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Istanbulite[1] Women and the City in Elif Şafak's *The Bastard of Istanbul*

Ayşe Naz Bulamur

This essay argues that the representations of Istanbulite women in Elif Şafak's *The Bastard of Istanbul* are intertwined with the discourses of Turkish nationalism. The novel indicates the ways Istanbul's geographical position in-between East and West has an impact on the construction of Turkish nationalism that expects women "to achieve a 'healthy' balance between" cultural/religious values and "secular/Westernist nationalism" as Meyda Yeğenoğlu argues in Colonial Fantasies (134). Şafak's novel serves as a critique of Turkish nationalism that dismisses the multiple facades of Istanbulite women living on the threshold of the two continents and creates a homogenous female identity combining moral propriety with secular clothing and education. The nationalist project of establishing an Eastern and Western synthesis is not "healthy" for Şafak's women characters who become outcasts in society by wearing headscarves that symbolize Islamic backwardness in Turkish nationalism or by engaging in extramarital relationships that break the rules of sexual purity. In focusing on the intersection of Turkish nationalism and women's gender roles, I will also examine how Şafak's characters wearing a short skirt or headscarf blur lines between modernity and tradition as they live under the same roof in Istanbul. My discussions of *The Bastard of Istanbul* will explore how the motherland has been "invented" and "gendered" with the construction of a secular desexualized female body that exemplifies Turkey's modernization and perpetuates male dominance at the same time (e.g. Benedict Anderson, Anne McClintock).

In "Worlds Apart and Together: Trial by Space in Istanbul", Kevin Robins and Asu Aksoy lay out the three stages of Istanbul: "Istanbul's 'first age' was different—it was an Ottoman and Islamic city—but its 'second age' was very much shaped by the modernist paradigm. [...] The city now is facing a fundamental challenge to its modernizing ethos, one that is associated with a growing polarization and politicization of space" (258). Istanbul's "second age" starts with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 and his modernization project of adopting Europe's social and political systems. To reach Europe's level of civilization, Turkey had to break away from the declining Ottoman Empire regulated by Shari`a (Muslim canonical law) and to model Western secularism. Perceiving Islam as an obstacle to Turkey's progress, Atatürk institutionalized state control of religion by abolishing the sultanate, establishing a secular civil code based on the Swiss model, making education a monopoly of the state, and outlawing the headscarf in official premises. His reforms, which changed the

outward appearance of Turks and eliminated the cultural practices of the empire, indicate how modernization became synonymous with Westernization in Turkish nationalism.[2] This article examines how Elif Şafak's Istanbul breaks away from Atatürk's version of modernization and becomes a hybrid space where Islamists defend one's right to publicly practice religion and Kemalists advocate a secular democracy. In fact, *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2007) was published at a time when Kemalists were accusing the current prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the leader of the Justice and Development Party, of establishing a moderate Islamist government that aims to lift the headscarf ban at universities. As Zeyno Baran writes in "Turkey Divided", the election of a conservative party with "Islamist roots" increased the polarization between "supporters of the secular republican tradition" and "those who want to reshape the Republic, chiefly along Islamist lines" (55). In an interview with the journal *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Şafak herself asserts that "there is no dialogue" between Kemalists and Islamists, and in her novel she conceptualizes an alternative modernity that is not synonymous with Westernization but that merges secular democracy and Islamic traditions.

Şafak's novel problematizes Atatürk's secular/Westernist nationalism by narrating Istanbul as a heavenly city protected by Allah. As Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson would argue, "the religious or spiritual imagination" of Istanbul in *The Bastard of Istanbul* "challenges conventional Western views of modernity and the city on the secularization of society" (8). Istanbul goes against Atatürk's ideals of secularism, with Şafak's narrator portraying it as a spiritual place under the surveillance of a Celestial Gaze:

> If there is an eye in the seventh sky, a Celestial Gaze watching each and every one from way up high, He would have had to keep Istanbul under surveillance for quite some time to get a sense of who did what behind closed doors and who, if any, uttered profanities. [...] From where the Celestial Gaze is situated, from that high above, all these sporadically lit bulbs seem in perfect harmony, constantly flickering as if coding a cryptic message to God (214).

Ironically, Istanbul—the Ottoman capital that was secularized with the erection of nationalist monuments after the foundation of Turkey—emerges as a city watched by Allah, whose eye, for Şafak's narrator, is "omnipotent and omniscient; it is an eye that never closes, or even blinks" (243). In "Three Urban Discourses", John R. Short offers a critique of modernists, who cannot think of the city as a "religious artifact": "Religion has been too long counterpoised to the continuing enlightenment project of rationality.

The city has been so long associated with the modern and the contemporary in the Western imagination that it is read as the site of the irreligious and the secular. But cities have always reflected and embodied cosmologies" (22). Indeed, the fact that Şafak's characters—the Kazancı family of seven women—live in a "slightly decrepit" Ottoman mansion, which looks "out of place" between "tall modern apartment buildings," signals the novel's conceptualization of a heterogeneous and complex modernity that is not uniformly Western (18). Şafak's narrator does not suppress the Islamic character of Istanbul, and, instead, portrays prayers, recited by the "mellow-voiced" "*imam*s of copious mosques", as one of the city's major voices that wakes up Istanbulites early in the morning (215). With the Kazancıs' dilapidated Ottoman house, morning prayers, and the Celestial Gaze up in the sky, the narrator imagines Istanbul as a city where nationalist ideals of modernity and Islam coexist.

The narrator displays the complexity of Istanbul, which she describes as "a hodgepodge of ten million lives" and "an open book of ten million scrambled stories", through the diversity of urban women characters who disrupt the homogeneous construction of a secular and virtuous Turkish female identity (243).[3] After their father's death and their brother Mustafa's departure for the University of Arizona for his college education, the four sisters—Zeliha, Banu, Feride, and Cevriye—form a matriarchal family with their mother, Gülsüm, and with Zeliha's illegitimate daughter, Asya. Unaware that their brother Mustafa is Asya's father, Zeliha's sisters treat their only niece as their daughter. In the United States, Mustafa is happily married to his wife, Rose, and has no intention of going back to Istanbul, "a ghost city" that has been haunting his dreams and tormenting him with his shame of raping his sister Zeliha (285). Yet Mustafa realizes that he cannot escape from his past when Rose's daughter, from her Armenian ex-husband, travels to Istanbul and stays with the Kazancıs to discover her family heritage. Almost two decades after leaving his family, Mustafa returns to Istanbul with his wife to bring his stepdaughter, Armanoush, back to Arizona. When his clairvoyant sister, Banu, intuitively discovers that Mustafa is Asya's father, she invites him to a poisonous Turkish dessert to pay for his sins. In unraveling the secrets of the Kazancı family, Şafak's narrator also highlights how the four sisters, wearing a miniskirt or headscarf, blur lines between modernity and tradition, as they all live under the same roof in Istanbul.

