The 1950s marked a modernist turn in Turkish literature with the production of a number of works both in prose and poetry that displayed a search for new themes and forms of expression in literature. This modernist turn first began to take shape in the 1940s and consolidated itself in the 1950s with the publication of literary works that sought artistic experimentation. These works are characterized by individualism, alienation, formalism, irony, and a direct break with mimetic representation. In addition to fiction, Turkish poetry experienced a similar modernist paradigm shift that continues to shape today’s poetic production. In addition to the aforementioned type of fictional texts, a number of poetry collections with modernist characteristics were published one after another in the second half of the 1950s: Turgut Uyar’s Dünyanın En Güzel Arabistanı (The Most Beautiful Arabia in the World, 1959); Edip Cansever’s Yağışkanlı Kanlıfil (The Gravitational Carnation, 1957), Umutsuzlar Parkı (The Park of the Despairing, 1958), and Petrol (1959); Cemal Süreya’s Üvercinka (1958); Ece Ayhan’s Kan Hanımın Denizleri (Kınar Hanım’s Oceans, 1959); Sezai Karakoç’s Körfez (The Bay, 1959); Ülkü Tamer’s Soğuk Otların Altında (Under the Cold Weeds, 1959); and İlhan Berk’s Galile Denizi (The Sea of Galilee, 1958). It is precisely for this reason that literary critic Orhan Koçak has characterized this period as one of an “explosion” in the production of modernist poetry.1 Interestingly enough, this was not the result of a predetermined poetic movement. None of the poets was cognizant of each other’s experimental poems being written published in different magazines at the same time as they were writing the early poems which would be later collected in their first books. This modernist turn in Turkish literature was a result of a social, political, economic, and cultural transformation in Turkey during the 1950s.

Among these developments, urbanism played the most determinant role in the search for new forms of writing thus creating, so to speak, a poetics of urbanism. The prose writings of these modernist poets about poetry during this period show that they were in urgent need of a new narrative mode against the insufficiency of conventional poetic devices in representing the confusion, shock, and alienation brought by urban transformation. Dramatic poetry emerged as an efficacious form at this point and the Second New Wave poets utilized its potential remarkably. Edip Cansever (1928–1986) and Turgut Uyar (1928–1985) were the leading poets among other Second New Wave (İkinci Yeni) poets employing dramatic form and monologue
extensively in their poetry. In this chapter, I will discuss how dramatic poetry became instrumental to represent the modern experiences of alienation and isolation of the fragmented self as a result of urbanization in the dramatic poems of Edip Cansever and Turgut Uyar.

Generally speaking, literary historians have argued that the First World War, which shook the foundations of modern civilization, resulted in major social, economic, and political shifts that ultimately led to a modernist turn in artistic production. More specifically, radical changes in urban habitats had a defining influence on shaping modernist art and literature. Julia E. Daniel argues that modern artists “felt the need to address the ‘problem’ cities presented to both the overwhelmed psyche of the individual on the sidewalk and the increasingly fragmented modern populace as a whole.” Daniel pays particular attention to Georg Simmel’s claim in his well-known essay, “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” originally published in 1903, in which he discusses how a deep alienation became inevitable with the experience of displacement and the loss of identity brought by urbanization. The ultimate protective response to the material culture of urbanism was “dissociation, a blasé attitude that put the city dweller at risk of deep alienation.” The loss of belief in order and meaning, the disintegration of old values, and the rise of material culture in a highly urbanized environment all urged the poets to seek a new language and form to express this new reality.

