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Machinic Agency and the Powers of the False in Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn* (1998)

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Özdamar's second novel Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn has been read as a coming-of-age story of its female protagonist against the backdrop of 1968. Its portrayal of Turkish 'Gastarbeiter' has been interpreted in classical Marxist terms of alienated labour, and the novel itself as a rallying cry for international Leftist movements. This essay argues that the novel is non-representational both in its aesthetics and its politics, articulating a critical perspective on Leftist politics and foregrounding the non-representational power of art. It attends to the novel's distribution of agency, its cinematic techniques and parodic moments that contribute to what Gilles Deleuze has called 'the powers of the false'. Machinisms are at work on the factory floor and through the camera's lens, prefiguring the forces of capitalism that render representational aesthetics and politics obsolete, and culminating in a collective enunciation irreducible to a familiar narrative of migrant labour or political activism.

Keywords: Capitalism, non-representational aesthetics, Deleuze, Lazzarato, powers of the false, Turkish German culture, machinic enslavement, micropolitics, affect, materialism

‘The entangled, contingent, and changing material conditions of the shop floor produce much more than saleable commodities and the flow of capital is but one stream in a turbulent river of agencies’.¹

1. Introduction

Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn* (1998), the second in a trilogy of auto-fictional novels, concerns the 1960s labour migration that gave rise to the largest ethnic minority in Germany today. Far from a classic piece of ‘Gastarbeiterliteratur’, however, the novel locates Turkish labour migration in a

¹ Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2007), p. 239.

transnational frame, as not simply fuelling the West German economic miracle, but as integral to international labour movements and the New Left politics of the late 1960s.² Critical interest in Özdamar's novel trilogy as a whole has focused on its biographical status as 'life writing',³ and on their female protagonist's work in theatre.⁴ Those critics who have engaged with the importance of work and transnational labour politics in *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn* have shown how it explodes myths about the predominantly male, depoliticized, and uneducated 'Gastarbeiter', and how it writes ethnic minority subjects into a national history of 1968.⁵ However, these critics still view the characters in Özdamar's fiction as representing Turkish identities inserted into a more or less familiar historical setting. Indeed the two main modes in which this novel has been read are as a transnational rewriting of 1968, and a personal coming-of-age story of the female protagonist.

Leslie Adelson is the only critic in German Studies to date to call for a move beyond the representational paradigm, cautioning against viewing even migrant labour as an 'experiential property of migrant actors that could be identified as characters or authors'.⁶ Instead, she sees the ethnicity of Turkish figures in German literature as a form of what Rey Chow has described as alienated labour, a commodity producing a residue of cultural capital that is irreducible to the logic of representation.⁷ Her interest is in how discursive regimes of representation are unsettled by the illogical excess produced by the imaginative labour of these texts, rather than how they reproduce an already familiar world. My analysis shares

² Ernest Schonfield, '1968 and Transnational History in Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*', *German Life and Letters*, 68.1 (2015), 66-87 (pp. 71-74).

³ See Elizabeth Boa, 'Özdamar's Autobiographical Fictions: Trans-National Identity and Literary Form', *German Life and Letters*, 59.4 (2006), 526-39; Laura Bradley, 'Recovering the Past and Capturing the Present: Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde*', in *New German Literature: Life-Writing and Dialogues with the Arts*, ed. by Julian Preece, Frank Finlay, and Ruth J. Owen (Bern: Lang, 2007), pp. 283-95.

⁴ See B. Venkat Mani, 'The Good Woman of Istanbul: Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*' *Gegenwartsliteratur*, 2 (2003), 30-58; Moray McGowan, "'Sie kucken beide an Milch Topf': Goethe's *Bürgergeneral* in Double Refraction', in *Language – Text – Bildung/Sprache – Text – Bildung: Essays in Honour of Beate Dreike*, ed. by Andreas Stuhlmann and Patrick Studer with Gert Hofmann (Bern: Lang, 2005), pp. 79-88; Ela Gezen, 'Staging Berlin: Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde*', *German Studies Review*, 38.1 (2015), 83-96.

⁵ See Beverley M. Weber, 'Work, Sex, and Socialism: Reading Beyond Cultural Hybridity in Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*', *German Life and Letters*, 63.1 (2010), 37-53; Monika Shafi, "'Talkin' Bout my Generation": Memories of 1968 in Recent German Novels', *German Life and Letters*, 59.2 (2006), 201-16.

⁶ Leslie A. Adelson, *The Turkish Turn in Contemporary German Literature: Toward a New Critical Grammar of Migration* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 124.

⁷ Adelson, *The Turkish Turn*, p.144. It might be argued that 'commodity' is itself a representation of capital, and thus remains a form of representational thinking.

Adelson's commitment to non-representationalism, that is, resistance to the notion that the novel corresponds to a pre-existing reality outside the text, and explores instead its potential to open up the possibility of a new world and to go beyond our familiar frameworks of reference. Indeed I argue that the novel is anti-representational not only in form but also in its politics.

This is not to ignore the referential content of the novel, but to attend to what the text otherwise does to unsettle a referential reading. Thus the Vietnam War, Franco's Spain, Algerian independence, the military Junta in Greece, and the 1971 military coup in Turkey are all relevant political contexts, many of them announced in newspaper headlines that punctuate the novel, but they are contexts to which the novel's narrative need not be reduced. Nor are they a mere 'backdrop' to the development of an individual personality, the story of a young woman's political and sexual awakening, first as a Turkish factory worker, then in the escalating student movement in Berlin, in an ecstatic love affair in Paris, and finally in the ever more violent oppression of the Left before and after Turkey's 1971 military coup. I view these things, material, historical reality and individual protagonist, as inextricably connected in the novel, the personal life entirely continuous with and externalized onto the forces permeating the world she inhabits; the self as an enfolding of the outside, rather than the interiority of a psyche.⁸ Thus my reading of the novel diverges from those that view it as a story of alienated migrant labour, predicated on an individualist view of the worker estranged from her humanity by the mechanistic conditions of industrial production.