Instead of equating modernization strictly with Westernization, Şafak's novel conceptualizes Istanbul as a city that welcomes both European and Islamic cultures through the Kazancı household, where multiple and even contradictory dress codes and religious beliefs coexist. The Armenian-American visitor, Armanoush, wonders how the

atheist and tattoo artist Zeliha with her nose piercing, the pious Banu with her covered head, the humorless history teacher Cevriye, and the schizophrenic Feride can be sisters "despite the stark contrast in their appearance and obviously in their personalities" (154). With the diversity of the Kazancı sisters, the novel provides an alternative definition of modernization that is not synonymous with Europeanization but that combines "Islamic and modern" (Keyder 38). In "Whither the Project of Modernity? Turkey in the 1990s", Çağlar Keyder argues: "Taking a stance similar to the postmodernist celebration of the hybrid," many writers, like Şafak, "announce the death of the modernization project identified with the normative importation of Enlightenment ideals, and they celebrate the possibility of a local (and, some would argue, therefore authentic) appropriation of the modern" (38). The novel also suggests that paradox and contradiction lie at the heart of Turkey's modernity by depicting a household where there is a constant tension between its Islamist and Kemalist inhabitants.[4] Gülsüm Kazancı, for example, calls Zeliha a whore for her affair that resulted in the birth of her illegitimate granddaughter, and she abhors her eldest daughter Banu for disrespecting Atatürk's dress reforms. Gülsüm's idealization of Atatürk's model of a modern, educated Turkish woman also becomes problematic as Armanoush observes that the nationalist history teacher Cevriye is ignorant of the massacres of the Ottoman Empire's Armenian population in 1915. The following three sections examine how Şafak's characters serve as a critique of Turkish nationalism that excludes women's right to have extramarital relationships, practice religion publicly, and to question the objectivity of history, all of which are considered acts of disloyalty to the Republic.

ZELİHA AND ASYA KAZANCI: A SINFUL MOTHER AND BASTARD OF ISTANBUL

In her late thirties, Auntie Zeliha protests "the moral codes she was born into" by walking on the cobblestones of Istanbul wearing "miniskirts of glaring colors" and "tight-fitting blouses" that show off her long beautiful legs and "ample breasts" (221). The narrator notes how Zeliha is "fighting the city" with her skimpy outfit by uttering profanities at her harassers, while walking with her high-heel shoes in Istanbul's rain, mud, heavy traffic, and chaos (3):

> Yet, there she was on this first Friday of July, walking on a sidewalk that flowed next to hopelessly clogged traffic; rushing to an appointment she was now late for, swearing like a trooper, hissing one profanity after another at the broken pavement stones, at her high heels, at the man stalking her, at each and every driver who honked frantically when it was an urban fact that clamor had no effect on unclogging traffic [...] (1)

The parallel narration of Istanbul's broken pavements and Zeliha's stalkers specifically highlights women's struggle with the city where they not only have to fight with the urban problems but also with men, who judge feminine virtue based on attire. In "Women and Leisure", Eileen Green writes that nineteenth-century women "became the embodiment of respectability and moral order in public places; a legacy which continues in 'post-modern' societies. Public sanctions for women who challenged the dominant ideologies by appearing unescorted in the city, included loss of social (and sexual) reputation" (150). Zeliha also transgresses the norms of modesty and purity as she strolls unescorted through the streets of Istanbul with her revealing clothes, which mark her as a fallen woman. The narrator tells how Zeliha rushes through the streets ignoring all the men who "eye her in amusement" and "stare at her body with hunger": "The vendors looked disapprovingly at her shiny nose ring too, as if therein lay a clue as to her deviance from modesty, and thereby the sign of her *lustfulness*" (3). Not caring for her lost respectability in her neighborhood, Zeliha stands up for her freedom in the city by proudly putting on her nose ring, whose piercing she did herself, and by smoking on the streets, acts which are not acceptable for Istanbulite women.

"Can't a woman walk in peace in this city?" Zeliha asks as a taxi driver verbally harasses her while she is walking through the streets of Istanbul with her high heels and mini-skirt (5). The taxi driver whistling—"I'll have some of that!" "You wouldn't want that sexy body to get wet, would you?"—at Zeliha illustrates many Turkish men's belief that unescorted women with indecent clothing deserve to be harassed (5). In "The Man-Shaped City", Jane Darke describes "the city of property where urban space is seen as belonging to (some) men, and women are seen as a part of men's property", and Istanbul, in Şafak's novel, emerges as "the city of property" as Zeliha is treated as a sexual commodity by the taxi driver (89). Swearing back at the taxi driver, Zeliha breaks the following "unwritten and unbreakable rules" of prudence, which ask Istanbulite women to remain calm and silent when being harassed:

> The Golden Rule of Prudence for an Istanbulite Woman: When harassed on the street, never respond, since a woman who responds, let alone swears back at her harasser, shall only fire up the enthusiasm of the latter!
>
> [...]
>
> The Silver Rule of Prudence for an Istanbulite Woman: When harassed on the street, do not lose nerve, since a woman who loses her nerve in the face of harassment, and thus reacts excessively, will only make matters worse for herself! (Şafak 5–6)

As Zeliha violates female codes of conduct by furiously yelling and shouting profanities at the cab driver, the pedestrians and street vendors perceive her as a "madwoman" whom they should not mess with (5). Ironically, by defending herself, Zeliha becomes a morally dangerous woman, who poses a threat to Istanbul's patriarchal society with her masculine traits of impatience, "proclivity to violence" and "frighteningly furious" behavior (6). The wide acceptance of both the golden and silver rules of prudence, however, indicates that Zeliha is alone in her fight against the city and that women do not dare to emerge from their zone of silence even when they are assaulted by men. While swearing at the cab driver, Zeliha gets the right heel of her shoe stuck under a cobblestone and the narrator comments that she holds the broken heel "as tenderly and despondently as if she were carrying a dead bird" (7). The narrator's comparison of Zeliha's broken heel to a dead bird indicates that Zeliha cannot escape being victimized as a woman, who is treated as a "visual spectacle and object of desire" in Istanbul's masculinized public spaces (Rendell 140).

Zeliha's home does not provide a safe refuge from the public realm, where she is treated as a promiscuous woman. In "The Apotheosis of Home", Joshua Price argues that the association of home with peace and comfort excludes the fact that the home is "one significant institution in which women face violence" and "frequently a central place of terror and danger" (40). Even before the scene with the taxi driver, the most severe punishment for Zeliha's way of dressing takes place at home as her brother Mustafa legitimizes his rape of his nineteen-year-old sister by attacking her as impure and disgraceful. He accuses Zeliha of bringing shame to her family by showing her shaved legs to the men in the neighborhood staring at her miniskirt: "You have no shame [...]. You don't care when men whistle at you on the streets. You dress like a whore and then expect respect? [...] You have responsibilities toward your family, miss. You cannot bring disgrace to this family's good name" (314). As the patriarch after his father's death, Mustafa tries to preserve the family honor by controlling Zeliha, who refuses to be judged as a whore on the basis of her clothing. She resists Mustafa's attempts to determine her sexual conduct by reminding him of his secrets such as gambling and sleeping with prostitutes, but Zeliha loses the battle to her brother, who possesses the female body he cannot control. He pulls up her skirt and rapes his sister, who has tried to undermine his dominance by telling him that what she wears and how she lives is none of his business (314). The fact that Zeliha notices "the Kodak balloon in the clear sky" during the rape indicates how that scene will always be photographed in her memory (316). In this instance, the rape of Zeliha can be seen as her punishment

for not conforming to the accepted norms of feminine virtue by wearing revealing clothes that show off her physical beauty.