Yet the Turkish public was experiencing a completely different transformation during this urbanization process that shaped modernist tendencies in the arts, especially in the West. The First World War was nothing but the traumatic end of the Ottoman Empire, which set the conditions for a struggle for independence. The War of National Independence between 1919 and 1922 paved the way for a new republic that strictly designed cultural life based on the ethos and nationalist discourse of the modern nation-state. Literature, which was effectively used as a means for the nation-building project, played an important role in this designation. This socially motivated approach rejected the idea of autonomous and individualistic literature. Embracing modernity, Turkey did not provide an environment of skepticism about its values, such as democracy, rationalism, progress, and secularism. Thus, the modernizing narrative of the nationalist elite was rarely challenged in literature during the early years of the Turkish Republic. This only happened in the 1940s by a few writers, like Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (1901–1962) and Nâzım Hikmet Ran (1902–1963). Yet their critique of modernity never became a widespread current as it remained a personal endeavor, especially in comparison to the widespread practice of modernist literature of the 1950s under discussion. During this period, Turkey also witnessed a genuine transition from a traditional society to a more urbanizing society due to the urbanizing policies under the newly elected Democrat Party, a moderately right-wing political party with a populist and liberal ideology. Urbanization especially became evident in the two metropolitan cities: Istanbul, the old capital of the empire, and Ankara, the new capital of the Republic. In the nationalist discourse of the early Republican period, Istanbul was represented as “the symbolic vestige of decadent Ottoman cosmopolitanism” and was marginalized “not only economically but culturally.” Following the Second World War, Istanbul once again emerged as “the growth pole in the inflationary expansion of the economy” due to Turkey’s “changing international alliances and shifting patterns of integration into world markets.” Turkey’s state-sponsored import-substitution industrialization model guaranteed “the continuous expansion of the internal consumer market,” which was “accompanied by redistributive measures and a populist discourse, aiming to mobilize and incorporate a larger proportion of the population into product and labor markets” in big cities. The population of Istanbul exploded between 1950 and 1960 roughly from 1 million to 1.8 million due to work opportunities created by new industries in which poor immigrants became the dominant element in the city. The population of Ankara reached beyond 1 million in 1960, tripling in ten years. This
rapid growth triggered a fundamentally profit-oriented urban development. This was a sudden new reality in big cities that caught the artists unprepared who did not know how to handle this dramatic transformation in daily life as well as in art. Turgut Uyar (1928–1985), one of the leading figures of the Second New Wave poetry, describes the shock and thrill of encountering the new urban transformation in the following way:

One may ask what happened at that moment and an imminent change in poetry became inevitable. In addition to the liveliness and specific necessities of poetry, one must pay attention to the policies of the Democrat Party that led to the explosion of money in daily life that triggered a change and dissolution of values. I, personally, experienced a profound shock and felt an urgent need for a reckoning when I returned to Ankara from Terme as a military officer.7

In another essay he makes a similar point:

Experience of how the environment changed around me has pushed me to write the poetry I wrote. Sudden urbanization, an encounter with neon lights, big hotels, the conditions that inform a number of new developments were keeping me away from being an Orhan Veli-style poet.8

Uyar’s observations illustrate how the modernist turn in poetry was a direct response to the massive urbanization process of the 1950s in Turkey. He appears to welcome the opportunity provided by this urbanization to describe new themes and forms of expression in poetry. Therefore, a cultural crisis for Uyar and his generation became a means of new poetic experimentation and creative opportunity. For this reason, he underlines that in this new environment, producing poetry following the style of Orhan Veli (1914–1950), a representative of the Garip Movement, a group of young poets promoted simple language and rejection of figures of speech as a reaction to classical poetry, is outdated. The conditions the Garip Movement had built on had nothing to do with the recent urban development that the Second New Wave witnessed. Although “Orhan Veli-style poetry” employed the theme of alienation to some degree, it was far from showing the inner depth of the subject Turgut Uyar’s generation aspired to reflect.

The Second Wave New poets crafted alternative solutions to represent personal responses to the change in daily life in the big cities beginning of the 1950s in Turkey. In order to do this, these poets extensively used dramatic monologue as a means of creating a narrator, a dramatic persona separated from themselves in narrating his/her experiences in an urban setting. This form of narration makes use of this device one of the defining characteristics of this modernist poetry. Unlike the lyrical poetry that retained its popularity in the Second New Wave, these were long dramatic poems in which the narrators almost always become estranged from the outer world, isolated and disoriented. The narrator expresses his/her solitude in the form of dramatic monologue where the narrator speaks to himself/herself so as to reveal certain thoughts and feelings to the reader.

