Chapter 6
Inarticulate, Self-Vigilant, and Egotistical: Masculinity in Turkish Drawn Stories[1]

Cenk Ozbay

> I did not used to read Ortam. Normally, I read every page [of the comic magazines]. But, Ortam seemed really ugly to me. Once, I saw an expression on his face. It was drawn so big; it just caught my eye. I had a look at it because it suddenly seemed familiar to me. It was describing a moment when Ortam entered a small shop that his parents forced him to work at. He entered to the shop and was shocked. So, in the scene, the owner of the shop was sitting on his table, eating stuff, some apprentices were running along, looking at Ortam mischievously; everything was so ugly and rustic. When you looked at it you realized that Ortam thought he was way better than all of those; that shop, those people. But he did not know how to deal with them; he did not know what to say. So he was freaked out. Standing at the door, looking inside; frozen. I know that expression because it happened to me, too. At that moment, the story got me. I wondered what this guy was going to do, how he could escape from that hell. Later on, I became addicted to Ortam's stories and moods. It is just like me, or you: A young guy in the city, not rich, not so poor, with a weird family; he is trying to do something, achieve something, but it is never perfectly done. Always, something's missed. Wrong time, wrong place; a wrong thing to say, a wrong move … He always makes a wrong move; but keeps trying. So, every week I am curious to see what's next.
>
> Cetin, 23, male, heterosexual, college student

My informant Cetin told me this in an interview for the research about four "drawn stories" that are published in the weekly comic magazines *Uykusuz* and *Penguen* in Turkey.[2] These drawn stories are called "Sandik Ici" (Inside the

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2 Between June 2011 and December 2013, I explored, scanned, and coded the visual material (total 863 digital files) from weekly comic magazines and individually published volumes. Following the initial interpretative analysis, I searched through the secondary sources, including the newspapers and websites, in order to document how comic magazines and drawn stories are talked about and to delineate the discursive structure in which they are

Chest), "Genco'nun Yalan Dunyasi" (Genco's Fake World), "Ortam: Dunyanin En Telmasa Adami" (Ortam: The Most Nugatory Man of the World), and Otisabi ("Big Brother Otis"). These are different stories of four male protagonists: Ersin, Genco, Ortam, and Otis. In this chapter, I will illustrate who these fictional men are, where they live, with whom they interact, and what they represent in terms of subjectivity through popular culture.

Young Men, Politics, and Subjectivity

Young men in Turkey (roughly aged 15–30) have experienced, or been afflicted by, the military coup and the first waves of neoliberalization in 1980s, the rise of nationalism(s) and civil conflict in 1990s, and neoliberal Islamism in 2000s, while they gradually distanced themselves from the modernist, developmentalist, Enlightenment-based public discourses of the republican regime. They restructured their self-presentation and daily conduct through the basis of boredom, hopelessness, and satire, as well as an acute self-vigilance that is centered on self-interest and risk calculation. I would like to say that the social symptoms of this attitude the informalization of communicative style, the artificiality of political commitment or the rejection of being a militant, the globalization of taste and the development of transnational belongings, and finally, inaction in the face of the ennui and malaise of the state and society.[3]

In this context, I began this research trying to find answers to a number of questions around young men and masculinity in contemporary Turkey. For example, how can one understand the workings of masculinity in the sociocultural landscape of urban Turkish society? Who exactly are the young men? Where are they located socially and geographically? How are we able to hear their voices?

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produced and perceived. Then I conducted 20 interviews with young men (aged 18–29) and two focus groups (one with two men and two women, and another with five men) to analyze the relationship between young people's subjectivities, reflexivity, and the representational dynamics through these particular cultural productions. Throughout the study, I followed Suad Joseph's suggestion to contextualize subject-making: "Perhaps the issue is who can transform the subject and under what circumstances. Perhaps the issue is the conditions under which subjectivity is more pliable, the relationships in which subjectivity is more malleable. Rather than theorizing selving in general, perhaps it is more productive to theorize the conditionalities and relationalities that affect pliability. Rather than theorizing 'the' subject, what is needed are methodologies of observation to capture the moments and conditionalities of constructing subjectivity" (2012, 17).

3 The demographer Ferhunde Ozbay (2015) observes that there has been an increase in the last decade in numbers of Turkish men who are educated and live alone in the cities, not because of practical necessities but as a lifestyle choice. The majority of these men are aged between 18 and 44, and they have never been married. It is possible to place the four comic protagonists in this framework, as they live alone, or in various arrangements that could be considered *almost* alone, and actively struggle to keep their lifestyles this way.

The most practical and undemanding answer to these questions was to look at the political sphere. Scholars who examine conventional political discourses in Turkey are able to detect four main routes of political belonging: Conservative Islamism, Turkish nationalism, secularist republicanism, and Kurdish nationalism. According to such analysis, young men occupy one of these mutually exclusive (and often hostile) identity categories, become one of them (for example, an Islamist man or a nationalist man), and feel and act through that socio-political and affective position.

I argue that the analysis of politicized subjects for mapping masculinities is insufficient, if not almost surreal, that it assumes stabilized, coherent, and unchanging political identities and acts.[4] My intention in this research was, on the other hand, to find the channels through which men who are not included in these pre-given political and ideological categories express themselves. These men do not identify themselves with these top-down political commitments and develop a certain sentiment of dislike and indifference, not only for these four political traditions, but also for social issues and politics itself. In this sense, I was curious to explore the limits of the party-based political framework and what falls outside of it, in order to understand the interplay of men and masculinities in Turkey.

While the distance from conventional politics and the dissociation of the social make these young men look not only depoliticized and frivolous, but also invisible and unintelligible to untrained social observers; these men implicitly construct a resistant form of manhood, given that hegemonic masculinity in Turkey is established and stylized significantly by political rhetoric (Ozbay 2013a). As the equation between being an opponent to the existing political system (including the state discourse and the government) and the boundaries of the legitimate (party) politics is consistently archaic, I have noticed that a sensibility has been developing for more than a decade outside the framework of the stabilized four legged political structure. This insurgent aspect of contemporary masculinity became more tangible through a number of marked displays of secular identity and casual sociability (including patterns of embodiment and style, drinking

4 Such a fixated approach to socio-political identities avoids weaknesses, flexibilities, ruptures, and ambiguities within stories that are put together in biographies. Individuals turn into subjects via discourses in which they occupy a social place and acquire a voice as someone. These emergent subjects are able to undertake discursive and non-discursive acts, to make a choice, or to take responsibility, or they are forced to do something even when they are unwilling to do. But these subjectivities are not by any means stabilized and consistent. There is always a state of liminality between different positions and stories, with unsettling reluctance and doubt. The centrality of error and awkwardness in contemporary lives as well as the subject's capacity of versatility (or of stiffness) should be taken into account when social relations of identities, including gender identities, are interpreted. I strive to comprehend and problematize the formation of this new masculinity in a kaleidoscopic site of affect and historical moment, when the national subject, global modernity, and gender regimes have been destabilized through fragmented performances and instantiations of ambivalence and contradiction.

alcohol, and dancing in public, as well as producing a language and diffusing it via social media) during the Gezi Riots in June 2013, first in Istanbul and then in almost all cities in Turkey (Ozbay 2013b).