Mothers, however, have a role in perpetuating patriarchal codes of masculinity by bringing up their sons like the sultans of their families. Many traditional Turkish parents, like Mustafa's, prefer to have a son rather than a daughter in order to maintain the continuity of their family lines.[5] Before leaving for Arizona to pursue his undergraduate studies in agricultural engineering, Mustafa was treated as "a precious gem bequeathed by Allah", "a king in his house", while the first three daughters grew up "feeling like unwelcome visitors", and "an introduction before the real thing, an accidental prelude in their parents' sex life" (31). In *Money Makes Us Relatives*, Jenny White observes that adult sons of patriarchal Turkish families continue to be waited on by their mothers, and the narrator of Şafak's novel comments on how Gülsüm spoils her college-age son by cooking for him, washing his dishes, and doing his ironing: "She had fully dedicated herself to her only son and valued him often at the expense of her daughters" (218). By keeping Mustafa out of the kitchen, Gülsüm forced him to be strong and macho like his oppressive father and to be completely in charge of the Kazancı women. Ironically, the only male child of the family, "pampered, mollycoddled, spoiled, always favored over the girls", grew up to be insecure as he tried to live up to his mother's idealization of his gender role. Sharing his first name with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, he did not want to embrace the role of a hero but "wanted to be just an ordinary man, good and fallible at the same time" (46). Zeliha exposes the lack of self-confidence underlying his "forced masculinity" by calling him the "precious phallus" of the family, who is even incapable of socializing with his classmates and flirting with girls (45). Emasculated by Zeliha's ridicule of his timidity and unpopularity with girls, Mustafa attempts to reassert his male power by raping his sister.[6] Gülsüm's discrimination among her children serves as a critique of mothers, who partake in patriarchy by associating manhood with dominance without realizing that the role of a hero can be oppressive for men struggling to live up to the myth of male power.

While admiring Mustafa, Gülsüm despises her fifth child, Zeliha, who disappointed her parents' hopes of having another son, for her inappropriate clothing and sexual conduct. Zeliha remembers her mother saying that "beautiful women [have] to be twice as modest and careful with men" (310). Gülsüm lectures her daughter that women should conceal their beauty and should not be friends with men, because this can be misinterpreted as flirtatiousness. She is disillusioned by the way her daughter defies the "unwritten and unbreakable" rules of femininity by exposing her legs with a miniskirt, smoking on the street, piercing her nose, and using foul language, behavior

which is "not highly regarded" for Istanbulite women (8). Unaware of her son's rape of Zeliha, Gülsüm accuses her daughter of bringing shame to her family with her inappropriate clothing: "Is it not enough that you always bring disgrace to this family? Look at that skirt you are wearing. The dish towels in the kitchen are longer than your skirts! You are a single mother, a divorcée. Hear me well! I have never seen a divorcée with a ring in her nose. You should be ashamed of yourself, Zeliha!" (258). Ironically, Gülsüm calls Zeliha, who has never married in her life, a divorcée, to conceal from the neighbors the fact that she gave birth out of wedlock. Knowing how Gülsüm associates virtue with the length of a woman's skirt, Zeliha conceals the rape from her mother, who might have sided with Mustafa and blamed her for arousing her brother's desire by dressing up "like a whore" (29). Gülsüm's condescending attitude towards Zeliha highlights how mothers perpetuate patriarchy by oppressing their daughters with the ideals of feminine virtue.

While defying the rules of prudence for Istanbulite women, Zeliha also takes advantage of living in Istanbul, where there are clinics that offer services—pregnancy tests and abortions—that are not available in many rural regions of Eastern Anatolia. In *The Sphinx in the City*, Elizabeth Wilson writes that "urban life, however fraught with difficulty, has emancipated women more than rural life or suburban domesticity", and Zeliha is also privileged to live in Istanbul where she has the option of not keeping her baby (10). The narrator foregrounds the accessibility of abortion in Istanbul, by telling how Zeliha's doctor is supportive of his patient's decision to end an unwanted pregnancy: "There was no judgment in his stare, no unwise questions on his tongue" (15). Ironically, Zeliha, the only atheist woman in the Kazancı family, decides not to have an abortion on hearing the Friday prayers coming from "microphones and cabinet speakers" of the nearby mosques, while lying anesthetized on the operating table of the doctor's office (17). Istanbul plays an active role in the abortion scene, as the celestial sounds of the city Zeliha hears make her keep the baby:

> "But then just when I am about to go unconscious on that operating table, I hear the afternoon prayer from a nearby mosque … The prayer is soft, like a piece of velvet. It envelops my whole body. Then, as soon as the prayer is over, I hear a murmur as if somebody is whispering in my ear. 'Thou shalt not kill this child!' […]. "And then …" Zeliha carried on with her story, "this mysterious voice commands: 'Oooo you the culprit of the righteous Kazancı family! Let this child live!' " (28)

Considering herself "a true Istanbulite", Zeliha makes her decision by listening to the sounds of the city, the prayers that multiply "in echoes, as if drawing circles within

circles" (18). Despite being irreligious, Zeliha feels that Allah "keep[s] Istanbul under surveillance," knows "who did what behind closed doors" and whispers in her ears that she should not kill the child (214). While waiting semi-consciously for the procedure, Zeliha imagines that Allah is punishing her by "raining cobblestones from the blue skies" of Istanbul (19). Her internal conversation with God shows how Zeliha conceptualizes Istanbul as being protected and watched over by "a Celestial Gaze" that punishes the wrongdoings of Istanbulites. She yells "Stop!" to the doctor, and the narrator highlights Zeliha's dilemma of being an atheist and conversing with God at the same time: "'Why did you not let me do it, Allah?' she heard herself mutter, but as soon as the words came out of her mouth, she apologized in panic to the atheist in herself" (21). The narrator projects Zeliha's content in keeping the baby onto Istanbul, which becomes "a blissful metropolis, romantically picturesque," where even rain and traffic seem manageable after she leaves the clinic (21). The juxtaposition of the abortion scene with Islamic prayers also works to portray the hybridity of Istanbul, which exceeds such easy categorizations as a "modern," "secular," or "Islamic" city.

