Recapitulating Love

Modernity, Secularity, and Sufism in Turkey

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This dissertation argues that the notion of love in Turkey refers not merely to an emotion but rather to reason, rationality, and a scientific mindset. It is situated among a plethora of interconnected fields, from culture to politics, and is woven into questions of national identity. It focuses on an eclectic range of examples, including modernist literature, a cartoon, and popular contemporary television series, all of which address love from various discursive perspectives. This emphasis on love, as a concept in Turkish, is derived from its ambivalent meaning in that it both refers to romantic and Sufi love. Using Michel Foucault’s genealogical method, I draw a genealogy of love in Turkey by situating ašk at the intersection of modernization, secularism, gender, and Islam. Although ašk signifies an epistemological break with the Ottoman Islamic past, primarily in republican discourse, I argue that the Sufi concept of love persists in secularized Turkey in diverse forms. Throughout my analysis, love, with its ambivalence, both complies with and resists secularization, highlighting the crucial role of emotions, culture, and traditions in the making of an alternative modernity.
Recapitulating Love
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Table of Contents

PRONUNCIATION OF TURKISH VOWELS: ................................................................. VII
PRONUNCIATION OF SOME TURKISH CONSONANTS ........................................ VII
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ......................................................................................... XI
INTRODUCTION ....................................................................................................... 1

ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION .......................................................... 19
Part I. Discontinuity ............................................................................................... 20
Part II. Continuity .................................................................................................. 22

CHAPTER 1: SUFISM, LOVE, AND MODERNIZATION FROM THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE TO TURKEY ...... 29

IN THE BEGINNING WAS LOVE .............................................................................. 29
SUFISM AND ISLAM ................................................................................................. 31
The meaning of Sufism ............................................................................................ 36
What is Sufi love? ..................................................................................................... 40
The unity of love: Metaphorical and divine love .................................................... 44
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUFISM, SECULARIZATION, AND MODERNIZATION .................................................. 47
Sufism and politics after 1950 ................................................................................ 54
Sufi love (ashk) as a theme of Turkish modernization ........................................... 58

PART I. DISCONTINUITY ......................................................................................... 63

CHAPTER 2: A LOVE TRIANGLE: LOVE, SUFFERING, AND MODERNITY ...................... 65

INTRODUCTION: THE EAST/WEST DICHOTOMY .................................................. 65
A marginal synthesis from a female author ............................................................ 67
THE TUG OF WAR BETWEEN THE PAST AND PRESENT .................................... 69
Stuck between two worlds ..................................................................................... 70
Modern love ............................................................................................................. 73
Love as a pathological disease .............................................................................. 79

LOVE, SUFFERING, AND MODERNITY ............................................................. 85
Alafranga snobs ...................................................................................................... 86

SAFIVE EROL’S ALTERNATIVE MODERNITY: INCLUDED MIDDLE ......................... 90
The love story of an alaturka Nietzschean overwoman ......................................... 94
Critique of Christianity .......................................................................................... 97
“On enjoying and suffering the passions” ............................................................. 99
A secular afterlife: Death and creation ................................................................. 106
Sacred love, reason, and madness of love ............................................................ 111

CONCLUSION ......................................................................................................... 116
Table of Figures

Figure 1. “Women’s Lodges Also (Apparently) Exist!” Karagöz, 16 September 1925, no. 1826, page 4 ........... 161
Figure 2. (From left to right) Firdevs (Nebahat Çehre), Behlül (Kıvanç Tatlıtuğ), Bihter (Beren Saat), Adnan (Selçuk Yöntem), Nihal (Hazal Kaya). ................................................................. 212
Figure 3. Adnan’s yalı. ........................................................................................................................................... 215
Figure 4. Adnan looking at Bihter at the cemetery. .......................................................................................... 218
Figure 5. Bihter and Adnan meet at the cemetery. ........................................................................................... 219
Figure 6. Behlül is mesmerized with Bihter. ..................................................................................................... 226
Figure 7. Before Bihter and Behlül’s first kiss. ................................................................................................ 228
Figure 8. Extreme close-up of Bihter touching her lips....................................................................................... 230
Figure 9. Bihter lying down dead..................................................................................................................... 237
Figure 10. Behlül crying at Bihter’s grave. ........................................................................................................... 239
Figure 11. Sheikh Müslüm Gündüz and Fadime Şahin incident, 1996 ............................................................... 245
Figure 12. A promotional photo from Resurrection: Ertuğrul by Tekden Film................................................... 250
Figure 13. Ibn ‘Arabi meets saints to herald the coming of the savior of Islamic lands. ................................. 256
Figure 14. Ibn ‘Arabi conducting zikr (ecstatic ritual with recitations of the names of God). ......................... 259
Figure 15. Ertuğrul chained to the wall of a well in his dream........................................................................... 260
Figure 16. Ibn ‘Arabi divines Ertuğrul’s state and prevents his murder during the zikr............................................ 261
Figure 17. Erdoğan and his wife, Emine Erdoğan, visiting the set of Resurrection in 2015 and wearing the traditional headgears........................................................................................................... 266
Figure 19. Ertuğrul donning the futuwwa shirt. ................................................................................................. 273
Figure 20. Ibn ‘Arabi and Ertuğrul hug each other upon meeting. .................................................................. 282
Figure 21. Each in their own world, Kemal and Settar drive through the gloomy, damp streets of Istanbul, framed in a two-shot composition that emphasizes their proximity as well as their distance. ...................................................... 289
Figure 22. In ultraviolet light, the Aleph symbol appears on the victim’s bathroom tiles. ..................................... 291
Figure 23. Sheikh Saadettin conducting zikr, while Settar sits estranged among the ecstatic crowd. .................. 293
Figure 24. The low-brow police chief, with his iconic ultra-nationalistic moustache, represents the new power constellation in Turkey. ......................................................................................................................... 295
Figure 25. Settar drinking alone in the fishermen’s tavern outside the modern, urban center of Istanbul............. 296
Figure 26. Kemal’s torch illuminates the mad dervish’s past. ................................................................................. 300
Figure 27. The mad dervish’s hand mirror illuminates Kemal’s past.................................................................. 300
Figure 28. The mob behind the influential religious scholar is marching toward the Sufi lodge to burn it down. ...................................................................................................................................................... 302
Figure 29. The clash of orthodoxy and heterodoxy during zikr at the seventeenth-century lodge. ..................... 303
Figure 30. Burning whirling dervish in the seventeenth-century lodge................................................................. 304
Figure 31. Burning dervishes in the seventeenth-century lodge. ......................................................................... 304
Figure 32. Always seen through photographs, Güneş (on the left) represents the “unspeakable.” ............... 309
Figure 33. Celal jumping off the Bosphorus Bridge together with Settar .......................................................... 315
Pronunciation of Turkish vowels:

/a/ as in “but”
/e/ as in “bet”
/i/ has no English equivalent. It is a high back vowel, which sounds similar to schwa /ə/.
/i/ as in “bit”
/o/ as in “gold”
/ö/ as in “her” (British English)
/u/ as in “bull”
/ü/ has no English equivalent. It is a front rounded vowel.

Pronunciation of some Turkish consonants

/c/ as in “edge”
/ç/ as in “chair”
/ğ/ has no English equivalent. It is a glide like sound that changes the quality of the preceding vowel.
/j/ as in “pleasure”
/ş/ as in “shine”
To loving memories of
Nevzat and Alp Buğdaycı,
and
to Gökdemir İhsan
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