

ISTANBUL’S GHOST STORIES: INVESTIGATING THE URBAN GOTHIC SPACE
IN AHMET ÜMIT’S “A MEMENTO FOR ISTANBUL” AND BARBARA NADEL’S

“LAND OF THE BLIND”



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YEDİTEPE UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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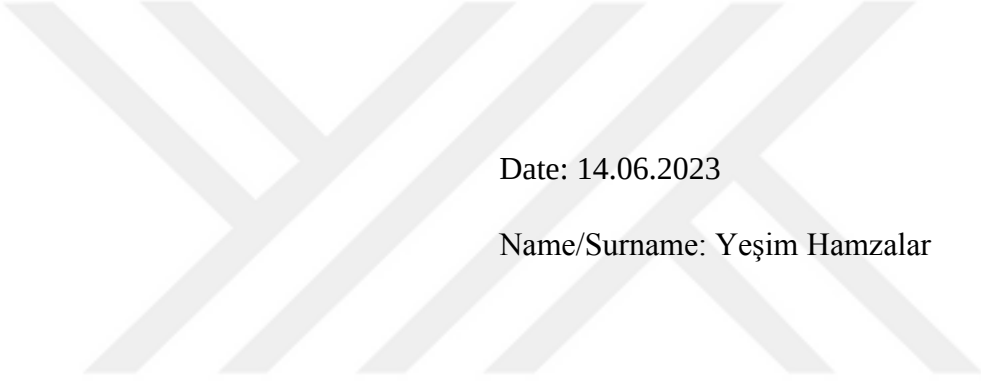
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the representations of Istanbul as an Urban Gothic Space in Ahmet Ümit's "A Memento For Istanbul" and Barbara Nadel's "Land of the Blind". The study explores the urban space of Istanbul and argues for its palimpsestic nature, haunted by the blood and memories of the past civilizations and empires that it was once home to. Further emphasis is placed on the constant tug of war between the old and the new and East vs West. The supernatural and various transgressions which are manifested mainly in the historical parts of the urban city are investigated by employing various theories of Gothic and related fields. The first chapter starts with a reading of Ahmet Ümit's historical crime fiction "A Memento for Istanbul" employing an Urban Gothic framework, accompanied by Derrida's concept of "Hauntology". Furthermore, a survey of the city's history in accordance with the theories is conducted. In the second chapter, in Barbara Nadel's crime fiction "Land of The Blind", the intersecting stories of the victim Ariadne Savva and the Negroponte family are explored through Bakhtin's Chronotopes and Carnavalesque. The Negroponte's "Gothic House" is discussed by employing Freud's "Uncanny", together with Poe's recurring Gothic theme, "Fear of being buried alive". Additionally, two Gothic subgenres are investigated, i.e. "The Queer Uncanny" and "Gothic Postmodernism". In the third chapter Walter Benjamin's concept of the "Flâneur" is employed. Inspector Nevzat Akman from "A Memento for Istanbul" and Inspector Çetin Ikmen from "Land of The Blind" are compared and portrayed as Flâneur-detectives turning the idle act of strolling into a purposeful act of investigating crime and historicizing the Gothic city in the process. Moreover, the protagonist Ariadne Savva is depicted as a female engaging in "street haunting" through Woolf's concept of the "Flâneuse".

ÖZET

Bu tez, Ahmet Ümit'in "A Memento For Istanbul" (İstanbul Hatırası) ve Barbara Nadel'in "Land of the Blind" (Körler Ülkesi) adlı eserlerinde İstanbul'un Kentsel Gotik Mekanı olarak temsillerini inceliyor. Çalışma, İstanbul'un kentsel mekanını inceliyor ve geçmiş medeniyetlerin ve imparatorlukların kanı ve anılarıyla hayatletlenen palimpsestik doğasını savunuyor. Ayrıca, eski ve yeninin ve Doğu ile Batının sürekli çekişmesi ve çatışmasına vurgu yapılıyor. Antik kentin çoğunlukla tarihi bölgelerinde ortaya çıkan doğaüstü ve çeşitli ihlaller Gotik ve ilgili alanların teorileri kullanılarak inceleniyor. İlk bölüm Ahmet Ümit'in tarihi polisiye romanı "İstanbul Hatırası"nın Derrida'nın "Hayatletbilim" kavramıyla, Kentsel Gotik bir çerçevede okumasıyla başlıyor. Ek olarak Gotik teorilerle uyumlu olarak şehrin tarihi bir incelemesi yapılıyor. İkinci bölümde, Barbara Nadel'in polisiye romanı "Körler Ülkesi"nde kurban Ariadne Savva ve Negroponte ailesinin kesişen hikayeleri Bakhtin'in Kronotop ve Karnavalesk kavramları ile inceleniyor. Negroponte ailesinin "Gotik Evi" Freud'un "Uncanny" ve Poe'nun tekrarlayan Gotik teması "Canlı gömülme korkusu" ile birlikte ele alınıyor. Ayrıca "Queer Uncanny" ve "Gotik Postmodernism" gibi iki Gotik alt tür de inceleniyor. Üçüncü bölümde Walter Benjamin'in "Flâneur" kavramı kullanılıyor. "İstanbul Hatırası"nın Komiser Nevzat Akman ve "Körler Ülkesi"nin Komiser Çetin İkmen'i Flâneur dedektifler bağlamında karşılaştırılıyor. Flâneur dedektifler gezinti yapma eylemini suçları araştırmak ve bu süreçte Gotik şehri tarihselleştirmek için amaçlı bir eyleme dönüştürüyorlar. Ayrıca protagonist Ariadne Savva, Woolf'un Flâneuse kavramıyla bir kadın "sokak gezgini" olarak konumlandırılıyor.

DEDICATION

To my beloved dad, I miss you so very much... To my kind, and loving mom, I am forever indebted to you...



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I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude,

to my dear supervisor, Prof. Dr. Adriana Raducanu, it was a pleasure and privilege to work with you and to learn from you. Thank you for your patience, guidance, and support. I am extremely grateful that you took me on as a student and believed in me.

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To my loving and supportive parents, without you, this wouldn't be possible. Dad, you would have been proud...

To my furbaby Erik, my quiet companion, now playing by the Rainbow Bridge.

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INTRODUCTION

This study aims to explore the representations of Istanbul as an Urban Gothic Space in Ahmet Ümit's "A Memento For Istanbul" and Barbara Nadel's "Land of The Blind". The study argues for the palimpsestic nature of the city, haunted by the blood and memories of the past civilizations and empires that it was once home to. Sara Wasson posits that early Gothic literature relied on ghosts or demons to create a sense of fear; in contrast, the metropolis summons the horrors of human violence and corruption which can be horrifying enough without relying on supernatural elements. The anonymity of the city provides a space for sexual and criminal transgression. Literary portrayals of the city reflect the anxieties around class and capital and the city's diurnal dualism is used to represent internal psychological struggles. Disorienting, maze-like, and claustrophobic cities are expressive settings for the Gothic (Wasson, 2010, p. 3).

The first chapter starts with a reading of Ahmet Ümit's crime novel "A Memento for Istanbul" employing an Urban Gothic framework, accompanied by Derrida's concept of "Hauntology". "A Memento for Istanbul" is a murder mystery set in the backdrops of a historical urban city. Chief Inspector Nevzat, in pursuit of the criminals, follows the clues and finds himself immersed in the Gothic past of the city. Nevertheless, as Robert Mighall argues, a Gothic setting is not enough for a city to be called Gothic. For a city to possess a Gothic quality, it requires a significant collection of memories and historical associations that would be manifested in an existing architectural or topographical legacy, as these areas offer a natural setting for supernatural entities that embody imagined or projected significances (Mighall, 2007, p. 57). Furthermore, Mighall claims, the persistence of historical memory is a fundamental feature of Gothic representation; this, for the Urban Gothic implies the city's criminal past haunting its civic present (Mighall, 2007, p. 55). In "A Memento for Istanbul", the seven murders are committed in order to save and protect the archaic city. The narrative, interestingly, facilitates the readers sympathizing with the murderers as they are avenging the death of their loved ones and cleansing the city of ongoing corruption. In the first chapter a survey of the city's history in accordance with the theories is conducted. Further emphasis will be placed on the constant tug of war between the old and the new and East vs. West. Additionally, the struggle and anxiety that lead way to the supernatural and various transgressions which

are manifested mainly in the historical parts of the urban space will be examined. As Botting claims, the intrigue with transgression and the unease that arises from crossing cultural boundaries, still evoke complex feelings and implications in narratives of darkness, lust, and power (Botting, 1995, p. 1).

In the second chapter, in Barbara Nadel's crime novel "Land of The Blind", the intersecting stories of the victim Ariadne Savva and the Negroponte family are explored. The silent protagonist is again the Gothic city, Istanbul. Inspector Ikmen and his team investigate Ariadne Savva's death and search for her missing baby while roaming the archaic city for clues. Bakhtin's Chronotopes and how they represent a crisis and break in life are the theoretical frameworks employed. Furthermore, life turned inside out in the Park (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 329) is portrayed through Bakhtin's Carnavalesque; how the Negroponte House has been turned into a "Gothic House" is discussed by employing Freud's "Uncanny", together with Poe's recurring gothic theme, "Fear of being buried alive". Madam Anastasia is related to Bertha Mason using the "Madwomen in the Attic" trope; it is argued that the constructs that the patriarchy inflicts on women often lead to their demise. Additionally, two Gothic subgenres are investigated, i.e. "The Queer Uncanny" and "Gothic Postmodernism". Paulina Palmer posits that "The Queer Uncanny" originated from recognizing that numerous contemporary fictional works utilize visual elements and themes of the Uncanny and Gothic to explore various aspects of queer sexuality and transgender experience. According to Palmer, the Gothic's ability to transgress boundaries through unconventional and wandering elements is particularly noticeable when it deals with queer identity and experiences (Palmer, 2012, p. 11). In "The Land of The Blind" there is an abundance of queer characters and experiences. They all unite in the Park to protest against the establishment of yet another shopping mall. During this gathering, the Park becomes a place where they can display their queer identities openly as opposed to their regular lives where they are usually closeted or huddled in their own quarters. In Gothic Postmodernism, Maria Beville builds on David Punter's notion of the Gothic as the literature of terror and defines Gothic-postmodernism as intensifying the Gothic language of terror to encompass the contemporary fears and worries of our postmodern period as well as the notions of terror that have arisen from the domain of postmodern cultural theory (Beville, 2009, p. 9). Almost two decades earlier,

Baudrillard claimed that modern cities have taken the place of graveyards and resemble abandoned towns that symbolize death. If a highly functioning and extensive metropolis represents the pinnacle of civilization, then ours can be described as a society of decay and death. (Baudrillard 1993, pp. 127). Thus, in the “Land of The Blind” the protests in the park exemplify the cry against capitalism and the anxiety caused by the oppression provoked by the constant development of high-rising building blocks and the perpetual pressure to consume and become indebted to the government and capitalism.

In the third chapter Walter Benjamin’s concept of the “Flâneur” is employed. Inspector Nevzat Akman from “A Memento for Istanbul” and Inspector Çetin Ikmen from “Land of The Blind” are compared and portrayed as Flâneur-detectives turning the idle act of strolling into a purposeful act of investigating crime and historicizing the Gothic city in the process. Furthermore, the Inspectors’ relationship to the crowds and the city in the context of the “Flâneur” is investigated. Virginia Woolf contends that the desire to possess a lead pencil can be a reason for walking halfway through London between tea and dinner. If we can use this excuse as a pretext, we could enjoy one of the greatest pleasures of winter city life which is wandering the streets of London without any risk or danger (Woolf, 2014). In this context, Woolf’s flâneuse is indeed like Baudelaire’s flâneur who enjoys the hustle and bustle of the big city. Corresponding to Baudelaire’s flâneur and Woolf’s flâneuse the protagonist Ariadne Savva in “Land of the Blind” adopts the qualities of the flâneuse while “street haunting” in the streets of Istanbul pursuing an investigation of her own. Woolf’s flâneuse encounters the hunchback, the crippled, and disfigured in other words the “Grotesque” in the city. This generates a Carnavalesque environment in the city. This Carnavalesque environment which according to Bakhtin is life taken out of its usual routine and to a certain extent “Life turned inside out” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 329-31) is portrayed in depth in the “Park” in “Land of The Blind”. Elizabeth Wilson argues there are various stereotypes of women found in literature such as the seductive temptress, the promiscuous whore, the fallen woman, and the lesbian. Many writers viewed the presence of a woman as a challenge to societal order due to the association of women with the possibility of sexual excitement, which was perceived as a moral and political danger. (Wilson, 1992, p. 6). These stereotypes of women are also represented in abundance in the “Land of the Blind” such as Sergeant

Gürsel's transgender lover Pembe and lesbian wife Sinem, and the antagonist Ahmet Öden's mistress the big brassy gypsy Gülizar.



CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction

The deity was looking at the King. [...] “Salutations to You, Poseidon,” exclaimed the King. [...] Salutations to You, Most Magnificent of the Gods, Supreme Ruler of the Seas, and Protector of the People of Megara. With Your grace, we have laid claim to this rich land, surrounded on three sides by this bountiful sea. With your grace, we have founded this city, this city which rises like a testament to Your Brilliance from the bowels of the earth. With your grace, we thrive, on land and at sea. We implore You, as the one who loves us as His own children, who has shown us mercy and has protected us, to accept this, our sacrifice, a mark of our loyalty and obedience. [...] The King, in the knowledge that neither the Deity or the sacrifice were to be kept waiting, grasped the hilt of his broad sword and took a step towards the bull. He placed the blade under the creature’s head and sliced open his throat. [...] Unrepentant, the King felt the cool serenity of a man who had performed his duty; and yet, somehow, he could not stop staring into the eyes of his sacrifice as they quickly faded away into lifelessness (Ümit, 2010, p. 3-5).

Ahmet Ümit’s crime novel “A Memento for Istanbul” is a murder mystery set in the backdrops of a historical urban city. This chapter aims to explore the representations of Istanbul as an Urban Gothic Space in “A Memento for Istanbul”, employing an Urban Gothic framework, accompanied by Derrida’s concept of “Hauntology”. This chapter will start with a summary of the novel, followed by a survey of the city’s history in accordance with the theories.

A Memento For Istanbul’s protagonist, renegade Chief Inspector Nevzat goes on a wild goose chase around Istanbul in order to solve seven savage murders. His detectives Ali and Zeynep assist him on this deadly pursuit. The murders are committed consecutively and the corpses are left under seven historical sites. Ümit embellishes his novel with myths, folklore, and cruelties that have taken place throughout the history of this palimpsest city.