In spite of the strong anti-neoliberal inclination during the Gezi Riots and their aftermath, I contend that seemingly depoliticized young men whose subjectivities fall outside of conventional political streams and hence wander on the edges of intelligibility, take "becoming smart, learning the rules of the game, and getting rich as fast as possible" as an answer to the question of how to become a proper man in Turkey in the last decade. In other words, they do not share or engage political, social, moral, or religious ideals to define how the world should look, but instead put themselves in the center of their imagined worlds and aspired lives. What I have termed "neoliberal masculinity" (Ozbay 2010b; 2011) has been rendered legible, acceptable, and desirable through cultural discourses, popular narratives in films and novels, and public stories about success and failure.

The most compelling challenge in the configuration of neoliberal masculinity is to learn "how to desire in a proper way" (Rofel 2007) and to recalibrate selves in different walks of life. In the drawn stories, neoliberal masculinity exposes itself through a strong egocentricism, tenacious self-vigilance, and inarticulacy, which are followed by reflexive practices and calculative action. Neoliberalism, as a set of governing logic and rationales that are espoused and embodied, is the foundation of the new masculine subject in Turkey.

Although subjectivity today is examined by researchers in multiple ways (Biehl et al. 2007) I tend to use subjectivity in the very basic meaning of the concept, elaborated by Michel Foucault (1978; 1980), both as dependency (subject produced by and within a discourse) and agency (a rightful actor who makes decisions and takes responsibility). Cetin and my other informants, as well as the producers and readers of the comic magazines, are intelligible subjects in contemporary urban Turkey in the sense of their political position and masculine gender identity. Nevertheless, the voice of this subjectivity has been largely absent in the recent analysis of contemporary Turkish society.[5] My question here is about the contested formation of the political and moral autonomy of politically discontented Turkish men, who cannot be easily included within conventionally ideological or partisan groups (such as secularists, Islamists, nationalists, environmentalists, socialists, gays, or Kurds). These men occupy a different, if not unique, place; they speak from and become subjects in this peculiar social position. If "all forms of desire are discursively organized" as the anthropologist Saba Mahmood (2005, 15) puts, and if we ought to understand subjectivity as "the agonistic and practical activity of engaging identity and fate, patterned and

5 In a broader sense, the ways that the neoliberalization in Turkey in the last quarter century affected gender dynamics, and especially power relations *between* men is underexplored, except in the sociologist Gul Ozyegin's (2011) notable work on young, upwardly mobile, educated men's affective desires and self-transformative endeavors. See also Ozbay 2010a; 2010b; 2011.

felt in historically contingent settings and mediated by institutional processes and forms" (Biehl et al. 2007, 5), then what type of analytical openings can we find through following a visual representation of stories that these men can narrate, experience, communicate, make sense of, and have fun with? Also, if we agree with the historian Evelyn Fox Keller on "subjects are epiphenomena, constructed by culturally specific discursive regimes, and subjectivity itself is more properly viewed as the consequence of actions, behavior or 'performativity' rather than their source" (2007, 353), then what might be the role of neoliberal governmentality in cultivating these masculine subjectivities in the process of the orchestration of the masculine self through present contingencies, heterogeneities, and local and global assemblages that make these men licit subjects?

My aim below is to put forward a framework that provides a gendered context of neoliberal masculine subjectivity and its flaws via reading the drawn stories published in weekly comic magazines. First, however, I will briefly discuss the role of the weekly comic magazines in the politically charged, opponent side of Turkish popular culture.

Weekly Comic Magazines

One can find numerous weekly or monthly journals and magazines exhibited in the kiosks and independent bookstores scattered throughout Istanbul and other major cities in Turkey. Most of these magazines and journals are printed in very small numbers and followed by a limited circle of readers. The most popular among them are the weekly comic magazines that include drawings, photographic collages, cartoons, and short texts. Although *Leman* (formerly *Limon*) has been published since the early 1980s and is the longest-running one within this genre, *Penguen* and *Uykusuz* have been the most popular weekly magazines in the last decade. Independent companies that were established by cartoonists' initial investment capital publish both magazines. Thus, they do not belong to one of the media giants and have full editorial and financial autonomy, although they have to cooperate with the media corporations for their countrywide distribution.

Penguen was established in 2002. A group of artists and writers left *Penguen* and founded *Uykusuz* as a separate magazine in 2007. Three million people follow *Uykusuz* and two million follow *Penguen* on their Facebook pages, and their posts are shared and liked in great numbers. Both print approximately 70,000 copies per week. This makes almost 600,000 copies in circulation within a single month. These magazines are widely read by high school and college students, and readers have a tendency to share their copies for practical and economic reasons. Hence, the potential number of readers of these magazines is actually much higher than their printing numbers. Weekly sales depend on seasons (summers are usually slower), promotional gifts they attach to the magazines, and, most importantly, the heated public discussions in the country in the previous week. If there is an ongoing political debate on a subject, about actions of the government, for example, then

sales may increase substantially. Both magazines are printed in 16-page color booklets and sold for 2,5 Turkish lira (about $1.20). What distinguishes them from other sorts of publications is the traditionally critical and opponent humor vis-à-vis discourses of power and the state in Turkey (Cantek 2011).

Turkish society has been divided between the supporters of the Justice and Development Party (JDP), which has been in office since 2002, and large but fragmented segments of society, which are juxtaposed against the increasingly hegemonic regime JDP has instituted. In broad terms, both *Uykusuz* and *Penguen*, just like other weekly comic magazines, are among the most avid and outspoken voices of those who are against the conservative ideology and neoliberal policies implemented by JDP. In other words, in a cultural-political atmosphere where opposition to the state and JDP's discourses and practices are mostly censored and oppressed, weekly comic magazines, with their consciously and insistently critical attitude, have become the main channel of dissident opinions shared especially by the urban youth. The denominator of critical humor targeting the government policies brings together diverse social groups of a wide political array, including central-leftists, etatist nationalists, anti-Islamists and radical secularists, feminist, environmentalists, queer and GLBT activists, defenders of human rights, and sympathizers with the Kurdish movement. The first three pages of *Uykusuz* and *Penguen* (including the covers) are especially reserved for cartoons and texts that recount what happened in the country last week with sharp critical humor, satire, irony, and condemnation. This opponent political attitude often disturbs state authorities, and the prime minister has even sued these magazines because of the caricatures they publish.