Instead the novel obscures the determinate distinction between the worker's body and the apparatuses deployed, presenting them as entangled, relational phenomena across which different agencies are dispersed.⁹ In this way the novel presents us with industrial production and labour politics in unfamiliar and non-deciphered ways. Moreover its anachronistic evocation of the Fordist industrial production line prefigures the advent of immaterial labour, of the entrepreneurial and 'self-employed' worker who produces not only commodities but also innovative ways

⁸ It is this absence of psychologizing interiority, rather than any autobiographical authenticity, that links the three novels of the trilogy, in my view. See Margaret Littler, 'Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei', in *Landmarks in the German Novel (2)*, ed. by Peter Hutchinson and Michael Minden (Bern: Lang, 2010), pp. 93-110.

⁹ We will see this de-centering of human agency in depictions of eyes, fingers, and machinery functioning together on the production line.

of relating to consumers and shaping their tastes.¹⁰ For them the forces of capitalism have come to encompass all aspects of life, as was already tangible by the time of the novel's publication in 1998, but is all the more so in today's digital age. In this the novel's anticipatory force may be compared with Deleuze and Guattari's image of the watch running fast,¹¹ evoked more recently by Doro Wiese as 'a possible future haunting of the present',¹² whereby the narrative registers an outside, an unthought, a non-linear time and a non-homogeneous space, not limited to its historical 'setting'. One way in which it does this is by adopting cinematic techniques in the narrative such as the close-up, and the distortion of space and time.¹³ Not unlike the machines on the factory floor, the camera is active in the production of reality, not a mere instrument focusing our attention on the object world. Thus the cinematic gaze is a further dimension of the machinic agency of the text, withholding subjective interiority and plunging us into an unexpected view of reality. This is what makes the novel political in my view, beyond even its often critical thematic treatment of labour movements and the politics of the New Left. Its externalization of affect, its close-up perspectives, and the insertion of parodic elements at moments of greatest tension are part of its break with 'truthful' representation in favour of what Deleuze calls 'the powers of the false'. I will argue that the techniques of film are as important as the novel's reflections on political theatre, and that it both thematizes and enacts a non-representational aesthetic. Instead of a narrative revolving around the coherence of a character we will see how Özdamar's novel resists such conventional reading, building to a collective enunciation not localizable in any individual subject.

2. From Alienated Labour to Machinic Agency

To prepare the way for my analysis of the novel I will here elaborate on the difference between a classical view of alienation and the micropolitics that I see at work in Özdamar's text, and that gives it such enduring political relevance. The Marxist idea

¹⁰ Maurizio Lazzarato, 'Immaterial Labour', at <http://www.generation-online.org/c/fcimmateriallabour3.htm> (accessed 22 January 2016).

¹¹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. by Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 59.

¹² Doro Wiese, *The Powers of the False: Reading, Writing, Thinking Beyond Truth and Fiction* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2014), p. 20.

¹³ The films of Sergei Eisenstein are influential for the young Leftists in Özdamar's novel. Eisenstein also viewed the techniques of cinema as fundamental to an understanding of other art forms. Sergei M. Eisenstein, 'Montage and Architecture', reprinted with an Introduction by Yve-Alain Bois and Michael Glenny, *Assemblage*, 10 (1989), 110-31 (p. 112).

of alienated labour was based on a humanist assumption that work was originally the expression of the worker's essential humanity, a link ruptured by wage labour and commodity production. The kind of production line piece-work featured in the novel could therefore be seen as a classic instance of alienation. In poststructuralist critiques of capitalism alienation is more commonly understood as 'interpellation' (Althusser), or subjection to available subject positions, not of the worker's making. Yet Maurizio Lazzarato recently drew attention to a neglected dimension of the production of subjectivity in capitalism, which he sees as a combination of social subjection and machinic enslavement:

Social subjection equips us with a subjectivity, assigning us an identity, a sex, a body, a profession, a nationality, and so on. In response to the needs of the social division of labor, it in this way manufactures individuated subjects, their consciousness, representations, and behavior.

But the production of the individuated subject is coupled with a completely different process and a completely different hold on subjectivity that proceeds through desubjectivation. Machinic enslavement dismantles the individuated subject, consciousness and representations, acting on both the pre-individual and supra-individual levels.¹⁴

Social subjection is widely acknowledged in poststructuralist theory, but desubjectivation has yet to receive such critical attention, despite the many ways in which 'machinisms' are part of our everyday lives, where "humans" and "non-humans" function together as component parts in corporate, welfare-state, and media assemblages'.¹⁵ Thus, capitalism has acquired a further means of producing docile subjects, 'human resources', or, in the current crisis, 'the indebted man' who must bear responsibility for his supposed reckless past or the excesses of others.¹⁶ The term

¹⁴ Maurizio Lazzarato, *Signs and Machines: Capitalism and the Production of Subjectivity*, trans. by Joshua David Jordan (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2014), p. 12.

¹⁵ Lazzarato, *Signs and Machines*, p. 13.

¹⁶ Maurizio Lazzarato, *Die Fabrik des verschuldeten Menschen: Ein Essay über das neoliberale Leben*, trans. by Stephan Geene (Berlin: b-books, 2012). Lazzarato is indebted to the work of Gilles Deleuze, who also wrote: 'Man is no longer a man confined but a man in debt', see: 'Postscript on Control Societies', in *Negotiations 1972-1990*, trans. by Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 177-82 (p.181).

‘enslavement’ as used in cybernetics means the management of the components of a system:

Enslavement is the mode of control and regulation (‘government’) of a technical or social machine such as a factory, business, or communications system. It replaces the ‘human slavery’ of ancient imperial systems [...] and is thus a mode of command, regulation and government ‘assisted’ by technology and, as such, represents a feature specific to capitalism.¹⁷

Whereas subjection creates individuals and maintains the subject/object distinction (the subject is produced in relation to other things which s/he manipulates), enslavement produces what Deleuze has called ‘dividuals’:

The dividual does not stand opposite machines or make use of an external object; the dividual is contiguous with machines. Together they constitute a ‘humans-machines’ apparatus in which humans and machines are but recurrent and interchangeable parts of a production, communications, consumption, etc. process.¹⁸

For Deleuze the individual was the product of disciplinary societies, but the new digital control societies produce dividuals, subject to ever changing demands and performance criteria. His 1990 essay ‘Postscript on Control Societies’ is a chillingly prescient account of the transformation of societies in neoliberalism in which the solidity of institutions is replaced by ‘coexisting metastable states of a single modulation, a sort of universal transmutation’, where, for example, the currencies based on a gold standard give way to floating exchange rates and the vicissitudes of markets, or continual restructuring and flexible redeployment of human resources replace old employment practices and career structures.¹⁹ The term ‘Dividuum’ was used in a similar sense in the late 1920s by Brecht who, inspired by contemporary science, ‘believed that the age of the bourgeois individual would be replaced by the new collective age of the dividual, who had passed through the crucible of socio-

¹⁷ Lazzarato, *Signs and Machines*, pp. 25-26.