While on a macabre hunt Nevzat confronts his tragic past. After recently losing his wife and daughter in an explosion that was meant to kill himself instead, he is overwhelmed with guilt. Furthermore, he is trying to sustain a romantic relationship with his beautiful and kind Greek girlfriend Evgenia. Shortly after the murders, he reconnects with his childhood friends the withdrawn vet Demir, and Istanbul lover, architect Yekta. This reunion brings back memories of other tragic deaths, that of their beloved Handan, the trio's best friend, and first platonic love, and her son Umut. Years later, Handan and Yekta had got married and had a son together, Umut. Consequently, an emotionally fragile Nevzat is both on a hunt for the killers and haunted by the ghosts of his past.

Nevzat goes back and forth in time, entangled in the myths and history of the city. He frequently encounters the supernatural, such as the living breathing furniture, faces in mirrors, and ghosts of his daughter, wife, and Handan haunting him. His childhood comrades with whom he has shared the tragic loss of Handan are also haunted by these memories. Thus, they are in search of a way to reconcile with the past and bring justice to their precious friend and her beloved son Umut. They had died in a terrible accident that was a result of the neglect of the novel's villain, the greedy and pompous businessman Ahmed Yezdani. Ahmed Yezdani is a supposed lover of Istanbul and history, whose knowledge of history is considerable. He has devoted his knowledge and skills to creating an urban tourist center by rebuilding the city's forgotten historical gems. Yet in his scheme to rebuild the historical places the notorious villain sets out to plunder the ruins and remains of the ancient city and old peninsula, thereby destroying nature in order to erect a pastiche of the historical city. Nevzat, in pursuit of the criminals, follows the clues and finds himself immersed in the gothic past of the city, only to discover tragically that the killers were his best friends avenging their beloved friend Handan and her son's unfortunate death. They also meant to punish corruption and salvage their city's history.

In an interview, Ümit explains that Inspector Nevzat on one hand is a rational detective with an analytical mind who investigates crime and hunts down murderers. On the other hand, he is a living breathing human being burdened by death, suffering, and violence. He doesn't dwell in New York, London or Paris. He dwells in Istanbul, in its wealthy, poor, and historical neighborhoods. In short, Nevzat is a troubled "İstanbullu".

The reason why he is so popular amongst Turkish readers is because he is one of us (Uştuk & Şeref, 1919).

1.2 Istanbul: The Gothic City

The study argues for the palimpsestic nature of the city, haunted by the blood and memories of the past civilizations and empires that it was once home to. Further emphasis will be placed on the constant tug of war between the old and the new and East vs. West. Additionally, the struggle and anxiety that lead way to the supernatural and various transgressions which are manifested mainly in the historical parts of the urban space will be examined. As Botting claims “The fascination with transgression and the anxiety over cultural limits and boundaries, continue to produce ambivalent emotions and meanings in their tales of darkness, desire, and power.” (Botting, 1995, p. 1)

The gothic tradition transitions from the country to the urban city in the 19th century, with T Reynolds’ “The Mysteries of London” (1845) and Dickens’s “Bleak House” (1853). As Allan Pritchard illustrates:

When Mr. Jarndyce directs Esther's attention from the restored Bleak House to the London slums, he is pointing out in effect that the real locale of Gothic horror is no longer to be found in the country mansion, but rather in the midst of the city. His Bleak House thus provides a crucial link and point of transition between the traditional rural Gothic setting and the new urban Gothic setting (Pritchard, 1991).

However, Robert Mighall argues that a Gothic setting is not enough for a city to be called gothic. The “Gothic of a city [...] needs a concentration of memories and historical associations” that would be “expressed in an extant architectural or topographical heritage, as these areas provide the natural home for ghostly presences of imagined/ projected meanings.” (Mighall, 2007, p. 57). Moreover, a structured city demands a different spatial model for its horrors. Horror cannot loiter in secluded forgotten pockets. (Mighall, 2007, p. 57) In Hugo’s “Les Misérables” (1862) and “The Phantom of the Opera” (1910), there is the concept of the “criminal underworld”. In “The Phantom of the Opera” the myth of the ghost of the Paris Opera provides us with the historical association of the ghostly presence - the Phantom. In addition, the secret passages under the Paris Opera, the underground lake, and catacombs are the urban gothic

settings where the villain lurks. The heroine Christine is both bewitched by and afraid of the antagonist Erik - the Phantom. She depicts him as a man with many skills that can hear her whenever she calls for help. He is a man who lives underground that can do things that no other man can do. He knows things that are unknown in the land of the living (Gaston, 2012, p. 410). In Hugo's "Les Misérables", "Patron-Minette" was the name of the four-man society depicted as a single monstrous polyp of evil living in the crypt of society in Paris. They usually met at nightfall when they woke up in the wasteland next to La Salpêtrière to plot and implement their evil deeds until the morning. However, Hugo notes that society cannot be rid of these underground criminals sneaking around the sewers of Paris, for even when they are dead, "under the dark roof of their holds, they are forever reborn out of the slime society oozes." They return like ghosts, always the same yet they do not carry the same names and wander in the same skin (Hugo, 2010, p. 1,192). Similarly, in "A Memento for Istanbul", the city itself is full of secret quarters where corrupt businessmen, politicians, and journalists have been plotting and implementing their evil deeds. In addition, the seven brutal murders are carried out in a "kill room" at night and subsequently displayed under ancient monuments. Nevertheless in "A Memento for Istanbul", the seven murders are committed in order to save and protect the archaic city and the reader sympathizes with the murderers as they are avenging the death of their loved ones and cleansing the city of continuing corruption. As Mighall argues, one of the essentials of Gothic representation is the persistence of historical memory, thus "for the Urban Gothic this meant the criminal past haunting the civic present" (Mighall, 2007, p. 55).

The protagonist's first mention of Istanbul is the Istanbul of his childhood, but his memories are vague. "I was taken back to the old days, the good old days, to the Istanbul of my childhood, to those patchy images, those distant voices, those scenes from now hazy memories... But try as I might to revive them, they'd lost their former clarity" (Ümit, 2010, p. 7). As the former images of Istanbul blur in Nevzat's memory, so do the boundaries between self and place. What is "heimlich" becomes "unheimlich". According to Freud, the German word *unheimlich* is the opposite of *heimlich*. *Heimlich* is what is familiar and what belongs to home. Hence the "uncanny" is frightening since it is unfamiliar. (Freud, 2003). In this context in "A Memento for Istanbul" Istanbul becomes

an uncanny Urban Gothic space, and the protagonist dwelling in this space is treading between the heimlich and unheimlich. According to Wolfreys the nature of Being-as-dwelling is primarily to always be homeless, unheimlich, and uncanny. To be aware of this as a fundamental function of the new Urban Gothic is crucial. The importance of this functionality is that it is materially and culturally historiographical as well as phenomenological and ontological (Wolfreys, 2020, p. 20). Inspector Nevzat is a born and bred “İstanbullu”, thereupon the backstreets and far corners of Istanbul are not unfamiliar to him. Similarly, he is also accustomed to the history, myths, and folklore of the city through his mother’s tales, visits to museums, and adventures with his childhood friends. However, due to the passage of time the way he sees things are not the same as he remembers them. Consequently, Nevzat frequently finds himself roaming between the heimlich and unheimlich.

Istanbul, a city of two continents is both literally and metaphorically situated between the East and the West. Set in the land of the mythical King Byzas who was Poseidon’s son and founded in d. 337 by Constantine, the first Roman Emperor who embraced Christianity; Istanbul was also home to the fascinating Ottoman Empire. From the Megeran pagans to the Christian Roman Empire and Islamic Ottoman Empire, Istanbul became a melting pot albeit a sizzling one that was a habitat to many different religions and powerful rulers. Jelena Bogdanović emphasizes “Constantinople, the capital city of the medieval Roman Empire which we know as the Byzantine Empire (324–1453), was the largest and most thriving urban center in the Old World” (Bogdanović, 2016, p. 97).

Ümit’s victims are found in the old city, nearby historical monuments which were once upon a time, glamorous establishments thriving with people. Thus, this posits a twofold alignment with the Urban Gothic; firstly, the demolition of the glorified past, and secondly the changing of the gothic setting. Sara Wasson notes that whilst the settings of eighteenth-century Gothic are mostly castles, monasteries, convents, or forests, as the nineteenth century advanced these settings transformed into the flourishing metropolis. In the wake of industrialization and increasing urbanization, the bleak countryside settings

of earlier Gothic were replaced with thriving cities. As a result, not only did the location of malice change so did the nature of the threat (Wasson, 2010, pp. 2-3).

While earlier Gothic generates a thrill of fear with ghosts or demons, the metropolis evokes the horrors of human violence and corruption, terrifying enough without necessarily needing a supernatural edge. The city's anonymity enables sexual and criminal transgression. Literary representations of the city reflect the anxieties that circulate around class and capital and the city's diurnal duality is recruited to represent interior psychic dramas. Disorienting, labyrinthine, and claustrophobic cities are evocative settings for the Gothic (Wasson, 2010, p. 3).

Furthermore, the historical places where the killers leave the bodies and the way the executions are performed signify a kind of ceremony, a ritual. In all the killings the murderers are placed in a prayer position and their throats are slashed. Correlatively, in gothic literature, rituals are important to restore the order. Krzywinska emphasizes there is a visible sense of urban decay as part of the anthropic landscape where questionable human actions cause its deterioration. To quell the consequent anxiety and attempt to restore order, rituals must be performed to cleanse the habitation. (Krzywinska, 2020, p.145). Additionally, coins minted in past civilizations that were found in the victims' palms portray another element of these rituals. According to Pritchard, mystery in Gothic fiction is also associated with ancient, indecipherable documents, or lost documents. (Pritchard, 1991). Hence, the aforementioned coins can be thought of as such documents.

1.3 The City and Its Dreamers

Nevzat's complacent solitude which consists of his work and comforting smoking habit is interrupted by his last murder case and reunion with his childhood friends. His hunt around the old city evokes old memories. He reminisces about his mother's stories about history, their museum visits as well as his adventures around the city with his childhood friends. Triggered by these memories and by the hauntings of his wife and daughter, Nevzat frequently finds himself in the realm of the supernatural.

It was madness... I found myself in an ancient hippodrome filled with crowds of thousands upon thousands. Gone was Sultanahmet Square; in its place was a Roman hippodrome, its imposing stone stand filled with baying crowds. [...] I saw him again, the man I was chasing (Ümit, 2010 p.123).

Another encounter with the supernatural occurs when he walks around Hagia Sophia with Leyla Barkin, a museum director and art historian who is a consultant employed in the murder investigation. Nevzat loses his grip on reality and starts to hallucinate about his late wife and daughter. He sees a vision of his late wife Güzide in Leyla Barkin's clothes (Ümit, 2010, p.352). The dreamlike state that Nevzat frequently drifts into in the novel is at odds with the rationality presupposed by his very profession but is a clear feature of gothic and its associations with ambiguity, excess, incoherence. Nevzat's dreamlike state can be read as a gothic representation of his subconscious.

The gothic use of dreams may be more properly understood as expressing the uneasy tension in the period between scientific and religious explanations of dream experience. The dreamers in these stories tend to be wounded figures suffering from some physical and psychological disturbance and some visionary experience that they commonly explain in terms of the supernatural. Those explanations, however, usually contend in the text with a desire for a more "psychological" explanation that connects the dream to some undisclosed repressed material, some traumatic experience, or some crisis in authority experienced by the dreamer. The conflict between these two viewpoints becomes apparent when the dreamer chooses either to convert the dream event into the common words of our language or to submit it to the uncommon language of the divine (Thomas, 1990).

Conversely, Chief Inspector Nevzat is aware of his dreams and nightmares and doesn't allow them to influence him. Hence, following his dream of the Roman hippodrome, he remarks he had never arrested anyone because of a dream and he wasn't going to do so now (Ümit, 210, p.127).

1.4 Gothic Identities in the City

The search for identity is another gothic theme in “A Memento for Istanbul”. Wolfreys claims that our dwelling is also a “displacement, a homelessness” as a result of this we are overcome with a “Persistent sense of anxiety and the uncanny, as each and every modern urban subject remains caught up in, and in the wake of a search for identity, subjectivity, and selfhood.” Moreover, the Urban Gothic notes that we are always estranged from any home pursuing the ghosts of ourselves. Thus, we are eternally chasing the haunting figures of otherness that lie at the heart of who we are (Wolfreys, 2020, p. 23). In this sense, inspector Nevzat and his childhood friends Demir and Yekta are having trouble coming to terms with who they have become as well as finding purpose in living after the loss of their loved ones. In Yekta’s words, they killed in order to give their lives some kind of meaning. To have something to live for (Ümit, 2010, p.569). As Raducanu posits, albeit in a different context: “Trauma, loss, and search for identity are general Gothic tropes which are also present in different urban narratives and/or poems written by Turkish authors centered on the image of Istanbul.” (Raducanu, 2014)

When the protagonist Nevzat goes to one of Istanbul's old derelict neighborhoods Eğrikapı to talk to a person of interest in the murders, he remembers one of the games they played with Demir, Yekta, and Handan when they were children.

Back then it had been a bit of a gypsy quarter with fewer houses and shops and far fewer people. But the legend of the famous Kaşıkçı Elması - the Spoonmaker’s Diamond found in a rubbish dump, the morose grandeur of Tekfur palace, the gruesome Prison’s of Anemas, the strange marble-pooled Ayia Zoni Ayazması, and the cemetery which housed the remains of some of the Companions of the Prophet, alongside the ancient crumbling walls which now circled all those weird and wonderful buildings, imbued Eğrikapı with enough magic and mystery to children’s playful albeit imaginary, escapades (Ümit, 2010, p. 242).

Demir gets lost in the winding passageways of the Dungeons of Anemas causing the other children to panic and cry with worry. Then he suddenly steps out of the darkness claiming he has dug out the Byzantine emperor’s sword from the bowels of the earth (Ümit, 2010, p. 243). Accordingly, this portrays how the myths and folklore of the history

of the city are ingrained in the habitants of Istanbul starting from childhood. Conversely, Andreas Huyssen notes:

We have come to read cities and buildings as palimpsests of space [...] Of course, the majority of buildings are not palimpsests at all. As Freud once remarked, the same space cannot possibly have two different contents. But an urban imaginary in its temporal reach may well put different things in one place: memories of what there was before, imagined alternatives to what there is. The strong marks of present space merge in the imaginary with traces of the past, erasures, losses, and heterotopias (Huyssen, 2003, p. 7).