Although my aim here is not to document how these magazines are received by the imagined and actual readers, who vary greatly in terms of age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, location, and political persuasion, I want to quote from the two interviews I have conducted for this research on how these two magazines are open to being read differently. Cem (25, male) is a graduate student at a private college, where he studies business and finance. He works at a multinational company, lives in an expensive gated community with his fiancée, and defines himself as "Muslim but not extreme." He says he reads *Penguen* almost every week, and rarely *Uykusuz*, only if he comes across it "because it is *too* national-leftist sometimes." When I asked him what he thought about the magazines, he said:

> Sometimes these guys [the government] are doing obviously wrong things. And of course they [the magazines] criticize them. Most of the time, I agree with them. Nevertheless, I always keep my distance from criticisms because I know sometimes they stem from Islamophobia, especially in *Uykusuz*. But overall, I think they are fulfilling a necessary mission because young people [and] students need to guide their energy to intelligence and humor and not towards destructive or illegal activities. The dissatisfaction of the youth must be absorbed.

Bugra (20, male, heterosexual) studies engineering at a highly prestigious public university. He is involved in political activism concerning environmental struggles, and he actively supports Kurdish and queer student groups on campus. He says,

> *Uykusuz*, *Penguen*, and others are the only reliable sources of information for many students here because they do not read critical but *serious* journals, such as *Birikim* or *Express*. Most people can learn what is really going on around us in Turkey, only through these comic magazines because they don't have time to follow alternative channels of news like some independent websites and internet-based TV channels. The mainstream media is full of governmental censorship and it is totally supportive of the state, using the state's language. Everything covered in *Uykusuz* and *Penguen* [is] true, otherwise officials would sue them and put them into trouble. They have a perfect political sensitivity for the environment, minorities, women, and human rights, and they are tireless fighters against Islamism, repression, and corruption.

As these two quotes illustrate, different opinions about the weekly comic magazines exist, but there is an agreement that they have a performative task of verbalizing alternative ideas and visualizing criticism, which is an indispensable element of a much-desired democratic public in Turkey. However, my focus here is not on the political aspects and democratic capacities of the comic magazines, but rather on how they construct, represent, and illustrate masculinity. Forms of governmentality, the execution of the neoliberal logic, and the dynamics of subjectivation at work in contemporary Turkey have recently been documented in the chapters of this book as well as elsewhere (Ozbay et al. 2011; Bekmen et al. 2013; Turem 2011). I contend that gender relations and particularly the constitution of hegemonic and resistant masculinities in relation to the production of subjectivities in Turkey have not been explicated thoroughly. After introducing the four drawn stories' protagonists and their respective *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977), I will discuss at the end of the chapter how these representations of masculinity are telling examples and meaningful departure points to locate and better comprehend the operations of power, both on the subjective and intersubjective levels.

Four Men, Four Storylines

Comic magazines in Turkey are created, drawn, read, and talked about mostly by men, and they have been historically preoccupied with representing masculinity.[6] Previous scholarly examinations of "drawn masculinities" concentrated on

6 Both *Uykusuz* and *Penguen* are male-dominated settings (most cartoonists and writers are male) but independent from their culture inside the institution, which is quite impervious, both magazines are careful not to reproduce the sexist, misogynist,

forms of social marginality and otherness, including super-human heroes (Turk 2013) and lower-class migrants (Cantek 2007; Oncu 1999). In this section, I will introduce and give a sketch of four full-page drawn stories that are published in the comic magazines. What makes them different from previous representations of masculinity is their emphasis on quite normal, regular, ordinary men as embedded in almost mundane relations in the city.

Genco's Fake World

Sonmez Karakurt (born in 1970) and Servet Gurbuz (born in 1962), are two famous cartoonists who created Genco, a man in his early thirties, with sharp observations, dazzling details, and funny insights about men and masculinity embedded in the everyday life of urban Turkey. The story started as a single strip, became popular, and then evolved into a full-page series (four strips). It was published in *Penguen* between 2005 and 2008. After 2008, Karakurt commenced to draw the life of Ortam, another male protagonist, which I will talk about below. Genco's adventures were later published as two volumes titled *Arkadasim Muzo* (My Friend Muzo) and *Yalniz Tatil* (The Lonesome Holiday) (Gurbuz and Karakurt 2010; 2011).

Genco simply represents the loser in everyone.[7] It is ironic because he has graduated from college (not an elite or prestigious institution, located in a small college town in Western Anatolia), he has a brand new car, and he has a white-collar, professional job in one of the modern business districts of Istanbul. Despite the fact that he owns a modest apartment, he mostly stays at his parent's apartment, where he does not have a bedroom and sleeps ill at ease in the living room on a sofa bed. Although he always misses familial warmth and wants to go back to the safe atmosphere of his parents' house as soon as possible when he is out, he also feels uneasy at his parent's apartment, constantly thinking on what is going on outside and what he is missing every second he stays there with his parents: "It is a new day, life has started to flow outside. You still could not leave your mother's home and mingle with the running cosmos."

In spite of his age, education, and career, Genco cannot complete his transition from teenager-student to a young adult, who is independent, autonomous, and able to navigate his life through his personal desires and objectives. His living

homophobic, and heteronormative vernacular of hegemonic masculinity in Turkey (Ozbay 2013). Sometimes they may fail to avoid doing so, as feminist criticism argues.

7 The cartoonists Karakurt and Gurbuz said in an interview, "We are all Gencos" (Cobankent 2010). In one of the entries on the most popular online forum eksisozluk.com (which I will make other quotations below) an online writer says, "Who among us is not a Genco? Maybe all of us, maybe none of us" on September 29, 2005: https://eksisozluk.com/genconun-yalan-dunyasi--1349104?p=1. The English word loser is widely used in eksisozluk.com when writers talk about Genco. The closest translation *ezik* (literally, squashed) is also used.

arrangement between his own (which is decorated not according to his taste but his mother's) and his parents' apartment comes to signify his unfinished process of coming of age. He serves his parents with their mundane needs, takes them to the hospital, and gives them money, but he is actually unhappy about this, thinking he is the "fool" of the family. When his older brothers got married and established their families without actively supporting their parents, he was there without protecting his own interests. He thinks nobody in his family or among relatives takes him seriously, since he is not worth listening to or sharing the troubles one might have. He is inadequate, talentless, and dull.