Zeliha's conversation with the receptionist also highlights how the Turkish government preserves the patriarchal family structure by facilitating abortion for single women through not requiring any paperwork or formalities while demanding the husband's written consent from married women.[7] Zeliha also observes how bureaucratic regulations are "less keen to rescue babies" that will eventually be outcasts in society without a father's surname that determines one's identity: "A fatherless baby in Istanbul was just another bastard, and a bastard just another sagging tooth in the city's jaw, ready to fall out at any time", the narrator comments (12). An illegitimate baby stands for her mother's extramarital relationship, and, therefore, as the child of a whore, has no respectability in society. Paradoxically, her inability to kill her child, which is forbidden in the Qur'an, makes Zeliha "the black sheep of the family" who brings disgrace with her illegitimate child (174). Her internal dialogue with Allah shows how it is not in religious thought that children are categorized as "legitimate" or "illegitimate", but in nationalist discourses which discriminate against women giving birth out of wedlock as being shameful. Culturally constructed terms such as "bastard" and "adulteress" highlight the ways Turkish society controls women's bodies by discouraging them from experiencing sex and motherhood outside of the institution of marriage. Zeliha challenges the institutionalization of pregnancy in marriage by choosing to keep her baby girl, Asya, who will be another unwanted, unrespectable "Miss Bastard" of Istanbul (212).

Unlike her mother Zeliha, Asya feels out of place in Istanbul, since her grandmother and her classmates look down upon her as a child born out of wedlock. Asya becomes aware of Gülsüm's hostility when she starts addressing her eight-year-old granddaughter as a bastard. While watering the plants with Asya, Gülsüm murmurs the word "bastard" so calmly that Asya does "not immediately understand that her grandmother was addressing her, not the flower" (61). Treated as an outcast at school for not having a father, Asya learns by the age of sixteen "that other families weren't like hers and some families could be *normal*" (62). Whereas Zeliha considers herself a "true Istanbulite", Asya does not have any sense of belonging to Istanbul, where, according to the narrator, an illegitimate child is just a "sagging tooth in the city's jaw" (12):

> By the time Asya Kazancı reached seventeen she had further comprehended that she no more belonged to Istanbul than did the ROAD UNDER CONSTRUCTİON or BUİLDİNG UNDER RESTORATİON signs temporarily put up by the municipality, or the fog that fell over the city on gloomy nights, only to be dispersed at the crack of dawn, leading nowhere, accumulating into nothing. (62)

The narrator hints at Asya's sense of worthlessness by indicating how she compares herself to construction signs and foggy nights, both of which have only a temporary presence in Istanbul. Understanding that being fatherless is considered as an anomaly, Asya thinks she will always be unwanted in Istanbul, where her presence will lead nowhere and "accumulate into nothing" (62). Thinking that the city does not regard her highly because she is a bastard, Asya even attempts to commit suicide by swallowing her aunt's pills. Ignorant of the fact that Zeliha is also her aunt, Asya decides to call her "Auntie Zeliha" in order to render her "mother's sin" and her shame as a bastard in Istanbul "less visible in the eyes of the society" (174).

Gülsüm's four daughters, however, never use the term "bastard", and they problematize Turkish society's assumption that children are in need of a male role model to look up to and learn ideals of honor from. In order to compensate for Gülsüm's harsh treatment of Asya, Zeliha's sisters treat their only niece as a daughter by sending her to "a first-rate school", spending all their savings on her hobbies, and by suffocating her with their love (171). By giving Asya all their support and care, her "four auntie-moms or mommy-aunties" show how women can raise a child without the presence of a patriarch in charge of his family's social conduct and moral propriety (173). Asya remarks that, unlike Gülsüm, her aunties "pretend there is no such thing as *father*. Instead there is only *Father*, with a capital *F*. When you have Allah up there in the sky to look after you, who needs a father? Aren't we all His children?" (146). In

reminding Asya of the fact that marriage is a socially constructed institution, her aunties suggest that all children, whether legitimate or illegitimate, are equal in the eyes of Allah, who watches over and takes care of them. The matriarchal domicile of the Kazancı sisters provides an alternative model to Gülsüm's ideal of the traditional family unit by being equally in charge of Asya's life and by questioning the need for a domineering male figure in a household.

Like her mother Zeliha, nineteen-year-old Asya challenges the production of the virtuous Turkish female identity by smoking joints and having an affair with a much older married man. In her conversation with Armanoush, Asya highlights how the strong emphasis on virginity is reminiscent of folktales such as that of Layla and Majnun, in which characters love each other "from a distance, mating without even touching" and never engage in "any actual physical contact", which is perceived as "corrupt and ignoble" (198). The idealization of platonic love in folktales discourages couples from being physically intimate before marriage by hinting that the magic of a relationship perishes with sexual intercourse. "Is there no beauty in sex?" (198), Asya asks, in response to her self-disciplined Auntie Cevriye's belief that "the needs of the human body [are] revolting", and she foregrounds not the physical aspect of sex, but its sensual aspect, which enables couples to discover each others' personalities (173). In fact, she strongly believes that a woman can never be sure whether her partner is the right person before sharing the same bed, where "people's most imperceptible, innate complexes surface" (199). With her critique of folktales, Asya rebels against patriarchal discourses that control the female body by representing extramarital sex as a shameful act, and stands up for her right to have boyfriends as a young single woman.

Although sexually liberated at the age of nineteen, Asya is in between "her national identity" and "her pure, sinning self" (199). Her dilemma illustrates women's paradoxical position in Turkish nationalism, which asks them "to achieve a 'healthy' balance between" cultural/religious values and "secular/Westernist nationalism" (Yeğenoğlu 134). Instead of repressing her sexual desires before marriage to preserve her honor, she chooses to engage in extramarital relationships while pretending to be virtuous. Her preference for keeping her affairs secret indicates that she is taken in by the correlation of purity with virginity. Unlike her mother, Asya is afraid of being judged as a disgraceful woman and, therefore, does not share her drug use and polygamous affairs with the Armenian-American visitor staying at the Kazancı mansion. Asya feels it is her national duty to exemplify Atatürk's ideal of the virtuous Turkish woman by keeping her numerous relations and her critique of platonic love secret from the "polite and proper" Armanoush:

> How on earth could she now tell Armanoush that, though only nineteen, she had known many men's hands and did not feel a speck of guilt for it? Besides, how could she ever reveal the truth without giving the wrong impression to an outsider about "the chastity of Turkish girls"? This kind of "national responsibility" was utterly foreign to Asya Kazancı. Never before had she felt part of a collectivity and she had no intention of being so now or in the future. Yet here she was accomplishing a pretty good *impersonation* of someone else, someone who had gotten patriotic overnight (emphasis added 199).

Asya's "impersonation" of a proper Istanbulite woman highlights how femininity is performance in Turkey, where many sexually liberated girls pretend to be virtuous virgins in order to preserve their respectability in society. Although Asya resists the ideals of female modesty, she does not want her foreign visitor to associate Turkish women with drug use and random sex. In her efforts to present herself as a well-mannered young woman fluent in English and successful at school, Asya participates in a national mission to represent Turkey as a modern country that preserves its moral foundations. Both Zeliha's and Asya's defiance of moral codes foregrounds the limitations of Turkish nationalism, which maintains gender difference by attributing chastity to women and by giving men the right to control female sexual conduct.