However, for Ümit, the memory of what was there before, in other words, the history of the city is an important part of its identity. Yekta remarks “[...]The old names of the city and its neighborhoods are all being swept aside. This city is losing its grasp of the past, and cities as you know, are just like people - if they forget their history and lose their sense of the past, then they also lose their sense of self [...]” (Ümit, 2010 p.95). Notwithstandingly in a different context, Raducanu states “Istanbul as an exceptional urban space is articulated through the exposition of a multiplicity of historical layers, reminiscent not of a Tower of Babel-like imagery, but one that is suggestive of heaviness, the enormous historical and geographical burden that the city has to endure” (Raducanu, 2014). Additionally, in his Memoir “Istanbul: Memories and the City” Pamuk associates Istanbul with Hüzün (Melancholy). According to Pamuk, this Hüzün (Melancholy) derives from the collective sense of loss against the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the eternal sense of deprivation compared to the geographically close Europe (Pamuk, 2003, p. 48). Huyssen attests to Pamuk’s association of Hüzün with Istanbul, noting that in the urban scenes Pamuk depicts “Hüzün becomes palpable almost as a material reality.” (Huyssen 2008, p. 14) For Huyssen, in Istanbul, the remains of a glorified past civilization are to be seen everywhere, in the arches, fountains, and mosques no matter how ill-kept they are. Yet Istanbul simply carry on with their lives among the ruins. Despite the fact that these ruins are constant reminders of the city’s poor and confused state. In addition, they are indicators of the fact that it will never again rise to its former wealth, culture, and power (Huyssen, 2008, p. 299). In my opinion Ümit’s characters are also imbued in this thick fog like Hüzün. Although they are not mourning

the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire or its former power. They are simply devastated that their city is robbed of its history, beauty, memories, and folklore as a result of the greed and corruption of the people who are now in power. In other words, they are grieving the loss of their city's diverse, multilayered, and vibrant former identity.

1.5 The City and Its Specters

Ümit constantly draws upon the duality of the East and West in the city; hence, the urban landscape is a palimpsest of intertwined layers of eastern and western influences. The murder suspect Namık Karaman exclaims "I often see, especially on a full moon night, a ghost rise out of this grand old temple and soar up to the skies. It could be the ghost of Empress Eirene Komnena, the empress who had the church made, or the ghost of Mullah Zeyrek [...]" (Ümit, 2010, p. 61) These visions can best be understood considering Smith's views on spectrality as a means towards an assiduous exploration of history:

How to represent the past is one of the central concerns and the figure of the ghost is used to raise questions about making visible that which a culture has lost or has been forced to forget. [...] Ghosts are historical beings because they are messengers about the preoccupations of a particular age. [...] Ghosts are never just ghosts; they provide us with an insight into what haunts our culture (Smith, 2007, p. 153).

One of the most prominent gothic tropes, "the ghost" is prevalent in the novel. It is the common denominator of the troubled detective, murder suspect Namık Karaman, imam, and tramps. It is their token to the realm of the supernatural. A tramp who is an eyewitness to one of the murders by the Column of Constantine tells Inspector Nevzat that on a pitch-black night he had seen the ghost of the emperor wearing a huge cross on his chest and a golden crown on his head on top of the column. Avery Gordon asserts "ghosts hate new things". The reason being is that ghosts are attached to the events that produced them in the first place. They are by nature haunting reminders of ongoing trouble. Ghosts hate new things because once the conditions that summon them and keep them alive no longer exist, their reason for being and their power to haunt diminishes

(Gordon, 2008, p. Introduction xviii). The aforementioned characters are all haunted by the past, by the memories of a bygone era.

1.6 The City and Its History

Ümit pulls the reader back into another myth with the fourth victim Teoman Akkan, a corrupt architect found down a side street by the Hagia Sophia, his throat cut in the same way as the other three victims. The coin found in his right hand was a Justinian coin minted in Constantinopolis. Ümit states that Theodora was Justinian's partner in crime, a second sovereign by his side. She was the most merciless of women, yet she was the Deity's gift to the emperor (Ümit, 2010, p. 337). Arias and Pulham emphasize that "[...] literature is permanently haunted by ghosts, revenants and spirits which travel across time and make an appearance in the form of textual/spectral traces" (Arias & Pulham, 2010, p. xix). Theodora a symbol of decadence in many texts is juxtaposed with Justinian, the emperor who banned Pagan practices and transformed Constantinople into a dominantly Christian city glorifying it with the magnificent Hagia Sophia. C. Foss in "The Empress Theodora" claims Theodora, the alleged prostitute who became empress, is probably the most famous and notorious figure in the millennial history of the Byzantine empire. In this context, the empress Theodora was renowned for her famous speech during the Nika Riot which took place in Constantinople in January 532. When the emperor and his court were contemplating whether to stay or flee, Theodora spoke out and made a brave speech, which ended with the maxim that "royalty is a good winding-sheet" On that account, Justinian and his ministers decided to strike ruthlessly. More than 30,000 people had been slaughtered in the Hippodrome. The revolt turned out to be a major calamity but it restored Justinian's power. Consequently, shortly after the Hippodrome massacre, Justinian initiated the construction of a new Hagia Sophia to replace the church that was burned.

Theodora and Justinian are depicted as a power couple in the novel. Theodora is portrayed as savage and ambitious. Yet her actions are also justified as a road to progress. The renovation that Constantinople had undergone was a result of the crushing of the revolt following Theodora's prompting. Consequently, the Hagia Sophia we see today was built (Ümit, 2010, p.380). Walter Benjamin attests that a document of civilization is

at the same time a document of barbarism. And such a document is not free of barbarism which taints the way that it is transmitted from one owner to another. Walter Benjamin claims that although conquests and revolutions leave massive amounts of destruction, looting, suffering, and casualties behind, the storm which we call progress is inevitable. (Benjamin, 2000).

Similar to Justinian's Hagia Sophia, Topkapı Palace (Sarayı Cedide-i Amire) was built on the remains of the Acropolis, a religious and military focal point in the Byzantine Period. The Romans had kept the site as it was, due to its religious status but years after he conquered the city, Sultan Mehmet ordered his palace to be built on the hill (Ümit, 2010. pp. 402-3). In fact, both rulers stormed their way towards the future by destroying and building on what was once sacred. Therefore, there were consequences such as the inheritance or debt they left their people. According to Derrida:

One never inherits without coming to terms with [s'expliquer avec] some specter, and therefore with more than one specter. With the fault but also the injunction of more than one. That is the originary wrong, the birth wound from which he suffers, a bottomless wound, an irreparable tragedy, the indefinite malediction that marks the history of the law or history as law: that time is "out of joint" is what is also attested by birth itself when it dooms someone to be the man of right and law only by becoming an inheritor, redresser of wrongs, that is, only by castigating, punishing, killing. The malediction would be inscribed in the law itself: in its murderous, bruising origin (Derrida, 1994, p. 63.).

The parallels of power politics between the Byzantine, Roman, and Ottoman Empires are plentiful. During the Byzantine period, the Great Palace and Hagia Sophia used to stand close to each other. It was even said that there was a walkway between them. During Ottoman times, the Topkapı Palace was built next to Hagia Sophia, which the Ottomans converted into a mosque. The rulers of those empires understood the importance of fostering religious and moral authority to sustain and sanction the state. Their regimes had to be recognized and validated by the people's faith. Thereupon the center of political power, the palace was never far from the church, temple, or mosque, in short, the center of religious power. Similarly, Justinian acknowledges that he built Hagia Sophia as a symbol of his faith in the Creator and for Christianity (Ümit, 2010, p. 403).

However, Ümit also conveys that the real reason behind the construction of a splendid church was not to glorify God but the man who built it. The temples and other houses of worship immortalized their makers and brought them superiority and prestige among the people, even when the people were crushed without mercy by those very same rulers in order to have their ambitions realized (Ümit, 2010, p. 407). In this context, we may employ Derrida's concept of Hauntology:

What is a ghost? [...] Repetition and first time, but also repetition and last time, since the singularity of any first time, makes of it also a last time. Each time it is the event itself, a first time is a last time. Altogether other. Staging for the end of history. Let us call it a hauntology. [...] A specter is always a revenant. One cannot control its comings and goings because it begins by coming back (Derrida, 1994, pp. 41-42).

For Derrida hegemony resulting in repression is the cause of this haunting: "Hegemony still organizes the repression and thus the confirmation of a haunting. Haunting belongs to the structure of every hegemony." (Derrida, 1994, p. 97).

Ümit claims the patterns of the rulers of each empire are the same. They both want to rise to power and maintain their power. In my view, that is why they use religion as an Ideological State Apparatus, to exert power over their nations. According to the Marxist theory "State", is precisely devised as a repressive apparatus. Thus, State is a "machine" of repression, which enables the ruling classes to ensure sovereignty over their people. (Althusser, 1970). Mehmed the Conqueror just like the former rulers wanted to unite and rule his people, yet he wanted to unite them under Islam this time. That's why the Ottomans kept on building monuments and mosque complexes.

All the peoples of the world, be they Turk, Persian or Frank, all the races of the world, be they black, yellow or white, all the religions of the world, Muslim, Christian, Jewish and pagan, would gather under his banner and be united under his rule to live as one nation... And the heart of this great nation would beat in Konstantiniye (Ümit, 2010, p. 423).

Constantine, Mehmed the Conqueror, and the rulers that have ruled Istanbul before and after have used religion as their primary Apparatus in ruling their empires. This may seem anachronic at first, nevertheless the genesis of Religion as a State

Apparatus goes back to the Middle Ages. According to Althusser, during the Middle Ages, the Church (the Religious Ideological State Apparatus) had fulfilled educational and cultural functions. Correspondingly, the family Ideological State Apparatus played a huge part in capitalist social formations (Althusser, 1970).

As the chief Imam at the Fatih Mosque claims, the mosque was far more than a mosque in its purpose of serving the community. With all its additional functions such as a madrasah, a primary school, a hospital, a guesthouse, a soup kitchen, a library, a caravanserai, and a public bath, it was merely a foundation for a new Islamic city (Ümit, 2010, p. 429). Hence, the mosques served as a State Apparatus in the Ottoman Empire.

1.7 The City and Its Changing Urban Texture

Ümit's novel argues the Ottoman way of life was closed and introspective. The people viewed the outside world from the confines of their mosques and mosque courtyards (Ümit, 2010, p. 469). However, Shrine Hamedah states the Ottoman court's return to the capital city from Edirne in 1703 marked a prominent time in Istanbul's urban history. During nearly half a century of war campaigns against mostly the Habsburg empire, the Sultan and his court had resided mainly in Edirne, away from the capital city. The return to the capital resulted in one of the most revolutionary transformations in the city's history. It was a period in which extraordinary construction, repair, and restoration projects were executed. Therefore, a new architectural era and shift in society began. Shrine Hamedah summarizes the importance of this era:

First, it is that this intense activity, mainly concentrated along the shores of the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus channel, constituted the most radical expansion of the Ottoman capital city to date. Second, this period saw the dramatic evolution of certain building types, the formation of a new decorative idiom, and the phenomenal expansion of the city's outdoor public space. Third, and most importantly, this was a moment when gradually unfolding social transformations since the second half of the sixteenth century were distinctly manifested in the urban and the architectural landscape (Hamedah, 1999, p. 28).

The introduction of the coffeehouse in 1551, the famous street art "Karagöz and Hacivat" performed in the second half of the sixteenth century were the first important

signs of a true urban culture. Thus, by the eighteenth century the lifestyles, social rituals, and recreational practices of the middle-class society were imprinted in the urban fabric of the capital, reaching its peak in cultural expression. “the development of the Bosphorus shore is thus explicated from the perspective of “two antithetical trends” which characterized the ruling elite: “An urge for movement and reform, and an inclination toward lethargy and pleasure.” (Hamedah, 1999, p. 35). As the inhabitants of Istanbul started to leave the confines of the closed spaces and started socializing in outdoor public spaces a discrepancy between the two lifestyles emerged. Thus, as Botting claims “Architecture, [...] signaled the spatial and temporal separation of the past and its values from those of the present.” In this context horror and terror rose from the reappearance of figures and values long gone. Magical worlds, tales of monsters, ghosts, and terrors were conjured up in the Gothic realm. In the words of Almond:

If imperial cultures offer ways of configuring and coagulating certain ideas and values, then their break-up and decay can be witnessed under the guise of many different formats: a shift in social class, the loss of masculinity, an appeal to mythic memory, even the re-ordering of a certain kind of time. [...] Ghosts appear in such moments as extra-symbolic seepages. [...] They escape through the cracks of ideological edifices in moments of change, and the meaning of their disruptive presence cannot be limited to a single content or purpose (Almond, 2017).

In summary, the changes in architecture brought about changes in social life and social values. The separation of the values of the past and present caused cracks in culture and the texture of society. Monsters, ghosts, and terrors leaked through the cracks into the Urban Gothic realm.

1.8 The City and Its Hauntings

The style of the fifth victim's execution resembled that of one in history. The severed head was delivered to the director of the Topkapı Palace in a box, whereas the body was placed in the courtyard of the Fatih Mosque. The victim Fazıl Gümüş was the ex-deputy mayor. His execution resembled Atik Sinan's. Atik Sinan was the architect who had built the Fatih Mosque and died before Mimar Sinan was born. Atik Sinan had

infuriated the Sultan due to some kind of misdemeanor, therefore Sultan Mehmed, first had his hands cut off, then had him beheaded.

The killers by embodying the same methods of killing are explicitly sending a message. They are avenging the city in order to bring justice. They are killing those who they believe are responsible for the destruction of the city. A fundamental of Gothic representation is the persistence of historical memory. Avery Gordon contends “Haunting is a frightening experience. It always registers the harm inflicted or the loss sustained by a social violence done in the past or in the present. But haunting, unlike trauma, is distinctive for producing a something-to-be-done.” Inspector Nevzat attests the people behind these murders are protecting the city from an assault, they are performing a certain kind of ritual. Furthermore, they seem to be offering sacrifices to the city, just like the sacrifices made to please the pagan gods in antiquity. The killers have a message “Those who endanger the city are themselves in danger.” (Ümit, 2010, p.418).

At the end of the novel Chief Inspector Nevzat finds out that the accident that caused Yekta’s wife and son’s death was instigated by the antagonist Adem Yezdani’s construction in the Basilica Cistern where the wall had fallen over several people including Handan and Umut. He recalls after that incident Yekta had begun to resemble Demir, their friend the vet in his bleak approach to life. That was why they reconnected with Demir despite all those years they had been apart and everything that had happened between them.

When Inspector Nevzat approaches Yekta’s desolate three-story residence which is almost an homage to the earlier gothic castles, he is reminded of the somber atmosphere that imbued his own house when he had lost his wife and daughter; the furniture and objects had seemed to be mourning their loss (Ümit, 2010, p. 546). According to Freud’s concept of the uncanny, it is the peak of uncanny when an inanimate object—a picture or a doll—comes to life as seen in Hans Anderson’s stories where the household utensils, furniture, and tin soldiers come to life. Despite the uncanny effect of the mourning furniture, it is not surprising that when Inspector Nevzat opens the garage door he picks up a sharp, sour stomach-turning stench, in Nevzat’s words “The squalid stench of man’s inhumanity to man.” His nightmare continues as he approaches his friends’ kill room where Nevzat finally faces the unspeakable truth: The last couple of

days the room had been used as a death chamber instead of a garage. A slaughterhouse where his friends had slashed the throats of their victims as a reverence to Istanbul (Ümit, 2010, p. 547).

