

POSTMODERN AFFECTIVE HISTORIES IN SEVGİLİ ARSIZ
ÖLÜM (1983) AND DARE TO DISAPPOINT: GROWING UP
IN TURKEY (2015)

A Master's Thesis

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Ankara
May 2025

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– Bilkent University 2025



“Umudumu dürttüm, Uyandı”

—Nilgün Marmara, *Daktiloya Çekilmiş Şiirler*

“One thing. One thing. One thing:

Tell me there is a meadow, afterward.”

— Lucie Brock-Broido, *A Meadow*

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The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by
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THE DEPARTMENT OF
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By Yeşim Kaya

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Turkish Literature.

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ABSTRACT

POSTMODERN AFFECTIVE HISTORIES IN *SEVGİLİ ARSIZ ÖLÜM* (1983) AND *DARE TO DISAPPOINT: GROWING UP IN TURKEY* (2015)

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This thesis analyzes two postmodern novels that were published in different periods—*Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (1983) by Latife Tekin and *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* (2015) by Özge Samancı—in a comparative framework. It investigates how these Turkish women authors employ postmodern novel genre and postmodern narrative strategies such as magic realism, fragmentation, metafiction, and visual storytelling to construct what this study calls postmodern affective histories. Through such writings and the creation of affective histories, the two authors create feminist affects, reclaim women's subjectivity, and challenge dominant patriarchal and historical discourses. In doing so, as both authors' narratives are autobiographical, they also reclaim their agency in the world literary scene where they are otherwise underrepresented or marginalized.

Drawing on a theoretical framework that combines approaches from world literature theories, postcolonial criticism, feminist theory, and affect theory, this thesis situates both novels within world literary circuits. This thesis work also incorporates Franco Moretti's "distant reading" approach to highlight how these

authors—despite their marginal positioning due to gender, language, and geography—actively contribute to the development and evolution of the postmodern novel genre and global feminist discourse. Ultimately, this study argues that through their protagonists, Dirmit and Özge, and the use of localized postmodern techniques and translations, Latife Tekin’s *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* and Özge Samancı’s *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* offer alternative historiographies and enrich our understanding of Turkish women’s literature and presence within a global literary context.

Key Words: Postmodern Novel, Affect Theory, Feminist Resistance, Turkish Literature, World Literature

ÖZET

SEVGİLİ ARSIZ ÖLÜM (1983) VE *BIRAK ÜZÜLSÜNLER: TÜRKİYE'DE BÜYÜMEK* (2015) ROMANLARINDA POSTMODERN DUYGULANIMSAL TARİHLER

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Mayıs 2025

Bu tez, farklı dönemlerde yayımlanmış iki postmodern romanı—Latife Tekin'in *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm'ü* (1983) ve Özge Samancı'nın *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey'i* (*Bırak Üzölsünler: Türkiye'de Büyömek*) (2015)—karşılaştırmalı bir çerçevede analiz eder. Çalışma, bu iki Türk kadın yazarın, postmodern roman türünü ve büyüü gerçekçilik, parçalı anlatım, üstkurmaca ve görsel anlatı gibi postmodern anlatı stratejilerini kullanarak nasıl "postmodern duygulanımsal tarihler" (postmodern affective histories) inşa ettiklerini inceler. Bu tür anlatılar aracılığıyla, söz konusu yazarlar feminist duygulanımlar yaratmakta, kadın öznesini yeniden sahiplenmekte ve baskın tarihsel ataerkil söylemlere meydan okumaktadır. Bunu yaparken, her iki yazarın anlatısı da otobiyografik olduğundan, aynı zamanda, onlar aksi takdirde yeterince temsil edilmedikleri dünya edebiyatı sahnesinde kendi öznel ve edebi aktörlüklerini de yeniden kazanırlar.

Bu tez, kuramsal çerçevesini dünya edebiyatı teorileri, postkolonyal eleştiri, feminist teori ve duygulanım kuramının birleşiminden oluşturur. Her iki romanı da dünya edebiyatı dolaşımı içerisinde konumlandıran bu çalışma, Franco Moretti'nin “uzaktan okuma” (distant reading) yaklaşımından da yararlanıp cinsiyet, dil ve coğrafya gibi nedenlerle marjinal konumda yer alan bu yazarların kendi yazımlarıyla postmodern roman türünün gelişimine ve romanların çevirisiyle küresel feminist söylemin genişlemesine nasıl aktif biçimde katkı sunduklarını ortaya koymaktadır.

Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma Dirmit ve Özge adlı karakterler, yerelleştirilmiş postmodern teknikler ile bu romanların çevirilerinin, *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* ve *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* (Bırak Üzölsünler: Türkiye’de Büyömek) eserlerinin alternatif tarih yazımları sunduğunu ve Türk kadın edebiyatının edebiyatı küresel bir bağlamda zenginleştirdiğini savunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Postmodernizm, Duygulanım Kuramı, Feminist Direniş, Türk Edebiyatı, Dünya Edebiyatı

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis is a culmination of a very personal and grave journey that went beyond intellectual as well as mental challenges which typically are associated with academic research and Master's Degree level responsibilities. At times, the conditions and experiences under which this thesis work was completed required going through structural, emotional, and institutional complexities. These complexities remain largely invisible within scholarly frameworks and unfortunately, in our daily lives.

Throughout my time at Bilkent University, I was continually reminded that resilience is not solely a personal attribute or characteristic. Instead, it is often a necessity within spaces that are not always designed to accommodate difference, vulnerability, or dissent. The completion of thesis is, therefore, not just an academic achievement or a progress. But it is also a testament to perseverance in the face of circumstances that sought, at times, to diminish one's sense of worth and belonging.

I extend my deepest gratitude to my parents and my sister. Their unconditional support taught me that love is boundless and the self is limitless. I also thank the friends whom I know—and those I do not know personally but whose understanding and compassion reached me nevertheless. Their presence, whether spoken or silent, affirmed that solidarity can transcend familiarity and one-on-one contact.

Finally, I want to note that I will always remain mindful of those moments when acknowledgment was withheld. This work quietly resists such erasures and oppression. Overall, this thesis affirms the necessity of recognizing and accepting the presence,

contributions, as well as dignity of all individuals trying to navigate academic life and improve themselves.

Yeşim Kaya



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INTRODUCTION

In “Notes toward a Politics of Location (1984),” Adrienne Cecile Rich explores the relationship between identity, geography, and political consciousness. At the beginning of the discussion, Rich critiques Virginia Woolf— herself a British modernist writer, literary critic, and feminist thinker. While raising her critique, Rich specifically refers to Woolf’s statement: “As a woman, I have no country. As a woman, I want no country. As a woman, my country is the whole world” (Woolf 106). In contrast to Virginia Woolf, who disregards the material conditions of women in this statement, Adrienne Cecile Rich believes women’s presence, perspectives, problems, and challenges can only be understood when enough attention is paid to women’s positionality in the world. Positionality in this context indicates “the social location of a person—in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, religion, age, [and] ability, citizenship status” (Samuels & Ross-Sheriff 5). In saying so, therefore, Rich in fact argues that comprehending women’s experience requires thoroughly examining the material realities that shape every aspect of their identity and experiences in the world.

This emphasis on positionality in Rich’s writing also anticipates critiques developed in the less dominant and underrepresented feminist traditions. These less dominant traditions are the ones such as intersectional and postcolonial feminism which argue that universalist claims—like that of Woolf’s—often erase and remove the diverse realities of women affected by racial, colonial, and geopolitical inequalities, material conditions, and social disadvantages. Rich’s

criticism in this instance thus is highly important because it draws attention to diversity and multiplicity. Besides, it is significant because it marks a crucial turn toward more grounded, less dominant as well as much more differentiated understandings of feminist discussions and feminist subjectivity.

“Postmodern Affective Histories in *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (1983) and *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* (2015)” aligns with Rich’s standpoint and criticism. Instead of approaching women’s experience from a totalizing perspective and analyzing their conditions through a holistic and universalist lens, it also highlights how women’s material conditions and their disadvantaged position shape their experiences with art and their artistic production processes. In doing so, this project also draws attention to how women utilize their writing and their fictional production as a tool to combat patriarchal oppression by shaping their own realities.

For the analysis, this study chooses *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (1983) by Latife Tekin and *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* (2015) by Özge Samancı. The reason behind such a special selection is because both authors provide unique perspectives on Turkish women’s experiences across different time periods as well as socio-political contexts. Tekin provides a perspective on the 1960s and 1970s through the consciousness she acquired following the 1980s military coup¹

¹The 1980s were the period that coincided with lots of conflict between the leftists and right-wing people. As a result of the constant political tension resulting from this conflict, on 12 September 1980, General Kenan Evren of the National Security Council and four service commanders decided that these conflicts would overthrow the government. They then declared a coup d'etat on the national channel. This was the third coup in the national history of the Turkish Republic. Also, it was the beginning of a repressive and anti-democratic period in Turkish history, which lasted for three years and created repression on people with strict censorship, hindering them from engaging in social, political, and scholarly life freely. For more information on this historical event, please have a look at Turkish historian Sibel Bozdoğan’s work entitled *Modernism and Nation Building Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic* (2002).

in Türkiye. Samancı, on the other hand, provides a perspective on 1980s and the 2000s in Türkiye with the political consciousness she developed following the Gezi Park protests². Their distinct narrative strategies and the historical moments they portray render these two authors significant examples for exploring how postmodern techniques and affective storytelling work in relations with feminist narratives of resistance. In addition, Tekin and Samancı's marginal positioning in the world literary scene make them rather relevant to the discussions in this thesis. It is mainly because despite their literary significance, in the world literary circuits and discussions, these two authors occupy a marginal and underrepresented space. This positioning is not shaped only by their gender but also by the position and linguistic marginality of Türkiye. It is mainly because literature in Türkiye is underrepresented in Anglophone literary circuits. This is mainly due to limited translation, orientalist reception, and the tendency to exorcize narratives produced in the non-Western countries. These structural and intersectional barriers render the international reception of Turkish women writers uneven as well as uncommon. In this regard, the experience of women publishers and authors in Türkiye illustrates these challenges. It also underlines their disadvantaged position. Literary critic Arzu Akbatur also touches on this issue and the disadvantaged status of Turkish women in the world literary scene. She underlines this phenomenon in "Turkish Women Writers in English Translation"(2011). Akbatur believes Turkish women's disadvantage comes from three reasons and

²Gezi Park Resistance took place between the 30th of May through roughly the end of summer in 2013 in Turkey. When the Turkish state and police wanted to cut down the trees in Istanbul's Gezi Park, located in Istanbul's Taksim Square, a group of activists resisted them by occupying the place. With the increase in the police's oppression, this event drew the attention of the international media, and it became known within a matter of hours. In addition, Gezi Park Resistance turned out as a politically-loaded phenomenon where the civilians and the government were constantly in a clash. Later on, this event started to be called "Gezi Park Resistance" and "Gezi Movement." For more information on this political event, please have a look at *AKP Since Gezi Park: Moving to Regime Change in Turkey* (2021)

she states: “Turkish women writers in English translation can be considered to be occupying a “minority” status for three reasons: First, the[ir] works are translated from Turkish, a “minor” language (and literature compared to English). Second, the works are “translations” (as opposed to being composed originally in English). Third, they are translations of Turkish ‘women’s ’writing” (Akbatır 164). Hence, analyzing these narratives produced by Latife Tekin and Özge Samancı, in fact, equips us with the ability to enrich and expand our understanding of world literature. At the same time, it helps us to discover how Turkish women’s writings as well as their understanding of feminism can contribute towards to the development of world literature. Additionally, understanding their case allows us to have a better grasp of how to approach the concept of literature through more diverse, inclusive as well as more differentiated lenses.

In the analysis, this thesis puts forward that Samancı and Tekin’s works function as postmodern novels, which combine personal stories with broader historical and socio-political contexts. In doing so, this thesis argues that *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* and *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* demonstrate how contemporary Turkish female authors localize the postmodern novel genre with the aim of resisting patriarchal oppression and challenging dominant historical narratives. The above mentioned texts construct what I call “postmodern affective histories” in this thesis. By this term, I refer to the narratives that generate affects while foregrounding the material conditions of Turkish women’s lives and their experiences. By doing so, the authors reclaim their agency by situating their works within transnational feminist discourse and the evolving field of world literature. Additionally, as both *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* and *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* are autobiographical—Samancı’s memoir is fully

autobiographical and Tekin's novel being semi-autobiographical—they serve as fictionalized histories. Because of this reason, these works act as a means of reclaiming authorial agency and presence. To put it differently, by embedding their personal histories into their narratives, the authors also put themselves into a world literary field that has often marginalized, overlooked or underrepresented Turkish women writers. These two authors' use of localized postmodern narrative strategies—such as magic realism, fragmentation, parody, and visual storytelling— and the translations of their works turn these two authors and their works into entities which are locally grounded yet globally resonant.

In order to fully grasp the ways these novels create affects, resist patriarchal narratives and create spaces for these otherwise underrepresented authors, this thesis adopts an interdisciplinary theoretical framework. The theoretical framework upon which the thesis is constructed first provides information on postmodern novel genre. In doing so, it offers insights into postmodern narrative structure and historical reconstruction in these narratives. The theoretical framework also is informed by affect theory. While touching on the issue of affect theory, the thesis sheds light on how emotions circulate and generate resistance in the above mentioned novels. Finally, the theoretical framework also has world literature theory information. Having this information is useful. With the help of this information, this thesis situates Tekin and Samancı's narratives within a transnational context and world literature discussions. It does so, particularly through focusing on the use of postmodern novel genre in these novels and analyzing their translations. At the same time, the theoretical frame work benefits from feminist theory. Though the help of feminist theory, this project foregrounds

the intersectional material conditions shaping women's experiences and their realities.

While the thesis is built on all these theories as well as textual facticity, this thesis is highly informed by the concept of distant reading which is introduced in "Conjectures on World Literature (2000)" by Franco Moretti who is one of the famous scholars working on the concept of world literature. This approach emphasizes examining systemic patterns, genre circulations, and broader global literary flows rather than focusing solely on individual works and their impact. By adopting distant reading as a new perspective and a new study lens, this thesis situates Tekin's and Samancı's novels within the global evolution of the postmodern novel. In so doing, this thesis highlights these two authors' active participation in transnational literary movements despite their marginal position in world literature. This thesis also underlines their participation in the world literary circulation through focusing on these novels' translations, as well. The following of the thesis elaborates further on these ideas under three headings.

The first chapter deals with the literature review. The literature review is intended to give details about the key concepts while building the theoretical backbone of this thesis. Initially, this literature review section focuses on the key concepts relating to postmodern novels and their features. In this part of the thesis, an exploration of the developments in affect theory and the concept of world literature will also be conducted. Such an exploration is also equally significant because overall, this project is about highlighting how emotions, histories, and global movements intersect in the works of contemporary Turkish women writers. And this thesis aims to demonstrate how postmodern novel genre evolves and

how these two authors—despite their marginalized space in the world literary scene—contribute to the development of this specific genre. At the same time, this thesis also aims to underline how though the translations of their works both Samancı and Tekin participate in world literature discussions.