¹⁸ Lazzarato, *Signs and Machines*, p. 26.

¹⁹ Gilles Deleuze, ‘Postscript on Control Societies’, p. 179.

economic crisis'.²⁰ On the eve of the Wall Street Crash Brecht wrote of the 'Zertrümmerung der Person':

Sie fällt in Teile, sie verliert ihren Atem. Sie geht über in anderes, sie ist namenlos, sie hört keinen Vorwurf mehr, sie flieht aus ihrer Ausdehnung in ihre kleinste Größe, aus ihrer Entbehrlichkeit in das Nichts – aber in ihrer kleinsten Größe erkennt sie tiefatmend übergegangen ihre neue und eigentliche Unentbehrlichkeit im Ganzen.²¹

While Brecht was reflecting on the subject-shattering effects of the economic and political crises of the 1920s, his words still resonate with critiques of the neoliberal present.

It is this dividualizing process that I see at work in Özdamar's novel, with its defamiliarizing focus on individual body parts. Others have seen this as dehumanizing and therefore a necessarily negative representation of industrial production.²²

However, rather than seeing her characters as 'deindividualized', I propose that they have not been individuated, as Lazzarato suggests:

Not only is the dividual *of a piece with* the machinic assemblage but he is also *torn to pieces* by it: the component parts of subjectivity (intelligence, affects, sensations, cognition, memory, physical force) are no longer unified in an 'I,' they no longer have an individuated subject as referent.²³

These molecular components are part of the assemblage or process itself. They are 'the non-individuated intensive, subhuman potentialities of subjectivity, and the non-individuated, intensive, molecular component parts and potentialities of matter and machines'.²⁴ Lazzarato's analysis draws extensively on Deleuze's critique of capitalism, which, following Marx, is that there is no escape from its oppressive

²⁰ Stephen Parker, *Bertolt Brecht: A Literary Life* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 270.

²¹ Bertolt Brecht, 'Die Zertrümmerung der Person', *Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe*, vol. 21, ed. Werner Hecht, Jan Knopf, Werner Mittenzwei and Klaus-Detlef Müller (Berlin: Aufbau, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1993), p. 320. For Brecht's use of the term 'Dividuum', see also pp. 180 and 359.

²² See for example Ernest Schonfield, '1968 and Transnational History' and Beverley M. Weber, 'Work, Sex, and Socialism.'

²³ Lazzarato, *Signs and Machines*, p. 27. Emphasis in the original.

²⁴ Lazzarato, *Signs and Machines*, p. 27.

power, only the possibility of engaging with its flows and constraints.²⁵ Thus the novel's critique of Leftist discourse that fails to engage with the material reality of workers' lives, and the futility of the attempt to bring 'consciousness' to the people, or indeed to represent 'the people' at all, coexists with the other, equally political dynamic of the narrative, its focus on the immanent molecular potentialities of matter and machines.

3. Body-Machine Assemblages in *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*

In drawing attention to the materiality of the body, it is important to recall Deleuze's understanding of the body as a challenge to thought, and a confrontation with the unthought:

'Give me a body then': this is the formula of philosophical reversal. The body is no longer the obstacle that separates thought from itself, that which it has to overcome to reach thinking. It is on the contrary that which it plunges into or must plunge into, in order to reach the unthought, that is life. Not that the body thinks, but, obstinate and stubborn, it forces us to think, and forces us to think what is concealed from thought, life. Life will no longer be made to appear before the categories of thought; thought will be thrown into the categories of life. The categories of life are precisely the attitudes of the body, its postures. 'We do not even know what a body can do': in its sleep, in its drunkenness, in its efforts and resistances. To think is to learn what a non-thinking body is capable of, its capacity, its postures.²⁶

Deleuze's challenge to the Cartesian mind/body distinction exhorts us to pay attention to the attitudes of the body rather than the workings of the mind, to engage with the life beyond human subjectivity. This is all the more necessary in Özdamar's novel because we rarely have insight into the character's emotional life. Her thoughts and feelings are externalized in often bizarre or grotesque corporeal imagery, not

²⁵ Deleuze wrote of his collaboration with Félix Guattari: 'What we find most interesting in Marx is his analysis of capitalism as an immanent system that's constantly overcoming its own limitations, and then coming up against them in a broader form, because its fundamental limit is Capital itself', Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 171.

²⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London and New York: Continuum, 2005), p. 182.

immediately accommodated in a familiar framework of meaning, but established by the force of repetition as the narrative unfolds. For instance in the early part of the novel there are frequent references to women's knees, whether those of the women workers with their rolled-down stockings on the train to Germany, or the reflections of women's knees in puddles on the cold, early morning walk to work, or indeed the bizarre instance when an elderly German who has invited the protagonist into his bare apartment licks her trembling knees through her stockings:

Der alte Mann ging vor meinen Beinen auf die Knie. Ich hatte Nylonstrümpfe an. Er fing an, meine Strümpfe am Knie zu lecken und schrie dabei, als ob man ihn mit einem stumpfen Messer schneiden würde. Meine Knie zitterten so sehr, daß der alte Mann die Luft leckte, schreiend, dann war es still.²⁷

There is no attempt to interpret his bizarre act nor the cause of his pain, we are confronted only with the opacity of a physical attempt and failure to connect. At Versailles in an ecstatic episode with her Catalan lover Jordi, he kneels before her and kisses her knees, reflected in the mirrors all around them (*B* 140). These passages draw attention to a part of the body normally overlooked, not usually thought to be erotic or beautiful. The various suggestions of vulnerability, strangeness, tiredness, cold, forlorn, or ardent intimacy are not explained but if anything intensified by repeated externalization in this unexpected corporeal image.