The last victim, the greedy and notorious Ahmet Yezdani was found by the Atatürk Statue in Sarayburnu, where the killings had started. Demir was standing by the body. Nevzat observed that he wasn't his childhood friend but a monster, a lunatic whose only desire was revenge and blood (p.560). Demir remarked it was Yekta that wanted to leave him there because the charioteers of ancient Rome had returned to their starting point after circling the Hippodrome seven times. In this sense, they left the last body where they had left the first one in order to complete the circle.

Alan Pritchard claims "Gothic fiction, as some analysts have suggested, has been marked from its beginning by a dichotomy, which is reflected in the complexity of narrative method, between the subjective and objective, the private world of the isolated self and the more public world." (Pritchard, 1991). Hence, although Demir and Yekta are romantic, poetic, and healers in their private lives, they commit the most brutal acts that resemble the most vicious crimes of serial killers. Demir an animal lover and Yekta a poet-architect in love with the history of his beloved city, avenge their beloved Handan and her son Umut's death. Additionally, they sacrifice themselves, aware they are going to get caught. Thus, Yekta expresses "We offered up our own blood to Istanbul, as a memento. A keepsake..." (Ümit, 2010, p. 572). As Avery Gordon claims "Haunting was precisely the domain of turmoil and trouble.". Indeed, amidst the gothic imagery of the deserted cemetery, swaying cypress trees, and howling dog, Yekta falls lifelessly onto his wife Handan's tombstone (Ümit, 2010, p. 572).

The ghosts of Inspector Nevzat's wife Güzide and daughter Aysun, their beloved friend Handan, her son Umut and now his childhood friends will continue to haunt him throughout his life. So how does one live with such ghosts? For Derrida "He should learn to live by learning not how to make conversation with the ghost but how to talk with him, with her, how to let them speak or how to give them back speech, even if it is in oneself, in the other, in the other in oneself: they are always there, specters, even if they do not exist, even if they are no longer, even if they are not yet..." (Derrida, 1994, p. 360).

We were looking at the city from the sea. At King Byzas's legendary country, at Constantine's imperial capital, at the stone necklace of the walls built by Theodosius II, at Justinian's peerless Hagia Sophia, at Topkapı Palace, from which Mehmed the Conqueror ruled over half the world, at the Lawmaker's stunning Suleymaniye Mosque... From out at sea we gazed upon those kings, those extraordinary generals and captains, at the nobility and the citizens of repute and bearing, at the slaves and the Sufis and the saints... At the women Pulheiria, Theodora and Roxelana...

[...]

The citadel of broken dreams... The queen of mourning, a beauty which has been ravaged by tyranny, an elegance which has been overrun by guile and exploitation, a land of prosperity infested by greed... We gazed upon our city, our streets, our gardens, our houses and our graves...

We were looking at Istanbul, from the sea... Nevzat, Demir and I...

At an Istanbul lost in the mist (Ümit, 2010, p. 577).

CHAPTER 2

2.1 The City and Its Specters

In this chapter I will employ Urban Gothic related theories as my framework and present a reading of Barbara Nadel's "The Land of the Blind". Firstly, I will discuss the city and its relation to Bakhtin's Chronotope. Secondly, I will examine Bakhtin's Carnavalesque and present examples of the Carnavalesque in the Park. Thirdly I will explore the concept of the "Gothic House" employing gothic tropes such as the "Uncanny", "Premature Burial" and "The Madwoman in the Attic". Lastly, I will investigate two Gothic subgenres: "The Queer Uncanny" and "Gothic-Postmodernism" and exemplify them in "Land of The Blind".

Barbara Nadel's crime novel "Land of the Blind" takes its name from a legend. In 685 BC the Greeks from Megara fled the Dorians and founded Chalcedon – Kadıköy. The oracle of Apollo called it the Land of the Blind because the inhabitants had failed to see the advantages and beauty of the Seraglio Point and settled on the Asian shore instead. In 667 BC, the Megarian King Byzas founded Byzantium on the shore "Opposite the Blind".

Ariadne Savva, the protagonist, and victim in the "Land of the Blind" is a Greek Byzantine specialist who wants to protect the historical sites that once upon a time belonged to the Byzantines in Istanbul. She was fighting against the villain Ahmet Öden, the wealthy property developer who is trying to demolish Gizlitepe, an old neighbourhood home to the rubbish pickers and gypsies. She is found dead after she gives birth in the ruins of the Constantinople Hippodrome. A piece of red stone is found in her hand and her new-born is missing. Nadel's famous detective Çetin İkmen and his sergeant, Kerem Gürsel who has a crippled lesbian wife, Sinem, and transsexual lover, Pembe, begin a hunt around Istanbul to unravel the mystery around her death and find her newborn child. Meanwhile, Çetin İkmen's former subordinate, the handsome and charismatic detective Mehmet Süleyman, investigates the remains of a 50-year-old skeleton found on the grounds of his old lycee, Galatasaray Lisesi while he continues his affair with the voluptuous gypsy artist Gonca.

Simultaneously, in the center of the city, Gezi Park, one of the city's largest and most central green areas left, is about to be demolished. The government is planning to build a shopping mall in its place. However, the park has become host to a remarkable protest. People of all ages, ethnicity, and vocation have united and camped out in the Park in order to prevent the destruction of the only green space left in an urban concrete jungle. Amidst the chaos, Istanbul once again becomes home to an urban gothic mystery.

2.2 A Chronotropic Examination of the City

Bakhtin defines the Chronotope (literally, "time space") as "The intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature." (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 166) According to Bakhtin, in the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators become a tangible whole. "Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot, and history." (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 166-167)

Following the establishment of the Gothic genre toward the end of the seventeenth Century, the "castle" has become a major Gothic trope. The "castle" was first identified in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, followed by Radcliffe, Lewis, and others. The castle is where the lords of the feudal era and other historical figures lived. The vestiges of centuries and generations are to be seen in the castle's architecture, furnishings, weapons, human relationships, and the transfer of hereditary rights. Most importantly legends and traditions permeate every corner of the castle. It is these characteristics that produce the particular narrative ingrained in castles that are transferred into Gothic novels (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 418-419). Moreover, the organic unity of spatial and temporal categories in the castle and surroundings, and the historical intensity of this Chronotope provide the images that are necessary in the development of the historical novel (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 419-420).

In Nadel's novel, the Byzantium structure that the protagonist Ariadne Savva had discovered represents a similar "castle" chronotope. She had given birth in that Red Room, on the porphyry slab where many Byzantine empresses had given birth to generations of princesses. Bakhtin argues that Chronotopes can exist together, intertwine,

replace, or oppose one another. They can also contradict each other or form increasingly complex relationships (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 428). Similarly, the castle chronotope permeates into the chronotope of the threshold; its most fundamental significance being the chronotope of a crisis and break in life. The threshold chronotope represents a duality; the birth of Ariadne Savva's daughter which resulted in her own death.

Bakhtin claims the threshold is associated with the breaking point of a life, the moment of crisis, the decision that transforms a life (or the indecisiveness that prevents the necessary change, the indecisiveness, the fear to step over the threshold). In literature, the chronotope of the threshold is metaphorical and symbolic.

In Dostoevsky, for example, the threshold and related chronotopes-those of the staircase, the front hall, and corridor, as well as the chronotopes of the street and square that extend those spaces into the open air are the main places of action in his works, places where crisis events occur, the falls, resurrections, renewals, epiphanies, decisions that determine the whole life of a man. In this chronotope, time is essentially instantaneous; it is as if it has no duration and falls out of the normal course of biographical time. In Dostoevsky, these moments of decision become part of the great all-embracing chronotopes of mystery- and carnival-time. [...] It is as if Dostoevsky's landscape is animated and illuminated by the ancient public square's spirit of carnival and mystery... (Bakhtin, 1981; pp. 423-24).

Similarly, once the property developer Ahmet Öden crosses over the threshold into Negroponte's house, his fate is sealed. He walks into his chamber of death where his fate takes a carnivalesque turn. The wealthy and powerful, all-mighty property developer is trapped in a small chamber adjacent to the red room. He is alone and humiliated. He wets himself and defecates. Crumbled into a petty existence he is almost buried alive.

Ahmet Öden, a seemingly pious businessman, is a conflicted character. He has set out to keep his promise to his religious father of buying the Negroponte's home and destroying the sacred Greek red room hidden underneath it. That room is not only the Negroponte family heirloom but a sacred Byzantium heritage. This so-called moral businessman is praised for taking care of his motherless daughter with Down syndrome. However, secretly, he is paying his gypsy mistress who used to strip at a nightclub to do

things the faithful would never do. He was lured into the Negroponte house with promises of a settlement but instead, he was entombed in a wall shortly after he set foot in the house. Consequently, he spends days in his secret grave waiting to die. Thus, this entrapment almost deprives him from a proper religious burial and farewell. Peeren argues that in chronotopical terms the hidden burial site cannot definitively signify the end of an individual's life, therefore obstructs the ability for personal or familial remembrance (Peeren, 2013). Luckily Ahmet Öden is rescued by Çetin Ikmen's team and dies after spending some time in intensive care. Hence his family can give him a proper funeral.

The way Bakhtin has used the "Chronotope" in literature has been adopted and expanded by many novelists. According to Inti Athanasios and Yanes Fernandez, the phenomenon of "dreams" as a meaningful conflation of time-space is called the "dream-chronotope" explained as the concept of a dream vision as a narrative space having symbolic and allegorical significance, which creates an artificial environment that provides the narrator with a substitute device that enables the accomplishment of something that would be impossible in social reality (Athanasios & Fernandez, 2016).

Correspondingly the novel under perusal here conveys both Ikmen's sergeant Kerim Gürsel's father and his lover Pembe claimed they had visions about the ghosts of the Byzantine Princes in full armour driving chariots in the old Hippodrome and Empress Theodora in Hagia Sophia. These visions reinforce the Byzantine legacy and myths built around it. Using the dream chronotope while interpreting these dreams allows us to legitimise these visions instead of ruling them out as insanities.

2.3 Carnival amidst the City

Following the government's decision to demolish the Park and build a shopping mall instead, protesters from all aspects of life united to protest in the Park. The protest thus acquired Carnivalistic aspects, with the low and the high, the poor and the rich coming together to vent resentments, in the process enjoying the freedoms (albeit temporary ones) of a de-hierarchized climate. The transsexuals, goths, Sufis, Muslims Against Capitalism, LGBTQIA+, and many other diverse groups are present in the Park. The outcasts sporadically scattered in the novel are all united in the Park, such as Ikmen's

cousin, the big transsexual Samsun, Mehmet's luscious gypsy lover Gonca, Sergeant Gürsel's lesbian and crippled wife Sinem, and his transsexual lover Pembe as well as the eastern Sergeant Ömer Mungan's nurse sister Peri (who worships the snake goddess Shahmaran). The aforementioned have all become main characters in the Park where the allegedly situated outside the acceptable societal norms and restrictions live in the carnival spirit and proudly wear their identities as their shields.

Bakhtin asserts that Carnival which encompasses various types of festivities is not a literary occurrence but rather a syncretic pageantry of a ritualistic kind. Moreover, in the carnival, everyone participates and communes. The carnival is not a performance. Its participants live in it and follow its laws. They live a carnivalistic life which signifies life pulled out of its usual rut. It is "Life turned inside out." hence "The reverse side of the world." (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 329). Furthermore, during carnival the laws, rules and restrictions that govern everyday life are suspended. This includes the hierarchical structure and the forms of fear, reverence, piety, and etiquette associated with it. Any kind of inequality amongst people, including age, is lifted. All barriers that usually separate people are disregarded, thus a special carnival category emerges. People can interact freely and familiarly with one another. This is a crucial element of the carnival worldview, as people who are typically separated by strict hierarchical rules come together in a spirit of familiarity and freedom on the carnival square (Bakhtin, 1984; p. 329, 330).

Comparably, Inspector Ikmen also acknowledges the attraction of the atmosphere in the Park. Like the concept of the carnival, he depicts it as a festival, full of music, food, and drinks. People wear colourful clothes, discuss everything imaginable freely, dance, and there is even someone who fondly includes the non-human element in the carnivalesque and recites poetry to the trees (Nadel, 2015 p.266). Therefore, Ikmen can see the appeal of this liberating environment both for his closeted young son Kemal and his transsexual cousin Samsun.

Correspondingly, everyone has reasons to participate in the Park protests. The archaeological pathologist Dr. Aylin's husband Burak, whom Mehmet Süleyman is working with, has abandoned his architectural practice and is living in a tent in the Park.

He had for long been awaiting this moment when the city could get rid of the ghastly shopping malls turning up on every corner of the city like tumours (Nadel, 2015 p. 157). Similar to Bakhtin's Carnival, the Park has a life and law of its own that brings together all sorts of people who feel like a minority or oppressed under the current government and circumstances. In accordance, Peri tells her brother that everyone she had talked to in the Park only wanted equality, peace, the perseverance of nature, and the urban cleansing that made a couple of people rich at the expense of the majority who became poorer to stop (Nadel, 2015 p. 120).

According to George E. Haggarty, Gothic fiction provides a historical framework for queer theory and politics that involves challenging societal norms, characterised by sexual codes and opposing dominant ideologies. Haggarty asserts that the fundamental elements of Gothic literature are transgressive social sexual relations, which can be traced back to the beginning of Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*. Manfred pursues his deceased son's fiancée, and she flees into the dark and labyrinthine subterranean depths of the castle, thus establishing one of the main gothic motifs, where terror is often sexual terror and fear, escape and imprisonment are almost tinged by the allure of transgressive sexual aggression (Haggarty, 2006, p. 2).

An incident that can be read along the above theoretical insights occurs in the Park. After the police invade it, the peaceful protests turn to mayhem. Peri, caught alone in the tent, is attacked by a policeman in full riot gear. She depicts them as the "unrepresentable", "Their faces hidden behind visors, they could have been anyone or anything" (Nadel, 2015, p.109). This visor effect is aptly described by Derrida, who explains that:

To feel ourselves seen by a look which it will always be impossible to cross, that is the visor effect on the basis of which we inherit from the law. Since we do not see the one who sees us, and who makes the law, who delivers the injunction (which is, moreover, a contradictory injunction), since we do not see the one who orders "swear", we cannot identify it in all certainty, we must fall back on its voice (Derrida, 1994, pp. 35-36).

As the policeman sticks his hand roughly up her skirt, he takes his helmet off. Peri is thus left to face an ugly face, with the appearance of a frog. When she is about to get raped, a small woman hits him with a frying pan and rescues her. Peri is able to escape this time, but many of her comrades in the Park are not so lucky, as the police behind the visors continue to attack.