Building upon the theoretical framework, the second chapter focuses on Latife Tekin's prominent and famous novel, *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*. *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* blends postmodern narrative techniques—such as magic realism—into its narrative while providing insights into Dirmit's journey and her development as a character. This fusion enables *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* to add another layer to the personal history of the author: through the use of magic realism and metafiction in the narrative, the author provides a social critique on the issues relating to the gender-related norms of the 1960s and 1970s. She does so through the consciousness which she developed in the following of the 1980s military coup in Türkiye. This chapter begins with a summary of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*. The first part highlights how Dirmit's relationship with her mother, Atiye, reflects the political tensions between the patriarchal atmosphere of the patriarchal forces and the feminist developments. At the same time, the first section reveals how affects are associated with Dirmit's character. After that, the second part focuses on *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*'s use of postmodern genre, its translations and adaptations. In doing so, this second part reveals how, through translations, adaptations and through the use of postmodern novel genre, Latife Tekin's novel continues to engage with national and global political concerns in the contemporary world. At the same time, the second part highlights how, through adaptations and transitions, *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* continues diffusing the feminist affects associated with Dirmit's feminist resistance.

The penultimate chapter dwells on *Dare to Disappoint: Growing up in Turkey* by Özge Samancı. This chapter follows a structure similar to the previous chapter. It begins by summarizing *Dare to Disappoint: Growing up in Turkey*. Focusing on the characterization of the protagonist, Özge, the first part of this section explores how Özge's presence challenges the patriarchal structures in the novel. This part also shows how subversive potentials of Özge's character are introduced and how her characterization starts representing affects. Building upon that, the second part focuses on *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey*'s relevance to world literature discussions. In doing so, this final section also demonstrates how the novel engages with contemporary national and global political concerns. Finally, like in the Chapter 2, this section of the thesis also concludes by discussing how Samancı's use of postmodern genre and the novel's translations adds to the process of anchoring Turkish women's contributions to world literary scene.

The final chapter serves to link together the main arguments presented throughout the study. This way, this final section offers a comprehensive conclusion. This section also reflects on the key findings, theoretical contributions, and broader implications of the research. Like the previous chapters, this final section of the thesis is also broken down to two different parts. The first part synthesizes all the arguments while also highlighting this study's broader and more global implications. The second part of this section provides a comparative analysis by revealing key thematic and structural parallels and differences between Özge Samancı's *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* and Latife Tekin's *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*. It, for example, underscores significant shifts in storytelling techniques by including their use of visual narrative, temporality, and affective modes of expression. Based on all these, this conclusion reflects on the

transformation in Turkish literature. It underlines how authors increasingly test the form and to articulate personal as well as political histories. Ultimately, this research highlights the potential of Turkish literature to contribute to world literature discourse and world literary circuits. Finally, by investigating how postmodern techniques, affects, and feminist resistance are integrated into the narratives of Latife Tekin and Özge Samancı, this study repositions Turkish literature within global literary discussions and circuits. At the same time, it offers a critical framework for future studies on marginalized and underrepresented literatures.



CHAPTER 1

A Literature Review

World Literature, Postmodern Historical Novel Genre, and Affect Theory

1. World Literature Concept

World literature is one of the most extensively theorized concepts in literary analysis. In *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* (2013), John Breuilly defines the 19th century as the period dominated by nationalism and nationalistic ideas. Echoing this view, Florian Bieber acknowledges the dominance of nationalistic ideas in the 19th century and their influence on the world as well as on literature. Further, in the following of his writing, Bieber comes up with a definition for nationalism. He describes nationalism as “a malleable and narrow ideology, which values membership in a nation greater than other groups (i.e., based on gender, parties, or socioeconomic group)” (Bieber 519). These observations and hypotheses underline nationalism’s reliance on differentiation and strict definition: nationalism allows nations to define themselves based on their differences from the others. Thus, nationalism operates through a very restricted, fictional, constructed, and essentialist lens. As a result, it is a concept, which reinforces the dichotomies, power imbalances, and differences among different locations in the world.

1.1. National Literature(s)

The concept of national literature also came about based on these ideas regarding nationalism in the 19th century. As mentioned, nationalism works on the principle emphasizing the constructed essentialist differences amongst different cultures and countries. Created with the influence of such ideas, the aim behind the emergence of the national literature concept was similar: national literature concept also aimed to underline that any of the national literatures, created in different locations in the world, emphasize the individuality and the distinction between countries. Hence, according to nationalistic ideas, these literatures also reinforce the constructed power imbalances, differences, and dichotomies. As a result, the national literature concept was also thought to be “essentialist in construction”(Torres 3). It was argued that national literature concept aimed to represent a unified national identity and privilege dominant cultural narratives while marginalizing regional, minority, or transnational voices (Torres 3). Because of all these particularities, national literature concept was restricted in the sense that it did not focus on the contributions of any literary work to the world literature. At the same time, national literature concept was not helpful in understanding the role of any literary work in shaping the world literary scene.

1. 2. Understanding World Literature Concept

When world literature first emerged as a new critical lens, it was attributed to Johann Goethe. During his lifetime, Goethe was exposed to extreme nationalism in Germany because at that time, Germany was rebuilt from "the primordial spirit of the united German people and "the sovereignty of the nation” (Mark Hewitson 1173-1174). World literature was put in relations with Goethe through his work

entitled *Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann and Soret* (1836). In this particular piece, about the concept of world literature, Goethe states: “Nowadays, national literature doesn’t mean much: the age of world literature is beginning, and everybody should contribute to hasten its advent” (Goethe 378). In addition to these observations and claims, Goethe further argues:

I am more and more convinced that poetry is the universal possession of mankind, revealing itself everywhere and at all times in hundreds and hundreds of men. I therefore like to look about me in foreign nations, and advise everyone to do the same. National literature is now a rather unmeaning term; the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach (Goethe 225- 227).

These statements emphasize that Goethe sees national literature concept as a very restricted critical lens. For him, the literary analysis provided with nationalist perspectives does not capture the circulation of different literatures in the world and across different cultures. Nor do they explain how literature works and how it corresponds to the changes in the world. Instead, nationalist perspectives on the concept of literature only focus on the unified and constructed images of the nations. Hence, they are not helpful when explaining the advancements regarding the literature. Nor do they help in understanding literature’s circulation in the world.

However, as the above statements reveal, Goethe’s points still “oscillate[d] s between an essentially European focus and a much more global perspective” (Pucher xix). In other words, Goethe falls into a paradox: while coming up with a

solution to dissolve the totalizing images created by national literature, Goethe ends up creating a concept that can speak on behalf of all literatures present in the world. Thus, his concept also reinforces totalizing images instead of paying attention to the individual differences between literatures and their contribution to the development of world literature concept. Moreover, in Goethe's statements, "ambiguities and uncertainties" attend "the conception of world literature from its early formation" (Pucher xix). It is mainly because Goethe never thoroughly explains the term. In the end, Goethe's totalizing perspective on world literature created the ambiguities. It led to the development of criticisms and new theoretical lenses for exploring world literature concept.

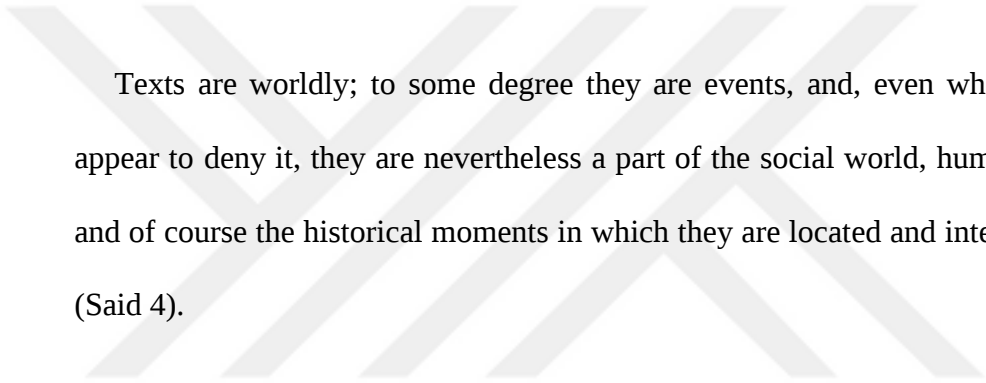
2. Postcolonial Criticism on the Concept of World Literature

Upon the emergence of Johann Goethe's world literature concept, several different critics have voiced their concerns and criticisms about it. To develop advanced solutions to define, conceptualize, and theorize world literature as a new theoretical lens for literary analysis and interpretation, several critics also approached the issue through different theoretical angles. Their approaches rendered world literature a multilayered and versatile literary analysis method. Also, their approaches opened new veins of discussion about the concept of world literature. One of the schools of criticism that raised new interpretations about the concept of world literature is the postcolonial school of criticism. To better understand where postcolonial critics' criticism of the concept of world literature came from, there is a need to grasp the logic behind the emergence of postcolonial literary theory.

In the second half of the 20th century, the postcolonial school of criticism mostly emerged. This set the stage for the critique of colonial structures and Western representations of Eastern cultures and literatures. The main idea behind the emergence of postcolonial criticism was exposing the power structures behind Western representations of the Eastern cultures (Barry 33-34). In the colonial context, the East appears as the "focus of anticipated mastery by the imperial ego," which is to be controlled. Hence, it holds the secondary position (Barry 33-34). According to postcolonial criticism and rhetoric, the West persistently reproduces and reinforces false images about the East in a totalizing manner. In other words, the West sees the East as a subservient counterpart without paying attention to its particularities and individual characteristics. Often, postcolonial critics argue, these representations associate the East with savageness, ignorance, and inferiority. In so doing, they render the East a point of mystery and hence associate the East with the otherness. This way, the West aims to position itself above the East. Postcolonial critics, therefore, believe that by underlining the East's particularities, they can endow the East with an agency and recognize it as a subject. To put it differently, postcolonial criticism emerged to reinterpret the West's representations of the East and aimed to reclaim the East's position. As a result, this school of criticism advocated for a more nuanced and decolonized understanding of Eastern history, culture, and identity.

Building on this foundational postcolonial arguments, Edward Said, who is at the same time the author of the seminal postcolonial work, *Orientalism* (1978), discusses world literature concept. Referring to the definition and statements provided by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Said underlines their insufficiency

when it comes to assessing and analyzing literature. He argues that there is an urgent need for paying attention to the Eastern particularities in *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (1983). By paying attention to the particularities present in each literary works, Edward Said believes a more nuanced and well-rounded type of a literary analysis approach will be achieved. Hence, world literature concept and its development will be better understood. Based on these ideas and foundations, Said introduces a new theoretical lens for investigation of the world literature concept saying:



Texts are worldly; to some degree they are events, and, even when they appear to deny it, they are nevertheless a part of the social world, human life, and of course the historical moments in which they are located and interpreted (Said 4).

Edward Said's interpretation of Goethe's concept and his points reveal that, according to him, literary criticism must recognize literary pieces' entanglement with power structures, colonial histories, and ideological forces. Literary pieces, therefore, should not be seen as objects without any sort of identity. Nor should they be seen as concepts lingering in the air with no particular individuality. Additionally, Said's statements reveal that according to him, by paying attention to the worldly and material aspects of the literary works, literary critics may see the East's particularities. As a result, they can see how the Eastern cultures, in fact, contribute to the formation of world literature and global literary circuits.

Similar to Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak also calls for greater attention to literary particularities of the Eastern cultures instead of seeing the world literature concept as a totalizing image and umbrella term. However, rather than using the term worldliness or worldly as in Edward Said's case. Spivak introduces her own concept to express her opinions. The concept and the theoretical lens for the analysis of world literature she introduces is *worlding*, which comes up with in her essay "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" (1985). Like Edward Said, in the beginning, Spivak situates *worlding* within the broader framework of post colonialism and postcolonial theory.

In doing so, Spivak redefines the concept of the world in the ways that reflect the agencies and the legacies of decolonization and the decline of European imperial powers (Spivak 244). This way Spivak strips the colonized from the restrictions of the colonial concept. She turns postcolonialism into a critical tool which she can use to draw attention to the details of the colonized's position. This approach helps her to better situate literary works into world literature discussions.

Similarly, in *Death of a Discipline* (2003), Spivak coins another concept of studying world literature to make her criticism speak to globalization. The concept she introduces in that particular work is "planetary." In *Death of a Discipline*, Spivak believes that globalization essentially reproduces the totalizing image the postcolonial theory is fighting against. To put it differently, according to her, globalization erases the particularities of the Eastern cultures and renders the world into a neutral entity where cultural differences are not taken into account. Hence, Spivak argues that there is an urgent need to understand the individual qualities of the places and the texts in the world to understand world literature concepts better. To introduce the term, she states:

The globe is on our computers. It is the logo of the World Bank. No one lives there. It allows us to think that we can aim to control it. The planet is in the

species of alterity, belonging to another system; and yet we inhabit it, on loan. If we think the planetary, we figure ourselves as planetary subjects rather than global agents, an imagination rather than a given entity, and therefore open to an uncharted politics (Spivak 72).

Here, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak puts the benchmark between the global and the local by highlighting the concept of planetary. According to her, the globe represents the governing power which, as an abstract entity, produces digital and economic discourse. It does not represent real people or real communities. It is, rather, a system which does not have human qualities. Spivak, therefore, argues that rather than seeing world literature from a global perspective, we should analyze it from planetary perspective. Planetary, in contrast to globalization, is the place where the global power relations does not work. It is the place free of oppression and marginalization. Hence, in Spivak's words, planetary is the platform where the colonized and marginalized literatures can voice their opinion. It is also the vague space where they can, in fact, reclaim their agency.

As mentioned in the "Introduction,"Özge Samancı and Latife Tekin occupy the marginalized space in the world because of the country of their origin. However, they challenge the marginalization imposed upon them through the European framing of world literature. In both *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* and *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, Samancı and Tekin represent Turkish women's resistance and their desire to overcome this disadvantaged role in the world. In doing so, their works exemplify the ways in which Turkish women's narratives resist totalizing Western frameworks by offering affective unique perspectives shaped by personal, historical, and socio-political realities. In addition, their particular use

of localized postmodern novel genre adds to their subversive potentials and shows their contribution to this particular genre. The translations of their novels contribute to their presence—as Turkish female authors—in the world literary scene, as well. Thus, these two authors manage to combat “the harsh facts of the Anglo-American publishing industry [...] [which] continue to obstruct the recognition and dissemination of Turkish women [...] writers in English” (Akbatır 175).

As mentioned, Samancı’s graphic memoir illustrates the complexities of growing up in a politically turbulent Türkiye. The novel—through use of postmodern novel’s specific features such as parody, fragmentation, visual storytelling, and metafiction—underlines Özge’s struggle for self-construction in a shifting cultural and political landscape. Similarly, Tekin’s novel also uses postmodern novel’s specific features—like intertwining magic realism with the lived experiences of rural and working-class women—to tell about Dirmit’s self-construction process. By localizing magic realist elements, *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*’s narrative pushes back against dominant literary traditions that often exclude non-Western voices. Similarly, through use of postmodern novel’s features, Samancı creates a counter narrative for the purposes of creating space for herself and her fictional character in the world literary scene. In other words, in doing all these, these authors both render their readers’ attention to the particularities of the culture where they are living through their use of postmodern novel genre. Hence, postcolonial literary critique—such as those by Said and Spivak—can be applied to analyze the world-making potential of Turkish female authors’ literatures in the contemporary world.

