

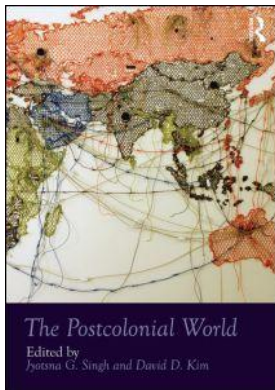
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Queers In-Between

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PART II

POSTCOLONIAL DESIRES



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CHAPTER FIVE

QUEERS IN-BETWEEN

Globalizing sexualities, local resistances



Abdulhamit Arvas

I

The 2012 Turkish movie *Zenne Dancer* (dir. Alpay and Binay) narrates the real-life story of Ahmet Yildiz, a Kurdish youth, who, at the age of 26, was shot dead allegedly by his father in Istanbul because of his aberrant sexual orientation.¹ Deriving from the Persian word *zen* [woman], and also evoking one of the historical characters appearing in Turkish theatrical shadow plays like *Karagoz* from the fifteenth century onwards, *zenne* refers to a man in drag; and today the word is used for campy male belly dancers in the Turkish language. The movie presents Ahmet and his *zenne* friend, Can, as victims of social, familial, and state violence. The story of the two “queer” men reaches its climax when they try to acquire an official exemption from their military service that is obligatory for all “healthy” males in Turkey.² For Can and Ahmet, there is only one possible way to avoid this service: undergoing an interview with military doctors to prove their “homosexuality” by adopting extremely flamboyant and feminine manners during the interview, and providing the military officials with photos of themselves having sex as evidence for their *pasif* [passive] sexual behavior.³ After being diagnosed as “psychosexually disordered” by the military doctors, and forced to come out to his father as *ibne*, the leading character Ahmet is shot dead by his father to save the honor (*namus*) of the family right before his European boyfriend Daniel was to “save” him by taking him to Europe.⁴

The movie not only evinces the everyday lives and struggles of queer people, but also invites us to consider the complexities of different queer subjectivities (i.e. *ibne*, *zenne*) that coexist simultaneously in contemporary Turkey. In this essay, I explore how these struggles and perceptions of sexual identities are interlinked with the historically changing sexual discourses as they have been shaped by state policies, nationalism, globalization, and westernization. Going back to the Ottoman modernization as the primary means of adopting western sexual identities in the nineteenth century, I propose to map out a genealogy of different sexual identities to better highlight indigenous terms, categories, and models as well as a blend of historical continuities and ruptures in Turkey.⁵ In the nineteenth century, there occurred an epistemological shift in Ottoman sexual attitudes by which the object of sexual intercourse gained

utmost significance with the adoption of western medical and moral discourses as a result of the process of westernization movements and modernization endeavors of the reformers, who were mostly educated in the European cosmopolitan centers. The newly introduced western conceptions of sexuality did not eradicate earlier conceptualizations, but merged with conventional understandings of sexuality in Ottoman Turkey. Hence two different sexual logics – psychosexual identities (European), and a penetration-based sexual matrix (Ottoman) – have since then coalesced into a hegemonic sexual discourse in contemporary Turkey that marginalizes all non-normative acts and subjects. Western sexual identities such as the homosexual, as mentioned above, traveled from Europe to Turkey, gaining a new momentum by amalgamating with already-existing categories and concepts. They crossed borders with their own epistemological luggage including medical, moral, psychological implications, and blended with indigenous identities and practices, be it cultural, social, performative, erotic, or sexual.

Contemporary films are interesting case studies because while they are mainly about the present, they nevertheless sharply illuminate these historical ruptures, shifts, and identity politics when placed in a historical context. They also show local resistances against as well as subversions of the hegemonic discourses. Ahmet's and Can's attachment with native categories like *zenne* and *ibne*, and their performance of the effeminate to get away with military service are exemplary in showing how modern western discourses are redeployed, twisted, and reused by queers for their own goals. While I focus particularly on the movie *Zenne* in this essay, I also trace numerous contemporary representations of queer people in film and literature within the Turkish context such as Kutlug Ataman's *Lola+Bilidikid* (1999), Atif Yilmaz's *Gece, Melek ve Bizim Çocuklar* [*Night, Angel and Our Kids*] (1994), and Perihan Magden's recent novel, *Ali and Ramazan* (2010). In my exploration of these representations, I particularly underscore the specificities of sexual differences, sexual subjectivities, and their specific forms of historicity as I highlight the sexual conceptualizations and perceptions that resist the prevailing Euro-American sexual discourses based on identity categories in accordance with the sexual object choice (i.e. gay, lesbian).

Specifically, I focus on the Turkish experience of queer sexualities and their complex relationship to European history and to contemporary Euro-American discourses because Turkey stands out as a unique space that is *neither* a postcolonial state nor a European country. It is a space *in between* borders, be it national or geographical. It is at a geographical crossroads between the so-called East and West and between Middle-Eastern and European traditions, blurring the lines between these dichotomies. And while evoking the conditions of postcoloniality, these blurred lines probe conceptual borders between Islam and Christianity, local and global, colonizer and colonized, or for the focus of this essay, sexual identities and acts. Considering Turkish sexual culture and experience in terms of in-betweenness, therefore, disrupts such conceptual borders and dichotomous thinking.⁶ Furthermore, queerness located in in-betweenness can be productively investigated through the postcolonial concept of hybridity.⁷ Considering hybridity as operating on a theoretical and political level to challenge any national cultural hegemony in postcolonial contexts, William Spurlin astutely makes a connection between hybridity and queerness: "Hybridity, conceived as 'in-betweenness,' has particular relevance to queerness both as an intellectual strategy and as a political praxis since queerness disrupts and exceeds the coherence of

normative citizenship tied to the reproduction of heteronormative social relations.”⁸ Following this connection between hybridity and queerness, and locating queer in a hybrid space, I present queerness as a site of resistance to the Turkish national cultural hegemony that is maintained by the military enforcement of heteronormative nationalism.