So what did these poets expect from dramatic poetry, or the dramatic monologue in particular, in the first place? The first answer is the change in these poets’ attitudes towards the voice in poetry. The lyric “I,” a Romantic invention above all things, is designed to express personal feelings that require a coherent voice, thus jeopardizing the effective representation of the disunified self. When the Second New Wave poets sought to give a voice to a disunified and solipsistic self shaped by an alienating setting, dramatic poetry appeared as the most appropriate medium for this poetic diction. For this reason, it is not surprising to see that in almost all of their dramatic
poems, the Second New Wave poets gave a voice to a narrator with a fragmented self under the pressure of social conventions. In addition, dramatic poetry provides a literary strategy to avoid the problem of impersonality found in lyric poetry. The new reality brought by urbanization and consumerism had an effect upon not only a certain class or the poet himself but every individual in the fast-changing city to a different extent. Thus, the new mode of poetry was supposed to be personal, but not so personal that it would make the reader think that the feeling of alienation in the poem was only unique to the poet. Aware of this new situation, the poets of the Second New Wave employed dramatic monologue in order to express their sincere thoughts and emotions yet they represented these emotions and thoughts as the experiences of the poetic narrator while they were, in fact, naturally their own emotions. This poetic voice in dramatic poetry, just like in prose fiction, enables the poet to impersonalize the feelings of alienation and isolation whereas the reader easily internalizes these very emotions and thus is immersed in the poem.

Edip Cansever (1928–1986), a leading poet who employed the dramatic monologue, wrote an article titled “Şiiri Bölmek” (“To Divide Poetry”) in 1963 in order to emphasize the importance of this usage in modernist poetry. He argues that the urban dwellers wear different masks in performing different roles in their daily routines, ultimately leading to the loss of their personality. To Cansever, this is the sheer reality of modern life. Therefore, human beings “are bewildered in choosing whether to escape or submit to a series of dead-ends. We ceaselessly fluctuate in non-dimensional, meaningless, and tormenting life.” However, both in terms of its themes and forms of writing, the established poetry failed to produce poems appropriate to the spirit of the changing time. That is why Cansever insists that the poet needs to employ a “divided poetry” in order to represent a “divided self”:

So, if we want to convey the “I,” which has been losing its privilege and identity through a constant splitting again and again, we will finally have to turn to dramatic poetry. Because we are actually experiencing a horrible drama.

Cansever’s thoughts on Turkey’s recent urbanization summarize the poets’ search for the language and form of poetry suitable for the changing life of the 1950s. It was this modernist attitude towards life that essentially enabled the poets to generate modernist poetry of the world which already found the dramatic narrative mode as an answer to the problem of impersonality inherited from Romantics. The modernist Anglo-American poetry provided the major textual source for the turning point in Turkish poetry by the Second New Wave poets. As argued by Ahmet Oktay, this caused an orientation change in Turkish poetry inspired by French models starting the nineteenth century. The Anglo-American interrelation is clearly evident in Edip Cansever’s profound interest in T.S. Eliot’s poetry despite the fact that Cansever did not know English. It appears that Cansever read both T.S. Eliot’s poetry and writing on poetry alongside other twentieth-century modernist poets in Turkish translation. Eliot is the most referenced poet in Cansever’s own writings about poetry, which shows his particular interest in the Eliotian objective correlative and dramatic monologue. Whereas the former attribute is evident in his image-making mostly in his lyric poems, the latter appears to play an inspirational role in his dramatic poems.

