male protagonists who are secular and educated yet lost, oppressed or distressed for they do not fit in society. Bıçakcı's 'layered, metaphorically dense, and tightly crafted' writing style is seen by Yan Overfield Shaw as a homage to the twentieth century literary movements of modernism and postmodernism.[519] Nevertheless, I argue that Bıçakcı's recent novels, particularly *The Apartment Shaft* and *Natural History (of a woman),* should be considered under the neoliberal Gothic tradition due to their use of Gothic conventions in order to project Istanbulites as distressed subjects of the neoliberal system.

Although Bıçakcı's literary language is rarely political, Shaw identifies his political position as in line with the 'marginal cultural segment of educated and secularised young professionals' who have 'become increasingly stigmatised by the

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[518] 'En iyi 20 genç yazar' (The best 20 young writers), *NTV Sanat*, 24 August 2010 <https://www.ntv.com.tr/galeri/sanat/en-iyi-20-genc-yazar,HZfhYXWp6ku2shSXfV7rkw/mCAN4hMi-EO0N3B92rxkFg>.

[519] Yan Overfield Shaw, 'Hakan Bıçakci', in *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Turkish Novelists Since 1960. Second Series Volume 379*, (eds) Burcu Alkan and Çimen Günay-Erkol (Michigan: Gale Cengage Learning, 2017), pp. 51-60.

majoritarian rhetoric of [then] Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the pro-government media'.[520] Indeed, Bıçakcı openly supported the Gezi protests which later became the motivation behind his short stories, criticism and essays on the Gezi movement, the urban transformation of Istanbul, and political authoritarianism, published in various collections and magazines. He was also one of the more than a hundred writers from Turkey who signed a petition calling the Turkish government to stop its blockade on freedom of expression and human rights in August 2016.[521] Therefore, Bıçakcı's novels inarguably reflect his dissident stand and, moreover, appeal to those in the same position. In other words, Bıçakcı answers to Göknar's description of post-millennial writers as 'tacticians of resistance on an individual rather than social or historical scale'.[522] Hence, Gothic effects found in Bıçakcı's novels are more than the components of a mode of writing, they are tools of resistance per se.

In an interview in 2016, when asked whether he is inspired by Horror cinema while writing his novels, Bıçakcı answered:

Horror is a dangerous genre. I am interested in Horror cinema but I consider a large part of it extremely conservative. By dictating us to fear something in particular, horror cinema directs us to a fascist narrative because it creates an enemy named as 'them'. Particularly, Hollywood cinema frequently does this and we see a society justified with a nationalist discourse named as 'us'. In addition, in Horror films, the threat is almost always from outside and the destruction of that threat leads us to a happy ending. That is to say, narratives reaffirm the order. When I write in the Horror genre, I like to think the opposite. I try to question the existing order. I never see monsters, creatures, aliens from

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[520] Ibid, p. 57.
[521] 'Turkey's writers call for an end of 'attack on free thought' and freedom for Aslı Erdoğan', *PEN International*, 19 August 2016 < https://pen-international.org/fr/nouvelles/turkeys-writers-call-on-turkey-to-end-its-attack-on-free-thought-and-free-asli-erdogan>.
[522] Göknar (2008), p. 501.

outside as horror elements: on the contrary, I consider the people who kill them and then embrace each other — that patriarchal society — as horror elements. In *The Exorcist*, I find the paternal Priest who comes to exorcise the devil inside the little girl as disturbing, not the devil itself.[523]

Bıçakcı expresses that the creation of 'the Other' in American Horror cinema is the result of a conservative — indeed fascist — discourse, and that his own Gothic writing aims to do the opposite by questioning 'us' as modern individuals, the existing order and the authority figures of the society. This statement positions Bıçakcı as a tactician of resistance and a writer of neoliberal Gothic. By focusing on the threats created by his characters' inner anxieties and by questioning the reality, meaning and credibility of the social order rather than taking the system on faith, Bıçakcı provides his own way of fictional resistance. Bıçakcı's secular protagonists with their dark and estranged consciousness are thus mainly gothicised representations of this resistance and their fragmentation reveals the Turkish individual's futility under the neoliberal system.

The Apartment Shaft, Bıçakcı's fourth novel, sets a precedent in this sense. Teeming with Gothic tropes, *The Apartment Shaft* is a novel about the impossibility of artistic originality and authentic individualism in the neoliberal age. Its protagonist is a man in his thirties named Arif who is laid off from his white-collar job at an advertising agency with a considerable amount of compensation. Now that he has all the time in the world, Arif is determined to realise his life-long dream of composing his own songs. Arif has sung covers of English songs with his long-running band for years. However, he is uncomfortable with the fact that they don't play original songs. Having moved into a new flat in Istanbul which has a room appropriate to make into a studio, Arif believes

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[523] Hakan Bıçakcı, 'Korku Sinemasının Büyük Bölümü Son Derece Muhafazakâr' [The Majority of Horror Cinema is Rather Conservative], interviewed by Kürşat Saygılı and Fırat Çakkalkurt*, Cine Rituel*, 21 February 2016 <http://www.cinerituel.com/2016/02/hakan-bicakci-korku-sinemasinin-buyuk-bolumu-son-derece-muhafazakar.html>. [*my translation*]

that he will finally focus on his own music and create that long-awaited album for his band. Soon, he finds an unusual muse in his studio and starts having nightmares and hallucinations which make him question his talent even further. Arif's obsession with the originality of his music gradually increases and reveals his fragmented self, trapped in this new apartment.

As a longstanding motif of the Gothic mode, the fragmented self challenges the idea of a coherent identity. Stevenson's main character in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is an archetypal figure of the fragmented subject. The novel characterises Dr Jekyll's evil alter ego Mr Hyde as the monstrous other and establishes the simultaneous existence of good and evil in the human psyche. According to J. Halberstam, contemporary Gothic deals with the human psyche in a similar way because 'it is the human, the facade of the normal, that tends to become the place of terror within postmodern Gothic'.[524] Accordingly, the Turkish edition of *The Apartment Shaft* opens with two relevant epigraphs: 'The only real danger that exists is man himself' by Carl Gustav Jung and 'Man is his own worst enemy' by Cicero.[525] These epigraphs announce to the reader that *The Apartment Shaft* is about the human psyche and its self-destructive nature.

Arif's earlier characterisation in the novel is significant in analysing the reasons for his fragmentation towards the end. Arif is a total misanthrope with a rebellious attitude, a distressed self, and a Romantic aspiration for individualism. In many ways, he evokes the qualities of the Byronic hero archetype of the nineteenth century. Stein defines the Byronic hero as 'a loner' and 'an outcast' who refuses any 'oppressive institutional authority', who 'defines and creates himself […] embodying the ultimate

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[524] J. Halberstam, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (London: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 162.

[525] Hakan Bıçakcı, *Apartman Boşluğu* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2016), p. 5. In the English edition of the novel, these epigraphs are taken out most probably because of copyright issues.

development of the individual'.[526] Similarly, Arif is a loner who leads an independent life trying to stay away from the neoliberal system's impositions and any institutional authorities. For example, Arif doesn't like crowds because he claims that they soak up his energy. Instead of walking through the crowds of the Istiklal Road, Arif prefers walking in mud: 'Mud doesn't have eyes; it doesn't stare at your face like a cow […] It has no being: it doesn't get on your nerves'.[527] Arif also doesn't like 'the "warm" environment of a neighbourhood' as he believes extreme familiarity is accompanied by authoritative control.[528] When he is outside wandering in the streets of Istanbul, Arif picks out every negative detail and expresses his discontent about them:

> Street sellers who desperately try to appeal to tourists, men who spit at the road,
> soulless mannequins in the shop windows, depressing car parks, tasteless techno
> music coming from fast food restaurants, shopping malls, concrete buildings
> everywhere…

This is the picture of a global city, or a 'planned city where everything' is 'one type like duplicated printed images'.[529] For Arif, the lack of individualism that the neoliberal society suffers from is reflected on the streets of Istanbul.

Considering the relationship between the Byronic hero and Romanticism, Peter Thorslev remarks that 'the Romantic movement was a rebellion in the name of individualism' and the Byronic hero represents this rebellion 'which asserted the independence of the individual and the primacy of his values not only in the face of society but even in the face of "God"'.[530] Arif's rebellion is a Romantic one for the sake of individualism in an increasingly consumerist society which only appreciates

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[526] Stein (2004), p. 8.
[527] Hakan Bıçakcı, *The Apartment Shaft* (Milford: Universe Publishing Company, 2012), p. 18.
[528] Ibid, p. 11.
[529] Ibid, p. 140.
[530] Thorslev (1962), pp. 189-172.

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stereotypical and competitive individualism. He strives for independence from the overwhelming authority that the late-capitalist system has over people. On his first morning without a job, Arif remembers his work life with loathing and feels happy that he is no longer 'a puppet whose strings were tied to the second hand of the clock':[531]

> I was sprawled out on a dim island removed from bright meeting rooms, long and empty discussions, ego clashes, second class boss jokes, third class artistic whims and anxieties, the daily repacking of clichés as something original, the word 'creative' which had been badly hollowed out, arrogance, Americanisms, distorted understanding of humour, cold bottoms of carton tea cups and coffee mugs, revisions, alternative studies, b plans, broken sentences half in Turkish half in English, plazas that glorify stress by covering it in mirrored glass.[532]

Arif portrays the work life he experienced as a depressive cycle of meaninglessness, imitation and vanity which had the power to transform him into an inanimate object like a puppet or just another wheel of the neoliberal system. This is an emblematic neoliberal workplace and now that he is out of this depressive cycle, Arif believes that his music will show signs of artistic creativity. Instead of being 'a puppet continuously repeating the works of others', Arif will make an album 'far from the shallowness, affectation and clichés, an album with character, in Turkish' so as to prevent his band from being consumed and wasted by the system.[533]

Once Arif moves into his new apartment, his obsession with originality and his fear of being lost in the system reveal his fragmented self in the form of a black hole on the wall. As Spooner suggests, 'Holes are the antithesis of perfection: they signal dereliction, fragmentation, decay. They dramatise a body (or soul) falling apart — or

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[531] Bıçakcı (2012), p. 9.
[532] Ibid.
[533] Ibid, p. 19.