Indeed like hybridity, queerness also challenges any stable borders and fixed sexual identities by stressing fluidity, both in concept and practice. As David Halperin defines, “Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers. It is an identity without an essence.”⁹ The queer resistance to stable sexual identification and the hybrid instability of a cultural and geographical belonging, therefore, productively bring together the postcolonial and the queer; *both* postcolonial theory and queer studies have challenged and expanded critical, cultural, and literary studies in the last few decades. Going back to poststructuralist and particularly Foucauldian methods of analyses, both schools of anti-foundational thought and criticism have questioned power relations by rendering as their object of analysis such notions as the state, nation, race, oppression, gender, and sexuality. Studying non-western sexualities, local, indigenous sexual subjectivities resisting western identity politics, and transnational interactions in varying sexual groups have revived sexuality studies as well as postcolonial approaches, especially in their intersections with transnational, diaspora, and globalization studies. While queer scholars started to trace how racial, colonial, and sexual discourses intersect, postcolonial scholars investigated sexual oppression and Eurocentric sexual transformations in postcolonial states by tracing, and oftentimes blurring, the lines between dichotomies like local/global, imported/indigenous, civilized/uncivilized, identity/act, and liberation/repression by providing different sexual epistemologies at work in colonized spaces.¹⁰ Furthermore, quite typically, in many of these works, transnational perspectives and comparative approaches that focus on the circulations, encounters, and movements of people, ideas, and discourses stand out as the significant modes of analyses.¹¹ Dennis Altman, for example, discusses how American sexual identities are in circulation in today’s globalizing world, and becoming global identities.¹² Elizabeth A. Povinelli and George Chauncey edited a special issue in 1999 on “Thinking Sexuality Transnationally” in *GLQ* proposing new ways of sexual analysis from a transnational lens that highlights transnational sexual movements and the effect of “translocal mobility” on sexual culture and histories of a given place.¹³ Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, in their “Global Identities: Theorizing Transnational Studies of Sexuality” in *GLQ*, have suggested that western-born identities emerging from the colonial era became global in modernity, and highlighted the interactions and transformations in different sexual cultures when they come into contact.¹⁴ Most recently, Joseph Boone’s *The Homoerotics of Orientalism*, historicizing the significance of cross-cultural encounters and interactions in shaping sexual notions in Europe and the Middle East, demonstrates how sexualities circulate across borders. These transcultural queer approaches, therefore, propose to focus on circulating sexual identities/subjectivities beyond national borders and attest how transcultural influences operate in the formation of sexualities in any given context.¹⁵

While these scholars have stressed the significance of a transnational approach to sexuality studies and the effects of globalization on indigenous sexual cultures,

postcolonial critique has more specifically uncovered how imperialistic and neocolonial motivations operate in globalizing sexualities as a new form of cultural imperialism.¹⁶ Joseph Massad's *Desiring Arabs*, for example, is one such exemplary study that challenges orientalizing and exoticizing western approaches to Middle Eastern sexualities, and raises serious concerns against universalist LGBT activism in non-western societies. Exploring recent oppression of gay men in the Middle East, particularly the 2001 Queen Boat case in Egypt, Massad notes that there exists no "gay" identity in these cultures, and LGBT activism, or the "Gay International" as he calls it, transfers, in a colonizing move, European sexual identities to these societies without taking into consideration its negative oppressive effects. He states that

by inciting discourse on homosexual and gay and lesbian rights and identities, the epistemology, nay, the very ontology of gayness is instituted in such discourse, which could only have two reactions to the claims of universal gayness – support them or oppose them without ever questioning their epistemological underpinnings.¹⁷

Massad argues that imposing western sexual identities on other societies, wherein a gay or lesbian identity does not exist ontologically or epistemologically, destroys native sexual culture and practices in these places, and reduces them into certain sexual categorizations (i.e. gay). That reduction raises resistance in the native culture against those imported sexual categories; and hence the oppression and punishment of these persons identified as gay. The gay rights discourse of the "Gay International" to "liberate" Arabs from oppression is just another form of cultural imperialism (white man saving brown boys), for Massad.

While I agree with Massad that there are some LGBT groups or scholars who ignore cultural nuances and sensitivities by approaching Arab and Muslim queer subjects via essentialist, orientalist, and imperialist lenses, I must also add that we cannot see all "gay" and "lesbian" identities in these regions simply as an effect of neocolonial impositions of western sexual paradigms in orientalist terms. An individual's will to choose, identify, and desire cannot be ignored; claiming a West-originated identity is not simply a means of having complicity with the imperialist or the neocolonialist expectations and norms. It is worth noting that "the oppression and punishment of these persons identified as gay" is also a western practice that is adopted by the so-called East, and must be seen as a repressive, normalizing, non-native form of punishing non-normative sexual acts and desires, even while it may play out in different ways in the East and West. The homosexual is an adopted western notion, so too is homophobia. As Valerie Traub astutely puts in her critique of Massad, noting "the cultural imperialism implicit in any unidirectional importation of a conceptual apparatus derived largely from European and Anglo-American perspectives" should not lead to create absolute binaries that categorize and exclude sexually repressed people.¹⁸ Massad's analysis that ignores human agency and complexities of cross-cultural and transnational transferences thus risks generating another East/West binary. Strict dichotomies between the so-called East and West, as Spurlin reminds us,

[do] not entertain the possibilities of reciprocal interchange either in same-sex sexual relations between Arab Muslim men or as a more general form of cultural

mediation through international travel, the media, the internet, and social networking sites, the latter of which were key forms of communication and textual sites of the democratic struggle in the recent Arab Spring movements.¹⁹

Moreover, considering the long history of transcultural encounters and interactions, and the circulation of people and ideas between the two halves of the world, particularly in the Mediterranean, one cannot but ask, is there a native, pure, stable culture untouched by other cultures?