2.4 The Gothic House

The Negroponte household consists of Madam Anastasia, her son Yannis, and their servant Hakkı Bey. Madam Anastasia's house has turned into a haunted house. One of the concepts that can best help to shed light onto its general atmosphere is Freud's "Uncanny". According to Vidler, the uncanny movement tends to shift from "homely to unhomely", as seen in many ghost stories, where a seemingly ordinary and cosy house transforms into a place of horror (Vidler, 1992, p. 32).

In parallel, during the Istanbul pogrom in 1955, Madam Anastasia experienced a tragedy. Her husband was beaten to death, her child was kidnapped, and she was beaten up and injured severely, both mentally and physically. Consequently, she had been confined to live in her home, the Negroponte house, until her old age. Thus, Madam Anastasia's house, which was once a happy house, where children could run around freely, and had no reason to hide anything, became an uncanny site where the familiar and homely turned into the unhomely. As Mariconda notices, a house offers a feeling of security, comfort, and shelter from the outside world. It provides a sense of intimacy, care and protection, and is associated with the Mother archetype. Home is the core of one's existence and a source of personal safety (Mariconda; 2007, p. 267). When the developer Ahmet Oden turns up and pressures the Negroponte's to sell their house, not only are the memories and anxieties of the 1955 lootings and killings triggered but their home and sense of security are threatened; aptly described by Mariconda, albeit in a different context: The Haunted House evokes a feeling of fear, sadness, intrusion, physical danger and the impermanence of life and love (Mariconda, 2007, p. 267).

After she had left the hospital and arrived home Madam Anastasia was obsessed and terrorised with the idea that her husband had been buried alive. The last time she had seen her husband was on the back of a man. Although his face had been distorted and

swollen from the beatings, she had seen that one eye was open. She heard he was buried shortly after and believed that he had been buried alive. For years she heard him scratching the walls. He called her to let him out (Nadel, 2015, p. 299). Similarly, Poe elaborately discusses the fear of being buried alive in his short story “The Premature Burial” (Poe, 1966) where he claims that to be buried alive is without a doubt the most terrifying experience that can happen to a human being. It surpasses any other terror that a human being can be subject to. Thus, this theme has often been employed in Gothic fiction. On the other hand, a ghost scratching the walls can also be read as the manifestation of the homely becoming unhomely. Andrew Smith claims that:

Ghosts are thus projections of our innermost anxieties and this blurring of physical and psychological realities becomes reworked in Freud’s idea that the self is ghosted by the subconscious; or, as Castle puts it, “Ghosts and spectres retain their ambiguous grip on the human imagination; they simply migrate into the space of the mind.” [...] “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.” For Castle ‘high’ Gothic represents a cultural shift in which the meaning of death is fundamentally changed because it is no longer part of a logically understood cosmology, as it had been in the Middle Ages, but rather indicates how the self becomes ghosted by images of projection. (Smith 2007, p. 148).

The scratching that stopped when Madam Anastasia’s son Yannis returned from Germany had started again. Madam Anastasia was aware that unspeakable things were being done in her house. As Paulina Palmer expands on Freud’s ‘Uncanny’, the uncanny sensations, and the unsettling transition from the familiar into the unfamiliar they provoke, “Reflect the projection of unconscious fears and desires originating in ‘something repressed which recurs.’” (Palmer, 2012, p. 2).

Madam Anastasia’s alleged son Yannis who had supposedly been rescued from the 1955 lootings and killings when he was a baby and afterwards was taken to Germany to live with another family, came back from Germany years later when he was 40 and started living with Madam Anastasia and her servant Hakkı. Hakkı had saved Madam Anastasia from dying after she was almost beaten to death. Hence, he had taken her home

and looked after her ever since. Upon his return, Madam Anastasia had accepted Yannis as her son and he had been living with them thenceforth. Yannis was a magician. He performed magic tricks for kids outside the gates of the Negroponte property.

Magic is a central trope of Gothic. The fact that Yannis is a magician also hints that he could be someone other than he claims to be. Therefore, this idea reinforces the possibility that the house he lives in could be hiding a secret and the doors and walls in the house might be illusionary, obscuring secret chambers and passages behind them. Thus, Inspector Ikmen recalls a chamber or room that he had seen in the house when he was visiting Madam Anastasia with his mother when he was a child. Nevertheless, he hadn't seen anything similar when he was last in the house (Nadel, 2015, p.300). Inspector Ikmen's mother was an Albanian witch who used to read tarot cards for Madam Anastasia. Therefore, Ikmen had inherited some of her enhanced instincts. Hence, Ikmen could sense something was off at the house. Ikmen outsmarts the servant Hakkı Bey and her son Yannis, who have been trying to prevent Ikmen from speaking to Madam Anastasia by giving Madam Anastasia his mother's tarot cards. Consequently, he uses the tools of the supernatural as a means of communication with Madam Anastasia. If it were another male inspector less dedicated to find out the truth, Madam Anastasia might have fallen prey to the "Madwoman in the Attic" trope and declared insane. As Kranzler explains, the story of Bertha Mason, the first wife of Edward Rochester embodies the very things that Jane and several heroines in Gaskell's novels dread the most: madness, confinement, and the incapacity to speak (Kranzler, 2006). Consequently, these constructs that the patriarchy inflicts on women often lead to their demise. As Holland describes it:

The history of Western literature is, of course, a history of dead mothers and murdered daughters/lovers/wives. Thus "Polonius cannot save Ophelia but can only shame her to madness and to death. Oedipus cannot save Antigone but can only leave a divided heritage that means her death. Creon, like Polonius a substitute father, like Claudius a substitute king, cannot, or rather will not save her, asserting instead his right as father/king to kill her, even if it leads to his own son's death and that of the mother/wife (Holland, 2001).

However, Inspector Ikmen, whose mother was an Albanian witch, has a strong 6th sense; he follows his intuition. Thus, the supernatural prevails over the rational and Ikmen

not only picks up on the message she sends him through the Tarot cards, he believes Madam Anastasia's mumblings about scratching in the walls which convey that a man is trapped somewhere in the house. As a result, he saves the entrapped villain Ahmet Oden and unravels the Byzantine Purple Room that Ariadne Savva had discovered that led to her death.

2.5 Queers in the Park

Palmer explains in her preface to “The Queer Uncanny” that her interest in writing “The Queer Uncanny” stemmed from realising the abundance of contemporary fictional works that employ themes and visual elements related to the uncanny and Gothic to examine and portray diverse aspects of queer sexuality and transgender experience. Palmer emphasises that Gothic’s capacity to transgress boundaries, both in terms of being unconventional and wandering is especially evident when it engages with queer identity and experiences (Palmer, 2012, p. 11). According to Annamarie Jagose, Queer refers to gestures or theories that magnify the inconsistencies in the supposedly fixed relations among biological sex, gender, and sexual attraction (Jagose, 1996, p. 3). In light of the aforementioned theoretical insights, we can conclude that in “Land of The Blind” there is an abundance of queer characters and experiences. These characters which are normally considered as abject or invisible in society are juxtaposed with people in law enforcement, such as Inspector Ikmen and his transgender cousin Samsun, and his gay son Kemal, Sergeant Kerim Gürsel and his lesbian and crippled wife Sinem, his transgender lover Pembe and her transgender entourage in the Park protests. Furthermore, Inspector Suleyman’s gypsy lover, albeit not queer can be considered as “other” and abject. Palmer claims:

Unlike many people whom society regards as ‘other’ and abject – such as blacks, the disabled and the elderly – who display visible signs of difference, the homosexual and lesbian generally reveal none. The ‘invisibility’ of lesbians and gay men, Iris Marion Young argues, helps to explain the phenomenon of homophobia and the feelings of ‘border-anxiety’ that it reflects. The fact that no physical or mental signs differentiate the homosexual from the heterosexual, and that the boundary between their sexualities is permeable, indicates that anyone can

be gay, triggering in the heterosexual fears about his own sexuality (Palmer, 2012, p. 16).

Sergeant Gürsel's wife Sinem is both crippled and a lesbian. His lover is a transgender woman called Pembe. Pembe is also Sinem's caretaker. Sinem is aware of her husband's relationship with Pembe, therefore resents her at times. Sinem is both abject due to her handicap and is invisible in society because of her sexual orientation. She is confined to her wheelchair and takes pain medication. Besides, she is married to a man, thus cannot explore her sexuality as a lesbian freely. She confides in Pembe that she wants to know how it feels to be in love (Nadel, 2015, p.104). It is only when Pembe takes her out to the protests in the Park that she is able to socialise with fellow queer people and fight for a cause. Therefore, she feels liberated in the Park and carries a rainbow flag with her. However, when overwhelmed by the loud music and dancing, she acts a bit shy, she is misunderstood by Pembe and told off for lacking confidence (Nadel, 2015, p.166).

Earl Jackson claims, although marginalized, male gay sex is still recognizable under patriarchy. However, lesbianism is inconceivable in the same society. Furthermore, Jackson implies, while male gay sexuality has been repressed by society through initiating laws and imposing severe or degrading punishments for its violation, lesbianism has been made almost imperceptible in various cultures and eras. (qtd. in Palmer, 2012, p. 17). Moreover, Judith Butler explains why lesbianism is invisible in phallogentric culture: Lesbianism is not explicitly forbidden partly because it has not yet become accepted as a valid concept within the cultural norms and language that define what is considered acceptable and normal behaviour. It has not become a part of the collective consciousness that regards what is real and what can be labelled. Thus, according to Butler lesbianism is assigned to the "Domain of unthinkability and unnameability." (Butler, 2008, p. 171). Relatively, in Nadel's narrative, even Nurettin the rubbish picker observes that most of the protestors in the Park are weirdos with coloured hair and tattoos, there are also gays and drag queens, and women he considers to be prostitutes (Nadel, 2015, p.155). Whereas, there is no mention of lesbians, thus their very ontological status is questioned. Similar to Butler's realm of concepts that are incomprehensible and unnameable, lesbians, like Sinem, are also confined to the private sphere where they remain unseen.

Although males can explore their sexuality in parks, public toilets, lesbians are once again stuck in their homes, in an uncanny recontextualization of the Victorian Gothic “Madwoman in the Attic” trope. In this case, Sinem can also be considered as Madam Anastasia’s double in the novel as both are confined to their home and considered as abject in society. Additionally, Sinem’s mother-in-law pushes her son to divorce Sinem since she believes she can’t have children (Nadel, 2015, p.288). Correspondingly, even her caretaker Pembe sees Sinem as abject as she gazes upon Sinem, who is shrunken and twisted. Pembe ponders she was in such pain that not even the Oramorph could alleviate; it seemed irrational to consider feeling envious of an invalid that was also a lesbian (Nadel, 2015, p. 361).

On the other hand, Ikmen is supportive of his cousin Samsun’s identity as a transgender and supports her unconditionally, he even walks with her on World Aids Day. According to Butler the individual can only determine and claim one’s “sense of gender” if there are social conventions in place that facilitate and empower the process of claiming (Butler, 2004, p. 23). Hence, Ikmen is also aware of his son’s sexual orientation and is willing to support him unlike his religious wife Fatma, who is clueless that her son is gay and wishes he would meet a nice girl and get married.

Sergeant Gürsel and his wife Sinem are also at peace with each other's sexual orientations. Sinem doesn’t mind her husband's relationship with her transgender caretaker Pembe, even though she sometimes resents her. Gürsel also knows that his wife is a lesbian and wishes that she would meet someone in the Park. William Hughes and Andrew Smith explain the nexus between Gothic and queer as Gothic literature, to some extent, has always been “queer” because it has typically been associated with unconventional expressions of sexuality that are considered taboo or rebellious by the dominant culture (Palmer, 2012, p. 11). Moreover, Gothic motifs such as the family secret can also be applied to Queer Gothic. Palmer notes, at times, the transsexual due to his gender ambiguity and his resort to reconstructive surgery is berated for blurring the line between nature and culture (Palmer, 2012, p. 153). Hence, Kerim Gürsel ponders what the conservative members of the police would think of him, should they find out that his lover is transsexual, and his wife is a lesbian.

Consequently, the Park's carnivalesque atmosphere brings together an interesting mix of people who under normal circumstances would not interact. Since transgenders are considered abject in society, they would customarily stay put in their own territory, often in the backstreets of the city. They would generally be seen late at night if one ever happened to pass through their neighbourhood. Ikmen's transgender cousin Samsun even realises that "It felt odd standing behind a man in such simple, pious garb when she was wearing red stilettos and cubic zirconias the size of quails' eggs hanging off her earlobes." (Nadel, 2015, p. 324) when she encounters the religious Ozgur Bey, whom her transgender friends had saved from being attacked by the police during the Park protests. As Duncker claims, expressions of queer passion are frequently conveyed through the changing and elusive conventions of disguise and masquerade. Transvestism severs gender from its roots in biological differences and transforms it into performance (Duncker, 1996). Moreover, Duncker explains alluding to the history of queer in fiction where she argues that describing aspects of eighteenth-century gothic writing as "queer" is not "anachronistic wish-fulfillment" or "ahistoric self-indulgence". She claims explicit examples of queer gothic can be found in Sade's sexual narratives and hidden examples can be found in women's romantic friendships or cross-dressed as novices in monasteries. Duncker posits Queerness exists in the present not just in the past. However, many queer individuals still adopt Gothic conventions and conceal their identities through masks and disguises. Not all queer individuals are explicit about their identities, let alone confrontational about it (Duncker, 1996).

2.6 Gothic-Postmodernism in the "Land of the Blind"

Maria Beville expands on David Punter's idea of the Gothic as the literature of terror and defines Gothic-postmodernism as magnifying the Gothic language of terror to incorporate the contemporary fears and anxieties of our postmodern era as well as the concepts of terror that have emerged from the realm of postmodern cultural theory. (Beville, 2009, p. 9). Beville argues that in the late eighteenth-century context Gothic terror and anxiety corresponded to a rapidly changing world represented by violence, confusion, and loss of meaning and religion. Despite being caused by different events, terror and its consequences mimic their eighteenth-century parallels, and this is

manifested through Gothic-postmodernist fiction. Moreover, Ronald Paulson notes that the early or original Gothic was significantly altered by events in France, adding that many Gothic plots from the period are stories of justification followed by horrible excess (Beville, 2009, p. 24). Beville suggests that terror has played a crucial role in Gothic literature since its inception during the tumultuous eighteenth century serving as an intense response to the fears, desires and anxieties that afflicted society due to the evolution towards capitalism. In the present day, terror remains a prevalent theme in contemporary political discourse since the advent of postmodernism and has now become a fundamental aspect of society and popular culture. Moreover, Beville posits that Gothic-postmodernism can be seen as an artistic reaction to the terror that plagues our collective subconscious in the context of our postmodern culture of anxiety as well as our individual longing for its resurgence and for discourse to explore the darker aspects of our familiar “realities” (Beville, 2009, pp. 23-24).