Additionally, to fully grasp the impact of these writers within the global literary scene, it is essential to understand how critics have theorized the circulation of world literature as well. It is mainly because through the use of postmodern novel genre, translations, interpretations, and adaptations, these authors speak beyond borders. They also finally reach to global audiences and speak to the developments happening in the world. The frameworks developed by scholars like Pascale Casanova, Franco Moretti, and David Damrosch, who focus on world literature with respect to circulation, shed light on the hierarchical dynamics that often play role in determining the movement of literary works across borders. These models help to explain the positioning of Turkish women's literature and their contributions to the world literary scene better. The following will analyze and expound the theories and criticisms regarding the circulation of world literature concept. It will then demonstrate how they may contribute to our interpretation of these two novels in question.

2.1. World Literature and Circulation

As mentioned, to better understand the concept of world literature, critics also have focused on how literary works circulate globally. In doing so, critics have underlined how literary works' circulation can, in fact, contribute towards our understanding of literature's influence in the world. David Damrosch, for instance, is one of those scholars working on the circulation of the texts and their contribution to world literature concept. To expound the concept of world literature and the role of circulation in the development of literature, Damrosch introduces his perspective "What is World Literature?"(2003). In this work,

Damrosch discusses world literature at length in relations with the importance of translation and hence, circulation. He puts forward that “a work enters into world literature by a double process: first, by being read as literature; second, by circulating out into a broader world beyond its linguistic and cultural point of origin” (Damrosch 4). Damrosch’s standpoint reveals, according to him, a literary work engages with the larger structures and enters into world literary discussion through getting translated. Additionally, his statement also highlights the power imbalances in literary exchange and the role of translation in shaping meaning. This way, while Damrosch acknowledges Goethe’s vision in the inception of world literature concept, he starts critiquing his totalizing perspective and the lack of nuances in Goethe’s theory. He additionally puts the Eurocentrism associated with Goethe’s standpoint into question. By underlining the power imbalances in translation processes and their effects on the overall translation processes and world literature concept, Damrosch, therefore, provides a better and more detailed analysis on the circulation of the texts.

Similarly, Franco Moretti, a literary critic and a historian, also touches on the circulation of world literature and the power relations. Nevertheless, Moretti assesses texts circulation through a more genre-based approach rather than relating it only to the translation processes. Moretti says, “capitalism is a system that is simultaneously one, and unequal: with a core, and a periphery (and a semi periphery) that are bound together in a relationship of growing inequality” (55–56). In other words, based on the economic and socio-cultural inequalities between different capital locations, Moretti thinks certain concepts like periphery and the center emerge. This emergence further can contribute to the entrenchment

of the inequalities between different locations in the world. It is mainly because while the center represents the dominant and the advantaged culture, the periphery stands for those living under the constraints of the economic as well as cultural disadvantages. Building on these ideas, Moretti argues: as the genres develop and evolve like organic entities, they get influenced by all of the nations and their contributions. Hence, although the center position is represented as the dominant one, the peripheral cultures also contribute to the development of the genres. Thus, studying genres from world literature perspectives and through genre-based circulation allow us to see literature in a broader, nuanced, and more complex manner. It also helps one to understand the constructed nature of all the power relations that are present in the advancement and the interpretation of the literary works. At the same time, these approaches pave the way for the dissolution of dichotomies that create power imbalances among different locations in the world.

In "Conjectures on World Literature (2000)," Franco Moretti continues dwelling and explaining on the concept of world literature. In his piece, Moretti challenges traditional literary analysis. He advocates for a new reading strategy calling it "distant reading" method to understand the developments regarding world literature concept. He believes, such a reading practice will enable people to digest large-scale literary data and see literary developments in a better way. In doing so, according to Moretti, critics will find the opportunity to identify patterns, structures, and the global circulation of literary forms. Reading literature, according to him will allow one to see how the periphery and the center work in relations with one another. In the end, Moretti believes, such a practice challenges traditional, Eurocentric literary history. Similarly, this way, Moretti puts Goethe's

standing about the world literature concept into question while offering a new way to understand genre development beyond national boundaries.

In *Through Other Continents: American Literature Across Deep Time* (2006), Wai Chee Dimock also challenges and aims to the monolithic look on the world literature concept. Like Damrosch and Moretti, Dimock also assess the circulation of the literary works and aims towards providing a more in depth look on the world literature concept. In the article mentioned above, Dimock introduces the concept of “deep time.” She extends the temporal boundaries of American literature beyond the nation’s history. This way, she traces its influences across centuries and civilizations. Emphasizing transnational connections, she explores how American texts engage with non-Western traditions. Through this approach, Dimock demonstrates that literary forms and genres are fluid. They evolve through cross-cultural exchanges rather than remaining fixed within national borders. Hence, this enables genres to gain agency and evolve throughout the time as they interact with the outside world. Put together, the perspectives of Damrosch, Moretti, and Dimock unveil how the global circulation of literary texts—whether through translation, genre migration, or deep temporal engagement—disrupts national boundaries and exposes the power structures shaping literary value, visibility, and presence. Together, these approaches collectively enrich our understanding of world literature as a dynamic and contested field shaped by both cultural exchange and structural inequality.

When assessed in light of these theoretical perspectives, *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* and *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* can be counted as examples of

world literature shaped by local resistance and postmodern experimentation. Both novels, originally published in Turkey, center on female protagonists who are marginalized within their societies and who actively resist patriarchal structures. At the same time, both of the authors' occupy a marginalized space. Through the resistance of their characters, both authors generate affective intensities that challenge dominant power relations embedded in both literature and society. The use of postmodern techniques further enhances this resistance by disrupting linear narratives, identities, and conventional genre expectations.

In this sense, Tekin and Samancı integrate postmodern literary strategies with culturally specific material taken from the context present in Türkiye. By localizing the postmodern form, they both contribute to the genre's evolution. They also underline female agency within a culturally grounded framework. This localized yet innovative use of form situates both authors within global conversations on world literature, where voices from the periphery are often marginalized. This way, their works become active agents in global genre circulation. Plus, they challenge the dominance of Western literary traditions and expanding the boundaries of world literature. The translations of their works also anchor these two authors' presence in the world literary scene where they are otherwise underrepresented and marginalized.

Taking this broader methodological world literature approaches and lenses allows for a more nuanced understanding of Tekin and Samancı's contributions to global literary discourses. Also, it gives us the opportunity to understand Turkish women's presence in the world literary scene. Additionally, this approach

highlights the role of genre, affect, and cultural specificity in shaping how literature circulates and transforms across contexts and nations. The following of this thesis elaborates on these claims. It does so by outlining the key features of the postmodern novel and exploring its intersection with historical representation in both texts and the culture specific items in them.



3. Postmodern Novel and Developments

3.1. The 19th Century and the Novel Genre

During the 19th century, the novel genre gained popularity. As the novel genre was developing, it was considered a medium based on reality and devoid of any fictional elements. It was mainly because, during the 19th century, history was considered a strict reality. This approach rendered history an empirical search for external truths corresponding to the absolute reality of past events and actual representation of all the happenings (Onega 1995). Since novels were thought to reflect historical realities during that time period, they became associated with the dominant ideologies and their power. However, the representation system regarding the historical material and the understanding regarding the concept of history changed over time. In both *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* and *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey*, Samancı and Tekin offer a different perspective on the historical moments and women's historical experience in Türkiye. To better grasp how both Samancı and Tekin are providing a different look at the history and historical phenomena, looking at the development in the perception of history and the novel genre is productive.

3.2. Postmodernism, History, and the Novel

As the twentieth century progressed, postmodernism began to shape critical thought, historical inquiry and the way intellectual concepts are assessed in the world. Under its influence of postmodernism, scholars and historians were seen not as the recorders of fact. Instead they started to be acknowledged as philosophers whose work questioned pre-established rules (Lyotard, qtd. in Smyth 14). Rather than presenting objective truths, postmodern historians viewed history

as a discourse composed of representations. They also put forward that history is shaped by interpretation and imbued with ideological positions (Abrams 183; White 1973). In this view, historical narratives started to be acknowledged as constructed and they began to not to reproduce societal power structures (Abrams 184). As a consequence, postmodern novels also began to challenge traditional conceptions of history and historical material. Building all these, Brian McHale draws a distinction between modernist and postmodernist fiction. McHale suggests that while the former is concerned with epistemology—“How can I interpret the world?”—the latter is focused on ontology—“What is a world?” (McHale 9–10). With respect to this framework and understanding, postmodern novels began foregrounding fragmented, contested histories. They were acknowledged to disrupt linear, objective storytelling.

In other words, postmodern novels’ deconstructive particularly came to the forth. Their deconstructive also became particularly powerful and useful for women writers and authors. As Heilmann and Llewellyn note, “historical fiction has a strong political resonance, especially for women” (142). Postmodern historical fiction thus becomes a vehicle through which female authors can reimagine history from marginalized perspectives and create their own. This way, female authors offer a perspective which is unbound by patriarchal ideologies and understandings. Both *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* by Latife Tekin and *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* by Özge Samancı exemplify this mode and this use. They construct their own reality and challenge the already existing ones. In other words, they reclaim their agency through use of deconstructive nature of the postmodern novel genre. By blending personal and political histories and adding local elements, they also contribute to the development of postmodern genre. At the

same time, both authors use female protagonists as affective centers of resistance, and rewrite historical memory through postmodern strategies. The following will first explain the features of the postmodern novel genre and then will elaborate on the affect theory.

3.3. Postmodern Novel Features

As mentioned, both Tekin and Samancı employ features of the postmodern novel and localize them to challenge dominant discourses and patriarchal understandings. In doing so, they contribute towards the development of the postmodern novel genre. One of the most significant features they use and localize is magic realism. Magic realism is a genre/a narrative mode initially associated with Latin American literature. Unlike traditional realist narratives, magic realism integrates the supernatural into everyday reality. It presents the unreal as ordinary and thus blurs the boundaries between the magical and the real. This oxymoronic blending challenges dominant ideologies and power structures. Additionally, it offers subversive and possibilities, especially for writers from the Global South and the marginalized countries. In other words, “third-world literatures necessarily incorporate the magic as a means of accessing repressed histories and social contradictions” (Slemon 9). In *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, Tekin employs magic realism to characterize Dirmit as a liminal figure who resists patriarchal oppression. Her interactions with supernatural elements as well as her supernatural qualities allow Dirmit to subvert the structures that confine and restrict her. Situated within the post-1980 coup context, Tekin’s magic realist narrative becomes a political tool that critiques the historical erasure of women’s

voices and their presence. It also, allows the author to vocalize her opinions and anchor her presence in the world literary scene.

At the same time, Latife Tekin's novel benefits a lot from another feature of postmodern novel. It is metafiction. In *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction* (1984), Patricia Waugh argues that "Metafiction is fiction that self-consciously reflects on its own status as a constructed narrative"(Waugh 2). Through metafiction and its blending with magic realism, Tekin draws attention to the constructedness of narrative. This way, she invites the readers to question the legitimacy of dominant, patriarchal histories, which often present themselves as objective truths and govern the lives of the individuals. In *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, therefore, the blurred line between fiction and autobiography functions as a metafictional device that allows Tekin to reclaim narrative agency.

Similar to *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* utilizes metafiction as a means for constructing resistance. Apart from that, however, the novel showcases a different set of postmodern strategies. Additionally, as a graphic memoir, *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* relies on visual storytelling, fragmentation, parody, pastiche, and irony. Through these tools that the novel disrupts narrative linearity and allow for polyphonic meaning-making. Samancı's fragmented visual-textual format invites readers to actively interpret the narrative, further destabilizing grand historical narratives and patriarchal assumptions. Apart from all these, like in the case of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey*, also localizes the these postmodern novel features. As a result, both works, then, employ postmodern techniques not merely as stylistic devices but as subversive tools for affective and ideological resistance.

They generate affects—intensities, emotions, and resonances—that invite readers to empathize with silenced voices and question institutional power. These strategies render postmodern fiction a malleable, open space for marginal perspectives to be heard.

4. Affect Theory and Its Developments

Understanding affect theory, therefore, becomes crucial for a more profound analysis of the literary works in question. Affect theory provides a valuable framework for analyzing the contemporary developments in Turkish postmodern historical novels, particularly in understanding the circulation of affects in Latife Tekin's *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* and Özge Samancı's *Dare to Disappoint: Growing up in Turkey*. However, defining the origins of affect theory remains a real challenge. It is mainly because this school of criticism lacks a singular foundation or a neatly organized disciplinary boundary (Truran 26). Instead, scholars regard affect theory as an interdisciplinary and dynamic field of study. Affect theory, according to them, examines bodies, worlds, and the forces that move and motivate them into relation and existence (Truran 26). Although it is rather difficult to define affect theory, it is possible to assess contemporary affect theorists by categorizing them into two groups.

Contemporary affect theory can be divided into two main categories. The first group conceptualizes affect as a pre-personal, pre-cognitive intensity that precedes conscious emotion and language (Shouse 12). One of the important scholars in this field, Brian Massumi, falls into this category. In his writing, Massumi defines affect as “the state of being affected and to affect” (Massumi 48). According to him, affect exists prior to recognition and consciousness. It is an unformed, bodily

intensity. Although unformed and undefined, this intensity moves between bodies and has the potential to disrupt normative social structures. In other words, it has the deconstructive nature. Such that, even the smallest affective interruption or intensity, according to Massumi, may lead to broader societal shifts. And they may challenge the normative and patriarchal power relations.

When compared to the first group, the second group, by contrast, approaches affect from a more phenomenological perspective. They focus on how affect comes about in embodied encounters which are shaped by subjective experience and socio-political contexts. Thus, the second group analyzes how affect circulates among bodies, objects, and social environments, and how it sticks, accumulates, and produces meaning. Despite their differences, both groups draw on foundational ideas from Baruch Spinoza and Gilles Deleuze. Spinoza's distinction between *affectio*—the state of being affected—and *affectus*—the body's capacity to act—forms the foundation for the later thinkers, as well (Garrett 30). Deleuze similarly views affect as a force embedded in lived, embodied experience. Hence, according to him as well, affect is capable of producing political and historical consequences. Plus, it has the capacity to challenge the norms and patriarchal formations.

More contemporary scholars like Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth expand this approach. They do so by emphasizing the circulation of affect between bodies. This way, they argue that affect shapes relationships and power structures. Similarly, Sara Ahmed builds on these ideas. Nevertheless, she also takes a feminist approach. While doing so, she reframes affect as a “sticky” force that binds bodies together. Her approach highlights how affect accumulates around

certain emotions—such as fear, pain, or anger—and contributes to feminist and activist movements (Ahmed 27). In her view, therefore, affect has an intelligence of its own. It becomes a visceral, embodied response to systemic oppression and it has the capacity for putting people into action.

As outlined, within this theoretical framework, this thesis reads *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* and *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* as literary spaces where resistant affects are generated and circulated. Both novels mobilize affective strategies with the help of their narrative form, postmodern techniques, and embodied female resistance. With the help of these affect experiences, they subvert patriarchal power and redefine female agency within their socio-political contexts. Additionally, these resisting affects go beyond the restrictions of national borders because these authors localize postmodern genre and contribute towards the genre's development. At the same time, their resisting affects travel through translations as well as adaptations.

CHAPTER 2

Affects in Latife Tekin’s Writing: Female Self-Construction, Magic Realism, and Dirimit in *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (1983)

Introduction

Before the emergence of the 1980s military coup in Türkiye, Türkiye was experiencing a polarization between leftist and rightist groups. This polarization in Türkiye stemmed largely from the tension between progressive movements, which were advocating for democratic reforms and social freedoms, and the conservative forces, who were determined to preserve traditional norms and reinforce state authority. These contradictory ideologies and the clash between these movements led to widespread political unrest and turmoil. Additionally, they caused street clashes, assassinations, and escalating violence (Tekin and Şanlı 238–239). Because of all these and turmoils, an immense pressure on the Turkish economy and society was generated (Tekin and Şanlı 238–239).