In his critique of Massad, Spurlin calls for a comparative approach that highlights the specificities and historicities of cultural and sexual differences:

Reading culture as circulatorial, and as always already relational and mediated, can help destabilize and queer fixed cultural identities and challenge national cultural hegemonies both in the West and in the postcolonial world, and expose new sites of heterogeneity and difference. Examining the spaces and the movements between national borders enables a tearing in the fabric of nationalism and new ways of exposing and loosening its hegemonic hold.²⁰

Spurlin resists an approach that analyzes indigenous sexual acts and subjectivities as self-contained and autonomous; instead, he stresses “relationality” as a more relevant and fruitful basis for analyzing sexual differences and the indigenous societies and cultures they emerge from. Similarly, in their introduction to *Cinsellik Muammasi: Türkiye’de Queer Kultur ve Muhalefet* [The Sexuality Conundrum: Queer Culture and Dissidence in Turkey], Cuneyt Cakirlar and Serkan Delice propose to revisit “queer analytics” as a response to Massad: “Queer goes beyond a monolithic East/West dichotomy. It makes it possible to rethink history(ies) of sexuality, to produce creative methodological approaches so as to understand relationality between local and global sexualities.”²¹ Queer, therefore, provides us tools to generate frameworks to work within without being trapped in a universalist vs. localist matrix. As regards rethinking histories of sexuality and reciprocities between cultures through a queer historicist methodology, Joseph Boone calls for a “contrapuntal” reading strategy that puts into dialogue sexual discourses from different spatial contexts to challenge the Orient/Occident divide.²² Such a method of analysis, Boone shows, illuminates the myriad forms of sexuality and eroticism in Europe and the Middle East that have contributed mutual constructions of sexualities in these spaces while simultaneously challenging ideologically created dichotomies.

Following these critical arguments about sexuality and eroticism as plural and transcultural, I attempt to historically map out indigenous sexual discourses in Turkey and how these discourses have shifted, and transformed into myriad forms as a result of westernization and flourishing nationalist discourses from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. In what follows, I particularly focus on the demarcation and interaction between discourses of sexuality as an identity depending on the sexual object-choice and sexuality as a hierarchy depending on active/passive or penetrator/penetrated dichotomy. And following Spurlin, I further stress the inevitability of a certain cross-pollination of influences between the East and the West in my exploration of contemporary representations of queer people in Turkey within a frame that observes the historical shifts and local specificities in their relation to

transnational, transcultural, and globalizing interactions. I suggest that the influence of Euro-American sexual notions is multi-faceted, going beyond neocolonial imposition, orientalist fantasizing, and globalizing imperatives. Sometimes these notions are adopted by the state and imposed on the people; other times these notions are claimed and deployed by queer people to resist and subvert hegemonic heteronormative repressions. Tracing the historical contexts henceforth reveals the shifting ideological dynamics of such transferences, which promises to productively intervene into the ongoing queer-postcolonial dialogue.

II

Exploring the historical shifts within changing perceptions of sexuality, scholars who work on Ottoman sexualities have depicted a sexual culture that liberally accommodated various forms of sexual acts and desires, and the expression of them – particularly same-sex male desire – in pre-modern Ottoman society. Walter Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı's groundbreaking work, *The Age of Beloveds*, for example, presents a history of early modern Ottoman sexuality with a focus on contemporaneous European practices. They show that same-sex sexual practices were a part of the early modern Ottoman society, and that particularly, same-sex male love was the main trope in Ottoman literary works from the fifteenth to the late seventeenth century. As they state, "In Ottoman society, sexual or erotic relations between men and men and boys were seldom punished, especially if they were carried on in private."²³ So more than the sex of the sexual object choice, it was the sexual role that determined the societal norms of sexual relations:

in the patriarchal Ottoman society it was a given that older men should dominate young men and boys, a man could take the role of passive beloved in his youth and then, on being recognized as an adult (symbolized in the poetry by the growth of a full, dark beard), he could move into a dominant role without being stigmatized or censured in any way.²⁴

Similarly, Ze'evi posits that

the early Ottoman attitude to male "passive" intercourse was one of indifference as long as the hierarchy was sustained. This was some people's preference, it was part of the spectrum of normal sexual behavior, and it was not to be considered deviant in any way.²⁵

However, with the impact of westernization, this Ottoman sexual norm started to change in the nineteenth century.

Western medical discourses, which dissected sexual acts and desires, and thus led to the birth of "the homosexual" as a pathologized identity, were adopted by the Ottomans as a result of the westernization – and as some would consider a part of the colonial civilizing mission – movement in the mid-nineteenth century.²⁶ Thus ironically, mimicking the white male colonizer's dominant image, heterosexuality was now the norm. Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, a leader of the nineteenth century reforms, for

example, reports in his autobiographical *Ma'ruzat* that he writes for Sultan Abdulhamit II the salient change taking place in the moral conduct of people in 1850s:

As the number of women-lovers increased, that of boy-lovers decreased. It is as if the people of Sodom [the sodomites] disappeared off the face of the earth. The well-known love for and relationships with the young men in Istanbul has transformed to young women as *the natural order of things*. We don't see people like Kamil or Ali Pashas or those similar to them who were well known as boy-lovers in the higher offices. Yet, Ali Pasha had always tried to hide his love for boys because of the disapproval of the foreigners.²⁷

Cevdet Pasha acknowledges a shift in the sexual conducts of people, a move from same-sex relations to cross-sex ones, from homoeroticism to heteroeroticism in Istanbul, which he calls “the natural order of things.” Cevdet Pasha’s use of the order of things sets forth a categorization of sexualities by declaring procreative sex as natural and as the norm, hence identifying all non-procreative sexual inclinations as deviant.

This nineteenth century paradigm shift in sexual discourse generated selective integration of certain western discourses (sexual, gendered, racial) into the discourses of the westernizing state at the height of European colonialism. In the process of prompting this new “natural” order of things, textual materials that explicitly addressed matters related to sex such as dream interpretations, medical and legal texts, and shadow theaters, were all censored. Marriage and the family became institutionalized, and with a shifting emphasis on heteronormativity, literary representations now promoted monogamous heterosexuality.²⁸ By eradicating homoerotic friendship, affection and its affective expression – dominant in the pre-modern Ottoman culture – heteronormativity replaced the conventional homoerotic tone in literary works. Moreover, these changes suggested a desire not only to be like westerners, but also to be liked by westerners, as the second part of Cevdet Pasha’s accounts strikingly shows: “Ali Pasha had always tried to hide his love for boys because of *the disapproval of the foreigners*.” Ali Pasha’s attempts to have his homoerotic affairs in secret to avoid the critique and disapproval of (western) foreigners – travelers, diplomats, ambassadors – indicates how the changes from a homoerotic to heteroerotic matrix also occurred on the level of collective self-fashioning as a result of interactions with the Europeans. Importantly, considering the colonial, orientalist European narratives that attributed sodomy and all other sexual deviances to the Ottomans from the sixteenth century onwards (a civilized, moral West vs. a backward, immoral East), we can see how the nineteenth century Ottomans were well aware of these stereotypical representations, and keeping their guard up under the European gaze in order to prove them wrong about their presumed sexual practices.²⁹ This self-transformation and auto-correction to avoid orientalist European lenses was most visible in the new Turkish republic that defined itself as a western, civilized, modern, and national state in contrast to the backward Ottoman past. Indeed, heterosexualization reached its peak with the newly born nation-state Turkish Republic’s nationalist discourses of sexuality, which attributed all non-normative sexualities to the imperial “perverted” Ottomans the way orientalist Europeans had done.³⁰