unevenly stitched together, like Frankenstein's monster'.[534] Holes represent the exact opposite of wholeness and thus, the orange-sized black hole on the wall of Arif's new bedroom is the ultimate symbol of his fragmented self. At first, Arif doesn't care about the hole. He settles in the apartment and plays his guitar every night to the point of fatigue in order to come up with a melody. One day he receives an anonymous call from a man who simply says: 'Side B of the rat tape'.[535] Arif cannot make any sense of the sentence but the same night he wakes up to hear sounds resembling rat squeaks and finds a tape inside the hole. He listens to the B side of the tape and bursts with excitement:

> A voice that sounded like me but wasn't me was humming something over a few simple guitar rhythms. This was a song without lyrics. It was the sort of melody I was after for months. Fascinating in spite of its simplicity… It was far beyond what I was dreaming about.[536]

Arif finds the most beautiful melody ever played in this mysterious tape that came from the black hole. However, his excitement is short lived as he starts panicking about the originality of the song: 'What if it's like something else? What if there is already a song like this?'[537]

As Arif's obsession takes a self-destructive turn, Bıçakcı's writing progresses towards Punter's description of paranoiac fiction. For Punter, paranoia is one of 'the aspects of the terrifying', 'to which Gothic constantly, and hauntedly returns'.[538] Punter strongly links paranoia to a psychoanalytic reading of the Gothic mode and names J.G. Ballard and Bret Easton Ellis, amongst others, as writers of 'paranoiac fiction',

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[534] Spooner (2008), pp. 152-3.
[535] Bıçakcı (2012), p. 81.
[536] Ibid, p. 84.
[537] Ibid.
[538] Punter (2013b), p. 184.

meaning: 'fiction in which the implicated reader is placed in a situation of ambiguity with regard to fears within the text, and in which the attribution of persecution remains uncertain and the reader is invited to share the doubts and uncertainties which pervade the apparent story'.[539] In *The Apartment Shaft*, Bıçakcı reveals this paranoiac structure particularly through Arif's obsession with his flat's door. While the thought about the originality of the songs coming from the black hole preys on Arif's mind continuously, he also becomes paranoid about the anonymous phone calls he continues to get and people he encounters on the street. Worried about his own safety, Arif orders an iron door with bars for the apartment. After a while, he orders a padlock for the iron door, and then a full security alarm system. His friend Ender observes that the apartment looked like 'a prison' from outside and the inside gave him 'the creeps'.[540] Arif stops leaving his so-called prison and anxiously waits for new songs to come from the hole. Soon his appearance and attitude start to change as well. His caved-in cheeks, dark eye circles, the bizarre look in his eyes filled with fear, anger and desperation, as well as the strange way he moves and talks catch people's attention immediately. He is characterised as a ghostly figure whose mind becomes unable to separate reality from the imaginary. His paranoia is reflected in his first-person narration which becomes frequently interrupted by moments, images, words or sentences from the past.

Conforming to Baldick's three requisites: a claustrophobic space, a fragmented subject and the return of the repressed — which I have mentioned in the Introduction of this thesis — Bıçakcı puts together the Gothic effect that climaxes the novel.[541] The breaking point occurs when Arif finds himself in a dark metro tunnel. The mysterious man on the phone tells him that he is behind the hole and that he can meet him after the

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[539] Ibid, p. 183.
[540] Ibid, pp. 160-1.
[541] Baldick (1992), p. xiii.

last stop of the metro. When Arif arrives at the stop after the last stop, he finds an orange-sized hole at the end of the dark tunnel and faces his other self.

> I looked at the other side, at the electronic instruments, papers, mirror fragments… The wretched man with dishevelled hair was in bed. […] I took out the little black tape recorder from my pocket, started it and began to hum. The tape recorder on the other side of the hole started automatically. The man jumped out of bed and crouched behind the hole. He was listening to me in awe.[542]

In the next chapter, this same moment is told from the perspective of Arif in the bedroom. At this point, Arif loses his reliability as a narrator and the fragmentation that his identity experiences is fully revealed. Nevertheless, Arif's confrontation with his alienated other self is a freeing experience. After this experience, the songs come one after another and Arif finishes the album that he has been dreaming of for so long. In other words, the black hole enables the return of Arif's individuality, creativity and artistic talent repressed by the system for years.

As Robert Miles points out, 'The gothic represents the subject in a state of deracination, of the self finding itself dispossessed in its own house, in a condition of rupture, disjunction, fragmentation'.[543] Illustrative of Miles' statement, *The Apartment Shaft* creates a Gothic atmosphere through Arif's detachment from his own subjectivity at his own house. Through Arif's slow transformation from a fragmented neoliberal subject to a Romantic artist, Bıçakcı establishes his critique of the neoliberal system. This critique is best explained in Arif's answer to his imaginary interviewer about the name of the album he comes up with: Apartment Shaft.

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[542] Ibid, pp. 167-8.
[543] Robert Miles, *Gothic Writing 1750 - 1820: A genealogy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 3.

Well, we all live in apartment buildings in cities. And in general, we struggle with a feeling of emptiness which is a characteristic of our era, an effect of postmodern urban life on the individual… A space… An urban space… An empty urban space, yet shared: The apartment shaft tells about a particular mood…[544]

Here, Arif alludes to the atmosphere, to the soul of neoliberalism, the consumer culture and the postmodern way of our lives. Bıçakcı makes it clear that Arif's struggle with the system is a collective one shared by the society through urban spaces. This is in fact, a perception present in all of Bıçakcı's novels as they mostly take place in urban spaces, specifically apartments in Istanbul.

Bıçakcı's only novel with a female protagonist, *Natural History (of a Woman)* also takes place in the urban spaces of the globalised Istanbul. The novel follows Doğa, a well-educated woman in her mid-thirties, whose seemingly perfect life in the triangle of a high-rise residence, a mega shopping mall and a business centre turns upside down after an encounter with an ex. Doğa tries to ignore her old genuinely happy self that her ex suddenly reminds her of and continues her corporate life. Soon, the memories of her past become so entangled with her present experiences, ambitions and expectations that the borders between reality and imagination, and sanity and madness, blur.

For an investigation of *Natural History (of a Woman)* and its protagonist Doğa, the concept of the neoliberal self is useful. Referring to Margaret Thatcher's infamous words: 'Economics are the method: the object is to change the soul', Jim McGuigan states that neoliberalism, like every other dominant ideology, has left a mark on the soul of the masses.[545] Such an influence, McGuigan asserts, leads to the construction of 'a

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[544] Bıçakcı (2012), p. 152.
[545] Thatcher, Margaret, interviewed by Ronald Butt, *Margeret Thatcher Foundation*, 3 May 1981, <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104475>.

discernible social type' that is most common amongst young people and those who work in financial occupations.[546] The most common characteristic of the neoliberal self is its involvement in the consumer society and its commitment to commodity fetishism.[547] This involvement is directly proportional to the subject's purchase power and income level. Simply, the more the subject works the more he or she can consume — it is an equation which eventually contributes to the neoliberal system by bringing out the free-market dynamics at the workplace. Thus, the neoliberal self has to be competitive, concerned with its self-interest, and always aspire for a promotion, a better-paying position as well as a better life standard. In doing so, the neoliberal self 'is transformed into a commodity, where it is packaged, presented and sold, like any other commodity'.[548]

Doğa in *Natural History (of a Woman)* is the epitome of 'the neoliberal self': she is everything that the neoliberal system wishes for. She has a managerial position at a marketing firm where she constantly strives to win her boss Mr Cengiz's favour over that of her rival Alev. Moreover, Doğa is self-centred and superficial, competitive at work and in her social relationships, an utter consumerist with a particular interest in designer fashion, high-priced skin care products and state-of-the-art smart electronics; she is well-groomed from head to toe, and fond of herself to the point of narcissism. Her deep affection for social media is explicitly for the likes and the compliments she receives. Doğa also uses electronic cigarettes and drinks either green tea from the organic cafe at work or coffee from her espresso machine. Nevertheless, Doğa is unhappy: she is chronically miserable.

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[546] Jim McGuigan, *Neoliberal Culture* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 117-118.
[547] Ibid, p. 131.
[548] Matthew McDonald and Stephen Wearing, *Social Psychology and Theories of Consumer Culture: A Political Economy Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 47.

Doğa suggestively experiences emotional and behavioural side effects of the neoliberal culture, and the fragmentation of herself is the result of such anxieties. Bıçakcı's main focus here is neoliberal culture's persistent attention to the female body image. The commodification of the self in neoliberalism has led to the perception of the body as the packaging of the self and generated anxieties in relation to 'body consciousness'.[549] Mike Featherstone comments that women in particular are 'trapped in the narcissistic, self-surveillance world of images, for apart from being accorded the major responsibility in organising the purchase and consumption of commodities their bodies are used symbolically in advertisements'.[550] Accordingly, Doğa's entrapment in her own body image is the source of her mental breakdowns and identity fragmentation. In a moment of self-observation at the mirror, Doğa feels disgusted by her image and grumbles to herself that she has gained weight like a 'well-fed chicken'.[551] At that moment, she is confronted with her fragmented self in the mirror:

> The echo of her last words, which rebounded on the mirror, became so loud that it outgrew her head and transformed into a horrible ringing before shooting through her temples. It felt like the ground was removed from below her feet. At the same time, she saw her reflection coming towards her at a flickering speed. She looked in horror through her hair falling on her face. There was someone else before her. Full of hatred, someone savage… As she got closer, her impression deformed, and her face melted away like a mask. A fierce scream, which hurt her hair roots, emerged from within her. It seemed as if she was attacked by a raving animal which resembled herself.[552]

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[549] Ibid, p. 124.

[550] Mike Featherstone, 'The body in consumer culture', in *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory*, (eds) Mike Featherstone, Mike Hepworth and Bryan S. Turner (London: Sage, 1991), pp. 178-9.

[551] Hakan Bıçakcı, *Doğa Tarihi* [Natural History (of a Woman)] (İstanbul: İletişim, 2014), p. 88. [*my translation*]

[552] Ibid.

Bıçakcı uses a Gothic style in describing Doğa's confrontation with her so-called fat body image. This sequence draws an analogy between a savage animal and Doğa's other self and therefore, dehumanises the neoliberal self. *Natural History (of a Woman)* is filled with such psychotic episodes in which Doğa's anxieties about her body image and her neoliberal self are scrutinised. She suffers from eating disorders, hallucinations, and temporal and spatial distortions throughout the novel. However, contrary to Arif, who manages to get away from his neoliberal self and rediscover his lost individualism, Doğa is trapped in between her neoliberal and authentic selves. At the end of the novel, in an attempt to return to her old self from a much happier time, Doğa swallows all the drugs prescribed by her psychiatrist and commits suicide.