More readily interpreted images of women workers on the production line at Telefunken have been viewed as signifying the 'dehumanization of the working bodies of the factory',²⁸ but I suggest we might more usefully see them as machinic in Deleuze's sense, that is they are not determinate organisms but consist of connections that may extend and maximize their selves. The women workers wear a magnifying glass in their right eye in order to manipulate the minute wires in the radio valves produced by the factory. After work they continue to shut their left eye and use the trusted right eye to cook, sew, look for things, and they even sleep with lopsided eyes (*B* 16-17). Indeed, the extended description of the women's lopsided gaze is reminiscent of Charlie Chaplin's production-line worker in *Modern Times* (1936),

²⁷ Emine Sevgi Özdamar, *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1998), p. 61. Hereafter references to this edition will be given in the text abbreviated '*B*'.

²⁸ Weber, 'Work, Sex and Socialism', p. 45.

where Chaplin plays the worker screwing nuts at an ever faster pace so that it becomes a compulsive repetitive twitch that he is unable to stop even out in the street, to hilarious effect. Özdamar's workers' bodies too are reduced to fingers working the tiny tweezers on the radio valves under neon light, while the objects they manipulate themselves become animate: 'unsere Finger, das Neonlicht, die Pinzette, die kleinen Radiolampen und ihre Spinnenbeine' (*B* 17). Normal organic functions are interrupted, so that even their dandruff waits to fall and the mucous stays suspended in their noses, such is their concentration on their work. Instead of a metaphor for alienated labour, however, I see this as an instance of the worker-machine assemblage, articulated as a simple series. That is, the body is neither separate from the machine, nor even a machine in itself, but part of a machinic that extends beyond it and may not include all of it.

The same could be said of a further image of the snow melting from one worker's coat to the other, when they arrive for work at the Siemens factory (*B* 115), which has been interpreted by Weber in anthropomorphic terms as another negative symbol of dehumanization: 'The melting snow implies a non-subjective, non-gendered mass identity created for the workers. This contributes to the constitution of the immigrant body from which a certain labour-value can be extracted in order to keep Germany functioning economically'.²⁹ This is, however, just one of many images of collective identity that could equally be seen as pointing to the dispersal of agency across a working assemblage, snow — water — coats — bodies, releasing the molecular potential of matter as soon as the workers enter the factory.

In the enormous space of the factory the workers look tiny, as if photographed at a different scale from the building. The echoing noise makes the workers smaller still. They make no noise themselves, only the machines and the rain on the roof can be heard. Each body is focused intently on its machine, even taking on the appearance of the machine when an error is pointed out by the foreman:

Wenn die Drähte in einer Maschine schief gezogen waren, kam manchmal ein Meister und sprach leise mit dem Arbeiter, dessen Körper in diesem Moment auch aussah wie ein Draht, der zwischen zwei Hebeln festgemacht und in die Länge gezogen wird (*B* 99).

²⁹ Weber, 'Work, Sex and Socialism', p. 46.

At the end of the working week they grease their machines and leave with the grease still on their fingers, the rain on greasy hands ‘sah aus, als ob ein Stück Butter schwitzt’ (B 99). There is an indistinct line between the hand that greases the machine and the machine that makes the hand greasy, and the grease that is carried out into the rain even after work has finished. This dispersal of agency across human and non-human beings resonates with the agential realism of physicist and philosopher Karen Barad, which accords matter itself a kind of agency: ‘Matter is neither fixed and given nor the mere end result of different processes. Matter is produced and productive, generated and generative. Matter is agential, not a fixed essence or property of things’.³⁰ Thus agency is performative, not a thing that one has, but something one does, not a property but an enactment, and it is a potential of matter. Barad talks of the factory as ‘a material-discursive apparatus of bodily production’,³¹ where ‘the material conditions of the shop floor performatively produce relations of class and other forms of cultural identity in the intra-action of humans and machines.’³²

Crucially, Özdamar’s worker-machine assemblages extend far beyond the industrial process itself, as the forces of capitalism come to encompass the rest of life. The workers employ the same dexterity in operating the cigarette machine as they do the radio valves. Going upstairs to the cigarette machine is timed exactly by the automatic light on the stairs, as the protagonist learns to her cost when she tries to pull out a second pack and is plunged into darkness on the way down (B 99-100). Even shopping at ‘Hertie’ is a mechanized process, illuminated by the same bright neon light as the factory, and described in terms that minimize human agency and emphasize only the workings of machines: ‘die Wurstmaschine arbeitete, vier Scheiben, fünf Scheiben. Das Wurstpapier glänzte, das Fett glänzte unter den Neonlampen, die Waage bewegte sich, der Zeiger blieb stehen, und der Kugelschreiber des Verkäufers schrieb den Preis groß auf das Papier’ (B 101-02). Within one sentence there is a progression from the paper that shines as grammatical agent to the pen that writes as agential machine.³³ The production of goods and their

³⁰ Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, p. 137. Barad draws on the physics philosophy of Niels Bohr to propose a non-representational realism based in quantum science. Her writing brings together quantum physics and social reality to present a complex view of the entanglements of matter and meaning, and a performativity not limited to either the social or to human bodies.

³¹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, p. 226.

³² Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, p. 227.

³³ I am grateful to Lizzie Stewart for her insightful reading of this passage.

circulation are connected not by human agents but by means of the neon lights and the mechanized processes they share.

Later in the novel when the protagonist's socialist commune in Istanbul is located in between a Greek tailor's and a brothel, and the socialists develop their films of exploitation with the aid of a hairdryer, work is entirely undertaken by non-human agents: 'Unten arbeiteten die Nähmaschinen der türkischen Griechen, oben arbeiteten die Hurenbetten, und in der Filmkommune arbeitete der Haartrockner' (B 305). But there is no pathos in this registering of machinic agency that would imply a dehumanizing world. Rather there takes place a defamiliarizing and often comic decentering of human subjectivity amid the industrial and non-industrial productive processes.