In addition to his unresolved issues with his family, Genco has all sorts of insecurities about his physical appearance. He yearns to be taller (5'9") and more muscular, he cannot decide how he needed to shape his designer's beard, and, most significantly, he worries a lot about being bald. He shaves his head with a razor every other day in order to hide his baldness and make himself a "skinhead," which is supposed to look hip and cool. He grows jealous of other men who have hair on their heads. He looks at his old pictures to trace when and how fast he lost his hair. The absence of his hair, his early baldness that is demeaned by his rivals, his regular efforts to hide it by shaving, and the cuts he accidentally makes on his head while shaving may be deemed as transfigurations of his lack of virility, his immature personality, and his sense of underwhelming masculinity.

Genco also has problems with women. He finds himself in the most awkward situations with women, totally paralyzed and having great difficulty in communicating with them. On the contrary, he is comfortable when he is alone, or when he is with his buddies in male-only environments where he does not watch his behaviors or language and where there is no sign of shame or refinement.

An encounter from his high school years is recounted in one of the stories: Genco was walking in a park with his three male friends, and they came across some girls from school. Genco was proactive and greeted the girls, and they reciprocated. After a while, the two groups ran into each other again, and Genco repeated his salute. The girls laughed, and one of them said, "You can only say hi." Genco was transfixed, his friends were surprised and blaming each other for this shameful assault. It was just one moment of many in Genco's life where he was speechless in front of women, inarticulate, and abashed. Throughout his adventures, Genco flirts with Arzu, a nice looking, lower-class but upwardly mobile young woman. When they are alone, Genco cannot start a conversation, despite the fact that he was planning to talk about interesting subjects that Arzu would love to hear about and therefore admire him. In those moments of embarrassing silences, Genco imagines everybody he knows talking about how he should have beaten his ego, talked in a relaxed manner, and how useless he always is. The sentiment of failure haunts him during the time he spends with Arzu.

The instances where Genco feels most notable and self-confident are the ones where he drives his new, moderately expensive, shiny car. However, he also uncontrollably calculates how much gas the car consumes. This brings yet another aspect of his personality: self-discipline, frugality, egocentrism, and

opportunism. He compares himself with virtually everyone, almost instinctively tries to understand who is better, who is superior, and who is luckier and smarter. Yet this is not a competition in the perfect sense because Genco deeply believes that people around him are indeed more quick-witted and precocious than he is, while he sees himself as reticent and obviously disadvantaged. He believes that the cause of his introverted stance is his substandard upbringing; his parents ruined everything and made him diffident. In a monologue, he tells himself, "If my buddy Muzo will stay alone all through his lifetime, your pain because of your own loneliness will decrease by 95%." He can only comprehend the situation he is in by looking at other people.

From time to time, Genco decides to change himself, improve his life, and reform his social relations. What he thinks he lacks most is self-respect. This constitutive deficiency manifests itself in the material objects, furniture, and clothing he has. In these crisis moments, he instantaneously opts for "burning money" for himself, his pleasures, and his public image. He sees consumption, which is against his usual frugality, as the only exit from his miserable world where nobody, including himself, respects or admires him. In another monologue, he says,

> You are a coward. That is why you postpone everything. That's enough, idiot. I will start making quickened plans for saving myself, catching the flow of life. First, I need to have a gym membership. If I will read a book per week, makes 50 books in a year. In two years, I will be able to handle even the most difficult discussions and to unravel the mystery of life. I will spend money on clothing. I need to buy everything from socks to underwear. I need to wear chic clothes to start life with an advantage.

At the end of the stories, we see Genco having failed transforming himself or advancing his lifestyle. He is still behind his buddies, embarrassed in front of his high school friends during a reunion by his abject presence, and lost Arzu, who becomes a "successful and significant" person, unlike him. Insecurities and indecisiveness, shyness and introversion, self-centeredness and parsimoniousness, and the fear of lagging behind everything and everybody else mark Genco as an atypical loser, who cannot interpret his circumstances and cannot adapt himself to the environment. His follower, Ortam, on the other hand, unapologetically embodies the type of personality that the contemporary mood of social relations requires.

Ortam: The Most Nugatory Man of the World

After Genco's finale, Sonmez Karakurt started drawing a new story with another male protagonist, Ortam in 2008. The full-page series has been published in *Penguen* since then. Ortam is in his late twenties. He lives with his father and mother in the beginning of the story. Later, he takes over a friend's apartment.

Ortam's story is more complicated than Genco's. It spans more than five years, which makes more than 250 pages of convoluted plot with numerous encounters, sites, side characters, and tangential narratives. In spite of the fact that there are considerable similarities between the two characters, the radical difference between Genco and Ortam is the latter's ability and experience of transformation, while the former's was briefly a story of inadaptability and failure. While Genco was relatively privileged but still unable to comprehend the social world around him, desperately pretending to be someone who is well acquainted, Ortam is indeed incompetent yet flexible enough to adapt to the new social milieus he enters and manipulate things for his own sake. Year after year, we watch how Ortam betters himself due to his lack of rectitude and swift positioning of himself in the right spot through feigned actions and careful silences. Instead of behaving on moral terms as he believes (or according to what is right to do) Ortam is repeatedly drawn as immobilized, reticent, calculating his own benefit, and trying to decide how he should act in complex situations to pursue his interests: "His brain was squinted, Ortam was watching what was going on, striving to maximize himself."

At the beginning of the story Ortam is rather naïve and inexperienced. He does not have a job, does not have good connections, and drifted from one place to another. One of the online writers stated on eksisozluk.com that Ortam was an "egotist, insidious, swindling, untrustworthy, ignorant, unscrupulous, greedy, treacherous, pretentious person who does not care for his family. He's disgusting and he's one of us. We're corrupted."[8] As time goes on, he stumbles across different people in a number of diverse settings, including a traditional shop that Cetin referred at the beginning of this chapter, where he is forced to work as an apprentice and harassed by the Islamist boss; a summer camp, where he goes without invitation and is humiliated but then experiences sexual intimacy with a woman by chance; an advertisement agency, where he works as a graphic designer, despite the fact that he does not have any talent; at a wedding party, where he does not feel included and becomes uneasy and asocial; in a traditional Turkish tavern where he tries to express his feelings to a female coworker and fails; at a foreign friend-of-a-friend's home, where he smokes marijuana for the first time and blacks out; and a business trip to Amsterdam with his religious customers, who are keen to practice Islam and stay away from the locals, while Ortam concentrates on the erotic and somatic experiences that the city is famous for.

Ortam's character has been depicted and stylized through various events, including surprising novelties, bizarre predicaments, and emergent crises. The boldest emphasis in the course of the last five years has been on Ortam's disingenuous manners and opportunist personality without integrity, moral fiber, loyalty, or affective coherence. He certainly is not a man of principles; he

8 Written on April 28, 2012: https://eksisozluk.com/ortam-dunyanin-en-telmasa-adami--1986742?p=4.

recalibrates himself easily and cunningly without a concern for being honest and reliable. However, he is far from being caricaturized and is continually presented in convincingly real situations that most of the readers feel could happen to them, too. In this sense, Ortam is not an atypical or exaggerated example of a low-quality, banal person. The subtext here highlights how one must be Ortam-like in order to navigate and survive in contemporary Turkey. We might not be Ortam, unlike the aforementioned poster's belief that we are similar to Genco, but the real world around us is most certainly the one that surrounds Ortam. Even when we do not want to admit it, we know, as readers, that sometimes we are called upon to act like Ortam.