Interestingly, rather than predominantly a colonial or imperialistic imposition by the West, this history of changing sexual discourses suggests that the changes taking place in Turkey were also self-imposing, and consistent and concurrent with widespread indigenous cultural concepts and trends. As Spurlin persuasively states,

just as the self is bound, indeed formed, by social, ideological and historical constraints, no cultural or national identity, as part of its movement through history, can exist untouched by the circulation of cultures, presently occurring at increasingly higher speeds across the globe.³¹

In this circulation, the imported concept or identity, I would argue, fuses with native ones and attains new significations. As I discuss in regards to the contemporary Turkish movies in the following part, *homoseksualite* was imported into Turkey as a pathological notion, yet has been applied only to the passive party in accordance with conventional, traditional (Turkish) sexual culture. And as I discussed elsewhere, parallel to the European experience that built the abnormal pathologized homosexual identity upon older categories of sodomite, catamite, or effeminate, Turkish discourses adopted the homosexual as a new category blending it with older categories like *gulampare* (boy-lover), and *ibne*.³² Subjectivities like *zenne*, *ibne* are now medically *the homosexual*, while the penetrating party in male–male relations has remained the normal in a temporal phase.

III

Adopting European medical discourses and sexual identities and conflating them with varying indigenous sexual categories, from the nineteenth century onwards, the contemporary nationalist hegemonic discourse in Turkey still sustains the conventional sexual matrix of penetrating/penetrated to identify deviant, unhealthy men. In the Turkish experience with modern sexual discourses, the military state has been instrumental in pathologizing and rejecting non-normative sexualities. As the militarist practice evinces in the movie *Zenne*, the determining factor for *homoseksualite* is not identity, or self-identification, but the *pasif* sexual role in a sexual act. The movie *Zenne* strikingly illustrates how sexual identities and discourses are intricately interlinked with Turkish traditions, history, and state policies as well as interactions with the West in this geography. It also shows how young queers in Turkey subvert the hegemonic understanding of sexuality for their own goals by performing these identities the way they are conceived by the state.

The main tension in the movie is produced by the state's intervention via military apparatuses into the protagonists' sexual lives. Ahmet is about to graduate from college, and like all young Turkish men, he has to serve in the military. Yet Ahmet does not want to serve in the military, and he uses "homosexuality," as one of the few ways possible to be exempt from this service, to avoid the military service. In so doing, he needs to prove his homosexuality by completing two steps: posing for a photo while being anally penetrated, and acting in a feminine way. It is obvious that the military, and thus the state, perception of homosexuality – and therefore unhealthy sexuality – is restricted to bottoming effeminate males. Homosexual deviance is thus constituted by the combination of sexual perversion (passive) and gender inversion (feminine).

Feeling humiliated, Ahmet wants his German lover – a photographer, who is aware of Ahmet’s familial oppression and willing to take him to Europe – to photograph him having sex so that he can use these pictures as evidence of his “unhealthy sexuality.” To this end, he transforms his “bear” look into an effeminate one with flamboyant manners and pink jeans. Ahmet plays according to the rules, confirms, and subverts the homosexual identity that the military doctors have in mind for his own goal by easily fashioning himself. He temporarily adopts the very same traits that the militaristic state attributes to the homosexual. He becomes the homosexual that they know of when they see him – *pasif* and feminine. Ahmet therefore succeeds in obtaining an exemption from military service, but as a result of this process, he is publicly “outed” as *ibne*.

Left with no other option, he comes out to his father, crying: “*Ibneyim babo!*” [I am *ibne*, Dad]. Ahmet’s coming out as “*ibne*” also elicits how act-based and identity-based notions of sexuality are conflated into one another. A derogatory slang term of identification (like “faggot”), *ibne* is only used to refer to those male individuals who adopt the receptive role in anal intercourse with other men. More recently, *ibne* has been reclaimed as an identity category by queer people in Turkey.³³ Derived from the medieval notion of *ubna* (unhealthy males who desire to be penetrated by other men), *ibne* uneasily blends sexuality-as-orientation (Ahmet’s coming out), based on the sexual object-choice, with sexuality-as-hierarchy, based on active/passive roles (military perception). *Ibne*, therefore, amalgamates an Arabic-originated word and signification (*ubna*/passive) with a European term and connotation (homosexual/psychosexual identity).³⁴ For the military, Ahmet is considered “homosexual” – unhealthy and effeminate – only when he proves to be penetrated anally. However, a man who is *aktif* [active, top] during sex with another man is not considered as ineligible to do military service as a homosexual man, but is perceived as a healthy man in a temporary homosexual space to be straightened up during the military service.³⁵