In light of the theoretical insights mentioned previously it can be noted that, “Land of the Blind” deals with this terror on both collective and personal levels. The Park protests are a cry against capitalism’s greed and its decided demolition to make room for yet another shopping mall manages to unite people from all walks of life; their different ideologies and vocations are subject to the anxiety caused by the oppression provoked by the constant development of high rising building blocks, and the excess of shopping malls that have left no space to breathe. Additionally, the perpetual pressure to consume and become indebted to the government and capitalism, excessive police brutality, and force are among the causes of postmodern anxiety. In the eighteenth century the anxiety caused by post-enlightenment events and concepts, such as the loss of God and meaning due to “The Age of Reason” was manifested as ghosts, demons, and monsters. Beville claims that In Gothic-postmodernism, monsters are portrayed as symbols of abject otherness and are no longer considered peripheral but rather an integral component of the literary narrative of our postmodern society (Beville, 2009; 20); thus, exemplified in “Land of the Blind” as the resemblance of policemen to monsters, attacking the unarmed protestors, shielded by their visors and big black boots. As Peri states “A mass of dark figures marching in time signalled what her brother always called ‘boots on the ground’”. (Nadel 2015, p.109) Raymond Chandler in his crime novel “The Big Sleep” also compares the

police's slickers to gun barrels (Chandler, 2011, p. 32). These examples reflect the postmodern anxiety felt toward the police.

One of the themes that persist in postmodern times which is dealt with in the novel is gentrification. Gizlitepe, the residential neighbourhood of the lower class, such as rubbish pickers like Nurettin, is being demolished by the property developer, Ahmet Oden, the novel's antagonist in order to build apartment blocks. The victim Ariadne Savva was helping the rubbish pickers fight against Ahmet Öden. Ikmen was able to hear the sorrow in Ariadne's assistant Meltem's voice while she was telling him about the incidents; he could relate to it as well. Many of his co-workers were involved in the city's transformation. Some considered it a sacred responsibility to promote what they called "regeneration". However, Ikmen preferred to refer to it as "urban cleansing". Because when the developers entered, the original inhabitants such as gypsies, immigrants, prostitutes, transsexuals were forced to leave, and he disapproved of that. Moreover, he equally resented the erasure of his city's historical legacy (Nadel, 2015, p. 24, 25).

According to Baudrillard modern cities have replaced cemeteries and have become deserted towns, symbolising death. If the vast operational metropolis represents the ultimate manifestation of an entire civilization, then ours can be defined as a culture of demise (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 127). Inspector Mehmet Süleyman exemplifies this tragedy. The boy who used to sell him kokoreç when he was a student had lost his home to the developers. Thus, his wife took his children away to live with her parents in another city. He slept underneath his stall for months and one night he drank half a bottle of cognac and then cut his own throat. As Süleyman puts it he "fell through the cracks" (Nadel, 2015, p.55). Similarly, "The great operational metropolis" just like a machine takes the underdog, grinds it, and scatters its remains over the city to haunt its inhabitants until eternity.

Beville expands on Baudrillard's notion of "The culture of death" arguing that terror serves to accentuate the ghostly nature of our postmodern existence. In Gothic-postmodern literature, this is emphasised through the prevalent themes of haunting and mutable identity (Beville, 2009, p.11). Additionally, Gothic-postmodernism provides the reader with a novel reading experience that corresponds to the postmodern condition. It is a genre in which Gothic features propel postmodern investigations of reality and

hauntology. The characters' liminal existence touches upon the realm of unrepresentability, which nurtures the processes of subjectivity, causing silent screams when readers' illusions are crushed (Beville, 2009, p. 11).

Correspondingly, Anastasia Negroponte was old and damaged both mentally and physically due to the events of the pogrom where she had been beaten up severely and left to die. She could be considered as a liminal character due to her unreliable memory and fragile body described by Ikmen as "A tiny, delicate baby bird". Although when he continues describing her, the imagery becomes more Gothic. "Her skin, which was a grey-purple colour, appeared to be just lightly draped over her skeleton, while the nails on her toes looked not unlike the talons of a pigeon." (Nadel, 2015, p.152). Despite her weak mental and physical state, she was aware of the threat by the property developer that was forcing her and her son to leave their home. Furthermore, she was haunted by the past events of the pogrom and her oppressed status as a minority. In addition, she was haunted by the unrepresentable happening in her house at the very moment which she couldn't do anything at all to end. Anastasia Negroponte's memory was sporadic, except for a few memories that were permanently ingrained in her mind. Consequently, some may consider her as a fool. However, those who suggest that she didn't know who she was were wrong. Anastasia Negroponte was fully aware of who she was. She knew where she resided, as her family had lived there for generations. She also was aware that she was at risk of losing it all (Nadel, 2015, p. 47).

Beville claims that terror is a "personal experience". Experiencing terror entails being in a state of uncertainty or indecision. Terror only implies unspeakable horrors, leaving the mind to wander as it awaits the revelation of what is to come next. (Beville, 2009, p. 24) Similarly, Madam Anastasia is terrified by the scratching in the wall. She intuitively knows there is a body trapped somewhere in her home and that another death will occur soon. The scratching reminds her of the unspeakable and unrepresentable that had happened many years ago in the same house. The terror that Anastasia has felt is aptly described as:

But more terrifying than anything else had been the idea that her husband was buried alive. [...] Bloodied, his face swollen and distorted from the kicking and stamping he'd endured, as Nikos was taken away, she saw one eye open. [...] She

couldn't shift it from her mind that while she'd been fighting for her life, Nikos had been put into the ground, somewhere, alive. [...] For years she'd heard him scratching. At night, whether she was awake or asleep, he called to her to let him out. She could never move. She could never tell anyone. She especially couldn't speak of it (Nadel, 2015, p. 299).

Beville notes that the most common manifestations of the terror of death are the ghosts or specters that haunt. Moreover "Gothic-postmodernism revolves around terror. Essentially it alludes to the inconceivable, the "unrepresentable" through terror." (Beville, 2009, p. 32). Likewise, Madam Anastasia is in a state of terror throughout the novel, haunted by her husbands' ghost, dreading the revelation of the family secret and awaiting the next death to occur. Consequently, she is left in a perpetual state of gothic terror and postmodern anxiety.

CHAPTER 3

3.1 Roaming the City: “The Flâneur-Detective” in the Land of The Blind and A Memento for Istanbul

In this chapter, I will employ Walter Benjamin’s concept, the “Flâneur”, Virginia Woolf’s female “street wanderer” the “Flâneuse” and Bakhtin’s “Carnavalesque” as my main theoretical frameworks. Hence, I will discuss the novels “A Memento for Istanbul” and “Land of the Blind” in accordance with the aforementioned theoretical frameworks.

Firstly, I will examine how the protagonists Inspector Nevzat in “A Memento for Istanbul” and Inspector Ikmen in “Land of the Blind” embody the concept of Walter Benjamin’s “Flâneur” by turning the idle act of strolling into a purposeful act of investigating crime and historicizing the city in the process. Additionally, I will investigate the inspectors’ relationship to the crowds and the city, in the context of the “Flâneur” and the novels under perusal. Secondly, I will discuss how Virginia Woolf’s concept the “Flâneuse” relates to Walter Benjamin’s concept the “Flâneur” whilst portraying how the female protagonist Ariadne Savva in “Land of the Blind” encompasses the qualities of the “Flâneuse”. Thirdly, I will examine the “Flâneuse’s” relationship to the crowds and introduce the concept of Bakhtin’s carnivalesque while portraying how the “Flâneuse” encounters the grotesque in the city. Furthermore, I will illustrate the representation of “women” in the city, depicting various stereotypes established in literature and exemplifying their presence in the novels under review.

3.2 The Flâneur-Detectives

Benjamin’s flâneur is a street wanderer based on the fictional “Flâneur” M. C. G. [Monsieur Constantin Guys] in Charles Baudelaire’s writings (Baudelaire, 2010). Thus, this study argues that both protagonists Chief Inspector Nevzat in “A Memento for Istanbul” and Inspector Ikmen in “Land of the Blind” are flâneur-detectives that roam the historical city to find the killers and solve the murder mysteries. In both narratives, the victims’ bodies are found under historical places. Hence the flâneur-detectives investigate the crimes strolling in the city in a purposeful way, historicizing the city and revealing the clandestine stories of the palimpsest city.

What are the dangers of the forest and the prairie compared with the daily shocks and conflicts of civilization? Whether a man grabs his victim on a boulevard or stabs his quarry in unknown woods - does he not remain both here and there the most perfect of all beasts of prey? (Benjamin, 2006, p. 21)

In the preceding passage, Benjamin quotes Baudelaire and contends that the “city and civilization” have become as savage and brutal as the wild forest. However, in Benjamin’s “The Flâneur” essay, the habitat the “flâneur” dwells in doesn’t sound like a savage environment at all. On the contrary, it describes a homely and safe environment. According to Benjamin, the street feels like a home for the flâneur. He is just as comfortable amidst the facade of buildings as any man inside his own home. He finds the shiny and enameled signs of businesses as pleasant as a bourgeoisie would find an oil painting hanging as an ornament in his living room. The walls are like his desk, against which he places his notebooks; the newsstands serve as libraries and the terraces of cafes are the balconies where he can look down and observe his surroundings after his work is finished (Benjamin, 2006, p. 19).

Nevertheless, Benjamin asserts that however familiar and comfortable the environment may seem to the flâneur, he will eventually encounter a crime. He refers to Dumas’ “Mohicans de Paris (The Mohicans of Paris)” in which the protagonist follows a scrap of paper floating in the wind when he claims, “No matter what trace the flaneur may follow, every one of them will lead him to a crime.” (Benjamin, 2006, p. 22). Moreover, Benjamin claims that in the “Mohicans de Paris (The Mohicans of Paris)”, the title indicates that the author will “Open a primeval forest and a prairie” for the reader, in Paris, where a wild adventure will begin (Benjamin, 2006, p. 22). Similarly in Ahmet Ümit’s “A Memento for Istanbul” the title suggests that we will find traces of the history of Istanbul in the murder mystery. Albeit in “Land of the Blind” one needs to know a little more about Istanbul’s history to decipher the title as according to the legend the “Land of the Blind” was Khalkedon in antiquity - today’s Kadıköy.

The original “flâneur” Baudelaire’s “M. C. G. [Monsieur Constantin Guys], enjoys mingling with the crowds, relishes anonymity, and takes his uniqueness to the extent of humility. Herein, Baudelaire further depicts the qualities of the flâneur: The crowd is the flâneur’s natural habitat, just like the air is for birds and water for fish. It is

his passion and profession to immerse himself in the crowd. The ideal wanderer and zealous observer takes great pleasure in making the crowd his home and partaking in the hustle and bustle, the elusive and the eternal. Thus, these self-sufficient, profound, and open-minded spirits do not fit easily into linguistic definitions; they enjoy being at the very center of the world yet remain unseen by it. The observer is like a prince enjoying his anonymity wherever he goes. The lover of life embraces the world thus the world becomes his family (Baudelaire, 2010, p. 22). Furthermore, M. G's most powerful qualities are his curiosity and eye for detail. These qualities are indeed the most important qualities of our flâneur-detectives, "Inspector Ikmen" and "Chief Inspector Nevzat" as well as the convalescent in Poe's "Man of The Crowd". Baudelaire compares M.G's character to the spiritual condition of the convalescent mentioned in Poe's "Man of The Crowd" (Poe, 1966). Thus, he argues that the convalescent, just like a child, takes great pleasure in being curious and interested in even the most seemingly insignificant things.

Sitting in a café, and looking through the shop window, a convalescent is enjoying the sight of the passing crowd and identifying himself in thought with all the thoughts that are moving around him. He has only recently come back from the shades of death and breathes in with delight all the spores and odours of life [...] Curiosity had become a compelling, irresistible passion (Baudelaire, 2010, p. 19).

Similarly, Inspector Ikmen uses his curiosity and eye for detail in a crime scene at the beginning of the first chapter of "Land of The Blind". He is called to the crime scene and the first thing that catches his eye is the porphyry, the piece of stone in the deceased's left hand. He remarks that there is no porphyry there and to prove his point he flashes the light from his torch around the dark space. Despite living quite close to İstanbul's Hippodrome, its sphendone or curved back edge was foreign to Ikmen. Although he had never been inside the ancient monument before, his careful attention to detail and deduction ability, which is a method used by master fictional detectives such as Hercule Poirot and Sherlock Holmes, is established early in the novel. Correspondingly, when we turn to "A Memento for Istanbul", Nevzat's curiosity enables him to recognize that the inscription on the coin which was found in the palm of the first victim was in Greek. Nevzat remarks that he had learnt Greek at Uncle Dimitri's house. He had worked out the Greek alphabet from the illustrated books they had brought over from Greece.

Furthermore, his deep knowledge and interest in his city's history can be noted throughout the novel. For instance, when he acknowledges that the inscription says Byzantion, his assistants, detectives Zeynep and Ali can't make any sense. Nevzat, shocked at their ignorance replies "Byzantium, for crying out loud! Byzantium! The city you bloody live in! Istanbul's original name!" (Ümit, 2017, p. 11). Hence Halim Kara argues that the narrative strategy of connecting the serial murders to the history of Istanbul allows Ümit to establish a detective protagonist who transforms his flâneur-like wandering into a focused and deliberate investigation of the crimes in the narrow streets of Istanbul's old quarter. Thus, giving his aimless wandering a new sense of purpose. Moreover, according to Kara, in the first pages of "A Memento for Istanbul", Ümit introduces Chief Inspector Nevzat, a resident of Istanbul, as an urban wanderer who displays several key traits of the modern flâneur, a concept first introduced by Charles Baudelaire in his writings (Kara, 2019).

In his essay, Benjamin compares the leisurely quality of the "colossal parade of bourgeois life" that was described in the physiologies¹ which were first published at the same time as the September Laws in France to the "Style of the flâneur who goes botanizing on the asphalt." (Benjamin, 2006, pp. 18-19). This statement can be read as roaming the streets leisurely and taking in one's surroundings with all senses and faculties. Likewise, in the opening of "A Memento for Istanbul" just after Inspector Nevzat's encounter with the first victim, he remarks that although he was used to seeing such sights, he had felt queasy looking at the dead body. He turns and looks at the sea which he romanticizes as a source for healing and refuge from the horror-filled sights of the world: "Two battered old ferries, those long-suffering sea hands, passed by leaving lines of foam on the gently bobbing blue. A pale light and gentle breeze suffused Sarayburnu, a sweet accompaniment to the scent of the sea filling the air; behind me, the trees lining the asphalt avenue leading up to the palace were beginning to come into flower..." (Ümit, 2010; 6). The almost-lyrical descriptions above emphasize the abilities

¹ Physiologies: "They were the salon attire of a literature which was basically designed to be sold on the street. In this literature, the inconspicuous, paperback, pocket-size volumes called " physiologies " had pride of place. They investigated the human types that a person taking a look at the marketplace might encounter. From the itinerant street vendor of the boulevards to the dandy in the opera- house foyer, there was not a figure of Paris life that was not sketched by a physiologue." (Benjamin, 2006, 18)

of the flâneur to activate all his senses, appreciate the beginning of spring, even amidst the most gruesome crime scene. Baudelaire's words reinforce that Nevzat is no fool, since he is using all his faculties to solve the murder and relieve himself of this burden: "Any man who is not weighed down with a sorrow so searching as to touch all his faculties, and who is bored in the midst of the crowd, is a fool! A fool! and I despise him!" (Baudelaire, 2010, pp. 23-24)

3.3 The Crowds and the Flâneur

Benjamin analyzes the way various authors describe the crowds in which the flâneur dwells. The crowds that Poe mentions reflect the effects of industrialization on individuals. In "The Communist Manifesto", Marx and Engels claim that to remain in power the bourgeoisie must continually innovate the means of production, thus affecting the way merchandise and services are produced as well as the entire relations of society. Consequently, this ongoing process of change and ambiguity differentiates the bourgeoisie era from the earlier ones. (Marx & Engels, 2015, p. 6). Hence, Rob Latham contends: "Sociologist Georg Simmel has argued that urban existence threatens the very stability of the self: 'because it stimulates the nerves to their utmost reactivity until they can finally no longer produce any reaction at all,' the city gives rise in its denizens to an affectlessness and anomie that Simmel calls the 'blase' attitude.'" (Latham, 2007, p. 592).