Ortam's biggest desire is to be seen as an important, respected person, whose ideas are valuable and whose threats are frightening. He yearns to be a man who is visible, admired, and effective. When he feels challenged regarding his desired powerful identity, he carefully tries to understand whether he can beat the challenger with his knowledge, social power, or money. If he thinks that he is the stronger one, he counteracts wildly. However, if Ortam's rival intimidates him, he certainly becomes terrified, withdraws, and even regrets his unsupported jejune aggressiveness. He seems to have successfully internalized the famous Turkish saying, "You have to call the bear 'uncle' until you finish crossing the bridge." Otherwise, the bear will harm you before you can reach the other side. Ortam's concentration is always on the other side and not on the bridge or what he does on the bridge. On the other hand, he sees his mother, for example, as always inferior to him, obviously not a bear on the bridge. He can be really harsh to her, criticizing and blaming her for every trouble he has.

Without a serious educational background, commitment to a profession or a job, satisfaction from emotional or sexual relationships, or a minimum level of self-confidence or self-rule, Ortam is "the most nugatory man" because he represents the most mundane, futile, and inconsequential efforts to attain a respected, worthy, decent identity. He lies to the woman he seems to love, he cheats at work, he avoids facing his defects, he dissimulates all the time, and he escapes from taking responsibility. However, he is also a nebulous subject without an obvious direction. He cannot induce himself to act in what he implicitly knows is the right way. We can never fully understand what Ortam really wants or for what purpose he is endeavoring. Otisabi, on the other hand, is the most determined and focused protagonist among the four drawn stories.

Otisabi

The cartoonist Yilmaz Aslanturk (born in 1964) started to write under the title of Otisabi ("Big Brother Otis") in the comic magazine *Pismis Kelle* and then transformed the stories into the drawn form in 1990s. He continues to create weekly stories around Otis, a male mid-30s character, and the women he has escapades with in different magazines, such as *L-Manyak* and *Penguen*. Since 2007, his extremely popular drawings have appeared in *Uykusuz*. Aslanturk is one

of the best known artists outside the mainstream popular culture of Turkey, and his drawings have been published in six best-selling volumes (Aslanturk 2004; 2007; 2009; 2010; 2012; 2013).

Otis lives alone in a small apartment with a rooftop terrace in Cihangir, a neighborhood located next to the city center of Taksim Square, populated by intellectuals, artists, foreigners, and other bohemians of the city. His life is very compact and geographically limited, in the sense that he hates to go to the suburbs or out of the city. He is a vigorous womanizer and even the idea of marriage terrifies him. Every evening after work, he hangs out in bars and pubs in the cosmopolitan Beyoglu area, searching for new sexual conquests. Otis fights on four fronts: women he strives to meet and tempt, women he already knows and wants to see again, his endless negotiations with his landlord, and his cool and distant interactions with his friends and his boss at the workplace. Nevertheless, his fundamental motivation is to have sex with as many beautiful women as possible without any emotional or social engagements, that is, no strings attached. Other fronts, including his financial situation, interpersonal relations, and affect, physical needs and health, tastes and habits, matter only in the context of his sexual attempts. For example, his short-term unemployment was portrayed through the prism of his attractiveness in the eyes of sexually available women. In other words, Otis is less of a character than the other three protagonists I examine here. His stories are no doubt more one-dimensional than the others' and are interlocked with emergent sexual needs; however, I argue that Otis represents the significant undertow of a hedonist, egocentric, goal-oriented aspect of neoliberal masculinity. Every week he finds himself at a new situation with a new woman, and many readers look at the end of the page to see whether Otis "scores" that week or not. Results matter, not the means by which they are attained.

Otis has two significant figures in his life: his landlord Nejat and his neighbor Kaan. Nejat is quite old, married to a woman he does not (maybe never did) love. His wife governs his life. He is obsessed with young women and sexuality, although he seems dissatisfied with his life and sexual experiences so far. His body betrays him, and he needs chemical drugs to treat erectile dysfunction. Women do not like him physically, and he needs to pay for sex. He uses a vulgarly masculine language that degrades women and calls Otis "gay" and "fag" although he knows that Otis is in fact a heterosexual. Nejat is the person Otis would never want to become in the future—a frightening possibility. Kaan, however, is younger than Otis. He is single, and he is also obsessed with women and sex. He is a chubby guy, seemingly not so cute, computer-oriented, and romantic in the most naïve fashion. He definitely wants to fall in love, be loved in return by a woman, and ultimately get married. His way of talking is also different from Otis's. Kaan's speech is not as obnoxious and unmannerly as Nejat's, but it still embarrasses Otis with its ebullient and unconstrained style. Kaan represents the minimum standards (or a low limit) that Otis would not want to imagine for himself. Otis navigates and repositions himself by looking at what Nejat and Kaan yearn and struggle for. Otis has to hang out with these two abjected men due to social, economic,

and practical reasons, but he always finds ways to use them for his purposes and exhibit them as unpleasant alternatives in order to polish his attitude and increase his chances with women. He actually dislikes both of them, and protects himself and his life from their intrusions. He constructs his self-image—he imagines who he is—on the basis of these two men's appearances, lives, bodies, speech, and their failed relations with women. While Nejat and Kaan are losers in different ways, Otis invests in himself, uses his mind, calculates the possibilities, and strategizes his actions in order to prevail in his universe. Here success and failure are as simple as black and white: Everything is all right and he is content if he has sex with a beautiful woman, but if he has not, it is a wrecked week and Otis is disappointed.

Responses to the Otisabi series differ widely. There is a strong feminist critique that underlines Otis's objectifying attitude toward women, who are portrayed in the stories as inferior subjects, just a means to have sex, who can be easily fooled. For example, a writer noted on eksisozluk.com, "[Otis is] a bloody loser character that is not suitable for *Uykusuz*. I hate him, but the majority, who believes everything weak and female should be screwed, loves him. The cartoonist in an illusionary way claims that women love this, too." In the same vein, another poster wrote, "[Otis is] a deviant character by Yilmaz Aslanturk. There is no woman left that he has not kissed, made love to, and fucked." However, there are other views expressed on eksisozluk.com that point to the questions Otisabi raises. For example, one poster states "[Otis is] a caricature protagonist who makes you think such a person could really exist."[9] In the interviews and focus group I conducted for this study, participants also framed Otisabi not as a realistic person who deems women as sex toys and treats them in a dehumanizing way, but an illustration to demonstrate the state of contemporary masculinity. One of the informants (Turgay, 21, male, heterosexual, college student) said, for example,

> He is an ideal, maybe a dystopia, but not a guy like me or you. Just like 'Issiz Adam' [*The Lonesome Man*, 2008, a very popular Turkish movie that recounts a bachelors' life]. So, I can't really understand people who criticize Otisabi. The point in the drawn story is to exaggerate to state of men today. The psychology [of men] and relations with women. We are all under pressure. The economy, unemployment, life in Istanbul, our parents and the society, the entire marriage thing. Otis is a response, saying that men are in crisis.