In both *The Apartment Shaft* and *Natural History (of a Woman)*, Bıçakcı portrays the lives of Istanbulites under the dark shadow of the neoliberal capitalist system. Arif and Doğa are embodiments of the human psyche's struggle for survival in the neoliberal system. Their fragmented identities represent the identity crises experienced by the young, secular and educated segment of the Turkish society under neoliberal consumerism. Bıçakcı's exploration of these characters centres around Gothic motifs of doubling, psychological derangement, claustrophobic spaces, alienation and the fragmented self. In doing so, Bıçakcı Gothicises the neoliberal self and, allegorically, those Istanbulites trying to survive in the neoliberal system despite the oppression, alienation and sense of not belonging they experience.

Urban Anxieties and National Trauma in Contemporary Horror Cinema

Neoliberal Turkish Gothic's concern with the anxieties of Turkish society under the strains of the global neoliberal system manifests itself in post-millennial cinema with a particular focus on national trauma. Gothic scholarship has often defined trauma as one of the defining features of the returning past in Gothic. In fact, Steven Bruhm remarks

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that 'the Gothic itself is a narrative of trauma' since 'its protagonists usually experience some horrifying event that profoundly affects them, destroying the norms that structure their lives and identities'.[553] Trauma is pertinent to the identity formation of subjects, groups or even nations who experience it. As Roger Luckhurst suggests, trauma in the contemporary world 'has been turned into a repertoire of compelling stories about enigmas of identity, memory and selfhood that have saturated Western cultural life'.[554] The impact of the two World Wars, global terrorism, natural disasters as well as images of chaos and violence available daily in printed and visual media, have all contributed to the traumatic culture of the neoliberal age. Documentaries and films about the violence witnessed in the Holocaust, Hiroshima and Vietnam, and the accounts of the survivors of these disasters show that our understanding of the contemporary world is deeply affected by its traumatic history.

Understanding trauma begins with Freud's psychoanalysis. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud uses the term 'traumatic neurosis' as a psychological condition resulting from 'an extensive breach of the protective barrier' around the human psyche.[555] The traumatic neurosis includes two key features: 'the fright experienced by the victim' and 'physical wound or injury'.[556] Patients with traumatic neurosis, Freud observes, experience dream cycles where they are taken back to the moment of the original traumatic event and wake up with 'a renewed sense of fright'.[557] In the 1990s, Freud's theories on trauma became the foundation of trauma studies. One of the most influential scholars in the field, Cathy Caruth, defines trauma as 'a wound of the mind' which 'is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly to be fully known and is

[553] Steven Bruhm, 'Contemporary Gothic: why we need it', in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambrdige: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 268
[554] Roger Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question* (Oxon: Routledge, 2008), p. 80.
[555] Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle and Other Writings*, trans. John Reddick (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 152.
[556] Ibid, p. 123.
[557] Ibid.

therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the

nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor'.[558] Trauma, as Caruth suggests, is a

belated memory repressed until it returns with repetitive patterns of re-experiencing the

initial event. While individual trauma prevents the victim from comprehending the

sudden effect of the traumatic event, historical, national or collective trauma penetrates

into 'the basic tissues of social life', 'damages the bonds attaching people together, and

impairs prevailing sense of communality'.[559] Therefore, collective trauma 'works its

way slowly and even insidiously into the awareness of those who suffer from it'.[560] As a

result, nations or communities become permanently changed: 'the traumas of the past

become ingrained in collective memories'.[561]

Although the representation of trauma has been a rather controversial subject

due to trauma's inexpressibility by its victim, yet as the field of trauma studies has

grown, representing trauma in narrative and image has become a way of healing for

victims, survivors and those affected. Moreover, in the neoliberal age when as E. Ann

Kaplan and Ban Wang suggest, 'cultural memory is being subjected to relentless erasure

by the transnational media driven by the logic of commodity and consumption', trauma

has gained a significant function of preserving cultural heritages and creating a

historical consciousness in the new generations.[562] More importantly, the representation

of traumatic memory can 'make a critical use of it to shed light on the chronically

trauma-producing social structures so as to forge the will to change them'.[563] Therefore,

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[558] Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 4.
[559] Kai T. Erikson, *Everything in Its Path: Destruction of Community in the Buffalo Creek Flood* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1976), p. 154. qtd in Kai Erikson, 'Notes on Trauma and Community', in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), p. 187.
[560] Ibid.
[561] Arthur G. Neal, *National Trauma and Collective Memory: Extraordinary Events in the American Experience* (New York & London: M. E. Sharpe, 2005), pp. 4-7.
[562] E. Ann Kaplan and Ban Wang, *Trauma and Cinema: Cross-cultural Explorations* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008), p. 11.
[563] Ibid, p. 12.

representing traumas, either through narrative or images, may transform our understanding of history as well as the present and create a social awareness to extinguish the conditions which have shaped those traumas in the first place. This powerful approach, I argue, is what inspires the films I will discuss in this section.

Horror cinema, as Blake suggests, operates as an ideal medium for representing historical and individual traumas. Blake argues that through horror films, one can recognise the ideological motives behind man-made traumas and the distortions of the healing processes initiated and designed by the dominant ideological structures.[564] In this context, Yağmur and Durul Taylan's *Küçük Kıyamet* (The Little Apocalypse, 2007) and Ceylan Özgün Özçelik's feature film *Kaygı* (Inflame, 2017) are outstanding examples which aim to create a social awareness of national traumas while revealing the healing processes, whether they have been successful at healing the nation, or have failed at the hands of the ideologies they were attached to in the first place. Despite almost a decade-long gap in between, these two films are reflective of the anxiety of rapid urbanisation that Istanbulites experience under the rising tide of globalisation in Turkey, while centralising two separate events that traumatised the Turkish nation. Directed and written by young professionals who fit Göknar's definition of 'tacticians of resistance', the films have political subtexts that are directly counteractive to conservative policymakers of neoliberalism in Turkey. Drawing on contemporary Gothic tropes, these films reveal the return of collective memories and question neoliberalism's failure to heal the nation.

The Taylan Brothers' second film *The Little Apocalypse* addresses the traumas of the deadliest earthquake in Istanbul's recent history utilising techniques and motifs that are central to the Gothic mode. The Gothic mode has been a key feature of the

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[564] Linnie Blake, *The Wounds of Nations: Horror Cinema, Historical Trauma and National Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), p. 2.

Taylan Brothers' auteurship since their first project, which was an appropriation of *The X-Files* titled *Sır Dosyası* (Mystery File, 1998) for Turkey's first private TV channel, Star TV. Their adaptation of author Doğu Yücel's widely acclaimed debut novel *Hayalet Kitap* (Ghost Book, 2002) into film under the title of *Okul* (The School, 2004) reintroduced the Gothic horror genre into Turkish cinema of the 2000s with the tagline: 'horribly funny'.[565] *The School* not only follows Yücel's humorous tone in the novel but also serves as a parody of post-1980 American teen horror movies with its haunted high school setting and focus on adolescent issues such as sexuality and uncertainty towards the future. Moreover, *The School* provides a ghost story with a subtext unearthing young people's anxieties concerning university entrance exams in Turkey.

The Little Apocalypse was also written by Yücel though in a completely different style to *The School*. Commenting on the film's treatment of the horror sub-genre, Yücel remarks: 'Horror cinema does not only consist of creatures, devils and ghosts. This style also has emotional, intellectual and political content. There may not be any political words in *The Little Apocalypse,* but its subtext is completely political'.[566] Here, Yücel counters a very common misunderstanding about Gothic horror, as a genre comprised of monsters and jump scares only and highlights the socio-political subtext of the film. Such a conception is central when separating conservative Gothic narratives in Turkey, which are mostly dependent on jump scares and Islamic demons, from neoliberal Gothic narratives, which aim to unearth deep-rooted anxieties of the nation in the neoliberal age such as those of the 1999 İzmit earthquake.

The İzmit earthquake occurred on 17 August 1999. At exactly 3:01:40 am, people living in and around İzmit (a neighbouring city to Istanbul) woke up to an

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[565] Nigar Pösteki, *1990 Sonrası Türk Sineması* [Turkish Cinema After 1990] (İstanbul: Es Yayınları, 2005), p. 107.

[566] Doğu Yücel, 'Küçük Kıyamet / The Little Apocalypse', *Moon and Stars Project*, 12 July 2012, <http://moonandstarsproject.squarespace.com/descriptions/2012/7/17/kucuk-kyamet-the-little-apocalypse.html>.

earthquake with a magnitude of 7.6 that lasted thirty-seven seconds. The earthquake claimed almost twenty thousand lives (around fifty thousand according to unofficial numbers), irreversibly damaged more than a hundred thousand houses and left almost half a million people homeless.[567] When the initial shock diminished, it was revealed that Istanbul was very unprepared for a similar catastrophic event. Scientists and experts from Kandilli Observatory in Istanbul made statements that another large-scale earthquake was expected in Istanbul in the future and warned that the outcomes might be disastrous. Since then, scenarios and speculations about the possibility of another huge earthquake have grown into a social anxiety causing the Istanbulites to live with constant fear of a natural apocalypse.[568] For Yücel, underlining the lack of precautions taken for a possible large-scale earthquake in Istanbul was one of his motivations while writing the story.[569] He did research on the traumas of earthquake victims as well as the scientific reports written about the expected Istanbul earthquake.[570] In an interview, alluding to global warming discussions in the media, the Taylan Brothers also call attention to the anxious expectation of such a disaster not only in Istanbul but also worldwide: 'There are pessimistic expectations about the future on a mass scale. There is the problem of global warming and the radio news keeps talking about the premature blooming of the flowers. This is the general mood in the world'.[571] What Yücel proclaims as the general mood of the world, is nothing but the cultural logic of the age,

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[567] Vasile I Marza, 'On the death toll of the 1999 Izmit (Turkey) major earthquake', *European Seismological Commission Proceedings* (2004).