BANU KAZANCI: THE MURDERING SISTER IN THE HEADSCARF

Whereas Zeliha's way of being in Istanbul is depicted through her hostility toward her stalkers on the streets, Banu is never portrayed in a public space of Istanbul, but only appears in her Ottoman mansion, where she gradually leaves behind her worldly interests and devotes herself to Allah. The narrator remarks: "Auntie Banu had suddenly announced the decision that she had secretly been contemplating for only Allah knows how long: to withdraw from everything material and mundane, and to dedicate herself totally to the service of God" (66). The Kazancı women, however, do not take Banu's decision seriously, and even joke that the overweight Banu, who sleeps on luxurious feather mattresses, can never "abandon all worldly vanities, just like the dervishes had done in the past" (66). In order to defend herself, Banu announces "in her new mystical voice" that the days when she idly watched soap operas and had "immense appetite" are over: "I will go into battle with my *nefs* [bodily cravings] and I shall prevail!!!" (67). The interior of Banu's house becomes a convent-like place as she leads "the life of a hermit" by replacing her shawls with scarves, attempting to survive on bread and water, not taking care of her looks, and not socializing with anyone in the

family (67). According to the narrator, Banu finds "blissful abyss" during her forty-day phase of penitence, when she passes "the test of the three P's—penitence, prostration, and piety" by reciting the Qur'an and by giving up her daily routines of gossiping with neighbors, watching television, and doing housework (68). With her religious transformation, Banu excludes Istanbul's public spaces from her life by rarely leaving home and by enjoying her new spiritual way of life in the mansion.

On the morning Banu finishes reading the Qur'an, the narrator remarks that she leaves her room with "a radiant smile, with an uncanny sparkle in her eyes and a cherry red scarf on her head" (68). The family's dispute over Banu's new attire shows how the female body constitutes a "symbolic border", as Deniz Kandiyoti argues, in the ideological battle between the Islamists,[8] advocating women's being allowed to wear a head covering in official premises, and the secularists, fearing that legalization of the headscarf might lead Turkey to become an Islamist state based on Shari`a law ("Identity" 383):

> "What's that sorry thing on your head?" was the first reaction of Grandma Gülsüm [...]
>
> "From this moment on I am going to cover my head as my faith requires."
>
> "What kind of nonsense is that?" Grandma Gülsüm frowned. "Turkish women took off the veil ninety years ago. No daughter of mine is going to betray the rights the great commander-in-chief Atatürk bestowed on the women of this country."
>
> "Yeah, women were given the right to vote in 1934," Auntie Cevriye echoed. "In case you didn't know, history moves *forward*, not *backward*. Take that thing off immediately!" (emphasis added 68)

Raising her daughters in the light of Atatürk's reforms, Gülsüm interprets Banu's headscarf as a threat to the secular regime and glosses over the fact that women should have the freedom to practice religion in a democratic nation. Associating the headscarf with Islamic backwardness, Gülsüm asks Banu "to take that thing off" and participate in Turkey's modernization with European clothing, which, of course, does not include Zeliha's miniskirts. The headscarf dispute in the Kazancı family shows how Turkish women's bodies—veiled and unveiled—become political instruments to advocate both Qur'anic verses and Atatürk's secular reforms. Despite their ideological differences, both camps use women's attire to advocate their conceptualization of Turkey as a democratic nation where citizens can publicly practice Islam or as a secular state that limits religion strictly to the private domain. Within the context of Turkey and Iran,

Homa Hoodfar claims that "women and their interests counted little" in the debates on veiling: "Rather they had become the battlefield and the booty of the harsh and sometimes bloody struggle between the secularists and modernists on one side, and the religious authorities on the other" (259). Ignoring how religious and secular women are equally oppressed by the ideals of modernity and moral propriety in Turkish society, Gülsüm and Cevriye take part in the polarization between Islamic conservatives and proponents of Atatürk's reforms. Gülsüm's reaction to both Zeliha's miniskirt and Banu's headscarf show how women perpetuate the construction of a secular virtuous Turkish female identity by policing each other's bodies and condemning those who do not conform to their gender roles as being shameful or backward.

The coexistence of a miniskirt and headscarf within the Kazancı family also problematizes the history teacher Cevriye's perception of Turkey's modernization as being symmetrical, progressive, and "singular, moving from one stage of development to another" (Mitchell 8). Her reaction to Banu's decision to cover her head shows how she has internalized the "linear procession" of Turkish history moving from the "primitive" Ottoman Empire to the European enlightenment (McClintock 92). Assuming that history is not "simply a movement through time" but also "a gradual rise through a hierarchical progression" on the scales of modernity, Cevriye accuses Banu of regressing by following an Islamic custom which Atatürk wanted to leave behind with the adoption of European dress codes and civil law (Ferguson 176). Turkish history, for Cevriye, starts with the foundation of the Republic in 1923, and therefore she ignores the six centuries of Ottoman tradition of women's covering up, which cannot in fact be totally eliminated and which will eventually be a part of Turkish culture again. Embracing Turkish nationalism's belief in linear time and progress, Cevriye does not consider how Turkey's development can be multi-dimensional, merging Atatürk's reforms and the Ottoman custom of women's covering. Şafak's novel, however, unsettles Cevriye's conception of Turkey's modernity as a movement upward on the ladder of Westernization, and proposes instead a plural, unstable, and history-contingent modernity with the hybridity of the Kazancı family that interweaves secularism with Islam (Ferguson 176).

Banu's decision to cover her head in a matriarchal family of seven women also complicates the nationalist perception of the headscarf as a sign of women's oppression in patriarchal households. Gülsüm's first reaction to Banu's headscarf as a "sorry thing" on her head highlights her assumption that women unwillingly cover their heads because their fathers, brothers, and husbands say it is right (68). Many secularists in Turkey, like Gülsüm, believe that wearing the scarf is not an act of self-assertion but an indication of

male domination over the female body. In "Modernity and Veiled Women", for example, İbrahim Kaya argues that, unlike modern women, headscarved women accept "the superiority of men", "do what their husbands tell them to do", and try to be "a good wife to a Muslim husband" (204). Banu, however, does not fit into Kaya's homogenization of covered women as agents of patriarchy. She refuses to be a traditional housewife and spends more time at the Kazancı mansion, rather than cooking, cleaning, and making love to her husband. Her preference to be with her sisters instead of her "tenderhearted" and "good-natured" husband problematizes the structure of a traditional family living under the same roof (30). After her twin baby boys die due to illness, Banu deserts her husband, with whom she cannot bear living anymore. "She is still married on paper but seldom sees her husband," Asya says, commenting that her auntie seeks "refuge in Allah" to cope with the loss of her children (173). Banu challenges the institution of marriage with her ambivalent position: she does not completely abandon her husband, visiting him once in a while "like a concerned stranger", but never stays over as "a loving spouse" (31). Through Banu, who simultaneously disregards her wifely duties by leaving her husband and covers her head as her faith requires, Şafak's text questions the nationalist discourse that associates the headscarf with women's imprisonment in marriage and secularism with gender emancipation.