The earliest example of dramatic poetry in Cansever date back to 1958’s Umutsuzlar Parkı (The Park of the Despairing); which consists of four long poems in which the poet concerns himself with objective correlative rather than dramatic monologue. His dramatic poetry, however, took a new shape in the 1960s and became the most distinctive feature of his poetics. Starting
with *Tişördüler* (Tragedies) published in 1964, Cansever began to compose books consisting of one single poem in the form of dramatic monologue. From then on, Cansever’s technique in his long poems closely coincided with Eliot’s well-known modernist poem *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*. Dramatic monologue, incomplete dialogues, and thoughts that characterize his dramatic technique are effectively used in his poetry collections of *Tişördüler*, *Çağrılmayan Yakup* (Uninvited Yakup, 1966), *Ben Ruhi Bey Nasılım* (How Am I Ruhi Bey, 1976), and *Bezik Oynayan Kadınlar* (Women Playing Bezique, 1982). They all consist of one long poem similar to *Prufrock*. Cansever’s solipsist characters in these collections are always “chosen from the public life of Istanbul, and mostly from the most marginal sections of the society” lost in daily routine and representing “the fragmentation and self-contradiction of modern man.” The form, a dramatic mode most often using dramatic monologue as the basic poetic device, is deliberately chosen to represent a certain content: the modern urban individual’s dilemma in a contemporary metropolitan city.

A striking example of these poems is *How Am I Ruhi Bey*, which expresses the gloomy sentiments of a troubled modern individual in a rapidly changing modern city. The main character in the poem speaks to himself in the form of dramatic monologue, sometimes through stream of consciousness, and wanders in Istanbul interacting with other people in suspended dialogues. The central feelings in this space are displacement, disengagement, boredom, dullness, and isolation rising from fast-paced transformations in the modern urban landscape. The poem depicts Ruhi Bey’s daily routines in the streets, pubs, and brothels through his vivid account of his urban surroundings:

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Have you ever seen how water is burned within the salt
I saw that lifelong groaning
Slight inside of big gardens
In some of the flower pots
I saw it, but
A geranium, maybe, raised me
As if someone shook me awake while sleeping

Me, who
Is it a ghost of a child within a woman
A ghost of a woman within a child
Or, just a ghost?

So, what is it
A silence of flour spilled on the ground
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Cansever in these lines employs impersonality in order to objectify the speaking “I.” The first-person narrator observes himself from outside and calls himself “silence of flour spilled on the ground.” The voice appears to be concerned with a state of mind, being disoriented. The poet uses striking imagery to starkly reveal the anguish and feelings of isolation. This mode of writing is supported with an ungrammatical syntax causing obscurity and opaqueness in meaning. Such manner of narration continues for the first four parts of the poem, enumerated in Roman numbers. The form of representation is suddenly changed in the fifth part when the narrator, the speaking voice Ruhi Bey, appears in the first stanza addressing himself: “I, Ruhi Bey, the one who is how I am / how am I.” Ruhi Bey speaks freely through his consciousness which
is emblematic of Cansever's dramatic monologues that directly project his narrator's mind to the reader. This form of expression expects the reader to identify himself/herself with Ruhi Bey's narration by embodying his discomfort and existential crisis. A lack of communication appears to be the distinctive feature of the dialogues in this part. Ruhi Bey is surrounded by other individuals on the surface, but they never hold a meaningful conversation:

How would you be, Ruhi Bey
You are early today too, Ruhi Bey
Are you having beer along with wine, Ruhi Bey
Early in the morning, Ruhi Bey
This time of the night, Ruhi Bey
In the morning and night, Ruhi Bey
Would you like to have a cigarette, Ruhi Bey
Let's light it, Ruhi Bey, let's light it
Don't you get cold like that Ruhi Bey

. . .
So, how are you then, Ruhi Bey
– I am fine, I am fine.