[568] See Sarah Rainsford, 'Turkey fears future quake horror', *BBC News*, 11 November 2005 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4429224.stm>; Ian Traynor, 'A disaster waiting to happen - why a huge earthquake near Istanbul seems inevitable, *The Guardian*, 9 December 2006 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/dec/09/turkey.naturaldisasters>; Jillian Kestler-D'Amours, 'Turkey braces for next major earthquake', *Aljazeera*, 19 April 2014 <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/03/turkey-braces-next-major-earthquake-201431182932518813.html>.

[569] Doğu Yücel, 'Bir Filmin Hikayesi: Küçük Kıyamet' [The Story of a Film: The Little Apocalypse], *Altyazı Magazine*, Issue 57 (2006), pp. 42-44. [*my translation*]

[570] Ibid.

[571] Yağmur and Durul Taylan, interviewed by Senem Aytaç and Fırat Yücel, 'Taylan Biraderlerle Ölüm Üzerine' [On Death with the Taylan Brothers], *Altyazı Magazine*, Issue 58 (2007), pp. 20-23. [*my translation*]

resulting from the dysfunctions of the global neoliberal system. Therefore, the earthquake in the film is not only a reminder of the national traumas but also stands for a range of other anxieties about a disastrous future.

Set in Istanbul eight years after the İzmit earthquake, *The Little Apocalypse* reflects neoliberal anxieties of the urban bourgeoisie both at an individual level, through the main character Bilge's personal trauma, and at a collective level, referring to national traumas imprinted in Turkish history. The story follows Bilge, a secular woman in her early thirties living in a block of apartments overlooking Istanbul's cityscape, with her husband Zeki, who is a civil engineer, her little daughter Eda, her newborn Alp and his nanny Filiz. This is an affluent, secular and urban family representing the Turkish bourgeoisie. After a family dinner sequence which is marked by plans for the vacation that the family will take next day, an intense earthquake occurs, and the family rushes out of the city in the middle of the night, leaving Istanbul for a planned vacation. However, this retreat is marked by an intensifying sequence of uncanny incidents, resulting in an epiphanic moment where Bilge finds herself trapped under the wreckage of the collapsed apartment block.

In the film, Baldick's definition of the Gothic effect plays a central role for the Gothic atmosphere of entrapment and in-betweenness that the Taylan Brothers create through claustrophobic spaces. The opening scene introduces the first claustrophobic space in the film, Bilge's apartment flat. The initial shot of the two high-rise blocks of apartments from inside the pool creates an ambivalent image of the buildings (See Figure 7). While the water's fluidity generates a sense of tranquillity, the low-angle shot of the camera intensifies the apartment's monumental grandeur. The audience's gaze here is confronted with the sublimity of the apartment which evokes an overwhelming feeling of inferiority on the audience's part. Furthermore, these buildings are made of tasteless concrete without any aesthetic concern. Therefore, through this shot, the

Taylan Brothers Gothicise the architectural characteristics of neoliberal urban housing. In other words, they introduce an alternative version of Gothic architecture.

Figure 7. The shot of the high-rise blocks of apartments from inside the pool in *The Little Apocalypse* (2006).

Having established a sense of the urban sublime, the camera turns to Bilge whose flat is located in one of the top levels overlooking the pool and the city. Her elevated position empowers Bilge and also hints at her family's upper-middle-class status. Bilge is captured holding her son Alp and looking out from her window with static eyes (See Figure 8). Her expression delivers mixed feelings of admiration, anxiety and fear. Once the camera is inside the flat, the audience shares Bilge's gaze (See Figure 9). It is revealed that she is looking at the scenery of the emblematic Bosphorus Bridge and Istanbul's urban cityscape. This revelation together with Bilge's facial expression extends the ambivalent image of the apartments' architecture to the whole city. Bilge's facial expression here embodies the urban anxieties of the Istanbulites. Istanbul's cityscape, largely made out of concrete, represents the city's transformation under neoliberal urbanisation. Although the Bosphorus Bridge is one of the city's tourist

Figure 8. Bilge gazes at Istanbul in *The Little Apocalypse* (2006).

Figure 9. The audience shares Bilge's gazing at Istanbul in *The Little Apocalypse* (2006).

attractions, the film refuses to conform to the charming image of Istanbul that the tourists see and aims to expose the uncanny Istanbul that its inhabitants experience.

Throughout the film, the Bosphorus Bridge is highlighted several times as a symbol of Istanbul's — and tacitly, the Turkish nation's — identity. In the beginning of the film, after the dinner sequence, Bilge's sister Belgin, who is an artist, brings Bilge a portfolio titled 'The Little Apocalypse' which includes her paintings for her upcoming exhibition. Flicking through the portfolio, Bilge sees the Bosphorus Bridge placed in an apocalyptic scene with a silhouette in front of it. The Taylan Brothers and Yücel were inspired by the name given to the 1509 Grand Istanbul earthquake for the name of the film but as Belgin states in this scene, 'The Little Apocalypse' also refers to 'the moment we are confronted with our own death'. Here, through Belgin's paintings and the past memories of the city regarding large-scale earthquakes, the film associates the image of apocalypse with the global showcase of Turkey, Istanbul. Moreover, the expectancy of an apocalyptic disaster is further stressed through discussions over global warming on the TV and conspiracy theories that Batu (Belgin's son) obsessively mentions. Hence, the idea of apocalypse is globalised, and the film is situated in a global framework in line with post-millennial popular culture. The shot of the two high-rise blocks of apartments resembling the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre in New York also associates the film with themes of national trauma, disaster and apocalypse, which have been prominent in global cinema since the 1990s. In this respect, *The Little Apocalypse* demonstrates the transnational character of the Taylan Brothers' auteurship and Yücel's writing.

The earthquake scene in the film reinstates Bilge's flat as a claustrophobic space and engages with the concept of the return of the repressed in a Gothic atmosphere of entrapment. Nine minutes into the film, it is the early hours of the morning (similar to the time of the 1999 earthquake) and everyone except for Bilge is asleep. She nervously

looks at the photographs of the vacation villa online, while the camera shows carefully chosen objects around the flat such as the clock, which remains on the same hour for the rest of the film; the digital picture frame showing photographs of Eda, Alp and Bilge's mother; and the luggage packed and ready for the journey. When the earthquake starts, though shocked and frightened, Bilge attempts to reach her children who are sleeping in the living room, but she is startled by the memory of her deceased mother in the form of her voice screaming 'My daughter!' According to Bruhm, 'images of haunting, destruction and death, obsessive return to the shattering moment, forgetfulness or unwanted epiphany' are Gothic tropes that bear key resemblances to the repetitive effects of the traumatic experience.[572] Accordingly, the earthquake causes Bilge to return to the traumatic moment that is the 1999 earthquake. Through the uncanny voice of her mother calling out for her, Bilge not only relives her own trauma but also is terrified of being entrapped under the wreckage just as her mother was.

From this scene on, the film takes place in the vacation villa which symbolises a purgatory-like place of in-betweenness. Having left Istanbul in a hurry, the family drives for hours before they finally arrive at the rental villa situated opposite to a graveyard in a secluded area of a little town. This is a journey to the unknown, from the city's familiarity to the eerie tranquility of the rural landscape, evoking traditional Gothic tropes in a contemporary setting. Upon arrival, the family meets the gatekeeper of the villa, Ali. Ali is a middle-aged man with muddy clothes and a distinct regional dialect that seems strange to this urban bourgeois family. The house is as strange as Ali and not quite what the family expected from a vacation rental. The graveyard view, the cockroaches wandering around in the patio, the excessive mosquitoes, an unexpected

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[572] Bruhm (2002), p. 268.

visit by a nocturnal dog, and unstable furniture as an eerie reminder of the earthquake, all contribute to the family's anxious first night at the villa.

In the following days, Bilge continues to struggle with the apparitions of her mother whenever she feels anxious as well as hallucinations that constantly remind her that her children might still be in danger. In one of these hallucinations, Bilge imagines a tsunami approaching towards her family. The sequence takes place at the beach. Eda announces that she has made sand castles and invites everyone to stand up for the opening ceremony. The family stands up and Eda lifts the towel she holds in front of the sand castles (See Figure 10).

Figure 10. Istanbul's emblematic cityscape made out of sand in *The Little Apocalypse* (2006).

Once again, the Bosphorus Bridge, together with other architectural structures that are emblematic to Istanbul's cityscape, is highlighted, in this scene as made out of sand. Although this cityscape represents a highly familiar image of this touristic city, the unnatural character of the sand structures — their elaborate yet fragile details — generates an uncanny Istanbul. In the meantime, while Bilge is still trying to make sense

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of what she sees, she notices a tsunami wave coming towards the shore. This view alarms Bilge and engages with the traumatic memories of the nation by referring to the fear of tsunami promoted by the media after the actual earthquake. Furthermore, once Bilge grabs Eda in horror, she is confronted with the strange looks of her family. She looks back at the sand castles, which now look ordinary. The sand castles are washed away by the water, similar to certain areas around Istanbul which were washed away by the Marmara Sea during the 1999 earthquake.

As the only special effect of the whole film, the tsunami scene paves the way for the climax. First, the weather changes dramatically from sunny vacation weather to stormy Gothic weather with an emphasis on dark gloomy clouds, and the strange occurrences escalate. Zeki realises he is lost and encounters Ali at the end of his search for a non-existent destination. Batu finds out that the names of the family members are written on tombstones in the graveyard. Having felt more on edge after seeing the tombstones, Bilge decides to leave the villa and return to Istanbul; however, Zeki is nowhere to be found. As a result of the storm, technological devices do not work efficiently which adds to the family's isolation in the villa. The anxious atmosphere takes a chaotic turn when Bilge notices Zeki who is following Ali to an open grave. She catches up with them only to find Zeki's freshly closed grave. When Bilge hysterically starts digging into the grave with her bare hands, Ali tries to console her saying: 'It is too late, sister. His time is due. There is nothing you can do. Leave him in peace'.[573]

Luckhurst suggests that 'ghostly visitations, prophetic dread, spooky coincidence or telepathic transfer' are cultural expressions for the post-traumatic experience.[574] At this critical moment in the film, Bilge's mother reappears warning her that there is nothing she can do for Zeki but she can still save her children. Her mother's

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[573] *Küçük Kıyamet* [The Little Apocalypse], dir. Yağmur and Durul Taylan (Limon Film, 2006).
[574] Luckhurst (2008), p. 98.

visit symbolises the return of Bilge's repressed traumas regarding losing someone she dearly loves. As the storm gets worse, Bilge comes face to face with Ali in the villa to protect her remaining family. In this scene, the dialogue between Bilge and Ali reveals the symbolic role of the villa as a passage to the afterlife and of Ali as the Angel of Death who is responsible for assisting Bilge and her family:

> Ali: Don't resist sister, it's pointless.
>
> Bilge: What do you want from us?
>
> Ali: It is my duty, sister. I take those who are due. There is nothing to be afraid of. The time has come. You first; then, your children. But, you first. Come sister, let's not keep the landlord waiting.[575]

This revelation is followed by an epiphanic moment for Bilge who associates the image of Ali standing before her with the man on the cover of Belgin's exhibition pamphlet. In fact, the pamphlet appears in various scenes throughout the period of vacation. Therefore, a strong connection is made with the moment of death that the exhibition is about and the vacation villa which symbolises being in between life and death. Having realised this connection and that she is faced with her own moment of death, Bilge finds herself back in Istanbul at the moment of the earthquake when she hears her mother's voice. Here, the audience is introduced to a twist similar to — yet, more nuanced than — an 'it was all a dream' ending. The twist is that the majority of the film takes place in Bilge's subconscious and her trauma in relation to her mother's death and the earthquake goes deeper than the film initially demonstrates to the audience. However, it is the national trauma that the film aims to focus from this point on.