Another participant stated,

> I don't think that Otis is real in the sense that there is no one like him in the real world. Honestly my gay friends' lifestyle looks more like Otis than straight men. Straights are of course trying hard to get women but they also want to marry and have the comfort of being with a woman effortlessly. Otis keeps

9 https://eksisozluk.com/otisabi--32132?

> looking for sex all the time with new people. I think this is what gays do, not straights. (Selim, 25, male, bisexual, graduate student).

Even though Otis's moral standards are flexible and he is not homophobic, as specifically exemplified in one of the stories, homosexuality is not within his predefined boundaries of sexual adventures. He has sex with old, fat women for their money, and he once had sex with a religiously covered woman to fulfill a fantasy. He tempts women who are coming to him to learn computer-based graphic programs. He mediates between sex workers and Nejat. He lends his apartment to young couples for money. Through reading about all of these (and other) actions, we come to comprehend that his is a calculative vision of the economic agent, which is translated into sexual and practical exchanges. In other words, Otis meticulously acts within the terms of the neoclassical economy with rational-choice references in order to maximize his benefit, decrease his costs, and sustain his lifestyle. Whilst he has a number of reflexive moments in which he reconsiders his life, checks himself if he wanted to marry in the future, questions his penis size and sexual performance, or feels uneasy about his body, he easily picks up, drives his cool old car, wears his overcoat, and carries on being himself. This impervious attitude of Otis makes him radically different from Ersin, who is the autobiographical protagonist of the story *Inside the Chest*.

Inside the Chest

Ersin Karabulut (born in 1981) started to publish his drawings at the magazine *Pismis Kelle* in 1997, when he was still a high school student. Since then he has written and drawn different stories in multiple forms including art works, campaign designs, and advertisement images. His best known work is the autobiographical *Inside the Chest* (Sandik Ici), which started in the year 2002 and still continues for short intervals from time to time. Chest here refers to the metaphor of a kind of intimate memory where we keep the lost information about our past; we do not visualize (remember) it, but we deeply know that it exists somewhere (in the chest) waiting to be recollected and reconstructed. In this sense, *Inside the Chest* is a story of a man throughout the years from childhood to adolescence and his gradual transition to young adulthood. Two volumes of the early years of *Inside the Chest* were published and received with great appreciation (Karabulut 2009; 2011).

Ersin lives with his parents and his sister in Bayrampasa, one of the poorest sections of Istanbul, far from the city center and marked by informal/illegal housing practices. Although his parents work as primary school teachers and his father also makes and sells paintings for limited extra income, their financial situation is always tight. Overall, it is not possible to say that the family would have been far from satisfying the emergent criteria of passing as middle class during 1980s Turkey, when Ersin grew up. From an early age on, he developed his inclination and skill for drawing and, in the end, became a "fine arts

person"—a position which is highly marginalized and usually belittled in the parochial Turkish education system. His extreme talented enabled him to be admitted to the Department of Graphics at the prestigious Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, out of thousands of other applicants. He therefore is both formally educated at the best art school in the country and highly experienced in the comics business since he has long been employed at comic magazines.

Ersin is depicted in the stories via his many insecurities and vulnerabilities. If masculinity is performed as a masquerade in the three previous drawn stories, it appears here as a revelation, a confession, or a tête-à-tête. The sentiment of failure that haunts Genco, and to a certain extent Ortam, becomes alive with Ersin: He only lives through the memories, stories, and ghosts of failure, weakness, and blunder. The protagonist and his life are almost naked under the reader's eye. The realm of his memories, rich everyday experiences with miniscule details, and the deep frailty he always feels are represented through a wide range. Ersin's experiences of class most shape who he has become. He repetitively recounts childhood experiences of poverty and lack, the class position of his family, their ties to the village they come from, encounters with rich friends and their material conditions, excuses and explanations that exasperated him, growing up and living in a neighborhood that signifies squatter-settlements and poverty in the popular imagination, going to public schools and receiving a low-quality level of education, commuting on crowded buses, and all the small sources of unhappiness that might emerge out of financial difficulties, including familial comfort and humility. He knows exactly where he belongs on the social map, and he carefully constructs his upwardly mobile class position in the stories. His interest in becoming an artist instead of aiming toward a more secure job is also epitomized through the social pressure he has received in the form of numerous advices and warnings: "forget about the arts," "these are futile efforts," "do something that will make you earn money" from lower-class, sometimes ignorant relatives. His predilection for drawing and his ultimate decision to become an artist is also perilous, as Ersin has to defend himself constantly against other people, as well as his own questioning, reflexive mind.

In addition to his class identity and occupational choice, about which he thinks constantly, Ersin is also illustrated as bodily imperfect throughout the series. The artist Karabulut frequently portrays himself with an overly exaggerated nose and speaks about how his actual appearance and how he represents his self-image in his stories. As time goes on, he becomes concerned about his growing stomach, receding hairline, puffy eyes, and painfully aching back. He says his face looks like a potato, and the unattractiveness of his drawn self-representation heightens every year as he gets older.

Ersin is not content with himself in terms of his relations with other people. He illustrates in the stories how he tries to deal with the idea of being uncool and weird, how he finds himself talking impressively in imagined dialogues with numerous others but is unresponsive and inarticulate during actual encounters, how other people (especially the cool ones) will not pay attention to him and

what he says, and how he is able to express himself by drawing. Masculinity is a strong force of fear, intimidation, and uneasiness for Ersin. He is astonishingly far from other men in confronting manifestations of hegemonic masculinity in Turkey. Some participants of this study told me that they believed Ersin was gay and that the fearful masculinity he enacts belongs to the gay subjectivity until they had been convinced that he was straight. Burak (20, male, heterosexual, college student), for example, says:

> I was reading *Inside the Chest* as how a gay man grows, and even lectured to my friends about how we should understand the difficulties gay men face in our society. He was always using 'the girl he fancies' and I thought this was a way to hide he was gay … because he did not get along with other guys. All the stories he recounted were about how he was terrified by other men and how he tried to escape men. I never thought that this was a world of straight men. You know he even does not like football. Who does not like football in Turkey?