More specifically, the *mise-en-scène* during the interview with the military physicians is telling as regards the humiliation imposed on Ahmet by the doctors as well as their utterance of what it is means to be a “man.” When they ask Ahmet what his occupation is, he replies that he is a *zenne* (although we know he is not, but he knows *zenne* will easily be associated with homosexuality), upon which one of the doctors provokes: “Would a real man [*erkek adam*] dance, boy?” Following this evocation of what “a real man” is comes the scene in which they look at the sexual photographs of Ahmet: The camera focuses on their faces, reflecting their disgust as well as amusement. Seeing the photographs, they approve his exemption at once. The military oppression over sexually marginalized people presented by these scenes shows the extent to which the nationalist Turkish discourse of military service is sexualized and gendered.³⁶ Military space becomes an arena to determine what is normal, to mark the penetrated party as unhealthy, and to straighten up those who are not homosexual enough (i.e. *aktif*). Also, the medical aspect attached to this military vision (the military officers diagnosing homosexuality as a disorder are also medical doctors in the army) reflects the medical pathologization of (homo)sexuality that Michel Foucault explores in *The History of Sexuality*. Referring to the West in the nineteenth century, Michel Foucault points out, “the homosexual was now a species.”³⁷ Foucault and other social constructivists investigated the birth of homosexuality, as we

know it today, and have posited that “the homosexual” as an identity, and thus a homo/hetero binary, is a modern bourgeois concept.³⁸ Of course what constituted this modern sexuality is *scientia sexualis* of the nineteenth century, generated by writings of sexologists such as *Psychopathia Sexualis* by Richard von Krafft-Ebbing, which pathologized and gave birth to conceptualizations of psychosexual orientations.³⁹

As the movie illustrates, homosexuality as an aberrant, pathologized form of sexuality is still perceived as a medical disorder today by the militaristic nationalist cultural hegemony, though this understanding of sexuality differs from and complicates the post-nineteenth century western conceptions by attaching homosexuality, in accordance with conventional penetration-based sexual culture, to acts rather than desire, and to a single sexual role, *pasif* (bottom). The movie, therefore, highlights the military and medical perception of the homosexual as flamboyant, feminine, and bottom/passive in accordance with the mainstream public perception of *ibne*. It also displays that the state’s perception of homosexuality depends on the framework in which a man may reject a homosexual identity and be considered “healthy” as long as he is the penetrator; hence, the coexistence of western medical categorization (homo/hetero) and conventional, traditional sexual conceptions (active/passive).

As many other contemporary queer representations show, the active/passive matrix does not solely function in military spaces. Many individuals internalize this matrix, and resist any form of sexual identification be it because of an internalized heteronormativity, or non-identitarian conceptualization of sexuality. Kutlug Ataman’s *Lola+Bilidikid*, a German-Turkish co-production, for example, addresses complex queer subjectivities in immigrant Turkish communities in Germany while presenting varying Turkish approaches to same-sex sexual relations.⁴⁰ The main character Billy the Kid (*Bilidikid*) is a rent boy, a hustler having sex with men for money. Despite having a love relationship with another man, Lola, who cross-dresses for drag shows, Billy resists a sexual identity. He wants Lola to undergo a sex change operation, to be a “woman” so that they can have a happy family away from public surveillance. When Lola protests by saying “Why can’t we be happy as we are” and asks him why Billy himself does not undergo a sex change operation, he replies, “because I am man, you are not.” Billy’s understanding of sexuality is simply based on a sexual hierarchy of the dominating and the dominated, and a gendered matrix of man/woman. As long as he is the penetrating one, the penetrated is simply a “woman,” or in Lola’s case, a woman in a male body. This is his first advice when he meets Murat, Lola’s younger gay brother: “Kestaneyi çizdirme, tamam mi?” [Do not get your ass fucked, ok?]. Murat should never confess it to others even if he feels he is gay, says Billy. A man is still a man no matter where he puts “it” (his penis) in, he advises. Billy’s addressing Lola as wife/woman fits into the hegemonic discourse of gender-based sex as we see in *Zenne*. Yet although Billy seems to internalize heteronormativity, his having sex with other men for money, his sincere friendship with other sexually transgressive individuals, a desire to live a life with Lola (which means to dream of a nuclear family with children), and his passionate love for him/her altogether create a challenge to enforced heteronormativity as well. As an immigrant minority from a lower class, Billy uses a gender-based discourse as a reaction to identitarian European policies.

The active/passive demarcation, Billy makes, is actually a common trope in many other Turkish filmic representations as well. The movie *Gece, Melek ve Bizim Çocuklar* [*Night, Angel and Our Kids*] by Atif Yılmaz, shows a similar tension between

Hakan, a hustler, and Serap, a female prostitute.⁴¹ Hakan's articulation of disgust for queer people early in the movie is later contrasted with his own sexual adventures with other men for money. Hakan's approach to sex and sexuality seems to be similar to Billy's. Likewise, in Perihan Magden's recent novel, *Ali and Ramazan*, Ramazan's passionate love for his best friend and lover Ali, or the sexual acts he partakes in with other men for money, is not enough for him to attach himself to a sexual orientation.⁴² These examples from recent gay-themed Turkish representations demonstrate how the military, the state, and the public perception of sexuality is internalized by individuals, and how some people just resist being identified as *gey*, *ibne*, or *homo-seksuel*. This is indeed a serious caution against tendencies to describe these subjects as "gay" because in none of these representations do we hear the word "gay," though the term "gay" has entered in the Turkish language as "gey" for self-identified male homosexuals. These characters (apart from Ahmet of *Zenne*) also reject the label *ibne* because it is stigmatized and attached to the penetrated party. All these representations reflect the fact that anal passivity and femininity are stigmatized and forced to concealment with suppression and prevention. However, Ahmet's coming out as *ibne*, and Can's identification as *zenne* in *Zenne* probes this simplistic matrix, and forces us to consider the nuances of these categories.

As scholars working on Turkish homosexualities have shown, there is no single form of homosexuality.⁴³ Men like Billy, Hakan, and Ramazan, who have sex with other men but resist a sexual identification, be it because of societal repression, heteronormativity, or lack of identity-based conceptualization, are all a part of queer sexualities in contemporary Turkey. While in many suburban places or conservative communities, an active/passive model without psychosexual identities is dominant, nonetheless, *gey* appears as a popular identity category particularly among more educated, westernized, hybrid urban communities.⁴⁴ In urban centers LGBT communities have become more visible by producing publications, forming organizations, actively engaging in politics, and organizing Euro-American style pride events with thousands of attendees every year in Turkey.⁴⁵ Also, as *Zenne* shows, more historical categories like *zenne* are still alive in social life. As Eve Sedgwick asserts, referring to Euro-American sexualities, earlier sexual categories (re)appear within the new ones with "the unrationalized coexistence of different models during the times they coexist."⁴⁶ Indeed, when we focus on "the unrationalized coexistence" of all these forms of sexualities in Turkey, we can see how the traditional models are blended with contemporary Euro-American forms of sexuality and heteronormativity.