Towards the end of the film, Istanbul's cityscape once again becomes the focus of attention. Having climbed out of the wreck with the hope of calling for help, Bilge is

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[575] *The Little Apocalypse.*

confronted with the scale of the earthquake for the first time. The camera focuses on Bilge's gaze at Istanbul's cityscape from the wreckage of her apartment (See Figure 11). The scene bears distinct similarities to the opening sequence, yet this time, Bilge's facial expression evokes pure horror as she is faced with her biggest fear.

Figure 11. Bilge gazes at Istanbul after the earthquake in *The Little Apocalypse* (2006).

Figure 12. Istanbul's state after the earthquake in *The Little Apocalypse* (2006).

This is not the Istanbul she is familiar with any more. As the camera slowly moves away from Bilge, the scenery she overlooks is revealed to be of an apocalyptic city where helicopters carry survivors to hospitals and fires break out amongst wrecked buildings (See Figure 12). The Bosphorus Bridge, whose emblematic glory is now split into two, points at the fact that the bridge between the West and the East is now destroyed. The expected grand earthquake did, in fact, happen and Istanbul, the city which was deemed to be unprepared for such a disaster, is in ruins. Therefore, the scene marks what Adam Lowenstein calls 'an allegorical moment': 'a shocking collision of film, spectator, and history where registers of bodily space and historical time are disrupted, confronted, and intertwined'.[576] This is where the individual traumas of Bilge meet the national traumas of the Turkish nation. This unsettling scene demonstrates the dark underside of urbanisation in Istanbul. It shakes the audience at their cores because not only does it address national traumas but also it confronts the conditions that generated those traumas, such as the harsh reality that is the lack of strong building infrastructure and the inadequacy of precautions taken for a large-scale earthquake in Istanbul.

In the decades immediately following the 1999 earthquake, the national and international media continued to speculate over the possible catastrophic repercussions of a high magnitude earthquake that is expected to happen in Istanbul.[577] Although some precautions such as compulsory earthquake insurance, new legislations and regulations

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[576] Adam Lowenstein, *Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), p. 2.

[577] Jonathan Head, 'Istanbul prepares for major earthquake', *BBC News*, 1 January 2012 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-16357602>; Doğan News Agency, 'Awaited Istanbul earthquake may destroy 600,000 building units: Minister', *Hurriyet Daily News*, 11 September 2017 <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/awaited-istanbul-earthquake-may-destroy-600000-building-units-minister-117821>; Phoebe Weston, 'Massive earthquake could hit Istanbul at any moment with just SECONDS warning, say scientists', *Daily Mail*, 17 May 2017 < http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-4513880/Istanbul-overdue-potentially-devastating-earthquake.html>

regarding urban construction projects, and systematic inspection of buildings have taken effect, the anxiety regarding the consequences of the expected earthquake in Istanbul has not left the hearts and minds of the city's residents.[578] Furthermore, urban anxieties regarding the city's unplanned sprawl have increased tremendously during the last decade. Particularly since the Gezi Park Protests in 2013, the suffocating density of concrete buildings, the diminishing green spaces within the city, the urban transformation and the construction of shopping malls at the expense of demolishing historically unique neighbourhoods have become issues of social and political controversy.[579]

Ceylan Özgün Özçelik's *Inflame* explores these controversial issues using Gothic tropes in a way that resembles *The Little Apocalypse* yet is more overtly political. The film follows Hasret, a young woman who is an editor for a private TV channel, allusively named Tek (Only) TV. Annoyed by the channel's news editing policy which instructs its editors to 'cut the right words' in direct proportion to the requisites of the authoritative governing system, Hasret quits her job and immerses herself in finding out the real 'truth' behind her parents' death. Her repetitive nightmares, the uncanny whispers she hears, brief flashbacks she experiences and ostensible rising temperature of the walls in her flat convince Hasret that she does

[578] Every year on 17 August, commemoration services are held in cities which were heavily affected by the earthquake. See 'Turkey observes 15th anniversary of devastating earthquake', *Anadolu Agency*, 17 August 2014 <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-observes-15th-anniversary-of-devastating-quake/130782>; Mustafa Kırıkçıoğlu, 'Turkey mourns loss of lives on commemoration of İzmit earthquake', *Daily Sabah*, 16 August 2015 <https://www.dailysabah.com/feature/2015/08/17/turkey-mourns-loss-of-lives-on-commemoration-of-izmit-earthquake>; 'Marmara earthquake victims commemorated 18 years on', *Hurriyet Daily News*, 17 August 2017 <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/marmara-earthquake-victims-commemorated-18-years-on-116848>.

[579] See '10 urban heritage sites Istanbul lost in 2000s', *Hurriyet Daily News*, 25 June 2014 <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/10-urban-heritage-sites-istanbul-lost-in-2000s-68282>; David Lapeska, 'Istanbul's gentrification by force leaves locals felling overwhelmed and angry', *The Guardian*, 2 July 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2014/jul/02/istanbul-gentrification-force-locals-angry-luxury-hotels-turkey>; Lorena Rios, 'Making Room for Nature in Erdogan's Istanbul', *Citylab*, 25 July 2015 <https://www.citylab.com/equity/2017/07/making-room-for-nature-in-erdogans-istanbul/534678/>.

indeed know what happened to them, that she just can't remember. Alienated from her friends and society, Hasret confines herself in her soon-to-be-demolished apartment and succumbs to paranoia, obsession, and past memories until she finally remembers the tragic reality about her parents' death and the Turkish nation's past.

Inflame had its world premiere at the 67th Berlin International Film Festival in 2017 and attracted attention from European and American media.[580] Despite average reviews, the film's use of atmospheric tropes was found successful by many.[581] At home, the film was not a box office success closing after twelve weeks in cinemas with only nine thousand viewers.[582] Nevertheless, Turkish film critics identified the film as politically courageous and timely.[583] This is a point mostly made due to *Inflame*'s choice of setting as an Orwellian dystopia taking place in contemporary Istanbul in an alternative Turkey ruled by an Islamist group known as the Muzaffer Brothers.[584] The film addresses current socio-political issues in Turkey such as anti-government protests, overwhelming urban gentrification and state-run media. The Muzaffer Brothers' authoritarianism is similar to that of the JDP's which combines Islamism, nationalism and neoliberalism.[585] Considering this fact, what Özçelik portrays in *Inflame* is an alternative version of the country that seems uncannily too real.

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[580] The film's rights were sold to Filmrise US who released the film in DVD & Blu-Ray format in late 2017.

[581] Stephen Dalton, ''Inflame' ('Kaygi'): Film Review | Berlin 2017', *Hollywood Reporter*, 12 February 2017 <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/inflame-review-975159>; Lee Marshall, ''Inflame': Berlin Review', *Screen Daily*, 12 February 2017 <https://www.screendaily.com/reviews/inflame-berlin-review/5114949.article>; Adrian Torres, 'SXSW Review: Inflame' (Kaygz)', *Boom Howdy,* 16 March 2017 <https://www.boomhowdy.com/boomnews/sxsw2017/sxsw-review-inflame-kaygi/>.

[582] 'Kaygı' [Inflame], *The Box Office Turkey* <https://boxofficeturkiye.com/film/kaygi-2013630>

[583] Kenan Behzat Sharpe, 'Turkey in Flames: Genre Film, Memory, and Politics in Kaygı', *Blind Field Journal*, 27 July 2017 <https://blindfieldjournal.com/2017/07/27/turkey-in-flames-genre-film-memory-and-politics-in-kaygi/>; Kaya Özkaracalar, 'Toplumsal-eleştirel bir psikolojik gerilim filmi: Kaygı' [A Socio-cultural Psychological Thriller: Kaygı], *İleri Haber*, 26 December 2015 <http://ilerihaber.org/yazar/toplumsal-elestirel-bir-psikolojik-gerilim-filmi-kaygi-31777.html>.

[584] The name of this organisation is a direct reference to the transnational Sunni Islamist organisation known as The Society of Muslim Brothers (est. in Egypt in 1928).

[585] Bilge Yeşil, *Media in New Turkey: The Origins of an Authoritarian Neoliberal State* (Springfield: The University of Illinois Press, 2016), p. 2.

In this context, the main character Hasret is a metaphor for the young dissident Turkish people who feel oppressed under the authoritarian neoliberal order. The opening sequence of the film, during which Hasret and her friends have a heated discussion about politics and social media, reflects the polarisation that is recognisable in twenty-first-century Turkish society. The membership of the group is significant: a state supporter who was awarded a jeep in a social responsibility project; another one who considers street protests as pointless, as opposed to Hasret and others who respect protestors' right to speak up and defend living with one's dignity despite the faults of the system. The last member of the group is asleep, which is an allusion to the metaphor that has been widely used by dissident people for those who do not speak up against the government despite its oppressive policies.