To illustrate, the higher ranks in Poe had uniform appearances, mechanical and uniform movements. They all had somewhat balding heads, and they would consistently take off or adjust their hats using both hands. Additionally, they wore watches with brief gold chains. Benjamin compares the uniform and mechanical movements to the repertoire of a clown. The clown's performance clearly alludes to the concept of economy. Through his sudden movements he mimics both the machines that propel merchandise and the economic growth that drives sales. Poe's crowds, like a clown, whenever they were obstructed while moving, abruptly stopped muttering, increased their hand gestures, and waited with a distracted and overly exaggerated smile on their lips for the people blocking their path to move out of the way. If someone bumped into them, they excessively bowed to that person and seemed very flustered (Benjamin, 2006, pp. 29-30).

Benjamin's analysis of the mechanized crowd and the above theoretical insights can be read as modernity's grinding effect on society. George Simmel claims the modern metropolis becomes an unlimited connection of commerce and power which diminishes the individual into a "single cog" against the immense and overpowering system of entities and influences which slowly strip him of anything related to development, spirituality and value (Simmel, 1971, p. 793).

Henceforth, in "A Memento for Istanbul" Ahmet Yezdan represents one of the vast overwhelming organizations that turns people into cogs. Ahmet Yezdan is a wealthy businessman who wants to change the facade of the historical Sarayburnu and erect replicas of all the ancient monuments and buildings which had existed there before. In parallel, in the "Land of the Blind", the protagonist Ariadne Savva puts her life at risk fighting for the rubbish pickers who were about to be displaced from their homes and community due to the property developer Ahmed Öden's new housing projects. Despite the hostile forces of capitalism, in both novels, the protestors unite to preserve and protect their history, architecture, communities, and values. In "A Memento for Istanbul", Namik Karaman, a surgeon, activist, and Leyla Barkin's (the director of the Topkapi Museum) boyfriend has established an activist group, the IDL (Istanbul Defence League) dedicated to reclaiming and protecting the history and architecture of the city. In other words, IDL mostly holds protests against the materialistic businessman and property developer Adem Yezdan's projects. In uniting to fight against the large institutions run by greedy developers the individuals are resisting becoming cogs, and mobilize to preserve their communal bonds and relationships, the meaning of solidarity in their lives.

In addition, the Negroponte family fought to protect their house, which wasn't only their home but a part of their community's Byzantium heritage, from being demolished by Ahmet Öden. The protestors in Gezi, albeit coming from all walks of life including a diverse community of outcasts, united against the establishment of a new shopping mall, fighting to preserve one of the scarce pieces of green land left in the city.

Ikmen also takes a personal interest in helping the Negroponte family fend off Ahmet Öden's threats. He rushes to Hakkı Bey and Yannis's aid whenever Ahmet Öden threatens to knock their house down. Moreover, the flâneur-detective inspector Ikmen, like Benjamin's flâneur, is also an avid supporter of people's lives and liberty. Benjamin

contends, in the crowd, there was the individual who blended in and there was the flâneur who demanded personal space and was not willing to forsake his idle lifestyle. His relaxed demeanor is his objection to the division of labour that turns people into specialists as well as the pressure to be industrious. (Benjamin, 2006, pp. 30-31)

The dialogue between Ikmen and his son demonstrates that Ikmen holds the safety and liberty of the people he serves above everything.

“Dad, are you saying that you support what people are protesting about in Gezi?”

There was a pause before Ikmen spoke. “My job is to uphold the law and protect the people of this city from harm. My opinions don’t matter. Things that do matter are people’s lives, their homes, and their liberty” (Nadel, 2015, p. 57).

The division of labour and the psychological effects it has caused in personal relationships are aptly described by George Simmel. According to Simmel, the modern city is solely supplied by production for the market. Thus, anonymous consumers remain unknown to the producers. Therefore, the interests of both parties become purely practical and economic self-interest can be pursued without being impacted by personal relationships. The focus remains on rational calculation of financial gain, and any uncertainties arising from interpersonal connections can be avoided (Simmel, 1971, p. 770).

Correspondingly, in “Land of the Blind” all the protesters want is to protect a green space; they are not harming anyone, yet are being harmed, women as well as men. Simply because they are opposed to the construction of another shopping mall in an area that is rapidly turning into a metropolis of shopping malls. The production of vast shopping malls is not only destroying the city’s green spaces, but also promoting the division of labour, turning people into cogs and consumerists. Whereas an extensive natural park can provide a safe space where people can relax and connect with nature and their spirituality. Thus, the healing aspect of relaxing in nature will always triumph loitering in a concrete building occupied by random people coming together.

3.4 Heritage and the Detective

In both novels, the city of Istanbul plays a huge role in the detectives' personal and professional lives. The cosmopolitan city of Istanbul leading back to the Byzantines is

central to the crimes that the detectives must solve. Kara contends, Ümit employs a narrative strategy in his novel that transforms Istanbul into a palimpsest, where various layers of architectural landmarks, memories, histories, narratives, and cultural influences from different eras merge together to shape its present-day urban cityscape (Kara, 2019).

The detectives' hybrid background is in tune with the cosmopolitan aspect of the city. Although they were both born and bred in the city's old town and would like to preserve their city's history, they also have ethnic heritage or relationships. Nevzat's girlfriend Evgenia is Greek, and Ikmen's mother Ayşe, was an Albanian witch. Moreover, the detectives' lives are tuned to the supernatural elements, through their dreams and the cultivation of the sixth sense. Accordingly, Nevzat frequently sees his wife and daughter's apparitions and Ikmen is known for his sixth sense even among the police force. Ikmen's spirituality partly comes from his mother's side, as she used to be a Tarot cards reader for Madam Anastasia; hence, Ikmen uses his mother's cards to find the entrapped property developer Ahmet Öden. Ikmen's psychic mother is juxtaposed with his academic father, who knows Greek and has passed on his knowledge to his son. With this knowledge, Ikmen can understand the Greek scribbles in the victim Ariadne Savva's notebook and develop new leads in the murder case. On the other hand, Nevzat's rational side and love for the city and its history comes from his history teacher mother and the trips they made to museums and historical places where Nevzat would be lectured about the history of the city.

Istanbul as an amalgamation of culture, history, and landscape is a multi-folded setting for both novels. As Akkerman points out:

Sauer (1925) advanced the concept of a cultural landscape as the imposition of culture upon nature. Culture, as defined as the shared myths, beliefs, and behavioral standards, manifests itself in a cultural landscape, i.e., human intervention upon natural landscape. Culture and one of its more important aspects, technology, have been changing the lived environments of humans, primarily through considerations of expediency related to the human body, while bodily experiences have been changing accordingly and, in turn, have often driven advances of technological change. Landscapes modified by human action, as an aspect of culture, thus impact culture itself, whereby the feedback interaction

between culture and landscape as a progression in time, defines much of the history of civilization (Akkerman, 2013).

Following the analysis of the effect of culture upon nature and how this has modified the landscape and the lived environments of humans over time, it can be said that the real villains in both novels, who eventually become victims, desire to reshape and change the city's landscape according to their own beliefs and tastes. Ahmet Öden, the supposedly "pious" property developer in the "Land of the Blind", wants to destroy the Negroponte House where Anastasia Negroponte and her family have been living for decades because he wants to demolish a sacred place for the Greek community; an ancient Red Room room where the Byzantine princesses such as Zoe were born. This is also an attempt to bury the ethnic threads of the city and destroy its cosmopolitan heritage. On the other hand, Adem Yezdan the greedy property developer in "A Memento for Istanbul" aims to destroy the remains of a natural and cultural landscape, that of the historical peninsula to build a "replica" of history. Thus this "replica" will be designed according to his preferences and become his legacy. The two developers' projects can be best described by Lowenthal: "As we diminish and modify the past we have inherited; we increasingly create our own. Despite being products of historical events beyond our control, we fashion our surroundings and artifacts to fit our imagined histories both shared and personal, that satisfy our tastes." (Lowenthal, 1975, p. 36).

3.5 Istanbul as a Crime Scene

In both novels, the victims are found under historical monuments: in "A Memento for Istanbul" the victims are discovered under each of seven historical monuments, whereas in the "Land of the Blind" the victim Ariadne Savva is found under the Hippodrome. The historical significance of these sights unravels the city's history and allows the detectives to retell the city's history, thus emphasizing its importance as a mega metropolis and the setting of the crime stories. While all mega metropolises have become cosmopolitan cities, in this post-modern age, Edhem Eldem investigates a few other options before defining Istanbul as a cosmopolitan city in the context of the nineteenth-century Ottoman society.

Eldem asserts: It is noticeable that the Ottoman capital city had a substantial number of people from “transnational or trans-imperial nature” including foreign diplomats, merchants, captains, sailors, artists, missionaries, political refugees, and translators. However, the challenge lies in determining the nature of the social, cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity of the permanent denizens of the imperial city and other port cities. Out of different terms possible to depict this diversity such as “plurality, pluralism, diversity, hybridity” cosmopolitanism seems to be the most appropriate term to define the social and cultural diversity created by the mixing of local and foreign ethnic and/or religious groups to reflect the common usage of the term in the context of Ottoman society during the 19th century (Eldem, 2013, p. 214).

Building on the insights provided by Eldem, we can find a similar display of cosmopolitanism in “A Memento for Istanbul” where Inspector Nevzat comments on the religious district Çarşamba; during the Byzantine era, this region was home to many monasteries and churches, and this continued under the Ottoman rule. There were numerous mosques, madrasah, Sufi lodges, and mausoleums present. Despite a decline in their numbers the Christians and Jews remained. The Patriarchy, for example, is located close by in Fener; several Orthodox priests remain there. There are also other churches and synagogues, which serve various religious communities including Armenians, Jews, and Catholics. This region has a long history of different religious communities coexisting peacefully (Ümit, 2010, p. 147, 148).

As Lewis Mumford notes, the city is a defining feature of most civilizations and is frequently regarded as their most complete manifestation. Its roots can be traced back even before the “urban revolutions” that occurred in Mesopotamia during the third millennium BC to the archaeological remnants of Jericho and Çatalhöyük in Anatolia. Despite the passing of centuries, the nature of urban life remains a major preoccupation for mankind. (Harding, 2003, p. 5).

Hence, the themes dealt with in both novels are directly related to the quality of urban life. In “A Memento for Istanbul” the motives of the murderers are rebellion against greed, corruption and negligence towards their loved ones and their beloved city which Yekta even writes odes to. On the other hand, in “Land of the Blind” the property

developer Ahmet Öden walks into entrapment due to his hatred towards the Negropontes and their Greek heritage.

3.6 Secrets in the City

“In his *Eugene Aram*, Bulwer-Lytton orchestrated his description of big-city dwellers with a reference to Goethe’s remark that each person, the most worthy as well as the most despicable, carries around a secret which would make him hateful to everyone else if it became known” (Benjamin, 2006, p. 20).

In the “Land of The Blind” Hakkı Bey the loyal servant, deceives and entraps the property developer Ahmet Öden to protect the family secret, the Red Room room which was the room the Byzantium princesses were born in. Ahmet Öden had promised his religious father that he would destroy the Red Room which is a part of the Byzantium heritage passed on to the Greeks. To keep the Red Room room a secret, Hakkı Bey and Madam Anastasia’s son Yannis are reluctant to leave Inspector Ikmen alone in the house; when they even accompany him to the bathroom, it becomes clear to Inspector Ikmen that something is hidden from him in the Negroponte house.

Benjamin contends that the crowds have become the asylums that conceal the secrets of the recluses. A Parisian secret agent wrote in 1798 that it is nearly impossible to sustain proper behavior in a densely populated area where one is unknown to others and doesn’t have to feel ashamed in front of anyone. In such places the masses serve as a sanctuary that protects an antisocial person from their pursuers. Hence this aspect of the menacing crowds is one of the first to become evident, thus is the genesis of the detective story (Benjamin, 2006, p. 21).

Hakkı and Yannis can also be considered as recluses since they rarely go out and spend their days taking care of Madam Anastasia in the Negroponte house. Comparatively, in “A Memento for Istanbul”, Inspector Nevzat’s solitary childhood friends Yekta and Demir commit seven savage murders right under his nose. Yet, Inspector Nevzat doesn’t suspect them until the very end. Nevzat enters Yekta’s house following the final murder where he is shocked by the brutality of his beloved friends.

As I approached the garage door, I picked up a strange scent. A sharp, sour, stomach-turning stench of a rotting organism; the putrid stink of decaying flesh. I

froze, rooted to the spot. There was no point in trying to deceive myself any longer. It was a smell I knew from neighborhoods and crime scenes all over the city - the squalid stench of man's inhumanity to man.[...] For the last few days, the room hadn't been used as a garage but as a chamber of death; an abattoir where the blood of their victims, their homage to Istanbul, had run like rivers onto the hard stone floor, a slaughterhouse where men's throats had been cut (Ümit , 2010, pp. 546- 47).

Like the brutality displayed in the midst of the metropolis in both novels, Benjamin argues that the "The Mysteries of Paris" alludes to Cooper in promising that the book's heroes from the criminal underworld of Paris are just as far removed from civilization as the savages who are majestically portrayed by Cooper. Comparatively, Nevzat's well bred, educated, humanist childhood friends are turned into savages in the center of civilization due to their rebellion against corruption, greed, and despair. They both lost their beloved childhood friend, Yekta's wife Handan and her child Umut in an accident caused by the negligence of the greedy property developer, Ahmet Öden. Thus, all their victims played a part in covering up the incident. Considering Yekta and Demir were living a secluded life they could easily go incognito among the masses; thus, their self-imposed isolation fits with Benjamin's description of the original theme of the detective story, i.e., the erasure of the individual's presence in the bustling city and its masses (Benjamin, 2006, p. 21).