If masculinity is an invisible yet highly functional bond between men, Ersin is obviously out of it; yet beyond this sense of detachment, he develops an anxiety regarding other men's presence and possible (imagined) reactions to him. The young men who hang out at the corner in his neighborhood hail and verbally harass him because he looks different, with his earring and long hair. They call him gay, and Ersin is scared that these men would physically him. He is tense about "the man on the street" in his neighborhood, always drawn as a big man with a thick moustache, wearing a white undershirt and showing the body hair over his chest—the Kurdish, migrant, boorish "maganda" that was prevalent in the 1980s and early 1990s comic magazines (Oncu 2002). These men, he explains, can take off their shoes and belch on the bus. In one of the stories, the young Ersin and one of his friends go to the theatre to watch *Bambola*, a soft porn European movie. There are only two of them and three "maganda" men with their moustaches in the theatre. Ersin and his friends are terrified, imagining that the magandas might rape them during the movie. Ersin's imaginary or actual encounters with two other types of men (taxi drivers and the boyfriends of women who read and like Ersin) are constructed in a similar tone of humorous, frightening, contradistinction, apprehension, and, rarely, verbal conflict.

Coming from a lower class background and being struck there, with exceptional moments of small luxuries (for example, riding taxis instead of using public buses, the freedom of purchasing new apparel, or enjoying food and drinks in restaurants and bars), seem to enable the protagonist to stay away from the established, bourgeois point of view and embrace a rare versatility that a diverse array of readers would find humanistic, sentimental, and poignant. In other words, not necessarily humor, bitterness, or harsh realism (as in the cases of the other three drawn stories I have examined here) but affect draws hundreds of thousands of readers to Ersin's moods of imperfect, insecure, vulnerable masculinity.

Governing Men: Neoliberal Masculinity in Drawn Stories

My concern here is not about the obviously amusing aspect of the drawn stories that are published in the comic magazines and followed by a great number of young individuals in urban Turkey. Instead, I argue that a specific form of hegemonic masculinity is being represented through the development of these drawn stories and the embodiments of their protagonists, as well as their fathers, brothers, friends, rivals, and the many other masculinities that they encounter. Hegemonic masculinity in Turkish society has long been shaped mainly by the actions of political figures and the seemingly autonomous and scrupulously depoliticized flow of popular culture (Ozbay 2013). Mainstream politics around the cult of the leader, heterogeneous mass culture and multiple publics, competing forms of representation, and shifting gender ideologies (for example, between modernity versus traditional religiosity) are intertwined around the questions of what type of man a young male will become and what type of masculinity is the proper one in Turkey.

Societal obstruction of hegemonic forms of masculinity (Connell 1995) and reflexive inquiries to revamp masculine subjectivity are not unique to the youth that the comic magazines address. Older men also face crises about their masculinity and feel the need to reiterate that they are *still* men (Erol and Ozbay 2013). Young men, however, may undertake a slightly deeper existential probe as part of the attempt to construct and stabilize their social identities and self-definitions. While prevailing political narratives and grave social inequalities operating at both local and global levels do affect the formation of the masculine subjectivity, the mediation of bodies, selves, desires, fears, and sociabilities of men through media representations play a particularly constitutive role among incipient youth masculinities (Seidler 2006).

Contemporary masculinity as discursively and non-discursively produced in Istanbul is reflected in the drawn stories that I have outlined here. There are a number of connecting themes and bridging features between them. These themes and features can guide us mapping the contours of the contemporary masculine subject, who comes to represent living, working, feeling, and dreaming in Turkey in the last decade. A linear neoliberalization, procrastinating waves of democratization, unhurried globalization, the paralyzed integration to the European Union, and increasing regional inequalities have gradually shaped Turkey's social and political agenda since the military coup in 1980 (Oktem 2011; Ozbay et al. 2011; Bekmen et al. 2013). Citizens have experienced an Islamist version of the marriage of with a rampant neoliberalism under the rule of JDP in the last decade. As I have mentioned above, in this period alternative lifestyles, different cultural practices, and political opposition against the government was marginalized and repressed, and a peculiar form of neoliberal subjectivity was cultivated.

The new man in Turkey, whose rationality has been adapted from neoliberal principles such as self-government, self-responsibility, and self-vigilance, is called upon to incorporate the new masculinity into his language, actions, body, and

relationships with women as well as with other men. Men are invited, taught, and encouraged via cultural discourses and disciplinary institutions to take up neoliberal subjectivity and become successful, captivating, active, adept, worldly individuals. The new man mapped in these discourses (including the undertone through the drawn stories I have outlined above) is unavoidably apolitical (class based politics is deemed significantly outdated), indifferent to what is going on around his social environment, egocentric, opportunist, and pragmatist. He prioritizes himself in case of danger or risk (which he is supposed to calculate meticulously) and he has learned that if something or somebody does not threaten him, he should not get involved. He does not hesitate to use his masculine strength, emotions, or other sides of his subjective world (his interiority) to manipulate others and benefit himself at the end of the day. His inner world, including especially the formation of the neoliberal masculine subjectivity, translates into a façade, which is governed by hegemonic discourses of the new person: coolness, smartness, and success. Good masculinity and overachieving men are knit together in the image of a rationalist economic actor, who sees himself as a project to invest in continuously and the world as a setting for ruthless competition. Nevertheless, he always finds a way to circumvent responsibility, blame somebody else for wrongdoings, and pretend that he is innocent and free from guilt, especially in moral terms.[10] In sum, the traditional division between what has been signified as public (the surface; that is economic, profit oriented thinking) and as private (the inside; that is, the intimacy of love and other emotions) fades in the form of neoliberal subjectivity and entrepreneurial selves (Connell and Wood 2005; Ozbay 2011; Ozyegin 2011; Wilson 2004).

The sociologist Robert J. Antonio (2007, 73), with reference to Thomas L. Friedman's (2005) famous account on globalization, notes that neoliberal subjects are:

> brave new workers [that] make themselves ever more multiple as the situation demands and that they constantly upgrade their capacities so that their skills cannot be easily outsourced … These 'versatilists' welcome the fresh experiences, relationships and activities entailed by new jobs … Oozes attitude, ambition, and aspiration. Cool, confidant and creative. Seeks challenges, love

10 Responsibility is crucial in the constructions of neoliberal subjectivity. Jarrett Zigon (2010, 12–13) states, "Responsibility is a dispositional attitude that enacts social relations by means of a hyper self-aware individual who is able to stand outside of and be within those very relations at the same time … Responsibility is the moral disposition par excellence of the biopolitics of neoliberalism … [It is] also a central moral disposition for successfully living within a multidiscursive society." However, when we look at the four protagonists, it becomes clear that while each develops a strong sense of self-vigilance and (successful or not) reflexive practices, they resist taking responsibility for their decisions and actions in moral contexts or socioeconomic arrangements. In other words, responsibility as a dispositional attitude, and the lack of it, underlines the failed and false quality of neoliberal subjectivity that these fictional men take up.