Ultimately, these tensions and conflicts culminated in the 1980 military coup and the state intervention. Finally, this military coup emerged in the 1980s and it was led by General Kenan Evren. As a consequence of the coup, parliament was dissolved, democratic processes were suspended, thousands were tortured, and society came to resemble what many have called an “open-air prison” (Orhon 19; Demirel 128).

In the aftermath of such atmosphere, Latife Tekin’s seminal novel *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* was published in 1983. Although the novel recounts events set in the 1960s and 1970s, its post-coup publication fuses its narrative with political awareness

and feminist critique. At the same time, it equips the narrative with affective resonance. Its nature which is informed by the second wave feminism that “pushed the debate over women's issues and rights in Turkey into the spotlight of public discussion” (Berik 81) adds to its political messages. Written during such a time period and with the emergent feminist consciousness, *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* challenges authoritarian and patriarchal structures through its use of retrospective narration and localized postmodern narrative techniques. Drawing on from her own experiences and shaped by the emerging visibility of second-wave feminism and political oppression, in the novel, Latife Tekin constructs a narrative that is simultaneously personal, as well. Dirmit, as the novel’s protagonist, thus becomes both a semi-autobiographical figure and a symbolic vessel for feminist affect, self-reclamation, affective histories, and feminist reclamation. Tekin acknowledges Dirmit’s symbolic power, stating in an interview with Şenay Kalkan: “Dirmit benim iç sesimdi. Benim bastırılmış, korkmuş ama direnmek isteyen yanımdı³”(Tekin cited in Çiçekoğlu 5). Dirmit thus becomes a site of embodied resistance and her affective intensity which challenges patriarchal norms that shape every aspect of her life and her experiences. Through this way and mode of storytelling, Tekin not only reclaims her voice but also that of her protagonist, Dirmit. The novel, therefore, emerges as subversive entity, which generates “affective histories” by blending lived experience, memory, resistance, and feminist critique.

From a world literature perspective, *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* similarly and also exemplifies how voices from the literary periphery can gain global recognition

³ "Dirmit was my inner voice. She was the suppressed, frightened, yet defiant part of me." All translations are my own where otherwise is indicated.

and at the same time, contribute towards the development of world literature. In particular, *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*'s use of postmodern genre, its translation and adaptation also allow *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* to transcend linguistic and cultural boundaries of Türkiye. Hence, this way, *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* contributes to international conversations about gendered oppression, marginalization, and subaltern resistance. This chapter analyzes *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* as a postmodern feminist novel that utilizes localized magical realism, narrative fragmentation, and affect to transform Dirmit into a voice of resistance and feminist critique. It argues that the novel offers a unique lens through which one can reanalyze socio-political atmosphere of post-coup Türkiye and women's position in the country. By situating the novel in its original historical context and tracing its contemporary global circulation—through translation, adaptation, and feminist discourse—this chapter demonstrates how Dirmit's defiance resonates across temporal and spatial boundaries.

The chapter unfolds in two parts. The first section focuses on Dirmit's relationship with her mother, Atiye. It explores how this dynamic intersects with the broader political climate of the 1980s and articulates a form of feminist resistance. The second section examines how the feminist affects embodied by Dirmit transcend national borders through the novel's translation, the novel's use of postmodern genre, and the novel's adaptation. Ultimately, this chapter contends that through Dirmit and the innovative use of postmodern form in *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, Latife Tekin asserts both personal and literary agency. This way, the novel stakes a claim for Turkish women writers in the global literary canon. To put it differently, it becomes a tool for women to reclaim Turkish women's agency

where they have often been marginalized due to their language and geographic origin.

1. Dirmit, Her Childhood, and the Village

In *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, the name of the village where Dirmit and her family live is not revealed to the readers. As a result, Dirmit's early life and childhood unfolds in an unnamed rural village embedded in mysticism, superstition, Islam, and patriarchy. The village, where magic and religion blend, reflects what literary critics would call a space dominated by magic realist representations. In other words, it is a liminal site where the boundaries between the rational and irrational dissolve. When Atiye, as a literate woman, arrives in this new space and the world, she is othered by the community in a highly physical, linguistic, and corporeal way. The narrator describes how villagers aim to investigate her body upon her arrival in the village saying:

Zavallı kadın [Atiye], günlerce orasını burasını elleyen, yüzündeki kırmızılığın boya olup olmadığını anlamak için yaşmaklarının ucunu tükürükleyip yüzüne çalan, saçını eteğini çekiştiren bir dolu kadın ve çocuğun arasında iğne ipliğe döndü. Ve sonunda bir gün “Küt!” diye düşüp bayıldı (Tekin 9)⁴

Here, in this instance, the narrator draws attention to Atiye's position as “the other” by emphasizing how the villagers approach her as though she were an unknown object or an entity. As such, Atiye becomes a figure of “in-between, the ambiguous, the composite” (Kristeva 4). Simultaneously, she becomes a subject who unsettles the power dynamics surrounding her. She evokes fear and reactions

⁴ “Poor Atiye, after days of being poked and prodded by women and children—who touched her here and there, wet the corners of their headscarves with saliva to rub her face to see if the redness was paint, pulled at her hair and skirt—became a shadow of herself. And finally, one day, she collapsed with a 'thud' and fainted.”

in those around her. Hence, through her, the limitations of the patriarchal order starts to be discussed.

The use of localized magic realism further supports this subversive potential that is associated with Atiye's character. Within the scene in question, she is portrayed as possibly possessed or spiritually affected. Yet she is not dismissed or ridiculed by the narrative voice. Thus, she acquires a liminal space because of these magic realist elements in the novel Tekin's use of magic realism diverges from postmodernism. Instead, it aligns with what Amaryll Chanady defines as peripheral magic realism. This form of magic emerges in societies where "magical belief systems continue to shape collective experience"(Chanady 122) In this case, the use of culturally embedded movements root in local ritual and collective logic. The scene renders that Atiye's otherness feminist disruption. Atiye's liminal position positions her body as a site of both cultural anxiety and latent resistance to patriarchal and normative order. To further understand the affective intensity generated by her characterization, it is helpful to remember Brian Massumi's definition of affect. In *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (2002), Massumi defines affect as "intensity—bodily, unformed, and non-linguistic" (Massumi 48). Analyzed with this lens and through this perspective, Atiye's presence and the use of localized postmodern novel trigger what Massumi calls micro-affects. These affective disturbances become loaded with feminist potential. It reveals how emotional resonance and cultural ritual can shatter down oppressive systems.

The connotations of the localized postmodern novel and their relation to Atiye's subversive potential become clearer when *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* is contextualized

within its historical moment and at the time of Latife Tekin's writing. As mentioned earlier, there is a significant temporal gap between the novel's plot—which is set in the 1960s—and its publication in the early 1980s. The representation of female characters—particularly Atiye in this instance—clearly reflects the feminist consciousness which Latife Tekin developed in response to the political atmosphere of the 1980s and the emergence of the second wave feminism. As already explained in the beginning of this chapter, during the military coup and its aftermath, Turkish society was subjected to strict authoritarian rule and oppression. Women's rights, which had initially been granted under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's republican reforms, which were a part of “state-led modernization [projects] rather than emancipating women as individuals” (White 145–146), came to a halt. In other words, they were subdued because of the oppression that the society was experiencing and the military's intervention. At the same time, following the coup, the state's surveillance intensified, and traditional gender roles were reinforced, which ended up further restricting women's autonomy. While all these were happening, globally, second-wave feminism was emerging in the world. In the 1970s and 1980s, this new emergent feminism was addressing systemic pressures and the violence that women were experiencing. To improve women's living conditions, within the scope of second-wave feminism, issues such as reproductive rights, domestic labor, workplace discrimination, and patriarchal violence started to be discussed (Rosen 14). In Türkiye, these ideas began to circulate in the 1980s, yet their institutionalization was limited due to political repression and cultural conservatism. As Şule Akdoğan observes, “feminist consciousness in 1970s

Turkey never grew out of its infant-state to develop into an independent, influential and democratic women's movement" (Akdoğan 44).

Although the moment that Atiye enters to this unnamed village is before the 1960s, it becomes evident for readers that Atiye's characterization is, as mentioned earlier, was informed by the consciousness that Latife Tekin acquired in the aftermath of the 1980s coup. It is mainly because when assessed within this socio-political framework, Atiye's character becomes emblem for the women's voices which were surpassed before the emergence of the second wave feminism in Türkiye. Hence, Atiye's initial ambiguity and difference from the villagers bear the beginnings of this subversion which was informed by Tekin's emergent feminism. In addition, in these instances, Atiye becomes one of the vessels through which Tekin looks back. Through Atiye, Latife Tekin recovers both the fictional characters' voice and the voices of women as well as herself who were suppressed during and before the 1980s coup intervention climate in Türkiye.

However, this subversive potential diminishes as Atiye begins conforming to the community's patriarchal expectations and their patriarchal values. To have the recognition from the villagers and to get accepted by them, as the novel develops, Atiye adopts the villagers' speech, values, and behaviors. The article, named "Examination of the *Dear Shameless Death* Novel from the Perspective of Parent Modes" (2021), dwells on Atiye's characterization and her development. It argues that Atiye "could not stand up to her neighbors, started to talk like the villagers and do the jobs they could do, with the coping mode of submission" (Yılmaz 480). In other words, Atiye's subversive and potentially transformative energy is

surpassed by the dominant culture. It gets under the control of the patriarchy that was surrounding her. Her role as a mother and a domestic entity—which comes about upon her giving birth to Nuğber, Halit, Seyit, Dirmit, and Mahmut—further anchors her position within the domestic and patriarchal structure of the village. In other words, Atiye gets more and more accustomed to the patriarchal culture in the village. As the narrative unfolds and the story develops, it becomes clear that Atiye loses her own agency. Additionally, she also becomes an agent of patriarchal reproduction. Such that, she starts shaping the others' lives according to these rules. One of the characters that she shapes according to these rules is Dirmit. However, the affective intensity, which Atiye's character evokes becomes much more apparent in Dirmit's character. As a result, Tekin's resistance which is evoked in Atiye's character first becomes much more evident through Dirmit's characterization.

2. Dirmit, Affect, and Feminist Resistance

In the novel, Dirmit—similar to Atiye— gets introduced to the plot in the 1960s. For the first time, the patriarchal impact that Atiye aims to impose on Dirmit reveals itself even before Dirmit is born. In a scene which is set before Dirmit's birth, the narrator depicts Dirmit's supernatural emergence. In that scene, the narrator demonstrates that Dirmit starts the novel as a voice calling out “Ana, Ana” (21)⁵ from inside her mother's abdomen. Upon hearing Dirmit's voice, Atiye immediately feels scared and surprised. These feelings and the anxiety prompt Atiye to seek help from Cinci Mehmet, who is a spiritual healer and who is believed to possess mystical powers by the villagers. In the hope that Cinci

⁵“ Mother, Mother” (Tekin 21)

Mehmet could make the baby die without physical and medical intervention, Atiye turns to this cultural and spiritual exorcism. As a result, this scene in the novel again turns into an emblematic of localized magic realism applied. That is, it becomes an instance in which the supernatural is not presented as fantastical, but as part of the lived and culturally intelligible reality of rural Anatolia and the cultural realities. It is mainly because here in this instance, again, Tekin's version arises from Turkish oral culture, folk spirituality, and village life.

At the same time, this instance in the novel shows that the localized magic realism applied in the novel is also reflected in Dirmit's character. It is mainly because in this particular scene, Dirmit is introduced as a liminal figure who oscillates between life and death, fact and fiction. At the same time, she appears as a fetus which is able to speak and disturbs her mother and, symbolically, the patriarchal logic that Atiye represents. Referring to Massumi here again is important. Brian Massumi describes, affect is "intensity—bodily, unformed, and non-linguistic" (Massumi 48). In this instance, Dirmit's presence generates precisely such affective intensities. She immediately breeds fear, shock, and psychic rupture in her mother. This unsettling moment not only foreshadows Dirmit's role as a subversive force but also establishes her within the novel's postmodern affective logic. Through the fusion of magic realism and localized spiritual belief, Tekin frames Dirmit as a feminist subject capable of disrupting established structures and patriarchal symbols as well as dynamics. Dirmit's character, therefore, expands the narrative's affective field and defies the rigid binaries imposed by patriarchal tradition. When contextualized within the time period when *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* was written, it becomes more evident that Dirmit also symbolizes all

the subversion associated with women's movement in the 1980s. Hence, her characterization, like that of Atiye's in the beginning of the novel, reflects Latife Tekin's feminist consciousness developed in the aftermath of the 1980s coup and her attempts to revoke affective histories that challenge women's representation and presence during her time period.

When Atiye gives birth to Dirmit, the symbolic power struggle between patriarchal conformity and dissident continues. As the story unfolds, as mentioned, Atiye fully gets integrated into the norms of the village and their patriarchal values. This has its resonance on Dirmit's life as well. Such that, Atiye begins to insist on keeping Dirmit confined within the domestic sphere. She, at the same time, starts imposing the traditional values of their household upon her. The narrator also draws the readers' attention to this fact and describes several different instances where this pressure from Atiye's side is imposed on Dirmit. In one of the instances, the narrator tells about Dirmit's situation in their household by stating: "Dirmit'i göz hapsine aldılar" (Tekin 70).⁶ This means each and every one of the actions that Dirmit takes is controlled and watched by the villagers and her mother. At the same time, the narrator states that upon recognizing Dirmit's rebellious character and refusal to comply with established gender roles, the villagers label Dirmit "cine karışmış."⁷ Further, as the novel progresses, Dirmit's bodily presence, becomes a site of control. She is described as someone who "can't step outside the double-wing gate of their house" (Tekin 70). In other words, her physical presence and her agency are restricted by her family and the

⁶ "They put Dirmit under constant surveillance"

⁷ djinned girl

villagers. This very small yet interesting moments set an example of Latife Tekin's localized magic realism. It is mainly because they underline that in this unnamed village, spiritual and mystical explanations are not treated as unreal. Instead, they are culturally relevant and acknowledged. Thus, Dirmit also becomes the representative of a magic realism element once more. While the villagers 'use of supernatural vocabulary (djinn girl) becomes a tool of patriarchal control, which is hidden in their local belief systems, Dirmit's continuous attempts to push against these spatial, therefore, becomes a site for Dirmit to to diffuse feminist affects. That is, she successfully starts diffusing unstructured intensities that threaten to destabilize the systems attempting to contain her. In doing so, the villagers culturally and spiritually mark Dirmit as the dissident and the problem. This "othering" embedded in the language of folklore and local superstition, turns Dirmit into a threat to social norms of the village even more. Hence, through Dirmit's character, the feminist consciousness and affective histories that Latife Tekin evoked earlier start becoming more and more evident.