Banu's "dazzlingly red" and "eye-catching" headscarf not only defies the construction of a secular female identity in Turkish nationalism but also the Qur'an, which exhorts women to conceal and protect their bodies from the male gaze. Banu's flamboyant headscarf, however, attracts as much attention as Zeliha's miniskirt, and therefore renders her as the center of the onlookers' interest. By wearing a very striking and luminous scarf, Banu deviates from the function of covering to "restrain" men's eyes from the female body and to "guard" women's modesty as stated in the Qur'an (24:30). Banu's headscarf simultaneously disguises her feminine features—such as her hair, neck, and partially her face—but simultaneously attracts attention with its red color, associated with passion, which is not ascribed to women in either the Qur'an or nationalist discourses. In addition to its seductive color, the headscarf itself provokes the gaze of nationalists such as Gülsüm and Cevriye, who perceive it as a "nonsensical" Muslim practice and accuse covered women of violating Atatürk's mission of constructing a secular nation. With Banu, the narrator highlights the in-between position of the headscarf in Turkey: it paradoxically covers the female body but at the same time subjects it to the nationalists' gaze.[9] Banu's seductive red scarf also shows how women's motivation for covering up may be not only to fulfill the ideals of female

modesty in the Qur'an, but also to explore the possibility of both being fashionable and practicing religion.

Banu's profession as a clairvoyant defies both Atatürk's reforms, which ask women to contribute to the nation's progress as social workers, and the Qur'an, which states that only Allah has the knowledge of the future. Like the tattoo artist Zeliha, Banu chooses a vocation that does not fit into Turkish nationalism's depiction of the enlightened woman as a teacher, translator, or nurse. In privileging her personal interests over the nation's by making money from fortune-telling, Banu also goes against her faith by portraying herself as a holy figure capable of predicting women's destinies from coffee cups, tarot cards, and "anything, as long as it would bring news from the paranormal world" (69). The Qur'an, however, clearly states that "all power belongs to Allah", "He is the Hearer, the Knower", and, therefore the knowledge of one's faith only belongs to Allah, and men's speculation regarding the future has no basis in reality (10:65). After reading the Qur'an and covering her head, Banu stops taking money from her "needy customers" and soon becomes famous as "the holy lady" of Istanbul (70). She assumes that dedicating herself "totally to the service of God" will give her the privilege of partaking in His knowledge through divine inspiration and sharing her revelations with her customers (66). Her headscarf also becomes a marker of her knowledge of the workings of Fortuna in the eyes of her customers curious about their futures. By choosing a profession that is not highly regarded either by Turkish nationalism or the Qur'an, Banu problematizes the prejudice against the headscarf as a sign of women's oppression by deviating from the gender roles prescribed in both masculinist discourses.

By supporting women's right to wear a headscarf in Turkey, the text also questions the power of attire to signify one's degree of religiosity, since Zeliha keeps her baby due to her imaginary dialogue with Allah while Banu poisons her brother Mustafa, who has been living in Arizona with the torment of his rape. Ironically, the auntie—who faithfully performs her religious duties by covering her head, praying five times a day, and giving up material interests—commits Islam's most unpardonable crime, murder. The Qur'an asks Muslims to patiently endure their predicaments, return good for evil, and "slay not the life which Allah has made sacred" (6:151). Unable to cope with her knowledge of the rape, Banu believes that Mustafa should pay for his sins on his first visit to Istanbul with his American wife, Rose. While conversing with Banu in his bedroom at the Kazancı domicile, Mustafa inquires about the identity of Asya's father, assuming that his clairvoyant sister would know the family secrets. "I wish I didn't know the things I know", Banu says before leaving a bowl of his favorite dessert

laced with potassium cyanide beside his side of the bed (336). Living with guilt and remorse, Mustafa understands why his sister brought him the bowl and knows exactly what she asks him to do. "The choice belonged to him", the narrator says; he chose to "walk out on his past", and he is relieved to be redeemed for his sins by eating the dessert (336–7). Banu is aware that she violates Islamic laws by intervening in God's plans for His mortals and by encouraging Mustafa to die for his sins at the age of forty: "Allah will never forgive me. I am ostracized forever from the world of the virtuous. I will never go to heaven. I will be thrown directly to the flames of hell. But Allah knows there is little regret in my heart" (355). No one investigates Mustafa's death, and, even if they had, Banu never would have been suspect due to her headscarf, which is perceived as a sign of piety and holiness by her customers. Şafak's novel blurs the lines between the simple dichotomy of religious and irreligious, as the Qur'anic verse that orders man not to kill changes the atheist Zeliha's decision of abortion but does not prevent Banu from causing Mustafa's death.

ARMANOUSH AND CEVRİYE KAZANCI: THE CONSTRUCTION OF TURKISH NATIONAL HISTORY

The construction of Turkish femininity depends not only on women's adoption of secular and modest attire, but also on their acceptance of a national history that glosses over pre-1923 events like the 1915 deportations of Armenians to Syria.[10] While inviting women scholars and novelists to participate in Turkey's social sphere with their publications, the Republic also discourages them from questioning the national history taught in schools. Through the history teacher Cevriye's ignorance of the Armenian massacres, the novel highlights the national tendency to dismiss the pre-Republican past, which is assumed to have no relation to present-day Turkey. As the American-Armenian Armanoush visits Istanbul to discover her family heritage, Şafak's narrator comments that "the past continues to live within the present" and Turkey cannot be seen independently of its imperial past (262). Armanoush imagines Istanbul as a place of her origins and is frustrated to see that the Kazancı women are ignorant of the 1915 massacres, which are the cornerstone of her family history.

Before arriving in Istanbul, Armanoush conceptualizes the city through a chat room named Café Constantinopolis, designed by the grandchildren of Greek- and Armenian-American families who once lived in Istanbul. The narrator remarks that the cybercafé is a therapeutic "sanctuary" for both ethnic groups, which regularly discuss their "common history and culture—'common' oftentimes meaning 'common enemy': the Turks" (111). The opening melody of the website, "Istanbul was Constantinople /

Now it's Istanbul, not Constantinople", indicates how Greeks and Armenians long for the days when Istanbul was a non-Turkish and non-Muslim city (112). The members of the website further express their lament at the Turkification of Istanbul by depicting the city's silhouette with "the flickering shades of sunset, veils upon veils of amethyst and black and yellow" (112). The electronic reflection of a melancholic Istanbul at sunset indicates how Greeks and Armenians consecutively blame the Ottoman Turks for conquering the city in 1453, and for the deportations of their great grandparents in 1915. In "Cyberspace and the City", Alessandro Aurigi and Stephen Graham point out the connection "between the 'virtual' with the 'real' city in the mind of the user" (492). In the case of Café Constantinopolis, the dark, mysterious virtual city resonates with the site's members' assumption that Turks are either treacherous or ignorant.