Hasret's workplace is a direct representation of the twenty-first-century media sector filled with advocates of the JDP. The name of the network, Tek TV, refers to the monopolisation of media by the governing elite and to the widespread conception about neoliberalism as being an unrivalled system. Hasret's oppressive boss who terrorises the channel and orders his employees around without acknowledging their existence, and her dull co-workers who seem to go with the flow, are instantly recognisable reflections of the governing party and its followers. In this authoritarian environment, Hasret is expected to edit speeches of politicians in a certain way that will be beneficial for the state's agenda at the expense of hiding facts from the public. In other words, she is expected to distort the truth and rewrite the news in line with the instructions 'from the top'. On the walls of the channel, there are posters which feature the channel's motto, 'What you see is true, what you hear is true', in front of an image of an eye. This overt reference to 'Big Brother' and the three slogans of the Ministry of Truth in George Orwell's *1984* (1949) intensifies the film's allusions to surveillance culture and the media's role as a propagandist pawn of the governing elite. Moreover, Hasret doesn't

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have to use her creativity while editing and captioning the speeches, interviews or press conferences since everything is predetermined by those 'at the top'. The predetermined captions are highlighted when Hasret encounters a newspaper stand full of various newspapers with the same headline 'Cezayı Halk Verdi' (The People Give their Verdict).

The political rhetoric used by the Muzaffer Brothers and their partisans in the film bears a striking resemblance to the rhetoric of the governing party in Turkey. For instance, Erdogan's attitude towards the Gezi protestors is mirrored in one of the speeches made by Furkan Muzaffer: 'You can't do politics at the cost of public order! These are fragile regions. The people here are sensitive. If you are going to protest, go ahead, but do it properly'. In another newspaper headline which appears during a sequence in the TV channel, the Muzaffer Brothers are reported to say: 'The statue triggered the incidents', which might be a reference to Statue of Humanity in Kars, Turkey which was described as a 'monstrosity' by Erdogan in January 2011 and demolished the same year. In press conference footage that Hasret is forced to edit, the Ministry of Internal Affairs claims that demolishing a dilapidated historical building and constructing 'a beautiful shopping mall instead' will create opportunities for employment, a statement very much in line with the neoliberal policies that the JDP government implements in cities, particularly in Istanbul.

The neoliberal urbanisation of Istanbul has indeed a significant role in Hasret's story and the visual characteristics of *Inflame.* When asked about her motivation for the film in an interview, Özçelik answers:

Turkey's infrastructure has been changing a lot over the last 10 years, towards a very bad direction. Actually, it is a fact for many European countries lately as well. But it's somehow different in our country. Art house cinemas, theaters, and

old historical buildings are destroyed, ugly high buildings and malls built

instead, fracturing both the fabric of the country and our memory.[586]

Özçelik calls attention to the fact that Istanbul's urban transformation affects the Istanbulites' collective memories and accordingly changes the identity of the city and the country. Her standpoint thus foregrounds the urban anxieties of the Istanbulites. To reflect on these anxieties, Özçelik uses long shots of the city's urban scenery throughout the film. However, her focus is not the emblematic Istanbul that is admired and visited by tourists, but a dark version of it under the siege of restoration and gentrification projects surrounded by metal barricades or skyscrapers with their ultrahigh cranes.

In one of the long shots, the audience is introduced to what seems like a residential building complex (See Figure 13). The high-rise buildings, their repetitive patterns and the multitude of cranes create an unaesthetic and cramped image for the viewer. In another shot, the high-rise apartments are in the background and the focus of attention is the wasteland stuck in between new and old structures and surrounded by barricades (See Figure 14). The posters displaying the Muzaffer Brothers and the motto 'What you see is true, what you hear is true', once again bring the media's allegiance with neoliberal Islam out into the open. In most of these shots, Hasret is also in the frame walking through the streets experiencing the fractured fabric of the city in her daily life. Through these long shots of the city's urban landscape, Özçelik portrays a dense and claustrophobic Istanbul haunted by urban anxieties.

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[586] Ceylan Özgün Özçelik, interviewed by Rachel Montpelier, 'SXSW 2017 Women Directors: Meet Ceylan Özgün Özçelik—"Inflame"', *Women and Hollywood,* 11 March 2017 <https://blog.womenandhollywood.com/sxsw-2017-women-directors-meet-ceylan-özgün-özçelik-inflame-4ec61a9f930>
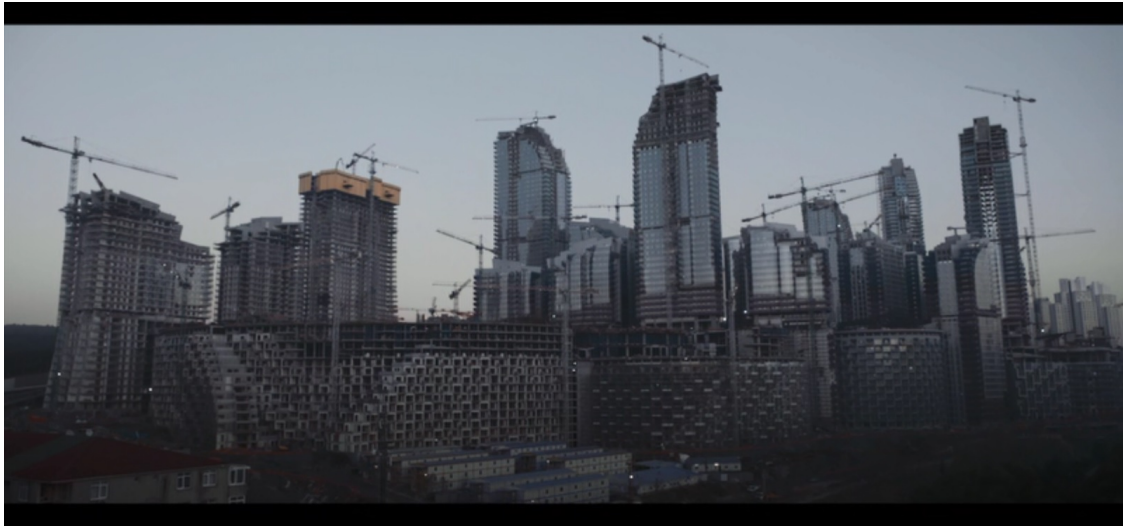
Figure 13. The shot of high-rise building complex in *Inflame* (2017).

Figure 14. The shot of apartments in front of a wasteland in *Inflame* (2017).

As the film continues, however, the focus of the film shifts from Istanbul's landscape to Hasret's claustrophobic apartment flat. Once Hasret quits her job, she confines herself to her flat situated in an old neighbourhood of Istanbul. The constant sound of construction machinery lurking in the background hints at the urban development process that the neighbourhood is going through. This is an old flat with high ceilings and creaky wooden floors, yet filled with memories, books and Hasret's parents' belongings. Accordingly, Hasret is not only expected to leave her apartment

soon but also her parents and her memories. This is where Hasret's resistance to the

neoliberal system begins: when she refuses to leave her own and the Turkish nation's

memories behind. Hasret wants to hold onto the past and the nostalgia that her flat

represents, just like the Istanbulites who want to hold onto the city in the face of the

neoliberal gentrification. Hasret's anxieties regarding the erasure of the past are

allegorically connected to those of the Istanbulites'. Therefore, what is terrifying for

Hasret is not the return of the past but its loss, its complete erasure.

In fact, Hasret desires the return of her repressed trauma since she can't

remember the cause of her parents' death. The film revolves around Hasret's efforts to

remember her trauma. Here, I am reminded Alexandra Warwick's consideration of

contemporary Gothic as

> the manifestation of the desire for trauma, not the trauma of desire that finds
>
> itself prohibited, but something of a sense that trauma itself is the lost object,
>
> that the experience of trauma, and not the healing of it, is that which will make
>
> us whole.[587]

Warwick refers to how contemporary Gothic engages with trauma superficially

transforming it into a spectacle rather than treating it as a painful wound awaiting to be

healed. Similarly, Özçelik is not interested in healing Hasret's or the nation's traumas.

In fact, Özçelik emphasises the significance of remembering trauma in order to feel

whole and keeping it in mind despite those who are trying to erase it.

This is why the scenes in which Hasret tries to remember her trauma in her flat

are depicted through Gothic effects. In line with the psychological effects of trauma,

Hasret sees the same nightmare over and over again, experiences flashbacks and short

moments of recollection triggered by sounds and smells and constantly feels the

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[587] Alexandra Warwick, 'Feeling Gothicky', in *Gothic Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (2007), p. 11.

supposedly rising temperature of the flat. Özçelik creates a sinister atmosphere and suspense through edgy soundtrack and a dark lighting. The flat is imagined as a claustrophobic space where Hasret's repressed memories return and as a site of haunting in which her mother's uncanny presence wanders around like a ghost. Smith reminds us that 'Ghosts are not just the spirits of the dead; rather they are, in 'high' Gothic texts, ciphers for models of subjectivity which refer to culturally specific notions of psychological trauma'.[588] This suggests that Hasret's mother's ghost is indeed the representation of Hasret's trauma and the embodiment of what she is trying to remember. The ghost of Hasret's mother therefore does not offer jump scares or horrific haunting scenes, but adds an eerie backdrop, a Gothic effect to the claustrophobic flat.

The political subtext of *Inflame* is indicated when Hasret's parents are introduced to the audience in two separate flashbacks. In the first flashback, Hasret's father plays a brand-new composition in his *bağlama* and her mother listens to him with admiration while Hasret watches them from afar as a little girl. The song is about peace between religious beliefs, particularly between Alevis and Sunnis. In the other flashback, Hasret's father tries to persuade her mother to go to Sivas for a festival. Hasret's mother is reluctant as she thinks the festival will only reopen their wounds. The exploration of Hasret's parents through flashbacks hints at the Sivas Massacre as the cause of their death.

The Sivas Massacre is one of the most shameful massacres in the history of modern Turkey. In the early days of July 1993, artists, writers, poets, musicians and philosophers from all around the country gathered in the city of Sivas in eastern Turkey in order to attend the festival organised in honour of Alevi poet Pir Sultan Abdal (1480–1550). One of the greatest writers of Turkish literature, Aziz Nesin, was among the

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[588] Andrew Smith, 'Hauntings', in *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*, (eds) Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy (Oxon: Routledge, 2007), p. 148.

attendees of the festival. Nesin was then translating Rushdie's controversial *Satanic Verses* into Turkish. His publication of excerpts from the novel in the left-wing newspaper *Aydınlık* was heavily criticised by Islamist groups of the time. Upon his arrival at Sivas, a notice saying that Nesin commits blasphemy against Islam and the Prophet Mohammed was published and handed out in the city. Nesin's speech in the opening ceremony of the festival was also signalled as the assumed reason behind the wrath of the Islamists. As a result of escalating events, on the afternoon of 2 July, Otel Madımak, where Nesin and other artists were staying, was set on fire by a large crowd of Islamist extremists.[589] At least thirty-five people were burned alive and more than fifty escaped with severe injuries. Ironically, Nesin was amongst those who managed to escape alive.