3. Dirmit, Education, Migration, and Self-Construction

As the story unfolds and the plot progresses, Dirmit and her family migrate from their rural village to an unnamed city in the urban Türkiye. Again, the city where they relocate is not revealed to readers, however. Within this new urban setting, Dirmit's resistance against the patriarchal norms continues to intensify and persist. One of the literary scholar also analyzes Dirmit's characterization in the aftermath of the migration experience. He notes, "Dirmit [...] kalıplarını kırmaya, bireysel gelişimini sürdürmeye uygun bir ortama kavuşur. [...] Dirmit, daha çok

okuyarak, sorarak, çevresindekileri sorgulayarak muhalif, solcu ve feminist bir kimlik edinir” (Tekin 11)⁸. In other words, with this transition to from the village to the urban life, Dirmir gets equipped with even more subversive potentials and possibilities. However, in the beginning her and her family’s relocation do not happen in a smooth way. Rather, this relocation is associated, in the novel, with economic hardship and constraints. In her Master’s Thesis, Deniz Gündoğan-İbrişim also looks into this correlation between migration and economic hardships. She refers this correlation as “migration misery” (Gündoğan-İbrişim 121). This misery comes shortly after relocating because Huvat loses his job. This, as a result, causes financial instability that affects the entire family and their way of living in this new city. In response, Atiye retreats further into patriarchal values and spiritual beliefs. This retreat comes about because she starts seeking safety in traditional roles and beliefs.

Although the family’s migration occurs in the 1960s and the 1970s, it reflects the failures of the Turkish modernization project, too. The modernization idea in Türkiye was rooted in Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s—the founder of Türkiye—reforms. This project assessed urban migration with progress. Hence, according to this particular understanding and ideology, the city appeared as a space of enlightenment and improved life quality. And the village became a site of backwardness and uneducatedness (Saylan and Çelikoğlu 665–666). Nevertheless, the novel unearths that these promises associated with Kemalist ideology often went unfulfilled and they often failed. Like many rural migrants to the city,

⁸“ Dirmir [...] finds herself in an environment conducive to breaking away from conventional molds and pursuing her individual development. [...] By reading more, asking questions, and critically engaging with those around her, Dirmir develops a dissident, leftist, and feminist identity” (11).

Dirmit's family and Dirmit experience disappointment and their life in the city does not turn out as a comfortable experience. By embedding these disillusionments and disappointments into the narrative backdrop and to the plot, Tekin subtly critiques the optimism of modernization in Türkiye, as well. Hence, the affective histories that aim to challenge and reinvestigate the historical representations are revoked through Dirmit and her family's relocation to the city.

The anxiety and the disappointment bred in Atiye because of the economic situation theyin is also reflected in Atiye's relationship with Dirmit and in the power relation between them. In the novel, after the relocation to the city, Dirmit, starts going out to a park on her own. To put it differently, upon facing her family's oppressive attitude, Dirmit tries finding ways to dissociate herself from the restrictions of their household. Atiye reacts to this liberation that Dirmit seeks to achieve by cutting Dirmit's hair without her permission. The narrator focuses on this particular scene and utters: "Atiye kaş göz etmekle bir türlü sokakta oynayan çocukların arasına katamadığı kızının, kendiliğinden parka gittiğini görünce sevincinden ne yapacağını bilemedi. Ama bu defa da Dirmit eve gelmez oldu [...] Dirmit'in saçlarını da kökünden kesti" (Tekin 67)⁹. In this instance, Dirmit's efforts to explore the world beyond domestic confinement goes against Atiye's attempts to regulate her behavior and impose patriarchal values. This act executed by Atiye can be read as a symbolic act of control and pressure. At the same time, it can, of course, be read as a patriarchal attempt to silence the dissident. This hair-cutting moment, therefore, again exemplifies the tension

⁹Atiye didn't know what to do with joy when she saw her daughter—whom she couldn't get to play outside with the other kids no matter how much she gestured—go to the park on her own. But this time, Dirmit stopped coming home [...]. Atiye then cut off Dirmit's hair from the roots" (Tekin 67).

between resistance and submission. Hence, although this scene is set before the 1980s, it becomes an allegory of post-coup Turkish society, where women's voices were increasingly marginalized and diluted under patriarchal surveillance.

Despite all these disheartening experiences, Dirmit's journey toward liberation continues in the scenes where her engagement with education and nature starts. One of the moments that lead to Dirmit's liberation occurs when she encounters the "bird plant," which sparks a deep interest for learning in her. Unlike the superstitious village environment, education offers Dirmit an alternative framework for understanding the world and constructing her identity. Her passion for schooling, however, is met with ridicule by the villagers. The narrator states describes the villagers' reaction to Dirmit's attempts to get educated by stating: "Dirmit okula gitmek istediğinde, evde herkes güldü. 'Kız başına okuyup ne edeceksin? Sana kim iş verir, kim ekmek kapısı açar?'"¹⁰ This mockery reveals the deeply entrenched patriarchy that seeks to discourage women from intellectual pursuits. Nevertheless, Dirmit refuses to internalize this rejection and oppression. Her consistent pursuit of knowledge becomes a form of affective resistance—what Massumi would describe as "bodily, unformed intensity"—pushing against the structures that aim to contain and subdue her.

As Dirmit becomes more committed to education, she discovers writing—specifically poetry—as a means of expression as the genre in which she wants to write. The narrator describes her interest and states, "Sonunda hem kendini

¹⁰“ When Dirmit said she wanted to go to school, everyone at home laughed. ‘What good will studying do for a girl? Who would give you a job, who would offer you a way to earn a living?’”

Atiye'ye iyi göstermenin, hem de evde annesinin dizinin dibine oturup gönlünü gezdirmenin bir yolunu buldu. Şiir yazmaya karar verdi" (Tekin 137)¹¹. Dirmit's choice of poetry as a way of expression is significant here and within the plot of the novel. Feminist epistemologies, as Pereira argues, are often "thick with stories, poetry, rhymes and tales; efforts to redefine language and do science differently" (305). In other words, the feminist ways of expression are often related to fictional forms of writing and feminism encourages production of fictional works. Through poetic expression and fictional form of writing, Dirmit creates a counter-space to the patriarchal reality. She defies against the forces that seeks to define and confine her to specific traditions. Though Dirmit does not articulate a political ideology, her writing—like her character—embodies a feminist resistance rooted in affect, creativity, and self-definition. Tekin's decision to frame Dirmit's empowerment through poetry is closely tied to the structure of the localized postmodern novel. Unlike common models of postmodernism, Tekin's narrative blends magic realism, oral culture, and feminist critique with a distinctly Anatolian sensibility. The affective force of Dirmit's writing is thus not isolated from its form. Her voice emerges through a literary landscape that is fragmented, hybrid, and emotionally charged. In Tekin's hands, the novel becomes a cultural cocoon: it becomes an entity which protects and eventually releases new forms of resistance rooted in local textures and traditions. This way, within the novel, the feminist consciousness and the affective histories that Latife Tekin evokes becomes more visible.

¹¹“ In the end, she found a way both to make a good impression on Atiye and to sit by her mother's side at home and ease her heart. She decided to write poetry” (Tekin 137).

This resistance—like the previous ones— is violently interrupted when Huvat discovers that Dirmit his writing poetry. Upon recognizing this, Hivat destroys Dirmit’s poems. The narrator focuses on how Dirmit after her father’s violent action. In that scene, Dirmit runs into the crowd and screams: “Şiirlerimi yırttılar! Şiirlerimi yırttılar!”¹² (Tekin 141). Just after that moment, Dirmit’s cry becomes collective, drawing the attention of others: “Sesi toplu bir haykırışa dönüştü, kalabalığın dönüp ona bakmasına ve bağırarak üstüne yürümesine neden oldu”¹³ (Tekin 269). In this moment, Dirmit’s affect merges with the crowd. It turns into a transformation from private and personal grief to public dissent. According to Massumi, this scene affect creates “micro-shocks” that can ripple through the social fabric (Massumi 100). To put it differently, these affective sensibilities in the novel have the potential for disrupting the status quo in the society. Building upon this transformative power of the affect, similarly, Sara Ahmed describes affect as a “sticky” force that binds bodies together and circulates intensively (Ahmed 27). Dirmit’s scream, which is filled with emotional rawness, therefore, becomes such a force in that instance. It is mainly because as shown in this instance, Dirmit’s cry binds the community in a shared moment of recognition. And it evokes what Ahmed calls “non-reflective feminist sensing”—a gut-level awareness that something is deeply wrong (Ahmed 30).

The way Dirmit’s resistance becomes more and more visible is also emphasized with the closing scene. In that particular scene, Dirmit’s mother— Atiye— dies while Dirmit is watching her. Dirmit reacts to the death of her mother in a rather

¹²“ They tore up my poems! They tore up my poems!”

¹³“ Her voice turned into a collective outcry, causing the crowd to turn and look at her, then approach her shouting.”

unexpected, counterintuitive, and a strange way. The narrator describes that scene saying, “Annesinin boyun eğmemesine sevdi. Sevincini yenemedi” (Tekin 150)¹⁴. Dirmiş’s lack of sorrow and her joy marks a final escape from the force that sought to confine her. As mentioned, Atiye, throughout the narrative, functions as the symbol of patriarchal discipline. Her death, and Dirmiş’s liberating response with a small smirk on her face, represents her personal emancipation from the forces that aim to restrict her and put her into a certain shape. Additionally, that scene also speaks very well to the novel’s broader act of feminist and political rebellion as well as resistance. Dirmiş’s final joy signals victory. It is mainly because this final scene demonstrates that Dirmiş has finally managed to reach the transcendence of patriarchal boundaries. At the same time, this final scene underlines powerfully the affective birth of resistance in *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*.

Although the novel does not overtly deliver political messages or make political claims about the time period when it was written, these moments—when contextualized within Türkiye’s post-coup history and Tekin’s localized postmodernism—provide a critique of both gender norms and state ideology. These critiques are mostly informed by the sensibilities of Latife Tekin following the 1980s military coup. To put it differently, through Dirmiş, Tekin creates an affective feminist subject. Tekin, at the same time, shows that Dirmiş’s silence is broken, not through direct political criticism or activism, but through persistent emotional intensity poetic expression. Like a cocoon that breaks open through sustained internal pressure, Dirmiş’s narrative unfolds as a metamorphosis. It transforms private repression into collective resonance and quiet resistance into

¹⁴“She loved that her mother conformed. She couldn’t contain her joy” (Tekin 150).

radical self-assertion. All these are also supported throughout the narrative with the uses of localized magic realism and postmodern novel genre. They, at the same time, demonstrate that through Dirmit's character, Latife Tekin also manages to create the affective histories and reclaim women's place in her retrospective narrative.

4. Circulation of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* in World Literary Scene

4.1. Translation and *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*

Interestingly enough, the resistance articulated through localized postmodernism and magic realism via Dirmit's character in *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* does not remain confined to Türkiye only. Thus, the same applies to the novel's construction of affective histories from a feminist perspective. In other words, the affective histories in the novel travel across the borders because rather than staying within the local, the feminist resistance that Tekin's writing creates circulates globally through her use of postmodern narrative strategies, the novel's translation into English, and its recent theatrical adaptation.

As discussed throughout this chapter, Tekin's use of magic realism, feminist affect, and narrative fragmentation are localized. To put it differently, throughout her *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, Latife Tekin localizes postmodern novel genre instead of adapting the genre as it is in the Western traditions. In particular, magic realist components are applied through this localization in *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*. In this sense, Latife Tekin's approach strongly resonates with Franco Moretti's theories on genre development. Specifically, her use of postmodern conventions reflects Moretti's notion of "genre evolution from the periphery." As put by Moretti, Tekin's *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* illustrates how literary genres evolve and transform as

they travel beyond their original cultural and linguistic contexts. Although, as mentioned in the “Introduction” of this thesis, postmodernism and magic realism are typically linked to Western literary traditions, Tekin reconfigures these forms to engage deeply with the socio-political realities of 1980s while she is retelling about women’s presence dating back to the 1960s and 1970s. While doing so, Tekin does not merely adopt postmodern techniques. Rather, she reshapes them to fit local narrative and political needs. Her novel thus serves as a “compromise formation,” in Moretti’s terms. That is, it is a hybrid and multi-dimensional structure in which imported forms are integrated with local content and expressive demands. This strategy does not only challenge the dominance of literary forms originating from the center. But also it reveals the generative possibilities of genre innovation from the margins. Moreover, by embedding feminist resistance and socio-political critique within postmodern techniques, Tekin demonstrates how global genres are not passively consumed by peripheral cultures but are actively reworked on by different actors and authors. Hence, her approach reinforces Moretti’s assertion that the literary periphery can become a site of innovation where formal evolution responds to distinct cultural and political pressures. Through such a practice, Tekin also manages to anchor the feminism she evoked in her retrospective narration. Additionally, she manages to create a space for herself and her agency in the world literary scene where she is—as a Turkish female author—otherwise underrepresented.

In addition to its specific use of genre and contributing to its development, *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* circulates through translation and adaptation. This way, again, the novel continues contributing to world literature formally and politically. The English translation of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* has the title, *Dear Shameless Death*.

This translation was published in 2001 by Saliha Paker and Mel Kenne. This translation, in particular, facilitates the novel's entry into the global literary marketplace. As David Damrosch suggests, a work becomes part of world literature when it "circulates out into a broader world beyond its linguistic and cultural point of origin" (Damrosch 4). Despite being translated to English by these two important translators, the novel successfully preserves Dirmit's feminist affect and manages to carry it to the global literary scene. This, as a result, positions the translation of the novel as an agent of resistance and the facilitator of the oppositional voices. In this way, *Dear Shameless Death* does not merely transfer language. Instead, the novel transmits political charge and the affect that is created in the novel through a blending of personal and the political.

Of course, such transference is also mediated by the translators. Arzu Akbatur notes in her article "Literary Translation from Turkish into English in the United Kingdom and Ireland, 1990–2012," that Saliha Paker was not only a translator but also an advocate for Latife Tekin's global visibility and presence. Akbatur's framing aligns with Pascale Casanova's understanding of translators as "intermediaries for literary legitimacy." It is mainly because through their translations, the translators enable authors from the periphery to gain recognition in world literature scene. Thus, in the case of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, Paker and Kenne function as cultural mediators. They contribute to the elevation of Tekin's status within world literature. Nevertheless, translation ends up producing both transformation and loss. In the novel's translation, certain culturally embedded terms—such as "Salatantünce" or "bereket duası" got translated as "a special prayer" and "a prayer for plenty." In other words, these culture-specific words become flattened into neutral, less culturally resonant expressions. These choices

highlight the limits of linguistic transfer and cultural element transmissions. At the same time, they underline the difficulty of conveying gendered expressions and Turkish culture. Yet, interestingly, they also emphasize the resistance Dirmit embodies. Such that, they underline the gap between local affect and its global articulation. Gayatri Spivak's concepts of "worlding" and "planetary" become helpful in that instance. Tekin's novel engages in "worlding" by narrating the specific experiences of women in Turkey. It is, at the same time, resists the homogenizing tendencies of global capitalism. In doing so, it enacts what Spivak terms "planetary"—an insistence on cultural specificity in the face of universalization. In this light, translation becomes not only a linguistic process but a feminist and political act. Thus, it resists both local silencing and global flattening.