A country with European, Asian, and Middle Eastern influences, engaging with western colonial influences but remaining outside European rule, queer Turkish history provides a unique lens on this complex network of influences. For instance, it calls us to account for western constructions of sexuality as *well* as indigenous re-workings and redeployments of and resistances to western sexual categories and forms of (sexual) identities. Therefore when locating the homo/hetero distinction and the emergence of "the homosexual" in West, we should also consider that *not* all sexual identities are rooted in the West and that non-western societies have long histories of complex negotiations with western sexual discourses and categories. Realizing native, indigenous categories and highlighting them in relation to their convergence with western sexual identities is a means to generate a queer resistance to the national cultural hegemony that sees same-sex expressions and practices as aberrant forms of

Euro-American immorality and wickedness. By putting *zenne* and *ibne* at its center, the movie *Zenne*, therefore, creates such a resistance by inviting its audience to place these subjectivities in complex native cultural contexts rather than seeing them all as western homosexuals. Thus, to sum up, in these representations, we can see how sexuality is a historical construct that shifts in accordance with state politics and power dynamics, and yet always in flux, crossing boundaries of the national and transnational, of Ottoman and western, and East and West.

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ENDNOTES

1. *Zenne Dancer*, dir. Caner Alpay and Mehmet Binay (Cam Films, 2012).
2. I am using the word “queer” in this essay as an analytical term to refer to transgressive sexual identities and acts for convenience. The use of this term does not mean refusal or ignorance of LGBT-I identities. Queer as a theoretical concept has long been embraced by Turkish queer academics and activists. As early as 2004, Bogazici University in Istanbul hosted “Queer, Turkey and Identity” conference that brought together academics, students, and activists to create a platform to discuss queer theory and approaches in Turkish context. For more on the deployment of queer and queer culture and dissidence in Turkey, see Cuneyt Cakirlar and Serkan Delice, eds., *Cinsellik Muammasi: Turkiye’de Queer Kultur ve Muhalefet* [The Sexuality Conundrum: Queer Culture and Dissidence in Turkey] (Istanbul: Metis, 2012).
3. I stress active/passive differentiation by using Turkish terms *aktif/pasif* in order to underscore that these terms are used by some individuals to define their sexual orientation. For various other identity terms such as *labunya*, *laço* that are popular among queer people who do not use gay or homosexual as an identification, see Tarik Bereket and Barry D. Adam, “The Emergence of Gay Identities in Contemporary Turkey.” *Sexualities* 9.2 (2006): 131–151.
4. Daniel’s desire to “save” Ahmet by taking him to Germany hints the colonial move of the white man’s saving the native. Ahmet’s first resistance to this invitation by saying “What am I going to do in Germany, Daniel” is a counter-move presenting his desire to stay in his native land. But the danger of losing his life, and the familial oppression pushes him to decide to join Daniel in his trip to Germany. The movie creates a desire for spectators to see him to be saved; but he is shot right before he leaves. A similar European man–Turkish man relation is pervasive in other queer representations as well. In Ferhan Ozpetek’s 1997 film *Hamam* [Turkish Bath], for example, a married Italian man explores his homosexuality/bisexuality with a Turkish boy in a *hamam* [bathhouse] in Istanbul. For more information on the homoerotics of orientalism and queer explorations in the East, see Joseph Boone, “Vacation Cruises: or The Homoerotics of Orientalism.” *PMLA* 110.1 (1995): 89–107.
5. Here I follow the model offered by David Halperin in his *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002). As a response to Eve Sedgwick’s critique of the essentialism vs. social constructivism dichotomy in sexuality studies, Halperin proposes to inquire into the construction of sexual identities before the emergence of sexual orientations and to do this *without* recurring necessarily

- to modern notions of “sexuality” or sexual orientation. For Halperin, tracing a genealogy of sexual identities and practices as well as shifting sexual discourses historically would defamiliarize the homo/hetero demarcation and open up new spaces to understand the construction of modern sexual identities.
6. For more on borders, border crossings, and gender interrelations, see Jane Aaron, Henrice Altink, and Chris Weedon, eds., *Gendering Border Studies* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010); Eithne Luibheid and Lionel Cantu, eds., *Queer Migrations: Sexuality, U.S. Citizenship, and Border Crossings* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2000).
 7. For more on hybridity, see Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994). On hybrid and diasporic identities, see Arif Dirlik, “Bringing History Back In: Of Diasporas, Hybridities, Places, and Histories.” In *Beyond Dichotomies: Histories, Identities, Cultures, and the Challenge of Globalization*, ed. Elisabeth Mubimbe-Boyi (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 93–127.
 8. William Spurlin, “Sexual/Cultural Hybridity in the ‘New’ South Africa: Emergent Sites of Transnational Queer Politics.” In *Gendering Border Studies*, ed. Jane Aaron, Henrice Altink, and Chris Weedon (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010), 208–221.
 9. David Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 62.
 10. Some exemplary works that extend the geographical boundaries of postcolonial and queer approaches by tracing globalization, transnationalism, and sexuality are Jasbir Puar, “Global Circuits: Transnational Sexualities and Trinidad.” *Signs* 26 (2001): 1039–1065; Phillip Brian Harper, Anne McClintock, José Esteban Muñoz and Trish Rosen, eds. *Queer Transxions of Race, Nation, and Gender*. Special Issue of *Social Text* 52–53 (1997); Engin F. Isin and Patricia K. Wood, *Citizenship and Identity* (London: Sage, 1999); Jon Binnie, *Globalization of Sexuality* (London: Sage Publication, 2004); John Champagne, “Transnationally Queer? A Prolegomenon.” *Socialist Review* 27.1/2 (1999): 143–164; Arnaldo Cruz-Malavé and Martin F. Manalansan IV, eds., *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism* (New York: New York University Press, 2002); Saskia E. Wieringa, Evelyn Blackwood, and Abha Bhaiya, eds., *Women’s Sexualities and Masculinities in a Globalizing Asia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Kathryn Babayan and Afsaneh Najmabadi, eds., *Islamicate Sexualities: Translations across Temporal Geographies of Desire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008); Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Berkeley: University of California, 1997); Gayatri Gopinath, *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005); Martin F. Manalansan, *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); Cindy Patton and Benigno Sanchez-Eppler, eds., *Queer Diasporas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); Eng-Beng Lim, *Brown Boys and Rice Queens: Spellbinding Performance in the Asias* (New York: New York University Press, 2013); John C. Hawley, ed., *Post-Colonial, Queer: Theoretical Intersections* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001); Jarrod Hayes, Margaret Higonnet, and William Spurlin, eds., *Comparatively Queer: Interrogating Identities across Time, Crossing Cultures* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), among many others.
 11. Ato Quayson and Girish Daswani note that transnationalism “focuses on various flows and counterflows and multi-striated connections they give rise to” (4). For more on transnationalism and diaspora studies, see Quayson and Daswani, *A Companion to Diaspora and Transnationalism* (Malden: Wiley Blackwell, 2013); Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur, *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader* (Malden: Wiley Blackwell, 2003).
 12. Dennis Altman, “Rupture or Continuity?: The Internalization of Gay Identities.” *Social Text* 48.14.3 (1996): 77–94.