The Sivas Massacre reopened the wounds of the Alevis in Turkey who have often been subjected to violence due to their religious beliefs. Only fifteen years before Sivas, in 1978 in the city of Kahramanmaraş in southeastern Turkey, a hundred and fifty Alevis were killed by Turkish ultra-nationalists and Sunni Islamists.[590] The incident became to be known as the Maraş Massacre and traumatised generations of Alevis as well as secularists from various ethnic backgrounds. As Feroz Ahmad explains, the reason behind the violence against the Alevis in Turkey is not only religious but also political: 'The Alevis, a minority among a Sunni majority, had always supported secularism and therefore voted for the RPP (Republican People's Party). They became the targets of the Action Party's Grey Wolves (ultra-nationalists) who denounced them as communists.'[591] Therefore, both Maraş and Sivas massacres resonated with the secular Turkish people for decades as an attack on secular values. After the trial

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[589] Hugh Hope, 'Turkish zealots kill 40 in 'Verses' attack: Militants burn down hotel in riot over Rushdie's book', *Independent*, 2 July 1993 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/turkish-zealots-kill-40-in-verses-attack-militants-burn-down-hotel-in-riot-over-rushdies-book-1482639.html>.

[590] Elifcan Karacan, *Remembering the 1980 Turkish Military Coup d'État: Memory, Violence and Trauma* (Berlin: Springer, 2016), p. 72.

[591] Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 171.

regarding the Sivas Massacre, some of the lawyers of the attackers became involved with politics in the following years and still continue to serve the Islamist ideology in the ranks of the governing party. This is one of the many chilling reminders of how dangerous the relationship between neoliberalism and Islamic ideology can be in Turkey.

This relationship resides at the core of *Inflame* and is revealed to the audience in an allegorical moment 'in which an image of the past sparks a flash of unexpected recognition in the present'.[592] This is the image, indeed a painting, of a burning building, hidden behind wooden panels on one of the walls in Hasret's apartment (See Figure 15).

Figure 15. The painting on the wall of Hasret's flat in *Inflame* (2017).

This is the wall that the ghost of Hasret's mother knocked on heavily in a previous scene as if to indicate its significance. Having removed the panels, Hasret is confronted with the painting which allegorically refers to the Sivas Massacre. The film immediately returns to the day of the massacre in a final flashback that is also Hasret's recurrent

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[592] Lowenstein (2005), p. 14.

nightmare. The flashback reveals that Hasret was with her parents in Sivas during the massacre. Amidst the chanting angry crowd and the fire smoke, Hasret's mother goes from door to door and asks people to take her and her daughter in for protection, yet no one helps her. These scenes are shot from Hasret's perspective as a little girl, whose mother is holding her hand. Such limited perspective fulfils the continuation of the claustrophobic atmosphere created through Hasret's flat. Wearing a red dress, Hasret's mother is imagined as politically transgressive for 'the woman in the red dress' has become a symbol for anti-government demonstrations since the Gezi Park protests.[593] Through this dialogue between the Sivas Massacre and the anti-government movements in contemporary Turkey, the political subtext of *Inflame* is accentuated. The film constructs an analogy between Hasret's claustrophobic flat and the Madımak Hotel where people were entrapped and burned alive in the Sivas Massacre. Hasret's trauma is thus associated with the Turkish nation's collective memory.

Both *The Little Apocalypse* and *Inflame* draw on Gothic motifs in order to remind the nation its traumas caused by the ills of the neoliberal system. To return back to Aldana Reyes' affective approach, I argue that these films enable their audiences to engage with the Gothic affects through emotional responses. In a similar vein, Kaplan and Wang suggest that in films, the viewers' position as witnesses to trauma generates an empathic identification 'which allows the spectator to enter into the victim's experience through a work's narration'.[594] In this context, these films combine Gothic effects and national traumas not to offer a sense of healing, but to create a point of identification between the pain and traumas of the nation and that of the characters. This emotional connection between the spectators and the victims can generate a better understanding of Turkey's past in order for the audiences to recognise the traumas

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[593] 'Turkey clashes: The Woman in the Red Dress', *BBC News*, 6 June 2013 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-22798827>.

[594] Kaplan and Wang (2008), p. 10.

inflicted today. In this respect, both the Taylan Brothers and Özçelik are tacticians of resistance whose works provide urgently needed frameworks to remind the Turkish nation of its past traumas, to point at the political structures behind the traumatic events and to reflect on their current trauma-producing versions. The Gothic motifs they use in their films such as psychological derangement, paranoia, claustrophobic spaces, apparitions and ghosts, return of the repressed, and the particular emphasis on death and loss, become the building blocks of the cinematic language that neoliberal Gothic tradition manifests.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the Gothic ramifications of anxieties experienced by the secular segment of the Turkish society concerning the neoliberal system in Turkey. My theorisation of Neoliberal Turkish Gothic began with an exploration of neoliberalism as a global hegemony that has affected Turkish politics and government policies for the last three decades. I have illustrated that under the neoliberal rule of the JPD, the young and secular segment of the society has gradually become marginalised and experienced anxieties caused by the dysfunctions of the neoliberal system. Accordingly, I have discussed Hakan Bıçakcı's novels *The Apartment Shaft* and *Natural History (of a Woman)* in relation to their Gothicisation of the fragmented neoliberal self. I argued that Bıçakcı's protagonists are the embodiments of the anxieties and the identity crises that secular, young and professional Istanbulites experience under the neoliberal system in Turkey. Istanbul and its inhabitants are the main focus of Taylan Brothers' *The Little Apocalypse* and Ceylan Özgün Özçelik's *Inflame* which depict the Turkish nation's traumas through a range of Gothic effects. Through the traumas of their main characters, these films, I argued, aim to warn their audiences against the ills of the neoliberal system and its political structures.

The neoliberal Turkish Gothic narratives I have discussed in this chapter address contemporary debates such as the neoliberal transformation of cities and their inhabitants, and the impact of these transformations on the collective memory of the nation. Produced by secular young professionals who have been marginalised and oppressed by the JDP's othering rhetoric and neoliberal and conservative policies, neoliberal Turkish Gothic tradition follows the revolutionary spirit of Gezi. Therefore, neoliberal Turkish Gothic not only responds to the conservative Turkish Gothic tradition and establishes the second side of the coin that represents the dual nature of Turkish Gothic in the twenty-first century, but also differs from previous Turkish Gothic trends in challenging the status quo.

Conclusion

Theorising Turkish Gothic

This thesis has argued for the existence of a distinctively *Turkish* Gothic tradition which is deeply intertwined with Turkish national identity and its two main ideological components: secularism and conservatism. I have discussed, in the introduction to this thesis, the lack of scholarship on Turkish Gothic in both Western and Turkish academia. Although the reasons behind this lack are varied, I argued that the most crucial reason is the absence of a theoretical approach in defining Turkish Gothic. In order to fill this gap, my theorisation of Turkish Gothic as a national mode has primarily depended on the historical, political and social circumstances which led to the ideological processes of Turkish identity construction in Turkey. I argued that although Turkey has been traditionally seen as a melting pot of Western and Eastern traditions, Turkish identity has been grievously stuck in between secular and conservative sentiments symbolising Western progression and Eastern traditionalism respectively. This in-between character of Turkish identity lies at the heart of my theorisation of Turkish Gothic in this thesis. In order to develop my arguments further, I specified globalgothic as my main theoretical framework and adopted a historically informed approach in my analysis of Gothic texts.

One of the main components of the term globalgothic is its emphasis on multidirectional cultural flows which have enabled the conventions and motifs of the Gothic to be circulated in various cultures. Chapter One therefore argued that these cultural flows have created a bridge between Western Gothic and Turkish Gothic. This bridge is significant since it puts Turkish Gothic on the map of globalgothic studies for the first time. In my textual analysis, I invoked a wide range of Gothic theories in relation to the depiction of the Turk as the oriental despot, the imperial threat and the barbaric other. I identified the barbarism vs. civilisation dichotomy — which has been central to Gothic writing and was used prominently as part of a pejorative rhetoric

towards the Ottoman Turkish identity in politically crucial times for the West — as the driving force of Western Gothic's depiction of Turkey. I argued that by depicting the Ottoman Turk as the Gothic other, Western Gothic narratives define British, European or American identities as superior.

As I have shown in Chapter Two, a similar line of thought was employed in Turkish Gothic novels of the early twentieth century. I examined the novels of Derviş, Gürpınar, and Seyfioğlu using Gothic theories in relation to female Gothic tradition, the vampire novel and the ghost story. I argued that in these novels the Ottoman past is denigrated and Gothicised while the secular, modern and Westernised Turkish identity is glorified in line with the Kemalist secular ideology of the state. Utilising national allegory, these novels centralise women as the salient symbols of modern Turkishness. The Gothicisation of Ottoman Turkishness in these novels not only shows ideological resemblance to the anti-Catholic sentiment of the late-eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Gothic novels, but also reveals the Gothic other, which links Western Gothic and Turkish Gothic together, as the Ottoman Turk. Through this connection, Chapters One and Two pinpoint the origins of the multidirectional flows of globalgothic in Turkey.

As the ideological stresses and the configurations of Turkish identity changed in the post-war period in Turkey, Turkish Gothic also went through a transformation. In Chapter Three, I focused on four Gothic horror films from this period of transformation and how they addressed the ideological transformation of Turkish political and social life through the process of Turkification, a method of translating and reinventing Western themes and motifs in Yeşilçam, the Turkish Hollywood. *Şeytan* and *The Serpent's Tale* in particular marked significant breaking points in Turkish Gothic cinema. I argued that due to its alignment with the pro-Islamist sentiment of its time, *Şeytan* was the precursor of the conservative Gothic narratives which became popular in

the post-millennium. Alternatively, *The Serpent's Tale* Gothicised the search for a new Turkish identity in the post-1980 period when Turkey was undergoing another transformation as part of the global neoliberal system.