. . .
Keep in touch with you, Ruhi Bey
I don't have time, I don't have time
Ruhi Bey, just keep in touch
I don't have time to see anyone
Ruhi Bey!
– Not even to myself, not even to myself16

Although in these cited lines the narration revolves around a single character, Cansever does not employ a single voice but divides it into “different narrative voices, namely his drawing near the form of a dramatic poem, enabling him to represent this divided man properly,” as Dirlikyapan has pointed out.17 After the first six parts of the poem in which Ruhi Bey speaks in the form of dramatic monologue, many other narrators—a flower lady, a waiter in the pub, the boss of the pub, a fur repairman, an undertaker—begin to speak about him. These characters resemble him: They depict their boring routines briefly in each part. This boredom and dullness become a defining atmosphere in the poem which proves it is not peculiar to Ruhi Bey but the general lives of urban people. They tell what they know about Ruhi Bey and speak to him, whereas he is always preoccupied with himself and rarely talks back to them. They assemble a chorus at the end of the poem, speaking in the form of a plural third-person pronoun that transforms the poem into a classical tragedy and enhances the dramatic setting. Interaction with the other is never fulfilled, as poetic diction is always interrupted throughout the poem. Alongside these characters in the present tense of the poem, Ruhi Bey remembers some events and people from his past. For example, he recalls his wedding night in which he failed to have sexual intercourse with his wife because of his earlier trauma. When he was young, he was forced to have sexual intercourse by his stepmother. As an adult, whenever he has sexual intercourse, he remembers this traumatic experience with a hidden pleasure and a deep feeling of guilt simultaneously.

In addition to this poem, Edip Cansever employs dramatic monologue as the sole narrative mode in his 1982 work *Women Playing Bezique*. This collection of poetry contains four
narratives: “Epistles to Hilmi Bey,” “Cemal’s Interior Monologues,” “From Seniha’s Diary,” and “What Esther Says.” Each poem has different narrators living in the same house. Three women and a boy respectively speak in dramatic monologues, sometime in the forms of diary entries and letters. They do not directly speak to each other. What they know and think about each other is only heard through monologues that substantiate a lack of communication and alienation as the primary theme of the book. A lack of communication and alienation are always enhanced with the presence of other characters. Cansever’s narrators are physically surrounded by other people and appear to interact with each other one way or another. However, the crowd does not help the desolation of the main characters but becomes one of the causes of his/her isolation. For instance, in “Epistles to Hilmi Bey,” the narrator is a woman named Cemile who addresses Hilmi Bey—whom the narrative leaves ambiguous on purpose, whether he is a real man from Cemile’s past or just a vision of her imagination. Cemile perceives herself as “an enormous hole,” revealing her desolation and alienation:

See this rain, this balcony, me
This begonia, aloneness
These drops of water, on my forehead, on my arms
This city born of my death
I’m flowing nowhere, only oozing into myself
By me, I mean an enormous hole
In the chair, in the mirror’s reflection
A hole! In the sofa, the kitchen, my bed
As if I’m looking at life upside down

Cemile does not remember her past precisely and invents a new one including an imaginative character, Hilmi Bey. This imaginative character seems the only addressee but considering the other narratives’ revelation that the letters were never sent, the poem is a soliloquy in which Cemile speaks to herself to reveal her thoughts and emotions to the reader. These examples show that dramatic monologue enables Edip Cansever to portray an urban individual’s point of view about himself/herself and surroundings. He accomplished this by blending a loose interior monologue with another effective literary tool of modernist literature: stream of consciousness. The voices of his narrators are ambiguous and interrupted, showing the fragmented modern self in a changing urban city trapped in a monotonous life.