Thus the machinic extends far beyond the confines of the factory, figurative and literal meanings intermingle and coincide, as affect is liberated from its subjective anchoring and released into the material world. When in the factory, the attributes of the women are carried by their hair rather than on their faces, which disappear while they work. As they sit at the production line each one only sees the hair of the woman in front of her: 'Während man arbeitete, vergaß man die Gesichter der anderen Frauen. Man sah nur Haare, schöne Haare, müde Haare, alte Haare, junge Haare, gekämmte Haare, ausfallende Haare' (B 26). They only see each other's faces when they go to the toilets to smoke, but even this feels like work, illuminated by the same harsh neon light: 'Weil die Toilette sehr starke Neonlichter hatte, sah auch das Rauchen wie eine Arbeit aus' (B 27). Back on the production line the women who have been smoking in the toilets are then visibly different from those who have not by their nervous hair. What could be seen as inner emotional states appear on the exterior of the body, and work extends to the illicit smoking done in work time.³⁴

Excitable hair pervades the novel as an externalization of affective bonds. When the protagonist returns to Istanbul for the first time after a year in Berlin, her parents' excitement is externalized in the static charge in their hair: 'Vor Aufregung elektrisierten sich ihre Haare, die dann auch meine Haare elektrisierten. So liefen wir, unsere Haare ineinandergedreht, über die Straßen' (B 106). There is actual static electricity in the women's hostel, from the women's synthetic dressing gowns (B 33), and when the protagonist receives a postcard from her lover Jordi in Barcelona, her

³⁴ A similar sequence occurs in Chaplin's *Modern Times*, where a futuristic screen flashes on in the washroom and the factory owner orders the smoking worker back to the shop floor.

body is so charged with static that she gets actual electric shocks from touching things (B 228-29). The effect of this is to show the continuity of capitalist forces and to convey the dematerialization of labour that now encompasses all of life, while not anchoring this in the psyche of individual subjects, but in the movements of ‘dynamic individuations without subjects’.³⁵ Where classic Marxist theory saw society as a molar structure divided by class conflict, Deleuze sees it as a collective assemblage determined by its points of instability, by its potentiality to coalesce around things other than ‘class’, ‘nation’, or ‘ethnicity’. With its foregrounding of the non-human and its externalization of affect the novel prompts us to think differently about the politics of migrant labour, as a potentially creative experimentation with its forcefield, without the pathos of exploitation and victimhood. Comparable to Brecht’s renunciation of ‘Einfühlung’ as a bourgeois response to theatre,³⁶ the novel consistently challenges us to view the industrial process in a dispassionate, non-individualistic way. A similar effect is achieved by the novel’s cinematic distortions — a further instance of its machinism — and its reflections on both political and aesthetic representation, to which I will now turn.

4. Affect, Cinema and the Powers of the False

‘It is through the body (and no longer through the intermediary of the body) that cinema forms its alliance with the spirit, with thought’.³⁷

Deleuze’s view of the body as a challenge to thought, explored above in the relation to the novel’s body-machine assemblages, also forms an important part of his work on cinema. Instead of the bodies of actors representing their characters’ inner selves, he saw the gestures of the body on screen as the enfolding of an outside, pointing beyond the constraints of character or plot, communicating instead what is unthought. Examples he gives include the telescoping of before and after within a single attitude of tiredness, or a whole landscape revealed in the close-up on an actor’s face. Instead of a representational model of cinema, therefore, Deleuze celebrated cinema’s ‘powers of the false’, its capacity to eschew representation, and to envisage ‘a future

³⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Dialogues II: Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London and New York: Continuum, 2006), p. 69.

³⁶ Bertolt Brecht, ‘Über experimentelles Theater’, *Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe*, vol. 22.1, ed. Werner Hecht, Jan Knopf, Werner Mittenzwei, and Klaus-Detlef Müller (Berlin: Aufbau. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1993), pp. 540-57 (p. 553).

³⁷ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, p. 182.

that is not a prolongation of the past but a possibility called into being'.³⁸ He differentiates between 'truthful narration', which unfolds according to extensive relations in space and chronological relations in time, and coalesces around a character, and 'falsifying narration' that produces 'disconnected places and de-chronologized moments', and an irreducible multiplicity.³⁹ Doro Wiese has applied this concept to literature, describing Deleuze's view of writing as 'a technology of undoing self and subjectivity, through which the writer is able to confront, sense and register that which is unfamiliar and new'.⁴⁰ In the following section I focus on the novel's reference to and use of cinematic techniques that contribute to its falsifying power. By means of its close-up effects, parodic passages, and its production of affect detached from individual experience, Özdamar's novel defamiliarizes both the 'Gastarbeiter' experience and that of New Left politics. It also thematizes the fact that 'the people are missing' in the naïve revolutionary optimism of its protagonist, at the same time opening up a new way of experiencing the world on which it trains its machinic gaze.

A central passage in Özdamar's novel concerns the protagonist's training at drama school in Istanbul, where she strives to reconcile her Leftist politics with theatrical practice. The drama students are seen wrestling with a representational and somewhat patronizing view of theatre's potential to politicize the masses: 'Wie könnte man mit dem Theater zum Volk absteigen?' (B 209). They are presented as screaming in impotent outrage at the injustice of the world (B 209-10), but the inauthenticity of their acting is emphasized in comic juxtaposition with their faking of orgasm (B 210). Yet they are increasingly aware of the gulf separating their revolutionary performances, such as Peter Weiss's *Marat/Sade*, and the real bloodshed out on the streets of Istanbul where student Leftists are doing battle with Turkish fascists (B 262). At drama school, however, the protagonist is encouraged to learn from cinema, and especially from the non-representational aspects of avant-garde and silent film.

Their tutors, the 'Kopfist' who represents a Brechtian style of theatre and the 'Körperist' who favours a method-acting style, forbid the students' outpouring of

³⁸ Wiese, *The Powers of the False*, p. 5.

³⁹ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, p. 129.