13. Elizabeth A. Povinelli and George Chauncey, "Thinking Sexuality Transnationally: An Introduction." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 5.4 (1999): 439–450.
14. Grewal Inderpal and Caren Kaplan, "Global Identities: Theorizing Transnational Studies of Sexuality." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 7.4 (2001): 663–679.
15. Joseph Boone, *The Homoerotics of Orientalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).
16. For more on the orientalist, colonial, and racial discourses as they intersect with sexual politics, see Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); David L. Eng, Judith Halberstam, and Jose Esteban Munoz, "Introduction, What's Queer About Queer Studies Now?" *Social Text* 23.3–4 (2005): 1–17; Boone, "Vacation Cruises"; William Spurlin, *Imperialism within the Margins: Queer Representations and the Politics of Culture in South Africa* (New York: Palgrave, 2006); Jarrod Hayes, *Queer Nations: Marginal Sexualities in the Maghreb* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Eng-Beng Lim, *Brown Boys and Rice Queens*; Anjali Arondekar, "Border/line Sex: Queer Postcolonialities, or How Race Matters Outside the United States." *Interventions* 7.2 (2005): 236–250.
17. Joseph A. Massad, *Desiring Arabs* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 174.
18. Valerie Traub, "The Past Is a Foreign Country? The Times and Spaces of Islamicate Sexuality Studies." In *Islamicate Sexualities: Translations Across Temporal Geographies of Desire*, ed. Kathryn Babayan and Afsaneh Najmabadi (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 1–40, 14.
19. William J. Spurlin, "Shifting Geopolitical Borders/Shifting Sexual Borders: Textual and Cultural Renegotiations of National Identity and Sexual Dissidence in Postcolonial Africa." *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 13.1 (2013): 69–79, 75.
20. *Ibid.*, 73.
21. *Ibid.*, 27
22. Boone, *The Homoerotics of Orientalism*.
23. Walter G. Andrews and Mehmet Kalpakli, *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2005), 80.
24. *Ibid.*, 49
25. Dror Ze'evi, *Producing Desire: Changing Sexual Discourse in the Ottoman Middle East, 1500–1900* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2006), 39. For overviews on early modern Ottoman sexualities, see Irvin Cemil Schick, "Representation of Gender and Sexuality in Ottoman and Turkish Erotic Literature." *Turkish Studies Association Journal* 28.1–2 (2007): 81–103; Abdulhamit Arvas, "From the Pervert Back to the Beloved: Homosexuality and Ottoman Literary History, 1453–1923." In *Cambridge History of Gay and Lesbian Literature*, ed. Ellen McCallum and Mikko Tuhkanen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 145–163.
26. This changing sexual discourse can be observed in other Islamicate societies. As Leslie Peirce asserts in her essay on Middle Eastern sexuality studies, "the impact of the West on nineteenth-century Middle Eastern society is undeniable, whether by force of intellectual inspiration and imperialist aura or on the ground in the form of colonial administrators, missionaries, commercial agents, governesses, young Muslims returning from European educations, and so on." ("Writing Histories of Sexuality in the Middle East." *The American Historical Review* 114.5 (2009): 1325–1339, 1336). Najmabadi's description of nineteenth century Iran shows similarities with the Ottomans in the process of building a nation-state through a new sexual discourse. For a history of sexuality and the changing discourses in Arabic speaking regions under the Ottoman Empire, see Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches and Men Without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian*

- Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality in Arab-Islamic World, 1500–1800* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago, 2005).
27. Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Ma'ruzat*. Ed. Yusuf Halacoglu (Istanbul: Cagri, 1980), 9, my translation.
 28. See Ze'evi's excellent overview on medical, religious, and legal as well as theatrical changes. For more on heterosexualization in the process of modernization, see Deniz Kandiyoti, "Some Awkward Questions on Women and Modernity in Turkey." In *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, ed. Lila Abu-Lughod (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 270–287; Deniz Kandiyoti, "Patterns of Patriarchy: Notes for an Analysis of Male Dominance in Turkish Society." In *Women in Modern Turkish Society: A Reader*, ed. Sirin Tekeli (London and New Jersey: Zed, 1991), 306–318; Deniz Kandiyoti, "Gendering the Modern: On Missing Dimensions in the Study of Turkish Modernity." In *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, ed. Sibel Bozdogan and Resat Kasaba (Seattle and London: University of Washington, 1997), 133–156.
 29. Some exemplary early modern accounts that attribute sodomy to the Ottomans are Paul Rycaut, *The Present State of Ottoman Empire* (1668; New York: Arno, 1971); Paulus Gouius, *A Shorte Treatise upon the Turkes Chronicles* (London, 1546); Sir Henry Blunt, *A Voyage into the Levant: Being a Brief Relation of a Journey Lately Performed from England . . . With Particular Observations Concerning the Modern Condition of the Turks* (London, 1634); George Sandes, *A Relation of a Journey* (London, 1615). For more on history of encounters and interactions between Europe and the Ottoman Empire, attributing sexual deviance to the Ottomans as a trope, see Boone, *The Homoerotics of Orientalism*; Goran V. Stanivukovic, "Cruising the Mediterranean: Narratives of Sexuality and Geographies of the Eastern Mediterranean in Early Modern English Prose Romances." In *Remapping the Mediterranean World in Early Modern English Writing*, ed. Goran V. Stanivukovic (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 59–74; Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theatre in the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570–1630* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003); Gerald Maclean, *The Rise of Oriental Travels: English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580–1720* (New York: Palgrave, 2004); Gerald Maclean, *Looking East: English Writing and the Ottoman Empire before 1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579–1624* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), among others.
 30. A good example to this policy would be Ismet Zeki Eyuboglu's *Divan Şiirinde Sapık Sevgi* [Pervert Love in Divan Poetry] (Istanbul: Okat, 1968), which in accordance with Republican condemnation of the Ottomans as perverts, uncovers the homoerotic nature of Ottoman literary tradition to claim how deviant the Ottomans were as opposed to the new secular, moral, and heterosexual Republic.
 31. Spurlin, "Sexual/Cultural Hybridity in the 'New' South Africa," 210.
 32. Arvas, "From the Pervert Back to the Beloved."
 33. See endnote 45 on the slogan, "Velev ki ibneyiz."
 34. For more on *ubna* as a medical sexual category in the medieval Islamic societies, see Ze'evi, *Producing Desire*, and El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality in Arab-Islamic World*.
 35. News about the existence of this military practice was announced to the world by the German magazine *Der Spiegel* (<http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/a-726903.html>) but the army renounced them (http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/haber_yalanlandi_dunyanin_en_buyuk_gay_porno_arsivi_tskda_degil-1028864). However, many people narrating their experiences prove the otherwise: According to their narratives, the military considers homosexuality as a temporal space and the exemption report is delayed till it is certain that the person is irrecoverably homosexual; thus the diagnosis is "*homoseksualite*," a psychosexual

- disorder. Some questions they are asked during the interview are whether the person is effeminate, playing with girls when they were kids, ever been with a woman; and see if the person can be “converted” and straightened up; and sometimes the army officers try military psychiatry cells called “pembe kogus” [pink cell] to “treat” *homoseksualite*. In the process of one’s proving his homosexuality, family members are informed, which forces these people to come out. See some of these interviews: http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/diger/335136/_Pembe_tezkere_ye_kogus_iskencesi.html; <http://www.mynet.com/haber/yasam/uc-escinsel-gencin-pembe-teskere-hikayesi-467120-1>; “Top Var, Tüfek Var, Trans Yok!” <http://www.kaosgl.org/sayfa.php?id=9147>; “Rapor Sürecinde Zaten Eşcinsel Olduğunuz Unutmayın!” <http://www.kaosgl.com/sayfa.php?id=15043>
36. Military service is, for example, a man’s honor (*namus*) in public discourse just like a wife or sister is considered as an honor to him. This discourse genders the “motherland” and the country as female to be protected by healthy males. For more on the military in the nationalist discourse and the gender dynamics in Turkey, see Ayşe Gul Altınay, *The Myth of the Military-Nation: Militarism, Gender, and Education in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).
 37. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage 1978), 43.
 38. Mary McIntosh, “Homosexual Role.” *Social Problems* 16.2 (1968): 182–192; Jeffrey Weeks, *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth Century to the Present* (New York: Quartet, 1997); David Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love* (New York: Routledge, 1989); Halperin, *Saint Foucault*; Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002); Arnold Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).
 39. Richard von Krafft-Ebbing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*. Trans. Franklin S. Klaf (New York: Arcade, 2011).
 40. Kutlug Ataman, dir. *Lola+Bilidikid* (Boje Buck, 1999).
 41. Atif Yılmaz, dir. *Gece, Melek ve Bizim Çocuklar* (Yesilcam Film, 1993).
 42. Perihan Magden, *Ali ile Ramazan* (Istanbul: Dogan Kitap, 2010). On queerness of “rent boys” of Istanbul, see Cenk Ozbay’s essay, “Rent Boy’ların Queer Özneligi: İstanbul’da Norm Karsiti Zaman, Mekan, Cinsellik ve Sinifsalık” [Queer Subjectivities of Rent Boys: Non-Normative Time, Space, Sexuality and Class]. In Cakırlar and Delice, *Cinsellik Muammasi*, 280–300.
 43. For more on contemporary queer culture in Turkey, see Hüseyin Taping, “Masculinity, and Turkish Male Homosexuality.” In *Modern Homosexualities: Fragments of Lesbian and gay Experiences*, ed. Ken Plummer (London: Routledge, 1992), 39–49; Bereket and Adam, “The Emergence of Gay Identities”; Serkan Gorkemli, “‘Coming Out of the Internet’: Lesbian and Gay Activism and the Internet as a ‘Digital Closet’ in Turkey.” *Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies* 8.3 (2012): 63–88; Arslan Yüzgün, “Homosexuality and Police Terror in Turkey.” *Journal of Homosexuality* 249.3–4 (1993): 159–169.
 44. See Gul Ozyegin, “Reading the Closet Through Connectivity.” *Social Identities: Journal for the Studies of Race, Nation and Culture* 18.2 (2012): 201–222; Haktan Ural, *Construction of Gay Identity Among Different Classes: A Case Study in Ankara*. Unpublished Master’s Thesis. Middle East Technical University, 2010.
 45. Forming homosexual groups and political sexual activism goes back to the 1970s. LGBT organizations were formed especially on university campuses in 1990s when *gey* as an identification term started to be popular as well. For more on LGBT movements in Turkey, see Taping, “Masculinity, and Turkish Male Homosexuality”; Gorkemli, “‘Coming Out of the Internet’”; and essays, particularly Erdal Partog’s chapter in Cakırlar and Delice, *Cinsellik Muammasi*. Interestingly one of the slogans that became famous during the

more recent LGBT rallies in Turkey is “Velev ki ibneyiz” [Suppose we are *ibne*, so what?], which shows how homosexual people claim *ibne* to define themselves while subverting its derogatory implications.

46. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2008), 47.

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