The novel's political message is particularly significant given the structural limitations placed on women writers in Türkiye. As feminist publisher Nadire Mater asserts, "the publishing world in Turkey is male-dominated, and literature written by women is usually not taken seriously" (Mater 12). Within this context, the international circulation of a subversive, female-authored novel like *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* is meaningful. Through its translation, Tekin's voice escapes not only national boundaries but also the internal patriarchal mechanisms that aim to marginalize it. Thus, *Dear Shameless Death* enters the world literary field not just as a translated text, but as a feminist intervention from the margins.. In this light, Wai Chee Dimock's concept of "deep time" also offers an additional lens through which to read Tekin's global resonance and presence. The translation of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* invites interpretations that extend beyond its immediate temporal and geographic context. Dirmit's resistance resonates across generations and

geographies. It becomes a symbol of ongoing feminist struggle. Her affective intensity, grounded in the local, contributes to a broader world literary conversation—one shaped not only by dominant traditions, but by voices that emerge from the margins and insist on being heard.

4.2. Transmedial Translation, Post-Gezi Park Protests & Post #MeToo

Apart from traditional translation, the transmedial adaptation of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* has carried its feminist resistance into new expressive forms and formats. Since 2017, the novel has been adapted to the stage. The theatrical adaptation of this novel is titled *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm – Dirimit Oyunu* (*Dear Shameless Death – The Dirimit Play*). It is performed and staged as a one-woman show by Nezaket Erden. In this stage adaptation, Nezaket Erden has transformed Latife Tekin’s magic realist narrative into an embodied stage performance. Like the novel itself, the adaptation functions not only as a cultural production but also as an act of feminist resistance. Like the novel, its implicit messages become especially significant in the context of Türkiye’s increasingly authoritarian political climate. It is mainly because over the past 25 years, Türkiye has witnessed rising censorship, patriarchal backlash due to Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi – AKP)¹⁵ and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s neoliberal as well as conservative governance. At the same time, the country has retreated from international commitments such as the Istanbul Convention¹⁶. As a result, in

¹⁵ The Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi – AKP) is a conservative political party in Türkiye. It was founded in 2001 by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Despite promoting a pro-European Union, liberal economic agenda and democratic reforms, the AKP gradually adopted a more authoritarian, nationalist, and socially conservative policies. Their tendency changed specially after consolidating power in the 2010s. Right now, the party emphasizes “family values,” Islamic morality, and neoliberal development. Additionally, the party often prioritizes patriarchal interpretations of gender roles. Under AKP rule, critiques have intensified regarding democratic backsliding, suppression of dissent, and the erosion of secular and gender-equal frameworks. These practices also include the controversial withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention in 2021.

¹⁶ The Istanbul Convention, formally titled *The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence*, was opened for signature in Istanbul in 2011. It is known to be

Türkiye, women's safety and their presence have been in danger. Such that, in Türkiye, people started using Anıtsayaç to count the number of women that die every day in the country. Within such a political atmosphere, staging Dirmit's voice emerges as a radical and necessary intervention. Such that, the adaptation manages to reclaim Dirmit's body and voice—two dimensions historically suppressed both in the fictional narrative and in the socio-political realities of Turkish society. By contextualizing Dirmit in the contemporary politics of Türkiye, therefore, the adaptation manages to underline the importance of the feminist consciousness and affective histories evoked by Latife Tekin back in the 1980s.

However, the adaptation of the novel ends up a little bit different from the original text. Tekin's novel is polyphonic and fragmented, the theatrical adaptation centers Dirmit in a monologue. It only gives Dirmit an uninterrupted narrative control. This narrative shift reclaims authorial and bodily agency. Dirmit speaks alone, uninterrupted. She starts embodying a sustained flow of feminist dissent. This performative structure aligns with feminist performance traditions where treat solo voice and corporeal presence are usually employed as instruments of subversion. As Seigworth and Gregg argue in their work on affect theory, affect "flows across bodies, atmospheres, and intensities." In this light, Erden's embodiment of Dirmit activates affective transmission within the theater space. It turns spectators into witnesses to her resistance and revolt. The emotional energy embedded in Tekin's original text is thus amplified and extended to contemporary

the first international treaty offering a comprehensive legal framework to prevent gender-based violence. The convention underlines gender equality, victim-centered approaches, and the state's responsibility in preventing all forms of violence against women. Türkiye was the first country to sign this international treaty. But controversially, Türkiye withdrew in 2021 under a presidential decree. It sparked national and international criticism. In the country, the criticism against Türkiye's retreat from the convention is still ongoing.

audiences. Thus, they end up being not only viewers but affectively engaged participants. This radical aesthetic transformation also brings about a narrative unification. The magical ambiguity of the original novel is turned into a direct and rather confrontational feminist voice. While this shift reduces the mystical undertones of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, it enhances Dirmit's symbolic potency as a figure of feminist rebellion. Audiences no longer read about Dirmit's struggles. Rather, they encounter her—in flesh and resistance. From a world literature perspective, this adaptation continues to contribute to the novel's global circulation. Drawing on Wai Chee Dimock's concept of "deep time" can be helpful here. Based on Dimock's argument, one can assert that Dirmit's presence on stage becomes transhistorical: her voice echoes across generations and political epochs. She carries the layered burdens of 1980s patriarchy and the authoritarianism of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's regime. At the same time, she aligns with the Gezi Park Spirit in Türkiye. According to Amnesty International, the Gezi Park protests—beginning in May 2013—quickly evolved from a localized environmental resistance into a nationwide, intersectional uprising against the ruling AKP government. Until late June 2013, this mass mobilization brought together diverse groups united by shared grievances. Within this context, Dirmit's voice becomes more than personal: it channels a collective unrest and embodies a spirit of rebellion. In Gayatri Spivak's terms her resistance might be called a "planetary." It resists the flattening logic of globalization by emphasizing specificity and tying itself with the local. It is a refusal to be reduced to a generalized or universal figure. Instead, it is a celebration of the particular and situated. Nezaket Erden's performance also offers a feminist reclamation of space in contemporary Turkish theater. Overall, this adaptation shows that it is not

merely a re-staging of Tekin's work. Instead, it is a continuation and amplification of its resistance. Through affect, embodiment, and political defiance, Dirmit evolves from a fictional character into a feminist force that travels across media, time, and audiences.

Ultimately, the resistance that Latife Tekin initiated in the 1980s, which is rooted in second-wave feminist sensibilities and the socio-political turbulence of post-coup Turkey in the 1980s—persists and gains relevance today. Such that, it still resonates with both local politics. What was once implicit and quietly subversive in her magic prose now becomes more visible, embodied, and assertive through adaptation. All these progresses regarding *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* shows that the novel does not remain frozen in its historical moment. Rather, it continues to live, transform, and inspire through every stage performance, every translation, and every reader or viewer. It moves—just like the resistance evoked by Latife Tekin decades back in Türkiye.

Conclusion

This chapter analyzes and focuses on *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (1983) by Latife Tekin through the lens of postmodern literature and postmodern novel. It analyzes how *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* constructs affective histories that resist patriarchal and authoritarian structures in post-coup Türkiye. Set against the socio-political backdrop of the time period between 1960s and 1980s in Türkiye, the chapter explores how the novel blends localized postmodern narrative techniques—such as magical realism— with feminist critique to produce the affective histories. It underlines how, Dirmit, the semi-autobiographical protagonist, becomes a symbolic figure of embodied resistance. And it underlines how Dirmit whose

journey from rural village life to urban modernity marks a transformation from repression to agency.

The chapter first begins with an exploration into Dirmit's relationship with her mother, Atiye. In the novel, Atiye appears as a character whose initial subversive potential is eventually subdued by patriarchal norms and the patriarchal structure of the village. On the other hand, in the novel, positioning Dirmit becomes a site of continued feminist resistance. Through the use of localized magic realism and the intensities described by affect theorists like Brian Massumi and Sara Ahmed, Tekin illustrates how Dirmit's bodily presence, voice, and writing challenge oppressive structures. Her character reflects the emerging feminist consciousness of the 1980s, despite being set in earlier decades.

The second part of the chapter focuses on the novel's global circulation through translation and adaptation. Drawing on world literature theories by Damrosch, Moretti, Casanova, and Spivak, it argues that *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* transcends national borders. It especially does so by transforming Western postmodern forms into culturally specific tools of resistance. The English translation (*Dear Shameless Death*) and its theatrical adaptation (*Sevgili Arsız Ölüm – Dirmit Oyunu*), performed by Nezaket Erden, help the novel's feminist affects decontextualize themselves global conversations. These forms not only preserve but amplify the emotional and political power of Dirmit's resistance. They link her struggle to contemporary local movements such as Gezi Park. Ultimately, the chapter also contends that *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* reclaims literary and political agency for Turkish women writers. It presents Dirmit's voice as a feminist force

that challenges patriarchal structures across time, media, and geography. It, at the same time, make Tekin's work a vital contribution to both local feminist literature while underlining her contributions to the global postmodern canon.



CHAPTER 3

Postmodern Novel, the Dissident Female Figure, and Feminist

Affects: A Reading of Özge Samancı's *Dare to Disappoint:*

Growing Up in Turkey (2015)

Introduction

Özge Samancı's *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* (2015) is an autobiographical¹ graphic memoir that explores the coming-of-age story of a young girl who shares the same as the author—Özge. Throughout the narrative, Özge navigates several different tensions such as patriarchal, nationalist, and authoritarian structures in post-1980s Türkiye and in the society. The novel's release came shortly after the Gezi Park protests of 2013, which marked a significant turning point in Turkish political history. The protests, which has already been discussed, initially rooted in environmental concerns. These protests, however, soon transformed into a widespread critique of the ruling AKP's authoritarian neoliberal governance and their conservative policies. As Tekinalp notes, the Gezi protests “reflect[ed] not only the shift from physical to more

¹ In *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey*'s blurb, Özge Samancı draws parallels between herself and the protagonist of the novel by underlining that she and Özge in *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* share several different similarities in terms of the experiences that they undergo in their household and in terms of their upbringing. The novel's blurb reads as follows: As a child in Izmir, Turkey in the 1980 and 90s, Ozge Samanci watched as her country struggled between its traditional religious heritage and the new secular westernized world of brand-name products and television stars. In Ozge's own family, she struggled to figure out the place where she belonged, too. Her older sister was a perfect student, and her dad hoped Ozge would study hard, go to good schools, and become an engineer to find stability in their country's uncertain economic climate. But Ozge was a dreamer and wanted adventure. Could she be a scuba diver like Jacques Costeau? Or should she become a world-famous actress? This touching memoir shows how Ozge dared to overcome both her family and her country's expectations to find happiness by being an artist (Samancı, *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey*, blurb)

conceptual demands such as democracy, freedom of speech and lifestyles, and self-actualization but [marked] a change in how such demands are expressed” (Tekinalp 2371). Despite this national and international criticism, however, the AKP “reproduced its hegemony through re-appropriating the historically produced centre-right ‘national will ’narrative” (Bilgiç 17). Through its visual-textual form and through the combinations of visuals and texts, nonlinear temporality, and affective density, Samancı’s memoir constructs what this thesis defines as affective history. That is, it functions as a narrative mode that fuses embodied emotion with political critique and collective memory (Ahmed 27; Massumi 48). Building on affect theory, feminist historiography, and world literature, this chapter argues that *Dare to Disappoint* exemplifies a localized postmodern graphic memoir and postmodern novel. It uses postmodern techniques such as irony, fragmentation, and parody to reflect the socio-political specificity of Turkish history (Demirel 128; Karaelibaş 61). In other words, through mentioning Türkiye and the politics in Türkiye, the novel contributes towards the localized form of postmodern novel. Simultaneously and the same time, the memoir engages with global feminist discourses, particularly those of fourth-wave feminism, through its use of humor, intermediality, pre-translated form and transnational critique (Munro 22).

Building on all these ideas, this chapter explores Özge Samancı’s *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* through three interrelated but at the same time different lenses. First, this chapter looks at the representation of the domestic sphere as a site of patriarchal indoctrination and early affective resistance by Özge. It then moves to the public institutions as spaces of ideological control and a subversive critique. Finally, this chapter focuses on the protagonist’s transnational

migration as a form of feminist worlding that complicates dominant literary flows and creates a different form of a reality (Damrosch 4; Moretti 56; Spivak 267).

Additionally, this chapter focuses on *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* and its international impact by focusing on the use of localized postmodernism and its pre-translated form.

1. Özge, Her Early Childhood, and the Household

As mentioned in the “Introduction” of this chapter, Özge Samancı’s *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* (2015), like that *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* reveals a distinctly postmodern temporal narrative structure. The graphic novel starts in 1980s and 1990s because the protagonist—Özge’s—coming-of-age story starts back in the 1980s and 1990s. However, the author writes about this phenomenon and Özge’s upbringing decades later—in 2015, to be more precise. This significant temporal gap between the time of the writing and the plot of the novel enables the narrative to reflect on personal and collective histories belonging to Türkiye through a retrospective lens. Of course, this retrospective lens ends up being shaped by her contemporary sensibilities and contemporary beliefs of the author. The contemporary sensibilities of the author become visible with the characterization of Özge in the novel and her journey. In the beginning of the story, the protagonist, Özge, is introduced as a counterintuitive child who aspires to become an illustrator. However, this dream challenges the patriarchal expectations of her family and their life expectancy. Particularly, her father, who insists she pursue engineering for financial stability, becomes rather angry upon hearing Özge’s decision. This early moment encapsulates a key tension in the narrative: it shows Özge’s desire to resist imposed roles and expectations. It also

positions Özge as a character, who is more interested in shaping her own path and creating her way in life.

To better understand this early scene and Özge's subversive potential, referring to Brian Massumi here can be rather handy and helpful. In this early instance, Özge symbolizes what Brian Massumi calls affect—"intensity—bodily, unformed, and non-linguistic" (Massumi 48). To put it differently, she becomes an affect, in Massumi's view, which has subversive potential that can destabilize entrenched authority structures, patriarchal expectancies, and patriarchal values. Thus, Özge's defiance and resistance do not challenge her father's authority and his expectations. But it also evokes affective responses in the readers and affective form of narrative in the narrative. Such that, this resistance invites readers to critically assess patriarchal norms and the father's patriarchal expectations. Hence, while Özge does not wholly overthrow paternal control or fully articulate her rebellious nature in this instance, her resistance in this scene can be read as a moment that generates feminist affects. This, in the end, guides the reader's interpretive stance and their understanding of the overall plot. In other words, this aspect helps readers to see the subdued one's perspective and their impact.

This affective dynamic is visually reinforced and underlined in Figure 1 and the use of localized postmodern elements in that scene (Samancı 91). In that particular scene, the narrator is depicting the clash between Özge's character and the expectations of her father. In that scene, Özge's father asserts, "You have to be successful at school. Otherwise, you will be dependent on your husband" (Samancı 91). While this statement may appear progressive and even feminist in its core because it supports freedom and has liberal undertones, the visual delivery—where

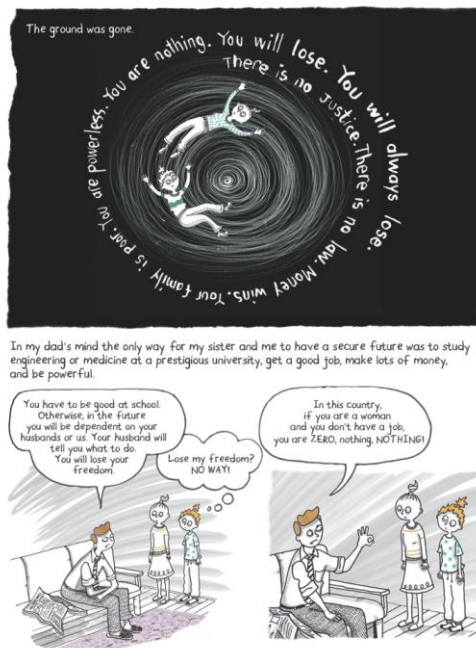


Figure 1. *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey*.

the father is demonstrated with an aggressive posture and raised finger—undermines and suppresses his apparent feminist impulses. In Figure 1, the daughters' anxious expressions and the use of dark in the frame which shows depicting them as if they are sinking into a void further underline the oppressive and patriarchal atmosphere of the household. The cartoonish exaggeration and ironic tone characteristic of Samancı's visual storytelling infuse the scene with postmodern sensibilities.