In his collection of poetry Uninvited Yakup published in 1966, Cansever explores the theme of alienation through the means of dramatic monologue. Similar to How Am I Ruhi Bey and in Women Playing Bezique, a long poem in this collection uses the dramatic monologue to problematize the emotional disassociation and isolation of an individual in a modern urban environment. Cansever himself remarked that “the prevailing reality in Uninvited Yakup is alienation from start to end.” The poem represents a character named Yakup who symbolizes, as Cansever commented, “a person who is marginalized, belittled and estranged by his society. For this reason, he appears as a type who is alienated to society, humans, and himself.” Accordingly, throughout the poem, Yakup reveals his confusion about his self-identity, his disoriented perception of himself, and alienation from himself and society in these repeated lines: “I don’t know”: “I don’t know / I don’t know, I don’t know / I, Yusuf, did I say Yusuf? No, Yakup / I get confused sometimes.” The narrator’s confusion about his identity is not only expressed in his words but displayed through the change of voice. In some lines in the poem, his first-person narrative voice appears to be replaced by the voice of the third-person singular narrator.
However, the whole poem makes it clear that the voice is not someone else’s but Yakup’s own voice from the very beginning to end:

I come from seeing the frogs
Said, Yakup. Told this, three times himself
They were sitting on a table
I come from there.21

This change in voice emphasizes Yakup’s confusion, split personality, and dissociation from himself and society. His relationship with his selfhood and others rests ultimately on a lack of communication and alienation. He repeatedly says that nobody called him:

I, Yakup, an ordinary form of every calling
I haven’t been called yet
Nobody called out to me like “Yakup!”
Yakup!
No one called me so that I could turn back and look
And I could drop out dead and rotten water out of me
I could throw worn-out papers in my pockets
Then I could wash myself.22

Yakup reduces his entire existence into a single act: being uninvited or uncalled. As if he is called, he will become someone else, maybe a complete self. Being uncalled, on the other hand, represents his true self, fragmented and alienated in an urbanized city.

Turgut Uyar (1927–1985) is another prolific poet of the Second New Wave who employed dramatic monologue in his poetry. His early poems use rhyme, and the meaning is easily grasped. Beginning from the second half of the 1950s, he abandons clear diction. He employs modernist devices extensively in 1959’s The Most Beautiful Arabia of the World, which is widely acknowledged as one of the most prominent texts of the Second New Wave. There, Uyar replaces the persevering and diligent countrymen of the earlier books with a crowd of idle onlookers of the city. Accordingly, the hopeful atmosphere of the early poems is replaced with a gloomy one. Like Cansever, Uyar’s main concern during this period was to impersonalize the poetic diction. Initially, his linguistic “solution” to “the problem” was the voice of plural first-person instead of singular first-person:

I was thinking there was an issue in poetry that I believed I had to deal with for a long time, I found it recently, kept it waiting to make sure of its authenticity: To liberate the poetry from the single point of view of “I.” At least in terms of the form, the expression. That’s why I hadn’t been writing for a while. Whatever I think, how I think, singular first-person came to my mind. Then I solved it. I nourish the first-person plural and speak with it. Maybe I can get rid of that selfish singular. I do not discredit it, though. I wore it off. It would eventually bring “I” to the dead end. I’m on the edge of that predicament.23

Uyar’s comments illustrate how he consciously rejected the use of the first-person singular pronouns in his poetry due to the dominance of the lyrical “I.” The first-person plural pronoun “we” provided additional opportunities for him to represent alienated urban individuals.
and helped him distance his own voice while producing poetry. The “we” reminds the reader that the overlap of the speaker and the poet should not be taken for granted, a feature that the contemporary reader of Turkish poetry in the 1950s was not accustomed to. The first poem for which Uyar used this mode of expression was “Night with Deer” in his collection *The Most Beautiful Arabia of the World*.