Chapters Two and Three established a strong link between Gothic and the dynamics of Turkish national identity throughout the twentieth century. The novels and films I have discussed in these chapters form a foundational Gothic aesthetic for the Turkish Gothic tradition. This Gothic aesthetic, which had not been explored fully until this thesis, foreshadows the dichotomy of conservatism and secularism which haunts Turkish national identity and Turkish Gothic in the post-millennium. Chapters Four and Five addressed this dichotomy and the tension between conservatism and secularism in Turkey. The polarisation of Turkish national identity can best be observed in the Gothic narratives discussed in these two chapters.

In Chapter Four, I discussed the conservative policies of the JDP (Justice and Development Party) regarding women and the misogynist rhetoric used by President Erdoğan as having a crucial impact on how women are represented in specific Gothic narratives depicting djinn possessions. In this context, these Gothic narratives show a Gothic aesthetic reminiscent of *Şeytan* and American horror films in treating monstrosity as a threat to the patriarchal society and its conservative values. Since the existing scholarship on Islamic Horror films tends to overlook the literary examples, I focused most of my attention on novels and tracked down the thematic origins of these Gothic narratives in populist Islamic novels of the late-twentieth century which criticise secular ideology and life styles. Accordingly, I argued that through the theme of djinn possession, conservative Gothic narratives define secular and modern women as monstrous subjects, who appeal to evil forces for immoral gains or are easily corrupted by them, and therefore, do not deserve salvation. By associating secular or non-religious

women with sexual perversity and alcoholism, conservative Gothic narratives evoke the standpoint of the Islamist ideology and the JDP and serve the interests of the status quo.

Chapter Five argues for the existence of another branch of Turkish Gothic which counteracts conservative Turkish Gothic. I defined this branch as neoliberal Turkish Gothic, drawing on Blake's theorisation of the term. Neoliberal Gothic in Turkey places emphasis on the neoliberal transformation of Istanbul and anxieties of its secular inhabitants arising from this new order. The main ideological backdrop of neoliberal Turkish Gothic, I suggested, is constructed by its writers and directors because they are secular and educated millennials who were born into or grew up in the global neoliberal system under the influence of global literary and cultural trends. I invoked the Gezi Park protests as the defining moment of this ideological backdrop and argued that novels and films I discussed in this chapter reflected a dissident sentiment regarding controversial issues in contemporary Turkey such as neoliberal selfhood, rapid urbanisation, free speech, authoritarianism and the Turkish nation's past traumas. In this context, neoliberal Gothic challenges the status quo and differs from its predecessors distinctively. The Turkish Gothic narratives I discussed in Chapters Two, Three and Four, all served the ideology of the status quos of their time, whether it is Kemalist secularism or Erdoğan's conservatism. Neoliberal Turkish Gothic on the other hand, challenges the ideology of its time, that is neoliberal conservatism, and paves the way for a revolutionary Gothic aesthetic which reflects the Gezi spirit.

As the first ever full-length academic study on Turkish Gothic, this thesis has examined novels and films spanning over three centuries, from the late-eighteenth to the twenty-first century, and three different cultures, British, American and Turkish. However, my selection criteria were limited to those works which directly refer to Turkish national identity or its ideological subtexts. There are other novels and films which were not included here, since they did not fit into the thematic analysis in this

thesis. In particular, since the late 1990s, there has been an upsurge of Turkish novels that combine Gothic conventions with the science fiction or fantasy genres. The most prominent examples of this mixing of genres belonged to the authors of the Xasiork Ölümsüz Öykü Kulübü (Xasiork Immortal Story Club) which remained in business between 2000 and 2012. Alongside short stories written by up and coming writers, the club also released novels such as *Gizli Evin Kitabı* (The Book of the Secret House, 2003) by Nefrin Tokyay, *Kızıl Vaiz* (The Red Preacher, 2002) by Orkun Uçar and *Sırıtkan Kırmızı Ay* (Grinning Red Moon, 2002) and *Venüs Bağlantısı* (The Venus Connection, 2003) by Sibel Atasoy. Further analysis of these novels could be beneficial for Turkish Gothic studies in the future.

Due to the limited space I had in this thesis, my textual analysis focused on novels and films however another boom of Gothic horror occurred in the short story genre. Following the foundation of Fantazya Bilimkurgu Sanatları Derneği (the Fantasy and Science-Fiction Arts Association) in 2011, writers from the association began to team up and publish short story collections particularly focusing on Gothic horror. *Anadolu Korku Öyküleri 1* (Anatolian Horror Stories 1, 2006), *Anadolu Korku Öyküleri 2* (Anatolian Horror Stories 2, 2013) and *Anadolu Korku Öyküleri 3: Yılgayak* (Anatolian Horror Stories 3: Yılgayak, 2017) have been the most prominent examples of this boom and engaged with Islamic demonology and Turkish folklore in multi-faceted ways compared to conservative Gothic narratives. The popularity of these collections encouraged the publication of others. *Aşkın Karanlık Yüzü* (The Dark Side of Love, 2017) and *Karanlık Yılbaşı Öyküleri* (Dark New Year's Eve Stories, 2017) have addressed the horrors of Valentine's Day and New Year's Eve respectively, and perhaps unintentionally, epitomised Derek Johnston's concept of seasonal Gothic horror.[595]

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[595] See Derek Johnston, *Haunted Seasons: Television Ghost Stories for Christmas and Horror for Halloween* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

The post-millennium has seen other mediums flourish which utilise Gothic conventions such as music, fashion and art. For example, Turkish dark-wave post-punk band *She Past Away* has gained international reputation amongst Goth-rock fans since they were formed in 2006, although they are not mainstream in the Turkish music industry. Nevertheless, Gothic aesthetics are not entirely absent from popular Turkish music. A significant figure of Turkish classical and arabesque music, Bülent Ersoy, who is commonly known as Diva by her fans, prominently uses Gothic aesthetics in her stage costumes and video clips. As a trans woman who had been banned from stage by the military junta of the early 1980s — after her sex reassignment surgery in London in 1981— Ersoy has had a history of being involved with political conflicts. However, her style shifted towards Gothic in the post-millennium when she had strong ties with the JDP government and Erdoğan despite their human rights policies exclusive of LGBT individuals in Turkey. Therefore, further exploration of how Gothic engages with political dissidence through different mediums such as music and fashion could be a significant addition to the scholarship on Turkish Gothic.

I also did not have space to explore how Gothic imageries and motifs are employed in canonical novels of Turkish literature. Particularly, a Gothic reading of the novels of Orhan Pamuk, who frequently writes about the in-betweenness of Turkish identity, would be a significant further contribution to Turkish Gothic studies and the worldwide scholarship on Pamuk. Pamuk's *The Black Book* (1990) has been considered as the product of a 'vigorous Gothic imagination' by one of the pioneers of contemporary British Gothic fiction, Patrick McGrath.[596] The Gothic motifs in *The Black Book* are rarely discussed by scholars, but they depict Istanbul as a claustrophobic, decadent and dangerous labyrinth in which Turkish national identity loses its way. This bleak

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[596] Patrick McGrath, 'Dark and Fantastic Invention', *The Washington Post,* 12 February 1995 <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/13/AR2006101301071.html>.

characterisation of Istanbul in *The Black Book* is also pointed out by Adriana Raducanu who analyses the novel in the context of urban Gothic in her book *Speaking the Language of the Night: Aspects of the Gothic in Selected Contemporary Novels* (2014).[597] Indeed, Raducanu's analysis is a precedent for further Gothic readings of Pamuk's use of Gothic conventions in his postmodern metafictions. However, a larger project inclusive of all of Pamuk's writing would provide a better understanding of how he addresses Turkish national identity through the use of the Gothic mode.

There is also room for further research in some of the chapters. Turkish woman as an allegory for the nation was a prominent theme in Turkish Gothic narratives examined in Chapter Two. Due to my limited space and thematic focus, I was not able to include all of Suat Derviş' Gothic novels and also had to exclude the novels of Nezihe Muhiddin and Kerime Nadir, who prominently wrote Gothic romance during the 1930s, 40s and 50s. Particularly, Kerime Nadir's novel *Dehşet Gecesi* (The Night of Terror, 1958) depicts the first Turkish female vampire as a Kurdish princess and engages with ethnic identity discussions of its time. Therefore, further research on female Turkish Gothic would contribute to female Gothic studies in the West, broaden the scope of Turkish Gothic and also help develop gender studies in Turkey. Additionally, the Conservative Gothic narratives I discussed in Chapter Four take their supernatural source from Islamic demonology. Similar narratives can be found in other Muslim cultures and therefore, my analysis can serve as a model for further theorisation of an Islamic or Middle-Eastern Gothic tradition.

Lastly, I would like to return to the introduction of this thesis where I resorted to a parodied image of Wood's 1930 painting. I argued that the image mockingly depicts Erdoğan, his wife and the Islamic ideology that his party represent. Published online a

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[597] See Adriana Raducanu, *Speaking the Language of the Night: Aspects of the Gothic in Selected Contemporary Novels* (Frankfurt am Main: PL Academic Research, 2014).

year before the Gezi Park protests, the image combined Western Gothic imageries and symbols with those of contemporary Turkish politics. This image, which started my theorisation of Turkish Gothic, was one of the early precursors of the strong criticisms of Erdoğan's status quo during and after Gezi. This critique was further marked by the representation of Erdoğan as a vampire by the supporters of the 'No' vote in a protest in Berlin, Germany before the Turkish Constitutional Referendum 2017.[598] Google images also provide several images depicting Erdoğan's zombified face. The use of Gothic monsters as mainstream political metaphors as such characterised the monstrosity behind the authoritarianism and conservatism of Erdoğan's rule. Therefore, in post-Gezi Turkey, Turkish Gothic has a continued political potential which can allow the Turkish nation to redefine its identity or contest the definitions which are dictated to it by any ideological status quos. The in-between and fragmented nature of Turkish national identity suggests that it is prone to shifts and evolutions which can lead to adoption of new definitions as they emerge. Through interactions with these shifts and new definitions, Turkish Gothic will continue to haunt its audiences with the dark undersides of Turkishness.

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[598] Stefan Schirmer and Özlem Topçu, 'The Fallout from the Turkish Referendum in Germany', *Handelsblatt Global*, 13 April 2017 <https://global.handelsblatt.com/politics/the-fallout-from-the-turkish-referendum-in-germany-746718>.

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