Through combining humor with critique, this

particular instance in the novel underlines how Özge is mocking the father's statements and his expectations regarding her career. Through using irony and visual affect in that scene, the narrative destabilizes patriarchal authority. Moreover, with the help of these components, the visual narrative invites readers to align with Özge's subversive perspective and her criticism. Hence, from these scenes onwards, the readers start seeing things and Özge's historical experiences with her own perspective instead of seeing them from the dominant ones. Hence, the alignment with Özge's perspective starts questioning dominant ideologies from this scene onwards. This way, the novel's use of postmodern narrative elements and their contributions enhance affective history which is being created within the narrative.

Of course, to better understand how this narrative guides readers and contributes to the reshaping of our understanding, it is also a must that localized postmodern novel elements are understood. To fully grasp these potentials, it is essential to historicize the novel and contextualize *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in*

Turkey within the time period it was written and the time period around which the novel revolves. As mentioned in the “Introduction” part of this chapter, Özge’s childhood coincides with the post-1980 coup era in Turkey and with the impact of the military intervention’s effects on the society. As previously explained, the 1980 military intervention “came at a time when Turkey was experiencing severe political polarization, economic instability, and widespread violence between right-wing and left-wing factions” (Demirel 128). It was aimed to regulate the society and put things in order in Türkiye. In response to the lack of regulation in the society at the time, the military suspended democratic institutions, imposed media censorship, and sought to instill nationalist unity by invoking Kemalist ideology (Karaelibaş 61). In other words, while the military was regulating the society, they imposed and forced certain rules onto the citizens. Their practices made the living conditions even more challenging in the country. Hence, the discomfort as well as the oppression were all dominating the citizens lives.

In this context and with respect to the historical facts mentioned above, Özge’s father can be read as a symbolic figure of the militarized state as well as their authoritarian regulations of the military during the 1980s. Like the state and the military, the father is authoritarian and anxious about securing a stable future and a regulated system in their household: he constantly wants his kids to have a secure future and a stable carrier. In particular, the father’s emphasis on discipline and order echoes the socio-political atmosphere of the 1980s. Thus, the family home itself becomes a microcosm of the broader political repression in Turkey. In these instances, therefore, Özge’s character at the same time resists the dominant ideologies of her time not only through her career aspirations but

also through her affective intensity and narrative position. Her choice to pursue illustration over engineering, despite familial pressure, represents a rejection of the stability and discipline endorsed by both her father and the state. While her resistance is partial and often subdued, it nevertheless accumulates into an affective history. That is, it becomes an alternative to official narratives. Hence, it can be suggested that *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* localizes postmodern techniques—such as irony, parody, and visual fragmentation—not through overt cultural references but through subtle engagement with Turkish socio-political realities. In conclusion, *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* demonstrates how the protagonist, Özge, channels affect to challenge both personal and political authority.

To fully grasp Özge's political significance and her subversive potential, her character must be situated within the broader historical and aesthetic context of the memoir. Although the events depicted take place in the 1980s and 1990s, *Dare to Disappoint* was written in 2015—shortly after the Gezi Park protests. These protests, which began in May 2013 as a local opposition to the government's decision to demolish a park, quickly evolved into a nationwide resistance movement against the AKP's increasing authoritarianism. Protesters, who were ranging from feminists and LGBTQ+ activists to students and artists employed irony, humor, and visual satire to express dissent. In their use of aesthetics, collectivity, and digital platforms, the Gezi protests echoed other global movements. They, in other words, carried the traces of such events as Brazil's Jornadas de Junho and later, the #MeToo movement. One Brazilian protestors who have got involved in the protests have noted in , “To me, it

[protests] has something to do with Turkey” (Eren). The protests thus became a transnational affective phenomenon, where local resistance gained global resonance.

This post-Gezi sensibility is embedded in Samancı’s narrative style and localized postmodernism in the novel. In returning to Figure 1, Özge’s quiet insistence on following her dream of becoming an illustrator—against her father’s career expectations—mirrors the resistance of marginalized voices during the Gezi Park protests. Her use of humor, irony, and visual storytelling to critique patriarchal and authoritarian figures parallels the protestors’ tactics. However, at this early stage in the memoir, Özge’s resistance remains affective rather than overtly political. She evokes discomfort and critique. But her young age and limited agency prevent her from fully articulating a political stance. Hence, although the novel manages to subvert the authority figure in this instance, this remains rather restricted because of the age of the narrator.

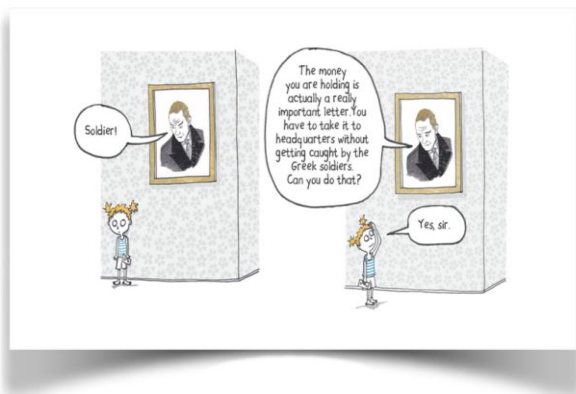


Figure 2. *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey*.

2. Özge, Historical & Political Commentary, and Affects

As the memoir progresses and the plot unfolds, Özge’s affective resistance enters the public sphere. That is, it does not just stay within the domestic borders. Rather, it seeks to provide a different and subversive look at the historical

phenomena going on in the larger country. In these instances the

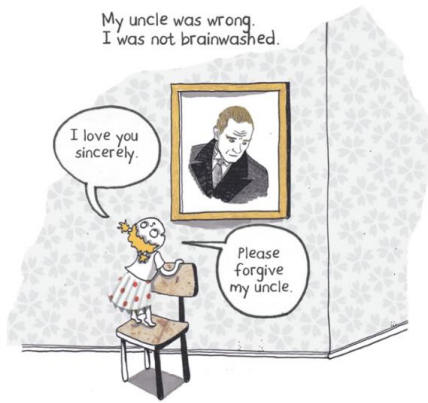


Figure 3. *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey.*

this irony and comical effect continues.

Atatürk calls Özge “Soldier!”, and her innocent salute—“Yes, sir!”. These statements highlight both Özge indoctrination and the absurdity of militarized education. Through parody, irony and exaggeration as well as through localized elements, Samancı critiques the unquestioned veneration of national icons. She,

as a result, ends up creating what Massumi calls a “disruptive intensity.” It is also supported by the child’s perspective and its absurdity too. Such that, in the end, this child perspective decreases the seriousness of nationalist indoctrination. Hence, it forces readers to reevaluate historical symbols.

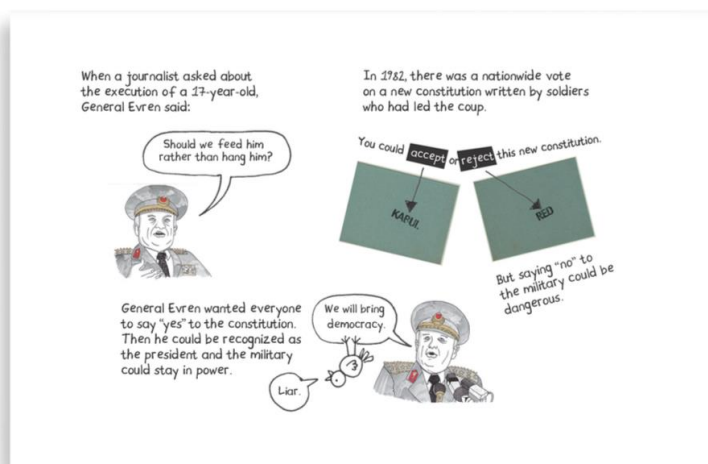


Figure 4. *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey.*

As the novel continues, this affective critique starts going beyond just the representation of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. It extends to depictions of General Kenan Evren, the coup's orchestrator. Figure 4 also focuses on this issue and the

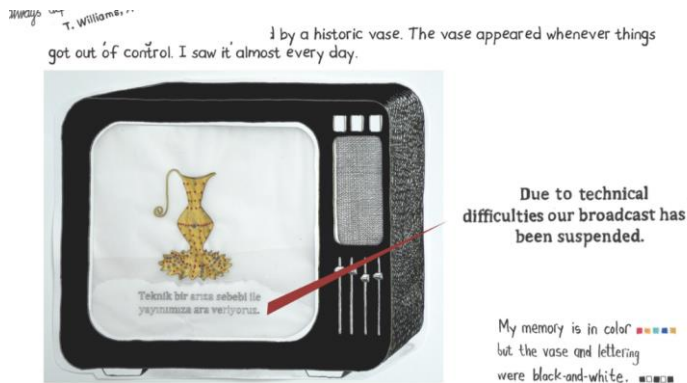


Figure 5. *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey.*



Figure 6. *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey.*

role of Kenan Evren. In that scene, Kenan Evren proclaims, “We will bring democracy.” His statement, however, gets interrupted by a bird calling him a liar. In other words, through an ironic visual device and cutting of the narrative,

the novel draws attention to the political hypocrisy represented by Kenan Evren’s presence in the country. In Figures 5 and 6, the narrator continues showing how Özge mocks censorship policies through the metaphor of a vase. In these scenes, the narrator manages to refer to the moments where the vase blocks television signals and restricts content. These visual gags become tools of subversion, challenging the audience to view state control through the lens of absurdity and emotional satire. Hence, they are at the same time rather localized in these

instances.

3. Özge, Relocation, and Affects

A turning point in the memoir occurs when Özge moves to Istanbul to attend Boğaziçi University. Her migration from a rural city to a metropolitan marks a narrative shift from affective resistance to conscious political awakening. This is also reflected through the Upon getting rid of from her family’s constraints,

Özge gradually embraces feminist and intellectual perspectives. She becomes much more liberated and she also turns into a much more open individual. Figure 6 also talks about this. It shows Özge's growing consciousness and her less silenced character. In that instance, Özge recounts a near-assault on campus. The traumatic experience is depicted through simplified, cartoonish visuals as can be seen in Figure 7. This cartoonish feel endorses the irony of gendered violence in



Figure 7. *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey.*

public spaces. Her escape, which happens purely by chance, emphasizes the instability of female safety in Türkiye. In Figure 7, Samancı adds an intertextual layer to this assault scene by referencing Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire*. In that instance, Özge says, "I have always

depended on the kindness of strangers." This ironic recontextualization critiques the normalization of patriarchal violence and the myth of male protection. Hence, it also creates an affective intensity and affective history moment. Thus, it invites the readers to further align with Özge's perspective and reassess the political climate regarding women's safety in Türkiye.

By the memoir's conclusion, Özge's resistance evolves into transnational feminist agency and her resistance goes beyond the borders of the country. After graduating from university, Özge

decides to relocate to to the United States. In doing so, pursue her dream of



Figure 8. *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey.*

becoming an illustrator. In other words, by the end of the novel, Özge manages to recover her subdued dream by the patriarchal forced. Figure 8 also appears in the novel following Özge's decision to move to another country in the hope of realizing her dreams. In that instance, Özge rides a colorful fish beneath a cloudy sky and asks, "Do you dare to disappoint?" The imagery turns out rather whimsical. Yet the message, embedded in it, is politically charged. As Massumi notes, affect precedes conscious recognition but holds the power to challenge systemic norms. Sara Ahmed further articulates affect's "stickiness"—its ability to bind emotions to social critique (Ahmed 27). Özge's final invitation, "Come, let's swim against the current!," in Figure 8 is both a personal declaration and a call for collective nonconformity. Positioned within a transnational feminist framework and context, this positive ending affirms that *Dare to Disappoint* is not merely a personal memoir but a postmodern narrative where the personal becomes political and the local becomes global.

4. From Turkey to the World (and Back Again)

Throughout this chapter, it has been asserted that *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey*'s political undertones can be understood when its release date after the Gezi Park protests (2013) is considered and when the novel's associations with the historical facts like the 1980s military coup are taken into account. It is mainly because through these associations, the novel's localized postmodern novel features come more to the forth. In addition, through the use of postmodern novel features and localizing them, Samancı manages to underline the contributions of the authors from peripheral countries to the development of the postmodern genre. This act of localization also speaks to the contributions of authors from peripheral literary spaces to the evolution of the postmodern novel

genre. Remembering Franco Moretti's core-periphery model, developed in "Conjectures on World Literature," provides a critical framework for understanding this dynamic. According to Moretti, literary forms often emerge in the "core" but are reshaped and refunctionalized in the "periphery"—where they are adapted to meet local social, political, and cultural realities (Moretti 58). Samancı's memoir—just like that of Latife Tekin's—exemplifies this process. Her use of postmodern form does not imitate Western models but rather *transforms* them through the lens of Turkish historical specificity and feminist resistance. In doing so, she reverses the usual flow of literary influence described by Moretti. That is, rather than the center shaping the periphery, the periphery here redefines the genre itself. Thus, *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* does not only critique authoritarianism and patriarchy within Turkey. But it also contributes to a broader literary reorientation and literary transformation. It demonstrates how marginalized voices from the periphery can challenge the genre conventions of postmodernism and assert their agency within world literary circuits. Through this, Samancı becomes not just a participant in postmodern literature. Instead, she—like in the case of Latife Tekin—becomes an innovator who is redefining its boundaries of the genre from the margins.

Samancı's *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* further aligns with global discourses because *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* was directly published in English. This move from Samancı functions as a pre-translation strategy and positions her work within the circuits of world literature from the outset. This decision ensures that Özge Samancı's memoir reaches a transnational audience. At the same time, because of this decision, the novel disrupts the conventional model of literary circulation described by Franco Moretti.

According to Moretti's core-periphery model, literary texts typically originate in the "periphery." They, on the other hand, gain visibility through translation, and are then validated by the "center," which holds cultural authority (Moretti 56). However, Samancı's work follows a reverse trajectory and it can be counted as a counter-intuitive narrative. It is mainly because, by writing in the language of the center while maintaining the cultural specificity of the periphery, Özge Samancı manages to challenge this asymmetry and the power imbalance between the center and the periphery according to Moretti. Her memoir travels from the local to the global without being mediated by the center's terms. This suggests that the local can initiate global relevance rather than merely aspiring to it.

Moreover, by retaining cultural complexity—through references to figures like Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, allusions to the 1980 military coup, and critiques of authoritarian nationalism—Samancı resists the homogenizing effects of globalization. David Damrosch argues, translation often risks erasing culture-specific contexts. According to him, in favor of universal legibility, reproducing structural inequalities in world literature (Damrosch 4). Samancı's direct engagement with English enables the novel to escape from this translational loss. Her memoir retains its rootedness in Turkish political and historical realities while becoming globally accessible. In so doing, the novel successfully preserves the feminist affects embedded in its localized postmodern form. In addition, it underlines Samancı's presence in the global literary scene.