A child of a divorced Armenian father and an American mother, Armanoush announces to her cyberfriends that she has to travel to Istanbul in order to discover her cultural and ethnic heritage. Armanoush's online statement indicates her belief that Istanbul, the city from which her great grandparents were deported, will help her come to terms with her past, and to establish a sense of belonging to the Armenian community:

> I've never been able to become an Armenian in the first place [...]. I need to find my identity. You know what I've been secretly contemplating? Going to visit my family's house in Turkey. Grandma always talks about this gorgeous house in Istanbul. I'll go and see it with my own eyes. This is a journey into my family's past, as well as into my future. [...] For me to be able to become an Armenian American the way you guys are, I need to find my Armenianness first. If this requires a voyage into the past, so be it, I am going to do that, no matter what the Turks will say or do. (117–19)

Armanoush's perception of her journey to Istanbul as a way of exploring her Istanbulite grandmother Shushan's family heritage hints at her assumption that she can find the traces of the pre-1915 Armenian past in the twenty-first-century city. Armanoush knows about Istanbul through the stories her father's family tells of many prominent Armenians, like Shushan's poet father, who were arrested and taken to police quarters on April 23, 1915. Istanbul, for Armanoush, signifies the reminiscences of her grandmother, whose parent's names were in "the list of Armenian intellectuals to be eliminated", and who died during the Armenian massacres (161). "She [Armanoush] had to go there. That was what she sorely needed: a journey", the narrator says, and, without informing her parents, Armanoush travels to Istanbul and stays with her Turkish stepfather Mustafa's family (115).

Armanoush travels from Arizona to Istanbul only to find that there are no traces of her Armenian grandmother's house in Istanbul. "Look, I have the address of the house [...] My grandma Shushan was born in this house. If you could help me with the directions, I'd like to go and visit it sometime", Armanoush says to Asya's aunts (159). When Asya and Armanoush visit the neighborhood where Shushan used to live, they find out that the house has been replaced by a modern five-story apartment building with a "classy-looking fish restaurant" on the first floor (169). The two girls go into the restaurant and ask about the building's past; the waiters, who have recently migrated from eastern Anatolia to Istanbul, do not have "any memory of the street's history" (170). Armanoush writes to her cyberfriends about her disappointment that her grandmother's house no longer exists: "In its place there is an ugly modern building. It's gone. No traces left behind ... There are no traces, no records, no reminiscences of the Armenian family who lived in that building at the beginning of the century" (182). Her online friends inform her that the names of Armenian architects, such as Mimar Sinan, who built Istanbul's magnificent Ottoman mosques, were changed to Turkish after 1923. "I am sure that the city is nice and scenic", one of the members of Café Constantinopolis writes, but goes on to comment that Istanbul conceals the fact that many of its Ottoman monuments are the masterpieces of Armenian architects (260). While Armanoush spends her evenings reporting her Istanbul trip to her online friends, her grandmother passes away, not knowing that she is looking for her house in Istanbul. Armanoush explains the purpose of her journey to her mother, Rose, who flies to Istanbul to take her daughter back to Arizona: "I came to Istanbul because I thought if I made a journey on my own into my grandmother's city, I could better understand my family heritage and where I stood in life. [...] This whole trip was an attempt to connect with my grandma's past" (303). The purpose of Armanoush's trip, however, is not realized, as she can find no traces of her grandmother in Istanbul, where most Ottoman houses have been torn down and where the Armenian heritage has been erased by the government's replacement of Armenian names by Turkish ones.

Armanoush understands that Turkey's pre-war history with the Armenians does not survive in the memory of Istanbulites, either. Her conversations with Cevriye indicate how women internalize the boundary between the backward Ottoman Empire and the modern Republic, and remain ignorant of the nation's "premodern era and its premodern tragedies" (209). While telling how thousands of Armenians including her great grandparents were "ordered to leave their house and belongings" in Istanbul and "to march a long distance on foot" without food and water to "an unknown destination", Armanoush sadly observes that Cevriye and Banu do not see any

"connection between themselves and the perpetrators of the crimes" (163–4). Both aunties listen to Armanoush's story as a tragedy that affected the peoples of a very distant land and pity her grandmother's mother who died on the way along with many others—including the elderly, the sick, pregnant women, and children—who were either executed or starved to death. The narrator mocks Turkey's national forgetfulness as the history teacher asks: "'Who did this atrocity?!' Auntie Cevriye exclaim[s] as if addressing a classroom of ill-disciplined students" (163). Cevriye blames the Ottoman Turks for being inhuman monsters without acknowledging the continuity between her generation and her ancestors': "The new state in Turkey had been established in 1923 and that was as far as the genesis of this regime could extend. Whatever might or might not have happened preceding this commencement date was the issue of another era—and another people", the narrator states (164). The fact that the Kazancı family has never heard of the 1915 deportations shows how the Armenian massacres are silenced and censored in Turkish history. As teachers are brainwashed to distinguish Turkey's history from its Ottoman heritage, both educators and students remain ignorant of the imperial past.[11]

Yet Şafak's novel does not represent Armanoush's version of the Armenian massacres as the historical truth, either. "Turkish national history is based on censorship, but so is every national history. Nation-states create their own myths and then believe in them", Asya says (260). Armanoush, however, believes in the myth of Turkish barbarians while ignoring the fact that many Turks and Kurds died because of the Armenians' collaboration with Russians, who were fighting against the Ottomans during the First World War (260). The novel questions Turkish national history, which constructs a clear-cut rupture between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic and offers selective accounts of the imperial past. Şafak's representation of the Turkish-Armenian conflict from plural angles, however, was not appreciated by extreme nationalist lawyers, who were offended by her novel's questioning of the official history. Şafak was charged with insulting Turkishness under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, because of an Armenian character's harsh critique of Turks as "butchers" (53). The charges were later dropped when the court stated that a novelist cannot be persecuted for a comment by a fictional character. The charges against Şafak, along with her character Cevriye's ignorance of the Armenian massacres as a history teacher, highlight the paradox in Turkish nationalism, which urges women to be prominent scholars but does not allow them to be enlightened enough to offer a critical revisiting of the past. Istanbulite women's "enlightenment", therefore, includes disavowing the imperial past in favor of

Turkey's modernization and reconfirming the truth of nationalist history in their classrooms and novels.