But nothing was frightening there  
Only everything was made of nylon  
And when we died, we died in thousands against the sun  
But before we found the night with deer  
We were all afraid like children

A sudden negative beginning in the opening line with the word “but” or “yet” (halbuki) implies the poem begins in the middle of the narration. The obscurity of time and surroundings enhances the gloomy atmosphere depicted here. The poem never reveals clearly who the speaking “we” is exactly and this remains unclear throughout the poem. Yet it implies that “we” impersonates silent crowds of people trapped and vanished in the halls of history: “First we dug into the earth / And vanished / From gladiators and the cogs of wild machines / From giant cities / Staying hidden and fighting / We saved the night with deer.” The poem itself, in this respect, is a dystopian vision of humanity where urbanization is represented with the concrete images of “nylon” and “asphalt.” These industrial images strikingly symbolize the last phase of the alienation of a human to his/her own nature. The image of the “night with deer” manifests a romantic revelation that would “redeem” the anonymous “us” from time, the time of the industrial age. “Night with Deer” compensates the darkness of “gladiators and the cogs of wild machines” with its wildness and greenness in “far off forests”: “You should all know the night with deer / In far off forests wild and green / Sun sinking slowly over the asphalt road / Redeeming us all from time.” Uyar puts forward the “we” as the narrator instead of the lyrical “I,” but “Night with Deer” ends up with a first-person pronoun: “And I lean forward to kiss myself on the cheek.” This isolated last line, in fact, demonstrates the impossibility of “we” regarding the theme of the poem. No matter how much the subject strives to be part of “we,” s/he is destined to be alone where even an action requiring reciprocity, like kissing, is done on one’s own.

Aside from “Night with Deer” and a few lyric poems, the larger portion of *The Most Beautiful Arabia of the World* represents the accounts of an alienated character, Yekta of Akçaburgaz. Consisting of episodes that are not always interrelated, this fragmented section of the book encompasses multiple narrators. The first part tells of Yekta’s defense against an immoral offense he appears to have committed. He was invited to the house of a married couple, Sinan and Gülşeyz. He had a sexual relationship with Gülşeyz, but Sinan caught the couple and brought them into the court. The narrative begins after Yekta hears the court verdict. The poem is told in a dramatic monologue that Yekta speaks to himself to justify his betrayal of Sinan. In the next episode, Yekta is married to a woman named Hümeyle this time and their marriage suffers from a monotonous life. Dissatisfied with his unhappy marriage, Yekta nurtures sexual desire for his sister-in-law, Hümeyle’s sister, Azra. Even though Yekta presents it as a love story, in fact the source of these desires come from his dissatisfaction with life. Thus, Azra is nothing more than a desired object to get rid of his boredom and anxiety. In the end, he seduces Azra, betrays his wife, and marches off, finally leaving both Hümeyle and Azra behind. Throughout the poem, Yekta does not appear persuasive since he tells his story from his own perspective. Since the
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The poem establishes Yekta as an unreliable narrator, the reader is never sure whether he is telling the truth or not. The dramatic monologue here thus serves for Uyar to create an inconsistent and ambiguous narrative that represents troubled, isolated, alienated, vulnerable, contradictory, and libidinous characters.

Uyar’s long poems with dramatic monologues enable him to elaborate on the chaotic psychology of the character in depth. His obscure style presenting events allusively confuses and demands much from the reader to discover what happened and why, also functioning as a means for the reader’s appreciation of his poetic creation. The reader is invited to the realm of disconnected images and thoughts enhanced by ungrammatical language signifying the stream of consciousness. The poem asks its reader to identify with the narrator’s self-scrutiny. At some point in the poem, Yekta finds himself isolated and lost amid the crowd, becoming nothing but a number:

We are gas consumers in the city
My subscriber number is 44741, I don’t know the others’
We buy papers and read, bread and eat
We pay on the first day of the month.27

Being nothing but a number symbolizes Yekta’s absolute alienation from his own self-identity. Feeling an external pressure to comply with the unwritten rules of daily life, like paying bills, creates a sense of mechanized life. This new order destroys the sense of individual uniqueness so much so that the modern subject ultimately loses her/his inner unity. A constant feeling of horror and a sense of entrapment are inevitable outcomes when the city becomes a monster with a dreadful roar that preys on the modern subject, as represented by Yekta: “The roar of the city was behind me, I used to suspect / Sometimes I used to suspect as such, then / Horrors and sweats lean against me.”28 The poem impersonally dramatizes the tragedy of the modern subject in the personality of Yekta, who rejects coming to terms with the bewildering environment of the contemporary city.