Özge Samancı's balancing act between global visibility and cultural specificity also resonates with Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak's postcolonial critiques. In *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, Edward Said insists on recognizing the

“worldliness” of texts. In other words, he underlines texts’ embeddedness in specific social, political, and historical conditions (Said 4). Similarly, Spivak, in her concept of “worlding,” calls for attention to how narratives from the margins are shaped. She argues these narratives are often silenced by dominant epistemologies and dominant power structures. Samancı’s work resists this silencing. Through localized irony, visual satire, and the affective disruptions produced by Özge’s narrative, *Dare to Disappoint* articulates a politicized feminist voice that speaks both to and beyond its national context.

In *Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism*, Spivak critiques globalization’s tendency to flatten cultural difference in favor of market legibility. Samancı’s memoir counters this by using culturally grounded postmodern techniques—such as parody, visual fragmentation, and absurdity—not as borrowed stylistic devices, but as tools of resistance deeply embedded in Turkish socio-political experience. This local grounding allows the feminist affects of the narrative to circulate globally without being diluted. As Sara Ahmed writes, affect “sticks”; the discomfort, anger, and irony in Özge’s coming-of-age story adhere to the reader, building transnational emotional solidarities. In this way, Samancı not only amplifies a marginal voice but also reshapes the boundaries of both postmodern narrative and world literature from within.

Conclusion

Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey is both a personal memory and political resistance. Through using localized postmodern novel, in the novel,

Özge Samancı intricately brings together affective storytelling, irony, visual satire, and autobiographical framing to construct an affective history. In doing so, she aims to create a perspective that resists dominant narrative, informed by patriarchal, nationalist, and neoliberal ideas. Samancı's protagonist, Özge, is shaped by the socio-political tensions of post-1980s Turkey. She is also influenced later by the global echoes of the Gezi Park protests. The memoir bridges two crucial historical moments by using the language of affect, parody, and visual form to reframe the experiences of marginalized individuals. This way, the novel also manages to draw attention to the perspective and the situation of women as well.

By drawing on Massumi's theory of affect, this chapter demonstrated how Özge's embodied resistance destabilizes familial and national authority structures. It also has underlined how it generates political critique through emotional intensity. Samancı's use of irony and visual fragmentation — which become particularly visible in the depictions of paternal discipline, nationalist indoctrination, and gender-based violence—showcases how postmodern techniques are not just stylistic but they are localized tools of subversion. These elements are deeply rooted in Turkish cultural and political history. This distinguishes Özge's narrative from Western postmodern models and position it within a broader genealogy of feminist resistance emerging from the periphery.

Moreover, the memoir's publication happens in English. This complicates conventional models of literary circulation and the position of Turkish women's writing. Through what Damrosch might call "pre-translation," Samancı ensures her narrative enters the world literary space without cultural omissions. This way,

she preserves the local specificity of her feminist and affective critique. In doing so, Samancı's work reclaims narrative authority in a literary market often dominated by center-periphery hierarchies. By doing so, *Dare to Disappoint* reverses the expected direction of influence and global circulation, as well. That is, instead of adapting to global expectations, it allows the local to shape and expand the boundaries of world literature. Ultimately, *Dare to Disappoint* exemplifies how feminist postmodern narratives from the margins can not only challenge internal systems of repression but also participate in and reshape global literary conversations. Through Samancı's unique blend of autobiographical storytelling, localized postmodern strategies, and affective resonance, Samancı creates a memoir that dares not only to disappoint but to disrupt and endure.

Conclusion

This thesis has examined and focused on two different contemporary Turkish women writers as well as their works. The authors in this thesis that has taken Latife Tekin and Özge Samancı's works into account and consideration. It has investigated how both authors use techniques of postmodern narrative to create affective histories which resist patriarchal oppression and run counter to hegemonic stories about history and women's position. This study, therefore, illustrated through a comparative reading of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (1983) and *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* (2015) how, different in formation and scope, and published in different socio-political moments, both texts address the issue of reimagining history from positions of marginalization and the less represented. Although these novels differ in details, both novels articulate a recovery of female agency and challenging of the patriarchal, nationalistic and authoritarian systems.

One of the elements making the two works similar is their use of localized postmodern narrative techniques as a means of resistance and reclamation. Tekin and Samancı employ experimental methods to challenge dominant narratives and highlight the material realities of Turkish women. In *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, Tekin uses magic realism as well as fragmentation, metafiction, and non-linear storytelling to blur the boundaries between reality and fiction. At the same time, Tekin manages to challenge the distinction between history and myth. Through the semi-autobiographical characterization of Dirmit, Tekin retells the oppressive and patriarchal socio-political environment of Türkiye following the 1980 military coup in the country. This way, Latife Tekin not only represents a counter fictional

narrative but she, at the same time, creates a way for herself to recover her voice in the literary world.

Similar to Latife Tekin, Özge Samancı in *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* applies a variety of postmodern techniques—most notably parody, pastiche, visual storytelling, fragmentation, and irony—to critique the socio-political conditions of Türkiye during the same historical period (the 1980s) and beyond. Both authors, therefore, use postmodernism not solely as an aesthetic choice but as a political tool to contest patriarchal norms, authoritarian ideologies, and state-imposed historical narratives. However, although the two works overlap in their postmodern strategies, they differ significantly in the degree of political openness and in the ways in which they construct their autobiographical links in their literary productions. This thesis has argued that Tekin's narrative is characterized by implicitness, subdued autobiographical link, and allegory. On the other hand, Özge Samancı's memoir is ostensibly autobiographical, politically charged, and it is very openly direct. In *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, the political critique is embedded in a rich folkloric, superstition, and magical realist imagery. Although the semi-autobiographical link between Tekin and Dirmit is acknowledged by the author in an interview, it remains rather subtle, implicit, and constructed throughout the narrative and the plot in the novel. This implicitness is mainly because of the symbolic language, dream sequences, and folkloric references, which are all blended in the narrative. Tekin abstains from explicitly positioning herself within the narrative and expressing the autobiographical link. Instead, she allows Dirmit to function as a fictional vessel through which the social and political conditions of Turkish women in the 1980s are conveyed.

By contrast, *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* is rather directly autobiographical and explicit in explaining the autobiographical link present in the novel. In the story, Samancı names her protagonist after herself. The character follows the same journey as herself: in *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey*, Özge Samancı frames the narrative as a direct account of her personal journey from rural Turkey to urban life and, eventually, to the global stage—to the USA. The political critique in Samancı's work is unambiguous and very direct, as well. Through *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey*, Samancı challenges Turkey's authoritarian politics, the 1980s military coup, and the continuous gendered oppression in Turkish society. Moreover, the graphic novel format itself invites a direct, personal engagement with political events and structures. Hence, it would not be wrong to assert that while Tekin is allegorical, folkloric and often is implicit, Samancı is direct, more obvious and explicit.

This important difference between the two works is not incidental or coincidental. Rather, when historical and ideological differences between these two works are taken into account, these differences reveal numerous as well as diverse important factors and facts. The differences between these two authors' time periods convey the different socio-political contexts and feminist discourses which shaped each author's literary production. As mentioned, Latife Tekin's *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* was released in the early 1980s. This period was marked by the oppression caused by the military coup. It was also the period where one could observe the suppression of leftist movements, and the early awakening of the second-wave feminism in Turkey. Writing in such a climate of censorship, political surveillance, traditionalism as well as conservatism, Tekin's decision to veil her feminist

critique in magic realism and allegory can be seen as a very tactical response to the limitations as well as the claustrophobic nature of her time period. Although Tekin's narrative is extremely subversive, Dirmit in *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* operates within the constraints of a literary and political culture of the 1980s. These were all contributing to the restricted the visibility of feminist dissent and oppositional views.

In a very sharp contrast and rather contradiction, Samancı's memoir was written in 2015—almost four decades after *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*. The release date of this graphic memoir coincided with the period in the wake of the Gezi Park protests and the global rise of fourth-wave feminism. By this time, in 2015 feminist discourse had shifted significantly and evolved as well. It started emphasizing public visibility, intersectionality, and transnational solidarity. The cultural landscape in which Samancı's memoir was produced allowed more direct engagement with issues of gendered oppression, political violence, and personal agency. *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* is thus not only informed by all these. But it also actively participates in this broader feminist and global discourse. Samancı's explicit autobiographical positioning and her unambiguous political critique reflect the changing expectations of feminist literary production as well as social movements in the twenty-first century.

Furthermore, this thesis has argued that the medium and form of these narratives are important for their feminist and political commentaries. This proposition is in alignment with Marshall McLuhan's famous assertion that "the medium is the message" (McLuhan, 1964). In other words, both Tekin and Samancı's works demonstrate how literary form itself becomes a site of resistance, world-making,

and meaning-making. In *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, the use of magic realism, folkloric elements, and non-linear narration highlights the instability of history and its changing nature through time. At the same time, it challenges the authority of official narratives and historical accounts. Tekin's narrative mode forces readers to question the constructed nature of historical truth. In addition, it paves the way for the readers to empathize with the affective experiences of the marginalized and the oppressed.

Similarly, Samancı's choice of the graphic memoir format is not just a stylistic decision. But it is a politically charged one method. The visual and textual interplay in *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* creates an accessible, affective, and subversive narrative space. This way it directly challenges patriarchal authority. The use of humor, parody, and visual exaggeration amplifies the political critique. At the same time, it makes visible the structures of oppression that shape the protagonist's life. Moreover, by writing the memoir in English, Samancı intentionally positions her narrative within the circuits of world literature and global feminist discourse. This strategic choice reflects her alignment with the dynamics of globalism and her desire to reach transnational audiences.

This global positioning contributes to differences which set Samancı's work apart from that of Tekin's. Whereas *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* is extremely founded by local culture, language, and folklore, its circulation in the world literary scene has largely depended on translation and transmedial adaptation. Tekin's narrative is localized in its language, in its cultural references, idiomatic expressions, superstitious nature, and narrative style. The novel's entrance into world

literature has been mediated by translators and adaptors. While they are doing the adaptations and the translators, the adaptors and the translators who attempt to convey *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*'s culturally specific affective and political dimensions to non-Turkish audiences.

In contrast, Samancı's memoir is globalized even before it was published because it is pre-translated. Written in English and in a visual, hybrid format, *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* circumvents the barriers of linguistic and cultural translation. Due to its language difference, the novel directly engages with global literary markets and feminist networks. This difference again reflects the broader historical shift from the nationalist frameworks of literary production in the twentieth century to the globalized, transnational circuits of literary circulation in the twenty-first century. It also demonstrates how feminist narratives have evolved in their strategies of resistance. That is, they have moved from implicit, localized forms to explicit, globally oriented ones.

Despite these differences, both works share a common goal of producing *liberating affects*. In other words, both of the novels evoke emotions, intensities, and embodied experiences which continually resist patriarchal authority. In doing so, they open spaces for feminist agency. Drawing on affect theory, this thesis has demonstrated how both Tekin and Samancı mobilize narrative form through playing with the postmodern narrative technique, character development, and political critique to generate affective responses in their readers. In *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, Dirmiş's rebellious nature, her suffering, and ultimate liberation contribute towards the development of affective space that invites readers to empathize with the struggles of Turkish women. Also, it forces them to question the socio-

political structures that confine them. Although Tekin's narrative never explicitly articulates its feminist message, it nonetheless diffuses a subversive energy. That energy challenges dominant ideologies, and patriarchal structures. At the same time, it affirms the agency of the oppressed.

Similarly, in *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey*, Özge experiences persistent struggle against familial, educational, and political authority. These struggle series generate an affective force that speaks to contemporary feminist and political movements. The visual, humorous, and ironic tone of the memoir contributes the narrative's affective undertones. They allow readers to engage emotionally with the protagonist's journey of self-actualization. Thus, Samancı's memoir invites readers to witness and feel the pressures, contradictions, and liberating potentials of growing up as a woman in patriarchal and authoritarian Turkey.

Additionally, this thesis has demonstrated that migration, both literal and symbolic, plays a significant in *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* and *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*. Further it has contribute to both authors' feminist and political interventions. In *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, Dirmit's migration from a rural village to a cityscape speaks the broader socio-political issues relating to the upheavals of Turkey's post coup period. Her urban-to-rural migration does not just reflect the marginalization of women in a patriarchal world. Yet it also underlines the gap between tradition and modernity, between grand national narratives and subversive personal histories. However, Dirmit's path and her migration's meaning remain geographically limited to Turkey. In other words, like the novel itself, Dirmit's migration remains local signifying the localized

orientation of Tekin's feminist criticism as well as the socio-political boundaries of her period.

In quite contrast, in *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey*, migration has different connotations. Compared to *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, migration in *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* extends beyond national borders. Özge Samancı's narrative in the novel traces her trajectory from rural to urban Turkey and ultimately to the United States. This turns out to be the movement which underlines the memoir's global orientation. In addition, this transnational migration does not stay just as a personal journey. Rather, it is emblematic and it is the symbol of shifting dynamics of feminist discourse in the twenty-first century. Samancı's migration to the global stage reflects her ability to transcend the socio-political constraints of Turkey to participate in a broader, transnational feminist dialogue. Her migration mimics the increasing mobility of feminist voices and narratives in a globalized world, and it reinforces the memoir's explicit engagement with global feminist concerns.

The contrast in how migration functions in *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* and *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* further emphasizes their differing approaches when it comes to feminist resistance. To put it other way, while Dirmit's migration underscores the internal, often invisible struggles of marginalized women within national boundaries, Samancı's outward migration emphasizes the visibility and circulation of feminist critique on a global scale. This way, migration in both texts becomes a metaphor for the broader movement of feminist voices from the margins to the center, from silence to articulation, and from localized struggle to global resonance.

Eventually, the comparative analysis conducted in this project underlines that Latife Tekin and Özge Samancı differ in form, tone, and historical context. However, their works are united by a shared vision: to resist patriarchal and authoritarian structures, to reclaim female agency, and to reimagine history from the standpoint of the marginalized as well as the oppressed. Further, their narratives show that literature is not just a reflection of historical realities. Rather it is an active force that shapes how history is remembered and felt.

This thesis contributes to broader scholarly conversations in postmodern literature, world literature, affect theory, and feminist literary criticism by drawing attention to the complex relationship between narrative form, socio-political context, feminist discourse, and global circulation. Overall, this project has argued that the differences in political explicitness, autobiographical construction, and global orientation between *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* and *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* are not simply formal choices. Rather they are rooted in the historical, ideological, and feminist contexts in which these works were produced.

Future research may expound upon this study by examining how other contemporary Turkish women writers deal with similar tensions such as the ones between local specificity and global circulation, implicit resistance and explicit critique. This way, they may explore how digital media and new narrative forms continue to reshape feminist literary production in the twenty-first century. The questions raised by Tekin's and Samancı's works remain urgent: How do marginalized voices enter the global literary canon? How are they carrying affect, history, and resistance mediated through narrative form? How can literature

continue to serve as a site of feminist world-making in an increasingly globalized and digitized world?

In their different but overlapping approaches, both *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* and *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey* demonstrate that the past is never fixed. It is continually reimagined, rewritten, and reclaimed by those whose stories have too often been marginalized as well as subdued. Both authors' narratives help us that literary acts of resistance—whether implicit or explicit, local or global—are powerful tools in the ongoing struggle for gender equality, political freedom, and historical justice.

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