Although Armanoush fails to find the traces of her Armenian family, she does fall in love with the "twisted and multifaceted" character of Istanbul, where women do not have standardized dress codes and religious practices even within the same household: "It is an urban maze here. More than one single city, it is like cities within a city" (182). In the context of Istanbul, Armanoush defines plurality as "the state of being more than one", and she admires the heterogeneity of the city, where multiple and contrary political beliefs blend and clash (117). In "Eluding the Feminist, Overthrowing the Modern?", Zohreh Sullivan argues, in the context of Iran, that modernity and tradition are "not mutually exclusive" but instead each exists "in a dialectical relationship with its alterity" (215). Şafak's novel also portrays Istanbul as a hybrid space where Atatürk's secular/Western modernity contains its antithesis, such as Banu's headscarf and the Arabic prayers recited from the mosques. Instead of privileging Atatürk's nationalism or Islamic traditions, the novel suggests that it is their interaction that makes Istanbul a "labyrinthine and centreless" city (Wilson 3). The modernity that the text proposes, then, is not the imitation of the West, but rather the coexistence of and the tension between diverse cultural practices (*e.g.* Felski and Abu-Lughod). With such a diversity of characters living under the same roof in Istanbul, Şafak's novel investigates the possibility of a Turkish society that does not choose between "the secular modernists" and "the traditionalists", and that liberates women—both veiled and unveiled—from nationalist codes of moral propriety and modernity (81).

NOTES

[1] I use the term Istanbulite to refer to women with diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds living in Istanbul. The term does not connote a unified cultural group in a city with a heterogeneous population consisting of Kurds, Turks, Macedonians, and Armenians.

[2] See Keyder, Mitchell, and Zehra Arat.

[3] For Atatürk, Turkey's rupture from its "backward" Ottoman past depended on the emergence of the new unveiled Turkish woman who partakes in the public sphere as an educated social worker and also conforms to patriarchal ideals of feminine virtue. His ideal of Turkish woman "was to be 'modern' in appearance and intellect but was still required to preserve the traditional virtue of chastity" (Parla 75). The diversity of Şafak's characters, wearing headscarves and miniskirts, serves as a critique of Turkish nationalism that dismisses the plurality of women's dress codes and religious practices for the sake of creating a uniform female identity.

[4] Here I rely on Marshall Berman's and Rita Felski's arguments that modernity cannot be reduced to a monolithic worldview. In *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*, Berman remarks that tension defines modernity: "To be modern is to live a life of paradox and contradiction. [...] It is to be both revolutionary and conservative: alive to new possibilities for experience and adventure [...]. We might even say that to be

fully modern is to be anti-modern" (13-14). Rita Felski, in *The Gender of Modernity*, also defines modernity as an unstable process: "Rather than inscribing a homogenous cultural consensus, the discourses of modernity reveal multiple and conflicting responses to processes of social change" (15).

[5] The Turkish Value of Children Study, conducted by Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı in both rural and urban areas of Turkey, shows that forty-six percent of the interviewed married persons "perceive boys to be more instrumental to the satisfaction of their most important values" (491). In "Status of Women in Turkey: Cross-Cultural Perspectives", Kağıtçıbaşı uses the findings of her research to foreground women's inferiority in Turkish society, which indicates a "preference for boys" and values "patriarchal-patrilinear traditions" and "male lineage" (491).

[6] In "Emancipated but Unliberated? Reflections on the Turkish Case", Deniz Kandiyoti argues that the responsibility of preserving women's honor is oppressive for Turkish men who are expected to live up to the ideals of male superiority. She notes that men tend to engage in violent acts in order to reassert their domination over women like Zeliha, who refuse to conform to the moral codes of Turkish society: "[I]n cultures such as Turkey [*sic*] which controls female sexuality rigidly and at the same time requires that men flaunt their masculine prowess, men are intensely preoccupied with possible loss of sexual identity. This state of affairs could partially account for the persistent element of danger associated with the female sex, an element that introduces the possibility of subjugation through violence especially when and if female behavior is construed as a slight against masculinity or male 'honor'" (327).

[7] In "Sexing political identities/nationalism as heterosexism", V. Spike Peterson states that although nationalisms give women the duty to reproduce ethnic cultures through motherhood, "not all reproduction is equally desirable to state/nation elites: some breeders and 'breeds' are more acceptable than others" (65). As Peterson remarks, even "extermination" is encouraged to "limit the size of 'undesirable' groups," such as illegitimate children, who deviate from the traditional family structure.

[8] Here I am relying on Nilüfer Göle's definition of Islamism, in *The Forbidden Modern*, as a struggle to "defend Islamic identity and independence" (109) in a secular nation that bans headscarves in government premises and as "a desire to realize a systemic change, to create an Islamic society" in Turkey (141).

[9] In *Femmes Fatales*, Mary Ann Doane states that the veil "simultaneously conceals and reveals, provoking the gaze. The question of whether the veil facilitates vision or blocks it can receive only a highly ambivalent answer inasmuch as the veil, in its translucence, both allows and disallows vision" (48-49). I am relying on Doane's argument to show how the headscarf both disguises the female body and reveals the tension between nationalists and Islamists in Turkey.

[10] The Armenian question is one of most debated issues both in Turkey and in the international arena. Many scholars, such as Vahakn Dadrian, blame the Ottoman Empire for carrying "out one of the largest genocides in world history, destroying huge portions of its minority Armenian population", and accuse Turkey of representing the "historical fact of the Armenian genocide" as a civil war (xiix). Donald Bloxham, Stephan Astourian, and Richard Hovannisian concur that the Ottoman Turks killed more than one million Armenians during the First World War and "systematically destroyed Armenian architecture and monuments to erase any physical traces of an Armenian presence" for the construction of a homogenous Turkish state (Bloxham 228). Many Turkish writers, such as Emre Kongar, deny the claims of genocide by arguing that the Ottoman Empire had to take drastic measures to protect itself from the Armenians, who were revolting against the empire by allying with the Russians during the First World War and by massacring Turks. Although Kongar accepts the deportations of Armenians to Syria, he denies that this was a pre-planned act to exterminate the ethnic group, and writes that more than a thousand authorities guilty of this crime were either sentenced to death or imprisoned after the First World War (90). Jeremy Salt supports Kongar's argument by questioning the statistics provided by Armenian writers and claiming that "the number of Muslims who died during the same period was bound to be much higher than any estimates of Armenian casualties" and points out that fanatical Armenians continued to assassinate Turkish ambassadors (21). Belinda Cooper and Taner Akcam, however, foreground the economic factors behind the genocide debate by commenting that Turkey avoids the word

"genocide" in order not to pay large sums of money to the United Nations for the crimes of its imperial past (91). Despite their contradictory opinions, both camps realize that Turkey's rejection of the genocide is detrimental to its relationship with the European Parliament, which requires the Turkish government to recognize the incident as genocide as a condition of being admitted to the European Union (e.g. Dadrian, Cooper, and Akcam).

[11] In "National History as a Contested Site," Alev Çınar claims that Turkish national history "pays only minor attention" to the Ottoman period because it "was achieved by the creation of a historical rupture, a break with the past marked by the founding of the Republic on October 29, 1923. In order to create a new beginning, an end had to be created as well, which required the distancing of the self from everything that marked the immediate past" (370).

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