⁴⁰ Wiese, *The Powers of the False*, p. 14. Wiese points out that Deleuze says little about actual narrative strategies, and she notes the paradoxical experience of 'using literature to testify to its own failure of representation', *The Powers of the False*, p. 8.

emotion, and both articulate a notion of political theatre based on mobilizing the potential of the body. The 'Körperist' says: 'Ihr müßt alle Gefühle aus eurem Körper rausholen, bis ihr sie kennengelernt habt. Dann gehen eure Grenzen auf' (B 204). The Brechtian 'Kopfist' insists on political analysis and historical study, but what might appear to be opposing approaches to acting are both forms of experimentation with the body's ability to be affected, to detach attitudes from expressions of will, and to confront the audience with the unthought. Both approaches also diverge from representational notions of character or plot, as Deleuze writes of the Brechtian 'gest':

It is Brecht who created the notion of gest, making it the essence of theatre, irreducible to the plot or the 'subject': for him, the gest should be social, although he recognizes that there are other kinds of gest. What we call gest in general is the link or knot of attitudes between themselves, their coordination with each other in so far as they do not depend on a previous story, a pre-existing plot or an action-image. On the contrary, the gest is the development of attitudes themselves, and, as such, carries out a direct theatricalization of bodies, often very discreet, because it takes place independently of any role.⁴¹

This lifting of performance out of a specific role or narrative context is seen when Memet the 'Körperist' requires the students to respond to the affective charge of photographs without contextualization, to impress on them their own ideological conditioning. A photograph of a Jewish concentration camp victim elicits an extreme physical reaction from the protagonist even before she knows who the man was: 'Daß es in der Nähe von diesem toten Mann Bäume gab, machte mich fast verrückt' (B 206). It is left to the reader to speculate whether this is an association with trees in Brecht's 'An die Nachgeborenen', or with Elias Canetti's analogy between the forest and German militarism,⁴² or a visceral response to the indifference of nature to the human fate depicted.

The protagonist begins to study photographs in newspaper reports, and is struck by the indexical power of sweat in a wide range of images. The sweat produced by labour, warfare, or sheer poverty seems a unifying force, whether on the shirt of an

⁴¹ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, p. 185.

⁴² There is a reference to Canetti's words later in the novel (B 248), and the association of post-Holocaust Germany with the forest is central to Özdamar's fairytale art book *Das Mädchen vom halbverbrannten Wald* (Berlin: Berliner Handpresse, 2007).

Israeli soldier or a Palestinian, of an American soldier or the Viet Cong, of evicted slum-dwellers or families bereaved by a mining disaster on the Black Sea. She recalls the intense sweaty heat of an iron foundry once visited with her school, and the sweat dripping from the forehead of a water seller who had dropped down dead in front of her under the Golden Horn bridge: ‘Von seinem toten Gesicht liefen die Schweißperlen weiter auf die Erde. In den Zeitungen gab es Überschriften über streikende Arbeiter: “Der Arbeitgeber will den Schweiß der Arbeiter zu billigen Preisen kaufen”’ (B 208). While the newspaper headline uses sweat as a metaphor for exploitation, the novel presents it as a material property of the body, its capacity to be affected, where affect is a power, a form of agency. Sweat is indifferent to the identities of those who sweat, permeating the body’s boundary, it is part of the organic, pre-conscious, pre-personal aspect of life, even continuing (for the water seller) for a while after death.⁴³ It is absent only from the photographs of politicians, those who delegate to others the sweat-inducing labour and warfare and whose security lies in their capacity *not* to be affected. Crucially, the protagonist realizes, it is extremely difficult to *act* sweating on stage, it resists representation or symbolization, except by the most unobvious of techniques (B 208). Sweat, as affect, shares with art the fact of being a moment of intensity, ‘a reaction in/on the body at the level of matter’, occupying an ‘asignifying register’.⁴⁴ In this it defies representation, but encapsulates ‘man’s non-human becoming’,⁴⁵ the life that precedes differentiated and distinct identities.

The drama students are urged to study the non-narrative aspects of early cinema, all the more striking for its contrast with the Hollywood films familiar from the protagonist’s youth. She notices how easy it always was to imitate the melodramatic gestures of Elizabeth Taylor, and how difficult to imitate the characters in a Jean-Luc Godard film (B 156). The ‘Cinematek’ where she sees the films of Sergei Eisenstein becomes both her acting school and her ‘street’, the place where she experiences an extension of self, and a prolongation of the revolutionary forces

⁴³ Schonfield interprets the sweat in these photographs as conferring victim status on those it unites, and as a direct illustration of the metaphor in the newspaper headline, ‘1968 and Transnational History’, p. 75.

⁴⁴ Simon O’Sullivan, ‘The Aesthetics of Affect: Thinking Art beyond Representation’, *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, 6.3 (2001), 125-35 (p. 126).

⁴⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. by Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson (London and New York: Verso, 1994), p. 173.

animating the films (*B* 215). The drama students study Brecht's film of the Great Depression *Kuhle Wampe* (1932), and are alerted to the precision of the close-up when an unemployed worker removes his watch before committing suicide, so that his family might sell it and live on the proceeds for a while longer: 'Und der Moment, als er seine Uhr hinlegt, erzählt den Zuschauern etwas Genaueres über die Figur und über die Arbeitslosigkeit. [...] Ihr müßt euch gute Filme angucken und in den Filmen die Kamerabewegungen beobachten. Wie bewegt sich die Kamera von einer Großaufnahme auf ein Detail zu?' (*B* 213). It is the close-up itself more than didactic narrative that releases affect in a way that might initiate change.

The novel itself offers unexpected cinematic perspectives on scenarios we may presume to know, reminding us that the lens, even when mounted on the body, is unbound by the constraints of subjective perception. Thus the magnifying glass worn by the workers at the start of the novel plunges them into a close-up vision of reality, and when interrupted the close-up is destroyed like a torn film (*B* 17). When 'Engel', a new young woman arrives at the workers' hostel, her slow movements and speech create the impression of slow motion, affecting the protagonist's own pace of life (*B* 57). When she and Engel decide to move into an apartment together in Kreuzberg, they soon regret leaving the hostel community, and sit through a wakeful night as if in a freeze frame. Again their non-belonging in Berlin is expressed in terms of a filmic metaphor: 'Berlin begann erst, wenn man aus dem Wonaym herausging, sowie man ins Kino geht, einen Film sieht, und mit dem Bus wieder zurückkommt und den anderen beim Ausziehen den Film erzählt. Jetzt waren wir in diesem Film drin, aber das Bild war gefroren' (*B* 63). But their non-belonging is also externalized in a close-up image of the weak light bulbs that illuminate only the death of the insects they have killed, rather than the room itself, and in the astonishment of the very walls to see them sitting there: 'Das schmutzige Licht der Glühbirnen gab us kaum Licht, sondern beleuchtete schwach den Insektentod. [...] Als wir dort saßen, staunten auch die Wände der Küche, daß wir dort saßen' (*B* 63). The close-up produces an image that is not a representation of the dingy apartment, only intensifying the horror of invertebrate death. On returning to Istanbul after a year in Berlin the protagonist again notes the slow-motion tempo of her own and other people's movements, but the close-up detail of the flickering lightbulb in her parents' hallway is a constant that connects Istanbul and Berlin (*B* 63, 108, 177).