> risks and shuns fear … They are guilt free about making money or spending it … On Friedman's planet, accumulating 'more' and consuming it is the main inspiration for choosing a path that entails so much frenetic competition, intense work and profound uncertainty.

Many of the characteristics that Antonio indexes are in accord with the silhouette of male protagonists' desires, aspirations, and efforts of the four drawn stories discussed here. However, Genco, Ortam, Otis, and Ersin are also failures, or positioned at the margins of neoliberal masculine subjectivity. They cannot attain proper neoliberal subjectivity, liberate themselves fully from their conscience and emotional interactions with others, reach their goal of radiant lives with material exuberance, or successfully resist unavoidable social, economic, political, and bodily forces. They yearn for a lifestyle such as the one Antonio depicts, but, simultaneously, they would question whether they really deserved it and then consider what others would like to think about themselves. They eventually hesitate about their goals and what would be the best option for them to pick and then fear the possible consequences. The internalization of neoliberal traits can be read in the protagonists' rationales in the drawn stories through various acts they undertake or refrain from, yet it is also visible in many cases of failure, retreat, regret, and atonement that there is a gap between their capacities to imitate hegemonic masculinity and implement neoliberal subjectivity to finally become smart, successful, cool men.

Discussion: Cultivating Subjectivity across Resistance and Ambivalence

Neoliberal logic and values are imbricated with scales of fear and insecurity in the masculine subjectivities throughout the drawn stories I have summarized here. These discursive, practical, and affective states are constellated to produce and govern the new, respected person, the proper man. On the other hand, though, the comic magazines' clear mission and democratic function is to be politically dissident and vocal against the government. Therefore, these publications are expected to oppose not only choric state violence and top-down governmental programs (such as privatization, de-unionization, and various public health campaigns) but also neoliberalism as a constitutive rationality, which includes the production of neoliberal subjectivity. As I pointed out above, the neoliberalizing tendencies of the characters as a leitmotif through the narratives are quite obvious. Generally, they navigate their lives and sociabilities according to these *successfully* incorporated neoliberal norms. My question, therefore, is how it is possible to juxtapose an inherently anti-neoliberal (and thus anti-neoconservative and anti-government) attitude of the comic magazines with the deeply neoliberal subjectivity in male protagonists of drawn stories.

There is a sense that these men are imagined as to be ready to escape from the neoliberal-neoconservative environment immediately and automatically if they

can find a chance to leave, for example through job opportunities abroad. In this sense, the anti-neoliberal subjectivity is assumed to be a natural, straightforward, and homogenous outcome of being politically nonconformist and mutinous. Having said that, when I look at the drawn stories, what I see is a series of much more complicated relations, including those with the self, full with hesitations, instabilities, and insecurities. The male subjects are in the constant state of not to be sure about what they say, what they do, and what the consequences of their actions will be, and thus thinking of the alternatives, an ongoing calculation, the men are convulsed with helpless inconclusiveness. Hence, these male protagonists are not to be saved, ideally dissident or entirely neoliberal subjects, yet they take up politically dithering, unsure, suspicious subjectivities. Neoliberal governmentality reorders and administers various aspects of life, including relations with the masculine self, and these men have the disposition of waiting, pausing, error, and trouble, similar to Auyero and Swiston's informants in Argentina (2009) who face environmental pollution and danger, unsure of what to do next. With so much at stake, subjects become timid.

Saba Mahmood (2005, 9) notes, "I believe it is critical that we ask whether it is even possible to identify a universal category of acts—such as those of resistance, outside of the ethical and political conditions within which such acts acquire their practical meaning." Neoliberal governmentality in Turkey not only produces new proper masculine subjectivities and manages conduct; it also generates heterogeneous forms of resistance which are historically situated and make sense in particular cultural and political condition. In this chapter, I have tried to provide a background of contemporary political and cultural environment in which I trace the path of the production of an intrinsically neoliberal but virtually critical masculine subjectivity. The political and ideological positions of Genco, Ersin, Ortam, and Otis depend either on their genuine ideas and feelings or the pragmatist, self-centered, and pleasure-seeking decisions they make. These four men are able to talk and act through these positions and hence become intelligible subjects in the hegemonic discourses, although this might not represent the proper masculine subjectivity. The ambivalently neoliberal but clearly anti-government premises merge with their individual aspirations, ambitions, and anxieties.

Delineating social change in 1920s and 1930s in Turkey, the anthropologist Nukhet Sirman (2005, 148) defines familial citizenship: "A gendered discourse in which the ideal citizen is inscribed as a sovereign husband and his dependent wife/mother rather than an individual, with the result that position within a familial discourse provides the person with status within the polity." In this sense, knowing your place is the most remarkable quality one must have. Depending on one's place in the social order, which starts within a large household, one can apprehend who is superior and who is inferior to him or her. When I look at the drawn stories, I can detect a similar search by the protagonists on who they are; they also try to understand and stabilize their places. Of course, circumstances now are quite different from the post-colonial, nation building times that Sirman depicts. Alongside the operations of neoliberal governmentality with local and

historical specificities, these four single, heterosexual men, who try to maximize themselves in different ways, can be thought as *defamilial* citizens. Let alone being married and becoming husbands (therefore having dependent wife/mothers) these men do not even have stable, long term, socially approved emotional and sexual relations with women and they certainly have some family complications in their biographies. Not surprisingly, this subjectivity is not actually *the proper* way to become a man as manhood is exalted by the hegemonic neoliberal (and neoconservative) discourses of Turkey in the twenty-first century.

Here subjects disavow the single location and engineer of power, discipline, biopolitical technologies, and hegemony, despite the fact that they have different backgrounds, occupy multiple positions, and experience the sociopolitical transformation (governmentalization) in divergent ways. Contemporary hegemonic masculinity's character (whether conservative or shrewd) is exalted by authorities as the model for individual and social welfare; inarticulate masculinity is decentralized. It is not hailed from the center but appears through relations between people across social situations. Once again, the opponent subject is not pre-given or pre-formed (and not fitted to an idealized sense of resistance) but takes shape through contingencies and ambivalences, mixing different discursive elements (neoliberal and dissident), and ends up in a new place, the *defamilial* bachelor who pauses, thinks, calculates, and yearns as though he himself were in the center. The ambivalent subject of neoliberal masculinity in Turkey is thus a product of Islamic neoliberal governmentality and his own inarticulacy, self-vigilance, and egotism.

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