As seen in this poem of Uyar, the success of the Second New Wave was to combine stylistic novelty with the power of representing modern subjects overwhelmed by the routines of modern urban life. Orhan Koçak points out that these poets saw a potential in the allusiveness of language to represent this new subjectivity shaped by a modern experience of the city.29 The stylistic novelty and the use of allusive language permitted the Second New Wave poets to represent the most intimate inner thoughts and complex experiences of the alienated urban individuals in their poetry. In Uyar’s poem, Yekta’s attempt at self-justification does not eradicate his sense of guilt completely. This creates tension in the reader between sympathy and judgment. Uyar’s poem does not demand his readers view reality from the perspective of an immoral character. He problematizes the distinction between moral and immoral by showing such moral distinctions as ambiguous and relative. This ambiguous and inconsistent narration is supported by another narrative in the poem where Yekta is depicted as a character trapped in a love triangle. Unlike the earlier episode, here it is his wife Adile, not Yekta, who commits adultery. This complex content, the ambiguous attitude towards moral values in the three sub-narratives, is consistent with the form of the poem as a whole, which ends without clear closure thereby leaving its themes and problems unresolved. This is not peculiar to Uyar’s poem but is one of the most defining characteristic functions of the dramatic monologue evident in Second New Wave poetry which attempted to represent the naked experiences of the alienated individuals of modern urban settings without providing a resolution.
Conclusion

Starting in the 1950s, almost all of the modernist poets of the Second New Wave shared the same technique of representing the sense of alienation in poetry through new poetic abstractions and techniques. This caused them to be harshly criticized as being “elitist, individualist, and detached from the people, their lives and language” by some poets and critics in the highly politicized atmosphere in Turkey after the 1960 military coup.30 However, when one thinks of the close connection between alienation and urbanism, one clearly sees poetry with the theme of alienation is a political act itself. This is indeed evident in the Second New Wave poetry’s relevance with one of the recent political upheavals in Turkey, the Gezi Park protests of 2013 in Turkey. The nationwide protests broke out against the government after an urban plan was announced to rebuild the Ottoman-era Taksim Military Barracks on the site of Taksim Gezi Park, one of the remaining green sites in the Istanbul city center, in June 2013. As E. Atilla Aytekin effectively argues, poetry left its mark on these protests because poetic “verses were written down on walls as graffiti, put up as signs, posted as tweets or Facebook status updates or simply recited in spaces of protest.” That these verses fundamentally belong to the Second New Wave poets, “not socialist realist poets,” clearly underscores the Second New Wave poetry’s revolutionary relevance to society and politics as “an aesthetic political act” in the twenty-first century.31

The verses of the Second New Wave poets on walls and on social media during the Gezi protests were mostly single lines quoted from the short lyric poems of the poets. For example, “We may both rejoice, let’s look at the sky” by Turgut Uyar became one of the most shared lines among the protesters. Thematically, this shows that the revolutionary characteristics of their poems are still valid today. However, as discussed throughout this study, poets like Edip Cansever and Turgut Uyar took a further step in radically changing poetic form by employing dramatic monologues. A new experience of urban life needed a radical remaking of forms and techniques in representing this new reality and dramatic monologue was the most effective poetic device to respond to this new poetic challenge. Although these dramatic poems are not many in number compared to the lyrical poems produced by the Second New Wave poets, they became their most characteristic works which are still widely read in Turkey.

Notes

3 Ibid., 25.
4 Ayşe Öncü and Çağlar Keyder, Istanbul and the Concept of World Cities (Istanbul: Window, 1993), 15. 
5 Ibid.  
6 Ibid., 16–17.
10 Ibid.  


ÖNCÜ, AYSÈ, and KEDİYER ÇAĞLAR. *İstanbul and the Concept of World Cities*. Istanbul: Window, 1993.