The novel's challenge to a view of Germany and Turkey as dichotomous and distinct entities has been well documented,⁴⁶ but this too can be related to cinematic manipulations of space and time. The Turkish *Gastarbeiter* in Berlin appear to inhabit a different space-time from their surroundings, huddling together in groups and speaking loudly in Turkish, as if to claim their right to the cold Berlin streets: 'So gingen sie hinter ihren Wörtern her und sahen für die Menschen, die diese Wörter nicht verstanden, so aus, als ob sie mit ihren Eseln oder Truthähnen durch ein anderes Land gingen' (B 46). What could be read as another metaphor for alienation, or indeed a stereotype of the Turkish peasant transplanted into the industrial city, might equally be read more literally as the coexistence of divergent, multiple worlds. The men are both in Berlin and not in Berlin, the one truth does not negate the other. Thus when the young women workers speak up when passing a Berlin telephone box it is so that their parents in distant Istanbul will overhear.

Just as space in the novel is not homogeneous, nor is time limited to the chronology signaled by the newspaper headlines punctuating the narrative. A temporal uncertainty prevails due to the preference for 'wenn' over 'als', making precise temporal reference indistinct, and treating what would normally be singular events in the past as habitual, iterative ones. While this may seem unremarkable in the account of life in the 'Frauenwonaym', where regular interactions are recalled (B 88), it is more striking in the account of the protagonist's (singular) stay in Paris, where she falls in love with the Catalan student Jordi (B 124). The protagonist's repeated attempts to lose her virginity are motivated by her Marxist rebellion against the exchange value it represents (B 162-63), but her body undermines even this clear-cut chronological sequence, failing to bleed as expected when she eventually believes her virginity has been lost to a Turkish socialist in Berlin. Retrospectively she realizes that perhaps she had lost her virginity to Jordi in Paris after all (B 165). The homogeneity of space and the linearity of time are unsettled in this 'falsifying' narrative, which is concerned not just with truthfulness, but with, in Deleuze's words, the 'power of the false which replaces and supersedes the form of the true, because it

⁴⁶ See for example Moray McGowan, "'The Bridge of the Golden Horn': Istanbul, Europe and the 'Fractured Gaze from the West' in Turkish Writing in Germany", *Yearbook of European Studies*, 15 (2000), 53-69.

poses the simultaneity of impossible presents, or the coexistence of not-necessarily true pasts'.⁴⁷

5. Art, Politics, and the Missing People

Having discussed the defamiliarizing body-machine assemblages in the novel, its externalization of affect and falsifying cinematic effects, it remains to connect these things to the politics of a non-representational literature. For while it is evident that Özdamar's novel concerns Leftist politics, I argue that its departure from representational aesthetics is part of a more fundamental critique of representational politics.⁴⁸

The novel repeatedly satirizes the discourse and political commitment of the Turkish Leftists, with their determination to politicize the ordinary people and gain electoral victory for the Workers' Party. The students declare their didactic aim to go to 'the people' to raise its consciousness: 'Und das richtige Bewußtsein der Massen wird die Partei der Arbeiter durch die Wahlen an die Macht bringen. Bewußtsein bringen hieß sprechen können, so daß die anderen einem zuhörten' (*B* 239). This aspiration rests on a fundamental paradigm of liberal democracy as representational, that of giving voice to an already constituted collective subject. Such a view of politics turns out to be futile on the protagonist's journey to the Kurdish South East, where the impoverished peasants are indifferent to the young socialists' talk of American imperialism and laugh at their incitement to march on Ankara: "Wir haben aber nur ein paar Schuhe, mit Löchern. Bis Ankara brauchen wir viele Schuhe." Ich sagte Slogans aus Istanbul auf, und die Arbeiter lachten mit mir' (*B* 285).

The leftist sloganizing in the novel is exposed as naïve, not least because its ready appeal is to mere consciousness and not to the material conditions of those it seeks to politicize and even less to a new subject not yet constituted. But it is also futile because it assumes the existence of a revolutionary people just waiting to be addressed. According to Deleuze, the catastrophes of the twentieth century rendered impossible the creation of art that would address a revolutionary people. The only option open for a revolutionary art was to call into being a people who do not yet

⁴⁷ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, p. 127.

⁴⁸ In order to show this I must of course refer to representational details of the narrative, but only to demonstrate how they are disrupted by falsifying effects.

exist, to address the people who are missing.⁴⁹ The novel's satirical critique of Turkish politics does not belittle the violence of the 1971 military coup, but its deliberately falsifying, often parodic narrative refuses to represent a 'people' capable of resistance. Instead it builds to a poignant lament that is unattributable to any actual subjects depicted, and bespeaks the very absence of 'the people', as it also resists interpretation in any realist mode.

In the latter part of the novel where the protagonist and her socialist friend Haydar travel to the Kurdish South East of Turkey to report on devastating floods and starvation, Elizabeth Boa has detected a change of tone: 'the vein of comic irony gives way to bleak yet vivid images of poverty and oppression in a remote region where the population scratch a meager existence under ubiquitous surveillance and where political assassination is an immediate threat; the agents of the state who seemed merely comic in Paris are here all too frightening'.⁵⁰ Yet it is precisely in this bleak political setting that the novel produces one of its more parodic effects, a further falsifying device, in the form of state surveillance by six identical plain clothes policemen who move around in a block reminiscent of the lodgers in Kafka's 'Die Verwandlung' or the messengers in *Das Schloß*. They are familiars, 'unsere sechs Zivilpolizisten', who turn up everywhere, whether offering the protagonist a light, following Haydar into the bath house, or simultaneously raising their rakı glasses to the pair in a hotel bar. They can be outwitted and outmanoeuvred at every turn, their collective presence posing no realistic threat:

Plötzlich gab mir eine Hand Feuer, es war einer der sechs Zivilpolizisten. Ich zog nicht an der Zigarette und das Streichholz verbrannte ihm seine Finger. Er lachte und lutschte an seinen Fingern. Haydar kam aus dem Bad zurück und erzählte mir, daß einer der sechs Zivilpolizisten nackt ins Bad gekommen war und ihn gefragt hatte: 'Bruder, darf ich dir deinen Rücken einseifen?' (B 282).