However, this can be read as twofold, for the worst villains need not be recluses or asocials, they can live among us hidden in plain sight, as Inspector Ikmen in "Land of The Blind" acknowledges that the evillest criminals in the world often live in well-kept homes and wear nice suits.

3.7 The Flâneuse and the City

No one perhaps has ever felt passionately towards a lead pencil. But there are circumstances in which it can become supremely desirable to possess one; moments when we are set upon having an object, an excuse for walking half across London between tea and dinner. [...] So when the desire comes upon us to go street rambling the pencil does for a pretext, and getting up we say: "Really I

must buy a pencil,” as if under cover of this excuse we could indulge safely in the greatest pleasure of town life in winter—rambling the streets of London (Woolf, 2014).

Based on the above passage we can conclude that Woolf’s flâneuse has a similar craving for wandering the city as Baudelaire’s poet flâneur. Hence when we look at how the flâneur starts his day we can see that he muses about the amount of time he has lost in sleep. Baudelaire aptly describes the flâneur’s sentiments: Upon waking up and seeing the sun shining brightly through his window the flâneur immediately feels remorse and regret for missing a great part of the day. He has lost several hours of sleep and missed several things he could have seen in the sunlight. With this thought he sets off and observes the magnificent and dazzling flow of life. He adores the eternal beauty and remarkable harmony of life in big cities, a tranquility amidst the commotion of human freedom (Baudelaire, 2010, p. 24).

Almost 64 years after Baudelaire’s poet flâneur, Virginia Woolf introduces her flâneuse, who uses the excuse of buying a pencil to “ramble” the streets of London. Woolf’s flâneuse is indeed like Baudelaire’s flâneur who enjoys the hustle and bustle of the big city. Woolf asserts that as we step outside our homes during the hours between 4 and 6, we are no longer the same person that our friends are familiar with. Instead, we become part of the vast anonymous group of wanderers, enjoying the experience of being among others after being isolated in our own rooms (Woolf, 2014).

Corresponding to Baudelaire’s flâneur and Woolf’s flâneuse the protagonist Ariadne Savva in “Land of the Blind” adopts the qualities of the flâneuse while “street haunting” in the streets of Istanbul. Ariadne, a Greek academic and Byzantine specialist working for the archeology museum becomes a flâneuse-detective whilst investigating the old Byzantine structures; thus, she discovers the secret room underneath the Negroponte house. Meanwhile she manages to hide her private life from her friends and coworkers. We follow the deceased flâneuse-detective, Ariadne’s traces in the footsteps of Inspector Ikmen and his subordinate, sergeant Kerim Gürsel. In her apartment, there are no clues of her life or her pregnancy. Her assistant Meltem and colleague Aylin don’t know about her pregnancy and relationship with her child’s father. She is also part of a congregation

where she is not close with anyone. Thus, she remains incognito even amongst her circle while roaming the city and searching for the old Byzantine structures.

However, Woolf warns us against the dangers of digging deeper whilst wandering; thus, we might be in great danger. We might awaken the sleeping army of humans and they may bring up on us their weirdness, sufferings, and atrocities. Therefore, let us wander a little longer and be content with surfaces only. Such as the radiant shine of the omnibuses; the splendid display of meat in the butcher shops; the clusters of blue and red flowers brightly glowing through the florist's windows made of plate glass (Woolf, 2014).

Nonetheless, Ariadne is not content with the surfaces, she possesses qualities of the *flâneuse* as she digs deeper; she gets involved with the troubles of the rubbish pickers and helps them fight against the selfish property developer Ahmed Öden who wants to push them out to build a housing project. Meanwhile, through her research and investigation she crosses paths with the Negroponte family. However, her whereabouts are elusive throughout the novel. Like the *flâneuse* she remains anonymous amidst the masses.

3.8 The Grotesque, Carnavalesque and Women of the City

We halt at the door of the boot shop and make some little excuse, which has nothing to do with the real reason, for folding up the bright paraphernalia of the streets and withdrawing to some duskier chamber of the being where we may ask, as we raise our left foot obediently upon the stand: "What, then, is it like to be a dwarf? (Woolf, 2014).

Woolf continuing her "street haunting"² introduces us to the grotesque³ of the city. She encounters a "dwarf" accompanied by two normal-sized women who look like warm-hearted giants beside her. As they shop for shoes for the dwarf Woolf notes that despite

² A term coined by Woolf in her essay "Street Haunting: A London Adventure" (2014)

³ The grotesque body is a concept developed by Bakhtin in his study of Francois Rabelais' work. As Bakhtin details it: "An important source for grotesque-bodily images is the cycle of legends and literary works related to the so-called "Indian Wonders." [...] But most important of all in our mind is the description of extraordinary human beings. These creatures have a distinctive grotesque character. [...] There are also giants, dwarfs, and pygmies. (Bakhtin, 1984, p.345)

needing their compassion, the dwarf had an irritable yet regretful look on her face often seen in the disfigured. The dwarf tried on pairs of shoes after shoes. Then she twirled in front of the mirror displaying her feet. With her gaze fixed only on her feet she fantasized that her entire body was as attractive as her feet. After the shoes were chosen, she left the shop with her guardians and parcel. However, the joy had gone, her old irritability and apologetic expression was back. By the time she reached the street, she had returned to her dwarf self again. Woolf asserts that the dwarf had altered the mood. She had invoked an atmosphere that seemed to bring forth the presence of the humped, the twisted or deformed. The dwarf had initiated “a hobbling grotesque dance” which everyone in the street joined in; including the stocky lady wrapped in shiny sealskin, the half-witted boy sucking the silver handle of his cane and the old man sitting on a doorstep. They all participated in the “hobble and tap of the dwarf’s dance” (Woolf, 2014).

According to Woolf, the presence of the dwarf creates the hunchback, the crippled, and disfigured in other words the “grotesque” in the city. This generates a carnivalesque environment in the city. Carnivalistic life according to Bakhtin is life taken out of its usual routine and to a certain extent “life turned inside out” and the “reverse side of the world” (“monde à l’envers”). During carnival the laws, rules and regulations that normally govern daily life are lifted. Carnival brings together and blends the sacred with the profane, the lofty with the low, the mighty with the trivial and the wise with the foolish (Bakhtin, 1984, pp. 329-31).

Yet, the carnivalistic life that seemed so harmonious at Gezi Park in “Land of The Blind” is not that cordial in governmental institutions. Despite their more liberal personal views the two higher members of the police force, Commissioner Hürrem, and Inspector Ikmen feel obliged to warn their subordinates to tread carefully in their private lives.

In “The Sphinx in The City. Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women” Elizabeth Wilson argues the representation of women in cities varies greatly in literature, encompassing various stereotypes such as the seductive temptress, the promiscuous whore, the fallen women, and the lesbian as well as the virtuous womanhood in peril and heroines who overcome hurdles. Some writers, such as Benjamin, focused on their own feelings of alienation and personal desires in the city whilst many others viewed the presence of a woman as a challenge to societal order. This was due to the association of

women with the possibility of sexual excitement, which was perceived as a moral and political danger (Wilson, 1992, p. 6).

Correspondingly in "Land of the Blind" Sergeant Gürsel's lesbian wife Sinem, and his lover the transgender Pembe Hanım are also considered a threat to the order in society; Sinem as a lesbian and Pembe Hanım as the seductive temptress, even by Inspector Ikmen's transgender cousin Samsun. Thus, she feels the need to warn Inspector Ikmen "Çetin, the wife is a beard! A disguise to hide what your sergeant really is. He likes chicks with dicks, Çetin, trust me, and his "wife" – ill little thing – well, she likes girls" (Nadel, 2015, p. 229).

Furthermore, Elizabeth Wilson claims although the city is crowded and has a conformist bureaucratic nature, the city dweller is presented with the opposite at every turn - pleasure, deviation and disruption (Wilson, 1992, p. 7). Building on this insight it can be said that Ahmet Öden, the religious property developer, is caught in a similar moral dilemma. Hence, he is a traditional pious man, yet he has a relationship with the gypsy stripper Gülizar. He engages in an immoral relationship with his gypsy mistress. On the other hand, he publicly shows his affection to his daughter with Down Syndrome. However, his public position and religion prevent him from continuing this relationship openly. Hence, Yannis remarks it is hard to imagine the reaction of his devout supporters and his morally upright employees if they found out about Gülizar; the large and bold gypsy who used to work as a stripper before Ahmet began paying her to perform actions that are deemed inappropriate by the religious. If his affair with his mistress were to be revealed, he would lose his position as a pious and moral citizen.

CONCLUSION

In this comparative study which focused on Ahmet Ümit's "A Memento For Istanbul" and Barbara Nadel's "Land of The Blind", Istanbul was explored within the theoretical framework of Urban Gothic. As explained in the introduction, the thesis analyzed Istanbul as a palimpsestic city, haunted by the blood and memories of the past civilizations and empires of that it was once home to. The ongoing conflicts between old and new, and East and West, which keep unfolding in this fascinating urban setting were also thoroughly discussed.

In the first chapter, I argued for the Urban Gothic nature of the city employing an Urban Gothic framework, accompanied by Derrida's concept of "Hauntology". Chief Inspector Nevzat Akman, the protagonist detective in Ahmet Umit's "A Memento for Istanbul" is also the prime storyteller of Istanbul's history and palimpsestic nature. While hunting the murderers of the seven vicious crimes, Inspector Nevzat roams the Urban Gothic city and tells us the history and secrets in the backstreets and myths around the ancient monuments of archaic Istanbul; his intricate tales are solid proof that Istanbul was an Urban Gothic city from its very foundation.

In the second chapter, as my framework, I implemented a reading of "Land of The Blind" by employing Bakhtin's concepts of the "Chronotope" and "Carnavalesque" together with related Urban Gothic theories. Similar to Nevzat Akman, the protagonist of "Land of The Blind", Inspector Çetin Ikmen and his team investigate the death of Ariadne Savva and search for her missing baby while roaming the ancient city for clues.

In the third chapter, I offered a reading of "A Memento for Istanbul" and "Land of the Blind" in congruence with Walter Benjamin's concept of the "Flâneur", Virginia Woolf's female street wanderer, the "Flâneuse" and Bakhtin's "Carnavalesque". The flâneur-detectives transform the leisurely activity of strolling into purposeful investigations of crime and uncover the Gothic city's history as they explore it.

As previously mentioned, this study has compared two crime novels one written by Ahmet Ümit, a famous Turkish crime fiction author, "A Memento for Istanbul", and one by Barbara Nadel a British, female crime fiction author, "Land of the Blind". Barbara Nadel is also the winner of the CWA Silver Dagger Award. Nadel not only knows the geography, heritage, and culture of Istanbul very well but shares the love and passion of a

true “İstanbulu”. Hence, the protagonists are very similar in nature; Inspectors Nevzat Akman and Çetin İkmen retell the history and myths of their beloved city while they pursue the murderers. They are also humanized by acknowledging their vices, such as İkmen’s smoking and Nevzat’s love of drinking rakı with his friends and girlfriend Evgenia. The assessment of their characters through the Gothic lens is established through Nevzat’s frequent shift into the supernatural realm and İkmen’s use of his sixth sense acquired from his “witch” mother.

At the core of the present study was the idea that Istanbul shares the quality of a protagonist together with the two detectives; had these novels been set in a different metropolis, the theories employed could have been selected differently. Istanbul’s geographical position between Asia and Europe and its historical past ruled by several brutal Eastern and Western emperors establish Istanbul as a city full of violence, transgressions, and ambiguity, which are prominent features of the Urban Gothic genre. The impact of this palimpsest city on its denizens is read through Derrida’s concept of Hauntology (Derrida, 1994). As the habitants of the city are born into enormous debt, they carry a burden similar to the mythological Atlas’ on their shoulders. However the detectives are not crushed under this burden, they are comfortable in this mixed ethnic and cultural heritage of the urban city; on a personal level, they have even managed to make peace with their vices and demons and are not defeated by their personal misfortunes. Moreover, the Inspectors use their knowledge of the city, curiosity, and detective skills to find the murderers and bring justice to their city.

Reading these two novels through the lens of Urban Gothic and related theories enabled me to give voice to the abject of the city. The Carnavalesque environment in the Park conveys how the queers and lesbians are united with the “normal” residents fighting against capitalism and the demolition of their sacred green space in the midst of their city. The juxtaposition of the abject with members of the police force such as Sergeant Gürsel, his lesbian wife and transgender lover, Inspector İkmen, his transgender cousin Samsun, and his gay son Kemal, Inspector Süleyman and his gypsy lover Gonca argues for Istanbul as an Urban Gothic city where the transgressions that normally take place in the

periphery of the city, in the backstreets and hidden pockets can also take place in the central, most authoritative organization, the police department.

Furthermore, the flâneur-detectives encounter atrocious crimes committed in the midst of the crowds. Inspector Ikmen witnesses Poe's recurring theme of "being buried alive" as Madam Anastasia's kind caregiver Hakkı attempts to entomb the greedy property developer Ahmet Öden in a wall. Similarly, Inspector Nevzat's childhood friends are revealed as the murderers he had been hunting all along. They have even prepared a kill room, a slaughterhouse to orchestrate in Nevzat's own words "man's inhumanity to man" (Ümit, 2010, p. 547). This also portrays an almost Carnivalistic turn of events where the good becomes the evil. In both novels, the victims Hakkı, Yannis, Yekta, and Demir turn into villains in order to get their own justice where there is ongoing corruption, neglect, oppression, and the system fails them. Thus, the fluidity of identity and crossing of boundaries are other fundamental aspects of the Gothic genre that were discussed here. Additionally, the "Flâneuse" Ariadne Savva in "Land of the Blind" encounters the Grotesque while "street haunting" the City and dies in the sacred Byzantine Red Room room giving birth to her child, thus experiencing the threshold chronotope representing the duality of birth and death, a distinct feature of Gothic.

In conclusion, this study argued that Istanbul is an Urban Gothic City through its encompassing a number of gothic themes and motifs. Moreover, the inhabitants of the city were shown as living in an eternal state of despair and anxiety for their future as a result of the repression, corruption, and injustice they face daily. In Baudrillard's words "[...] If the great operational metropolis is the final form of an entire culture, then, quite simply, ours is a culture of death" (Baudrillard 1993, p. 127). Thus, the anonymous "Flâneur-detectives" and "Flânuese's" of the city will undoubtedly continue to encounter many murder mysteries belonging to the Urban Gothic genre in Istanbul in future works of literature. Moreover, Urban Gothic related theories and subgenres such as "Hauntology" (Derrida, 1994), "Gothic Postmodernism" (Beville, 2009) and the "The Queer Uncanny" (Palmer, 2012) will open doors to many alternative readings.

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