References to Laurel and Hardy and Charlie Chaplin increase the sense of the absurd pervading the narrative. The two drama students with whom the protagonist sets off to the East are known for their 'Stan und Ollie' impersonation (B 264), and when she is

⁴⁹ Deleuze states that in Eisenstein's films the people were still there, but that Hitler and Stalinism compromised the possibility of cinema as 'supreme revolutionary or democratic art' and since then, the premise of a modern political cinema is that the people are missing, Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, p. 208.

⁵⁰ Boa, 'Özdamar's Autobiographical Fictions', p. 537.

reunited with her lover Kerim in an Ankara cinema, it is as if she has slipped into the end of the Chaplin film she is watching: ‘Als Chaplin die Hand des Mädchens, das er liebte, küßte, nahm jemand im dunklen Kino meine Hand und bedeckte sie mit Küssen’ (B 298-90). Even the real hardship and violence of the Kurdish peasants’ lives is presented in parodic juxtaposition with the contemporaneous US Apollo 7 space mission, as a tailor remarks: “‘Onlar Aya biz yaya.” (“Die fliegen zum Mond, wir gehen noch zu Fuß”)’ (B 278). Once again the novel presents us with non-homogeneous time, as even a newspaper headline announces: ‘Sie gehen zum Mond, und wir leben noch in der Dunkelheit des Mittelalters’ (B 263-64).

It is not that this ‘falsifying narrative’ belittles the extreme political violence in the aftermath of the March 1971 coup, when Leftist students were interned, tortured and executed. What is key to note here is that the political statement at the end of the novel issues not from a locatable subject or already constituted political grouping, but it emerges in the de-personalized silent lament of the mothers of tortured Leftist youth. It is a stream-of-consciousness not anchored in any particular subjectivity, nor even syntactically complete. Back in Istanbul at the end of the novel the protagonist observes mothers plunged in silent grief on the Bridge of the Golden Horn:

Sie sagten nichts, aber ich hörte ihre Stimmen. [...] DER MENSCH GEHT. Ein Kind stirbt, eine Frau weint, eine Katze läuft an der Hauswand, der Geruch von Holz, Gassen, Apfelsinen, Wolken aus Leinen, nach Seife riechenden, schlecht abgetrockneten Kindern, in Armut seine Federn zählender Vogel. Mit einer Schere, die Angst abschneiden kann. Der in den Augenpupillen wohnende Traum. Stadt, schweig. Höre unser Lied. Wir wohnen seit langem mit Toten ohne Grab. Schaut auf unsere Brüste, Arme. Wir wollen unsere Kinder lebend. Lebend wurden sie abgeholt. [...] Die Milch, die sie aus unseren Brüsten getrunken haben, kam aus ihren Nasen heraus (B 325-26).⁵¹

⁵¹ See Yasemin Yildiz, ‘Political Trauma and Literal Translation: Emine Sevgi Özdamar’s *Mutterzunge*’, *Gegenwartsliteratur*, 7 (2008), 248-270 (pp. 257-58) for an interpretation of this literally translated idiom. She explains that the literal translation of a very mundane idiom in Turkish evokes the violence of torture only in literal translation into German.

In this lengthy passage the novel addresses a ‘missing people’ in Deleuze’s terms, lifts the narrative out of the first person and transports it into a collective assemblage of enunciation, though not of a collective that already exists. Literature, for Deleuze,

exists only when it discovers beneath apparent persons the power of an impersonal – which is not a generality but a singularity at the highest point: a man, a woman, a beast, a stomach, a child ... It is not the first two persons that function as the condition for literary enunciation; literature begins only when a third person is born in us that strips us of the power to say ‘I’.⁵²

This is how literature goes beyond representation of existing identities and states of the world and directly engages with the world’s potential to become.

6. Conclusion

I have argued that Özdamar’s novel is both a meditation on the transforming and transformative forces of capitalism and on the relationship between politics and art. It sheds critical light on the politics of representationalism (the doomed project to ‘take theatre to the people’) and enacts a non-representational aesthetic that is a provocation to thought. Thus, more than just a re-writing of 1968, or a call for international Leftist solidarity, it opens up a new relationship between literature and life and thus new political possibilities. Ernest Schonfield has identified the socialist canon of literature in the novel as producing a sense of transnational community,⁵³ but the literary references are not only Leftist, their effects not merely identity-forming. Early in the novel the protagonist is fascinated by Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, read to her at night in the women’s hostel by her friend Rezzan. Central to Wilde’s novel is Dorian Gray’s agonized realization that his portrait is changing, while he stays the same, giving rise to a meditation on the continuity between art and life, and on art’s transformative potential:

[H]e found himself gazing at the portrait with a feeling of almost scientific interest. That such a change should have taken place was incredible to him.

⁵² Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. by Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (London: Verso, 1998), p. 3.

⁵³ Schonfield, ‘1968 and Transnational History’, p. 85.

And yet it was a fact. Was there some subtle affinity between the chemical atoms, that shaped themselves into form and colour on the canvas, and the soul that was within him? Could it be that what that soul thought, they realized? – that what it dreamed, they made true?⁵⁴

The words of Gray the aesthete (and Wilde the outsider) raise precisely the question of art's relationship to life, not as representation, imitation or mimesis, but as directly continuous with the material world. This is what I have sought to demonstrate in Özdamar's novel, its machinisms and falsifying effects distracting us from familiar identities and politics and affording a glimpse of the unthought and the not yet known.

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⁵⁴ Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (London: Wordsworth Editions, 2001), p. 77.